

# Messianic Passover Seder (Leader)

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## Preparing for the Seder

Hebrew worship music can be playing in the background [see Marty Goetz music]. Traditionally, the Seder is observed “reclining”. If possible, you can do this by having people sit on the floor on pillows and the items set on a low table or the floor.

Meats and salads other than the Seder foods should be prepared to fill out the Festival Meal, as well as bottles of wine to fill the glasses for the Four Cups.

The table should be set with the following special items.

- The Seder plate, which contains:
  - Lamb bone
  - Charoset – a mixture of nuts and fruit
  - Bitter herbs – typically mild horseradish or parsley
  - Vegetable – Romain lettuce, spinach, or any other green vegetable
  - Egg – a hard-boiled egg
- A covered plate that holds three pieces of matzah.
- Other matzah for general eating
- A bowl of salt water
- A wine glass for each person (Each participant will drink four cups during the Seder)
- Two candles
- A plate setting for each person (the rest of the meal is brought out later)
- A copy of the Messianic Passover Seder participants guide
- A bowl and towel to dip hands in for washing

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## [Introduction]

Welcome to a new Passover. Let’s begin by saying the Lord’s Prayer together:

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.  
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen.*

Why are we, believers in Jesus, celebrating a Jewish holiday like Passover? There are several reasons:

- Throughout human history, God revealed himself primarily through creation, through His Son Jesus, and through His people. His original people were known as Hebrews, and later as Jews.
- God Promised that through the Father of the Hebrews, Abraham, He would bless all nations, and through the nation of Israel would come the Messiah. His name is Y'shua – Jesus.
- Jesus is Jewish. He celebrated Passover. It was at Jesus' last Passover that He instructed believers to keep the Lord's Supper – the Passover supper, in remembrance of His sacrificial death on the Cross. The early church was made of many believing Jews who celebrated Passover every year, and they celebrated Jesus as the Messiah and the fulfillment of Passover.
- Through Christ we have been adopted into the family of God. We have become His people. We have been grafted into the Hebrew heritage of God's people on earth. Because of our relationship to Jesus, His story is our story, and His history is our history, and so it is appropriate for us to remember, observe, and celebrate. So, let's begin.

## [Lighting the Yom Tov Candles]

Before the start of every Sabbath or Jewish holiday, it is traditional for the women of the household to light two candles – the Yom Tov Candles - in honor of the holy day, and gratitude for the light of God

[After candles are lit] Now lets read Numbers 6:24-26 together:

*The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*

And this is our prayer (together):

*Blessed art Thou, Adonai, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sent Thy Son, Thine Only Son, Y'shua the Messiah, to be the light of the world and our Passover Lamb, that through him we might live. Amen.*

## [The First Cup – the Cup of Kiddush or Blessing]

Now we come to the first of four ceremonial cups. Make sure there is wine in your glass. This is the cup of Kiddush or blessing. With this cup we set this night aside, as different than all other nights. Holding the cup of wine in your right hand, we will recite the blessing together:

*Blessed art Thou, o lord our God, ruler of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.  
Blessed art Thou, o Lord our God, ruler of the universe, Father of our households.  
Blessed art thou, o Lord our God, ruler of the universe, giver of life and blessing.*

Everyone toast and drink together.

## [The Washing of Hands]

At this point, the washing of hands was customarily done by the servant of the house. Using a bowl and towel, he or she would go to each person at the table and wash their hands. But on the night Jesus observed Passover with his disciples, he added something completely unexpected.

## Read John 13:1-15

In our Passover observance, we will wash each other's hands, in honour of what Jesus modeled for us. Once you have washed your hands, each of you hold the bowl and towel for the person next to you, so they can wash their hands. [Play Hebrew / Jewish music while doing this]

## [The Seder meal]

In the center of the table is the Seder Plate - a special plate. Each food item on it has special symbolic meaning:

**The Lamb Bone** is a reminder of the first Passover Lamb of the last plague.

**The Bitter Herb** is the horseradish and it recalls the bitterness of slavery.

**The Charoset** is a mixture of fruit and nuts that represent the bricks and mortar the Israelites were forced to make under Pharaoh's taskmasters.

