



THE FEAST OF PASSOVER THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

“This day [Passover] will become a memorial for you, and you will celebrate it as a festival to Yahweh – you will celebrate it perpetually as a lasting ordinance.”

Exodus 12:14

“Like a lamb He was led to the slaughtering block.”

Isaiah 53:7

“Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

John 1:29

“For Christ, our Passover lamb has been sacrificed.”

1 Corinthians 5:7

“Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory.”

Revelation 5:12

Introduction

The Passover is a festival meal that Yahweh implemented in order to celebrate His deliverance of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. But the Passover does not just remember Israel's exodus; it also foreshadows the coming of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. This is the meal that Christ shared in the upper room with His disciples, which Christians call the Lord's Supper. Thus both Jews and Christians celebrate this Passover meal in remembrance of Yahweh's ability to deliver His people from bondage to the world, sin, and death. Tonight, let us remember the faithfulness of Yahweh and His deliverance, which He has brought to the nation of Israel and to us personally through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, our Passover lamb. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!

The Exodus Story

The story begins with a man by the name of Abraham, a pagan who worshiping false idols (Josh. 24) when God came to him and called him out of the world to follow Him. Abraham trusted God, and God declared him righteous. God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham, promising him that He would make him into a great nation, give him a land, give him personal blessings, and bless the world through him (Gen. 12:1-4; 15).

Abraham was the father of Isaac, who was the father of Jacob, who had twelve sons. These sons would later become the twelve tribes of Israel, fulfilling God's promise to make Abraham into a great nation. God also told Abraham that his descendants would be in bondage to Egypt for four hundred years, after which God would bring them out and make them into a great nation.

To escape a severe famine in the land of Canaan, Jacob took his family to Egypt to be with his son Joseph, whom God used to save the whole land and his own family from starvation. Soon Joseph was forgotten by the Pharaohs, and the Hebrews, the descendants of Abraham, were enslaved for four hundred years, fulfilling God's warning.

After four hundred years of slavery, it was time for God to begin to fulfill His promises to Abraham, and, moved by compassion for His people, He called one of their own, Moses, to deliver them from the bondage of Egypt. God came to Moses at the burning bush in the desert and revealed to Moses a new name by which Israel would call Him: "I Am that I Am," or *Yahweh*, meaning "the ever-present helper who is always with you."

For the next eight months Yahweh sent ten plagues upon Egypt as judgment for their enslavement of the Hebrew people and for their idolatry and to reveal Himself as the sovereign Creator so that they might repent and follow Him. The tenth and final plague was the death of the firstborn of every family. The only way to be spared was if one took a spotless lamb, sacrificing it in the place of the firstborn and spreading its blood on the doorposts of the home. This became the first Passover meal—the night that the angel of Yahweh "passed over" the homes of those who had by faith sacrificed a lamb to escape the judgment of Yahweh and receive His blessings.

The next day Yahweh came to the Hebrew people and led them out of Egypt as a great pillar of cloud by day and as a pillar of fire by night. This pillar of cloud and fire was the visible presence of Yahweh (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21), which the Hebrews called the *Shekinah* glory of God, meaning the dwelling of God's glory with them. The pillar of cloud and fire

separated the Hebrews from Egypt and its way of life, which was called the “house of slavery, sin, and death” (Ex. 13:3). Yahweh, through the pillar of cloud and fire, led them through the Red Sea, which was their water baptism (1 Cor. 10:1-2).

For the next fifty days they wandered through the wilderness being tested by Yahweh, which they failed, and eventually came to Mount Sinai where Yahweh made a covenant with them, giving them the Mosaic Law and promising that if they obeyed all His commandments He would make them His special possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.

After they received the Mosaic Law, Yahweh led them to the land of Canaan, which He had promised Abraham that His descendants would inherit, a land flowing with milk and honey.

The Spring Festivals

There are seven festivals that Yahweh prescribed in the Torah (Ex. 12; Lev. 23-24; Num. 28; Deut. 16): four in the spring and three in the fall. The four spring festivals foreshadow Christ’s first coming, and the three fall festivals foreshadow Christ’s second coming. We will only be dealing with the spring festivals as they relate to the Passover Festival.

Passover

Passover is celebrated on the 14th of Nisan—the day that the angel of the Lord passed over the homes of the Hebrew families who had placed the blood of a sacrificial lamb on the doorposts of their homes. Because of this substitutionary sacrifice and His grace, Yahweh spared from death the firstborn of the family.

