

# “The Threshold Covenant & Yahweh’s Passover”

## PART ONE

### Sabbath Workshop 1/6/07

**Reference Book:** “The Threshold Covenant” by H. Clay Trumbull

If you see a picture of a woman being carried across the threshold by a man you immediately make the connection that they have recently married. What does being carried over the threshold represent and how did it originate? Most of all, why is that particular symbolism important and how does it relate to Yahweh’s Passover? Let’s take a look and see.

## I. The Family Altar

An altar is the place where covenantal sacrifice is made. The threshold to the door has long since been a type of family altar, before temples and other buildings of worship were erected, there was the husband as priest of the home and the dwelling place (your home and your heart) as the sanctuary of Yahweh. Sacrifices for the family took place either within the home or at the door. Ancient beliefs and superstitions have surfaced as a result.

- **Syria & Egypt** = When a newcomer arrives the blood of a slaughtered animal is shed upon the threshold of that home. In this way, when the newcomer crosses over the threshold they are adopted into that family. Usually such sacrifices include prayer.

When you cross the threshold of a home, you imply covenant with those who live within that home. Entering the house any other way brands you as a thief.

- **Liberia, West Africa** = Common custom among the tribes is to kill a fowl and sprinkle blood upon the threshold upon the arrival of strangers.
- **Russia** = An honored guest is received with bread and salt after he or she crosses the threshold. A man always crosses himself upon stepping over the threshold and sitting upon the threshold is forbidden.

To step on the threshold rather than over it is to show contempt for the host and is extremely bad etiquette. The threshold is often revered as sacred. In Arabia it is common to say ‘Bismillah’, which means “In the Name of Yahweh.” upon crossing the threshold of a home.

- **Finland**= In Finland, homes are built with very high sills or thresholds. This is to make sure that one steps over not on the threshold.

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- **Ireland**= On November 11<sup>th</sup> every village family sacrifices an animal, places the blood upon the threshold “to exclude evil spirits from the house”.
- **Alaska**= It is considered an evil omen for the dead to be carried over the threshold. Therefore, when someone dies their body is carried out through a hole in the rear wall. Although the dead isn't allowed to be carried over the threshold, they are often buried under it as certain churches throughout Europe have done in honor of certain people.

With regard to the wedding ceremony ancient customs throughout the world dictate that sacrificial blood must be placed upon the threshold to the home. Upon crossing the threshold the new bride is adopted into the husband's family. This customs prevails even until today. In America the bride is often carried across the threshold. However, ancient customs reveal that some brides were carried and some crossed over on their own. Our modern custom is steeped in Hinduism. According to the sacrificial rules of Hindoo literature (the Vedic Sutras) the bride “must cross the threshold with the right foot first and grains of rice are poured on the heads of the bridegroom and his bride.”

Another ancient custom of America, England, and Ireland is for the bride and bridegroom to be carried across the threshold on the shoulders of the elders and placed upon their bridal bed.

Marriages in Abyssinia are commonly held at the doorway of the church. The wedding covenant is made at the threshold altar. African Americans have a custom of “jumping the broom” to seal the wedding covenant. The broom creates a make-shift threshold and jumping it symbolizes the new couple entering into a new life together. This custom was revived during slavery when the right to marriage was taken away from African Americans.

To cross over a threshold and not hold to the highest laws of hospitality is to subject yourself to Yahweh's wrath. **“And I shall punish on that day all who leap over the threshold, who fill their master's house with violence and deceit.”** (Zephaniah 1:9)

## II. The Threshold & The Cornerstone

The words “threshold” and “cornerstone” are often used interchangeably. In ancient Egypt the door to a home was placed at the side or end of the front wall and not in the center. In this way the door was not only the threshold **but also the cornerstone**. In New England the doors are placed at the far left of the front wall.

Artifacts, idols, sacrifices, and sometimes people are buried under the threshold. In Sweden, Christian churches often bury a sacrificed lamb under the threshold. Ancient Rome commonly used statues and images rather than living people. There is an instance in Rome where a perfectly preserved statue was

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unearthed during the reconstruction of a convent. By order of the monks, it was re-buried. According to ancient superstition, whatever is placed under the threshold is essential to the stability of the structure.

