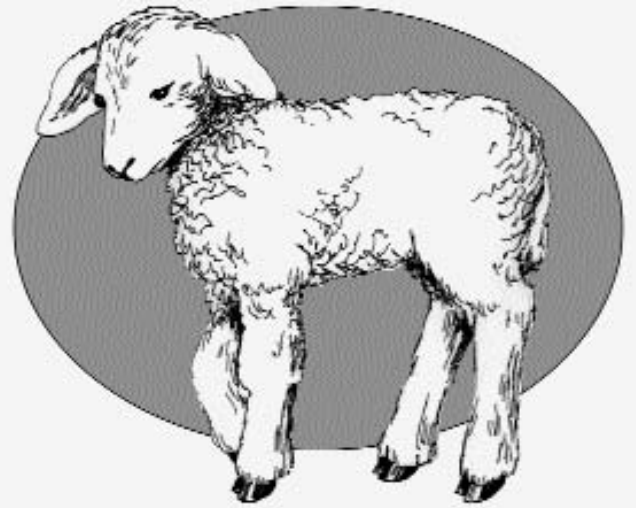




Sample pages from the book
"A Family Guide to the Biblical Holidays."

Note: This sample file includes 40 out of 87
pages from the Passover and Unleavened
Bread chapters.

Feast of Passover



Pesach



<i>Passover Observance</i>	<i>Messianic Significance</i>
The lamb was without blemish.	Jesus was examined and found without blemish (Mat 21:23; 27:1-2; 11-14; 17-26; Luke 3:2; John 11:49-53).
The lamb was a male of the first year.	Jesus was the firstborn Son of God.
The lamb was set aside for four days on the tenth of Nisan.	Jesus entered Jerusalem and the temple on public display for four days on the tenth of Nisan.
The penalty was imposed the moment the lamb was chosen.	Christ received the death penalty for our sin before He was born.
The lamb was killed between the evenings at 3:00 P.M.	Jesus died in the seventh hour, 3:00 P.M. (Mark 15:33-37).
The lamb's bones were not broken (Ex. 12:46, Num. 9:12).	Jesus' bones were not broken. (Ps. 34:20; John 19:31)
The blood of the lamb applied to the door saved the Israelites' firstborn.	The blood of Christ saves us.
The body of the lamb must be eaten the same night (Ex. 12:8).	Jesus was crucified, suffered, and died in the same night.
No work was to be done on the Passover. The Israelites could not save themselves. Even if they should have spent all the night in prayer, the destroying angel would have broken in upon them, and slain their first-born if the blood was not on the door.	The blood of Jesus saves us, not our works. (1 Peter 1:18-21).



Purpose of Passover

The name of the festival, *Pesach* in Hebrew, *passing over* or *protection*, is derived from the instructions given to Moses by God (Ex. 6:6-8). Moses was chosen by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God commanded Moses to tell the children of Israel, *Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD* (Ex. 6:6-8).

Passover is the time of beginnings for Israel. This festival ushers in the coming of spring on the Jewish calendar. It is celebrated on the fourteenth¹ day of Abib (the first month of the Jewish religious calendar, later called Nisan). Each of the three pilgrimage festivals—Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles—has an agricultural basis as well as an historical significance. Many different things are celebrated during Passover. A few of these include: the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the growing season; the new lambing time, and the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt during Passover.

It cannot be overemphasized as to how foundational Passover is in God's eternal redemption plan. Only Nisan can be the first month in God's calendar. Though other cycles and other aspects of life in the LORD are important, it is the sacrifice of the Lamb that gives it all meaning. Except for the sacrifice of the Passover and the blood on the doorposts, Israel would have suffered the same fate as the Egyptians. The promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would have then become void. With no Passover sacrifice and with no blood on the doorposts, then no Torah could have been given and no other celebrations could have followed. Apart from the sacrifice of the Passover and the blood on the door posts, there would have been no basis for Messiah, our Passover, to be sacrificed on the anniversary of that momentous occasion. We would have no hope and remain dead in our sins; however, the command was obeyed and deliverance was accomplished. Indeed, for us, this is most certainly the first of all the months, the first month of the year, truly the real beginning of all spiritual life (Michael 1996).



Purpose of Passover - Continued

God directs parents, this special night of the year, to take on the role of teacher, and pass down His story of the exodus from Egypt to future generations. This ceremony not only looks back to the miraculous story of God delivering His people, but it also presents the promise of Messiah's death and resurrection. It is an exciting experience centering on a mixture of ritual foods. The matzah, bitter herbs, wine, and the rest, provide a lasting link through the march of history.

ISRAEL'S REDEMPTION FROM EGYPT (EXODUS 1:1-18:27)

The Old Testament story of Passover has more light, more splendor, more vividness, and a richer application to life than any other story in the book of Exodus. Moses and his brother Aaron went to Pharaoh and told him that the Lord said to let the Israelites go. Pharaoh refused to release the Israelites, even for a brief visit to the desert to worship their God. In fact, he made life for the Israelite slaves even worse. Moses had warned Pharaoh that God would send a series of plagues upon Egypt unless the people were freed.

God sent the plagues to show the people that He is the one true God. He confronted the things that the Egyptians called gods. The ten plagues were righteous plagues, and justly inflicted upon the Egyptians because each plague had something to do with the false gods that the Egyptians worshipped. God makes those false things that we worship a burden to us.

The word *plague* is from the Hebrew word *oth*, which means "sign." The Egyptians believed in magic. They were always trying to override the laws of nature to perform their "tricks." God used the laws of nature to bring about His signs and wonders.

The entire episode of the plagues is supposed to have happened within eight to ten months. Each of the plagues spoke as a sign to the Egyptians, showing them that He is greater than their so-called gods. The first three plagues affected all the people, even the Hebrews. The next three plagues were much more intense and only happened to the Egyptians (*I will put a division between my people and thy people v. 23*). Before each plague, God commanded Moses and Aaron to warn Pharaoh, *Let My people go or I [God] will bring a plague upon you*. Before each plague, for three weeks, Moses warned Pharaoh. The actual plague lasted one week.



FIRST PLAGUE: THE NILE WATERS TURN TO BLOOD

The Nile, the river of Egypt, was the Egyptians' idol. The Nile's waters nourished the land and determined the welfare of all the people. The Egyptians thirsted after blood when they slaughtered the Hebrews' children, and now God gave them blood to drink. Now the source that brought the Egyptians life brought death instead (Exod. 7:14-25).

SECOND PLAGUE: THE FROGS

The frogs represented the fertility goddess, Isis, that was supposed to help women in childbirth. Frogs were everywhere: in their houses, in their beds, and at their tables. They could not eat, drink, or sleep without their precious god. The frog that symbolized life was left to be raked in heaps of rotting piles of death (Exod. 8:1-15).

THIRD PLAGUE: THE LICE

The lice which came up to live out of the dust of the earth represented the Egyptians' god of the earth, Seth. Matthew Henry notes that lice were small despicable, inconsiderable animals, and yet, by their vast numbers, they rendered a sore plague to the Egyptians. God could have plagued them with lions, or bears, or wolves, or with vultures or other birds of prey; but He chose to do it by these contemptible instruments (Exod. 8:16-19).

FOURTH PLAGUE: THE FLIES

The stinging, disease-carrying flies ruined the land. Beelzebub, the prince of the power of the air, has been glorified as the god of flies, the god of Ekron. The fly was always present at idolatry sacrifices. It seems that the god partook of those in this manner. This fourth plague came upon the Egyptians only. It made Israel a separate and Holy People (Exod. 8:20-32).

FIFTH PLAGUE: THE DISEASE OF LIVESTOCK

A great number of cattle died by a sort of pestilence. The Egyptians made the Hebrews poor and so God caused great loss to the Egyptians. This disease



Purpose of Passover - Continued

afflicted only the Egyptian livestock. The Egyptians believed animals were possessed by the spirits of gods. The bull was sacred in Egypt, identified in its markings to their god Apis. This pestilence, God's Word tells us, did not affect the Hebrew livestock (Exod. 9:1-7).

