

Feasts of the Bible Participant Guide

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Session Two



Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits

Our Lamb for Eternity

Be sure to see the key terms and charts starting on page 29.

Follow Along and Take Notes

Session 2 Outline: *Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits*

- I. Feast of Passover
 - A. Head, beginning, foundation
 1. Exodus 12:2
 2. Release from bondage
 - B. Feast of Unleavened Bread
 - C. Feast of Firstfruits (Reishit)
 1. 1 Corinthians 15:20
 2. Commemorates the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord
- II. Passover Preparation
 - A. Jesus celebrated Passover

1. Luke 22:7–13

B. Two Reasons for Unleavened Bread (Matzah)

1. Historical Reason

a) Deuteronomy 16:3

2. Leaven Pictures Sin

a) Leviticus 2:11

b) 1 Corinthians 8:1

c) 1 Corinthians 5:6–8

d) 1 John 1:9

C. Elijah Tradition: Herald of the Lord

1. Malachi 3–4

2. John the Baptist; John 1:29

D. Four Cups

1. Four-fold blessing of redemption

2. Exodus 6:6–7

III. Passover Service

- A. Lighting of the Candles

- B. Haggadah = “the telling”

1. Exodus 12:26–27

- C. Seder Plate

1. Parsley & Salt Water

2. Bitter Herbs

3. Charoset

4. Egg

5. Shank Bone

- D. First Cup: Consecration

1. Matzah Tash (Bread Bag) or Echad (Unity)
 2. Triune God of Israel; Isaiah 48:16
- E. Second Cup: Plagues (Judgment)
1. Death of the Firstborn
 - a) Exodus 4:22–23
 2. Provision for Our Redemption
 - a) Exodus 12:3
 - b) Concept of Judgment
 3. Passover Lamb
 - a) Zechariah 9:9
 4. Passover Story
 - a) Exodus 12:7, 13
 - b) Psalm 22; Isaiah 53

F. Family Meal

1. Afkomen (“that which comes afterward”)

G. Third Cup: Redemption

1. The Lord’s Supper

- a) Luke 22:19–20

2. New Covenant

- a) Jeremiah 31:31–34

- b) John 17:3

- c) Revelation 3:20

H. Fourth Cup: Hallel (Praise)

1. Elijah’s empty seat

2. Heralds going forth

Key Terms

Afikomen – (Ah-fee-KO-men) broken piece of matzah that is taken out from the second compartment of the matzah bag. It is hidden away until the third cup of the Passover Seder and then redeemed by a child who finds it. *Afikomen* is a Greek word that means “that which comes after.” It is this broken matzah that Messiah Jesus utilized to institute what has come to be called The Lord’s Supper (Luke 22:19).

Bitter Herbs – One of the three items commanded to be eaten at the first Passover according to Exodus 12:8–9. In Egypt, the bitter herbs were to remind the Israelites that their lives as slaves were full of bitterness. Today, as followers of Jesus, these bitter herbs remind us of the bitterness of our lives when we were slaves to sin.

Elijah’s Cup or Cup of Hallel – In the Passover Seder the four cups each have a name. The fourth cup is known as the Cup of Hallel (Praise), but it is also called Elijah’s Cup to remember that Elijah’s coming would precede the coming of the Messiah. This fourth cup is mentioned in Matthew 26:29–30 when Jesus and his disciples sang a song of praise at the end of the Passover meal.

The Exodus – The story of how God delivered the Israelites from bondage in ancient Egypt by Moses. This account is recorded in the book of Exodus.

Feast of Firstfruits – Also called *Reishit* (Re-SHEET), it was the day of offering the first ripe sheaf (the firstfruits) of barley to the Lord as an act of dedicating the harvest to him. Observed on the third day after Passover (Lev. 23:9–14). Jewish people rarely celebrate Reishit today, but it has great significance for followers of Jesus as the day of his resurrection.

Feast of Unleavened Bread – Also called *Hag HaMatzot* (Hawg Hah-MAHT-zot), in Scripture it is mentioned as a separate feast on the fifteenth day of the same month as Passover (Lev. 23:6–8; Ex. 12:15–20). Today, the feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits have all been incorporated into the eight-day celebration of Passover.

