

# MACON CONNEXIONS

BRINGING SHALOMIES TOGETHER

## PASSOVER

SPECIAL

### In This Issue

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7 TIPS FOR YOUR BEST PASSOVER

SABRINA'S CHAROSET RECIPE

A QUESTION OF LEAVEN

THE RABBI'S SECRET MATZAH RECIPE

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# DR. DAVID'S DRASH

TEACHING BY DR. DAVID HIGGINBOTHAM

## THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION AND THE SIX TIMES MOSES ASCENDED MOUNT SINAI

Both the book of Shemos (Exodus) and the book of Devarim (Deuteronomy) describe Moses's six ascensions up Mount Sinai. The first three ascensions were each less than a day with the third and shortest ascension likely being less than a couple of hours. The final three ascensions were each a period of forty days and forty nights. As will be shown later in this article, the six times Moses ascended Mount Sinai have a connection to the six days of creation that are described and recorded in the Book of Bereishis (Genesis), but first let us explore a chronological overview of Moses's six ascensions.

**THE FIRST ASCENSION** occurred on the first day of Sivan in 2448 AM (Anno Mundi/Year of the World) upon the arrival of Moses and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. The Torah records this first ascension in Shemos 19:1-8. Moses ascended the Mountain, and HaShem spoke to Moses and told him that if the children of Israel would agree to observe His Covenant, they would be a beloved, treasured holy nation and a kingdom of priests. Moses descended Mount Sinai either on the first of Sivan or early on the second day of Sivan. Moses informed the children of Israel of HaShem's words and the Children of Israel responded, "Everything that HaShem has spoken, we will do!"

**THE SECOND ASCENSION** occurred on the second day of Sivan and is recorded in Shemos 19:8-14. Moses informed HaShem of Israel's words and acceptance to be His Holy People. HaShem spoke to Moses and told him to tell the Children of Israel to wash their clothing and to fully immerse in a Mikvah (tevilah) and be ready for the third day. During these three days of sanctification, they were not to have marital relations with their wives and were to set up boundary stones around Mount Sinai. HaShem informed Moses that after these three days of sanctification, the Children of Israel were to gather at the base of Mount Sinai outside the boundary stones, and HaShem would speak to them. Moses descended Mount Sinai either on the second of Sivan or early on the third day of Sivan and informed them of all that HaShem had commanded. The Children of Israel sanctified themselves as HaShem had commanded them on the third, fourth, and fifth days of Sivan. These three days of sanctification are still observed before Shavuot (Pentecost) by observant Jews and are called Sheloshet Yemei Hagbalah (the three days of limitation). It may have been during these three days that Yeshua experienced tevilah in the Jordan River by Yocanan the Immerser (John the Baptist). On the morning of the sixth day of Sivan, the Children of Israel gathered at the base of Mount Sinai as HaShem had commanded. From the Mountain came thunder and lightning. A thick cloud covered the Mountain, and the sound of the shofar was heard and continually grew stronger. It was at this time, on the sixth of Sivan, that **THE THIRD ASCENSION** occurred as recorded in Shemos 19:20-25 as follows: HaShem instructed Moses to descend the Mountain and to again warn the Children of Israel they were not to ascend the Mountain and were to remain behind the boundary stones to avoid His wrath.

Moses replied, "The people cannot ascend Mount Sinai, for You have warned us saying, 'Set boundaries around the Mountain and sanctify it.'" HaShem then instructed Moses, "Go, descend. Then you shall ascend, Aaron with you". (HaShem's instruction for Aaron to ascend the Mountain with Moses referred to Moses's fourth ascension. This will be explained below, in the discussion of the fourth ascension.) Moses descended the Mountain for the third time on the sixth of Sivan, the same day as he ascended it, and as instructed by HaShem, he again warned the Children of Israel to not approach the Mountain. Then HaShem spoke to the whole nation of Israel in His own Voice "The Ten Sayings of HaShem" (Ten Commandments). The Children of Israel became afraid and told Moses, "You speak to us and we will hear; let not HaShem speak to us lest we die." So Moses approached the thick cloud where HaShem was as the Children of Israel stood away at a distance, and HaShem spoke to Moses at the base of the Mountain and gave him the Commandments of the Torah. It is important to understand that this conversation between HaShem and Moses did not take place on top of the Mountain but at its base. HaShem's final instructions to Moses were that Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (two of Aaron's sons), and seventy of the Elders of Israel were to ascend Mount Sinai to a half-way point up the Mountain that was determined by HaShem. There they were all to prostrate themselves to HaShem, and Moses alone would ascend the rest of the way to the top of the Mountain.

When HaShem had finished speaking to Moses, Moses went and told the Children of Israel all the words that HaShem had spoken and all the ordinances He had given them. The Children of Israel responded, "All the words that HaShem has spoken, we will do". Moses then wrote all the words of HaShem in what would be called "The Book of the Covenant". With the help of Aaron and his sons, Joshua, and the seventy Elders, Moses made multiple copies of the Book. It is likely that they all worked long throughout the night. These events are recorded in Shemos 20:1-24:4, Devarim 4:10-15; 5:1-28, and Midrash.

Moses arose early the next day, the seventh of Sivan, and directly oversaw both the building of an altar at the foot of the Mountain and twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Moses then had the young men of Israel bring bulls for offerings on the altar. Half the blood from these offerings Moses had thrown upon the altar, but the other half he had placed in multiple basins. Then Moses, Aaron and his sons, Joshua, and the seventy Elders went among all the people reading the copies of the Book of the Covenant so that all the children of Israel were able to hear it read. When this was completed, the Children of Israel all responded, "Everything that HaShem has spoken, we will do, and we will obey". Then Moses, Aaron and his sons, Joshua, and the seventy Elders went among all the people sprinkling them with the blood from the basins of blood that Moses had set aside from the morning offerings. When all the people had been sprinkled with blood, Moses, Aaron and his sons, Joshua, and the seventy Elders all gathered at the foot of the Mountain, and Moses announced to the people, "Behold, the blood of the Covenant that HaShem sealed with you concerning all these matters". Then Moses, Aaron and his sons, Joshua, and the seventy Elders of Israel began to ascend Mount Sinai. It would have been late afternoon on the seventh of Sivan when they began their ascent. They would not ascend to the top of the Mountain but instead to a halfway point up the Mountain designated by HaShem.

This would begin Moses's **FOURTH ASCENSION** up the Mountain and the first of his three forty-day and forty-night stays upon the top of the Mountain, but as will be shown, the seventh of Sivan was not the start of the forty days and forty nights. When Moses, Aaron and his sons, Joshua, and the seventy Elders reached the designated halfway point up the Mountain, they all prostrated themselves before HaShem. Then they had a festive meal in the presence of HaShem. From this point on the Mountain, they were able to view the image of HaShem sitting on the Merkvah (Heavenly Throne or Chariot) atop the Mountain. The Merkvah is described in greater detail in Yechezkel (Ezekiel 1:4-28). The Torah notes that they were able to see the sapphire brickwork under HaShem's Feet. HaShem then called out to Moses and told him to ascend to the top of the Mountain where HaShem would give him the two stone tablets and the commandments and teachings of the Torah. Moses appointed Aaron and Hur with the help of the seventy Elders to be in charge of the camp of Israel until he returned and sent them back down the Mountain. Moses appointed Joshua to remain at the halfway point up the Mountain until he returned to him. Then Moses ascended the rest of the Mountain and arrived at the top of the Mountain shortly after sunset on the eighth day of Sivan at which time the period of forty days and forty nights began. This period of forty days and nights would run from the eighth of Sivan to the seventeenth of Tamuz. Unfortunately, because the people had seen Moses begin his ascent on the seventh instead of the eighth of Sivan, it would cause some of them, especially those among the mixed multitude (Egyptians who had converted to Judaism), to miscalculate when Moses was to return. They expected him to return on the sixteenth of Tamuz, a day earlier than when Moses actually was supposed to return. It was this misconception of Moses being delayed from returning that led to the event of the golden calf. Only around three thousand people were directly involved in the worship of the golden calf, and most of these were from the mixed multitude. This did not excuse the over six hundred thousand able bodied men who did not take part in the worship of the golden calf, because only forty days prior, they had all taken an oath to keep idolatry out of the camp, but when it occurred, they failed to act.

