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Frank W. Nelte

WHAT DO YOU MEAN - 'YOU SHALL EAT IT IN HASTE'?

You are familiar with the Passover account in the Old Testament. When God gave the instructions for the Passover to Israel, amongst other things God said:

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 AV)

Exactly what was God instructing Israel to do in this verse? Was God here telling Israel to "eat quickly"? Let's examine this instruction more closely, because I believe we are here dealing with a universal mistranslation.

The Hebrew word in this verse translated as "you shall eat" is the verb "akal", and the Hebrew word translated as "in haste" is the noun "chippazown", which is used exactly three times in the whole Old Testament. This Hebrew noun is formed from the root verb "chapaz".

Before we look at the meaning of this Hebrew word "chippazown", let's examine some other Hebrew words that are used to convey the idea of "haste" and "hurry".

HEBREW WORDS TRANSLATED AS "HASTE"

There are in fact several different Hebrew words in the Old Testament, which are rendered into English as "haste". For example:

1) The Hebrew verb "mahar" is used 64 times in the Old Testament, and of those it is translated into English in the KJV 52 times as "haste, swift, quickly, hastily, hasty". Typical examples of how this word is used are:

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

HASTE THEE (Hebrew mahar), escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. (Genesis 19:22 AV)

THEN THEY SPEEDILY (Hebrew mahar) took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. (Genesis 44:11 AV)

Their sorrows shall be multiplied *THAT* HASTEN (Hebrew mahar) *after* another *god*: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. (Psalm 16:4 AV)

The context in which this word "mahar" is used in these verses makes clear that it means "haste". The

word implies a sense of urgency, to do something in a hurry.

2) The Hebrew verb "chuwsh" is used 20 times in the Old Testament, and of those it is translated into English in the KJV 19 times as "haste". Typical examples of how this word is used are:

And the liers in wait HASTED (Hebrew chuwsh), and rushed upon Gibeah; and the liers in wait drew *themselves* along, and smote all the city with the edge of the sword. (Judges 20:37 AV)

And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, HASTE (Hebrew chuwsh), stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. (1 Samuel 20:38 AV)

But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, HASTE THEE (Hebrew chuwsh) to help me. (Psalm 22:19 AV)

O God, be not far from me: O my God, MAKE HASTE (Hebrew chuwsh) for my help. (Psalm 71:12 AV)

The context in these verses shows that this word is also intended to convey a sense of haste and urgency.

3) The Hebrew verb "uwts" is used 10 times in the Old Testament, and of those it is translated into English in the KJV 8 times as "haste". Typical examples of how this word is used are:

And when the morning arose, then the angels HASTENED (Hebrew uwts) Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. (Genesis 19:15 AV)

And the taskmasters HASTED *THEM* (Hebrew uwts), saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw. (Exodus 5:13 AV)

The context in these verses shows that "uwts" conveys a sense of urging people on to do something.

4) The Hebrew verb "bahal" is used 39 times in the Old Testament, and of those it is translated into English in the KJV nine times as "haste, hasty, hastily, speedily, speedy". This word really primarily conveys the idea of being troubled, being amazed, being surprised. The meaning of "haste" is only inferred by extension. Examples of how this word is used are:

And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that HE WAS sore TROUBLED (Hebrew bahal), and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. (1 Samuel 28:21 AV)

And when the men of Israel turned again, the men of Benjamin WERE AMAZED (Hebrew bahal): for they saw that evil was come upon them. (Judges 20:41 AV)

These verses show that this word does not really mean "haste". The idea of "haste" is only in some situations a consequence of being troubled or amazed.

5) The Hebrew verb "nachats" is used only one time in the Old Testament, where it is translated into English in the KJV as "haste". Here is the verse.

And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business
REQUIRED HASTE (Hebrew nachats). (1 Samuel 21:8 AV)

This word "nachats" is also intended to convey a sense of urgency.

With this background let's now examine the Hebrew word "chippazown".

