

# Jesus in the Passover

**“Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover Lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover””.**

**(Luke 22: 7)**

## Introduction

For the Jews, festivals punctuated their life, engaging them with God’s dealings through their history, shaping their present identity as a people, as well as forming and capturing their hopes for what God will do in the future. For the Jews, to forget was the deepest unfaithfulness, to remember was to allow the past to shape their future.

The festivals were “enacted remembrance” that put them into the story and allowed them in some way to experience it. Passover, their most important festival, celebrated the deliverance from slavery in Egypt by ‘reliving’ the experience of their forefathers. As the rabbis’ said: “in every generation a man must so regard himself as if he came forth himself out of Egypt”.

Passover is about the story of the Israelites when they were held as slaves in Egypt, nearly 400 years after Joseph and his “techni-colour dreamcoat”! The Israelites were now oppressed by the Egyptians, who put slave masters over them, made their lives bitter, and dealt with them ruthlessly as they put them into hard labour. In the midst of all this the Israelites believed that God would one day save them from this slavery. Then, along came Moses, on a mission from God to set his people free. Each time the Pharaoh said “No” to the request, God sent a plague on the Egyptians to show he was serious - there were ten in all. Eventually Pharaoh got the message, and decided to let the slaves go free. The first Passover was their last night in Egypt when the “Angel of Death” literally “passed over” all the houses that were marked with the blood of a slaughtered lamb and their amazing, dramatic exit from Egypt. As a whole is known as “the Exodus”.

This event was so important that God told the Israelites to remember and celebrate the importance of their freedom every year since that time. This feast is designed to be enjoyed by all ages as the event is re-enacted through symbolic foods, actions and words – everyone takes part, as if they had been there themselves.

Also, more than that, it became a time to look forward to the future. They recognised that the Exodus from Egypt also points forward to a future complete freedom – not just from oppression in the form of slavery, but also spiritually, emotionally and physically. As such, the celebration of Passover continues to remember what God has done in the past, what God is doing now, and looks forward to when he will set them free again.

Easter is very closely related to Passover. Easter remembers Jesus’ death on a cross and his resurrection 3 days later. The so-called “last supper” that Jesus ate with his disciples before his arrest, trial and execution was one of these Passover meals.

The symbols used in Passover every year are closely linked to what was about to happen to Jesus. The last supper was a Passover meal, significantly and surprisingly changed by Jesus’ explanations of the symbols. He took the Passover story and wove in his own story, redefining the meal around himself, fulfilling the Jewish hope of redemption and covenant renewal through his own one-time sacrificial death. Hence The meaning of the Passover story, and its future hope was not lost on Jesus’ disciples and remains as a powerful legacy for all Christians throughout history. All that Passover celebrated and all that it was looking forward to suddenly made perfect sense and was perfectly completed in Jesus.

The Passover that we are celebrating is closely related to that which is traditionally celebrated in Jewish homes today, but is designed to illustrate how perfectly and easily Jesus can be seen running throughout each element of the proceedings.

Passover explores how God wants us to experience the fullness of freedom that has been made available through Jesus. Freedom is the central theme in Passover and we can better understand the Easter story when we understand the links between the two stories.

# Passover Preparation

## 1) Understand our part

- a. Participation in Passover means complete identification with those saved from Egypt. In fact “In every generation each individual should regard himself as if he had personally been saved from Egypt”.
- b. In the same way each individual must personally identify with the redemption provided by the Messiah, with His death, His burial and His resurrection. It is as if we died with Him, as if we were buried with Him, and as if we rose with Him when He rose from death.

## 2) Cleansing out the Leaven

- a. Prior to Passover all of the leaven (yeast) in the house is removed.
- b. In ancient times, before a batch of leavened dough was baked into bread, part of the dough was pinched off and set aside. Later, that piece of leavened dough was added to a new batch of flour, leavening the new batch.
- c. Removing all leaven represents a new start.

## 3) Thanking God For Keeping Us Alive

- a. A great opening blessing:
  - i. **Blessed are You O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has kept us in life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this season.**

## 4) If you are not using some critical foods you may want to use these 4 traditional questions at some point to reinforce the content:

- a. Get the youngest participant to *answer* the following questions:
  - 1) Why is it that on all other nights during the year we eat either bread or matzah, but on this night we eat only matzah?
    - We eat only matzah because our ancestors could not wait for their breads to rise when they were fleeing slavery in Egypt, and so they took the breads out of their ovens while they were still flat, which was matzah.
  - 2) Why is it that on all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs, but on this night we eat only bitter herbs?
    - We eat only Maror, a bitter herb, to remind us of the bitterness of slavery that our ancestors endured while in Egypt.
  - 3) Why is it that on all other nights we do not dip our herbs even once, but on this night we dip them twice?
    - We dip twice - (1) green vegetables in salt water, and (2) Maror in Charoset, a sweet mixture of nuts and wine. The first dip, green vegetables in salt water, symbolizes the replacing of tears with gratefulness, and the second dip, Maror in Charoset, symbolizes sweetening the burden of bitterness and suffering to lessen its pain.
  - 4) Why is it that on all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining, but on this night we eat in a reclining position?
    - We recline at the table because in ancient times, a person who reclined at a meal symbolized a free person, free from slavery, and so we recline in our chairs at the Passover seder table to remind ourselves of the glory of freedom.

