

The Passover

Passover and the Feast of Unleaven Bread [Hebrew: Pesah, or Pesach pronounced “p-sah” or “PAY-sahch”] always begins after sundown on Nisan 14 of the Jewish calendar around March or April is a reminder of God's protection during plagues in Egypt and their deliverance from Egypt. It is a eight day feast beginning on the 14th day of Nisan, [pronounced *nes-san*] the first month of the Jewish ecclesiastical year, about the time of the vernal equinox and ends on the Nisan 21st. The Passover meal is eaten on the first day. God commanded that Israel keep this feast perpetually. It is still celebrated by the Jews today, however in a modified form.

Exodus 12:14-20, *“And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.”*

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.”

Leviticus 23:4-6, *“These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD’S passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.”*

Passover Dinner, commemorates the protection of God as the Angel of Death passed over every Jewish family there in Egypt and protected them by the Blood of the Paschal Lamb. That Lamb was the Lord Jesus Christ. The symbolism is unmistakable. Israel, God’s chosen people were in slavery in the foreign land of Egypt. Egypt, in the Bible, symbolically always stands for the lost world ruled by Satan. Egypt was under the judgment of death of its first born and only those who believed in God’s promise of salvation and obeyed Him by sprinkling the blood of the sacrificial lamb would be spared. In judgment God offered redemption. Like wise in this age man is under the curse of sin and death. God offers us redemption through the atoning action of Jesus Christ, God’s son who came to the earth, and suffered and died for the sins of the world. He became the Paschal lamb. Under this judgment of sin and ultimate eternal death, God freely offers to all who will believe and accept His provision for us, forgiveness of our sins and life eternal.

The Lord did not give us the Passover celebration, but the Lord’s Supper, as a memorial of His death, burial and resurrection. There are parallels between the two memorials and they both point to the same event. That event was the day that Jesus Christ paid our sin debt and in Him is salvation to for all would will believe and receive it.

The Passover Meal Nisan 14 The eight days begins with the Passover meal on Nisan 14 and is referred to as the *Cedar* or *Seder* [say-dor] continues on the 15th-21st of Nisan which is the Feast of the Unleaven bread.

Before the Passover: A young male lamb is selected which is without blemish four days before the Passover. They examine it carefully to make sure it is perfect. The Jewish day begins at sundown one day and ends the twenty four hours later at sunset. The Passover therefore begins at sundown or the begin of the 14th day of Nisan. On the Passover night the blood of the lamb is sprinkled on the door posts of the house.

1. Before the Passover all leaven is removed from the house. Leaven is a symbol of sin and therefore before the Passover is a time of confession of sin and purification. (See 1 Cor. 5:6) Like wise the Lord's supper is also a time of purification and confession of sin. 1 Corinthians 11:27-32 instructs those who take the Lord's Supper to examine their lives, judge themselves and confess their sins to the Lord. To not to do so show a serious spiritual failure in not respecting (showing discernment) the Lord's suffering for our sins.

Today before the Seder the father plays a game with the children by hiding pieces of leaven bread around the house. The children then come in and hunt for it. When a piece is found the father comes with a wooden spoon and feather. He carefully uses the feather to brush the crumbs into the spoon and carries them the fire and burns them.

2. The mother is busy setting the table with their special Passover tableware and white linen. The white linen is representative of the righteousness of the saints. A special white linen covers the table. At the Seder tThe father is dressed in a white robe, call a *kittlet* [pronounced: *kit-tell*] and the table is lit with white candles.

A proper kosher housewife keeps four sets of dishes. Two sets for meat and milk keep meat and milk separated during the year at regular meals. Two other sets keep milk and meat separated at Passover.

3. The Passover meal begins and two candles are lit by the mother of the house. (A woman brought Christ into the world)

4. The First Cup. Four cups of wine (grape juice) is drank during the Passover.

a. First is the Cup of the Sanctification. (Sanctifies the table and all preparations) b. The service has not begun yet... this is the preparation.

c. When the father pours the first cup he is accepting that all has been done properly and everything is ready.

5. After the First Cup the father and all participants wash their hands. Afterwards the father takes three loaves or pieces of unleavened bread and places them in a white linen envelope which has three compartments. This bread with looks like a cracker is called *matzo*. [also spelled, *matzot*, *matzoh*, *matza*, or *matza*] The father then takes out the middle piece of *matzo* from the compartment, wraps it in a separate piece of white linen and hides it. . . generally under the table or in a drawer. Everyone is at the table and sitting on pillows or cushions.

6. The Four Questions are asked. The order of service for the Seder Dinner is contained in a book called the Haggadah. (Hag-ga-dah). The word means "telling." A copy is used by each participant and is essential for understanding and participation.