SIXTH PLAGUE: THE BOILS

Again God demonstrated His ability to control nature. When the death of their cattle didn't convince the Egyptians, God sent a plague that seized their own bodies. *And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast* (Exod. 9:10). Sores in the body were looked upon as punishment for sin, a means by which to call one to repentance. None of the Hebrews had any boils. This plague was a direct attack on the shamanism of the medico-mystical processes in Egypt (Exod. 9:8-12).

SEVENTH PLAGUE: THE HAILSTORM

Moses gave the people a one-day warning before this plague. The notice was given because the sorcerers of Egypt were also agricultural shamans who supposedly controlled the weather. Those who feared the Lord went into shelter (showing us that God had mercy on some of the Egyptians). Those who did not believe God and took no shelter died in the fields (Ex. 9:21). There was ice and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all of the land of Egypt. The hail killed both men and cattle, and battered down the herbs, vegetable gardens, fruit trees, and other plants. God, in His judgment, caused it to rain or hail on the Egyptians and not on the Hebrews (Exod. 9:13-35).

EIGHTH PLAGUE: THE LOCUSTS

By this time, Pharaoh's people, his magicians, and advisors, began to rebel. Pharaoh stood alone against God. *Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all*



the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. The plague was then sent which devastated the land and hence the power of the gods and shamans of agriculture. Pharaoh sent for Moses and pretended to repent. He asked Moses to pray to God to take the locusts away. *And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt* (Exod. 10:13-14, 19).

NINTH PLAGUE: THE DARKNESS

The Egyptians rebelled against the light of God's Word and they were justly punished with darkness. This thick darkness was over Egypt three days, but the people of Israel had light where they dwelt. What a picture of dark and light, of being lost and saved. The children of God walked in the light while Pharaoh and his people wandered in the darkness.

Matthew Henry's Commentary states,

The cloud of locusts, which had darkened the land (v. 15), was nothing to this. It was a total darkness. We have reason to think, not only that the lights of heaven were clouded, but that all their fires and candles were put out by the damp or clammy vapors which were the cause of this darkness; for it is said (v. 23), *They saw not one another.* It is threatened to the wicked (Job 18:5-6) that the spark of his fire shall not shine, even the sparks of his own kindling, as they are called (Isa. 50:11), and that the light shall be dark in his tabernacle. Hell is utter darkness. The light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee (Rev. 18:23).

This plague was an attack on the power of the supreme deity of Egypt, the sun god Re or Amun-Re. The Egyptians could do nothing but stay in their homes and consider what they had experienced up to now, regarding the power of the God of the Israelites. Even then, Pharaoh refused to yield (Exod. 10:21-29).

TENTH PLAGUE: THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN

God said in Exodus 13:2, *Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.*



Purpose of Passover - Continued

Nelson's *Illustrated Bible Dictionary* explains the importance of the firstborn: God placed a special claim on the firstborn of man and beast (Ex. 13:11-13). This meant that the nation of Israel attached unusual value to the eldest son and assigned special privileges and responsibilities to him. Because of God's claim on the first offspring, the firstborn sons of the Hebrews were presented to the Lord when they were a month old. Since the firstborn was regarded as God's property, it was necessary for the father to redeem, or buy back, the child from the priest. Early Hebrew laws also provided that the firstlings of beasts belonged to the Lord and were turned over to the sanctuary (Ex. 13:2; 34:19; Lev. 27:26). The firstborn's birthright was a double portion of the estate and leadership of the family. As head of the home after his father's death, the eldest son customarily cared for his mother until her death, and provided for his unmarried sisters until their marriages. He was the family's spiritual head and served as its priest. In figurative language, the term *firstborn* stands for "that which is most excellent."

The significance of the death of every firstborn in Egypt, from the house of Pharaoh to the slaves and the livestock, was great. But Israel would be spared so that there would be an obvious distinction between those who belong to the YAWH and those who do not (Exod. 11:1-10).

And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians (Exodus 12:29-36).



SEDER

During the Passover celebration, Jews and Christians remember this great event by eating special foods associated with the bitterness of slavery and the sweetness of freedom. The entire meal, called the *seder*, is eaten as the story of Israel's freedom is told. Everything in the Seder is directed toward the prime command from the Bible: *And thou shall shew thy son in that day saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt* (Exod. 13:8). See a *Messianic Seder Process* in the next chapter.

REDEMPTION

The great miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea is the climax of the departure from Egypt and the inspiring wonder that forged a group of slaves into a nation. The redemption from Egypt is not only that of Israel but also a salvation by faith in general. The celebration of redemption from Egypt will be a pattern for salvation from all other evil.

During this God-ordained night we celebrate the doctrines of our salvation. Thus, like ancient Israel, we are sovereignty brought to the edge of the "sea" with no hope except to trust His deliverance and to follow Him. We marvel at His overwhelming sufficiency. Like ancient Israel, when we trust Him for deliverance and walk through the "sea" with Him, we end up singing and dancing on the other side. That's Pesach! (Berkowitz 1996)





PASSOVER REMEMBRANCE THROUGH THE BIBLE

Numbers 9 is the first anniversary of the Passover. God made special alternative rules for persons unclean, or on a journey, for service to be held on the 14 of the second month. This made it possible for all to keep the feast. This chapter also outlines the penalty for disregarding the Passover observance.

Deuteronomy 16 restates the command to keep Passover, adding the appointed location where the Temple was to be established.

In Joshua 5:10-11 Passover is renewed by the Israelites upon their entering Canaan.

Ezra 6:19 and 20 tells of Passover after return from captivity.

For the first time in decades Hezekiah restores Passover. The people were so moved that the festival was extended an extra seven days (2 Chronicles 30-32).

2 Kings 23 and 2 Chronicles 35 describe a restoration of the Passover by Josiah after four hundred years of interruption.

Ezekiel reinstated Passover (Ezekiel 45:21-24).

Luke 2:41-52 tells of Mary, Joseph, and twelve-year-old Jesus going to Jerusalem for Passover.

Matthew 21-28 focuses on Passover week, replacing ceremony with reality.

1 Corinthians 5:7 calls Christ our Passover.

Acts 12:3 tells us that Peter was imprisoned at the time of Passover.



Passover in Bible Times

OLD TESTAMENT

Many years before Israel's redemption from Egypt, God revealed the importance of the shedding of blood of a lamb. Consider the story of how Abraham obediently offered his beloved son, Isaac, to God (Gen. 22:1-19).

“Father, where is the lamb?” These timorous words were first uttered by Isaac. Abraham, his father, in obedience to God, was taking him to the land of Moriah to be sacrificed (Genesis 22:1-7). Abraham's answer to Isaac's question was a prophetic promise as well as an illustration of faith, “God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering” (Genesis 22:8). Passover was God's provision of salvation for the nation of Israel to leave Egypt. That freedom was purchased at a great price—the death of the firstborn of Egypt. Passover demanded faith; it demanded obedience. Failure to provide the lamb, failure to put the blood of the lamb upon the doorposts and lintel in the prescribed manner meant death for the firstborn of that house (Exodus 12:1-13). The emphasis of God's Word has always been that, without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission of sin (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22). Thousands of years later, God would provide Himself a Lamb (Sevener 1995).

The Bible records Passover kept the second year after the Exodus, then again when the Jews reached the promised land (Joshua 5:10). The requirements directing the Passover meal in the Exodus 12:1-13:16 outline were followed:

- 1.) The celebration was to be during “the first month,” Abib (Nisan).
- 2.) On the tenth day of this month, each household would select a one-year-old lamb or kid.
- 3.) On the fourteenth day of the same month, the lamb was killed in the evening.
- 4.) The blood of the lamb was to be put on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses.
- 5.) The lamb was to be roasted with fire, his head with his legs, and no bones broken.



