

1 Cor 11:23-26
Ex 12:13-14

Christ in the Passover

Today I'd like to talk to you about our God - the God of ancient history, the past, the present and the future.

I'd like to describe to you the God who before the creation of the World knew that Jesus – His Only Begotten Son would have to come and die so that we would not need to face the wages of our sins.

Let us look at Christ our Passover to understand the amazing love of our God and the Lengths He has gone through to make Himself known to you, to be loved by you and to take you in to eternal glory to be with Him forever.

Throughout the Scriptures we see the brush strokes of God, painting Jesus into every scene, every lesson and every hope. Today we will look only at one particular story of Jesus in the Passover.

Let's begin by getting an understanding of what the Passover is, and how the Passover Supper looked in Jesus' time.

What is the Passover?

The story of the Passover begins not long after Joseph and his family die in the Land of Egypt. A new King (Pharaoh) comes to power and subjects the Hebrew Nation to slavery. Moses is born an Israelite (Hebrew), but because of a major baby genocide of all Israelite sons ordered by the King, was raised in the courts of the king of Egypt (that's a different story and sermon). This Moses grows up, learns of his heritage and one thing leads to another... He becomes an outlaw and leaves Egypt only to meet the True God of the Hebrews. God gives him a mission to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt and into a life covenant with God.

Moses returns to Egypt and asks the Pharaoh to let his people go. Pharaoh refuses, then through a series of plagues, God convinces Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. The final plague is where the Passover Holy Day comes from.

The ten plagues are:

1. Plague of Water into blood
2. Plague of Frogs
3. Plague of Gnats
4. Plague of Flies
5. Plague on the Livestock – all died
6. Plague of Boils
7. Plague of Hail
8. Plague of Locusts
9. Plague of Darkness
10. Death of the Firstborn

The first nine plagues the Israelites were spared from and were not affected by, but the 10th one God required something from the Israelites to maintain their distinction from the rest of Egypt... They were to take a spotless lamb (goat or sheep), sacrifice it and place the blood on the posts of their doors. They were to eat the lamb and leave nothing over. They were to eat their meal standing and with their bags packed and ready to walk out the door. Then that same night as Death swept through Egypt, it would see the blood of the Lamb and pass over that house.

Throughout the years people have added some traditions like the Haroset (sweet nutty mix), Roasted Egg and the Karpas (fresh greens) even the cups of wine drunk at the celebration of the Passover. But today we will not look at the other traditions added except the cups of wine – because Jesus made reference to them at the Passover, so then Jesus endorsed it.

But I would like to point out that most if not all of these traditions had already been added by the time Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with His Disciples and can be used to further this message but time does not permit such discussion.

So let's look at what was on the Passover Table. According Exodus 12 there were three things to be at the table of the Passover.

1. Bitter Herbs
 2. Lamb
 3. Matzah (unleavened bread)
- And possibly the:
Blood on the door (could be represented by the wine)

I would like to draw parallels here to help us more deeply appreciate what we celebrate in today's world when we celebrate the Communion. Watch as we start to see Christ in the Passover. Watch and know that God was thinking about you all the time, from even before the world was made!

The Bitter herbs: The bitter herbs were to be eaten as a reminder of the time of slavery in Egypt. Every year as they ate the bitter herbs they would be reminded of where they came from and what they were saved from: complete subjection to the rule of another over them. They had no power to resist the might of Pharaoh.

Just like the Hebrews were unable to resist and overcome their slave masters (Egypt); just as they were powerless to rise above them, so too are we unable to overcome our slavery to sin. When Messianic Jews eat this portion of the meal they are reminded that before Christ saved them, they were slaves to sin (our Egypt)

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly...God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:6 & 8

“But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted” Rom 6:17

(Perhaps if you choose to one day celebrate Christ in a Passover meal at your home, you could use these bitter herbs to help teach your family about the power of sin, and slavery to it, being broken in Christ our Passover)

The Lamb: According to Exodus a whole lamb was to be at the meal, and if you couldn't finish a whole one with your family you were to join with another family. Whatever remained in the morning was to be completely burnt. This means the lamb was a complete sacrifice, not one bit was a wasted sacrifice.

- a. The lamb was to be brought into the home and looked after. I suppose this was to ensure it remained unharmed, because the requirement was for a lamb without spot or blemish and no bones were to be broken! But this meant you had to make it your pet – as a farmer who has had to have his own sheep and chickens slaughtered, I know the need to have your pets distinct from your livestock. This lamb must have become like family...
- b. Infact as the lamb was led to Jerusalem to be sacrificed at the Temple it had the name of the Family hung around its neck! (I will come back to this)
- c. Knowing a bit of the traditions and history of the first century Jews were learn some interesting things about when Jesus entered Jerusalem. We celebrate palm Sunday as if it was a once of event for Jesus... but infact it was normal that as pilgrims (in masses) entered into

the city to celebrate Passover they were greeted with great songs and celebration and the waving of palm branches, these lambs as they were led in would have been followed by the King who rode behind the procession – usually on a donkey! These crowds on Palm Sunday knew they were welcoming the KING of the Jews! We get to celebrate today and every day the Kingship of Jesus in our lives, we get to welcome him in every moment of every day! What a wonderful privilege to be able to sing “Hosanna to the son of David, Hosanna to the King of kings.”