Children are an important part of the Seder. God commanded Israel to instruct their children in remembering Him and their history.

The youngest child answers the four questions:

1. Why do we eat matzo on Pesach? The answer: Matzoh reminds us that when the Jews left the slavery of Egypt they had no time to bake their bread. They took the raw dough on their journey and baked it in the hot desert sun into hard crackers called matzoh.

2. Why do we eat bitter herbs, maror, at our Seder? The answer: Maror reminds us of the bitter and cruel way the Pharaoh treated the Jewish people when they were slaves in Egypt.

3. Why do we dip our foods twice tonight? They answer: We dip bitter herbs into Charoset to remind us how hard the Jewish slaves worked in Egypt. The chopped apples and nuts look like the clay used to make the bricks used in building the Pharaoh's buildings. We dip parsley into salt water. The parsley reminds us that spring is here and new life will grow. The salt water reminds us of the tears of the Jewish slaves.

4. Why do we lean on a pillow tonight? The answer: We lean on a pillow to be comfortable and to remind us that once we were slaves, but now we are free. The Haggadah itself stresses the importance of the Seder as "a spectacle meant to excite the interest and the curiosity of the children."

Everything in the Seder is meant to make the children curious and to ask questions.

7. The father tells or reads the story of the Exodus and begins "When our people were enslaved in Egypt..." The family listens spell bound by the story.

a. As the story is told the ceremonial foods are eaten.

b. While the father is telling the story of the slavery...the bitter herbs are eaten. It is kosher horseradish (no sugar added) and parsley. He serves it to each person from the center

Seder plate on the table. The parsley is dipped into a bowl of salty water. [The bitterness is like a person before they are saved. Salty water for dipping represents one's tears of repentance.]

c. . As he talks about sacrificing the lamb..he gestures to a plate which has the unbroken shank bone of the lamb. (No bones are broken or cut)

d. A roasted egg is also on the plate. [Pharaoh's heart? Most have no idea what it means. They do not eat it..it is just there. Some suggest that the egg is a traditional symbol of mourning, and has been interpreted by some as a symbolic mourning for the loss of the Temple. Since the destruction of the Temple in the year 70 AD, neither the festival sacrifice nor the special Passover sacrifice could be offered. It is also a symbol of spring - the season in which Passover is always celebrated.

8. The Second Cup. This cup is spilled one drop at a time for ten drops on each person's plate. They stand for the ten plagues. Blood, frogs, vermin, beasts...etc. The people stare into the dripping "blood" and remembers what they were delivered from.

9. The Meal. This somber moment of the Second Cup is quickly ended by the meal. It is quite a feast. A whole lamb is called for by the scriptures, but the Jews think it not appropriate because they have no Temple...so beef, chicken, etc are prepared.. The lamb in the Old Testament was the main meal, but it is not now. It is like Christmas or Thanksgiving. The entire family with uncles, cousins and in-laws are present and the meal lasts from sun down to mid-night.

10. The Third Cup. The Cup of Redemption.

a. The father uncovers the three *matzot* [pronounced "mat -sah] which have been place in a three pocketed linen napkin. These lie in front of him in the napkin. He takes out the middle *matzot*, breaks it in half, takes the larger half and wraps it in a napkin and hides it somewhere under his cushion, in a drawer or under the table. One of the children will try to steal it away and claim a price if successful. Otherwise it will lie there "buried" until the service is over. Then, it will suddenly appears, it will be taken out and broken into small pieces and distributed to the members of the family. This, too, is a symbol of the Passover of which everyone was to participate. This *matzot*, since it had been broken, has become the *afikomen*, [pronounced: af-o-ko- man] a word apparently derived from the Greek, meaning, "I arrive," or "I come to." The hidden piece of unleaven bread is not brought out and eaten with the desert.

Note: The following was a warning to Jews about following "Christian" Haggadahs.

"Watch out for Christianized versions of the haggadah. The Christian "last supper" is generally believed to have been a Pesach seder, so many Christians recreate the ritual of the seder, and the haggadahs that they use for this purpose tend to reinterpret the significance of the holiday and its symbols to fit into their Christian theology. For example, they say that the three matzahs represent the Trinity, with the broken one representing Jesus on the cross (in Judaism, the three matzahs represent the three Temples, two of which have been destroyed, and the third of which will be built when the moshiach comes). They speak of the paschal lamb as a prophecy of Jesus, rather than a remembrance of the lamb's blood on the doorposts in Egypt. If you want to learn what Pesach means to Jews, then these "messianic" haggadahs aren't for you.

b. Next there is a procession called "*afikomen*" meaning festival procession. This is made up of children who seek to "find" the hidden bread and the father has hidden to redeem it or buy it for some piece of silver. (75 cents)

c. This is the middle piece of bread that was earlier placed in the linen and put in a draw or under the table. It is eaten with the Third Cup. The father brakes the bread and gives it to each one present. The person eats the bread and then drinks from the cup. This is what Jesus did in Matthew 26:26-27.

