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EXODUS 12:11

THE SCRIPTURE CONCERNED

> And thus shall ye eat it; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; AND YE SHALL EAT IT IN HASTE: it *is* the LORD'S passover. (Exodus 12:11)

The Hebrew noun here translated as "in haste" is "chippazown", which is used only three times in the Old Testament. This noun is formed from the primitive root verb "chaphaz", which is used nine times in the Old Testament.

THE MEANING PEOPLE DRAW FROM THIS TRANSLATION

The Jews have used this translation to justify eating their "passover" at the start of the 15th day, claiming that Israel left Egypt that same night before the first light of day. But that is in clear conflict with the whole account in Exodus. The account makes very clear that Israel killed AND ate the Passover on the 14th day. There was NO HASTE of any kind during that night of the Passover, though there was an extremely high level of FEAR.

THE MISTRANSLATION

The PRIMARY meaning of the Hebrew noun "chippazown" is NOT "haste", but FEAR. The "haste" is sometimes only a consequence of the fear. But the word "chippazown" inherently did not really mean "haste"!

The Hebrew word that really means "haste" is "MAHAR". A clear illustration of this is found in Genesis 18:6, where this verb is used twice. Notice:

> And Abraham HASTENED ("mahar") into the tent unto Sarah, and said, MAKE READY QUICKLY ("mahar") three measures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth. (Genesis 18:6)

The next verse shows the 99-year old Abraham RUNNING to the herd. There is no question that this Hebrew verb "mahar" has the primary meaning of "HASTE"!

The meaning of the Hebrew root verb "chaphaz" becomes quite clear when we examine the first time this verb is used in the Old Testament, which is in Deuteronomy 20:3. Notice:

> And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and DO NOT TREMBLE ("chaphaz"), neither be ye terrified because of them (Deuteronomy 20:3)

The entire context of Deuteronomy 20:3 is one of not having FEAR, and "haste" does not in any way enter the picture here. So likewise, the noun formed from the Hebrew verb "chaphaz" really means

"FEAR" and "TREPIDATION". Yes, sometimes a consequence of that fear may indeed be "haste". But at other times the consequence of that fear can equally well be "doing nothing" and "freezing in your tracks".

THE SOURCE OF THIS WRONG TRANSLATION

It is clear that the Jewish "sages" simply assigned the meaning of "haste" to this noun "chippazown" for the express purpose of supporting their biblically incorrect custom of having their "passover" at the start of the 15th day. They did exactly the same thing (i.e. assign new meanings to known words) in many other cases, some of which are discussed in other articles on this website. And all Hebrew scholars have simply accepted this altered meaning of "chippazown". But that is not right.

The words "haste" and "fear" don't really mean the same thing at all! If the word "chippazown" means "haste", then it doesn't really mean "fear"; and if it means "fear", then it doesn't really mean "haste". It is only for the purpose of supporting unbiblical customs that the Jews changed the meaning of "chippazown" to A CONSEQUENCE of the actual meaning of this word, because, after all, that consequence will in many cases fit very nicely into the context where "chippazown" is used. But the Hebrew word for "haste" is "mahar", while one Hebrew word for "fear" is "chaphaz".

Notice that the Jewish translation (JPS) also acknowledges that "chaphaz" means "fear and trembling. This is shown in Job 40:23, where we can compare the AV with the JPS.

> Behold, he drinketh up a river, *and* HASTETH ("chaphaz") NOT: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. (Job 40:23 AV)
>
> Behold, if a river overflow, he TREMBLETH ("chaphaz") NOT; he is confident, though the Jordan rush forth to his mouth.” (Job 40:23 JPS)

Even though the JPS translation largely follows the AV, the Jewish translators nevertheless understood that here "chaphaz" is more correctly translated as "tremble", rather than as "haste". Job 40:23 did not pose a threat to any of their customs and traditions; and therefore there was no need to stick with the altered meaning of "chaphaz". They could feel free to provide the correct meaning for "chaphaz" in this passage, even when the AV did not do so.

THE CORRECT TRANSLATION

> And thus shall ye eat it; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it IN TREPIDATION: it *is* the LORD’S Passover. (Exodus 12:11)

THE MEANING OF THIS CORRECT TRANSLATION

In Exodus 12:11 God instructed Israel to eat the Passover in an attitude of fear and respect for what God would do in Egypt that night. Their whole demeanour was to convey this attitude of fear. Being barefoot and getting ready to go to bed would not have shown the right respect that God was demanding. Therefore they were to be fully dressed and ready to respond to God, even though none of them were to go out of their doors until morning (verse 22).

The word "chippazown" qualifies HOW THEY WERE TO EAT THE PASSOVER. Now if this word really meant "in haste", then the only conclusion is that God was instructing them TO GULP DOWN THEIR FOOD WITHOUT CHEWING IT PROPERLY! That's what "eating in haste" means. But the Jews

themselves don't believe that Exodus 12:11 means "eating in haste", because their "Passover Seder" is A LONG, DRAWN-OUT RITUAL! There is no "haste" evident anywhere in their Seder ceremony. So they themselves don't do anything "in haste". The translation "eating in haste" is nothing more than a twisted justification for an unbiblical tradition.

The expression "eat it IN HASTE" would describe THE MANNER OF EATING the Passover, where the expression "eat it IN TREPIDATION" describes THE ATTITUDE with which they were to eat the Passover. And it is not the manner of eating but the attitude with which they were to eat that God was speaking about in Exodus 12:11.

IN SUMMARY

A correct translation of Exodus 12:11 does not in any way support a so-called "late 14th Passover", with the roasting and eating supposedly being intended for the 15th day. Keep in mind also that since the destruction of the Temple the Jews have actually NOT DONE ANYTHING on the 14th day that could be connected to "the Passover"; all their so-called Passover activities are only on the 15th day. See also the article on the mistranslation in Exodus 12:14.

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