**The Vegetable** is a symbol of life and strength

**The Hard-boiled Egg** is also a symbol of life, but also sacrifice.

## [Breaking the Middle Matzah]

There is also a plate on the table with 3 pieces of Matzah, or unleavened bread, which is called the bread of affliction.

And now comes one of the most interesting parts of the Seder for believers in Y'shua. It's the breaking of the middle matzah. Hebrews have been doing this for centuries, and yet it's unclear why.

Three Matzah are placed in a special white covering [called the "matzo toff"]. The middle matzah is removed and broken. The larger piece is wrapped and hidden, and then later brought back. It is called the afikoman, meaning that which comes later, or "The One" who comes later. The smaller piece is eaten with the others and the bitter herbs.

Why are there three matzah? Some rabbis say it represents the HIGH PRIEST, LEVITES and PEOPLE of ISRAEL. Other rabbis say that it represents ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB. Still other rabbis say that in the wilderness God gave daily MANNA, but on Friday a double portion was given and one is added for Passover, making three.

But why is the middle matzah broken, hidden and brought back later? This tradition has been celebrated for thousands of years, and yet there is no good explanation why. Jews call it a mystery.

For us who believe in Y'shua, it is no mystery. It is an ancient picture of Jesus and the one and only God revealed in three persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Son left the fellowship of the Trinity, was broken, buried, and brought back.

Hidden within the Hebraic celebration of Passover is this distinct revelation of Jesus as the deliverer. Yet even today they refuse to acknowledge it.

[Uncover the matzah and lift up the middle matzah for all to see.]

This is the bread of affliction which the people of God ate in the land of Egypt. It is also the bread of affliction eaten by the Son of God, who was betrayed, crucified, and buried.

So we break the middle Matzah into two pieces – one large and one small. We will wrap the larger part and put it aside and come back to it later. For now, we move on...

## [The Karpas]

Turn to the Seder plate, and we will eat “The Karpas”. “Karpas” means “greens” or “herbs” in Hebrew.

Green is the symbol of life. It reminds us of the Garden of Eden in all its glory – and the first days of God’s greatest creation – mankind. This is represented on the table by the vegetables.

But those days did not stay perfect for long. There is also a small bowl of salt water – it reminds us of the days of mourning as Eden was abandoned, and the Hebrews suffered in Egypt, and the tears of all those who suffer apart from God.

The matzah is the humble bread, or bread of affliction, and it is dipped into the bitter herbs to remind us of the bitterness of slavery and oppression, both physical and spiritual.

As followers of Jesus, The Karpas also reminds us that Jesus is the giver of life, the bread of life, and the salt water symbolizes the tears shed for him along the Via Dolorosa and the hill of Calvary where He was broken and oppressed, and gave His life.

So think silently about these things as you dip the vegetable into the salt water and eat. And dip the matzah into the bitter herbs and eat.

## [The Four Questions]

Now as the generations of Hebrews passed, the children would find it difficult to relate to the meaning of the matzah and the Karpas. They didn’t suffer like their ancestors. So this segment of the Passover highlights the importance of passing on the stories of their people from generation to generation, through 4 questions. The youngest person present usually asks the 4 questions.

*On all other nights we may eat either leavened or unleavened bread; but on this night why only unleavened bread?*

*On all other nights we eat herbs of any kind; but on this night why only bitter herbs?*

*On all other nights we do not dip our herbs even once; but on this night why do we dip them twice?*

*On all other nights we eat our meals sitting or reclining; but on this night why do we eat in a reclining position?*

Now perhaps the oldest person can read the answers.

