

Why Celebrate the Passover (Pesach)?

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Isn't your life already busy enough? Who has time for a six-hour Passover Seder commemorating something that happened thousands of years ago? What could this possibly have to do with my life here and now, you may ask? How can a 3500-year-old Biblical ritual in any way relate to those living in the age of the laser, satellites, the worldwide web and computers? Well, let's see!

The Preacher said in Ecclesiastes 3:15, "That which is has been already and that which will be has already been..." Life is full of paradoxes. Do advancements in technology, science, economics, medicine, religion, and world government really promise to give men the rest for their weary souls for which they long?

How about a different approach to the questions and problems facing modern man? Is it possible to go forward by going backwards? This is a thesis that the ancient prophet Yermeyahu (Jeremiah) proffered to those who had ears to hear. He said, "Thus says YHVH, Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you will find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk in it" (Jer. 6:16). What were those ancient paths to which this white-haired Jewish prophet referred? This question is answered three verses later: "Because they have not listened to My words, and as for My Torah, they have rejected it also" (verse 19). YHVH through his prophets has been showing men the way of rest for their souls for thousands of years, yet men consistently refuse to hearken. They always have a better way, it seems!

The festival of Passover is one of the most ancient paths to be found in all of Scripture. In it are contained clues that will help the partakers of it to understand the past, present and the future.

A God-hater, Karl Marx, the father of modern communism, said that religion is the opiate of the masses. Yes, this can be said of dead, truthless and spiritless religion. But how about that religion which gives definition, purpose, meaning, hope and destiny to a man's life? How could anything that comes directly from the Loving Father who created you and me in his own image be detrimental to us?

It has been said that the religion of the Bible tells a man where he has come from, where he is and where he is going. Could it not be said that a man who knows the answers to these questions possesses true wisdom and wealth, and has indeed found rest for his troubled soul?

One of the most important Scriptures in the Jewish faith is the famous Shema passage of Deuteronomy 6:4-9. This passage, which is like a "pledge of allegiance" for the Jews, starts out by saying, "Hear [*Shema*], O Israel ..." The word *Shema* literally means *to hear and to do*. Later, in verse five, the *Shema* continues, "And you shall love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul *and with all your might*." Loving our Heavenly Creator is not just a mind-thing, but also an action and a doing thing. It is something we act out and participate in. This is the Hebrew way ... the ancient paths! This is how YHVH's people showed their love and devotion to him. Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah, reiterated this when he said, "If you love me keep my *mitzvot* [commandments]" (John 14:15).

This is what the Passover Seder is all about. We, as humans, learn by doing. We learn obedience by obeying. We learn to love by loving. We learn about heavenly and spiritual mysteries by walking out the types and shadows found in Scripture (of which Passover is but one) that point to the heavenly and spiritual domain or dimension of YHVH himself. The French have a saying: *L'appétit vient en mangeant*. Translated this means: Appetite comes while eating. Or we could say that the more one eats (delicious food) the more one wants. David said in the Psalms 34:8, "O taste and see that YHVH is good: blessed is the man that trusts in him." The more we walk out the commandments of our Heavenly Father, the more of his goodness we behold, the more of his blessings we receive, the more our soul finds rest, the more we want to walk out his commandments, the more we behold his goodness, and so on goes this wonderful spiritual growth-cycle.

So why do we go to the trouble, expense and time to celebrate a Passover Seder? First, it helps us to fulfill the

commands YHVH gave to us to do at Passover, such as eating lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs; telling our children the story of the Passover; holding a “set apart convocation”; etc. (Exod. 12:14-20, 43-49; Lev. 23:4-5; Num. 9:2-3; 28:16; Deut. 16:1-3). But again we ask, what is the significance and relevance to us of this celebration?

Passover is but the first piece of a panoramic puzzle or the first thread in a rich tapestry of YHVH’s plan of redemption of mankind. Though the Children of Israel kept the first Passover 3500 years ago in the land of Egypt, this ancient celebration is not only a memorial of what occurred then, but is of utmost significance to the spiritual life of the Believer today. It has future or prophetic implications, as well. Passover is the first step of a spiritual journey that, if one continues in it faithfully to the end, will lead one into the very presence of YHVH Elohim, our Heavenly Father, himself. What a journey! Let’s look at it.

Ancient Israel, the covenant people through whom YHVH had chosen to reconcile all nations of the earth to himself, was in slavery in Egypt. YHVH heard their desperate cries, and remembering his promises to Abraham, with a mighty hand he brought down proud and powerful Egypt by his judgments and set his captive children free. Israel was in bondage to Egypt even as you and I were in bondage to our past sinful lives and under helpless control of the world, flesh and the devil. As the Israelites slew a perfect lamb and smeared its blood on the sides and top of the doorposts of their homes they were spared the judgment of the death angel who smote sinful Egypt and all those who were not under the blood. Likewise, there is deliverance for us if we but recognize our state of sin and lostness, and if we but come repentantly to the cross of Golgotha upon which the bleeding Lamb of YHVH, slain from the foundation of the earth, hung. If we too will apply his blood to the doorposts (thoughts and actions) of our lives, we, like our ancient forefathers, can escape the death angel’s terrifying judgment, for he will have no claim on our lives if we are under the blood of the Lamb.