Unleavened Bread

The Unleavened Bread festival starts on the 15th of Nisan and lasts for seven days. It is a week in which all yeast is removed from the house. Yeast is a symbol of sin in the Scriptures, so the festival was a time of repentance and looking forward to the new religious year.

Firstfruits

Firstfruits is celebrated the day after the Sabbath after the Passover. On this day, the first of the barley harvest was offered in the tabernacle/temple as an offering to God. It was a reminder of the new life that Yahweh had given them in a new land and that the harvest belonged to Him.

Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)

The Feast of Weeks is celebrated seven Sabbaths or fifty days after the Passover. This day became a second firstfruits offering for the wheat harvest. It also celebrated the giving of the Mosaic Law, the day that Israel received the Law from Yahweh through Moses at Mount Sinai.

The Sign of the Messiah and the New Covenant

The signs of the Messiah and the New Covenant that He brought were new, grain, wine, and olive oil. Grain symbolizes life, wine symbolizes the abundance and joy of life, and olive oil symbolizes spiritual life (the anointing of the Holy Spirit).

The Passover Meal

Traditionally, the Passover table was low and shaped like a rectangular horseshoe, and the members of the family reclined on the floor around it. This posture symbolized that they were no longer in bondage but were free men and women who could now recline as all free men did.

A woman in the church lights the candle.

The Lighting of the Candles

Mothers: Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by your Commandments and has commanded us to kindle the festival lights.
Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God, King of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us unto this day. May our home be consecrated, O Yahweh our God, by your light, shining upon us in blessing, and bringing us peace.

All: Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God! King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Four Cups

Note: Do not drink all the juice from this cup at once. We will be drinking from it four different times throughout the meal.

There are four ceremonial cups of wine that are drunk throughout the Passover meal. The concept and meaning of the four cups come from Exodus 6:6-7.

“Therefore, tell the Israelites, ‘I am Yahweh. I will bring you out from your enslavement to the Egyptians, I will **rescue** you from the hard labor they impose, and I will **deliver** you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will **redeem** you to myself for a people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out from your enslavement to the Egyptians. I will **bring** you to the land I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob – and I will give it to you as a possession. I am Yahweh!’” (Ex. 6:6-7)

1. The Cup of Sanctification—“I will **rescue** you from the hard labor they impose”
2. The Cup of Judgment—“I will **deliver** you with an outstretched arm and with **judgments**”
3. The Cup of Redemption—“I will **redeem** you to myself for a people”
4. The Cup of the Kingdom— “I will **bring** you to the land I swore”

First Cup: Sanctification

The Cup of Sanctification is a reminder of the freedom brought to the Hebrew nation when Yahweh delivered them through the Exodus.

Leader: “Yahweh said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. I have come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a land that is both good and spacious, to a land flowing with milk and honey.” (Ex. 3:7-8)

All: Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God! King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Washing of the Hands

In the tabernacle/temple was a bronze washbasin where the Hebrews ceremonially washed themselves before they offered their sacrifices to Yahweh. This symbolized the cleansing of sins that would later be fulfilled through the shedding of Christ's blood. It was at this point in the Passover meal that Jesus washed the disciples feet.

“Because Jesus knew that the Father had handed all things over to him, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, he got up from the meal, removed his outer clothes, took a towel and tied it around himself. He poured water into the washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel he had wrapped around himself.” (Jn. 13:4-5)

(Karpas) Parsley and Salt Water

Parsley is reminiscent of the hyssop bush, the plant used by the Hebrews to spread the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their homes and also used in the tabernacle in the splattering of the blood of the sacrificial lamb. The salt water represents the tears shed under the bondage of Egypt.

Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God! King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Marror (Bitter Herbs)

Marror are bitter herbs (horseradish) that reminds one of the bitterness of life that is a result of the sin in our nature and in the world. This was manifested through the bondage of Egypt over Israel (Ex. 13:3) and sin over us (Rom. 6).

Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God! King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Charoses

The charoses reminds one of the mortar the Hebrews used to make the bricks for Pharaoh during slavery. The bitter/sweet mixture reminds us that the trials of life are bitter, but Yahweh uses these trials in our life to build our character and draw us close to Him, which is a sweet result.

Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God! King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Zeroa (Lamb Shankbone)

This refers to the lamb that became the substitutionary sacrifice for the firstborn of the family, its blood placed on the door so that Yahweh's judgment would “pass over” them.

The Jews have called this “The Arm of the Lord” (*zeroa* means “arm”). As Christians, we know that Christ is “The Arm of the Lord” and sits on the right hand of Yahweh. The lamb was selected on the 10th of Nisan and then inspected for blemishes for the next four days to see if it was worthy of sacrifice on the Passover day. The lamb had to be roasted whole without any broken bones and be completely consumed by the family. This lamb became the substitutionary sacrifice for the firstborn of the family.