- d. What else do we know about the lamb that was to be slain to make distinction between the Egyptians and the Hebrews... Well, the blood was to be taken and sprinkled on the door posts. Do you know that when you do that, you cannot but make the symbol of a cross? The blood is what made death Pass Over that family!
- e. Today it is no different. If you want the wages of sin to be canceled and the slate wiped clean so that death might pass over you, you need the blood of the Lamb painted on the door posts of your heart. The sacrifice of Jesus has made that possible.
- f. Before we move onto the Matzah (unleavened bread) I want to point out something amazing – something we would not normally see... *“Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened it to the cross. It read, JESUS OF NAZARETH< THE KING OF THE JEWS... the chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “do not write King of the Jews”, but that this man claimed to be king f the Jews”* **John 19:19-21**. We might not see it but there on the cross, just like the sign hung around the neck of the lambs was the name of the family to which Jesus belonged... Studies have shown that the romans abbreviated those “charge sheet” signs much like we do today in many spheres. Eg: UPS – United Parcel Service, lol, brb. When the Charge above Jesus was abbreviated in Hebrew it would not have read INRI but Rather... YHWH – the very name of God. That is why the chief priest protested... they knew the significance of that sign and the Lamb of God being slain!
- g. Just as the last lamb of the day was being slaughtered at the temple the high priest would lift his hands to heaven look up and cry out... can you guess it... he would cry out “It is finished” meaning the requirements had been met! So here we clearly see Jesus, as the King of kings riding on a donkey, being the lamb that was slain for the forgiveness of sin, and we see Jesus as the great High priest calling out “IT IS FINISHED” *cf. John 19:30 – note the use of the Hyssop*

The Matzah (Unleavened bread): With regard to this there are three things I want to point out.

1. The Matzah tog
2. Christ in the Centre
3. The process of making the bread

The Matzah tog: A bag that hold the unleavened bread or Matzah. The interesting thing about this Matzah tog is that it has three compartments... each compartment hold a loaf of unleavened bread. So in this Matzah tog there are three loaves of bread.

Christ in the Centre: Without going into lengths as to why the Jews have three loaves of bread in the Matzah tog, I’ll give you a quick statement. There are differing opinions but basically they do not know, some say it represents the 3 Patriarchs – but they do not know.

I’ll put forward a hypothesis. It represents the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. This makes so much sense, because at the Passover meal. The middle loaf is removed and broken and then hidden for the children to go in search of later during the meal. This is the same loaf of bread that Jesus took and broke and then said: This is my body broken for you... Does this make sense yet. It was broken and hidden in a tomb, later to be raised from its hidden place and brought back to the table for all to enjoy and partake of. In the same Jesus was buried in a tomb (hidden if you will) and was resurrected (brought back to the table if you will) to give us life eternal. Jesus said: “I am the bread of heaven”

The Process of making Matzah: The dough is made using no yeast. It is then separated into three parts. Each piece is rolled out to look like a mini pizza base. It is then pierced over and over again, before being roasted on high heat on a grill. The visual effect of the bread leaves you remembering clearly a verse from Isaiah... it looks like brown stripes on the loaf, with lots of small holes in it. Can you picture the verse I'm thinking of?

"He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" Isa 53:5

Now hopefully when we celebrate communion we will remember Christ represented in the Passover. When we take the bread and it is broken and we all share from that one loaf, we will remember that Christ was pierced for our transgressions and by His stripes we are healed.

But let's not forget the cup that Jesus lifted.

The Passover Seder has 4 cups (often one cup filled for times). Each cup has a different name and meaning.

Cup 1: The Cup of Sanctification

This cup is drunk at the beginning of the meal. For us today with name like that, how can we not think of Christ our Sanctification? Cf Heb 9:22, Heb 10:29

"But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor 6:11

Cup 2: The Cup of Plagues

The cup of plagues is a reminder of the life that was left behind, a life that was spared destruction because God had separated them to be a holy nation, a royal priesthood. We no longer are under judgement we are under the grace of God. But it also reminds us that judgement still sits with the Holy one of Israel.

"For we know Him who said, 'it is mine to avenge; I will repay,' and again, 'the Lord will judge his people.' It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" Heb 10:30-31

Don't forget that those who sat in the Shadow of the Almighty were spared the Judgements...

Cup 3: The Cup of Redemption or the cup of Thanksgiving or the cup of Blessing

This cup is drunk after the meal and is the Cup that Jesus took up when He spoke those immortal words we use in communion. **Luke 22:20** *"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you"* cf 1 Cor 10:16,21

Jesus is our redeemer. When you are redeemed, you are bought back from slavery. The cup is also called the cup of blessing. How more of a blessing can we have than a new covenant, one where the past is wiped clean and we are brought into relationship with Almighty God. And what else is fitting but to give God thanks for His redeeming Covenant.

Cup 4: The Cup of Hallel or the Cup of Acceptance or the Cup of Elijah

Because of Jesus we are accepted into fellowship with God almighty. But this cup is a reminder that Messiah is coming again. Its called the Cup of Elijah because the people look forward to the Elijah how is the forerunner of the Messiah. Now the Jews are still waiting for Messiah, we know He has come. But, we also know He is coming again and like the Jews we look forward to that Day when He comes to take us to be with Him forever.

Conclusion

This message serves to remind us How God knew before the creation of the world, the plan He had for Jesus to save us from our sin. He wrote this into prophecy and fulfilled too. A God who can hold eternity in his hands and write me into it, to me is a God I want place my trust in.