- 6.) The lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs.
- 7.) None of the lamb was to remain—all that was not eaten was to be burnt with fire.
- 8.) They were to eat the meal with their shoes on and staff in their hands, in haste.
- 9.) This feast day was declared a memorial to be kept forever.

During the Temple times, the pilgrims came joyously in bands, singing psalms and bringing offerings. What a sight! Josephus records the number of lambs slain from 256,500 and later (a.d. 65) no fewer than three million. A sign hung on each lamb's neck bearing the name of the family. What an impression must have been made on the children. The glorious Temple, the robed priests, the smoke of the sacrifice, then a special supper with symbols and the re-telling of the story of the greatest night in all history. The special preparation for the Passover commenced on the evening of the thirteenth of Nisan, with which, according to Jewish reckoning, the fourteenth began, the day always being computed from evening to evening. The head of the house was to search with a lighted candle all the places leaven was usually kept. A reference to this search is seen in Zephaniah 1:12: *And it shall come to pass at that time I will bring Jerusalem with candles...* From early forenoon of the fourteenth of Nisan, the Feast of Passover may be said to have begun. In Galilee, no work would be done all that day. The next care was to select a proper Paschal lamb which, of course, was free from all blemishes (Edersheim 1994).

The crowd would lead their sacrificial lambs up to the Temple to be slain around 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The priest blew the trumpet when the lambs were slain. The priests caught the blood of the lamb in a special bowl of silver or gold. While hymns were sung, the bowls were passed on to the priest at the altar. The Hallel was recited (Psalms 113 to 119). The lambs were cleaned out and burnt on the altar. The service ended with burning of the incense. No work was allowed except the preparing of the Passover meal.

The lamb was roasted on a spit made of pomegranate wood. Special care was taken so the lamb did not touch the oven or any type of foreign matter. The bones were not broken. All that was not eaten was burnt with fire until none remained.



Passover is mentioned during the time of Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah, and under Ezra. The earliest records (the Mishnah) explain the service of this supper was very simple including only the lamb, the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, and red wine mixed with water.

PASSOVER OBSERVED BY JESUS

Unleavened Bread and Passover are used in the Gospels interchangeably. Strictly speaking, the Passover was Nisan 14 and the Unleavened Bread Nisan 15 through 21.

On the preparation day before the Passover (Mark 15:42), early in the day, Jesus sent Peter and John before Him to prepare for the Passover. Jesus ate His last Passover meal in the Upper Room in the evening in accordance with the original Passover observance in Leviticus 23:5, Numbers 9:1-5 and Exodus 12:6-13. Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. He broke the unleavened bread, symbolizing His offering of Himself as the bread of heaven. "In the evening He cometh with the twelve" (Mark 14:17) and ate the Passover lamb supper with them—all but Judas, who left before the meal (Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-23).

The Passover celebration took place yearly at the temple in Jerusalem. Every Jewish male was expected to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem during this time (Deut. 16:16). This was a week-long festival.

And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three



days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man (John 2:13-25).

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end (John 13:1).

(See also Matthew 26:17-28; Mark 14:12-25; and Luke 22:7-20.)

Jesus celebrated the Passover meal. When we keep the Passover we are following the ways of Jesus. Jesus also added to the Passover. He expounded on it in a new way. He told his disciples that whenever they ate the Passover meal, they should remember Him using the special unleavened Passover bread, and the cup was the Passover cup *after* the meal. In the Passover ceremony this cup is called “the Cup of Redemption.” Jesus wants believers to observe this yearly institute to remember the deliverance of God’s people physically from Egypt, *and* to recall the *spiritual* deliverance of God’s people through Jesus the Messiah.



Jewish Customs of Passover Today

Passover is the most popular Jewish holiday. The dinner celebration is called a seder. The Passover Seder is a meal with special foods, practices, and Scripture readings that commemorate the liberation from Egyptian slavery, in accordance with God's instructions (Lev. 23:1,4, Exod. 12:14,24-27). *Seder* means "order." The seder invites each family to recount its own version of the great story of Passover with each family member actively involved. The meal induces the experience of going from slavery to liberty through the food experiences and story as the meal turns into an elaborate feast. There is no "right way" to conduct a seder. The seder is usually a family dinner but can also be held with your family or with a church group. During the Seder, the narrative of the exodus is related and prayers of thanksgiving are offered up to God for his loving protection. The dinner table is beautifully set with fancy dishes and candles. There is a special pillow on the chair for the leader of the seder to lean on to symbolize the comfort of a free person reclining (as opposed to a slave who never rests). Orthodox Jewish tradition directs that, during Passover, meals be prepared and served using sets of utensils and dishes reserved strictly for that festival. The readings, songs, and prayers of the Seder are included in the Haggadah.

THE HAGGADAH

The Haggadah is the prayer book used at the Seder, or ritual dinner observed at Passover. Sometimes there is a small book for each person participating in the seder. *Haggadah* means "telling." The Haggadah is a "script" of what the leader and participants should say and the order of eating and drinking during each part of the meal as it tells the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The haggadahs were not used until the eighth century A.D. before this oral tradition was used to tell the Passover story. There are over three thousand different Haggadah versions available.

We have included a Messianic Haggadah in this chapter that you may reproduce, for your family only. This Haggadah is written to be used with a family with small children. We have also included a Messianic Seder Outline so you can make your own Haggadah, if desired.



Jewish Customs of Passover Today - Continued

THE SEDER PLATE

There is a special plate in front of the leader called the seder plate. The Seder consists of three directive foods listed in Exodus 12 and customary foods later added by the Rabbis. Each of the foods symbolizes some aspect of the ordeal undergone by the Israelites during their enslavement in Egypt.

FOODS LISTED IN EXODUS 12

Bitter Herbs (usually horseradish) representing the bitterness of bondage

Shank Bone of a Lamb symbolizes the lamb eaten before they fled Egypt.

Matzah — must be made solely of special flour and water (no leaven).

CUSTOMARY FOODS LATER ADDED BY THE RABBIS

Haroset (it looks unappetizing but is delicious) is a mixture of apples, nuts, grape juice, and cinnamon. It represents the mortar the Israelites used to build the Egyptian cities and the sweetness of a better world.

Roasted Egg is said to be the symbol of life, but we believe it came in with the pagan fertility rituals (Boaz 1996). (Our family decided to leave off the egg.)

Karpas or fresh greens (usually parsley or celery) symbolizes the new life for the Jewish people and the hyssop used to sprinkle blood on the door post. The parsley is dipped into salt water representing the tears of slavery.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

Jewish tradition requires the youngest child at the table to ask, usually in song, four questions about why this night is different from all other nights. The leader answers each question telling the Passover story.

1. Why do we eat unleavened bread on this night when all other nights we eat either leavened bread or matzah?
2. Why do we eat only bitter herbs on this night when all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables?





3. Why do we dip our vegetables twice on this night when we do not dip our vegetables even once all other nights?
4. Why do we eat our meals reclining on this night when on all other nights we eat our meals sitting or reclining?

THE FOUR CUPS

The four cups of wine are customarily drunk at the Passover Seder. An innocent-looking choice between wine and grape juice for the Passover Seder can, under appropriate circumstances, become a focus for complex moral, political, and religious issues. This book will not attempt to go into this much-debated issue. We'll leave this debate up to you and your family.

During Passover, no food with leaven is permitted. Leavening is a fermenting process in which yeast turns the food sour. The rules of leavening apply to food prepared out of any of the five kinds of grain; barley, wheat, rye, oats, and spelt. Although wine is fermented, it doesn't enter into the category of leaven because it's not made from one of these five types. Some reports indicated that possibly unfermented "raisin-wine" was the only acceptable beverage for Passover. Today only kosher wine is used for Passover (Sarna 1988).