THE HEBREW NOUN "CHIPPAZOWN"

The noun "chippazown" is formed from the Hebrew primitive root verb "chapaz". This verb means "to be terrified, to be alarmed, to tremble, to fear". A CONSEQUENCE of such terror, fear and alarm is that people then frequently, though not always, ACT IN HASTE TO ESCAPE the things they fear and are alarmed about.

However, the primary meaning of this word is to convey a sense of fear and terror. The very first time that this verb "chapaz" is used in the Old Testament is in Deuteronomy 20:3, which says ...

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 (Hebrew chapaz), neither be ye terrified because of them; (Deuteronomy 20:3 AV)

The context makes quite clear that here "chapaz" has nothing at all to do with "haste", and has everything to do with "fearing and trembling". In this case "haste" was not involved one way or the other. In other situations, when people clearly DID FEAR, then they typically also acted in haste, motivated by that fear. That is why this verb is so often translated as "haste", a haste stemming from a motivation of fear. It is THE MOTIVATION that this verb conveys, rather than the action produced by that motivation. The action is only secondary, with the motivation coming first.

Let's look at another example.

For I said IN MY HASTE (Hebrew chaphaz), I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. (Psalm 31:22 AV)

Again, in this psalm David is not really focussing on having said this "in haste", as he is focussing on having said this "in a state of fear". If David had wanted to convey that he had said this "in haste", then David would have used words like "mahar" (as in Psalm 16:4, quoted earlier) or "chuwsh" (as in Psalm 22:19 and in Psalm 71:12, also quoted earlier). In fact, the verb "chuwsh" is used 9 times in the Book of Psalms to effectively convey this idea of "haste".

In Psalm 31:22 David was with the word "chapaz" not referring to "haste" but to "FEAR AND TREPIDATION".

The noun "chippazown" is used three times in the Old Testament. While the biblical Hebrew dictionaries acknowledge the meaning of "fear and trepidation" for this noun, it is unfortunate that Bible translators have consistently translated those three occurrences of "chippazown" as "haste". In so doing they have altered to some degree the actual focus of those three Scriptures. Let's look at these three verses.

THE THREE OCCURRENCES

The first place is Exodus 12:11, which we have already seen.

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 AV)

God's focus in this verse is not at all on "haste"! The real focus is on FEAR AND TREPIDATION! As they were eating the Passover that night, hundreds of thousands, perhaps as many as one million or more firstborn people in Egypt would die! And the death angel would in fact PASS OVER the very houses of the Israelites ... and all that stood between the firstborn people in those houses and death was THE BLOOD which they had smeared on the doorposts.

They were to eat the Passover IN FEAR, but without any kind of "haste"! To make this quite clear, let's notice the context leading up to verse 11.

In verse 6 God instructed Israel to kill the Passover "between the evenings", i.e. between sunset and darkness, at the very start of the 14th day of the month.

The next verse gives the instruction that they were to strike the blood from these Passover lambs on the doorposts.

Verse 8 then says that they were to eat the Passover THAT NIGHT.

And THEY SHALL EAT THE FLESH IN THAT NIGHT, ROAST WITH FIRE, and unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. (Exodus 12:8 AV)

So they were to roast the whole lamb. The next verse spells out that they were NOT to take any shortcuts in doing this.

Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast *with* fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. (Exodus 12:9 AV)

They were not to eat any part of it raw, nor were they to boil any part of the animal in water. Roasting the whole animal with fire would take some considerable time. How long such roasting would take was not really a consideration. Time was simply not the issue! The next verse shows that they would still be in those houses THE NEXT MORNING.

And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and THAT WHICH REMAINETH OF IT UNTIL THE MORNING YE SHALL BURN WITH FIRE. (Exodus 12:10 AV)

A few verses later the very clear instruction is that none of them were to go out of their houses UNTIL THE MORNING.

And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that *is* in the bason; AND NONE OF YOU SHALL GO OUT AT THE DOOR OF HIS HOUSE UNTIL THE MORNING. (Exodus 12:22 AV)

Now notice very carefully!

