

*A Christian  
Passover  
Haggadah*

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## *Introduction*

Passover is one of the seven feasts of Judaism commanded in the Old Testament. Indeed, it was the first one commanded. It goes back to the time of the Exodus, when God struck down the firstborn of the Egyptians. God commanded that Passover be observed from that time forward, so that the people of Israel would remember what the LORD had done for them.

As time went on, several elements were added to the Passover celebration. Major changes came after the destruction of the temple in AD 70. It was no longer possible to sacrifice the lambs in the temple, so the Passover meal no longer included lamb. Instead, the shankbone of a lamb was used to remind the people of the Passover sacrifice.

The Passover celebration is known as the *seder*, which means "set order." The *seder* service is contained in a book known as the *Haggadah*, which means "the telling." While there are different versions of the *Haggadah*, they all contain the same elements. As we go through our *seder*, we will see each of the elements that comprise the traditional *seder*.

## *Christ and Passover*

Passover is more than a Jewish feast, however. It is a picture of the redeeming work of Christ. The Apostle Paul refers to Christ as "our Passover" in 1 Corinthians, chapter 5. There is the obvious picture of Christ in the Passover lamb. As this lamb was sacrificed to deliver the people from Egypt, so Christ was sacrificed to deliver us from the bondage of sin. But the picture of Christ in the Passover *seder* goes beyond the symbolism of the lamb. As the *seder* developed in Judaism, many of the elements contained pictures of Jesus. As we go through this *seder*, pay particular attention to these pictures.

Beyond the pictures of Christ is the fact that Jesus chose a Passover *seder* as the occasion to institute the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. As we go through this *seder*, we should keep in mind that night when Christ ate his last meal with his disciples. In doing so, we can better prepare our hearts for the celebration of His resurrection.

## *The Lighting of the Candles*

### **Leader**

As we kindle the festival lights, we pray for the illumination of the Spirit of God to bring great personal meaning to this, our Passover celebration.

**A Woman** (*lights the candles and says*)

Blessed are You, O LORD our God, Ruler of the universe, who has set us apart by His Word, and in whose Name we light the festival lights.

**Leader**

As light for the festival of redemption is kindled by the hand of a woman, we remember that our Redeemer, the Light of the World, came into the world as the promised seed of a woman.

*The Four Cups of Wine*

**Leader**

As the LORD spoke these words of encouragement to Moses, He revealed to His servant the plan by which He would redeem the children of Israel.

**All**

" . . . I **will** bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians . . .

I **will** free you from being slaves. . .

I **will** redeem you with an outstretched arm . . .

I **will** take you as my own people, and I will be your God. . ."

**Leader**

The four cups of wine of Passover remember the four "I wills" of God as He promised to redeem His people. With each cup of wine let, us remember the redemption that God has provided.

*The Cup of Sanctification*

**Leader**

Let us lift our first cup together and bless the name of the Lord!

**All**

Blessed are You, O LORD Our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

## **Leader**

As He began his final Passover *seder*, Jesus our Lord shared a cup of wine with His disciples, and said to them:

Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. (Luke 22:17,18)

Let us all drink of this, the first cup of Passover.

## *The Washing of the Hands*

### **Leader**

In the traditional *seder*, only the master of the *seder* washes his hands. But our Lord used this opportunity to show that a true master is the one who serves:

### **Reader**

After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" He asked them.

"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet." (John 13:5, 12-14)

### **Leader** (*Passing the bowl to all participants*)

As we share in the washing of hands, let us remember the example of our Lord.

*Note: A ceremonial foot washing may be placed here instead of the washing of hands.*

## *The Karpas*

### **Leader** (*Lifting up the Parsley*)

The parsley has two meanings, it is green to remind us of life, which is created and sustained by Almighty God. It also serves to remind us of the hyssop that was used to place the blood of the Passover lamb upon the doorframe.

*(Lifting up the Salt Water)*

Life in Egypt for the children of Israel was a life of pain, suffering, and tears represented by the salt water. The salt water also represents the Red Sea, through which the Lord delivered the children of Israel.

### **All**

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

## **Leader**

Now let us, together, eat the Karpas

## *The Four Questions*

### **Reader** *(a child, if present)*

How different is this night from all other nights!

On all other nights we eat bread or *matzah*.

On this night why do we eat only *matzah*?

On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables.

On this night why do we eat only bitter herbs?