# The Passover Seder

## 1) Kiddush(Sanctification): The First Cup

- a. During the Passover we will drink *four* cups of wine. Each cup has its own meaning and name. Let us begin our Passover meal by thanking God for the Cup of Sanctification, which serves to set apart this meal to accomplish God's plans and purposes.
- b. **Fill your wine glass, say the blessing together and then drink:**
  - i. ***Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.***

## 2) (Optional) Karpas: Parsley

- a. We dip the parsley into salt water, which represents our tears in Egypt. It also represents hyssop, the plant that was dipped into the blood of the Passover lamb and applied to the doorposts of our houses in Egypt.
  - i. *“the Egyptians appointed taskmasters over us to afflict us with hard labour. The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labour rigorously; and they made our lives bitter with hard labour in mortar and bricks and with all kinds of labour in the field, all their labours which they rigorously imposed on us.” (Exodus 1: 11 - 14)*
- b. **Dip the Parsley in salt water and say the blessing together before eating:**
  - i. ***Blessed are You O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the Earth.***

### 3) **Yachatz: Divide The Middle Matza**

- a. Three pieces of Matzah are placed within a “Matzatash”, which is a bag with three compartments on top of each other. There are a number of interpretations within Judaism for these represent, for example the Priests, the Levites and Israel or Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Given what happens, for us it seems quite clearly: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit.
- b. The matza is called the ‘Bread of Affliction’. It is the middle one that is removed from the middle of the Matzatash, just as the Son of God was the One who came from Heaven and was manifested on Earth. It is unleavened just as Messiah Jesus lived a perfectly sinless life. Messiah Jesus was afflicted, he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
- c. The matza is broken in half and put back in the Matzatash. The other half, the Afikomen, is wrapped up and hidden, just like Messiah Jesus was wrapped in grave-clothes and hidden in a tomb.
- d. **Take three Matza and put them together. Take the middle one, break it in half and wrap it in a white cloth. Get everyone to close their eyes and hide it in the room/house somewhere, to be searched and found later in the evening.**

### 4) **Magid: Telling The Passover Story**

- a. **Read the Story in Appendix 1**

### 5) **The Second Cup: The Cup Of Wrath**

- a. Since wine is a symbol of joy, we remove a drop of wine from our cup for each of the ten plagues. We do not drink from this cup. This teaches us that we are not to rejoice over the destruction of our enemies. They too are human beings made in the image of God, and it is a tragedy when a human being is destroyed. We are to feel compassion towards those who mistreat us.
- b. **Fill your wine glass. Dip your little finger in the glass then put a drop from it on the edge of your plate, and say the name of the first plague. Repeat this for each plague. Do not drink from this glass!**

### 6) **Daiyenu: It Would Have Been Enough**

- a. As a result we share together our overwhelming sense that the Lord has brought blessing upon blessing to us.
- b. **The Passover leader is to read out the first line everyone responds with Daiyenu (see Appendix 2), or “it would have been enough for us”.**

### 7) **The Symbolism of Passover Foods**

*(Optional: See Appendix 3 for the complete section “Symbolism Of Passover Foods”)*

- a. **Matzah – Unleavened bread.**
- b. The Unleavened Bread reminds us that the dough of our ancestors didn't have time to rise before the Lord redeemed them; as it is written:
  - i. *“They baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened because they were driven out of Egypt, and could not delay; neither had they made any provision for themselves.” (Exodus 12: 39)*
- c. Matzah is called “the bread of affliction”, just as the Messiah was also oppressed and afflicted.
- d. **Take a piece of matzah and think about its features. Then compare it with:**
  - i. *“He was **pierced** for our transgressions, he was **bruised** for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by his **stripes** we are healed” (Isaiah 53: 5)*
- e. **Say the blessing together then eat the matzah:**
  - i. ***Blessed are You O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to eat unleavened bread.***

### 8) **Shulchan Oraych: The Passover Meal**

- a. Since we have already prayed that God would sanctify the meal (in the Kiddush), and thanked God for the foods, we can now eat the Passover meal.
- b. **It is time to eat the feast that you have prepared!**