The period of the seventh day of Sivan to the seventeenth day of Tamuz when Moses descended the Mountain is recorded in the Torah in Shemos 24:4-32:29, Devarim 9:7-17 and 9:20-21, and Midrash. Before Moses descended the Mountain on the seventeenth of Tamuz, HaShem informed him that the people had made the golden calf and informed Moses that he planned to annihilate the people. Moses successfully prayed for the people, and HaShem relented from His anger. Moses then descended the Mountain and met up with Joshua who was still at the halfway point. Together they arrived back at the camp and discovered the golden calf for themselves. At this point, Moses threw down and broke the first set of tablets. Over the seventeenth and eighteenth days of Sivan the following events took place: Moses confronted Aaron and the people concerning the golden calf, Moses ground up the golden calf and poured it over water and had the Children of Israel drink the water, and Moses and the Levites slaughtered the three thousand who had worshiped the golden calf. On the nineteenth of Tamuz Moses informed the Children of Israel, "You have committed a grievous sin! And now I shall ascend to HaShem and perhaps I can win atonement in the face of your sin." Moses then made his **FIFTH ASCENSION** up the Mountain. This was the second ascension of forty days and forty nights which occurred from the nineteenth of Tamuz to the twenty-ninth of Ab. The Torah records this period in Shemos 32:30-34:4, Devarim 9:18-10:3, and Midrash. On the Mountain, Moses pleaded for HaShem to forgive his people and to personally go with them to the land. HaShem agreed! Then Moses asked HaShem to show him His Glory and HaShem agreed to have all His Goodness pass before Moses. Moses would not be able to see His Face but would be able to see His Back. (This event, which was agreed to on the fifth ascension, did not occur until the sixth ascension). HaShem then told Moses to carve out a new set of stone tablets to replace the broken set and descend the Mountain and show the two new blank tablets to the Children of Israel.

The Midrash states that Moses was told to carve the new set of tablets from the sapphire stones of the Merkvah. Moses descended the Mountain for the fifth time on the twenty-ninth of Ab, carrying out all of HaShem's instructions.

On the morning of the thirtieth of Ab 2448 AM, Moses made his **SIXTH AND FINAL ASCENSION** up the Mountain carrying the new blank set of tablets. This was the third ascension of forty days and forty nights which occurred from the twenty-ninth of Ab to the tenth of Tishri 2449 AM. The Torah records this period in Shemos 34:4-31 and Devarim 10:1-5. Atop the Mountain, Moses got to see HaShem's Goodness pass before him in the form of HaShem's Thirteen Attributes of Mercy (Shemos 34:5-7) and to see HaShem carve His Ten Sayings onto the new set of tablets. Moses descended the Mountain for the sixth and final time on the day of Yom Kippur on the tenth of Tishri 2449 AM. Only after he had descended the Mountain did Moses discover that his face glowed.

We now come to the second part of this article—the connection between the six days of creation and Moses's six ascensions up Mount Sinai.

Bereishis 1:1-2 reads: "In the beginning of HaShem's creating the heaven and the earth, the earth was Toho (formless) and Boho (void/without number)." Then in Bereishis 1:3-25, the six days of creation are described. In the first three days of creation, HaShem removes the Toho from the earth and gives it form. In the last three days of creation, HaShem removes the Boho.

On the first day of creation, HaShem gave form to the earth by creating darkness for night and by forming light for the day. On the fourth day of creation, HaShem gave number to the earth by creating the sun for day and creating the stars and the moon for night.

On the second day of creation, HaShem gave form to the earth by separating the waters above from the waters below. On the fifth day, He gave number to the earth by creating the fish to fill the waters below and creating birds to fill the waters above.

On the third day of creation, HaShem gave form to the world by separating the land/earth from the water/seas and creating plant life. On the sixth day HaShem gave number to the earth by creating the land animals that fill dry earth and man to rule over them.

On the first three ascensions of Mount Sinai by Moses that lasted less than one day, HaShem gave form to His Holy nation by giving the Children of Israel the opportunity and the choice to become His Holy People. On the last three ascensions of Mount Sinai by Moses that lasted forty days and forty nights, HaShem gave number to His Holy Nation by giving the Children of Israel 613 commandments--365 negative commandments and 248 positive commandments that define the rules of the relationship between the Almighty HaShem and His Holy Nation.

The chiasm between the six days of creation and the six times Moses ascended Mount Sinai is just one of the many chiasms found throughout the Bible. The connection of these two important events is that in six days HaShem created the world, and the last act of creation was the forming of man--the first Adam to rule over HaShem's creation. The six ascensions of Moses led to the creation of the Holy Nation of Israel from which will emerge the second Adam--Yeshua HaMashiach.

## About the Author

Dr. David Higginbotham was raised in the Southern Baptist Church and became interested in the Old Testament and Judaism when he was about seventeen years old. His grandmother then told him that his family was originally Jewish but some had converted to Christianity in the 1920s. He describes himself as an Orthodox Messianic Jew who loves studying the Torah and has taught Torah classes for more than 30 years.



# FROM THE INBOX



## A thank you...

Thank you so much to everyone who helped our family in some way or another when my mom passed away and Jonathan had his foot surgery. The meals were such a huge help, and the flowers for the funeral provided by the Shalom Macon Ladies group were beautiful! The cards sent by mail and the people who came to either the visitation or funeral to support me and my family meant so much to me. I am so very thankful for this family and all of the love and support you all provided in a very difficult time.

Blessings to all,  
Katie Eisner

## A praise...

The Walton family from northern Arizona is excited to share that our US soldier, Sgt. Travis Walton, is soon returning to the states from a 9-month deployment. We are relieved and so very grateful to HaShem for seeing our kiddo through some very scary times. Thank you for your continued prayers for our American military forces.

With love,  
Robin, Chelsea, Jason, Mya, and Sebastian



## A invitation...

To all Mid-West Shalomies: The Williams family would like to invite you to our house to celebrate Passover. If you are near enough to make the trip to Lincoln, Nebraska, and do not have anyone to celebrate with, please come and join us for this wonderful holiday. If you would like more information, or to RSVP, please send a direct message through Shalom@Home to Elizabeth Williams to receive all the details. We look forward to meeting you!

Faithfully,  
Elizabeth Williams



# EXPERIENCE ISRAEL 2025

Another traveler on the April, 2023, Israel trip shares her perspective of her experience in Israel. Registration is now open for the March 2025 Shalom Macon trip.