During the Seder, each participant drinks four cups of wine to recall the four expressions of redemption mentioned in the Bible (Ex. 6:6-7). God tells Moses to tell the people of Israel, "*I will **bring** you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will **rid** you from under their bondage and I will **redeem** you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments: and I will **take** you to Me for a people and I will be to you a God...*" The four cups at the Seder represent the four expressions of redemption—bring, deliver, redeem and take. The first cup is called the cup of sanctification; the second, the cup of judgment; the third, the cup of redemption; and the fourth, the cup of the kingdom.

A fifth cup was later added by rabbis, called the cup of Elijah. The custom of filling a fifth cup of wine for Elijah the Prophet at the seder table is relatively recent. Some families set a place at the table for Elijah and pour into a goblet called "Elijah's cup" to symbolize Elijah would be a welcome guest at the seder (Elijah never died. He ascended to heaven). Another custom is to open the door during the seder for Elijah, symbolizing bringing the



Jewish Customs of Passover Today - Continued

Messianic age into their lives. Elijah is expected to return at Passover time as we can deduce from Matthew 11:7.



THE MATZAH AND AFIKOMAN

Matzah is bread without leaven. The Jews have a ceremony they perform with the matzah bread. There are three pieces of matzah, two for the blessing and one to be broken. There is a special cloth holder with three sections called *matzah tash*. The three pieces of matzah are inside, one in each compartment. The leader takes the middle sheet of matzah and lifts it for everyone to see. He then breaks the bread in two. Next he takes one piece and places it back in the matzah tash. Then he takes the other piece and wraps it in a linen cloth. This linen-wrapped matzah is called the Afikoman. The leader “hides” the Afikoman.

The Jews teach that the matzah tash represents the three patriarchs of Israel: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob *or* the High Priest, the Levites, and the Israelites *or* three tribes of Israel: Kohan, Levi and Yisrael. Yet we do not read in scripture that the Levites were broken, nor do we read that Isaac was broken. There is one explanation that does line up with scripture. We'll discuss this in the Unleavened Bread Chapter.

DAYENU

One of the traditional songs of the Seder is “Dayenu” [It would have been enough].

If He had taken us out of Egypt but had not punished them, Dayenu. He killed their firstborn ... He split the Red Sea ... He allowed us to pass through it ... He buried our oppressors ... He supplied our needs ... He fed us the Manna ... He brought us to Mount Sinai ... He gave us the Torah .. He brought us to the promised land ... He built the Holy Temple for us .. [and all to the ever recurring refrain of “Dayenu, Dayenu, Dayenu—it would have been enough!”]

If you have access to the World Wide Web, you can download the music for Dayenu and other Passover music at: <http://members.aol.com/melizo/> or <http://www.holidays.net/Passover/>.



Messianic Significance of Passover

Several symbolic clues during Passover are fulfilled in Christ. John the Baptist introduced Jesus by saying “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29). The Jews had been celebrating Passover for 1,500 years. They understood the significance of John’s statements.



Isaiah 53, written hundreds of years before Christ, records the suffering the human lamb would experience.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand (Isa. 53:7-10).

TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF THE LAMBS

In the first century, a lamb was chosen by the high priest outside of Jerusalem on the tenth of Nisan. Then the priest would lead this lamb into the city while crowds of worshippers lined the streets waving palm branches and singing Psalm 118, “Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.”

Jesus our Messiah entered Jerusalem this same day, on a donkey (usually ridden by a king), probably right behind the High Priest’s procession. The crowds that had just heralded the entrance of the sacrificial lamb heralded the entrance of the Lamb of God. Accordingly, Jesus identified himself with the Passover sacrifice (John 12:9-19). The next day, as Jesus entered Jerusalem, His entry fulfilled prophecy.

Enthusiasm filled the air. All Israel knew that it would be in Jerusalem where Messiah would be enthroned as their King. Edersheim writes,

Everyone in Israel was thinking about the Feast, Everyone was going to Jerusalem, or had those near and dear to them there,



or at least watched the festive processions to the Metropolis of Judaism. It was a gathering of universal Israel, that of the memorial of the birth-night of the nation, and of its Exodus, when friends from afar would meet, and new friends be made; when offerings long due would be brought, and purification long needed be obtained—and all worship in that grand and glorious Temple, with its gorgeous ritual. National and religious feelings were alike stirred in what reached far back to the first, and pointed far forward to the final Deliverance.

The High Priest would then take the lamb to the Temple, where it would be tied in public view so that it could be inspected for blemish. In the same way, Y'shua sat and taught in the Temple courtyard for four days. He was inspected and questioned as the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the teachers of the law sought to trip him up in His words and entrap Him. They could not, because He was perfect and without blemish (Lancaster1996).

Passover pronounces redemption. To believers in Messiah, the Passover feast has a special meaning. Though we are not slaves, as God's people in Egypt, we were slaves to our sin, our own wants and desires. Sin was our master until Jesus, the Passover Lamb, delivered us from *our* Egypt. The lamb slain during Passover is a foreshadow of the redemption we find in Jesus, the Messiah, our Passover lamb. The principle of redemption is the concept of bondage to the slavery of sin and freedom from its domination (John 8:31-36). To be "redeemed" means to be "purchased from slavery." Jesus Christ purchased our freedom with His blood as the payment for the redemption (Ps. 34:22; 1 Peter 1:18,19; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; 1 John 1:7).

Jesus ate the Passover meal with eleven of His disciples (see Passover in Bible Times). Just as the priest was to teach, pray, and offer sacrifice, Christ, *the* High Priest, taught, prayed, and then offered Himself as our sacrifice.

AFTER THE MEAL

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. (John 18:1).

Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane. The garden has many ancient olive trees today, some of which may have grown from the roots of the trees that were present in Jesus' time. (All trees in and around Jerusalem were cut down when the Romans conquered the city in 70 a.d. Olive trees can



regenerate from their roots and live for thousands of years.) The name *Gethsemane* comes from the Hebrew *Gat Shmanim*, meaning “oil press” (Kollek). Since *oil* is used in the Bible to symbolize the Holy Spirit, it may be said that the garden is where “the Spirit of God was crushed” (Missler 1995).

It was here that Jesus agonized in prayer over what was to occur. It is significant that this is the only place in the King James Version where the word *agony* is mentioned (Strong’s concordance). The Greek word for *agony* means to be “engaged in combat” (Pink). Jesus agonized over what He was to go through, feeling that He was at the point of death (Mark 14:34). Yet He prayed, “Not my will, but thine be done” (Terasaka 1996).

Of medical significance is that Luke mentions Him as having sweat like blood. The medical term for this, *hemohidrosis*, or *hematidrosis*, has been seen in patients who have experienced extreme stress or shock to their systems (Edwards). The capillaries around the sweat pores become fragile, and leak blood into the sweat. A case history is recorded in which a young girl who had a fear of air raids in World War I developed the condition after a gas explosion occurred in the house next door (Scott). Another report mentions a nun who, as she was threatened with death by the swords of the enemy soldiers, “was so terrified that she bled from every part of her body and died of hemorrhage in the sight of her assailants.” (Grafenberg) As a memorial to Jesus’ ordeal, a church which now stands in Gethsemane is known as the Church of the Agony (ibid).

Immediately thereafter, He was betrayed by Judas (Mark 14:43), and captured by the high priest and taken for trial before Caiaphas (Luke 22:54). Consequently, Jesus was crucified between two thieves, fulfilling His own prediction that “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14). Most of His disciples fled at His arrest; only a group of women and one disciple, called “the disciple whom He loved,” were present at the cross when He died (John 19:25-27; compare Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40; and Luke 23:49).

JESUS’ TRIAL, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION

Many of us have a hard time grasping the pain and suffering Christ went through on the crucifixion day. Television today has de-sensitized our feelings pertaining to the horrifying violence of the torture and slow death of Jesus.

The following is just a portion of an article by Dr. C. Truman Davis, M.D.,



M.S., titled: **“The Crucifixion Of Jesus: The Passion Of Christ From A Medical Point Of View,”** which explains some of the agony of Christ:

In the early morning, Jesus, battered and bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night, is taken across Jerusalem to Pontius Pilate. The prisoner is stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. A short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus’ shoulders, back and legs.