Yahshua said "I am the Door: by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." (John 10:9)

"So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the set apart ones and members of the household of Elohim, having been build upon the foundation of the emissaries and prophets, Yahshua Himself being Chief Cornerstone." (Ephesians 2:19-20)

"Having put aside then all evil and all deceit and hypocrisies, and envyings, and all evil worlds, as newborn babes desire the unadulterated milk of the Word in order that you may grow by it, if indeed you have tasted that the Master is good. Drawing near to Him, a living Stone - rejected indeed by men, but chosen by Elohim and precious - you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a set apart priesthood, to offer up spiritual slaughter offerings acceptable to Elohim through Yahshua Messiah. Because it is contained in the Scripture 'See, I lay in Tsiyon a Chief Cornerstone chosen, precious, and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame.'" (1 Peter 2:1-6)

We see in the above passages that Yahshua is establishing Himself as the threshold and cornerstone.

### III. Favor & Forgiveness At The Altar

The altar is usually the centerpiece for worship. Appeals for forgiveness and protection is often sought at the altar. In India, there is an ancient tradition that if one wishes to obtain justice from another they would sit at the door of the person's house who wronged him and not move until he or she starved to death. If the repentant one died, his or her blood would cry out against the one who wronged him. In the Old Covenant we often read of people "grabbing hold to the horns of the altar" for protection.

**Biblical illustrations of this idea:** Exodus 32:26, Judges 19:25-30, Ruth 4:1-10, & Genesis 22:17, Matthew 16:18, Isaiah 24:12.

### IV. Doorway Tokens

The side posts of the doorway is commonly used to write inscriptions, prayers, or testimony regarding the deity of the dwelling place. Blood poured out upon the threshold was also used to mark the side posts of the doorway. Over time, other symbols for blood and life came into use to mark the side posts of the doorway.

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Ancient Egypt had a custom of inscribing the owner's name and a sentence over the entrance of the house to invoke good luck. China to this day have coins put under the door sill at the time when it is built. They also attach charms above the doorway and write inscriptions on the side posts. Similar customs were in use throughout the world when Yahweh commanded Israel to write the commands upon the doorposts of the house and upon the gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 & 11:13-21). Orthodox Jews commonly use a mezuzah (a small cylinder containing a small inscribed scroll) fixed somewhere on the door posts. The Hebrew word mezuzah means doorpost.

### V. The Red Hand

Another common symbol found on doorposts is that of a hand dipped in sacrificial blood. This hand was representative of a binding covenant with a deity. This symbol is often found in Jerusalem signifying the mighty hand of Yahweh. The hand is commonly drawn on the arch of the door. There is mysticism accompanied with this symbol. Often Jewish people cloak the symbolism of the hand with superstition - believing the hand will help them avoid the 'evil eye'.

The correlation to the red hand and its symbolic meaning is illustrated in scripture. We are often admonished to lift up our hands to Yahweh (signifying our surrender to a covenant relationship with Him). Yahweh Himself states in Isaiah 49:22 "I will lift up my hand to the nations". In other words - I will covenant with them.

Today this practice survives in our courtrooms when we are asked to raise our right hand and place our left hand on a Bible to swear an oath (enter covenant).

The hand also symbolizes the strength of the deity. This thought is also illustrated in Scripture when Yahweh is often described as having "a strong hand".

Let us not forget another very important Scriptural illustration of this point - the laying on of hands to symbolically transfer the strength and power of the Ruach (Spirit) in addition to confirming a covenant relationship. We are carefully warned to not enter into covenant (lay hands on one) quickly.

Certain ancient customs also dictate that formal documents must be signed with a hand or finger stamped in blood or ink.

### VI. Doorway Deities

Adam and Eve worshiped Yahweh. Their threshold offerings were for Him. Over time as paganism crept in, different idols (demons) were assigned to guard the thresholds. Here is where the idea of

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having giant statues of lions and other creatures guarding either side of an entranceway came from. Be very careful of any symbols placed on or around the doorway to your home or you may unknowingly consecrate your dwelling place as a heathen temple. Commonly used decorations such as wreaths are symbols dedicated to idols. **The fireplace hearth is also a threshold, be very careful of what you place upon the mantle.**

### VII. Altars In The Temple

A temple is a house solely dedicated to a specific deity or deities. In temples, the same truths with regard to the threshold covenant apply. Often in a temple, the doorway represents the temple itself and then you find an altar at or near the door representing the threshold. The most primitive temple was simply a doorway above an altar at the threshold. Is it no accident that when Yahweh gave the instructions for the Tabernacle he placed the altar right at the door of the tent.

