

*All About*  
**FIRST FRUITS**

*Recipes  
Inside!*



A step-by-step guide  
to understanding and honoring the First  
Fruits offering and Messiah's resurrection

FROM  
**LAMED VAV HOUSE**  
MESSIANIC JEWISH PUBLISHING

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## How It All Began

The Biblical festival of First Fruits falls the day after the first Shabbat of the festival of Unleavened Bread. While some might contend that it is always the first Sunday after Passover, it is generally interpreted by the sages who were knowledgeable in both Hebrew and the context of Torah that it was to be commemorated as the second day of the Unleavened Bread festival.

This festival commemorates the first fruits harvest of Israel, an agricultural society. Like the firstborn among them, the first fruits of the harvest belonged to HaShem. It was given to the people of Israel as a holiday to celebrate the first fruits of their harvests. It was not to be celebrated until the Israelites entered the promised land because they were previously wandering the desert for 40 years.

First Fruits is a festival within a festival (Leviticus 23:9-14). Today in Israel, you can find farmers celebrating with feasting and dancing in their fields into the night.



*Leviticus 23:10-11*

"After you enter the land I am giving you and harvest its ripe crops, you are to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the cohen. He is to wave the sheaf before Adonai, so that you will be accepted; the cohen is to wave it on the day after the Shabbat"

# First Fruits in the Bible

Israel entered the Promised Land and ate from its fruits.

Joshua 5:10-12

*The people of Isra'el camped at Gilgal, and they observed Pesach on the fourteenth day of the month, there on the plains of Yericho. The day after Pesach, they ate what the land produced, matzah and roasted ears of grain that day. The following day, after they had eaten food produced in the land, the manna ended. From then on the people of Isra'el no longer had manna; instead, that year, they ate the produce of the land of Ken'an.*

The beginning of the march that fell the walls of Jericho.

Joshua 5:13

*One day, when Y'hoshua was there by Yericho, he raised his eyes and looked and in front of him stood a man with his drawn sword in his hand. Y'hoshua went over to him and asked him, "Are you on our side or on the side of our enemies?"*

The cleansing of the Temple by Hezekiah.

2 Chronicles 29:1-28

Hizkiyahu was twenty-five years old when he began his reign, and he ruled for twenty-nine years in Yerushalayim. His mother's name was Aviyah the daughter of Z'kharyah. He did what was right from Adonai's perspective, following the example of everything David his ancestor had done. In the first month of the first year of his reign, he reopened the doors of the house of Adonai and repaired them. Then he brought in the cohanim and L'vi'im, assembled them in the open space of the east, and said to them, "Listen to me, L'vi'im: consecrate yourselves now, the house of Adonai the God of your ancestors, and remove the filth from the Holy Place.....Then the L'vi'im set about the task.....They began consecrating on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they reached the vestibule of Adonai. Then they consecrated the house of Adonai in eight more days; so that on the sixteenth day of the first month they had finished.....Hizkiyahu ordered that the burnt offering should be offered on the altar. The moment the burnt offering began, the song of Adonai also began, accompanied by the trumpets and the instruments of David king of Isra'el. The whole assembly prostrated themselves, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.

## First Fruits in the Bible (cont.)

Queen Esther saves her people from annihilation.

Esther 3:12; 5:1

The king's secretaries were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month. They wrote down all Haman's orders to the king's army commanders and governors in all the provinces and to the officials of every people, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language; everything was written in the name of King Achashverosh and sealed with the king's signet ring.

On the third day, Ester put on her royal robes and stood in the inner courtyard of the king's palace, opposite the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the king's hall, across from the entrance to the hall.

The resurrection of Yeshua.

