



LIBERTY *for the* CAPTIVES

One Shabbat, Yeshua was teaching in a synagogue and noticed a woman whose body was so crooked, she could not stand or sit as a normal person. He called her over and said *“Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.”* She rose up straight, glorifying God!

But the synagogue official objected to this being done on the Shabbat. Yeshua rebuked him, saying *“Even animals are set free on Shabbat! How much more should this daughter of Abraham be liberated, whom Satan has bound these eighteen years.”*

Bringing liberty to those held captive (whether by sin, sickness, or demonic oppression) is central to the mission of the Messiah: **“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me to preach good tidings... to the poor...to heal the brokenhearted... to proclaim liberty to the captives... to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”** (Isaiah 61:1-2).

He made this profound announcement at the outset of His ministry, reading

Isaiah 61:1-2 in a Nazareth synagogue, as recorded in Luke 4:16-21. When Isaiah spoke of the Redeemer proclaiming **“liberty to the captives,”** he used the word DROR/דרור which means both liberty and “free as a bird.” This word seldom appears in the Hebrew Bible, but is prominent when God grants Israel freedom from slavery and indebtedness, in Leviticus 25:10. **“And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty (dror) throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee year for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and...to his family.”**

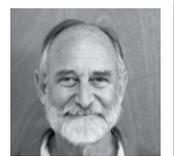
Passover and Jubilee?

Wow! In the context of Passover this is huge. It means that Yeshua has proclaimed to me - a former captive/slave to sin and self - *liberty*. I've been released, set free! Furthermore, anything that seeks to recapture me has no claim on my soul. My prison door has been permanently opened. Messiah has

come to release me from all forms of slavery and indebtedness. The entry is repentance - turning back to the Living, Merciful God - returning to the incredible *inheritance* I've been granted as His adopted son.

Some say this is the Jubilee year. The Jubilee year was when Israelite families were restored to their inheritance every 50 years. I have found no Jewish source declaring 2016 to be that year. Maybe it is, maybe not. But I do know that when Yeshua read from the Isaiah scroll He did not limit those promises to once every 50 years!

In the spirit of both Passover and Jubilee, we are invited to enter into the *liberty* obtained for us by the blood of Yeshua. It's time to return to our full inheritance as God's paid-for, fully adopted kids. Let's proclaim it this year! ✨



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TOWA

Passover is called the “Festival of our Freedom.” It commemorates our deliverance as a people from Egyptian bondage.

God frequently identifies himself in the Torah as “the God who brought us out of the land of Egypt.”

But what is freedom? What is bondage?

Freedom is being released from bondage, **and bondage is anything that keeps us from being who God made us to be.** The list would include things like sins, habits, lust, addictions, faulty thinking, bitterness, hatred, unforgiveness, demons, the flesh, the world, etc. We can all write our own list and it would include so-called *good things* as well as bad. We can put ourselves in bondage, and we can also be put there by others.

When Israel came out of Egypt, it is clear from their responses to crisis situations that they were not yet free. Real freedom is not being controlled by “the list.” It is the state of not being impacted by that which is designed to snare us again. We have come out from Egypt, but has Egypt come out of us? Israel left Egypt, but their behavior revealed that Egypt was still in their hearts. They wanted to return. It impacted their minds to such an extent that they remembered the past falsely. They recalled sitting every day “by the Nile on their beach chairs, sipping piña coladas, and eating grilled fish and onions” (Numbers 11:5 paraphrased).

Each time something bad (or challenging) happened, the Israelites forgot what God had done beforehand. That is not freedom. Thinking that their previous position as slaves was better than what they now had, was an even greater bondage.

RD FREEDOM

Everything

In Acts 17:28, Saul said to the Athenian philosophers and intellectuals that in God we were to “**live and move and have our being.**” This means walking in such a way that He is the filter through which we *see everything, measure everything* and respond to everything.

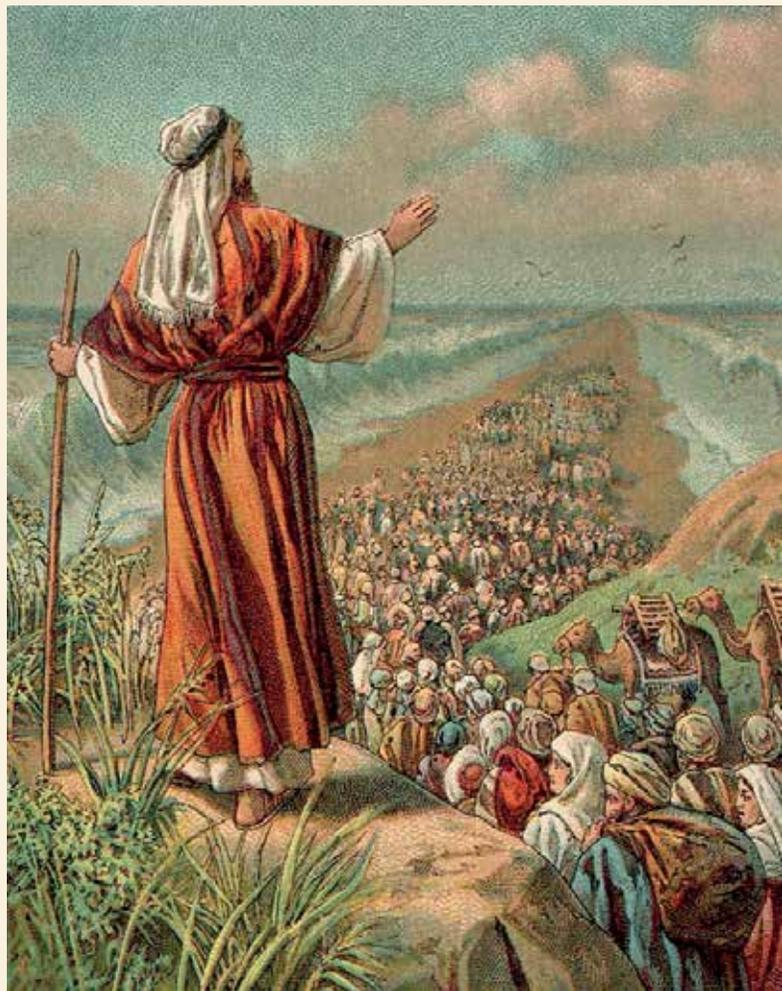
This is *real freedom* - a place with no room for bondage to get a grip on our thoughts and on our actions. “**Do not give the Devil an opportunity**” (Ephesians 4:27 NASB) is an exhortation to not allow breaches in relationships with God and men. Unresolved issues are doors for Satan to walk through. In John 14:30, Yeshua said, “**The ruler of this world is coming and he has nothing in me.**”