“When your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ then you will say, ‘It is the sacrifice of Yahweh's Passover, when he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck Egypt and delivered our households.’ The people bowed down low to the ground, and the Israelites went away and did exactly as Yahweh had commanded Moses and Aaron.” (Ex. 12:26-28)

Jesus arrived in Jerusalem on the 10th of Nisan, and for the next four days He was put on trial by the Jewish leaders and was declared innocent by Herod and Pilate. On the 14th of Nisan he was sacrificed as our Passover lamb.

Leader: “Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” (Jn. 1:29)

Leader: “He was treated harshly and afflicted, but he did not even open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughtering block, like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not even open his mouth.” (Isa. 53:7)

All: “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised from the dead on the third day.” (Matt. 17:22-33)

All: “For Christ, our Passover lamb is sacrificed for us.” (1 Cor. 5:7)

All: “Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory.” (Rev. 5:12)

Matzo (Unleavened Bread)

The matzo is bread baked without yeast. The Hebrews were to leave Egypt in such haste that they were not allowed to use yeast in the baking of the bread for the Passover meal. Throughout Scripture yeast is used as a symbol of sin because it spreads throughout and puffs up the bread. The next day they would begin the seven-day Unleavened Bread festival, during which they would remove all yeast from their homes.

“You must not eat any yeast with it; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast, symbolic of affliction, for you came out of Egypt hurriedly. You must do this so you will remember for the rest of your life the day you came out of the land of Egypt.” (Deut. 16:3)

“Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast affects the whole batch of dough? Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch of dough – you are, in fact, without yeast. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. So then, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of vice and evil, but with the bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Cor. 5:6-8)

There are three matzos placed together into three separate pockets called a Matzo Tash, referred to by the Rabbis as the “Unity.” Jews do not know why there are three. Some believe that it represents Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and others that it represents the king, the Levites, and the people. However, neither Isaac nor the Levites were broken. As Christians we know that this is the Tri-unity. The middle one is called the *lechem onee*, “the bread of affliction.” During the meal it leaves its place of honor, is broken, and then part of it hidden away. This becomes the *afikomen*, which means “one who comes.” Notice that this matzo is stripped and pierced just as Christ was flogged and pierced on the cross.

Leader: This is the bread of affliction, which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are needy come and celebrate the Passover with us. Now, we are here; next year may we all celebrate in the land of promise. Even now, many are slaves to sin; soon may we all be free!

Pause for the breaking, wrapping, and hiding of the matzo.

- Leader:** “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. The one who comes to me will never go hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty.’” (Jn. 6:35)
- All:** “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Cor. 5:21)
- All:** “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.” (Isa. 53:5)
- All:** Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God! King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

The Four Questions

Children are invited to join in on the Passover meal to ask four questions about the meal, whereby the leader teaches them by answering the questions.

- Child One:** Why is the night of the Passover different from all other nights of the year? On all other nights at every meal we have bread or rolls or hallah. Why on this night do we have no bread, but only matzo?
- Leader:** Our forefathers fled from Egypt in great haste. They had no time to bake their dough. Instead the hot sun baked it into flat unleavened bread, which they called “matzo.” To remember this we eat only matzo on Passover.
- Child Two:** On all other nights, we eat all kinds of vegetables. Why on this night do we eat bitter herbs especially?
- Leader:** Our forefathers led bitter lives as slaves in Egypt. Not to forget their suffering, we eat bitter herbs on Passover.
- Child Three:** On all other nights we do not dip our food. Why on this night do we dip parsley in salt water and bitter herbs in charoses?
- Leader:** We dip parsley into salt water to remind us that green comes to life in springtime. We dip the bitter herbs in sweet charoses as a sign of hope. Our forefathers survived the bitterness of slavery because it was sweetened by the hope of freedom.
- Child Four:** On all other nights we sit up straight at the table. Why on this night do we recline or lean at the table?
- Leader:** In the old times, reclining at the table was a sign of a free man. We recline at the Passover table to remember that on this night, hundreds of years ago, our forefathers were freed from slavery.

Second Cup: Judgment

This is a reminder of the judgment that Yahweh brought on the house of Egypt for their sins and the thanks for the Jews' deliverance. For each plague that is mentioned, we dip our finger into the cup and drip a drop of wine on our plates.