## A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE BY NICOLE PERSAUD

*If I had to use one word to describe my trip to Israel with Shalom Macon, it would be soul-stirring. For so many reasons, my soul has never been the same. To be honest, I had never even remotely had a desire to visit Israel, but when the opportunity was presented, I literally thought “eh...why not?” So I signed up, and my life is forever changed!*

*I truly 10000% believe my soul would not have been impacted in the way it was had I not gone with Shalom Macon and had we not had Shlomo as our tour guide for two reasons:*



## 1

*It was finally nice to be able to relax and be around like-minded people (and even more amazing, like-minded people who look like me) without constantly having to explain myself. If I said, “No bacon cheeseburgers for me” or “Baruch HaShem”, there were no questions. In fact, it was such a non-issue, I felt weird to not have to explain myself!*

“

Do I believe in anything with such deep conviction as they have?

— NICOLE PERSAUD

## 2

*Seeing the Bible come to life through a Jewish lens was more overpowering than I had anticipated. Especially because I had not anticipated it at all! Having a Jewish tour guide made a huge difference because the Jewishness of Yeshua was enhanced on the tour, not discarded or dismissed. It allowed for so many “aha” moments and connecting dots that it was overwhelming for my brain while simultaneously setting my soul on fire. Now, anytime I read passages from Scripture, I see it from a completely different lens, and even better, I think to myself “I have walked (or sailed) on the exact location this Scripture is describing”. Literally walking on land where Yeshua walked still gives me chills to this day and has brought the Bible to life in ways I would have never imagined!*

*As for the trip itself, the pride the people of Israel have for their country is so palpable, so thick in the air, it can be cut with a knife like Florida humidity! From the store keeper to the young men singing from the top of their lungs in the streets, pride is not only seen but felt as one walks the streets in the country and interacts with Israeli residents. This pride oozed out of Shlomo, our tour guide, as he proudly shared what he loved about his country and its rich history. He was vulnerable in sharing parts of his personal experiences that have made him into the proud Israeli man he is today.*





*The pride was thick when we visited Masada, the fortress near the Dead Sea. This is where new IDF soldiers receive their weapons and are sworn in to defend their country. Touring this site shook me to my core. It had me asking, “Do I believe in anything with such deep conviction as they have?”*

*During our visit, Israel observed its Memorial Day and Independence Day. I was touched by seeing the entire country pause when a siren rang throughout the land in remembrance of its heroes. People stopped in their tracks to honor those who sacrificed for the country. The siren was so loud it was heard even underground! Imagine a military base when everyone stops for evening Taps. Now magnify that exponentially as the entire country stands in silence and remembrance. It was truly moving!*

*The memories forever etched in my brain include experiencing Shabbat in Israel, my first Havdala led by Darren, and seeing the myriad of ancient to modern Mezuzahs. I even saw my name in Hebrew on the streets of Israel! That was HaShem’s little personal note to me...like who the heck in Israel is named Nicole?*

*A moving experience was actually touching the Western wall and experiencing the insurmountable reverence that is observed at that holy site. One could hear prayers at the Wall while simultaneously hearing Muslims praying over the loudspeaker at the Temple Mount. It was hard to comprehend all that was happening. Seeing Jews, Muslims, and Christians coexisting—living right next door to each other while respecting each other’s space—was unexpected. We never hear about that at home! Frankly, I do not think I would ever have believed it had I not seen it with my own two brown eyes!*

*I would be remiss on this trip down Memory Lane if I did not mention the food! The tastes, colors, and textures of the food were delicious and fresh.*



*The thick layer of ignorance I unknowingly possessed was shed and replaced with the richness of the history of the foundation by which I live my life. It is somewhat similar to a transition of a caterpillar into a butterfly. I did not even know or understand the transition was happening, but when I spiritually awoke, I felt like I was flying. It is almost like my soul had been in a gentle slumber for all these years and was awakened, much like when the shofar will sound and ultimately put an entirely new meaning to Shema Israel, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad!*

*If you can make the trip next spring, your life will be forever changed and friendships formed will last through eternity!*



**Gracias Shalom  
Macon for “macon”  
this happen!**

— NICOLE PERSAUD

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Tour code: **Eisner25**  
Email [kelli@shalomacon.org](mailto:kelli@shalomacon.org) with questions

**March 2-12, 2025**

**BOOK NOW** >>

# MACON THE MOVE



Lance & Emory Slater

## AN ANTHOLOGY

The Slater family came to Macon in 2017. Lance and Emory have four children: Aylee (age 10), Kaleb (age 8), Chaya (age 6), and Ari (age 1). Lance, the talented bass guitarist seen on Shabbat playing with Rabbi Damian, is a Torah Club leader, prayer service leader, and an integral part of the men's ministry at the synagogue. Here is the Slaters' story in Lance's own words:

*I was raised in the Baptist church, baptized at 8, and raised in the faith. By age 15, I felt the call into the ministry with the desire to live a life of faith like the Apostles and early believers. It was around this time my mother told me I was Jewish, which, at that time, was not at all important to me. At age 19, during a crisis of faith, I all but left Christianity. Lost and without hope, my mother's words came back to me. I thought maybe I was missing something in my walk, and what if being Jewish had something to do with it! That quest was the only thing that kept me from drowning. It was the lighthouse on the shore amidst the tempest.*

*It was around this time I really started learning about the Jewish roots of Christianity, which led me to Darren and Sabrina Huckey. A loose, but unwavering connection with them kept me afloat all through my 20s as I continued learning. They showed me Judaism with the Messiah, where Jews and Gentiles have a place and a joint mission.*



“

It was around this time my mother told me I was Jewish, which, at that time, was not at all important to me.

— LANCE SLATER

*In my late 20s, I met my wife, Emory, a girl from the deep south with parents from Mississippi and Louisiana. Her family moved to Arkansas for a better life and raised their seven children on the river. Ties to their Creator and a desire to serve were ever-present, but they could find no real home in a church. They came in to the Hebrew Roots movement when Emory was a young adult. Connections with families and close friends within the greater faith community helped keep her grounded. Never able to fully make it her own, however, she struggled to find her place in faith.*

*Our lives... very different. Our journeys' convergence... written in the heavens!*

*I was smitten with her curly hair swaying in the wind. Her green eyes sparkled like stars dancing across a gently disturbed lake on a moonless night. Her laugh! Her smile! But most of all, her kind and loving servant's heart! I fell in love hard and fast! Of course, we did not build our home on Love Potion #9, but on the foundation of Covenant. Guided by my distant, but ever-present teachers, the Huckeys, Emory and I committed to a life together. Darren signed our Ketubah almost 12 years ago, making a permanent imprint on our family.*

*Outside of the Huckeys, who were hours away, there was only the Hebrew Roots group for us to be a part of. We were content. It seemed good enough; we learned a lot and were close to many people there. Ten months after our honeymoon, the Slaters grew by two feet! We very quickly noticed a problem. There was nothing for children. None of the older children in our group were staying when they became adults. Why? Because there was no answer to a child's "why". The community did not invest in our children. I knew this was not going to work. Being the only family in our congregation who practiced Judaism, our kids would almost surely leave the faith.*





We connected with Darren and Sabrina and about once a month, we would travel to their house and spend Shabbat with them. That seemed to be the solution. It was not ideal, but we were being filled and learning how to be better parents and spouses. Right after our second child, Kaleb, was born, the Huckeys told us they were leaving for Georgia. I felt if they left, the last beacon of light would be snuffed out in Arkansas.