On all other nights we do not dip our vegetables even once.

On this night why do we dip them twice?

On all other nights we eat our meals sitting or reclining.

On this night why do we eat only reclining?

## **Leader**

It is both a duty and privilege to answer the four questions of Passover and to recite the mighty works of our faithful God.

## *The Story of Passover*

### **Reader 1**

Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly. They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly. Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."  
(Exodus 1:8-14, 22)

## Reader 2

Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said. Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" "Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water." (Exodus 2:1-10)

## Reader 3

One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian. (Exodus 2:11-12,15)

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up." When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey--the home of the

Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." (Exodus 3:1-10)

#### **Reader 4**

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country." God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. (Exodus 6:1-7)

#### **Leader**

Let us fill our cups a second time. A full cup is a symbol of joy, and indeed on this occasion, we are filled with joy at God's mighty deliverance. But let us also remember the great cost at which redemption was purchased. Lives were sacrificed to bring about the release of God's people from the slavery of Egypt. But a far greater price purchased our redemption from slavery to sin -- the death of Messiah.

As we recite each plague, let us dip a little finger into the cup, allowing a drop of liquid to fall, reducing the fullness of our cup of joy this night.

#### **All**

Blood!  
Frogs!  
Lice!  
Beasts!  
Cattle Disease!  
Boils!  
Hail!  
Locust!  
Darkness!  
Death of the Firstborn!

*(Do not drink the second cup at this time)*

## *The Passover Lamb*

**Leader** (*Lifting the Shankbone*)

Since the destruction of the temple lamb is not eaten at Passover. The shankbone reminds us of the lamb, and especially of the lamb who takes away the sins of the world, Jesus our Lord.

**Reader 5**

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire--head, legs and inner parts. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover. "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn-- both men and animals--and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. (Exodus 12:1-13)

**Leader** (*Lifting the Egg*)

The roasted egg has been added to the *seder* as a remembrance of the special holiday offering which was given in the Temple at the time of Passover.

## *Dayenu*

**Leader**

How great is God's goodness to us! For each of His acts of mercy and kindness we declare *dayenu* -- it would have been sufficient.

If the Lord had merely rescued us,  
but had not judge the Egyptians,

**All** *dayenu!*

If He had only destroyed their gods,  
but had not parted the Red Sea,

**All** *dayenu!*

If He had only drowned our enemies,  
but had not fed us with manna,

**All** *dayenu!*

If He had only led us through the desert,  
but had not given us the Sabbath,

**All** *dayenu!*

If He had only given us the *Torah*,  
but not the land of Israel,

**All** *dayenu!*

**All**

Blessed are You, O God, for You have, in mercy, supplied all our needs. You have given us Messiah, forgiveness for sin, life abundant and everlasting. Hallelujah!

*(Drink the second cup of wine)*

## *The Matzah*

### **Leader**

On all other nights we eat bread with leaven, but on Passover we eat only *matzah*, unleavened bread. As the children of Israel fled from Egypt, they did not have time for their dough to rise. Instead, the hot desert sun baked it flat. But even more than that, the *matzah* is a picture of the Messiah.

Leaven is used throughout the Scripture as a symbol for sin; the absence of leaven is a symbol of sinlessness.

## All

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are -- yet was without sin, a lamb without blemish or defect. (Heb 4:15, 1 Pet 1:19b)

## Leader

Three *matzahs* are wrapped together for Passover. The rabbis call these three a "Unity." Yet they are unable to explain its meaning. Some see it as the unity of the patriarchs, others a unity of the priests, Levites and people of Israel. We who know Christ see in it the tri-unity of God—Father, Son, and Spirit. In the *matzah*, we can see the stripes of the Messiah.

## All

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his **stripes** we are healed.

## Leader

The *matzah* is pierced

## All

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have **pierced**, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son. . . (Zechariah 12:10)

## Leader

 (*Lifting the plate with the three matzah*)

This is the bread of affliction, the poor bread which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in need share in the hope of the Passover.

*(Removing and breaking the middle piece of the matzah.)*

Just as the middle piece of the bread of affliction is broken, Jesus Christ was afflicted and broken. One half we wrap in cloth, just as the body of our Lord was wrapped for burial.

Let us now share a piece of the unleavened bread of Passover.