Haggadah – (Ha-GA-dah) means “the telling” and refers to the book used to explain the Seder service.

Leaven – *Chametz* is the Hebrew word for “leaven” which is any food that is made of grain and water that has been allowed to ferment and rise. Leaven is seen as a corrupting agent and is forbidden at Passover time. Leavened bread is the opposite of matzah or unleavened bread.

The Last Supper – Traditional name for the last Passover meal that Messiah Jesus ate with his disciples. In 1 Corinthians 11:20 Paul calls it “the Lord’s supper” because at the third cup (Cup of Redemption) Jesus instituted Communion. It is at this cup that Jesus pointed to himself saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Luke 22:20). He also took the Afikomen piece of matzah and referred to his body as a sacrifice (Luke 22:19). Therefore, Communion is a part of God’s Passover.

Matzah – The unleavened bread eaten on Passover to recall the haste in which the Israelites left Egypt (Deut. 16:3). It is made with water and flour only, not any leaven, and during the baking process the dough is pierced so it will not fracture into pieces in the oven.

Matzah Tash – This is the matzah bag, also referred to by many Jewish people as the *Echad*, meaning “unity.” It contains three compartments with one slice of unleavened bread (matzah) in each compartment. The second compartment contains the Afikomen.



Matzah Tash (Bread Bag)

New Covenant – A biblical term referring to a new kind of relationship between God and humanity in which sins are forgiven and each person can know God personally. This new covenant was foretold by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31–34) and promised by Messiah Jesus at the Last Supper. It is through Messiah that this new covenant is instituted.

Pesach – (PAY-sahch) The Hebrew way to say Passover. It comes from a Hebrew root meaning “to pass over.” Pesach refers to the fact that God passed over the houses of the Jews when he slew the firstborn of Egypt (Ex. 12:12–13).

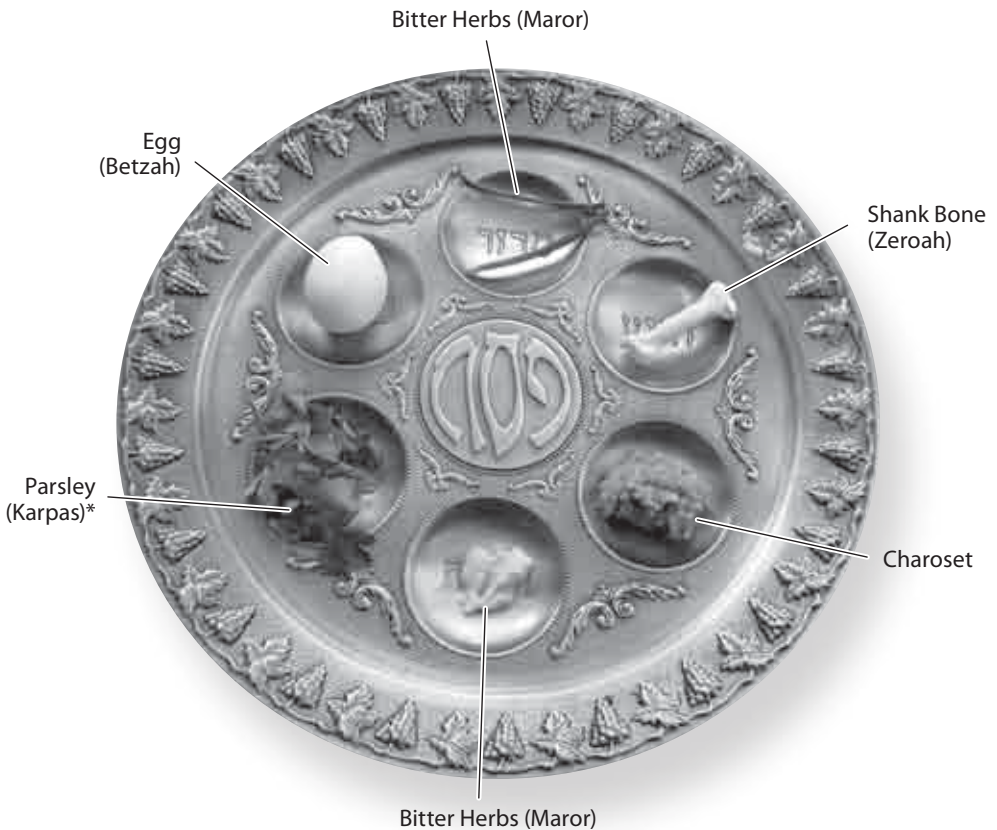
Seder – (SAY-der) Hebrew word that means “order” and refers to the order of service for the Passover meal. At each Passover table there is a special Seder plate with various ceremonial foods to be eaten during the meal. Today, a Passover meal can simply be called a Seder or Passover Seder.