So they were abandoning us for hot, muggy Georgia! But what was worse, they wanted us to come too! Now, they had Emory at “beach,” but for me... Georgia? Nope! I grew up in South Dakota and north Texas in the extreme cold or dry heat. Georgia? The opposite of both? The inside of a dog’s mouth? Humid, hot, muggy, the air so thick it envelops a body like a damp T-shirt. There are only two seasons: monsoon and summer. Obviously, I was dead set against it! Darren and Sabrina continued to pray for us, encourage us, and asked us to pray.

After they made the move, we felt my prophecy was true; we felt alone and in the dark. Things got much worse for us, especially in our marriage.

We decided we would wait until they got some what settled and then visit. We would use them as the canary in the coal mine!

“

Darren signed our Ketubah almost 12 years ago, making a permanent imprint on our family.

— LANCE SLATER

After driving all night, we arrived on a weekday morning just in time for Darren to take me to the synagogue where he and I prayed Shacharit. There, in the silence, just my teacher, me, and best of all, HaShem, I knew my family was no longer alone and in the dark. Kneeling at the steps of the Ark, I wept. I felt I was home and begged God to let this be His will.

One thing I remember about Shabbat services was the Rabbi calling up the children, blessing them, and talking about how important they were and our mission as parents and a congregation to bless, treasure, and teach them. That was it! Everything we were missing! Our children had not only a place but prominence in our faith!

We met so many people here: the Hazens, the Eisners, the Joneses, Dr. David, Ms. Ruthi, and others who gave us more reasons to love Shalom Macon. Each one made us feel a part of the family.

Halfway back to Arkansas, we called Darren and Rabbi and told them we did not know how or exactly when, but we were “Macon the Move”! About a year later and now with a third child, we came home!





# SHALOMIES ABROAD

JEFF, KELILA, AND THEIR DAUGHTERS PERRI AND KAYLI-ELLEN.

Meet the Hunters from the UK: Jeff, Kelila, and their daughters Perri and Kayli-Ellen. Here is their story as told by Kelila:

*Our journey on the road to find our Jewish Messiah, His revealed identity, and how Yeshua lived His life began when we were part of an Evangelical church.*

*Jeff and I met while serving in the Royal Navy and W.R.N.S. respectively. Jeff served 25 years in Weapon Engineering; I served nearly 9 years as a Physical Training Instructor. We married having only known each other a few months. While Jeff was away for long periods of time on deployments, I continued teaching in the fitness industry in civilian life. Our older daughter, Perri, was born in 1987. Eighteen months later, in 1989, her sister, Kayli-Ellen, completed our family.*

*Our daughters were brought up in the Church, first in a Baptist setting, then a Free Church, then Evangelical. Within these denominations we spent nine to ten years fully integrated within those communities. At our last Evangelical Church, Perri completed a two-year internship, and Kayli-Ellen was an integral part of the worship and leadership teams. Jeff and I were part of the hosting team, and I taught and led a dance/worship team.*



“

Yeshua and the Scriptures made more sense as HaShem was put back into His rightful place in my life.

— PERRI HUNTER

*Perri's words: Being brought up in the Church made it a massive part of my life, and I loved it! It was during my internship that I started to see things that did not appear Biblical. I noticed a lot of the world being brought into the church with a distinct lack of holiness. This unsettled me; I knew something was missing but was unsure of what that was. I have always questioned and sought out information, and this led me to finding out about our Jewish Messiah and a true reading of the Scriptures. My heart was broken by the journey away from the Church and everything I knew, but I also felt alive for the first time as Yeshua and the Scriptures made more sense as HaShem was put back into His rightful place in my life.*

*It was during the last years in the Evangelical Church that Jeff and I began questioning certain aspects of the church. We felt the services were taking on a disco-like quality with grace being the overarching aspect with lack of teaching of the Old Testament. One day as we were listening to the sermon, Jeff and I looked at each other and said, "What does it mean in Hebrew?" Our search had begun. Unknown to us, our daughters were starting out on their own journey of discovery.*



*Kayli-Ellen's words: Things had not been right in the Church for a long time. I never truly felt I fitted in and have always been questioning and seeking answers. Replacement Theology and anti-semitism became apparent. Yeshua's Jewishness did not seem to be important or even understood in the Church. This did not sit right with me. I had an interest in Hebrew at school which carried on in college and university. When my family came to the knowledge of the Messianic walk, I was married and living separately from them but was being led to the same walk as well!*

*Jeff, Perri, and I were introduced to Dwight Prior in a series called "Behold the Man " where we learned about Yeshua. It was during the latter years of Kayli-Ellen's marriage that we all started to study under FFOZ. Becoming members, we studied the six volumes of Torah Club. Kayli-Ellen became a virtual member of Beth Immanuel Synagogue and enjoyed extended visits in 2019. Through FFOZ, Kayli-Ellen discovered Rabbi Damian and Shalom Macon and watched the streaming services during the pandemic. She later introduced us to Shalom Macon which led us to the present. There have been many twists and turns, ups and downs, but we have never wavered in learning the truth of the Word, HaShem, Yeshua, Israel, and our inclusion in the Kingdom.*

“

...I was married and living separately from them but was being led to the same walk as well!

— KAYLI-ELLEN



## Fun Facts About the Hunters

- ☀️ Jeff has recently retired and enjoys time at the gym and playing snooker with his ex-Royal Navy buddies.
- ☀️ Kelila teaches personal training sessions and regularly works out. Together Jeff and Kelila lead a weekly Torah Club in their home.
- ☀️ Currently they are helping a young married couple living in Australia to understand the real and authentic Yeshua.
- ☀️ Perri is a teaching assistant working with 4-5 year-olds. She loves Jewish mysticism, HaShem's creation, history, creativity, being active, and laughing!
- ☀️ Kayli-Ellen is currently studying to be an Exercise Referral Personal Trainer. She loves music, nature, animals, walking in the forest, natural living, and Jewish Mysticism.



# SHALOMIES IN THE STATES

DAVE & MELANIE HAZEN

Dave and Melanie Hazen have been members of Shalom Macon for 15 years, joining just three months after the synagogue was founded! As long-standing members, they've witnessed Shalom Macon's growth and the coming together of a worldwide community. Here's what Shalom Macon means to them, in Dave's words:

“

*This incident showed me how our community and family can come together to support one of us in a powerful way*

*Many of you know that I experienced a heart attack on October 2, 2023, right in the parking lot of Shalom Macon. This incident showed me how our community and family can come together to support one of us in a powerful way. Several Shalomies, camping on the grounds for Sukkot, rushed to my aid. Some called for help, others stayed by my side until help arrived, and some reached out to Melanie, my beloved wife, keeping her informed about the situation. This all happened within the first 30 minutes! I've never felt more grateful for a group of people in my life.*

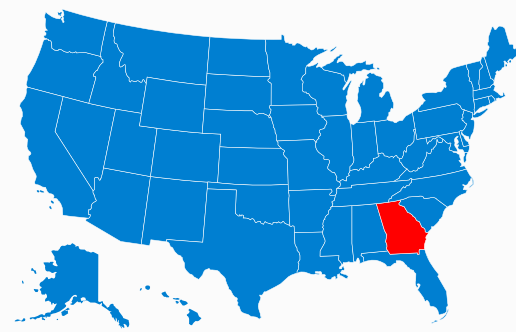
*Remarkably, most of those who helped were visiting Shalomies, here for Sukkot, a time meant for their relaxation and connection. Some even visited the hospital to lift Melanie's and my spirits. That was on Monday.*