Yahshua stated that He is the door, when you cross the threshold (enter into covenant with Him) you are saved.



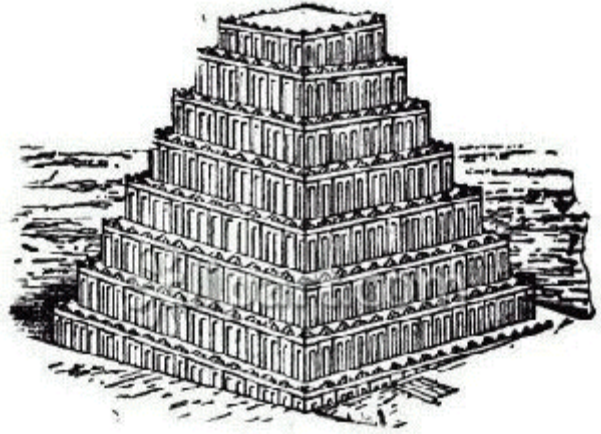
### Jacob's 'Ladder' = Scripture Reading Genesis 28:10-22

Further study of the familiar story of Jacob's vision reveals even more truth. Many early temples in Babylon, Egypt, Mexico, Peru, Central America, Mesopotamia, and the South Sea Islands were in the shape of a stepped pyramid, or a staged tower with stairways leading up to the summit. At the summit was an altar. These temples (also called ziggurats) were often dedicated to idols. In Jacob's

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vision (Genesis 28:10-22) he sees what is commonly translated as ladder. The word “sullam” is translated as ladder. It is a form of the Hebrew word “salal” which means “to raise up in a pile”, or “to exalt by heaping up as in the construction of a mound or highway.” After recognizing the place as the “gate of heaven” he set up the stone as an altar at its threshold.



(Image courtesy of clipart.com)

### **\*Origin of Tombstone / Burial Monuments \***

Swinging doors and gates are a religious symbol in ancient Babylonia. It symbolized the sun deity making his daily rounds of the heavens. The doorway is representative as a shrine for the deity. In ancient Egypt a false door was represented in tombs. This false door was to be pointed toward the west because the deity Osiris (deity of the underworld) was supposed to enter this realm as the sun went down. On or around the false door were written memorials or inscriptions and prayers for the dead. Before it was a table or altar for the soul of the dead. This false door became to be recognized as tombstones or burial monuments. The altar is commonly used for flowers or other artifacts for the soul of the dead.

At the beginning of the Middle Empire the false door form gradually rounded off at the top forming the tombstones that we use to this day. Think about how graves are revered to this day. On October 31<sup>st</sup> pagans flock to graveyards and beckon the spirits of the dead. Even something which seems minor or innocent such as placing flowers upon a grave, marking a tombstone, or praying at the burial site is actually the worship of Osiris (the deity of the underworld)!



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Unknowingly, billions of people have ignorantly covenanted with the deity of the underworld through our modern but ancient burial customs. Also think about how graveyards were traditionally a part of church backyards!

### *Midrash Point*

\*Something to think about... In death during our burials, do we actually covenant with the 'other side' by crossing the threshold of the door (tombstone) which is dedicated to Osiris? If so, how is this rectified? If not, how do you explain what just happened in the spirit (crossing the threshold of a pagan altar) ???\*

I found a single cremation in Scripture. Saul was cremated and his story is in 1 Samuel 31:8-13.

### **Sacred Ground & Boundary Lines**

Ancient belief dictates that a private landmark was a sacred boundary and was a threshold altar for its possessor. To remove or destroy a boundary line is to insult the owner and the deity in whose name it was set up. This is why Scripture commands that we not remove our neighbors landmark. (Deut. 19:14, Proverbs 22:28 & 23:10) A curse was placed upon those who removed their neighbors landmark. (Deut. 27:17) Boundary lines were also a token of a covenant.

