

JESUS IN THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

Week 5 – Passover/Unleavened Bread/Last Supper

How does Passover relate to us? Through the cross. Through Jesus' death on the cross for our sins. The blood of the Passover lambs during the first Passover delivered the children of Israel from bondage to slavery in Egypt. The blood of the perfect Passover Lamb, Jesus, delivers us from bondage to sin forever!

How do Jewish people celebrate the Passover? What do they believe about God's deliverance of the children of Israel in approx. 1447 BC? What is the significance for them today? What is the significance for us?

At the first Passover in Egypt, in approx. 1450 BC, the lambs died, and their blood was applied to the doorposts and lintels of the homes that observed the first Passover, so that the first born would not die – the first born would be given life in the midst of the judgment of the 10th plague! The Bible teaches that the lamb was the focus – the requirement – for Passover (Ex. 12; Ex. 34:25; Deut. 16:1-7). The lamb was the centerpiece of all that was accomplished. If there was no lamb, there would be no deliverance. One could not exist without the other.

At the first Passover, God required three foods to be eaten: the lamb, matzah (unleavened bread), and bitter herbs (Ex. 12:8). 1) The sacrifice was to be a young lamb, a male of the first year (Ex. 12:5), depicting innocence. The lamb was to be roasted with fire portraying the judgment that would fall on the lamb in place of the firstborn. 2) Matzah (unleavened bread) was to be eaten because they Passover was observed in haste. The children of Israel were driven out of Egypt; there was no time for their dough to rise. Leaven was removed and is removed from Jewish homes at Passover. Leaven, with its souring characteristic, which we have already discussed during week 3, is considered a symbol of sin in Scripture (I Cor. 5:6-8). The overarching symbolism of the unleavened bread speaks to the fulfillment of the Passover. Jesus, the spotless perfect Passover Lamb, our pure sacrifice. 3) Bitter herbs were to be eaten as a reminder of the suffering of the children of Israel in Egypt. We cannot forget that Jesus suffered for us.

Passover is a time for remembrance.

There was only one Passover when the Lord passed through the land in judgment. Every observance since then has been a memorial commemorating that occasion (Ex. 13:3). Passover was celebrated the eve of the exodus out of Egypt (Ex. 12). Passover was next celebrated in the Sinai wilderness one year after Israel left Egypt (Num. 9:1-14); it was celebrated as the Jewish people came into the land of Israel (Josh. 5:10-12); it was celebrated in the days of King Hezekiah (II Chron. 30) and King Josiah (II Kings 23:21-23; II Chron. 35:1-19); it was celebrated after the return from the Babylonian captivity (Ezra 6:19-20); and Passover was celebrated extensively in the days of Jesus (John 11:55).

We've already learned that Passover/Pesach (in the Hebrew) means – to pass over, to protect, to shelter under the wings of the Almighty. What does “Seder” mean? It means “order.” In Exodus 12 God instructed the children of Israel to commemorate the evening by eating 3 foods: lamb, matzah (unleavened bread), and bitter herbs. Rabbis later added other elements including green vegetables, a roasted egg, charoseth and 4 cups of wine. We know from the Gospel accounts that, in Jesus' day, the 4 cups of wine had already been introduced. Passover, like most of the Biblical holidays, features special meaningful foods. This reminds us that, from a Jewish perspective, theology is not only taught, it is also eaten.

During the Seder, the Papa reads from the Haggadah. Haggadah means “the telling”. It is the telling of the deliverance/redemption from Egypt. Ask your Jewish friends if they read from the Haggadah. The Haggadah is, in essence, a script. It maps out the order and it relays the story of the exodus. The youngest child at the Seder is encouraged to ask questions of the Papa so that the Exodus story could be rehearsed from generation to generation. *Ex. 12:26-27 - And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?'²⁷ that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.'” So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.*

And, so Passover was to be – is to be – a time of worship – looking forward to what God would do on their behalf – and, today, looking back – remembering – what God has done on their behalf!

You need to know that Rabbis have told their congregations, “In every generation let each man look on himself as if he came forth out of Egypt. As it is said: “And thou shalt tell thy son – it is because of what the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.” The Exodus and redemption are not to be taken only as history. Each Jewish person is to consider the experience as personal. The Hebrew Scriptures speak of a PERSONAL God. Share this with your Jewish friends!

You should know that there are, within Judaism, over 5,000 renditions of the Haggadah! Many Haggadahs do NOT include the lamb and the blood!!

Without the lamb, there is no Passover. Since 70 AD, when the (second) Temple was destroyed in Jerusalem, Jewish people do not eat lamb at their Passover celebrations. In their observance of Passover, however, Jewish people regard the shankbone of the lamb that sits on the Seder plate as being representative of the lamb. And, they regard the hidden piece of matzah, the “afikomen,” that is eaten at the end of the meal, as being representative of the lamb.

