

PASSOVER

A Teaching

In Leviticus 23, GOD Himself established what He called, ‘My Feasts’, and He commanded they be celebrated by His people forever.

- Passover
- Pentecost
- Tabernacles

Indeed, the fact that GOD Himself scheduled those events to coincide with the appointed times on His calendar indicates that even He observes His own festivals!

Passover is not sad or foreboding, but rather a joyous celebration and memorial of the redemption plan of our Creator GOD. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us!

- What a picture He has painted for us in the Exodus story.
- GOD made provision the same way, first for the Jews and then for the whole world.
- ‘the Lamb of GOD who takes away the sin of the world’.
- Passover is the appointed time to remember the death and burial of our Lord.
- We remember His resurrection on the celebrated Feast of Firstfruits, which was the actual day He rose from the dead as the first fruits of the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 5:7-8

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore, let us observe the festival...with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

- Jesus and the early disciples celebrated Passover every year as commanded them by GOD.
- The night of Jesus’ betrayal, they celebrated the Passover meal.
- Jesus used the elements of that meal to establish a New Covenant Passover ritual for all those who would come to faith in His Name.
- Even when these earliest Christians followed their Lord’s command and took the good news to the Gentiles, the new initiates into the faith of Jesus were instructed to observe the Passover.

As the church became increasingly Gentile the shift away from what by then was considered “Jewish” practices was accelerated.

- For the Western Church, this replacement of the Jewish foundations of the Christian faith reached a point of culmination in the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine.

- During the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, Constantine demanded that the church no longer have anything in common with the Jews.

- With his insistence, church leaders changed the time of celebration of Passover from Nisan 14 on the Jewish calendar to the first Sunday after the full moon after the vernal equinox on the Julian calendar— provided that Sunday did not fall on Passover (in which case it was moved a week away).

- Ironically, then, the Passover on the Jewish calendar continued to impact church doctrine and politics.

- As the fourth century dawned, the growing Anti-Semitism of official Christianity further fanned the flame of the passionate debate that condemned connecting the pivotal events of Christianity with the Jews.

- Finally, the issue was taken in hand by Constantine himself who, after the Nicene Council in 325 AD had concluded, wrote a missive to those leaders who were not present for the council in which he insisted that the church should “have nothing more in common the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Savior a different way”.

- The vast majority of the church has followed blindly in the error initiated by anti-Jewish zealots beginning in the third century.

- After the eleventh century, Passover observance vanished from official Christian tradition and experience.

- The church’s emphasis shifted from focusing on the celebration of Christ’s death to honoring His resurrection.

- In time, this celebration came to be connected with Germanic, Nordic, and Anglo-Saxon spring festivals.

- The word Easter was adopted as a name for the Sunday on which the Western churches chose to celebrate the resurrection.

- This term is from the Old English word Eastre or Eostre that dates from the ninth century AD and is connected with Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of Spring and light.

- In order to replace the paganism of the European world the church associated the resurrection of Jesus with a pagan celebration of Spring.

Whether official Christianity likes it or not, the day of Passover, the fourteenth day of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish calendar, has forever been established by God as foundational both to Judaism and to Christianity.

- Passover speaks of freedom and liberation from oppression.
- It speaks of the grace of forgiveness that God extended to his

people because of their acts of faith.

- It was his people's faith that provided the means by which the demands for divine justice are met and thereby made it possible for God to pass over their sins and deliver them from slavery.

- The Israelites' faith was demonstrated in the sacrifice of the paschal lamb and the application of its blood to the doorposts and lintels of their houses.

- That faith freed them from Egyptian slavery.

- The Christian's faith is demonstrated in his faith that the blood shed by the Paschal Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary is forever victorious to atone for the sins of the whole world, for those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

- This faith delivers all believers from the bondage of sin and death into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

- Because of the momentous events of the day of Passover, both Jews and Christians are called to remember God's mighty acts and to celebrate his goodness throughout all their generations; even to the end of the age when the Messiah Himself will once again commemorate the Lord's Passover in His kingdom.