The expression "that which remains of it UNTIL THE MORNING" in verse 10 makes very clear that the actual eating was NOT NECESSARILY TO BE DONE IN HASTE!

Anyone in the house could eat of the meat at any point during that night. The cutoff point for any eating of the meat was just before night ended and morning started. There was no reason of any kind to "eat quickly"!

It is only AFTER telling Israel that they were to burn any leftovers THE NEXT MORNING that we then have the statement in verse 11.

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 AV)

They were to eat it IN TREPIDATION! They were to be dressed and ready, so that they could get busy by the break of day. First they were to burn any remains of the Passover lambs. Then they would spoil the Egyptians, whose firstborn had died during that night. After that they would get all their belongings together and assemble for their departure from Egypt. And by sunset that evening, signalling the start of the 15th day, this vast multitude of two or more million people was ready to depart. They would all have had an extremely busy 12 hours of daylight behind them by then ... 12 hours to get ready to leave the place where they had been born and where they had lived all their lives up to that point in time.

To get some idea of how long those things would have taken, try to picture moving TWO MILLION REFUGEES, PLUS THEIR CATTLE AND THEIR SHEEP, OUT OF SOME WAR-TORN AREA. Even with our modern means of transport we would struggle to move even a few hundred thousand people, let alone two million, in that sort of time frame. The point is: they were to be ready from the very moment that the morning started (i.e. shod with their shoes, and with their staffs in their hands) because they would need EVERY SINGLE MINUTE BETWEEN SUNRISE AND THE NEXT SUNSET JUST TO BE READY TO DEPART!

I believe that it is a mistake to think that God instructed Israel to eat the Passover "IN HASTE"! There was nothing whatsoever to be gained from the Israelites eating their meal QUICKLY. God's instructions preceding this statement make clear that SPEED OF EATING was not the issue at all. God's reference to "burning" the leftovers the following morning should make clear all by itself that God's statement here could not possibly mean "eat it in haste"!

God's intent was to tell people to eat the Passover IN A SOBER MOOD, WITH AN ATTITUDE OF TREPIDATION. It is interesting that in practical terms that is EXACTLY what Mr. Armstrong taught us when he was used by God to restore the practice of keeping the Passover and the annual Holy Days. For the Passover instructions Mr. Armstrong wrote:

"When the time has arrived for the ordinance, the Church should assemble QUIETLY AND SOLEMNLY. ... Begin the service by reminding the brethren of the SOLEMN MEANING of this

occasion ...". (from the instructions to the ministry for conducting the Passover)

When we have conducted Passover services, we have NEVER told people to eat the bread and drink the wine IN HASTE! This is almost invariably done in a very contemplative setting. And while there is never any hint of "eating in haste", there is the very evident mood of quiet and responsible solemnity, the equivalent of Israel in Egypt eating the Passover "with trepidation".

Let's now look at the next place where this noun "chippazown" is used.

Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, *even* the bread OF AFFLICTION (Hebrew oniy); for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt IN HASTE (Hebrew chippazown): that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. (Deuteronomy 16:3 AV)

The expression the bread "of affliction" in Hebrew is the bread of "oniy". This noun "oniy" means "affliction, trouble, misery". Now WHY did God through Moses tell them that the unleavened bread during those seven days is "the bread of affliction and trouble and misery"?

Is the bread identified in this way BECAUSE THEY LEFT EGYPT IN HASTE? I don't believe so! Why would "haste" have to mean trouble and affliction? After the Passover they had still stayed around long enough to spoil the Egyptians during the following daylight period.

Or is the bread identified in this way BECAUSE THEIR DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT ENTAILED FEAR AND TREPIDATION? Yes, I believe that THIS is why they were to view this unleavened bread as "the bread of affliction". Their trepidation reached a high point even before the end of those Seven Days of Unleavened Bread, when they were "sore afraid" on seeing the Egyptian army behind them (Exodus 14:10-12). And Deuteronomy 16:3 was written AFTER the events in Exodus 14 had already taken place. By the time of Deuteronomy 16:3 it was already a historical fact that they had experienced EXTREME TREPIDATION before the end of those Seven Days of Unleavened Bread.