Blood—Frogs—Lice—Flies—Cattle Disease—Boils—Hail—Locust—Darkness—Death of Firstborn

“You are to tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ It will be a sign for you on your hand and a memorial on your forehead, so that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth, for with a mighty hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt. So you must keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year.” (Ex. 13:8-10)

Leader: “He went away from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, ‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Yet not my will but yours be done.’” (Lk. 22:42-44)

Leader: He brought us forth from slavery **All:** to freedom

Leader: From anguish **All:** to gladness

Leader: From mourning **All:** to festivity

Leader: From darkness **All:** to light

Leader: From bondage **All:** to redemption

All: Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God! King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

The Eating of the Meal

We now eat the meal and all would partake of the lamb in order to receive the blessings of the sacrifice. Our Seder menu replicates what a present day Jewish family would serve during the Passover celebration.

Afikomen Matzo

During this part the children would hunt for the hidden matzo cracker. This then would be ransomed back to the leader, and all would eat the matzo and let it linger in their mouths as the last taste of the meal. The Jews would often say “In remembrance of the Passover meal” as they ate it. During this part of the meal Jesus alluded to the bread as His body.

Leader: “Then he took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And in the same way he took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” (Lk. 22:19)

All: Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God! King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Third Cup: Redemption

This is where the Jews remember and celebrate their redemption from Egypt. In the Gospels, this is the cup from which Jesus' disciples drank, yet Jesus Himself never drank from this cup.

Leader: “And after taking the cup and giving thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” (Matt. 26:27-29)

All: Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God! King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Singing of Hymns

Jesus and the disciples went out singing hymns after the meal celebrating the Passover lamb.

“After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.” (Matt. 26:30)

Seat and Cup of Elijah

“Behold, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the coming of that great and terrible day of the Yahweh.” (Mal. 4:5)

“All the prophets and the Torah prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he himself is the Elijah, who was to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” (Matt. 11:13-15)

Fourth Cup: The Kingdom

Jesus and His disciples did not drink of this cup in the upper room. This is symbolic of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and the future coming Kingdom of God.

Leader: “‘Indeed, a time is coming,’ says Yahweh, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. It will not be like the old covenant that I made with their ancestors when I delivered them from Egypt. For they violated that covenant, even though I was like a faithful husband to them,’ says Yahweh. ‘But I will make a new covenant with the whole nation of Israel after I plant them back in the land,’ says Yahweh. ‘I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts and minds. I will be their God and they will be my people. People will no longer need to teach their neighbors and relatives to know me. For all of them, from the least important to the most important, will know me,’ says Yahweh. ‘For I will forgive their sin and will no longer call to mind the wrong they have done.’” (Jer. 31:31-34)

Leader: “After all of this I will pour out my Spirit on all kinds of people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your elderly will have revelatory dreams; your young men will see prophetic visions. Even on male and female servants I will pour out my Spirit in those days.” (Joel 2:28)

All: Blessed are You, O Yahweh our God! King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Closing

Passover is the celebration of Jesus as the Passover Lamb who took away the sins of the world as the substitutionary sacrifice for all those who place their trust in Him. Just as Israel went through the wilderness, so did Jesus, except He passed all the tests and remained sinless.

Here we see the sign of the new wine and grain being fulfilled.

The Unleavened Bread week was fulfilled by the fact that Christ came as the God-man completely without sin. He often referred to Himself as the bread of life.

“Then Jesus told them, “I tell you the solemn truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but my Father is giving you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” So they said to Him, “Sir, give us this bread all the time!” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. The one who comes to me will never go hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (Jn. 6:32-35)

Firstfruits is fulfilled in Christ for it is this day that He rose from the grave conquering sin and death. Jesus is referred to in Scripture as our firstfruits.

“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also came through a man. For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; then when Christ comes, those who belong to him.” (1 Cor. 15:20-23)

Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) is fulfilled in that just as the Law was given to the Hebrews fifty days after their exodus, the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples fifty days after Jesus’ death and resurrection.

“Now when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like a violent wind blowing came from heaven and filled the entire house where they were sitting. And tongues spreading out like a fire appeared to them and came to rest on each one of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them.” (Acts 2:1-4)

The sign of the olive oil is fulfilled in the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which came on the day of Pentecost.

“For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they were all drinking from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.” (1 Cor. 10:1-4)

“Then I saw a new sky and a new earth, for the first sky and earth had ceased to exist, and the sea existed no more. And I saw the holy city – the new Jerusalem – descending out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: ‘Look! The residence of God is among human beings. He will live among them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not exist any more – or mourning, or crying, or pain, for the former things have ceased to exist.’” (Rev. 21:1-4)