- Then, both God and humankind will celebrate God's victory over death through his Son Jesus Christ.

LET'S BEGIN OUR PASSOVER CELEBRATION!

We are honored and grateful that we have been invited by the Eternal God of Heaven and Earth to celebrate the Passover that He so graciously has provided for us as families among His chosen people.

We were also slaves to sin when the Eternal Father on this very day gave the gift of His only begotten Son, Jesus Messiah, to adopt us as His children and to deliver us from the power of the evil one.

We come to this table not necessarily because our linear ancestors were delivered from Egypt but because we have become naturalized citizens in the commonwealth of Israel through our faith in Jesus Messiah, the One who brought Israel's light to the nations.

Whether native born or naturalized, we are all fellow citizens in God's nation and among His chosen people, Israel. Therefore, let us observe the festival with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

CHECKING FOR LEAVEN

God's Divine Instruction, the Torah, commanded Israel to remove all leaven

from their houses. We must remove the leaven of sin from our lives.

- In Christian tradition, leaven represents sin and unfaithfulness to the Word and will of God.
- We are invited by our Father to search for even the hidden sins in our lives; however, when we discover them, we cannot deal with them ourselves.
- We must turn to our Father who gently and thoroughly removes them from our lives and casts them into the fire.
- PRAYER SONG AND TIME AT THE ALTAR FOR SELF-EXAMINATION--Confession and Repentance, if needed.

LIGHTING THE PASSOVER CANDLES

As God honored Mary to bring the Light of God into the world, so He honors the woman to kindle the festival lights.

- Light has always symbolized the Divine Presence manifest in ancient times in the Shekhinah
 - and in the New Covenant in the Ruach haKodesh whose seven lamps of fire burn before the throne of God as well as in our hearts.
 - PLAY 'HERE I AM TO WORSHIP'
 - I WILL LIGHT THE 2 TALL CANDLES
 - THE LADIES WILL LIGHT THE TABLE CANDLES
 - WORSHIP THE LORD WITH THIS SONG
- ### **THE FIRST CUP-THE CUP OF SANCTIFICATION**

We fill our cups four times to celebrate God's full and free deliverance. "I am the Lord;

- [1] I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians [**Sanctification**],
- [2] I will rescue you from their bondage [**Deliverance and Judgment**], and
- [3] I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments [**Redemption**].
- [4] I will take you as my people, and I will be your God [**Thanksgiving and Consummation**]" (Exodus 6: 6-7).
- Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed . . . Sanctify them by your truth, your word is truth . . . and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"
- Sanctification means that we are set apart for GOD's purposes.
- PLAY 'PURIFY MY HEART'
- MAKE THIS SONG A PRAYER OF FRESH COMMITMENT TO

GOD.

- **EVERYONE DRINK THE CUP OF SANCTIFICATION
THE BREAKING OF UNLEAVENED BREAD**

You will notice that in the process of baking this matzah, it was pierced in order to ensure that it did not rise from incipient yeast. In the baking process brown stripes are created along these pierced rows. This brings vividly to our minds the suffering of our Messiah.

- He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities . . . and by his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53: 5);
- . . . they pierced my hands and my feet” (Psalm 22: 16);
- . . . they shall look on me whom they have pierced . . .” (Zechariah 12:10).

The sages have prescribed that the unleavened bread, one of the three essential elements of the Passover Seder, be received from three pieces of matzah separated in the folds of a napkin or in the three compartments of a specially designed bag.

- Many Christians have celebrated the Passover with three pieces of matzah to represent the three persons or modes of existence in the one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- Furthermore, it is the middle of the three pieces of matzah that is broken into two pieces, symbolizing the body of Jesus that was broken for sin.