When they left Egypt, the death of the firstborn hung over Egypt like a shroud. And within seven days the Israelites themselves were extremely fearful at the sight of Pharaoh's army. And at that point they were still eating this "bread of affliction".

So I suspect that in Deuteronomy 16:3 the intended meaning is that they "... came out of the land of Egypt IN TREPIDATION", rather than "in haste".

Let's now look at the third place where this word "chippazown" is used in the Old Testament.

For ye shall not go out WITH HASTE (Hebrew chippazown), nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel *will be* your rereward. (Isaiah 52:12 AV)

"Rereward" is an old English word that means "rear guard".

In this verse God is also not at all speaking about "HASTE"! God is really saying: "you shall not go out IN FEAR AND TREPIDATION". The context makes this quite clear.

Notice the previous verse.

Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD. (Isaiah 52:11 AV)

Here God gives the following instructions:

- 1) Depart from some location.
- 2) Go out from there.
- 3) Don't touch the unclean things.
- 4) Go out of the midst of her (somewhat like Rev. 18:4 = come out of Babylon).
- 5) Those who have spiritual responsibilities are to be clean.

Now the next verse shows HOW THESE THINGS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED.

For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel *will be* your reward. (Isaiah 52:12 AV)

- 1) The word "for" introduces a reason or explanation for the statements in the previous verse.
- 2) You can do this because you will NOT be going out IN AN ATTITUDE OF FEAR AND TREPIDATION.
- 3) It will not be "a fleeing" because God Himself (i.e. Jesus Christ, the "LORD" of the Old Testament) will be leading you.
- 4) This tells us that this verse will be fulfilled AFTER CHRIST RETURNS!
- 5) At that time Christ will also be the rear guard for all those who come out.
- 6) THE CONTEXT likewise makes clear that Isaiah 52:12 is speaking about something that takes place after Christ's return. Thus:
 - A) It is a time when God has comforted His people and has redeemed Jerusalem (verse 9).
 - B) God has exposed His power ("made bare His holy arm") to ALL nations, and the ends of the earth will see God's salvation ... the second coming of Christ is being described (verse 10).
 - C) At that time (after Christ's return) people are instructed to sever all ties and connections with EVERYTHING that went before, because it was all "unclean" (verse 11).
 - D) Jesus Christ Himself will lead and guide and supervise that whole process of coming out of the old world (verse 12).
 - E) And Jesus Christ will deal very wisely when He takes up that position as Lord of lords and King of kings (verse 13).
 - F) THE VERY FIRST THING the human beings who survive into that time will need to understand is that the One ruling then will be the same person as the One who died on a stake approximately 2000 years earlier for the sins of all mankind (verse 14).

G) That is going to be a real shocker for those who physically survive into the millennium, and God will then open their eyes (verse 15).

That is a brief summary of the context in which this statement in Isaiah 52:12 appears. Those that Christ "leads and guides" at that time will not have any trepidation or fear in following Christ's leadership ... such trepidation and fear will only apply to the people addressed in verses 14-15.

In summary: again the word "chippazown" is used in Isaiah 52:12 to convey that something will be done without fear and trepidation, rather than being done without haste.

And Exodus 12:11 has nothing at all to do with supposedly eating "in haste"! Exodus 12:11 is nothing more than a very unfortunate translation of the Hebrew text. As it happens, it is this precise unfortunate translation that many people have based their whole interpretation of that Passover in Egypt on. It is because of this unfortunate translation, which the context reveals to be inaccurate and contrary to the intended meaning, that many people argue for "a late 14th day Passover". A correct understanding of Exodus 12:11 eliminates this argument.

Frank W. Nelte