John 20:1, 1 Corinthians 15:20-21

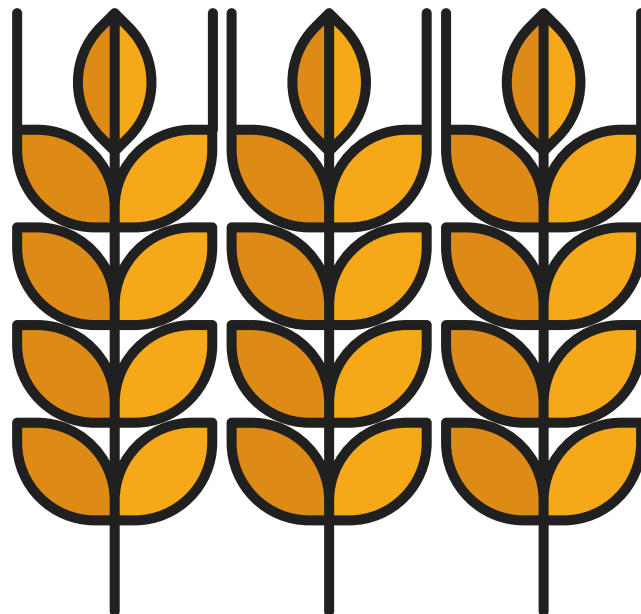
*Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Miryam from Magdala went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.*

*But the fact is that the Messiah has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died. For since death came through a man, also the resurrection of the dead has come through a man.*



## Traditions to Commemorate

1. Eat foods with barley.
2. Read and discuss Leviticus 23: 9-14; Luke 24: 1-49; 1 Corinthians 15.
3. Buy a Rose of Jericho/ Resurrection Plant.
4. Count the first day of the Omer.



# Yeshua: First Fruits of the Resurrection

In the messianic movement, we have learned to fully remember the death of Yeshua. We do it in the backdrop of our Passover seder on the 14th of Nissan. As believers, we should give equal, if not greater attention to the 16th of Nissan, the Feast of Firstfruits, or *Bikurim* in Hebrew, a word derivative from the word *bekohr*, firstborn."

It is no coincidence that Yeshua resurrected and appeared to the women at the tomb, to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and at night at their house, on that very day of the festival of Firstfruits. Paul makes allusion to the significance of this Jewish festival of Firstfruits/*Bikurim* as the day of the resurrection as he alludes to Yeshua Himself being the "Firstfruits/*Bikurim*" of those who are raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20). Indeed, Matthew also informs us that Yeshua's resurrection was immediately followed by a first batch of resurrectees (Matthew 27:52-53).



## Yeshua: First Fruits of the Resurrection (cont.)

Can you imagine being a disciple in those days? You had left everything behind to follow this perfect stranger and all of a sudden, he dies. What do you do now? That seder without Yeshua must have been the saddest seder ever. But can you also imagine their joy later when Yeshua was found to be resurrected? Wouldn't it be something you would want to remember every year as an added element to the celebration of the Feast of First Fruits?

The 16th of Nissan, the third day (Luke 24:45-46) after the crucifixion, fits so well. It is the day when the priest lifts an omer of barley from the earth as an offering to God representing the whole barley harvest of the Land, something Moshe commanded Israel to do (Leviticus 23:9-14).

Paul, the apostle, rightly called Yeshua the "Firstfruit" of those who rise from the dead. And in "rising from the dead", we are not talking about resuscitation, like Lazarus or the others raised by Elijah and Elisha. But a resurrection into a new heavenly body that we will receive at the final resurrection from the dead; a body like Yeshua, made of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39).

As the first person to rise from the dead in the glorious resurrected body, a body like that of Adam and Eve before the fall, Yeshua offers us the hope of the resurrection from the dead.



# Spiritual Thoughts...

## Going to Heaven or Resurrection?

When people speak of “salvation,” they often think of “going to Heaven.” It makes it sound as if Heaven is a planet somewhere far away. I, for one, believe that no one goes to heaven. Shocked? It’s quite simple: Heaven comes to us at the end of the Messianic Age, a time when the elect will live on earth in their resurrected bodies. You see, the great hope and expectation of the Jewish people is not to go to a place called “Heaven”. They are looking forward to the restoration of the Garden of Eden, a time when Adonai once walked the earth in the company of mankind, unadulterated by sin. And he will again.

The stories of the Bible tell us about the hope of the resurrection. We just have to look for them with the right lenses. This is what I hope to do in the next few articles.