- All matzah eaten on Passover is called “the Bread of Affliction.”
- **BREAK THE MIDDLE MATZAH IN HALF AND WRAP IN A LINEN NAPKIN AND HIDE IT FROM THE VIEW OF EVERYONE.**
- **IT WILL BE DISCOVERED AND REDEEMED AT A LATER TIME IN THE SEDER.**

- This represents our Messiah being ‘cut off or hidden from the land of the living; for the transgressions of the people He was stricken; however, He was discovered to be alive, resurrected in a glorious body!

- After we hide the half matzah, the remaining half of the middle matzah is returned to its place between the two whole matzah.

THE CUP OF DELIVERANCE AND JUDGMENT

(The second of four cups is now poured. Pour only a small amount, since no one will drink of this cup.)

We now come to the time for recognizing the second cup, the Cup of Deliverance.

- This cup is one of joy;
- however, it is diminished by the fact that the Egyptians, who were also God's children, suffered because of Pharaoh's evil heart.
- Thanks be to God for providing the Passover Lamb, who takes away the sin of the world and saves us from judgment.
- With this cup we celebrate God's deliverance that also brought judgment upon his enemies.
- God has delivered us from bondage to freedom, from darkness to light, from sorrow to joy.
- We rejoice, therefore, and praise him for his boundless grace,
- but we don't drink from this cup of judgment because we have been delivered from judgment!
- **POUR OUT THE SECOND CUP**

THE THREE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Our Lord Jesus also partook of these three essentials on the night of the last Passover supper before his death.

- Lift up the lamb shank bone, the first element:
- The roasted lamb--it died so the death angel would pass over you
- Lift up the matzah, the second element:
- The unleavened bread-eaten in haste; supernaturally delivered and redeemed from bondage
- Lift up the horseradish, the bitter herb-third element:
- The bitter herbs-as sweet as freedom is now, we must always remember the bitterness of bondage

EATING THE MATZAH

REMOVE THE MIDDLE MATZAH AND GIVE EVERYONE A PIECE.

“You shall eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, because you came out of the land of Egypt with great haste, so that all the days of your life you may remember the day of your departure from Egypt” (Deuteronomy 16: 3).

- Remember your redemption!
- (Everyone eats of a portion of the middle matzah.)

WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET

Our Lord Jesus not only washed his own hands during the Passover celebration, but as the meal was being served, he demonstrated the ultimate act of humility in washing the feet of the twelve disciples who shared that Last Passover with him.

- “After that he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet” (John 13: 25).

- As we remember this demonstration of servanthood that our Lord gave on the night of his last Passover, we affirm our commitment to serve one another in love.

- PLAY HARP MUSIC
- PASTOR MICKI WILL WASH SISTER MOLLIE’S FEE

EATING THE BITTER HERBS

HOLD UP THE HORSERADISH AND THE TOP MATZAH.
HAVE BO GIVE EVERYONE A PIECE OF THE TOP MATZAH.

- We eat the bitter herbs with the top matzah because it was God our Father who commanded, “They are to eat . . . bitter herbs and bread made without yeast” (Exodus 12: 8).

- Everyone dips the matzah in the bitter herbs and eats it.

EATING THE BITTER HERBS AND CHAROSET TOGETHER

TAKE THE THIRD PIECE OF MATZAH AND HAVE EVERYONE
BREAK OFF A PIECE.

- We dip in the maror for the second time, only now we dip also in the charoet to remind us of the sweetness that God always brings to temper the bitterness of life’s circumstances.

- The charoet is a mixture of fruit, nuts, and wine.
- It is red to remind us of the blood of the lamb.
- Everyone dips one piece of matzah in maror and another in charoet, places them together, and eats them as a sandwich.

EATING THE MEAL

Now let us share in the bounty of God’s provision as we eat the Passover meal, rejoicing in our freedom. (A full meal may be e

THE DESERT (AFIKOMIN)

Before the destruction of the temple, the roasted lamb was the last food that was consumed on Passover; however, since that time, the custom has been to eat the dessert, the afikomin, the half of the middle matzah that was hidden after the breaking.