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 21:22-33, & 31:43-53**

## **Yahweh's Passover**

**Scripture Reading ~ Exodus 12:1-14**

When Yahweh instituted the rite of Passover (Pesach) He didn't invent a new idea. He took a truth that they were already familiar with and restored its proper use. When the announcement came that this would be "Yahweh's Passover", the people already knew by the terminology to prepare the threshold covenant welcome for Yahweh! Notice that Father simply stated to prepare the sacrifice on the fourteenth day. He didn't state where to sacrifice the lamb and **the instructions for the Tabernacle had not yet been given! This slaughter offering took place on the threshold of every Israelite home.**

Until recently, I've always taken the words "pass over" to represent our meaning of pass over. I've envisioned the Spirit of Yahweh passing over the door or around the door or simply passing by the house altogether. But now, after obtaining this truth I understand that it means that Yahweh **passed over** the threshold and entered the home as a member of the family where the threshold covenant had

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been prepared for Him. The firstborn of all families who did not prepare, perished in His wrath.

### Scripture Reading ~ Exodus 12:21-27

The word basin in our Scriptures is translated as such from the Hebrew word “saph” which means threshold. This word appears many times in the Old Covenant but is often translated as “door” or “doorpost”. The word “door” in verse 23 comes from the Hebrew word “pethach” which means “opening”. Yahweh has literally stated that where the threshold covenant has been prepared for Him, He will pass through the opening of the doorway otherwise known as the threshold.

Passover is a renewing of the covenant. The word Passover is derived from the Hebrew word “pesach” which means to “cross over”. **Yahweh's Passover is when Yahweh crossed over the threshold of homes that had prepared the threshold covenant welcome for Him. He did not pass by them in order to prevent their destruction.**

He has asked us to mark beginning of each year with this feast - a renewing of His covenant.

According to **Jewish tradition** (this is another midrash point), it was on passover night when Yahweh entered into a threshold covenant with Abraham on the boundary of his new possessions in Canaan (Gen. 15:1-21). It was a passover night when Lot welcomed the angel visitors into his home in Sodom. It was passover when the Israelites crossed the threshold of their new home in Canaan and the walls of Jericho fell. It was also a passover night when Rahab covenanted with the Hebrew spies and thus was welcomed into the family of Israel.

Contemporary Passover Haggadah's (order of service) often include a part where an extra place setting is made and the “door is opened to welcome the spirit of EliYah”. This symbolizes the threshold covenant.

## The Wedding Of Yahweh & Israel

Remember the threshold covenant was the primary way that people married in ancient times. So the rite of pass over or threshold covenanting was the wedding day of Yahweh to Israel. The once “virgin of Israel” is now referred to as a bride and any idolatry hereafter is considered “whoredom, adultery, and fornication”.

Today, Orthodox Jews marry under a chupah or canopy as they have since ancient times. A wedding chupah is mentioned Joel 2:16 states “let the bride come out of her chupah”. In addition to that, the wedding chupah is referred to in Psalms 19:5, and Isaiah 4:5.

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Take note that when wedded under a chupah (which was always outdoors - the chupah being the only covering) it caused the couple to take vows at the threshold of an entranceway. The covering symbolizes the Tabernacle. According to this belief, not only are the bride and groom exchanging vows at the entranceway - they are exchanging vows in Yahshua Messiah! The entranceway to the Tabernacle IS Yahshua!

**This concludes part one of "The Threshold Covenant and Yahweh's Passover".**

Part two will reveal how Yahshua became our Passover Lamb which has a deeper significance than what we've been taught traditionally. Questions to ponder, Yahshua constantly referred to Himself as the "door" and "the cornerstone" thereby deeming Himself a threshold. He also is called the Passover Lamb which we now know provides the blood for the threshold covenant. The blood for this covenant is always shed at the door and then placed on the door. The threshold covenant is a welcoming covenant, those who receive it become family. Consider these points - the soon coming marriage supper of the lamb, and was the torture stake at Calvary ~ another wedding ceremony?

Selah... until we meet again.

### Overview of Part One:

- The threshold of the door is a primitive family altar.
- Yahweh has asked us to write the commandments on the doorposts of our homes and dedicate our entrance ways to Him.
- Jacob's ladder was actually a stepped temple.
- Tombstones and burial monuments is actually the worship of Osiris (the deity of the underworld).
- Boundary lines and fireplace hearths are also thresholds.
- During the first Passover, Yahweh passed over the thresholds of homes that had prepared the threshold covenant welcome for Him. In that way, they became family.
- The first Passover was also a wedding ceremony. Yahweh became a husband to Israel.
- Today and since Biblical times, traditional Jewish weddings take place under a chupah which is always outside because it symbolizes the Tabernacle. They marry at the threshold of the chupah which is Yahshua. They also take communion under the chupah.