*We eat matzah because when the Hebrews were told by Pharaoh that they could leave Egypt, they had no time to bake bread with leaven, so they baked it without leaven.*

*At the Seder, we eat bitter herbs to remind us of the bitterness our ancestors experienced when they were oppressed by the Egyptian taskmasters.*

*At the Seder, we dip food twice: the greens in salt water, and the matzah into bitter herbs, as we shall later explain.*

*In ancient times, slaves ate standing, while the wealthy in Egypt dined on couches. To show that Israel is now free, we too recline while eating.*

## [The Passover Story]

Now we will read the telling of THE PASSOVER STORY, and we all participate.

READER: The Bible teaches that during a great famine, the sons of Israel journeyed to Egypt to purchase food. There they were reunited with Joseph, who was second only to Pharaoh.

ALL: And then there arose a new Pharaoh, one who did not know Joseph. He beheld the might of Israel, and he feared that in time of war, the sons of Jacob might join themselves with Egypt's foes.

READER: And so he subdued the Israelites, and he afflicted them with cruel labor. Task masters were placed over the Israelites to compel them to make bricks and to build Pharaoh's great storage cities.

ALL: But despite their hardship, they continued to thrive, just as God had promised. Pharaoh then ordered the slaughter of Israel's infant sons. By his command, every male child born to the Hebrews was to be cast into the Nile and drowned.

READER: In anguish, they cried to the God of our Fathers. And God heard their cry. God remembered His covenant. And God raised up a deliverer. He sent Moses to Pharaoh's court to declare the commandment of the Lord...

ALL: Let my people go.

READER: But Pharaoh would not hearken to the Lord of Hosts. And so plagues were poured out upon the Egyptians, upon their crops, and upon their flocks.

ALL: But Pharaoh's heart was hardened. He would not yield to the will of God. He would not let the House of Jacob depart.

READER: Then the tenth plague fell upon the land of Egypt: the death of Egypt's firstborn. But to protect the children of Israel, God commanded the head of each Jewish household to sacrifice a spotless lamb, without breaking any of its bones, and to apply its blood to the doorway of their homes.

ALL: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plagues shall not be upon you to destroy you."

READER: By the blood of lamb was Israel spared.

ALL: By the blood of the lamb was death made to pass over.

READER: Passover. The night when death passed over the houses of Israel because of the blood of the Passover lamb. What a mighty act of redemption.

ALL: And just as the blood of those first Passover lambs was applied in faith, so the blood of the Messiah must be applied in faith to our hearts.

READER: Tonight, we worship God because all of us, whether Jewish or Gentile, may be redeemed from bondage through our faith in the Messiah Jesus. Through Him, we may pass over from death to life.

## [The Second Cup – The Plagues]

Please lift up your glass, and we will observe the second cup – the cup of the TEN PLAGUES. The Lord God promised to save His people, but salvation came through the suffering of the Egyptians. This too we remember.

We will spill one drop for each of THE TEN PLAGUES. As we mention the plagues, with your knife remove one drop out of your cup and place it onto your plate. Repeat after me as we do this.

*Because of blood...the frogs...the lice...the insects...the disease...the boils...the hail...the locusts...the darkness...the death.*

More than once has the enemy risen up to destroy us. The salvation of God is forever, yet it is not without sorrow. A full cup is a symbol of joy, but tonight we have diminished our cup to show that our joy is not complete, for it comes to us through someone's suffering.

**Read 1 Peter 1:24**

## [It would have been enough]

The Hebrew word for "It would have been enough" is DAYENU (pronounced: Dai-eh-nu). Say it with me...DAYENU. The Hebrews used this saying to give thanks to God for doing so much more for them than what they expected. The same is true for us.

LEADER: If through Jesus, we received eternal salvation and not received His Holy Spirit. DAYENU

ALL: It would have been enough for us.

LEADER: Had He given us His Holy Spirit and not bestowed us with the fruit of the Spirit. DAYENU

ALL: It would have been enough for us.

LEADER: Had He bestowed us with the fruit of the Spirit and not given us His peace. DAYENU

ALL: It would have been enough for us.