### 9) **Baraych: Blessing After The Meal**

- a. ***Blessed is He of whose food we have eaten and through whose goodness we live. Blessed are You O Lord our God, King of the universe, who feeds the entire world with Your goodness, with grace, with loving kindness and with pity.***

- b. ***You give bread to all flesh, for Your loving kindness endures forever. In Your great goodness food has not been and shall not be lacking for us, forever and ever. For You feed and support all, and You do good to all, and prepare food for all Your creatures which You created.***
- c. ***Blessed are You O Lord, who feeds all.***
- d. And now we remember the words of Jesus on another Passover occasion:
  - i. *“Truly, truly I say to you... it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of Heaven... I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst... I am the bread of life”. (John 6: 32 – 33)*
  - ii. *“I am the living bread that came down out of Heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.” (John 6: 51)*

## 10) Tzafun: The Hidden Afikomen

- a. After the meal we return to the hidden Afikomen.
- b. The broken matzah has to be found, which is what we must do now. The person who finds the Afikomen ‘resurrects’ it and brings it to the ‘father’. The ‘father’ pays a ransom for the Afikomen in order to bring it home.
- c. **Send everyone off to find the afikomen that was hidden earlier. The one who finds it gets paid the ransom (e.g. a bag of chocolate coins)!**
- d. If you remember, this middle matzah-of-three was removed from the Matzotash and was unleavened, striped, pierced, broken, wrapped up and hidden.
- e. And so, at His Last Passover Supper, Jesus took this matzah...
  - i. *“On the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said **“Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”**” (1 Corinthians 11: 23-24)*
- f. **Break the Matzah and pray together**
  - i. ***Blessed are You O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the Earth and the true bread, the living bread from Heaven.***

## 11) The Third Cup: The Cup Of Redemption

- a. And in the same way, after supper, Jesus took the Cup of Wrath. He added himself – his Blood – to it, thus transforming it into the Third Cup – the Cup of Redemption. And he said:
  - i. *“Drink from it, all of you; this cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in My blood, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26: 28)*
- b. It is the sacrificial blood of our Passover Lamb Jesus that has the power to take away all that is imperfect in our lives. It is this blood that can restore God’s perfection in our lives, and ultimately to the whole universe.
- c. Let us leave behind all of our ‘Egypt’s’ and drink the Salvation of God which is open to all of us.
- d. **Fill up your wine glass, Say the blessing over the wine together and drink from it:**
  - i. ***Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.***

## 12) The Fourth Cup: The Cup Of Praise

- a. So now, we can enjoy the fourth and final cup of our Passover together, the Cup of Praise.
- b. **Top up your glass, say the blessing together and drink from it:**
  - i. ***Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.***

## 13) Concluding Blessing

- a. The Priestly Blessing Of Aaron
  - i. ***Say the blessing together:***  
**May the Lord bless you and keep you.**  
**May the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.**  
**May the Lord lift up his countenance to you, and give you peace.**
- b. Next Year In Jerusalem
  - i. The traditional Passover blessing expresses the hope that next year they will celebrate Passover in Jerusalem in accordance with Jewish hopes. We might express it together in hope for the new Jerusalem at Jesus return, to bring to completion the New Exodus.  
**May God’s blessings go with you.**  
**“Next year in Jerusalem!”**  
**Amen and amen.**

# Appendix 1 – The Passover story

Read out the story. Split it into parts and get various people to read.

The children of Israel went down to Egypt in the time of Joseph. God used Joseph to save both the children of Israel and the children of Egypt. But years later a new Pharaoh arose who did not remember Joseph. Instead of showing gratitude he enslaved our people.

The Lord raised up Moses who went to Pharaoh and demanded that he let the Jewish people go. Pharaoh was stubborn and refused to let Israel go. God poured out ten plagues on the land of Egypt. The tenth plague was the worst one of them all: death for all the first-born sons throughout the land of Egypt, both the first-born of Israel and the first-born of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of beast.

There was only one way a first-born son could survive that first Passover night. God instructed us to take an unblemished year old lamb, kill it, and drain its blood into a bowl. Then we were to take hyssop, dip it in the bowl of blood and apply it to the two doorposts and the top of the door of our homes. The Lord said: "when I see the blood on the door I will pass over that house."

The Almighty went throughout the land of Egypt that night and struck every house. There was a great outcry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead. But as He had promised, on each door where He saw the blood of a spotless lamb, God passed over that home and spared the first-born son from death. The next day Israel was redeemed from Egypt. Then God took us by the hand, and led us through the wilderness to the promised Land of Israel.

Looking back, we can see that Passover was a prophecy of a greater Lamb, a more profound Redemption, and a greater Exodus that was to come.

Messiah Jesus is the Lamb of God who died on Passover to take away the sin of the world.