“

*It was an incredible sight —our community, from across the country, many meeting for the first time, coming together.*

*By Tuesday, I underwent a heart catheterization and had two stents inserted, starting my recovery. I was discharged from the hospital on Wednesday around midday. The first stop? Shalom Macon, to retrieve my truck, thank everyone for their assistance, and to check on 80 pounds of brisket awaiting preparation for the upcoming Shabbat dinner. However, I couldn't lift anything due to the recent heart catheterization. What to do? No need to worry—our community stepped up. I returned home to rest, and by 5 pm, about 20 people from our Shalomie family were at our doorstep, ready to trim the brisket with mostly dull knives. It was an incredible sight —our community, from across the country, many meeting for the first time, coming together. They stayed until the work was done and enjoyed fellowship afterward.*

*The task wasn't finished that Tuesday night. Friday morning, they returned to chop the brisket and prepare it for the evening's Shabbat dinner, then transported it to the Shul for the next group to take over.*



*Being accustomed to managing all this myself, it was challenging to let others into my kitchen and even more so to allow someone else to man my grill. I admit, I'm somewhat of a control freak when it comes to cooking—a sentiment Melanie might extend to other areas as well!*



“

*Watching our small community from Macon, Georgia, expand and impact people globally has been astounding, especially for just one "little ole person" like me.*

— DAVE HAZEN

*The support I witnessed that week was something I never imagined experiencing: a worldwide community uniting to help just one person, with hundreds praying from all over the globe, locals lending a hand, and many adjusting their plans just to support us.*

*Watching our small community from Macon, Georgia, expand and impact people globally has been astounding, especially for just one "little ole person" like me. My heartfelt thanks go out to everyone, from the bottom of my feet to the top of my head, for all you've done and continue to do for Melanie and me. We are profoundly grateful to be part of Shalom Macon.*

*Blessings to you all!*

## Fun Facts About The Hazens

- ✿ You'll recognize Dave as the Announcer Guy each Shabbat, and Melanie as a frequent reader in the Shacharit service.
- ✿ Dave installs restaurant equipment, requiring weekly travel, while Melanie is a receptionist in a doctor's office.
- ✿ They are proud parents of four grown children, with a fifth grandchild on the way!
- ✿ Dave also invites locals to support the kickball team, which is enjoying a winning season as of this writing!



# 7 TIPS FOR YOUR BEST PASSOVER

BY DARREN HUCKEY

**Select and Familiarize Yourself with Your Haggadah**

**Prepare Your Home and Set a Welcoming Atmosphere**

**Plan the Meal Thoughtfully**

**Ensure Adequate Supplies and Engage in Creative Planning**

**Focus on Inclusivity and Guest Comfort**

**Enhance Engagement**

**Personalize Your Seder**



Planning a Passover Seder can be a fulfilling yet challenging task. The Seder, a ceremonial dinner that marks the beginning of Passover in Jewish tradition, is rich with symbols, rituals, and opportunities for reflection and celebration. Here are seven tips to ensure your Seder is both memorable and meaningful:

### 1. Select and Familiarize Yourself with Your Haggadah

The Haggadah is the narrative book used during the Seder to guide participants through the evening's rituals. Choosing a Haggadah that resonates with your family and guests is crucial. There are so many great ones out there and many that make correlations to Yeshua's last meal with his disciples. Once selected, familiarize yourself with its contents and structure. This preparation allows you to lead the Seder confidently, facilitating reader participation and ensuring everyone can engage fully. Consider practicing the Seder's actions beforehand to smooth out any logistical concerns, such as hand washing or distributing Seder plate elements. It is also a great idea to send your guests home with their copy of the Haggadah as a keepsake of the event, and to let them know you appreciate them taking the time to join your family for the Seder.

### 2. Prepare Your Home and Set a Welcoming Atmosphere

Make your home inviting for guests. This involves not only the physical space but also preparing for the unique structure of the Seder. Inform guests in advance about the expected duration and recommend they eat lightly before arriving to ease the wait until the meal. Beautify your Seder table with your best dishes or paper goods, flowers, and items within easy reach to facilitate participation and create a festive atmosphere.

### 3. Plan the Meal Thoughtfully

A well-planned meal is a cornerstone of a successful Seder. Search for Passover recipes or invest in a Passover cookbook to ensure your dishes are both appropriate and able to withstand the wait. Serving the meal in courses can keep guests satisfied and engaged throughout the evening. One mistake to avoid, however, is serving lamb. Often, lamb is the main course of those seeking to make Passover as "authentic" as possible. However, we actually avoid eating lamb on Passover so that no one gets the impression that we are trying to eat the Passover lamb since it can only be slaughtered in the Temple, eaten in Jerusalem, and only by those who are halachically Jewish.

### 4. Ensure Adequate Supplies and Engage in Creative Planning

Beyond the Seder plate and traditional elements like the Matzah tash and Afikoman bag, consider the overall experience. Plan interactive activities, especially for children, such as singing, storytelling, and acting out the Exodus narrative. Coloring sheets and crayons also help keep the children engaged. Creative and fun elements can make the Seder an enriching experience for all ages.

### 5. Focus on Inclusivity and Guest Comfort

Invite guests early and be considerate of their needs and dietary restrictions. Communicate clearly about what the evening entails, including its duration and the expectation of active participation. If you plan on doing a traditional Seder—where it is generally an hour or more between the beginning of the Seder and the meal—then you will want to make sure your guests know this ahead of time. Being invited to a feast, sitting down at the table, and then delaying for that length of time can make your time together an endurance test, rather than a joyful event. Recommend that your guests eat something light an hour or two before they come over. If you have children, be sure to feed them at least something before sitting down to the table. It is also good to provide snacks for your guests and family that are distinct from the elements you will be using in your Seder (e.g. carrots or dried fruit rather than matza). This clarity helps manage expectations and ensures everyone comes prepared for the experience.

### 6. Enhance Engagement

Look for ways to make necessary rituals, like hand washing, more efficient and less time-consuming. This can involve having multiple stations or helpers to keep the evening flowing smoothly and to keep participants focused on the Seder's purpose. It's also very appropriate to encourage questions from your children and your guests. Questions are a central component to a successful Seder, even if you do not have the answers. The fact that the questions are asked is good enough.

### 7. Personalize Your Seder

Adding personal touches can significantly enhance the Seder's meaning for you and your guests. This could include wearing biblical costumes, creating custom decorations, or incorporating family traditions and songs that make the night uniquely yours. We love to throw plastic insects and kosher marshmallows (to represent the hail) when we recite the plagues. As Messianics, it is also requisite for us to discuss our Master Yeshua's last meal with his disciples and his sacrificial death. These additions will turn your Passover Seder into a memorable experience for everyone.

### Conclusion

A well-planned and thoughtfully executed Passover Seder can be a profound and joyous experience. By preparing in advance, focusing on inclusivity, and adding personal touches, you can create a memorable evening that honors tradition while reflecting your personal values and creativity.