11. Jesus was taking the last part of the Passover when He gave us the Lord's Supper. Matthew 26:26-27. Jesus took the bread and blessed it. His exact words were: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord out God, King of the universe, Who bringest forth bread from the heaven." Jesus then said, "This is my body, which is broken for you, eat this in remembrance of me.

It is a paradox that the Jews celebrate the Passover and do not know fully what it all means and Christians take the Lord's Supper and they too do not understand what it really is. It is actually the last part of the Passover when the third cup was taken. Jesus explained its meaning and purpose saying:

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:27-28)

The usual explanation for the three pieces of *matzot* is that they represent the threefold division in Israel: Priests, Levites and Israelites. A better explanation is that it represents the triune nature of God, the most Holy Trinity. The first piece represents God the Father. The middle *matzot*, (*afikomen*), represents the One whose body was broken and given for us in the Eucharist. It was hidden and buried, and then resurrected with the promise of *afikomen*: I have come already and am coming again!... yes, Jesus Christ. The third piece represents the Holy Spirit. Haggadah is the book read during the *seder*. The Haggadah [Ha-got-ta] is a book containing the Passover service and includes the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

Jesus was buried on the Feast of the Unleaven Bread. He was brought forth from the grave which stands for the Third cup and desert! (Matt 26:27-28).

Matthew 26:27-28 says, “And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

How did Jesus give thanks? What did he say? The answer is found in a Jewish marriage ceremony when the groom would pay a price for the bride to her father. When the groom leaves after giving the dowry to the bride's father he would say, "I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:1-4.) The bride then waited at home, separated and consecrated, set apart, being brought for a price, until the bridegroom would return for her.

She remained faithful, loyal and eager to be married. She was separated.. wearing a veil so that no other man would see her face and try to make contact with her and she would be a perfect example of purity and modesty. At home she would keep an oil lamp and plenty of oil standing by if the bride groom come at night and they have to travel in the dark. Unexpected..the bride groom arrives and abducts . the bride! At the bride groom's house everything is made ready as quick as possible. He must get his father's approval for his new room. Even the time of getting the bride is left up to the father. Someone asks, "When is the big day?" The answer, "Only my father knows."

The big day arrives and all is ready. Some in the bride grooms party shouts. "Behold, he bride groom cometh." When the bride hears this, she, her sisters and brides maids, trim the lights get ready. The bride groom the spirits his bride away to the honey moon clamber he was prepared and the couple go in and shut the door. The bride grooms best man would stand near the door and listen for the voice of the bride groom. When the marriage is consummated in the chamber, the bride groom tells his best man and the marriage is now official. The guests for the wedding

feast are not assembled and would begin a seven day celebration! The guests could not leave till it was over. The bride and groom come out and the feast begins.

The blessing over the Third cup is "Blessed art thou, O Lord God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine." This is what Jesus literally said and Jesus said I am the vine and here He blesses the fruit of the vine. It was like a toast to the His bride and to the fruit of the marriage. Biblically the disciples are the branches and we are the fruit of the Vine, the Bride of Christ.

12. Passover is a celebration, the Lord's Supper is a more solemn event.

Note Jesus ended the supper saying "Do this in remember of me." We celebrate the Savior, crucified, buried and rise, the Redeemer.

13. The Fourth Cup. Jesus did not drink the fourth cup of Passover. It is sometimes called Elijah's cup. Malachi 4:5. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

An empty chair is left at the table during these proceedings and a wine goblet. It is for Elijah who is expected to enter some Passover night and take his seat. He will take the cup and drink it and say,...the waiting is over, the Messiah is come! Some families place a whole setting for Elijah. The youngest child of the family goes to the door and looks out to see if Elijah is coming down the street. The family waits the child's answer..... the news comes from the door..."I don't see him." Zola Leavett said when he looked outside and down the street he truly expected to see Elijah coming...and he would even walk out into the street to see if he was there while the family was left waiting the answer.

Jesus and His disciple did not take the Fourth cup.... the Messiah was already there!

The celebration is ended as the father in a melancholy way says...."*L' shanah haba'ah b'yrushalayim.*" Meaning "Next year in Jerusalem."

He the Messiah is come. We should say, "*Next year in the New Jerusalem.*"

After the Lord's took the Passover, they sang a hymn and went out to the Mt. of Olives.

All this information came from <http://bible-truth.org/Feasts-Passover.html> (Cooper P Abrams III - Bible-truth.org)