

# PASSOVER

## Seder Haggadah

## Introduction/Welcome

Passover is kind of a holy meal “on the way”—we retell and remember the biblical historical story of the exodus out of Egypt.

We let the story work on in the current realities of our lives—where do I need salvation? What systems of oppression am I trapped within, or where in my life am I perpetuating systems that oppress others? Where am I supposed to be following God that may be frightening, disorienting, exhilarating or exhausting?

Finally, we look to the future—imagining together with our community of fellow sojourners the coming Kingdom of God and the Day of the Lord. This is why the traditional Seder meal ends with the proclamation “next year in Jerusalem!”

To some this seder will be a familiar practice, but to others this may feel a bit overwhelming, still others may be wondering how you will manage to lead others through this festival meal. Please be encouraged to use this Haggadah in the way it is most helpful. It may be read through quietly as a meditation on Christ as the Passover lamb, temple, High Priest, and our King. It may be read through over a traditional or modified passover meal with a single household— housemates, a couple, parents and children, a community group, or even, if your space can accommodate, all your friends and neighbors. A reminder that the church has celebrated the festivals through the ages, in secret and out in the open, in times both more and less difficult than our circumstances, times acutely difficult when a savior is needed now and at times of ease when we have the leisure to imagine the coming Kingdom of God. Creativity and faithfulness are more important than a strict adherence to norms or expectations.

The four crucial elements to celebrating passover are the **sacrificial lamb, the bitter herbs, the unleavened bread and the four cups of wine or juice**. The sections pertaining to these four are in bold throughout the Haggadah. Please feel free to modify the following service to be shorter/longer to accommodate those in your household who will share this meal with you.

Be encouraged. Be creative. Make this celebration meaningfully your own.

Grace + Peace to you and your household

## Home Preparation

For those of you who want to go all in here are some tips to prepare your table and home to celebrate Passover:

Traditionally the week before the Passover meal would be devoted to spring cleaning, but specifically to gathering and cleaning all of the leaven out of our homes. Leaven was a symbol of sin, so this would be a metaphorical purging of the sin from our lives. For those with kids, this can be a fun search through the house the evening before Passover with a candle and a feather to sweep up any remaining leaven and actively communicate the hardship of ridding our lives of sin.

The night of Passover it can be helpful to dress the table in a fine table cloth with the good dishes. Treat this festival meal as you would a Christmas feast, with festive candles, perhaps some good background music, make the seats around your table more comfortable with cushions or blankets, wear a nice outfit (make sure you're comfortable too though).

The Seder plate can be any large plate arranged with:

a **small cup or bowl of salt water** for dipping in the center of the plate, surrounded by a **lamb bone** (actual or symbolic stand-in),  
a **hard-boiled or roasted egg**,  
**bitter herbs**— horseradish (whole root and/or mashed) and lettuce or parsley or celery,  
**charoseth** (a mixture of chopped apples, nuts, dried fruit, spices, wine)

You will want a bowl or basin with warm water for “washing hands” before the meal along with a hand towel to dry hands.

A good supply of matzo which you can buy or make yourself (just remember, no yeast or leavening). You will need three of these set aside for the Matzo Tash, which is explained below, along with a clean cloth or napkin.

Lastly, enough wine or juice for everyone participating to have four cups through the course of the meal. The cups should be sized appropriately to how much you want to drink in one meal.

Have fun. Praise the Lord.

## I. The Lighting of the Candles

*A woman lights the candles. The leader explains:*

LEADER: The Passover begins as the Woman of each household kindles the festival light and recites a traditional Jewish blessing. We have adapted the blessing to reflect our faith in Y'shua (Jesus) who is the light of the world.

MOTHERS: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us in Jesus the Messiah, the light of the world.

*Baruch atah, Adonai elohenu, melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'Y'shua ha-mashiach, or ha-olam.*

LEADER: It is most fitting that a woman kindles the lights, for we are reminded of God's promise that the Messiah, the light of the world, would come not from the seed of man, but from the seed of woman and by the will of God. As the prophet Isaiah declared:

MOTHERS: "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14)

ALL: A light to lighten the Gentiles,

LEADER: and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:32)

ALL: Amen.

## 2. The First Cup: The Cup of Sanctification— *I will bring you out*

LEADER: The Passover has begun and during the course of our seder, we will drink from our cups and replenish them three more times.

*All raise the first cup*

The first cup is called the Kiddush cup or the Cup of Sanctification.

ALL: With this cup, we commit our observance to the Lord, and pray for His blessing upon the rest of the service to follow.