Shalom Macon recommends the following Haggadah selection

*Cup of Redemption: A Messianic Haggadah for Passover by Darren Huckey*

*The Master's Table - Vine of David (FFOZ)*

*Vine of David Haggadah*

# CHAROSET RECIPE

BY SABRINA HUCKEY

*Honestly, when I make charoset I don't measure ingredients! I just know how I want my charoset to look and taste. But for this newsletter, I whipped up a batch and measured everything so folks who have never made it before have a place to start and can see what it looks like. What is great about charoset is that it is easy and there is not just one way to make it (no surprise there, huh?). There are different Jewish traditions you can try, and you can make adjustments according to your taste and family's needs. The goal and symbolism behind the charoset is for it to resemble and remind us of the mortar the Israelites used to make bricks while they were slaves in Egypt. Here is the basic recipe that my family loves:*



## Ingredients

- 3 Fuji apples, cored and peeled
- 4 Pitted dates (*I don't always add these, but they are a nice addition*)
- 3/4 cup nuts (*I prefer pecans, but walnuts are another option*)
- 2 Tbsp honey (or brown sugar)
- 1 Tbsp wine (or juice)
- 1/2 Tsp cinnamon, ground
- Pinch of salt

Serves 6 (approx. for one seder)

## Tips

- You want to make your charoset ahead of time (the day before your seder works well) so the mixture has time to oxidize and turn a darker color of brown.
- You will need to double this recipe if you are having two seders. You might want to consider doubling this recipe anyway because it is so yummy. My family loves charoset and they want to eat it throughout the holiday week of Unleavened Bread, not just at our seders. They typically eat some for breakfast (or a snack) on top of some matzah spread with peanut butter. So, I usually use 3-4 pounds of apples to make a big batch (and even that doesn't usually last the whole week).

## Directions

- For a finer and smoother consistency, you can put all of the ingredients into a food processor and blend to the consistency you like (as pictured here). Put in a storage container and keep in the refrigerator.
- For a chunkier consistency, instead of using a food processor, you can grate your apples, and chop the nuts and dates. Add the remaining ingredients to this mixture in a bowl and mix well. Put in a storage container and keep in the refrigerator.





# A QUESTION OF LEAVEN - WHAT IS IT AND WHAT IS IT NOT?

BY DARREN HUCKEY



Everyone knows that the Torah forbids the Children of Israel from eating leaven during the week of Passover. However, few people have ever studied the terminology to understand what exactly is forbidden and what is permitted during this time. Every year people ask, “What do I need to get rid of for Passover?” They ask about pasta, tortillas, crackers, corn chips, and more. They want to know about baking soda, baking powder, nutritional yeast, yeast extract, etc. Is this going overboard? Not at all. However, there is much confusion and misinformation in this area, and hopefully, this article can shed some light on all of the confusion and bring clarity to this topic. The goal is to have a Passover that is free of confusion. And with God’s help, we will work towards this end. First, let’s look at the biblical commandment for Passover and the week of Unleavened Bread:

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. (Exodus 12:15)

This English translation of our passage appears fairly straight forward. It seems that we need to get rid of anything that can act as a leavening agent. In fact, some translations even go so far as to insert the word “yeast,” in this passage rather than “leaven.” For most people, this means simply discarding any kind of yeast, baking soda, baking powder, etc. or anything that has been made with them. But is this really what the Torah instructs us?

An immediate question arises that involves a nagging problem that I could not figure out when I first began observing Passover: How can wine be permitted during Passover since wine is made from grapes that are fermented—with yeast? How could Yeshua and his disciples have had wine at their Last Seder? It’s only when I looked at the Hebrew terms behind this passage, that my understanding deepened. Let’s take a look together to discover the truth about this mystery.

## Three Hebrew Words

If we insert the original Hebrew terms back into our passage from above we will see three key words that we need to become familiar with:

Seven days you shall eat *matzot* ( מצות ). On the first day you shall remove *se’or* ( שאר ) out of your houses, for if anyone eats *chametz* ( חמץ ), from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. (Exodus 12:15)

The key words in this passage are *matzot* (singular: *matzah*), *se’or*, and *chametz*. Understanding these three words is critical to our ability to grasp the full meaning of this passage and its implications. From these three distinct words in this single verse we can understand three different instructions from the Torah:

1. We are to eat *matzah* for seven days.
2. We are to remove all *se’or* from our homes prior to Passover.
3. We are not to eat *chametz* for seven days.

The Torah forbids the eating of *chametz* (חמץ) on Passover and during the week of Unleavened Bread. Is this yeast? The Torah also forbids *se’or* (שאר) to be found within the homes of the Children of Israel as well. If so, then what is the difference between *chametz* and *se’or*?

To further our understanding, we need to explore each of these terms and see how they play into our understanding of each of these instructions from the Torah. And in order to understand this, we must first understand the bread-making process from ancient times until now. Let’s take a brief look at this fascinating process.

## A Brief History of Bread Making

Before the Middle Ages, bread was made entirely different than most breads today. Up until that time, bread made in the ancient world was what we could consider sourdough. Generally, in order to make bread rise, a person needed to have a sourdough starter on hand and add some of this into her dough. A sourdough starter is created with three ingredients: flour, water, and time. It is made simply by mixing flour and water and allowing it enough time to start fermenting. After a while, the starch in the flour begins to break down and become a host for a culture of naturally occurring yeasts and bacteria. The general rule is that it only takes 18 minutes for the process to begin. These microorganisms will then produce enough gas, in the form of carbon dioxide, in order to sufficiently leaven and flavor bread. Each time a person used some of the sourdough starter, she would add back a little flour and water into the starter in order to keep the fermentation process going, so that the starter would remain active. One thing we need to keep in mind is that although the sourdough mixture contains yeast, it is not yeast itself; it was simply made from flour and water. This will become important in our discussion shortly.

Today, most breads are made with active dry yeast, but it wasn’t until World War II that active dry yeast became available.

During the war, Fleischmann's developed a granulated active dry yeast for the U.S. armed forces that didn't require refrigeration, and this type of yeast has become the standard for bread making until today. But let's explore how bread was made up to this point.

The transformation of our baking culture from a sourdough culture to an active dry yeast one was a slow process that took place over many centuries. It began the transformation in the Middle Ages when European bread makers began using the barm (foam) leftover from the beer-making process to assist their bread-making. It generally produced bread that was more sweet than sour (when it turned out right) and thus became very popular. It wasn't until the turn of the nineteenth century that yeast slurries were created that provided dense concentrations of yeast to be added to bread dough. With technological developments, compressed yeast eventually developed, and a wet yeast cake became the standard for the baking industry in the Western world during the 20th century. Yeast cakes are still available today and used in some industries.

Now that we have a basic understanding of the history of bread making we can begin to understand the various terms that the Torah uses to describe the various instructions for *Chag HaMatzot* (The Festival of Unleavened Bread). But as we begin understanding these terms as they apply to Passover, we must realize that they only apply to the five grains that appear in the Torah: wheat, barley, oats, rye, and spelt. An easy mnemonic for remembering these five grains is the word [eye]BROWS: **B**arley / **R**ye / **O**ats / **W**heat / **S**pelt.

Although other grains may go through the same processes as described here, they do not have the same status as those found within the Torah.

Only these five grains mentioned here are in consideration when we speak of what is permissible or impermissible for the week of *Chag HaMatzot*. Now, we will take a look at each of these three terms beginning with se'or, because it is the most basic.

### Se'or

Our central passage instructs, "On the first day you shall remove se'or out of your houses" (Exodus 12:15). If we are supposed to remove all of the se'or from our homes, then we need to understand what it is. Since there is no explanation of se'or within the commandment, or any other portion of the biblical text for that matter, then it must be assumed that the Israelites coming out of Egypt would have understood this term without the need for any further clarification. It is only in our modern context that terms like se'or and *chametz* have been lost.