Torah – Usually understood as Law, but in Hebrew it literally means “instruction.” Consists of the first five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

The Four Cups of the Passover Seder

	Cup of...	Meaning	Scripture
1	Consecration (Sanctification)	"I will bring you out"	Exodus 6:6
2	Plagues (Judgment)	"I will deliver you"	Exodus 6:6
3	Redemption	"I will redeem you"	Exodus 6:7
4	Praise (Hallel)	"I will take you for my people"	Exodus 6:7

Seder Plate



*A bowl of salt water is often placed off to the side of the plate in which to dip the parsley.

Get into God's Word

Key Bible Verses

Read: Exodus 12:1–12

Study Question: How did the people of Israel avoid the tenth and most terrible plague?

Read: Leviticus 23:5–14

Study Question: According to this passage, what are do's and don'ts of observing Passover? (The first two are filled in for you.)

v. 6 *Do eat unleavened bread* _____

v. 7 *Don't do any laborious work* _____

v. 8–9 _____

v. 10–11 _____

v. 12 _____

v. 13 _____

v. 14 _____

Read: Matthew 26:1–5, 17–30

Study Question: During this Passover meal, what did Jesus reveal to his disciples about who he was and what was going to happen?

Read: 1 Corinthians 5:6–8

Study Question: What (or who) is the “old leaven” Paul instructs believers to remove?

Talk about It

Discussion Questions

1. Have you participated in a Passover Seder? If so, share your experience of it with the group.

2. What is the significance of beginning the biblical year with the Feast of Passover?

3. Why was it important for each family to apply the blood of the lamb to their doorway?

4. What if a religious Jewish family decided they did not want to apply the lamb's blood to their door? Would they have escaped judgment? (See Ex. 12:7, 12-13)

5. There are many symbolic elements and set practices in a Passover Seder. What are some of the benefits of having symbols and ceremonies in worship? What are some of the possible pitfalls?

Stop and Pray

Passover Prayer

The Passover Seder is led by the head of the household, the father or the grandfather of the family. However, the woman of the household has the privilege to welcome this celebration by lighting the candles and reciting a Passover blessing. The blessing below is modified from the traditional Jewish blessing to reflect Jesus as the Light of world.

English

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of the universe who sanctified us through faith in Messiah, Jesus, the Light of the world and it's in his name that we kindle the Passover lights, amen.

Hebrew

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech Ha'olam, asher kidshanu al yaday emuna b'Yeshua haMashiach, Or HaOlam, oo'b'Shmo anu madlikiim haner shel Pasach.

Notes:

Think about It

Reflection Questions

1. Read and reflect on the progressive revelation that God gave us concerning the Lamb.
 - A lamb for the person – Genesis 22:7
 - A lamb for the family – Exodus 12:13
 - A lamb for Israel – Isaiah 53
 - A lamb for the world – John 1:29
 - A lamb for eternity – Revelation 5:5

2. Write down several ways that having a “Lamb for eternity” can impact your life today in how you use your time, your talents, and your resources.

Learn More

Going Deeper

1. **Why did God require a bloody sacrifice—the killing of a lamb—to spare the people?**

In the Bible, we read about people routinely sacrificing animals in obedience to God’s commands. Why did God require all the bloody sacrifices? The Scriptures are clear. It states in Leviticus 17:11, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.”