God instructed the children of Israel that on the tenth day of the month of Nisan a lamb was to be taken. In Ex. 12:3 the commandment is to take “a” lamb – an unknown entity – nothing special. In Ex. 12:4, God says “the” lamb. Now he

is unique, set apart. Finally, in Ex. 12:5 God specifies “your” lamb. This is a personal provision from God. A lamb per household, Scriptures says, according to each man’s NEED! A personal lamb for a personal need. Mankind has a need – to be redeemed, delivered – FORGIVEN!

Was the lamb something new to the Jewish people?

A lamb for a person: While sacrifices are mentioned in the beginning of Genesis, it’s not until Genesis 22:8 that a lamb for sacrifice is first specifically mentioned in Scripture. *And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.”* God provided a ram caught in the thicket in lieu of Abraham having to sacrifice Isaac. We see a substitutionary sacrifice in this passage. What about the lamb? This was a prophetic verse in Genesis 22:8; the lamb was yet to be provided.

And, here at the first Passover, we not only have a lamb for each man’s need but also for a household – for the family: Ex. 12:3-4 - *Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. ⁴ And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb.*

Jesus is the fulfillment of Passover. We must remember that each feast of the Lord that He gave to the Jewish people has a “rest of the story” – a fulfillment. And, that fulfillment, which speaks to Jesus, must occur on the day of the feast.

And so we read Luke 22:7-20 - *Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. ⁸ And He sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.” ⁹ So they said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare?” ¹⁰ And He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. ¹¹ Then you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, “Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” ¹² Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.” ¹³ So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover. ¹⁴ When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve^[a] apostles with Him. ¹⁵ Then He said to them, “With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶ for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; ¹⁸ for I say to you,^[b] I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” ²⁰ Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.*

In Matthew 26:2 we read Jesus' words to the disciples, *You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.*" Passover was God's chosen time for the Messiah to die. Throughout His public ministry on earth, Jesus had avoided His enemies' plots to kill Him (Luke 4:29-30; John 5:18; John 10:39). BUT NOW IT WAS TIME!

Matt. 26:3-5 - *Then the chief priests, the scribes,^[a] and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,⁴ and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him.⁵ But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."*

Passover – the 14th of Nisan – began at sundown and ended after Jesus was crucified.

Observations:

- Luke 22:7 - it was the time for the Passover (lambs) to be killed.
- Luke 22:8-13 – Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover. They were to look for a man carrying a pitcher. Some have suggested that this man was from the Essene sect of Judaism. The Essenes, emerged out of disgust with traditional Judaism taught by the Pharisees and Sadducees. This sect believed the Pharisees and Sadducees had corrupted the city and the [Temple](#). They moved out of [Jerusalem](#) and lived a monastic life in the desert, adopting strict dietary laws and a commitment to celibacy. So, we have a sect of Jewish men who's authority was "the Teacher of Righteousness" and whose calendar was a solar calendar as opposed to the Jewish lunar-solar calendar. Thus, this man carrying a pitcher is quite interesting. A chore handled by women in Biblical times and in this culture, was relegated to a man. Could this man have been an Essene? AND, because of their solar calendar, they ate the Passover prior to the fourteenth of Nisan.
- Most importantly, we must understand that all these arrangements had been prearranged. Jesus' time had come! He, as the perfect Passover Lamb, HAD to fulfill the Passover and HAD to die ON the day of Passover, the fourteenth of Nisan.
- Luke 22:15 - *With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.* It was essential that Jesus celebrate the Passover with His disciples. He must share with them the reason for His crucifixion – the reason for the New Covenant in His blood.

The disciples knew – or should have known about the New Covenant.

Jer. 31:31-34 - *Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them,^[a] says the LORD.³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all*

shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

This is the New Covenant that Gentile believers in Jesus have come under. It is the blessing aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. And that blessing aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant is salvation.

Gal. 3:13-14 - Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”^[h]), ¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

In the midst of all the instructions God gave to the children of Israel concerning the lambs being brought into the house – a lamb per household – according to each man’s need. . . there is, in my thinking, a most peculiar verse. . . *Ex. 12:6 - Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.*

In keeping with “it,” there appears to have been a “national” Passover lamb which was killed in the Temple on the fourteenth of Nisan at “twilight” (“between the evenings” – *beyn ha’arbayim*).

In cutting to the chase, I’ll tell you that the time was 3 p.m. And, Jesus, our perfect Passover Lamb, VICTORIOUSLY cried out from the cross at 3 p.m., “It is finished!” In the throes of suffocating from the cruel sufferings of crucifixion, Jesus cry at the end was LOUD and CLEAR and HE gave up His Spirit. He gave up His own life – for us.

Passover was a very dramatic time of year for the nation of Israel. They were brought face-to-face with their sin and reminded that an innocent lamb had to die to atone for their sins. Thousands upon thousands of lambs were slaughtered for millions of people, yet all combined couldn't take away one sin.

Hebrews 10:4 - For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Hebrews 10:11-14 - And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Jesus the Messiah, in one sacrifice, did what all the lambs, goats, and bulls could never do--take away sin forever.

LAST SUPPER

Jesus, at His last Passover with His friends, shared with them the full meaning of the Passover.