The condemned man was forced to carry the patibulum [cross bar], apparently weighing about 110 pounds, from the prison to the place of execution. Without any historical or Biblical proof, medieval and Renaissance painters have given us our picture of Christ carrying the entire cross. Many of these painters and most of the sculptors of crucifixes today show the nails through the palm. Roman historical accounts and experimental work have shown that the nails were driven between the small bones of the wrists and not through the palms. Nails driven through the palms will strip out between the fingers when they support the weight of the human body. The misconception may have come about through a misunderstanding of Jesus’ words to Thomas, “Observe my hands.” Anatomists, both modern and ancient, have always considered the wrists as a part of the hand. A titulus, or small sign, stating the victim’s crime was usually carried at the front of the procession and later nailed to the cross above the head. A small bundle of flexible branches covered with long thorns (commonly used for firewood) are plaited into the shape of a crown and this is pressed into His scalp. The heavy patibulum [crossbar] of the cross is tied across His shoulders, and the procession headed by a centurion, begins its slow journey along the Via Dolorosa. In spite of His efforts to walk erect, the weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious blood loss, is too much. He stumbles and falls. The centurion, anxious to get on with the crucifixion, selects a stalwart North African onlooker, Simon of Cyrene, to carry the cross.

The crucifixion begins. The legionnaire drives a heavy, square,



wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. The patibulum is then lifted in place at the top of the stipes and the titulus reading, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” is nailed in place.

Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber; then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

The body of Jesus is now in extremis, and He can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. This realization brings out possibly little more than a tortured whisper, “It is finished.”

His mission of atonement has been completed. Finally He can allow His body to die.

With one last surge of strength, He once again presses His torn feet against the nail, straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His seventh and last cry, “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit” (Truman 1965).

Jesus died as the lambs for the Passover meal were being slain. Not a bone was to be broken in these sacrificial lambs (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12). Jesus, the Lamb of God, was the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world (1 Cor. 5:7).

During the Passover time, a sign hung on each lamb’s neck, bearing the name of the owner of the lamb. Jesus was crucified with a sign hung over His head with the name of His Father. Studies have shown the Tetragrammaton probably appeared over Jesus when He hung on the cross. During Bible times, messages were commonly written with the first letter of each word. An example in English: UPS, stands for United Parcel Service. The phrase “Jesus of Nazareth and King of the Jews” was written in three languages on a sign above Jesus as He hung on the cross (John 19:19). The Hebrew initials for “Jesus of Nazareth and King of the Jews” was YHWH. That is why the priest asked Pilate to change the writing. *Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written* (John 19: 21-22).

The story does not end with the death of Jesus. His body was placed in a new tomb that belonged to a man named Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50-56;



John 19:38-42). The greatest event that separates Jesus from all others is the fact that He overcame death. In three days He rose again and lives today. He arose from the grave on the Feasts of Firstfruits!

On Nisan 17, when Israel emerged from the Red Sea, this emergence was a shadow of the fulfillment of the day of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:9-14). This was the first of God's people to emerge from sin (Egypt). It was fulfilled 1,478 years later on Nisan 17, 30 a.d. when Jesus was resurrected and ascended to heaven as our high priest, the Firstfruit of the resurrected (John 20:17).

TWO PASSOVERS

The gospels appear to say that the Messiah ate a Passover meal with the twelve on the evening beginning Nisan 14, and John appears to say Jews were having their Passover meal one day later. There are different theories to explain this.

1. The Sadducees and Pharisees disagreed on the day of Passover. The Sadducees (more conservative group) believed the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread were separate feast days. They held Passover on the fourteenth as God decreed in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Those of the majority opinion, including the Pharisees, held Passover on the fifteenth. Jesus may have been following both dates by having Passover with the disciples on the fourteenth and becoming the Passover lamb on the fifteenth.
2. Thousands of people would come to Jerusalem to have their lambs ritually slain in the Temple. If they only had one day in which to prepare for the Passover, it would have been extremely difficult to have slaughtered all the lambs brought in to be sacrificed. Therefore, they worked on two different time scales. The northern part of the country went with the old way of dating (starting from morning and going to the following morning). The southern part of the country followed the official dating method (from evening to evening). Thus, there were two times when lambs were being killed in the Temple for sacrifice.

This controversy as to what day Passover should be is not the purpose of this. You must study to decide for yourself which day is correct. Some families celebrate both days, one with their church and one at home.



Suggestions for Celebrating Passover

THE MESSIANIC SEDER

There are no set rules for the basic order of the seder. Just like with Thanksgiving dinner, traditions vary among families. In this chapter is an example of:

- 1.) a very simple seder with no specific readings.
- 2.) a traditional seder outline. This outline consists of eighteen traditional steps you can adapt for your family.
- 3.) an easy-to-use twenty-four page step-by-step Haggadah (you may reproduce for your family's use) that explains just what to say for each blessing as you pour the wine, when to eat and drink, and a list of the Bible verses to read. The leader simply reads aloud the text from the grey box on each page as the rest of the group follows the directions.
- 4.) a basic checklist of what you need to have at (or close by) the dinner table.

The one thing you should *not* do is get all bound up in “doing it right” and ruin the dinner. That would defeat the purpose. Pray and trust God to lead you. Passover was reintroduced by Hezekiah in Bible times (Numbers 9). They were unable to follow every step outlined in Leviticus; however, God knew their hearts. He had grace towards them and healed their people.

A SIMPLE SEDER

Don't be reluctant to observe Passover because it seems like a fancy elaborate meal. Families with many small children may enjoy a simple seder that doesn't last quite as long as the traditional seder. The main focus is to teach the children about both Passovers—the Exodus and Christ.

A seder can be this simple: Let the children decorate by coloring and hanging pictures from this book. Dinner can include the three elements from scripture such as broiled lamb chops, bitter herbs (horseradish or raw turnip greens), and bread. Make a regular bread recipe without the yeast (roll flat and pierced with a fork before baking). You really don't even need to have lamb. You may want to just place a shank bone from your butcher on a seder





plate, or put a small stuffed lamb as a centerpiece, add some candles and festive dishes for this special meal. During dinner, read the Passover story from the Bible or a storybook and asked the children to retell their favorite parts. Explain how Christ is our Passover Lamb. Play the Afikoman game explaining how it relates to Christ's burial and resurrection.

TRADITIONAL SEDER OUTLINE

1. This begins with a sanctification blessing over grape juice in honor of the holiday. The grape juice is drunk, and a second cup is poured, which is symbolic of the blood of Jesus (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:23,24; Luke 22:20; John 6:53-56).
2. The father or leader pours water into a basin and washes his hands. This symbolizes the foot washing Jesus did before He ate the Passover meal. *After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded* (John 13:5).
3. The Karpas (a vegetable—usually parsley) is dipped in salt water and eaten. The vegetable is said to symbolize the lowly origins of the Jewish people; the salt water symbolizes the tears shed as a result of our slavery.
4. There are three pieces of matzah, two for the blessing and one to be broken. There is a special cloth holder with three sections called *matzah tash*. The three pieces of matzah are inside, one in each compartment. The leader takes the middle sheet of matzah and lifts it for everyone to see. He then breaks the bread in two. This symbolizes Christ. Next he takes one piece and places it back in the matzah tash. Then he takes the other piece and wraps it in a linen cloth. This linen-wrapped matzah is called the Afikoman. The matzah tash forms a unity of one which speaks of the unity of God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
5. The leader hides the Afikoman. This is a picture of Y'shua (Jesus), the middle part of the tri-unity, which was broken, wrapped up in cloth, buried and brought forth again (as bread brought forth from the earth.) Y'shua (Jesus), the bread of life, was without sin (leaven), pierced, and striped just as the unleavened matzah. *And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb...*(Matt. 27:59-60).
6. There should be a retelling of the story of the Exodus from Egypt and



the first Passover. This may begin with the youngest person asking The Four Questions. Then the leader reads the Passover story in Exodus 12. We should try to motivate our children to ask their own chain of questions, by pointing out small items that will lead them along a path of discovery to ever bigger and more important items.