Just as the Jewish people took the blood of the Passover lamb and applied it to the doors of their houses, we must take the blood of Messiah Jesus the Son of God, the perfect sacrifice, and apply His blood to our lives.

Then God will deliver us from our "Egypt"

The Lord will take us by the hand, walk with us through the wilderness of this world, and lead to us the New Jerusalem, where we will live forever with Him!

## The Ten Plagues to say when taking drips from the cup of Wrath:

The Ten Plagues	Hebrew
Blood	Dam
Frogs	Tz'fardayah
Lice	Kee-neem
Swarms Of Insects	Ahrov
Plague	Dever
Boils	Sh'cheen
Hail	Barad
Locusts	Arbeh
Darkness	Cho-shech
Killing of the First-born	Makat B'cho-rot

# Appendix 2 – Daiyenu

The Passover leader is to read out the first line of the statements in Appendix 2 and everyone responds with Daiyenu, or “it would have been enough for us”.

If He had brought us forth from Egypt, and had not inflicted judgment upon the Egyptians.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had inflicted judgment upon them, and had not executed judgment upon their gods.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had executed judgment upon their gods, and had not slain their first-born.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had slain their first-born, and had not bestowed their wealth upon us.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had given us their wealth, and had not divided the sea for us.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had divided the sea for us, and had not drowned our oppressors in the sea.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had drowned our oppressors in it, and had not supplied our needs in the wilderness during forty years.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had supplied our needs in the wilderness during forty years, and had not fed us with manna.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had fed us with manna, and had not given us the Sabbath.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had given us the Sabbath, and not given us the Torah.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had given us the Torah, and not led us into the land of Israel.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had led us into the land of Israel, and had not built the Temple.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

If He had given us the Messiah, and did nothing else.  
*All: It would have been enough for us.*

# Appendix 3 - The Symbolism Of Passover Food

There are 5 main symbolic foods on our Passover table:

1. Zeroah – Lamb's shank bone.
  - a. The shank bone remembers the Passover Lamb, which is central to our story.
    - i. *"You shall say, 'It is a sacrifice of the Passover unto the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians and spared our houses.'" (Exodus 12: 27)*
  - b. The Lord was very specific about what kind of lamb was to be used (Exodus 12: 5)
    - i. A perfect male in the prime of its life
    - ii. Without any spot or blemish
    - iii. Observed for four days prior to Passover
    - iv. None of its bones were to be broken
2. Matzah – Unleavened bread.
  - a. The Unleavened Bread reminds us that the dough of our ancestors didn't have time to rise before the Lord redeemed them; as it is written:
    - i. *"They baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened because they were driven out of Egypt, and could not delay; neither had they made any provision for themselves." (Exodus 12: 39)*
  - b. **Take a piece of matzah and think about its features. Then compare it with:**
    - i. *"He was **pierced** for our transgressions, he was **bruised** for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by his **stripes** we are healed" (Isaiah 53: 5)*
  - c. **Say the blessing together then eat the matzah:**
    - i. ***Blessed are You O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to eat unleavened bread.***
3. Maror – Bitter herbs.
  - a. The bitter herbs are eaten because the Egyptians made us weep and embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt, as it is said:
    - i. *"They embittered their lives with hard bondage, in mortar and brick, and in all manner of labour in the field. All their labour was imposed upon them with rigour." (Exodus 1: 14)*
  - b. **Take a piece of Matza, add some horseradish to it, say the blessing together and then eat it: *Blessed are You O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to eat bitter herbs.***
4. Charoset – Apple mixture.
  - a. Charoset represents the mud that was mixed with straw by our ancestors to make the bricks with which we built Pharaoh's cities. It reminds us that, with God, there can still be sweetness even in the midst of the most bitter circumstances.
  - b. Rabbi Hillel (who predated Jesus), during the existence of the Temple, took unleavened bread, bitter herbs and charoset and ate them together. This became known as 'Hillel's Sandwich' and by Jesus' day had become a very powerful symbol. It was customary to take the 'bitter half' of the sandwich and dip it into the charoset bowl with someone you considered to be a friend. Then, rather than eat it yourself, you would give it to them as an expression of your love and friendship, even in times of bitterness and tears.
  - c. It may well have been this sandwich to which Jesus refers when he said:
    - i. *"I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me... one who dips bread into the bowl with me" (Mark 14: 18-20).*
  - d. **Action: Take a piece of matzah, add some horseradish and charoset, make a sandwich and share it with someone to whom you want to express your love and friendship.**
5. Betza – The egg.
  - a. The egg was not actually part of Jesus' Passover. It is a later addition that represents a hope for new life and a remembrance of the Temple sacrifices. The egg on the top table is also scorched to remember the destruction of the Jewish Temple in AD70.
  - b. **Take the egg and dip it into saltwater to remember our tears of suffering down the ages.**