LEADER: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

*Baruch atah, Adonai elohenu, melech ha-olam, borei p'ree ha-gafen.*

All: Amen

LEADER: It was concerning this first cup that the Messiah declared:

ALL: "Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come" (Luke 22:17-18).

### 3. The Washing of Hands

LEADER: Ritual washings have been a part of Jewish life since God commanded Aaron to bathe his hands and feet before approaching the altar of the Lord. And so we customarily wash our hands at this time as a token of our desire to live lives of acceptable service to our Almighty God.

ALL: Yet Jesus carried this idea of servanthood one step further on that Passover night in the upper room. He "laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded Himself... and began to wash the disciples' feet" (John 13:4-5).

LEADER: How graciously has He taught us that the fullest meaning of servanthood is found in the attribute of humility.

### 4. The Seder Plate

LEADER: Behold this seder plate and these traditional symbols placed on it.

ALL: What do they mean, and of what do they speak?

LEADER: The story of Passover is a story of deliverance from bondage, and all of the elements of the Passover meal are part of the portrait of redemption. They are placed on this ceremonial plate for all at the table to see and partake of.

ALL: What is the meaning of the *karpas*, or greens, and the salt water?

LEADER: The greens remind us of life. The salt water represents tears. We immerse the greens in the salt water in thankfulness that we are redeemed, for we recognize that a life without redemption, is a life immersed in tears.

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the earth.

*Baruch atah, Adonai elohenu, melech ha-olam, borei p'ree ha'adamah.*

*All dip a piece of parsley in salt water and eat.*

ALL: What is the meaning of the *chazereth* (hah-**zer**-it), the root of the bitter herb?

LEADER: The root reminds us of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt and the greater bitterness of slavery to sin. We are told as believers to "get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." And to "be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31-32).

ALL: And what is the meaning of the *maror* (mah-**roar**), the bitter herb itself?

LEADER: The bitter herb reminds us of the tears the Israelites shed when they were slaves in Egypt. We are to eat enough of the major to allow our eyes to tear as well and also to remember that when Messiah returns “a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity” (Zechariah 13:1).

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to eat the bitter herb.  
*Baruch atah, Adonai elohenu, melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvohtav, vetzivahnu al achilat maror.*

*All eat a small helping of horseradish with matzo (enough to make your eyes water).*

ALL: But what is the meaning of the *charoseth*, the apple mixture, and why is it sweet to the taste?

LEADER: The *charoseth* is reddish brown in color, like the color of the mortar with which the bricks were made by the Israelites for the storage cities of Egypt. We eat this to remind us of the hard labor of the Israelites.

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the earth.  
*Baruch atah, Adonai elohenu, melech ha'olam, borei p'ree ha-adamah.*

*All eat a small helping of charoseth with matzo.*

ALL: And what is the meaning of the egg, the *haggigah*? And why is it roasted?

LEADER: As a hen lays her eggs each morning, the roasted egg reminds us of the morning sacrifice at the Temple. However, the Temple no longer stands, and we mourn its destruction in AD70 by dipping the *haggigah* into salt water, which represents tears. The *haggigah* is also cause for rejoicing, that Jesus, the perfect, once and for all sacrifice can bring us peace and fellowship with God. The Scripture says of Him, “But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26).

*All eat the haggigah dipped in salt water.*

ALL: And what is the meaning of the *zeroah*, the shank bone of the lamb?

LEADER: The *zeroah* reminds us of the Passover lamb that was sacrificed in Egypt, its blood put on the doorposts of the Israelite homes as a sign, so that death would pass over those homes. The *zeroah* reminds us of the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for us.

## **5. The Bread of Affliction**

LEADER: Rabbi Gamaliel said, “He who has not explained the three symbols of the seder has not fulfilled his duty: the Passover lamb, the bitter herb, and the unleavened bread.”

ALL: We have heard of the Paschal lamb and we have eaten of the bitter herb, but what of the unleavened bread?

*The leader holds up a piece of matzo.*

LEADER: Behold the bread of affliction which the Israelites (our ancestors) ate in the land of Egypt. Then they (we) were slaves, now they (we) are free. Let all who are hungry come and eat.

ALL: But what is the meaning of this unleavened bread?