## All

Blessed are You, O LORD Our God, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

*(All eat of the bread.)*

## *The Bitter Herbs*

### **Leader**

On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables, but on Passover we eat only *maror*, bitter herbs. As sweet as our lives are today, let us still remember how bitter life was for the children of Israel in the land of Egypt.

*(Lifting the bitter herb)*

. . . so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly. They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work . . . (Exodus 1:12-14)

*(Break off **parts** of the top matzo, dip in bitter herbs and distribute)*

### **All**

Blessed are You, O LORD Our God, Ruler of the universe, who has set us apart by His Word and commanded us to eat bitter herbs.

*(All eat)*

## *The Kharoset*

### **Leader**

On all other nights we do not dip vegetables even once, but tonight we dip them twice.

*(Lifting the kharoset)*

The children of Israel toiled to make treasure cities for Pharaoh, working in brick and clay. We remember this task in a mixture called *kharoset*.

*(Break pieces from the bottom matzo and distribute dipped in bitter herbs and kharoset.)*

### **All**

We dip the bitter herbs into *kharoset* to remind ourselves that even the most bitter of circumstances can be sweetened by the hope we have in God.

*(All eat)*

### **Reader**

While they were reclining at the table eating, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me -- one who is eating with me."

They were saddened and one by one they said to him, "Surely, not I?"

"It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me."

## *The Lord's Supper*

*(Leader offers thanks for the meal)*

### *The Afikomen*

#### **Leader**

The *afikomen*, which means "that which comes after," is the piece of *matzo* that was broken from the middle piece in the unity. The *afikomen* was added to the *seder* after the destruction of the temple in AD 70 to represent the Passover lamb. In some ways, Jesus anticipated the *afikomen* when He established the Lord's supper. The *afikomen* provides a vivid picture of Christ. It is broken from the second portion of the unity which, as we saw earlier is a representation of the Trinity. It is wrapped in cloth and hidden away, as Christ's body was wrapped in cloth and buried in the grave. As the *afikomen* would later represent the Passover lamb, so Jesus used the bread of Passover to represent His sacrifice.

And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying,  
"This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." (Luke  
22:19)

Let us eat the *matzah*, meditating on the body of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

*(All eat)*

### *The Cup of Redemption*

#### **Leader**

The cup of redemption recalls the blood of the Passover lamb. This is the cup that Christ used when He established the Lord's supper.

In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20)

Let us drink the cup, meditating on the blood of Christ which cleanses us from all sin.

*(All drink)*

## *The Prophet Elijah*

### **Leader**

In the traditional seder, there would be one additional place set at the table. This is the place of the prophet Elijah, whom the Jews hope to come and announce the Messiah. We do not await Elijah, for prophecies of Elijah have been fulfilled in John the Baptist who declared of Jesus the Messiah,

Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)

Prior to John's birth the angel said of him,

And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah . . . to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (John 1:29)

Jesus said of John,

And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come.  
(Matthew 11:14)

## *The Cup of Praise*

### **Leader**

Let us fill our cups for the fourth and last time and give thanks to God, our great redeemer.

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good

**All**            *His love endures forever.*

Give thanks to the God of gods.

**All**            *His love endures forever.*

Give thanks to the Lord of lords.

**All**            *His love endures forever.*

to Him who alone does great wonders,

**All**            *His love endures forever.*

who by His understanding made the heavens,

**All**            *His love endures forever.*

who spread out the earth upon the waters,

**All**            *His love endures forever.*

who made the great lights --

**All**            *His love endures forever.*

the sun to govern the day,

**All** *His love endures forever.*

the moon and stars to govern the night;

**All** *His love endures forever.*

to Him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt

**All** *His love endures forever.*

and brought Israel out from among them

**All** *His love endures forever.*

with a mighty hand and outstretched arm;

**All** *His love endures forever.*

to Him who divided the Red Sea asunder

**All** *His love endures forever.*

and brought Israel through the midst of it

**All** *His love endures forever.*

but swept Pharaoh and His army into the Red Sea;

**All** *His love endures forever.*

to Him who lead His people through the desert,

**All** *His love endures forever.*

Give thanks to the God of heaven.

**All** *His love endures forever.*

(Psalm 136:1-16,22)

**Leader** (*Lifting the cup*)

Let us lift our cups and bless the name of the Lord!

**All**

Blessed are you, O LORD Our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

(*All drink*)

**Leader**

Our Passover *seder* is now complete, just as our redemption is forever complete.