7. A blessing is recited over the second cup of wine and it is drunk.
8. A second washing of the hands, this time with a blessing, in preparation for eating the matzah.
9. A blessing specific to matzah is recited, thanking God for bread that symbolizes the body of Christ (Matt. 26:26). Then a piece of matzah is eaten.
10. A blessing is recited over a bitter herb (usually raw horseradish), and it is eaten. This symbolizes the bitterness of slavery and the bitterness of our sin. The bitter vegetable should be eaten together with matzah.
11. The bitter vegetable is eaten again, but with a mixture of apples, nuts, cinnamon and wine, which symbolizes the mortar used by the Jews in building during their slavery. This mixture symbolizes how the sweetness of Y'shua can overcome bitter sin.
12. A festive meal is eaten. There is no particular requirement regarding what to eat at this meal except that leaven cannot be eaten. Traditionally, some Jews eat gefilte fish and matzah ball soup at the beginning of the meal.
13. The piece of matzah set aside earlier is eaten as dessert, the last food of the meal. The children look for the Afikoman. Once it is found it is ransomed to the leader for a price as the Messiah was our ransom.
14. The third cup of wine, called the redemption, cup is poured. Grace is recited afterward. Then a blessing is said over the third cup and it is drunk.
15. The fourth cup is poured.
16. Some items are set aside for the prophet Elijah (see previous section "Jewish Customs of Passover Today.") The door is opened for awhile at this point for Elijah.
17. Several psalms of praise are recited. A blessing is recited over the last cup of wine and it is drunk.
18. The Passover is completed with the phrase: Lashanan Haba'ah Bi Yerushalayim! (Next Year in Jerusalem!) This is sometimes followed by various hymns and stories.



SEDER CHECK LIST

General

- The table is usually set with the best dishes, a low floral arrangement, a tablecloth, and two candles and candlesticks.
- Place a haggadah at each setting (or every other setting.)

On the table near the leader

- Seder Plate. You can purchase a seder plate or use a fancy dish, or even let the children color a paper plate. On the seder plate are usually: A shankbone of a lamb (some leave off the shank bone and serve a different main dish because Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice. Others like the symbolism—you choose): bitter herbs (usually horseradish); charoset (a green vegetable, usually parsley or celery.)
- Three pieces of matzah, in the specially designed matzah cover or within three cloth napkins.
- A small basin of water for the handwashing (or the leader can bring it to the table when it is time) and a towel to dry the hands.
- On the chair should be a pillow or cushion for leaning.

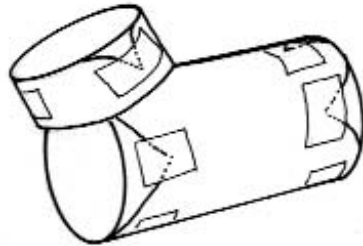
On the table within everyone's reach

- Small bowls of salty water.
- Wine goblet or glass.
- Extra bitter herbs and Charoset for a large family or gathering.
- A plate of matzah.
- A bottle of wine or grape juice (one bottle per every six to eight people).

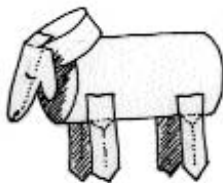
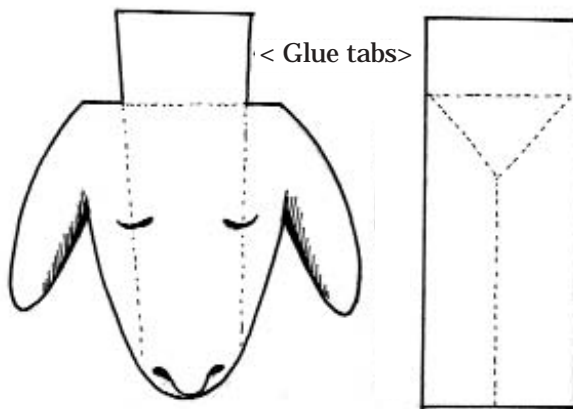


Lamb Craft

- This little lamb can provide the focal point of your Passover centerpiece. Begin by taking an empty bathroom tissue spool. Cut one inch off one end. Cut pieces of white paper and cover the open ends of the large portion and top of the small one. Tape it securely on top of one end as shown.



- Copy pattern. Cut white poster paper using these patterns. **DO NOT COPY DOTTED LINES.** They are guides for folding only. Cut one face and four legs. Fold on dotted lines to make an angle outward for support, or roll around pencil to curve outward. Fold glue tab on head downward away from face. Fold or roll sides of face back.

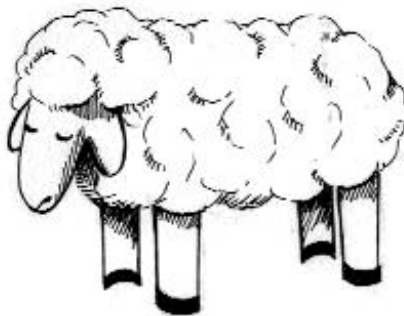


- Glue legs and face to spool as shown in illustration.

or



- Cover lamb's body, including face and leg tabs, with small cottonballs. Any white glue is fine. Let dry. Smaller cottonballs give a much neater surface.



- Option: Use paper maché to cover head and legs to give depth. Paint white and use pencil to plan details. Add finishing touches with paint or markers.



Family Drama: Moses and the Big Picture

Many families have a real flair for acting. Others haven't discovered it, but it is there waiting to be revealed. If any members of your family have good oral reading skills, or a knack for public speaking, inventing costumes, rigging props, or devising parts in a script, here's your chance! Encourage that brother or sister by staging a re-enactment of the Exodus.

You can start with Moses and the plagues and stage as much as your family size allows (multiple roles are O.K.). Invite extended family, church friends or home schoolers to join you or be an audience. All the plagues can be done with or without props, using complaints and gestures that convey the idea.