Although a few translations render se'or as yeast, almost all English translations render it as leaven. If we recall what we learned about bread making in ancient times we know that yeast is not an appropriate definition because yeast as an isolated baking ingredient did not exist until the modern era. A pinch of sourdough or a sourdough slurry was the principal ingredient added to a fresh batch of dough in order to begin the fermentation process that would produce enough gas in order to allow bread to rise.

In the passage we are examining, se'or is this sourdough starter. It is a combination of water and flour made from one of the five biblical grains that had been cultured long enough to contain live bacteria that had the ability to work its way into a batch of dough. The Apostolic Scriptures use the Greek equivalent to se'or (ζύμη) to describe this same process. Here are a few examples:

- It is like leaven (ζύμη) that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened. (Luke 13:21)
- Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven (ζύμη) leavens the whole lump? (1 Corinthians 5:6)
- And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven (ζύμη) of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. (Mark 8:15)

As we can see in these instances, "leaven" is something that has the potential to affect what it comes in contact with. In the minds of anyone in the ancient world this referred to a sourdough starter that was added to dough in order to make it rise.

### Chametz

If se'or is a fermented mixture of water and flour, then what is *chametz*? *Chametz* is basically food that contains se'or. Whereas se'or is the agent that introduces fermentation, *chametz* is what the se'or acts on. When se'or is added to a batch of dough or other foods, the result is *chametz*. Therefore, any kind of food product that contains one of the five grains that has had any water added for 18 minutes or longer before being cooked or baked is considered *chametz*.

Items that would potentially be considered *chametz* would be too extensive to list. However, a short list of *chametz* includes: cakes, cookies, pastas, breads, crackers, tortillas, pita chips, beer, and other alcoholic beverages made from distilled grains (bourbon, Irish whisky, Scotch, some brands of vodka). Our list also contains foods that include malt as an ingredient: malt vinegar, malted milk balls, malted drinks, etc. (malt is made from sprouted grain). We can also include anything that is battered such as onion rings, fried cheese, fried fish and other fried foods. Even things that are not obvious such as pre-milled flour (because grain is often sprayed with water and allowed to soak before milling), sprouted grains, bouillon cubes, some candies, certain chips, some (breaded) french fries, etc. could be considered *chametz* because they may contain grain products and water as added ingredients.

Another consideration is vinegar. The Hebrew word for vinegar is *chometz*, which is obviously from the same root as *chametz*. This is because vinegar is made through fermentation. And since vinegar can be made from a number of food sources, including wine, fruits, and grains, most authorities agree that vinegar and products made from vinegar (ketchup, mustard, salsas, salad dressings, etc.) should be discarded for Passover.

As we can see, our topic has quickly become extensive and complicated. In short, any food product that contains a mixture of grains and water outside of *matzah* specifically made to be kosher for Passover is essentially *chametz*.

### **Matzah**

*Matzah* that is kosher for Passover, however, is made with only two ingredients (flour and water) and must be cooked within 18 minutes of the water coming in contact with the flour so that there is no opportunity for fermentation to begin. There is also a stringent process by which the equipment, counters, etc. are all constantly cleaned to ensure there is no residual flour or dough from previous batches that could begin to ferment and then become mixed with new batches of dough. *Matzah* made from grains other than the five biblical grains are not to be used for Passover because they do not technically qualify as being *matzah*, especially in order to fulfill a biblical commandment.

### **Other Concerns**

Lastly, items like active dry yeast, nutritional yeast, yeast extract, baking soda, and baking powder are generally of no concern since they are not produced by combining flour and water. However, if there is any doubt, it is better to get rid of it and be wrong than to keep it and be wrong.

There are also considerations to take into account of Ashkenazi observance over Sephardic observance. According to Ashkenazi tradition, wheat-like food items such as rice, corn, lentils, soybeans, peas, etc. are classified as *kitniyot* (“legumes”) and fall under the same classification as the biblical grains during *Chag HaMatzot*. Therefore, the definition of *chametz* is extended in Ashkenazi traditions to include these items as well.



**Author's note:** This article should be considered merely informative and not halachic (legal) in nature. If you have any questions regarding specific food items, you should contact a halachic authority for a definitive ruling.

# THE RABBI'S SECRET MATZAH RECIPE-

## *A culinary odyssey*

Ever wondered what makes matzah so special? Is it an ancient secret ingredient or perhaps a mystical incantation whispered over the dough? Brace yourselves for the culinary revelation of the century, as we unveil the complex and arduous process behind this unleavened marvel.

### Ingredients:

- Kosher flour (shrouded in mystery..okay, not really)
- Water (not just any water, but the essence of hydration, blessed by the clouds themselves)

### Step 1: The Gathering

Begin your quest by venturing into the wilds to procure kosher flour. Legend has it that only the purest of grains, kissed by the morning dew and sung to by the birds, will do. Next, source your water. Some say the best water is drawn from a spring at midnight under a full moon, but we'll let you in on a little secret: tap water works too, as long as you whisper a polite thank you to the miracle of modern plumbing.

### Step 2: The Mixing

Now, under the watchful eye of the clock, combine these elements with the speed of a gazelle being chased by a lion. You have exactly 18 minutes to mix (some say also to bake) your matzah before it begins its forbidden journey toward becoming chametz. This step requires the precision of a surgeon and the agility of a ninja. No pressure.

### Step 3: The Rolling

Once mixed, channel your inner artisan and roll the dough thinner than a politician's promise. Achieving the perfect thickness requires the skill of a master craftsman and the patience of a saint. Any thicker, and you might as well be making pita bread.

### Step 4: The Baking

With the grace of a ballet dancer, slide your matzah into the oven, which must be as hot as the sands of the Negev Desert at high noon. Bake until it's dotted with the characteristic brown spots, signifying its readiness to fulfill its destiny.

### Step 5: The Eating

Congratulations! You have now created matzah that is not only kosher but imbued with the essence of tradition, humor, and a touch of rabbinical insight. Enjoy it with pride, knowing that you've participated in a ritual that connects us to our past and future.

Remember, while the process may seem as straightforward as mixing flour and water, it's the love, laughter, and community that truly make this matzah special.

May your Passover be filled with joy, and your matzah, well, edible.

*Disclaimer: No grains were harmed in the making of this recipe, and all levity is in good spirit, respecting the sacred tradition and Halacha of matzah preparation.*



I'm having some fun in this article, but if you're serious about learning about how matzah really comes to be, here is a link to an excellent and informative article from Orthodox Union: <https://oukosher.org/passover/articles/matzah-101/>

After you read this, you'll have a new appreciation what goes into your delicious holiday staple.

Happy baking ( or just eating ), and may your Passover be meaningful!



# TORAH ON TAP

BY MATT HENDERSON

One of the Bible study groups provided by Shalom Macon is “Torah on Tap” through Shalom@Home. I have the opportunity to meet with other men who have been on this walk longer than I have. This has led to other opportunities to not only improve my relationship with G-d, but to get to know others at Shalom Macon.

One of those opportunities was discovering Twerski on Prayer which is another work by Abraham Twerski, the author of *Lights Along the Way*, the book we are studying in Torah on Tap. This has been quite powerful for me because prayer is not something that comes easily for me.

I love studying His Word; I love reading the commentaries and trying to reverse engineer how the authors might have studied it to arrive at the conclusion they did. Prayer, however, is not like that for me. To be brutally honest, I treat conversation with HaShem like I treat family and friends. I am very reclusive and do not talk much, and that includes talking to G-d.