The annual Passover lambs that were sacrificed pointed to the necessity of substitutionary sacrifices. Substitutionary sacrifices are those offerings that God accepted in the place of the sinner (Lev. 1–5). These sacrifices were presented day after day and year after year, in order to attain forgiveness of sins. Each person that brought a sin offering as the payment for sin had to identify with the innocence of the animal offered, and then by placing his hands on that animal, transferring the sin as an exchange, killing it in front of the priest. This is the essence of identification with the sacrifice and forgiveness of sins that the shedding of blood brings. This is why, in the first Passover in Egypt, God required placing the blood on the door; each family placed the blood on their door by faith. God is looking to redeem people of faith who would trust in his way of redemption and follow him completely. The death of each family’s Passover lamb must have been personal and even traumatic because for four days the year-old lamb lived with the family—becoming a part of the family. In Exodus 12, we notice that Moses wrote precise instruction about this lamb using different articles. The articles go from *a* lamb, to *the* lamb, and finally to *your* lamb. Note the progression of the family’s identification with the Lamb.

Exodus 12:3 “they are each one to take a lamb for themselves”

Exodus 12:4 “...you are to divide the lamb.”

Exodus 12:5 “*Your* lamb shall be...”

Each family went from selecting *a* lamb from many lambs, and once this lamb was selected it became *the* lamb. After the lamb was inspected

and deemed to be without blemish it became *their* lamb for sacrifice and its blood was applied to the door of the home—a personal sacrifice to redeem them from slavery. After having this little lamb in their home they would have become attached to it. Can you imagine their sense of guilt when eating this meat? There was a personal identification with this lamb.

This sacrifice foreshadowed a coming and final substitutionary sacrifice, the Messiah, the Lamb of God. It is personal identification with the Lamb of God through faith that spares us from judgment.

2. How do Jesus' last days mirror the celebration of Passover?

Palm Sunday. It began with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey, which is commonly known as the triumphal entry on Palm Sunday (Mark 11:1–11). This Sunday would have been the 10th of the month when each family who had come up to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover would be selecting a lamb for sacrifice.

Inspected. From this 10th day until the 14th day of the month Jesus was tested by all the authorities of the day: civil, political, and religious (See Luke 20:1–8, 19–26, 27–47; 22:54, 66–71). He was found truly to be without spot and without blemish as a Roman official declared to all, “I find no fault in Him” (Luke 23:4). Passover lambs had to be unblemished (Ex. 12:5).

Passover Meal. Jesus partook of the Passover meal with his disciples on the first night of Passover on the 14th of Nisan, the same night when all Israel would be partaking of their lambs.

Sacrifice. Later that night after Judas betrayed him, Jesus was arrested in the middle of the night, and died on the first day of Passover (Luke 22).

No Broken Bone. John 19:36 points out that not a single bone of Jesus was broken—neither during the course of the beatings nor by the Roman soldiers who broke the legs of the other men crucified alongside Jesus. Similarly, the Jewish people were to be careful to make sure that not a single bone of the Passover lamb was broken (See Ex. 12:8–9, 46; Ps. 22:17).

3. What is the difference between the Passover meal and the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper (or Communion) was a practice Jesus instituted during the last Passover meal he celebrated with his disciples before his death. He gave new meaning to the Passover elements.

In Luke 22:19 Jesus identifies himself with the Passover bread. Messiah Jesus took the bread and said, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." This bread is called the Afikomen, the broken piece of matzah (unleavened bread) that had been hidden away. Messiah taught his disciples that this matzah represents his sacrifice for he is truly the only sinless, unleavened, perfect Lamb of God.

Luke 22:20 reads, "And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.'" This cup was the third cup of wine which is traditionally called the Cup of Redemption. It is taken after the meal. Notice how Jesus gave this cup a new meaning by telling his followers that this cup was the "new covenant." His disciples would have been familiar with the promise of the new covenant from the prophet Jeremiah: "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.... I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people'" (Jer. 31:31-33).

Therefore, Communion or the Lord's Supper is a part of Passover. Every year when we celebrate the Passover deliverance, we who trust in Jesus the Messiah don't stop at the borders of Egypt, but rather remember our perfect Lamb who redeemed us from the slavery of sin and death.