## Purim, First Fruits, and Resurrection

About three weeks ago, the feast of Purim introduced us to the season of Passover. These two indeed have a lot in common. Both stories tell us of a miracle HaShem performs in rescuing His people from a ruthless enemy, but they also tell us of the great hope of the Jewish people: Resurrection at the end of days.

“How does the story of Purim tell us of resurrection?”

By a twist of fate, Esther, a young Jewish maiden, a captive from the tribe of Judah, finds herself marrying the Persian Emperor, Ahasuerus. To do so, she has to hide her identity as a Jewess.

## Spiritual Thoughts...(cont.)

The time comes when Esther's people, the Jewish people, are threatened by extermination. She has to do something. At the behest of her uncle Mordechai, and the possible cost of her life, she decides to shed her concealment to go see the king. "If I perish, I perish," she says. Because she hadn't been invited, she should have been presumed dead upon arrival in the court of the king. But what happened? The king lowered his scepter, thus giving her her life back and allowing her to save her people. What a beautiful example of resurrection that leads us three weeks later to Pesach, the time of the death and resurrection of our dear Messiah, who sheds His sacrificial lamb concealment to reveal Himself to humanity.

### The Resurrection of Isacc (Pirkei Rabbi Eliezer 31:10)

In the Talmud, Isaac is often represented as a foreshadowing of Messiah. He is the middle matzah, which becomes the Afikomen of the Passover seder. After all, didn't he, like our Master, climb the same mountain range carrying the wood of his own sacrifice at the will of his father? We know the story: Abraham has a revelation from HaShem that he needs to take his only son, whom HaShem gave him, and offer him as a sacrifice on Mt Moriah. At the moment that Abraham gets ready to kill his only beloved son, a ram appears and an angel tells him to kill the ram instead.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews adds a particular twist to the story. It says, "...accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Hebrews 11:19 KJV). The Greek word for "figure" is "parable." What parable was he

## Spiritual Thoughts...(cont.)

talking about?

There is a Jewish lore, a parable in Judaism, that teaches that when Abraham lowered his knife on Isaac's throat, life temporarily left Isaac and returned, thus Isaac



died and resurrected. The writer of Hebrews, who seems very knowledgeable of everything Jewish, would have known this parable and could have been alluding to it.

Furthermore, when Abraham and Isaac arrived at Mt. Moriah, Abraham said to the young men with him, "Stay here with the donkey. I and the boy will go there, worship and return to you" (Genesis 22:5 CJB).

Hebrew grammar, which is more gender and number sensitive than English, does imply to say "WE will return." Why would Abraham say that when he knew very well what he was going to do on the mountain?

"Nevertheless, so Abraham returned to his young men" (Genesis 22:19 CJB). Abraham returns ALONE! Where is Isaac? The sages say that he went to learn Torah from HaShem. This part of the story is not in the Bible, but it corresponds exactly to our Messiah who carried His own wood on that mountain range, to be sacrificed and resurrected and who now sits at the right hand of the Almighty! Resurrection is our hope!

# Hope Can Resurrect a Life—Even a Nation

Life is a test. Life is hard. Life is a constant fight against death.

Life can leave us disillusioned and in a state where we feel that, at the end of our days, we've missed it all and have lost every possibility, even to a second chance.

Life eventually brings us to death, not just physical death, as that is the least of all deaths, but the death of our hopes; the death of our dreams; even the death of our most sublime ambitions.

What do we do then?

The Jewish anthem is called : Hatikvah: The Hope. This anthem is the anthem of a people who through hope, the "Hope of 2,000 years," have resurrected a country, a language, a culture, and a destiny.