## [The Festival Meal]

Now is the time to feast. Let us say the blessing together for this meal:

*Blessed art Thou, O Lord Our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the Vine  
Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth.*

We will now eat the rest of the Matzah, the fruit and nuts, the egg, the Lamb, and the rest of the meal together

\*Note: The Matzah was often dipped into the fruit and nuts during the meal, and it was known as the sop. It is still the custom today to give this dipped sop with affection to a loved one. So if you feel especially loving tonight...

Now it was with the dipped sop that Jesus identified his betrayer in John 13.

"One of you shall betray me". Peter motioned for John to ask who it was. Jesus answered, "He is the one to whom I shall give a sop". Jesus dipped sop, and gave it to Judas, expressing affection.

## [MEAL IS SERVED!]

## [Giving Thanks]

In Passover, Grace is said after the meal. Let's read it together.

LEADER: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

ALL: May the name of the Lord be blessed from this time forth and forever.

LEADER: We praise You, O God, from whose abundance we have partaken.

ALL: We praise You, O Lord our God, our Savior and our King who gives bread to all flesh, for Your lovingkindness endures forever.

## [Eating the Afikomen]

The Afikomen is now brought back to eat, but as we mentioned before, the Hebrews didn't really know why. But the Afikomen is the part of Seder that Jesus used to establish communion. He gave meaning to this previously meaningless tradition. He declared himself as the Afikomen.

Jesus said "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." The bread that was broken and hidden, has come back. Let us eat it in remembrance of Him.

[share and eat the Afikomen matzah]

## [Third Cup – Redemption]

We now come to the third cup – The Cup of Redemption. With this cup Israel remembers their deliverance from 430 years of slavery, and their redemption from the plague of death by the blood of the first Passover Lamb in Egypt.

It was with this cup The Word of God tells us: In the same way, after the supper he, Jesus, took the cup, saying, " This cup (The third cup – The Cup of Redemption) is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me". Jesus claimed to be the fulfillment of the cup of redemption which the Hebrews and Jews had drank from for thousands of years, but always awaiting its fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah. Jesus says He is the One they have been waiting for.

Those around the table must have wondered if Jesus had gone too far. But for us around this table, we know it to be true. He is our redemption. Through His blood we are saved.

So take your cup and raise it up, and lets declare this together:

[Everyone recite:]

*I will lift up the cup of salvation, The Cup of Y'shua and call on the name of the Lord.  
Remembering that Jesus' blood was poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Let us be thankful.*

[Drink the cup of Redemption]

## [The fourth cup – Cup of Elijah]

Let's fill the cup a fourth time. This now is the cup of Elijah. Elijah is the bearer of good tidings of joy and peace. His name is especially associated with the coming of the Messiah, whose advent he is expected to announce.

So in waiting for him, Jewish homes would open the front door. [Someone go open the front door]

Our door is open for Elijah to come in and announce the Messiah has arrived. And the cup of Elijah is filled and ready for him, but not drunk. It remains on the table in the Passover as a sign of God's messianic promise not yet fulfilled. And this is how the Hebrew Passover ends.

But for us who believe in Y'shua as the Messiah, "Elijah has come". The Gospels tell us that John the Baptist came as Elijah. Many believed he was the one declared in Passover. He prepared the way, and announced the coming of Messiah. He came as the forerunner of Y'shua – the true Messiah.

So now we must take our cup, rise up, and close the door!

Elijah and the Messiah have come, and now this cup represents the completion and fulfillment of God's ancient promises! Drink the cup of Elijah!

Messianic Jews would empty it because there is no need for the wine to wait any longer.

## [Conclusion – Praise and Expectation]

Let's conclude our Passover with readings of praise and expectation.

READER: Praise the Lord!

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

READER: Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forever.

ALL: I shall lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.

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

ALL: For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

READER: The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

ALL: This is the day which the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

READER: Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

**ALL: Next Year in Jerusalem!** (Traditional Jewish way of concluding the Passover)

## Prayer

Pray back to the Lord what He put on your heart during this Passover evening.

## The Shofar

[Blow the Shofar if you have one, and let others try it. It's a fun way to end the evening with laughter. Joyful Hebrew music should be played as well]