LEADER: The unleavened bread reminds us that our redemption out of Egypt came quickly as the Israelites left in haste without time for the dough of their bread to rise and become leavened. For during Passover, no leavened foods can be eaten. No items that have touched leaven can remain in the home. A ceremony to remove the leaven takes place the night before Passover begins. Leaven is also symbolic of sin. Perhaps this sheds additional light on the words of Paul, who wrote, “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

## 6. The Matzo Tash

*The leader lifts the matzo tash (three matzo wrapped together in a cloth).*

LEADER: This three-compartment pouch contains three pieces of matzo, yet it is also called a unity. There are several explanations for this three in one unity. Some say it is a unity of worship: of the priests, the Levites, and the entire congregation of Israel. Some say it is a unity of the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However the center wafer is removed, broken, and wrapped in linen to be brought back at a later time. As believers we see a greater unity represented here—the unity of God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

This centerpiece of matzo, now broken, has a special name: the *afikomen*. This is not a Hebrew word, but a Greek word, and it means, “That which comes after.” The origin and significance of the afikomen and the matzo tash are shadowed in mystery—a mystery we will explore as our celebration unfolds. But for now, guesses must give way to a game.

We are going to hide the afikomen as you children close your eyes. If you find it, we have to buy it back from you, or the Passover cannot be concluded...

ALL: Great is the reward of the one who finds the hidden afikomen.

## 7. The Four Questions

LEADER: The children are essential to the Passover celebration, for it is through this feast that they may learn of God's redemptive nature. And so at this time, the children come forward to learn the meaning of Passover by asking the traditional four questions. Who will ask the four questions for all the children?

CHILD: Why is this night different from all other nights?

LEADER: Once the Israelites were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord in His goodness and mercy redeemed them (us) from that land with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

ALL: Had He not redeemed them (us), surely they (we) and their (our) children would still be enslaved.

CHILD: On all other nights we eat either leavened or unleavened bread; on this night why do we eat only unleavened bread?

LEADER: We eat the unleavened bread to remember that the sons of Israel, in their haste to leave Egypt, had to take their bread with them while it was still flat.

CHILD: On all other nights, we eat herbs of every kind; on this night, why do we eat only bitter herbs?

LEADER: We eat the bitter herbs to remember how bitter it is to be enslaved.

CHILD: On all other nights we do not dip the bitter herbs even once; on this night, why do we dip twice?

LEADER: By dipping, we remember that a life of bondage is bitter indeed, but that even the harshest bondage is sweetened by the promise of redemption.

CHILD: On all other nights, we eat our meal in any manner; why is this night so special?

LEADER: This night is truly special; for once the Israelites (we) were slaves, but now they (we) are free, so we recline in order to appropriate and appreciate the rest God has wrought for us.

By strength of hand, the Lord brought Israel (us) out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. In gratitude, let us then worship our God and recount the story of Passover:

## **8. The Story of Passover**

*The leader may choose to tell the story of passover from memory or read from Exodus ch. 1-12 or simply to acknowledge the story and continue below.*

ALL: And just as the blood of those first Passover lambs was applied in faith to the doorposts of Israel's homes, so the blood of the Messiah must be applied in faith to the doorposts of



our hearts. And so tonight, we worship God not only because the angel of death passed over the Jewish people's homes,

LEADER: But because all of us— whether Jewish or Gentile— may be redeemed from an even greater bondage, the bondage of sin, through faith in the Messiah of Israel.

ALL: The Messiah Jesus.

LEADER: Through Him, we may pass over from death to life.

ALL: Amen.

## 9. The Ten Plagues

LEADER: A full cup is a symbol of complete joy. Let us, therefore, diminish our cups as we recall the plagues that befell the Egyptians.

*The leader recites the plagues on at a time and all respond (e.g., Leader: Blood, All: Blood) as participants use one finger to empty a drop from the cup onto a plate or saucer for each plague.*

The plagues: Blood—Frogs—Lice—Flies—Cattle Disease—Boils—Hail—Locusts—Darkness—Slaying of the Firstborn.

## 10. The Second Cup: The Cup of Praise— *I will free you*

LEADER: It is now time to drink the second cup.

*All raise their cups.*

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, creator of the fruit of the vine. We praise you, not for the plagues that brought suffering, but for Israel's deliverance that followed.  
*Baruch atah, Adonai elohenu, melech ha'olam, borei p'ree ha-gafen.*

*All drink the second cup.*

11. The Leader's Grace Before Dinner

## 12. The Passover Meal— *Dinner is served.*

## 13. The Afikomen

*The leader now sends the children in search of the hidden afikomen. The child who finds the afikomen returns it to the leader and receives a reward.*

*The leader raises the matzo.*

LEADER: This joy over the afikomen is certainly one of the more delightful moments of the Passover seder. And you see, some mystery surrounds the significance of the afikomen and matzo tosh from which it has been drawn. We may justly ask,

ALL: What is the meaning of the three matzos, and why is the middle matzo broken, buried, and then brought back?