To remedy that, I started researching the Siddur--how it was and is used. I have since incorporated morning and evening prayers from the Siddur into my routine. Before I learned to pray with the Siddur, prayer was maybe five minutes in the morning. Thanks to Mussar studies, I am learning that the Siddur is not just repetition, but, to me, it is like bumper rails in bowling—a way to keep my mind straight so I can hit the mark and make a real connection with HaShem.



Now I wake up earlier in the morning to incorporate as much prayer as I can prior to my Bible study time. This men’s Bible study has been instrumental for my journey. This is only one aspect of Shalom Macon; I cannot wait to explore others!



# MEET THE CARE MINISTRY

**What We Do:** The Care Ministry is your haven for heartfelt support, offering prayers and words of encouragement for any challenges you face. Whether you're dealing with illness, family issues, workplace or school difficulties, or any concern big or small, we're here to join you in prayer confidentially.

**Your Importance:** Often, we hear hesitations like, “My problems are nothing compared to others,” but we believe every individual’s needs are unique and significant. You are important, and your needs matter deeply to us. We encourage you to reach out, allowing us the privilege of supporting you through prayer.

**Sharing Is Not a Burden:** Another concern is, “I don’t want to burden anyone with my requests.” To us, praying for you is neither a burden nor an inconvenience. It’s our duty and joy. By sharing, you’re not only allowing us to fulfill a commandment

but also to partake in the blessing that comes from supporting one another.

**Lifting Together:** When you share a prayer request, think of it not as passing your burden to us, but as allowing us to lift it with you towards our loving Abba. It’s about mourning, weeping, and rejoicing together, fostering a closer, supportive community within Shalom Macon.

**How to Reach Us:** Please direct your requests to [care@shalomacon.org](mailto:care@shalomacon.org), specifying if you wish for them to be public or remain private. To ensure no request is overlooked, even if shared on Shalom@Home, kindly email us directly. This helps us pray for you without delay, offer words of encouragement, and keep in touch for any follow-up.

**Mi Sheberach List:** If you or someone you know is on our prayer list for healing, please keep us updated. Regular updates help us maintain a connection and pray more effectively for you.

**A Message from Care Ministry leader Elizabeth Williams who states,** “Thank you for allowing me the privilege of leading the ministry. It is a wonderful joy for me to be serving the Shalom Macon community in this capacity. I look forward to hearing from you and getting to know you. I love this community and am excited for us to grow together and get closer as a family. Many blessings to you all!”



# BE BUILDERS NOT BYSTANDERS

## WHAT ARE WE BUILDING?

Shalom Macon transcends physical boundaries as a global gathering space. Individuals from diverse corners of the world unite in a shared journey of faith and fellowship. Through the power of technology, our community extends beyond geographical constraints, offering an in-person and online home where people connect for prayer, celebration, mutual support, corporate worship, and joyful connection.

A few months ago, Rabbi Damian shared his vision called “Builders, Not Bystanders”. In the teaching Rabbi explains what Shalom Macon is building: lives, community, connection, hope, understanding, and the facility to help make this happen. The DNA of Shalom Macon is made up of five pillars:

- TRANSFORMATION
- SERVICE
- EDUCATION
- COMMUNITY
- EXPLORATION

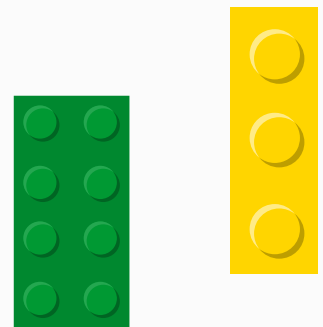


Shalom Macon is undertaking some remodeling of current facilities to enable us to serve our growing congregation in Macon as well as our online community who travel to be with us for the High Holy Days or just come to visit.

You can see some 3D renderings of the remodeling needed to accommodate and serve your community at **Shalomacon/build**. The link below will take you to the “Builders, Not Bystanders” teaching. You can also read more about what the five pillars mean to Shalom Macon.

Learn about the vision, check out the information provided, and become a Builder, not a Bystander! Click on “Donate” to be a part of making this vision become a reality!

Thank you for being a Builder!



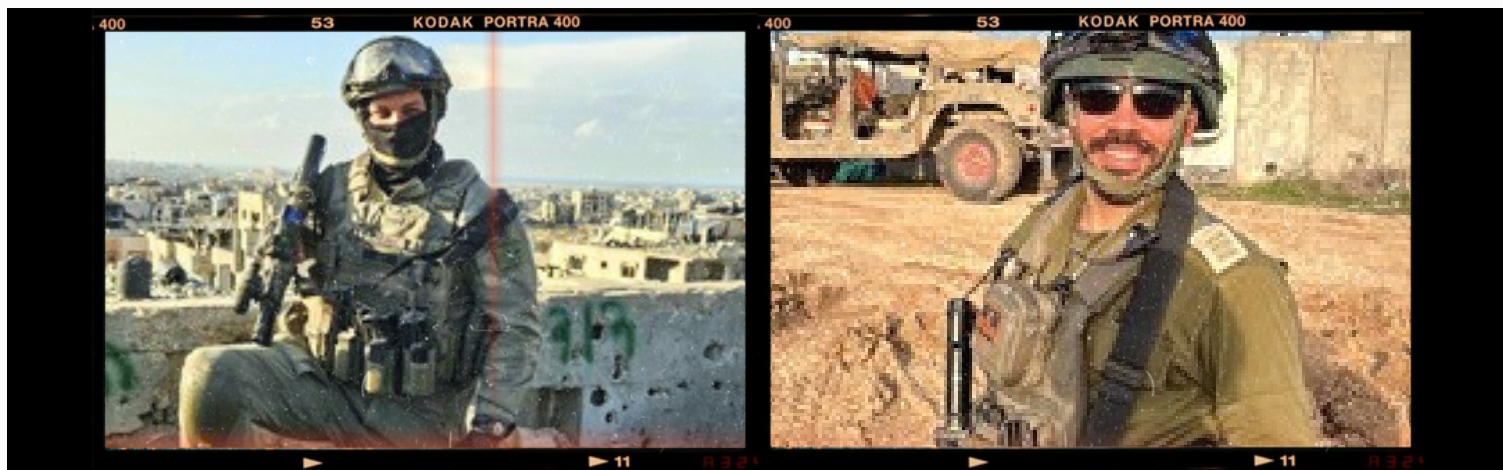
# DID YOU KNOW?



**Shalomies have donated almost \$40,000 for Israel aid! Most has been donated to charities; however, about \$15,000 is set aside to be used specifically for the IDF. To date, \$7,000 of that amount has been used to purchase new combat boots and uniforms for the IDF combat units on the ground in Gaza.**

Our good friend, Judi Seidner is a logistics operator in the IDF reserves and has helped to facilitate the purchase and delivery of these items. The soldiers are very grateful for the new items and feel the love and support from us Shalomies here in the states and around the world who donated to the Israel aid fund. Here are pictures of some of the soldiers with their new boots and uniforms.









**Judi Seidner, our liaison with the IDF in Israel, writes:**

Thank you so much for the tactical uniforms! For real, it's not obvious that you'd help us—we thank you from our whole hearts! We love you guys! Because of you all, we have proper uniforms. We're ready, and G-d willing, together we will win!