Passover is but the first step in a parade of seven prophetic dress rehearsals or convocations (each is called a *migra*) represented by the seven glorious Festivals of YHVH (called *moedim* or *appointed times*) all of which point to the redemptive work of Messiah Yeshua in the life of the Believer. There are three set-apart festivals (called *moedim*) in the spring of the year that are prophetic shadow-pictures of Messiah’s first coming to earth, and there are four set-apart festivals in autumn which are prophetic shadow-pictures of his second coming at the end of the age.

Passover represents the Believer coming out of spiritual Egypt. Interestingly, Passover falls at the beginning of YHVH’s sacred year. Not only is it at the beginning of the New Year, but it is the first festival of the year and represents the first step in a Believer’s life—all falling in the spring season of the year: the time of rebirth and new beginnings!

Hag haMatzot (the Feast of Unleavened Bread), which immediately follows Passover and which is often considered to be a continuation of Passover, represents the Believer putting Egypt out of his life, which is symbolized by putting leavening out of our homes and living in a leaven-free environment for seven days.

After that comes *Shavuot* (Pentecost). It is impossible for one to live sin-free for very long without help from above. Man needs a guidebook on righteous living, and one needs divine enablement to follow the instructions within the guidebook. YHVH’s Torah (i.e., the first five books of the Bible) is that guidebook and was given to Ancient Israel at Mount Sinai. On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the first-century Believers had not only been given Yeshua, the Living Torah (the Word of YHVH made flesh), but they were promised that the *Ruach haKodesh* (Set-apart Spirit) power of Yeshua, the Living Torah, would live inside of them empowering them to walk faithfully in the light and truth of the Written Torah.

After the Spring Festivals there are the fall festivals, which speak of a great harvest of Believers at the end of the age corresponding to the Second Coming of Yeshua. Those festivals are *Yom Teruah* (Day of Blowing Trumpets), *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), and *Sukkot* (the Feast of Tabernacles) immediately followed by *Shemini Atzeret* (the Eighth Day). Each of these contains a whole world of spiritual and prophetic meaning of tremendous significance to the Believer pertaining to the regathering of Israel, the resurrection of the righteous dead, the return of Yeshua the Messiah, the marriage of Yeshua the Lamb of Elohim to his spiritual bride (the believing Saints) and the establishment of YHVH’s millennial kingdom on earth. Learn about them. You will be blessed!

The central theme of the Passover Seder celebration was the lamb, along with the matzah (unleavened bread) and the bitter herbs. The Lamb is a picture of Messiah Yeshua who was crucified for you and me at the exact moment when each family of the Children of Israel was killing its own lamb, and later on when the High Priest was killing the Passover lamb up on the temple mount in Jerusalem.

In the Gospels we find recorded how Yeshua celebrated an early Passover/“Lord’s Supper” memorial cel-

celebration with his *talmidim* (disciples). At that supper he instructed them how he would perfectly fulfill the role of the Passover lamb and that they were to continue that memorial meal to which Paul makes reference in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

In the Seder are Four Cups of wine around which the Seder revolves. They are called the Cup of Sanctification, the Cup of Deliverance, the Cup of Redemption, and the Cup of Praise or Completion. The Four Cups are based on Exodus 6:6-8, in which YHVH makes seven promises (called the *Seven Steps of Redemption*) to Israel where he elaborated how he would start by delivering Israel from Egypt and end up bringing them into the Promised Land that he would give them.

It is believed that Messiah will drink of the Fourth Cup with his spiritual bride in his kingdom, for it is recorded in the Gospels that Yeshua drank of at least two of the four cups with his disciples during the Last Supper. But the last, or Fourth Cup of Praise or Completion, he said he would not partake of “until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt. 26:29). Many see this as a reference to the long-awaited Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

And this, my beloved friends, is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg in the explanations of these wonderful events that Bible Believers celebrate during the Passover Seder. It is a journey, if you stay faithful to him, that will never end, for the more you grow and learn, the more you will realize how little you know and how vast the ocean of YHVH Elohim’s unsearchableness really is!

1 Corinthians 10:11, “ Now all these things happened unto them for examples and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

1 Corinthians 2:9-10, “But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which Elohim has prepared for them that love him. But Elohim has revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of Elohim.”

Overview of Key Elements Pertaining to the Passover

☞ Meaning of the Word *Passover/Pesach*

- *Pesach* in Hebrew and *Pascha* in Aramaic and Greek means *to step, leap over*.

☞ Passover is in the Month of the Abiv

- Hebrew month always begins at *Rosh Chodesh*.
- The month of the *abiv* is first month of YHVH's biblical (sacred) year (Exod. 12:2 and 13:4).
- The word *abiv* (*Strong's* H24) refers to when the barley grain is green in the ear (Exod. 9:31).