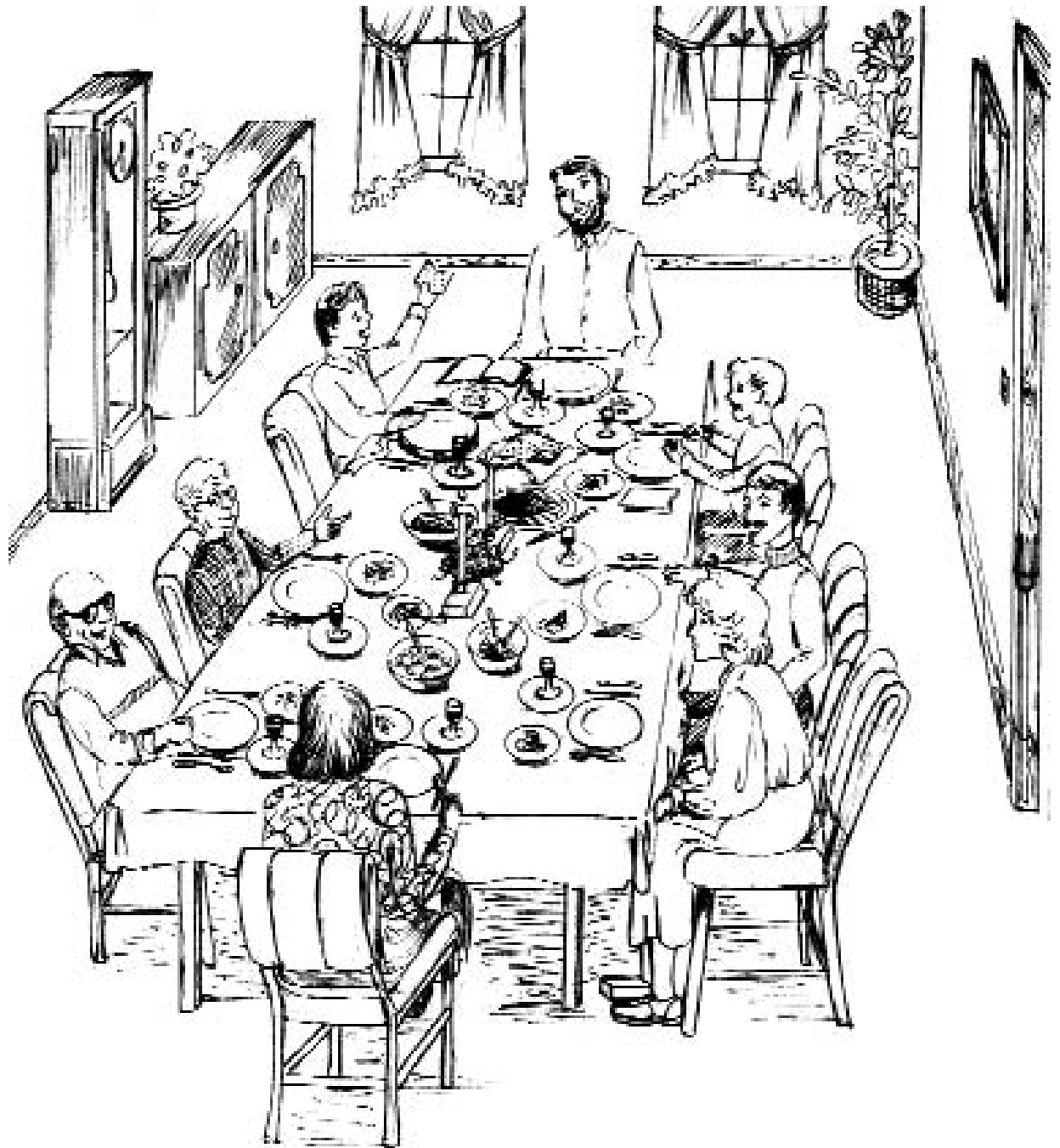


If you will perform this on an evening prior to your seder meal, it will enrich the "big picture" that surrounds this special observance.













*For a scaled-down version, Dad or Mom can condense the scripture account (or use a good Bible storybook) and read as a narrator while various children enter in costume, making gestures and those all-important facial expressions.

NOTE: When you discover which costumes (towels, bathrobes, fabric, etc.) and props work well—and those that don't—make a list and keep it in a file. You may want to refer to it if you decide to perform the Esther story at Purim, or something similar

Seder Supper Search



Find these hidden objects in the picture above.

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Book | Violin | Tambourine | Hat | Hammer | Staff | Broom |
|  |  |  |  |  | | |
| Gift | Fan | Corn | Brick | Ball | | |



The Purpose of Unleavened Bread

Feast of Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah) is the second spring festival beginning on the fifteenth of Nisan. When the Israelites fled from Egypt they took the dough before it had time to leaven. When they baked it, the next day, it was unleavened bread.

And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians and there was a great cry in Egypt: And he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said: Rise up and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go serve the LORD as you have said...And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders (Exod. 12:30-31, 34).

Matthew Henry's explains,

Of the provision made for the camp, which was very poor and slender. They brought some dough with them out of Egypt in their knapsacks, v. 34. They had prepared to bake, the next day, however, they were hastened away sooner than they thought of, by some hours, they took the dough as it was, unleavened; when they came to Succoth, their first stage, they baked unleavened cakes, and, though these were of course insipid, yet the liberty they were brought into made this the most joyful meal they had ever eaten in their lives.

The Egyptians urged the people to leave as fast as possible. As a result, their dough didn't have time to rise. So they carried it on their shoulders and made matzah. Every year, we commemorate this event during the Passover Seder, which is celebrated on the fifteenth of Nisan, the day that the Jewish people left Egypt.

The fermenting and permeating nature of leaven is commonly used as a metaphor for sin. As remembrance, God commanded His people to eat only pure, unleavened bread for seven days every year that they remember the "bread of affliction."

SYMBOLISM OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

The symbolic connection of matzah is twofold. On the one hand, unleavened bread is a symbol of freedom based upon Exodus 12:39; "...*They baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not*





Unleavened Bread in Bible Times

During this week-long feast, nothing with leaven (yeast) in it may be eaten. In the Jewish religion, leaven is the symbol of all that is unclean and evil and therefore must scrupulously be removed from all houses before the Passover feast. Abstaining from leavened bread for seven days was symbolic of God's people separating themselves from sin and becoming a holy people and experiencing a holy walk with the Lord.

THE REQUIREMENTS DIRECTING THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD (LEV. 23:6 AND EX. 12:15-17):

- 1.) The first day, all leaven should be removed from the home (Ex. 12:15).
- 2.) For seven days they were to eat unleavened bread (Lev. 23:6, Ex. 12:15).
- 3.) This feast was a high Sabbath (an extra Sabbath besides the weekly Sabbath). No work should be done the first day and the seventh day (except preparing food) (Ex. 12:16).
- 4.) This feast was declared a memorial to be kept forever. *And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread... therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever* (Ex. 12:17).





Jewish Customs of Unleavened Bread Today

Spring house cleaning has its roots in the Passover preparation where, thirty days before the Festival, the women of every household began removing all leaven (*chametz*) from their homes. According to Leviticus 13:7, as long as leaven remains in the house one cannot celebrate Passover. It is a spiritual as well as a physical cleansing (Thompson 1984).

The symbolic ritual of searching for chametz begins at nightfall on the fourteenth day of the Jewish month of Nisan, the evening before the Passover. The leavened bread is removed from the household with the exception of ten small pieces, which the woman of the house hides throughout the rooms of the house. The man of the house lights a candle, and takes a feather, a wooden spoon and a paper bag to search the house for chametz. When a piece is found, he uses the feather to sweep the chametz onto the wooden spoon and then places it into the paper bag. This is done until all ten pieces are found. The bread is then taken outside and burned. (See how this ceremony points to Jesus in the next section.)

Afterwards, the following prayer is said:

“Any chametz which is in my possession which I did not see, and remove, nor know about, shall be nullified and become ownerless, like the dust of the earth.”

Leavening is a fermenting process in which yeast turns the food sour. The rules of leavening apply to food prepared out of any of the five kinds of grain; barley, wheat, rye, oats and spelt. Although wine is fermented, it doesn't come into the category of leaven because it's not made from one of these five types.

Orthodox Jews of Ashkenazic background also avoid rice, corn, peanuts, and legumes (beans) as if they were chametz. All of these items have been used to make bread, thus use of them was prohibited to avoid any confusion.

Passover matzah (different from regular matzah) is made from wheat, but extreme care is taken to ensure that it's cooked very soon after being mixed with water so the yeast in it has no opportunity to begin to ferment.

To be quite certain the food is completely free from leaven there are products that bear the label of a reputable rabbinical authority, stating that they are “kosher” for Passover. All fresh fruit and vegetables are kosher for Passover and don't require any certification.





WHEN DOES THE LEAVENING PROCESS BEGIN?

During the first Passover the dough was made while in Egypt and baked it the next day. The rules the rabbis added to the holiday of Unleavened Bread is a good example of a “fence rule” (see page 38). The rabbis added a rule that says products can only be eaten on Passover if they are cooked before the leavening process even begins. This is reckoned to be eighteen minutes from the time they are mixed with water. Matzah is made from wheat, but extreme care is taken to ensure that it’s cooked very soon after being mixed with water so the yeast in it has no opportunity to begin to ferment. Since it’s very difficult to be certain that fermentation doesn’t start even before this time, the Jews usually don’t even try to prepare food themselves from things that have the potential to become leavened, as with their regular cooking utensils. To be extra sure they don’t eat any leaven during this period, they have completely separate sets of utensils for this period: pots, pans, cutlery, and crockery.

If the purpose is to remember the unleavened bread of the Exodus, it would appear we can bake the dough any time, even the next day as the Israelites did.