How is it possible to live like that?

It begins when we recognize our position in Him after our new birth and how we got to that place. Being born again is the individual picture of what happened to the nation collectively in being brought out of Egypt. **It is God who delivers** - with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. We were rescued – set free not by the arm of flesh but by the hand of God. When we can see the *difference* between human achievement and those things not made with human hands and truly embrace the latter, we are on our way to living it.

Kingdom of Freedom

In the second chapter of the book of Daniel the king had a dream which greatly troubled him. He demanded of his wise men to tell him the dream and then interpret it. Faced with an impossible task, the lives of the wise men threatened, Daniel requested time to pray. God gave the answers. Daniel gave the glory to God and told the dream and its interpretation. From the vision of the statue in the dream we are given a prophetic picture of earthly kingdoms. The statue represents the elevation of human effort and accomplishment. Earthly kingdoms continue on their prideful way to their ultimate demise. In the end it is the kingdom of God that prevails over all, destroying the greatest empires and emperors. ***Walking in this kingdom as an ever present reality is true freedom.*** This is why Daniel could flow through his 70 years of Babylonian exile undisturbed by lions’ dens, jealous rivals, non kosher food, angelic visitations, spiritual warfare, dreams and visions, etc. His external circumstances did not control him. He had been taken as a boy captive to Babylon, yet was a totally free man.



Israel's Escape from Egypt (Providence Lithograph Co. 1896 - 1913)

The stone cut without hands in Daniel 2:34-35 stands in contrast to the statue. The splendid statue represents the kingdoms of man. The statue is very humanly attractive. It impresses and controls those who are *not free*.

The stone points us to Yeshua. “**He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to him**” (Isaiah 53:2 NASB). Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, Islam are all to be shattered and scattered, but the Kingdom of God fills the earth forever. When we are not in bondage, we are not intimidated on the grand scale nor in everyday life.

When the Son of God makes us free we are free indeed. ✡



MOSHE MORRISON



I SURVIVED THE “RUSSIANS”



Gila and Moshe

A year has passed — a year of hard work and challenges overcome. This could be the story of any middle-aged immigrant in a new country, but because I am a Messianic Jew in Israel, my story has a certain context. The story is also about a Brazilian believer — a servant full of flaws, trying to survive aliyah (immigration) difficulties while staying true to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The God of Israel uses strange tools to shape us. When I started working at Return to Zion Ministries, I realized it would be different from any experience I ever had. Over 90 percent of its members are of Russian origin, and at first the cultural differences between us seemed insuperable. I’m from a generation that grew up watching Hollywood blockbusters. Before immigrating to Israel, the only impressions I had of the Russian people were prejudiced and distorted images I saw in American movies.

Upon arriving in Israel, I heard unfavorable stories about the Russian Israelis. I imagined that I would find the Russian immigrants to be hard, inflexible people, like the military characters in Cold War books and spy movies. At first the words Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine aroused haunting images. But my experiences with these “Russians” would show me how we all can be mistaken and full of prejudice.

“I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors” (John 4:38).

At Return to Zion Ministries, my family and I have had the opportunity to meet people from around the world with vastly diverse backgrounds. Yes, I met a former KGB agent, but he had already been transformed and restored by Yeshua. We became best friends with a wonderful family from Kazakhstan. I was completely charmed by the countless conversations I had with an old man who spent his childhood in Siberia where his family went to escape World War II. He became a believer at a Roman Catholic Church in Berlin, Germany, although nobody understood what a Jew was doing there praising God with them. If I was looking for new stories to share, I came to the right place.

In addition to the wonderful new friends, I have had the opportunity to start communicating with the “worldwide body.” In the last year, we received several groups from around the world interested in strengthening ties with Israel. As I write this, I’m saying goodbye to a Taiwanese group that has often visited Israel, but never had the opportunity to get close to the local believers - the Messianic Jews. God finally gave us the opportunity to meet each other, and it was a blessing for all.

Return to Zion Ministries has much to contribute to Israel and, with God’s help, I hope to be a part of this process. We are working to prepare the ground for a great harvest that is coming soon. My faith is still small, but I can almost visualize experiences that are yet to come. Maranatha, Lord Jesus, come back soon!

“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” (John 4:35) ✡

**MOSHE
AMI DA COSTA**