- The afikomin substitutes for the Passover lamb.
- **Now we must redeem the afikomin--seek it out. [Hunt for it].**

- **The gift** that we give is a deposit on the full price to be paid in the future.

- This is a wonderful picture of the Holy Spirit that is given to the believer as a deposit on the inheritance of eternal life (2 Corinthians 1: 22; 5: 5; Ephesians 1: 13-14). [**Present the prize for finding the matzah**]

- As we redeem the hidden afikomin, we are reminded that our Lord Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead, just as the ancient blessing declares, “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.”

- Jesus, the bread from heaven, was indeed brought forth from the earth in the resurrection.

- At the time of the Exodus, this piece of matzah, the afikomin, was called the bread of affliction.

- Indeed, Jesus was afflicted for our sins, but he was raised again the third day according to the Scriptures, ensuring for us eternal life.

- Just as Israel now eats this bread instead of the paschal lamb, when we eat this bread, we symbolically eat the flesh of the Lamb of God who removes the world’s sin.

- **GIVE EACH PERSON A PIECE OF THE MIDDLE MATZAH.**

- This bread which we now receive, is it not the communion of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was broken for us?

- Take and eat, knowing that Christ has died for us, Christ is risen, and Christ is coming again.

- Everyone eats of the afikomin.

THE THIRD CUP THE CUP OF REDEMPTION

The third cup of Passover is the Cup of Redemption, so called because God said, “I will redeem you.”

PLAY THE SONG: JESUS MESSIAH

- It was this cup that our Lord Jesus shared with his disciples to introduce the New Covenant in his blood by which we celebrate our deliverance from sin.

- This cup which we now receive, is it not the blood that our Lord Jesus Christ shed because of our sins?

- This is the cup of the new covenant.

- Drink this cup knowing that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself through the shedding of his blood.

- Everyone drinks of the Cup of Redemption.

THE FOURTH CUP THE CUP OF THANKSGIVING AND CONSUMMATION

We now partake of the Cup of Thanksgiving because God said to Israel, “I am the LORD; I will take you as my people, and I will be your God” (Exodus 6: 7).

- This cup is also called the Cup of Consummation, for it is the one to which Jesus referred when he declared, “I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26: 29).

- It speaks to us of the consummation of the relationship to which we have been espoused: “Blessed are those have been called to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19: 9).

- We recognize it as the promise of his second coming.
- DRINK THE FOURTH CUP.

THE GREAT HALLEL

Jesus and His disciples ended the Passover by singing the Great Hallel, Psalm 136. Worship our Lord as this song is sung:

PLAY THE SONG PSALM 136

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord cause his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace, in the name of the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and praise forever and ever. Amen.

As we conclude this Passover, let us shout with all our Jewish brothers around the world:

“Next year in Jerusalem!”

For the Celebrants:

- Place settings for each participant, including plates and silverware.
- One copy of the Haggadah giving the order of celebration for each celebrant.
 - This should be placed beside the place setting for easy access and ready participation.
 - Bitter Herbs— usually ½ teaspoon per person. Fresh horseradish is preferred. Strong horseradish also conveys the idea of the bitterness of Egypt much better than mild horseradish does.
 - Charoset— at least 1 tablespoon per person. Chop apples and nuts; mix them with honey, cinnamon, and wine or grape juice.

- Matzah— enough for each person to have approximately one-fourth of a full piece of matzah.

- Matzah is generally sold in square pieces; however, round matzah is also appropriate and is probably nearer the shape of the unleavened bread that was used in Jesus' time.

- One cup per person. This can be a small cup or piece of stemware.

- Wine or grape juice adequate to fill each celebrant's cup about one-third full four times.

(The leader will have four ornate cups, wine glasses, or goblets to demonstrate the four cups of Passover; however, individual participants will have only one cup that is partially filled four times preferably with red wine or grape juice.)