Jesus spoke out against those who sought justification by keeping legal requirements. The scribes and Pharisees were so scrupulous about keeping the law of the tithe that they would not overlook the sprigs of seasoning herbs in their gardens—mint, rue, and dill (Matt. 23:23; Lk. 11:42). God’s directive concerning tithing was not given because He had need of food or money, nor because God wanted to lay a burden on man to test him. God wanted this to be given for the welfare of His people. The Pharisees were looking for specifics as to how to keep the technicality of the law when they should have been using what they had to promote love, mercy, justice, and faith which the tithe was meant to promote. They were seeking to be justified by keeping law when they should have been seeking to accomplish its purposes.



Messianic Significance of Unleavened Bread

The matzah is a wonderful reminder of the Messiah. The bread is without leaven (without sin), striped, pierced, and bruised. The Messiah was wounded and bruised, and He suffered painful blows so that you may be healed from all sickness and diseases: He was wounded and bruised for our sins. *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. (Isa. 53:5) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (1 Peter 2:24).*

The Feast of Unleavened bread speaks of sanctification. The Messiah was set apart. His body would not decay in the grave. Christ spoke of leaven (yeast) as a type of sin. *Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees (Matt. 16:6, 11-12).*

Yeast is used in this analogy because just a small amount can puff up a large amount of dough. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (Gal. 5:9).* In the same way a small sin can spread and grow in our minds and attitudes causing us to “puff up” with pride and arrogance (1 Cor. 4:18-19; 5:2; Col. 2:18).

As the leaven represents sin, the unleavened bread is a symbol of the body of Christ, without sin. The matzah also reminds us of Messiah because it is striped and pierced. Our Lord referred to Himself as the bread of God and as the bread of life (John 6:33, 35), and he chose the bread of the Passover to be the symbolic memorial of His broken body (Luke 22:19). Just as God sustained the children of Israel in the wilderness, His Son now feeds the believer with the true bread of heaven, Himself. John 6:32 and 33 says *“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”* It is also significant that Christ was born in *Bethlehem* which means “house of bread.”

Paul used illustrations of the Passover lamb and unleavened bread to characterize Christ’s sacrifice and our salvation. *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 Cor. 5:7-8).

PUTTING OFF THE SIN NATURE

The unleavened bread is also a visual lesson instructing us how God wants us to change through Christ. When one accepts Jesus as the Passover Lamb who dies for our sins, his position before God changes to sinless (without yeast) because Jesus took on our sins. We are righteous through Jesus.

As believers in Christ we are to put off the sin nature within us. *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:22-24).*

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Gal. 5:16-24).

SYMBOLISM IN THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

- 1.) Seven days—the Hebrew word seven is *shevah* from the root word *savah*, to be full or satisfied, to have enough of.
- 2.) Israelites fed on bread without leaven (sin)—believers feed on Y'shua (Jesus), the Word, without sin.
- 3.) Unleavened bread is used for consecration and separation—believers in Christ are to be consecrated and separated to live a holy life.



Suggestions for Remembering the Holiday

During the day of Passover, search for leavened bread (described below) before your Passover meal. The Bible's banning of leavened bread during Passover festival declares: *...even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses* (Ex. 12:15). Expounding on this precept, the Mishnah opens with the directive, "At (twi)light of the fourteenth day (of Nisan) we search for leaven bread by the light of the lamp." The Talmud explains that this is the time when everyone is at home and the light of a lamp is "good" for searching in the dark. It also quotes a series of biblical texts which relate this external search to an inner search of man's soul (relieving it of pollution).

Explain to the family that, after partaking of the Passover, we should ask God for power to choose his will and strive to live a sin-free life of obedience as we observe the seven days of Unleavened Bread. This is a symbol of our step towards righteousness and turning away from sin. The purity of the Feast of Unleavened Bread follows the blood-deliverance of Passover; we can only walk in purity before the Lord after we have had the blood-deliverance at the cross. We gladly clear our houses of all leavened products for seven days to remind us Jesus cleanses us of sin. We eat matzah for these seven days, allowing us to symbolically take in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5:7-8).

THE SEARCH FOR LEAVEN IS SYMBOLIC FOR BELIEVERS IN MESSIAH

The search process is described in the *1997 Encyclopedia Judaica*:

- 1) After Evening Service on the night before Passover eve, no work should be done or food eaten until the search for leaven has been undertaken. The householder first recites the benediction, "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to remove the leaven."
- (2) He then conducts a thorough search of the house (or premises), checking every place especially until the search for leaven has been undertaken. The householder first recites the benediction, "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to remove the leaven."
- (3) The search is conducted in silence. As an aid to concentration, it is customary to switch off electric lights and only use an oil lamp or candle.





- (4) Since pre-Passover “spring-cleaning” will already have disposed of most leaven, small pieces of bread and crumbs are left around the house in advance (usually on paper) for the searcher to find, so that his benediction should not have been recited in vain.
- (5) All leavened bread discovered is carefully placed in a bag or other combustible container with the aid of feathers (some also use a disposable wooden spoon), tied up with the candle and feathers, and put to one side for burning the next day.
- (6) Once the search has been completed, a formula renouncing any leaven that remains is pronounced.
- (7) Before 10 A.M. the next morning (or as specified by the local rabbinate), the parcel of leavened bread is burned outdoors and a modified version of the previous formula is then recited.

THE SEARCH REPRESENTS JESUS

This search for leavened bread also represents the Messiah! Even Jewish tradition (not listed in the Bible) points to Jesus as Messiah! One day our Jewish friends will see Jesus as Messiah through these symbolic ceremonies.

1. The candle represents the Word of God who is the Light of the World, whose written word reveals to us our sin.
2. The feather represents the Holy Spirit (Ruach Ha Kodesh) directing us to the cross of Jesus.
3. The wooden spoon represents the tree of crucifixion.
4. The paper bag represents the grave.
5. The fire represents how our sin has been dealt with, never again to be remembered.

OUR FAMILY'S SEARCH FOR LEAVEN

One year, as we searched for leaven, I [Robin speaking] felt sure I had all the leaven out of the house, including the toothpaste, which had baking soda in it. I even remembered I had several small packets of yeast in our freezer, so I took those out. On around the fourth day of Unleavened Bread, I opened the freezer to pull out broccoli, and behind the broccoli was a 5-lb. bag of yeast! I had forgotten about it—it fell to the floor with a thud.

What a picture! Here I had searched and gotten rid of all the “little sins” but



I did not see the biggest one in the house that needed to go. I had been angry at my husband for something and realized I needed to apologize. He forgave me and I got rid of the yeast. Praise God for symbolism.

One family's description of the seven days of Unleavened Bread:

Day One: Matzah tastes great! Why don't we have this more often?
 Day Two: Let's make matzah appetizers with cream cheese and pickles.
 Day Three: I made desert with chocolate and ice cream in between two matzah!
 Day Four: Mom, Jimmy said cake has yeast in it. It doesn't does it Mom?
 Day Five: I found an old peanut butter sandwich behind the sofa!
 Day Six: Oh, pllllllllllllllllllllllease can I have a McDonald's hamburger?
 Day Seven: Let's go watch for the sun to go down. Tonight we can have BREAD!!! Yeah!



EAT NO LEAVEN FOR SEVEN DAYS

This is a time to be creative. You'll never imagine how many things you eat that include leaven. Substitute unleavened matzah crackers to make sandwiches. Homemade unleavened bread is delicious shaped into bread sticks. Eat soups instead of sandwiches.

Each time you or your family go to get your regular leavened bread during this week, it is an opportunity to explain we are not eating leavened bread this week to remind us that:

1. The unleavened bread is a symbol of the speed and haste in which the Israelites were redeemed from Egypt, not having the time to bake full loaves of bread.
2. Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:26-58).
3. The days of Unleavened Bread were not joyless; the time began and ended with a feast—a party. A walk of purity in the Lord is not a joyless life!
4. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. *And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying,*