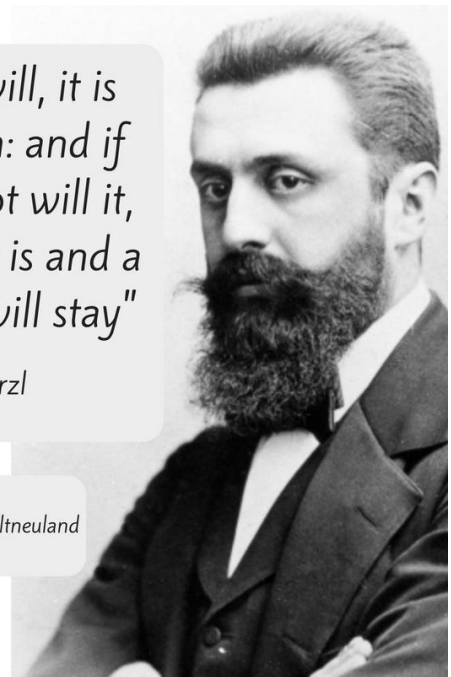
What does this teach us?

*"If you will, it is no dream: and if you do not will it, a dream it is and a dream it will stay"*

*-Theodore Herzl*



Altneuland



# Hope Can Resurrect a Life—Even a Nation (cont.)

Hope can restore what we've missed; can return the lost opportunities; can offer a second chance. Hope can resurrect us not just from mere physical death, but it can resurrect our hopes, it can resurrect our dreams, and even our most sublime ambitions.

And where does that resurrecting hope come from? Peter tries to encourage the persecuted congregation in Rome with "Hope":

Praised be God, Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who, in keeping with his great mercy, has caused us, through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from the dead, to be born again to a living hope" 1Pe\_1:3  
"Through him you trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory; so that your trust and hope are in God. 1 Peter 1:21

After a devastating ordeal, Job put his trust in the Living God, "The poor can hope again; and injustice shuts its mouth," he says in Job 5:16. Also, "You will be confident, because there is hope; you will look around you and lie down secure" (Job 11:18).

Job's hope was based on the final resurrection:

But I know that my Redeemer lives, that in the end he will rise on the dust; so that after my skin has been thus destroyed, then even without my flesh, I will see God. I will see him for myself, my eyes, not someone else's, will behold him. Job 19:25-27 CJB

# Hope Can Resurrect a Life—Even a Nation (cont.)

So should ours be, as Peter exhorted us, “Praised be God, Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who, in keeping with his great mercy, has caused us, through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from the dead, to be born again to a living hope” (1 Peter 1:3)

## The Return of the Jew—di!

At different times and in different ways, people around the world recently celebrated the resurrection of Yeshua. There is no greater prophetic advent of resurrection than that of the dead bones prophecy in Ezekiel 37.

*The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.” So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath,*

## The Return of the Jew–di! (cont.)

*and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.’ Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.” Ezekiel 37:1-14 ESV*

In that oracle, Ezekiel sees an Israel having lost all senses of religious, national, and cultural identity. It seemed that those who had vowed it’s destruction and annihilation had won. It certainly seemed that the Roman exile, which lasted 2,000 years, won over the people of the Book, the people of God. But lo and behold, as Ezekiel saw it, in the middle of the twentieth century, the country, its language and culture, were resurrected from the ashes of the Holocaust of World War II.

Today, those who still wish for Israel's annihilation may need a short history lesson.

## The Return of the Jew–di! (cont.)

A few months ago, we celebrated Chanukah, the time when we remember when one man, a Greco–Syrian king, tried to subvert God’s plan for the redemption of humanity by prohibiting Jews from worshiping God, the God of heaven and earth, according to the way he told them to. It failed! You can read the story in the Book of Maccabees.

Some weeks ago, we celebrated Purim, a story that tells us about a wicked man, wicked Haman, who also tried to subvert God’s plan for the redemption of humanity, by engaging his whole country as an unholy army to annihilate all of Israel. It failed! You can read the story in the Book of Esther.

Soon, we will celebrate Passover, the story of another wicked king Pharaoh, from Egypt, who also tried to subvert God’s plan for the redemption of humanity, by forcing the Jews into slavery, to build his cities, and drowning all their baby boys in the Nile River. It failed. You can read the story in the Book of Exodus.

Less than 100 years ago, a man, a very wicked man named Adolph Hitler, also tried to subvert God’s plan for the redemption of humanity, by committing genocide against the Jewish people. It failed. You can read the story in history books.