John 13:1-4 – Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. ² And supper being ended (some ancient manuscripts: “supper now in progress” [difference of one Greek letter] – makes sense due

to vv. 21-27 – the meal was still being eaten) *the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him,*³ *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,*⁴ *rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.*

Here we see an extreme act of servanthood.

And, here in the midst of the disciples arguing who among them would be greatest, Jesus humbles Himself!

Luke 22:24-27 - *Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.*²⁵ *And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.'*²⁶ *But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.*²⁷ *For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.*

What a message for those who would be of the body of the Messiah – the body of Christ.

In Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet, consider what they saw and how we might understand Jesus' actions:

- Jesus rose from supper, a place of rest and comfort
- Jesus rose from His throne in heaven, a place of rest and comfort
- Jesus laid aside His garments, taking off His covering
- Jesus laid aside His glory, taking off His heavenly covering (but NEVER emptied Himself of His deity!)
- Jesus took a towel and girded Himself, being ready to work
- Jesus took the form of a servant, and came ready to work
- Jesus poured water into a basin, ready to clean
- Jesus poured out His blood to cleanse us from the guilt and penalty of sin
- Jesus sat down again ([John 13:12](#)) after washing their feet
- Jesus sat down at the right hand of God the Father after cleansing us, when He ascended into heaven.

At the end of Jesus' Passover Seder, before He and the disciples sang and hymn and then left for the Mount of Olives, it appears that they had completed the actual meal when Jesus took bread and blessed it and distributed it. Matt. 26:26 - *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed^[b] and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."* This was an unusual act. No other food was to be eaten after the Passover lamb. At this Last Supper, Jesus was using what Jewish people call the "afikomen" to represent the Lamb – to represent His sacrifice! "Afikomen" is considered an "after dish" today in Jewish homes. The "afikomen" today is hidden in a fabric container that holds three matzahs. The middle piece of matzah is removed from this fabric container, broken in two and hidden during the Seder. One half of the middle, broken piece of matzah is wrapped in a linen cloth and is "buried" during the Seder. That

is the piece that is called the “afikomen.” It is retrieved after dinner by the children – it is raised from its burial place and eaten. And, today in Jewish homes the “afikomen” represents the lamb that is missing at the Seder meal. “Afikomen” is not a Hebrew word. It is a Greek word which means, “I am come”!

Jesus instituted the “new memorial.” He shared/explained the fulfillment of the Passover – Himself – His once-for-all sacrifice! He declared to the disciples that after His death, the Passover lamb would no longer have the same significance. It was the memorial of physical, historical redemption; however, it was a shadow of the ultimate redemption – soon to come. He was about to become the better sacrifice, to die once, for all.

Heb. 9:12-15 - Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ¹⁵ And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Heb. 9:23-26 - Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵ not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— ²⁶ He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Matt. 26:27-30 - ²⁷ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ For this is My blood of the new ^[c] covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. ²⁹ But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.” ³⁰ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

And this cup, of the four cups in the Passover Seder, was the third cup – the cup of redemption! The third cup in Passover Seders in Jewish homes comes after the blessing which is spoken after the meal. And, the cup of redemption represents the blood of the Passover lamb that was applied to the doors in Egypt during that first Passover. It is of this cup that Jesus said, “This is my blood of the new covenant.”

Jesus told the disciples and is telling us, *do this in remembrance of Me* (Luke 22:19).

Let us REMEMBER all that God reveals to us in His word. . . and let’s share it with others.

The feast of Passover is so closely associated with the fervent hope for the coming of the Messiah. Each year during the Seder, a child is sent to the front door to hopefully welcome the prophet Elijah. It is hoped that the prophet will step through the doorway, drink his cup of wine, and announce the coming of the Messiah. This tradition is rooted in the book of Malachi, *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.*

Scripture does not only lay out a lamb for a person and a lamb for a family. . . we also read about. . .

The Lamb for Israel:

Isaiah 53:6-8 - All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. . . . For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

The Lamb for the world:

When John the Immerser saw Jesus coming to the Jordan to be baptized, John cried out, *Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.* (John 1:29).

The Lamb for eternity:

Regarding the glory of the New Jerusalem, we're told in Rev. 21:22-23 - ²² *But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.*

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Pray about inviting someone to the upcoming Messianic Passover Seder.

Reread the handout and determine what you wish to research further.

Journal your thoughts and questions about Jesus' sacrifice and the passion week. Always leave room for future journaling under topics already addressed.

Share this lesson with someone who doesn't attend this class.

Perhaps form a study group to research further.

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QUESTIONS:

What did you take away, at this point, from this lesson?

Were there any V8 moments? If so, what were they?

What impacted you most?

How will this impact your relationship with God and with others in the body of Christ and with those who are not yet believers?

How are you loving God and others?

How can you do so?

Did this lesson help you to further understand God's progressive unfolding of truth in Scripture? If so, how?

Why is the progressive revelation of God in Scripture important?

How can you best share, in summary fashion, what you learned today with a Jewish friend/acquaintance/neighbor/doctor?