☞ The Physical and Spiritual Worlds Come Together Around the Biblical Calendar

- The Hebrew calendar is lunar-solar.
- The sun and moon must interact to coincide with the agricultural cycle to keep Passover in the spring of the year to fulfill the types of YHVH's plan of redemption in the seven feast days.
- The feast days are in *their seasons* (Lev. 23:4); i.e., the seasons were created around the feasts, which represent YHVH's plan of redemption for mankind.
- Heaven (the sun and moon), earth, the weather and the seasons literally come together or are in harmony with and synchronize with each other to choreograph YHVH's plan of salvation. How few people are aware of this! Yet now you can walk in the light of this understanding, for you are part of it.

☞ Passover is at the Full Moon

- Passover occurs when the moon has reached its full strength. The moon in harmony with the sun reflects its light and shines in the darkness of this world. This is a picture of Torah-keeping Believers in Yeshua who reflect Yeshua, the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2) and the Light of this world, into the darkness of this world.

☞ Passover is the First of Three *Aliyah* Feasts

- We must get the idea of pilgrimage into our hearts, and learn to celebrate YHVH's feasts where he has placed his name.
- Three *aliyah* feasts coincide with the three subdivisions in the Tabernacle or *Mishkan*. This pattern of three corresponds to body/soul/spirit, Father/Son/Spirit, Torah/Prophets/Writings, three steps in Jewish wedding: betrothal/separation and preparation/married life together.

☞ There Are Actually Four Passovers. Each Passover unfolds into the next to bring the plan of redemption into greater fruition or fulfillment.

- **The First Passover:** This Passover was kept in Egypt (the first Passover). Unique aspects of this Passover are:
 - Leaving Egypt
 - Loins girded, sandals on and walking staff in hand
 - No Levitical priesthood yet, the head of each home was the priest and so killed the lamb for his family
 - Passover kept in the home
- **The Second Passover:** The Passover that ancient Israel kept. Unique aspects of this Passover are:
 - Passover was kept wherever YHVH placed his name
 - Passover lamb was killed in the Tabernacle or Temple
 - A memorial meal was eaten on Passover in the homes of families at the place of *Aliyah*
- **The Third Passover:** The “Lord's Supper” or Passover that Yeshua instituted in the Renewed Covenant for Believers. Unique aspects of this Passover are:
 - Yeshua instituted this at his “Last Supper.”
 - This Passover is totally Yeshua-centered and focuses on the salvation of the individual Believer through the salvific and redemptive work of Yeshua at the cross (Matt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 11:24-26).
- **The Fourth Passover:** The Millennial Passover kept during the 1000-year-long Millennium or Messianic Age. Unique aspects of this Passover are:
 - This points to the wedding feast of Yeshua the Lamb when he will drink of the fourth cup (Cup of Praise) of the Passover Seder (Matt. 26:29).

☞ The Commemorative Meal Is Called a Seder

- *Seder* means *order of service*.
- At the Seder a *haggadah* is used. This is a booklet that is used to *tell* the Passover story to our children. The word *haggadah* means *telling or recounting* and it is following the command YHVH gave to the Israelites in Exodus 10:2, “And that you may tell in the ears of your son, and of your son’s son, what things I have done in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that you may know how that I am YHVH.”

☞ Four Cups of Wine Are Central to the Seder

- The four cups of wine are based on the four “I wills” of Exodus 6:6-8.
- The four cups are not only commemorative, but also celebratory and prophetic. We drink the wine to remember and to celebrate.
- **The First Cup:** The Cup of Sanctification points to Believers/Israelites being set apart from the world
- **The Second Cup:** The Cup of Deliverance pictures Believers/Israelites being delivered by the strong arm of YHVH the Redeemer from the world, flesh and the devil.
- **The Third Cup:** The Cup of Redemption points to the Believers salvation. This is the “communion cup” or Cup of Acceptance (first of two cups of wine) of the Jewish wedding ceremony and corresponds to Romans 10:9-10 when the new Believer says “I do” to Yeshua. These first three cups point to Yeshua's first coming as the Suffering Servant, Messiah Son of Yoseph.

- The Cup of Elijah points to preparing the way for Messiah's coming again
- **The Fourth Cup:** The Cup of Praise or Completion points prophetically to Yeshua's second coming as Bridegroom to his bride and as King of kings. This cup speaks to the millennial marriage feast of the Lamb.

☞ The Key Elements of the Seder That Go Back to the Original Passover In Egypt

- Lamb
- Matzah
- Bitter herbs
- Telling your children the story of the Exodus
- Celebrating
- Assembling together on the first Day of Unleavened Bread

☞ Passover Is Prophetic and Points to Yeshua's Second Coming

In the traditional Jewish Passover Seder between the third and fourth cups there is a sub-cup of wine that is called the Cup of Elijah. A place is set for the prophet Elijah at the table, a cup of wine is poured for him and the door is ceremonially opened to let him into the house where the Seder is occurring. This pictures that someone coming in the spirit of Elijah must precede the coming of the Messiah. At Yeshua's first coming, this represents Yochanan the Immerser. Now you and I are those coming in that spirit of Elijah to help prepare the way for Messiah's return (Mal. 4:5-6).