Today, there is another entity, a new baby–killing pharaoh, a new genocide–committing Haman, and a new Antiochus Epiphanes. Hamas, who has vowed the destruction of Israel by any means possible. It will fail. And we will read the story in history books in the future.



## The Return of the Jew–di! (cont.)

The story of Israel is one where persecution provokes its growth despite those who try to annihilate it.

It is a story of modern-day miracles.

All these people who call for the destruction of Israel need to remember that even though conquered, God is able to resurrect them, as is shown in the prophecy in Ezekiel 37.

## Blessings for First Fruits

Wave a sheaf of barley and recite Leviticus 23:9-14 and the blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא מִיְי מְזוֹנוֹת

*Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam borei minei mezonot.*

Blessed are you Adonai our God, King of the Universe, Who creates various kinds of sustenance.

Then say: "On this very day, HaShem rose Yeshua from the dead, the Firstfruit of the redeemed from all humanity," and recite 1 Peter 1:3 as a blessing.



# Lamb Barley Ragout

from Audrey Eaves

## Ingredients:

- 1.5 lbs lamb stew meat (or beef)
- 8 oz small/med tomatoes, peeled and diced
- 8 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 4 crushed garlic cloves
- 1 lime
- 1 lemon
- 2 red bell peppers
- 2 green bell peppers
- 1 Tbsp Paella spice blend, plus one pinch of saffron, soaked in 1/2 C of water
- 3/4 C pearl barley
- Salt & pepper
- Parsley



Begin by browning the pieces of lamb in olive oil in a pot, Then, add salt and pepper and the barley, with about 4 cups of water and cover. Simmer on low for 30 minutes. Add the tomatoes, onion, garlic, and the saffron water. Simmer for 15 minutes.

Peel the lime and lemon and julienne the peel into strips. Blanch in a pot of boiling water for about 10 minutes and drain well. Julienne the bell peppers and add them, with the lemon and lime strips, to the pot. Simmer another 5 minutes. Garnish with parsley and serve!

# Barley Cakes

## from The Biblical Nutritionist

### Ingredients:

#### *Dry Ingredients*

- 1 1/2 Cups Barley Flour freshly milled
- 1/2 Cup Whole Wheat Flour hard white or spelt - freshly milled
- 1 Teaspoon Baking Powder aluminum free
- 1/2 Teaspoon Real salt

#### *Wet Ingredients*

- 1 Cup Milk your favorite variety
- 1 Egg from a local farmer, if possible!
- 1 Cup Honey amount can be reduced

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
2. Mix together dry ingredients.
3. Mix together wet ingredients.
4. Combine and mix together both dry and wet ingredients.
5. Oil a muffin tin or use muffin liners.
6. Drop by spoonful into prepared muffin tin.
7. Bake for 10-15 minutes. Cakes will be light brown when done.



## ABOUT LAMED VAV HOUSE

Lamed Vav House is a new publishing house promoting messianic Judaism in the context of biblical learning and righteous living.

Much like Roman numerals, Hebrew letters have numerical values. Lamed “ל” has a value of 30; vav, “ו” has a value of 6. Therefore, lamed and vav together equal 36. There is a beautiful Jewish legend that says that at any time on the earth, there are 36 righteous people for the sake of whom HaShem does not destroy the world for its sins. Whether it is true or not, we believe that as much as HaShem is aware of the sin of people, he also adds into his scales of justice all the incredible good done by people of integrity.

This “goodness” is not necessarily based on religious ritual observance, civic obedience, or outward shows of charity, but the type of lifestyle King Solomon may have referred to when he said, “Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find? The righteous who walks in his integrity—blessed are his children after him” (Proverbs 20:6-7, ESV). Lamed Vav House seeks to promote this lifestyle through both fiction and non-fiction genres.

There are ways that you can help us establish the Kingdom of HaShem on earth as it is in heaven; one of those is by promoting materials that encourage people to live and walk in the integrity of their discipleship to Rabbi Yeshua. You can also submit your manuscript for us to consider, promote us on social media, pray for us, or donate to help build the Kingdom of HaShem through literature.

Visit us at [www.lamedvavhouse.com](http://www.lamedvavhouse.com) to learn more.



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