LEADER: To many people the question is a riddle to be resolved. But for those who know the Messiah, it need not be a riddle at all. For where can we find a clearer picture of our Messiah than in this tradition concerning the afikomen that has been broken... buried... and then brought back? Even the matzo, a symbol of a sinless nature, speaks of Jesus. The rabbis have set down some very specific regulations concerning the appearance of matzo. If it is to be found suitable for Passover use, first it must be striped...

ALL: As was Jesus. For the prophet Isaiah says, "And with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

LEADER: Second, it must be pierced.

ALL: As was Jesus. For the prophet Zechariah says: "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced" (Zechariah 12:10).

LEADER: Earlier we called this the bread of affliction that the Israelites (our ancestors) ate in the land of Egypt. And this is true. But it is also a symbol of the Bread of Life, which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world. Jesus said:

ALL: "I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

LEADER: Let all who are hungry come and eat.

*The matzo is eaten.*

#### **14. The Third Cup: The Cup of Redemption— *I will redeem you***

*The third cup is filled.*

ALL: What is the meaning of the third cup, the cup of redemption, the cup taken after the dinner meal?

LEADER: The promise of God to redeem the enslaved Israelites with an outstretched arm is available to us as well. Jesus took this third cup, the cup after the meal, and said, "For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

*All drink the third cup.*

## **15. The Fourth Cup: The Cup of Hallel— *I will take you to be my people***

*The fourth cup is filled.*

LEADER: Now comes the recitation from the Hallel or Praise Psalms, 113 through 118. Let us recite psalms of worship at this time, just as Jesus recited them every year as part of His Passover observance. Praise you the Lord!

(this time of praise may be adapted to each household— a traditional call/response is found below, you may choose to sing a song of worship together, or pray in spontaneous praise together)

ALL: Praise, O you servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.

LEADER: Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.

ALL: From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised.

LEADER: The Lord is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens.

ALL: Who is like unto the Lord, our God, who dwells on high?

LEADER: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.

ALL: For His love endures forever!

LEADER: I love the Lord, for He heard my voice; He heard my cry for mercy.

ALL: Because He turned His ear to me, I will call on Him as long as I live.

LEADER: The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.

ALL: The Lord protects the simple-hearted; when I was in great need, He saved me.

LEADER: How can I repay the Lord for all His goodness to me?

ALL: I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.

LEADER: Praise the Lord, all you nations; extol Him, all you peoples.

ALL: For great is His love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord.

LEADER: Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous.

ALL: The Lord's right hand has done mighty things!

LEADER: I will not die but live and proclaim what the Lord has done.

ALL: The Lord has chastened me severely but He has not given me over to death.

LEADER: The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.

ALL: The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous to our eyes.

LEADER: You are my God and I will give thanks. You are my God, and I will exalt You.

ALL: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.

*All drink the fourth cup.*

16. The Cup of Elijah (not taken)

*The leader points to the cup of Elijah.*

LEADER: The sharing of the afikomen and the cup of redemption are precious moments in the Passover seder. Yet many of God's beloved chosen people do not yet see how the Messiah and His promise to redeem them are portrayed in the breaking of this bread and the drinking of this cup. And so they look ahead to the promise represented by a special cup set aside for the prophet Elijah. It is recorded by the Hebrew prophet Malachi that the Messiah's coming will be preceded by the return of Elijah the prophet. And each year at Passover, a child goes to the door and opens it wide, hoping the prophet will accept the invitation, enter the home, and announce the coming of the Messiah.

A cherished Jewish prayer is for the prophet Elijah to come soon, in our time, with the Messiah, Son of David. Yet, we know that Elijah has returned. For when Jesus spoke of the prophet John, He said of him, "If you will receive it, this is Elijah, which was for to come" (Matthew 11:14). The prophet, the forerunner, has come. And so did the Messiah, even during Passover some two thousand years ago.

*A child opens the door to see if Elijah waits outside.*

17. The Hope

LEADER: As we celebrate this Passover seder, may our hearts be joined in gratitude to God for the coming of Messiah, for His death and resurrection, and for the promise of His return.

ALL: Praise the Lord, all you nations; praise Him all you people. For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever. Hallelujah!

LEADER: It is traditional to conclude the seder with the words, “L’shana Ha Ba’ah B’yerushalayim” which means “Next Year in Jerusalem.” For generations, this greeting has captured the fervent hope of the Jewish people, a hope to be restored to the ancient land of Israel, to Jerusalem, in the presence of the Messiah Himself.

We too have a similar precious hope, the hope of Messiah’s soon return.

We believe in the surety of His promise: “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. . . . I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.” (Revelation 22:12, 16)

**EVERYONE: MARANATHA! Come, Lord Jesus!**