

PASSOVER

AND THE HOLY FEASTS OF ISRAEL

by Avram Yehoshua

[The Seed of Abraham](#)

The Father set the yearly feasts in motion for the express purpose of exalting Himself, His Son and the Holy Spirit, so that Israel could see what her God had done for her. The Father also made the Feasts to be practical teaching tools for generations yet unborn, to learn who their God was. The celebration of the Feasts of Israel (Leviticus 23) is a divine joy because it is so faith building.

Many Christians are realizing that a major area of their ancient Hebraic biblical heritage is being filled as they learn to walk in the Feasts of Israel. Colossians 2:16-17, a text that the Church uses to say that the feasts have been fulfilled in Christ (i.e. done away with), actually supports them because it speaks of the feasts pointing still of things to come in the *future*:

‘Therefore, no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a *festival* or a New Moon or a Sabbath Day, things which are a shadow of what is *to come*, but the substance belongs to Christ.’ (Col. 2:16-17)

By speaking of the Feasts (and the Sabbath, etc.) as a ‘shadow of what is to come,’ Paul is saying that they are a picture of what Yeshua (Jesus), whom we don’t see, is like. Just as a picture of a person is not really that person, but you can see so many different things about that person that you might not have known before if you hadn’t met him, so too with God’s Feasts. They have been set up by God to reveal a portion of Yeshua’s identity, character and work of redemption. By not walking in the Feasts of Israel, one throws away one of the Father’s perfect pictures of Yeshua and Himself, for Yeshua said that he who sees Him (Yeshua) sees the Father (John 14:6-10). The Two are truly One.

I once arrived at a church for a Sunday night service where I was the guest speaker. I arrived early, before anyone else had gotten there. The church was locked. It was the middle of the winter, but it wasn’t too cold, and so I decided to walk down the street a bit to gather my thoughts. As I walked, my eye was drawn to a glaring light on my left that was coming from a bare light bulb on a front porch. There wasn’t any fixture on the light bulb and I quickly looked away, not wanting to stare into the bright light. On my way back, as I came near that porch, I intentionally looked across the street. To my delight, because of the light, there was a perfect silhouette of a tree on the wall of a school. The tree stood about twenty feet in front of the wall, yet the light from the porch across the street was so bright that I could make out the smallest detail of the tree branches *by its shadow* on the wall. There were no leaves on the tree, and so all the branches could be seen, their shadows imprinted on the wall. I could tell immediately, by looking *at the shadow* on the wall that it was a tree, even if I wouldn’t have seen the actual tree that made the shadow. I could also tell that it was a tree and not a lion, or a car or a human being.

The Feasts of Israel are like this! We don’t literally see Yeshua (the tree) in all His brilliant glory today, but He has left behind for us His Imprint in the Feasts, etc. This is the glory that our God has placed within His Feasts from the beginning because He knew what He wanted to do with His Son and how He was going to deal with Israel’s carnality and her future life with Him in the New Jerusalem.

The word *shadow* can equally be translated as ‘picture.’ The Feasts are pictures of God, revealing not only what great event happened, but also *what is to come*.

The Feasts can be broken down into three seasonal sections:

A. The Spring Feasts

1. *Passover*
 - a. *Matza*—The Feast of Unleavened Bread
 - b. The *First Sheaf* Wave Offering

B. The Summer Feast

1. *Shavu'ot*—Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks)

C. The Fall Feasts

1. *Yom Tru'ah*—The Day of Unspeakable Joy (commonly known in Judaism as *Rosh HaShana*, the New Year, a biblical misnomer). Also called The Feast of Trumpets.
2. *Yom HaKipurim*—The Day of Atonement
3. *Sukote*—The Feast of Tabernacles (and the Eighth Day)

Yahveh, the distinct name of the God, appearing more than 6,800 times in the Hebrew Old Testament and unfortunately translated in many English Bibles as the LORD, ordained these Feasts for Israel, both Jew and Gentile who love Yeshua (Rom. 11:11f.; Eph. 2:11f.) as holy vacations. Six months after the Spring Feasts are the Fall Feasts and six months after the Fall Feasts are the Spring Feasts, both of which last at least seven days. Satan gives his people one day off for Easter and Xmas, but God gives His people Israel at least a full week off every six months.

The Spring Feasts—Passover and Unleavened Bread

The Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread (and First Sheaf/Fruits) is actually one feast. Passover begins the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread and First Sheaf is always on the Sunday of Unleavened Bread.

God created the world and placed things in it to act as symbols or pictures to make us aware of who He is, what He's done and what He will do. Everyone needs water for survival. Without it we perish. In Ex. 17:6 God says to Moses,

“Behold! I will stand before you there on the Rock at Horeb and you shall strike the Rock and water will come out of it, that the people may drink,’ and Moses did so in the sight of the Elders of Israel.”

God gave Israel her most basic need for life—water, from a rock of all places! The Rock is Yeshua, as Paul says in 1st Cor. 10:1-4, and pictures Him being crucified for our greatest need—*Living Water*:

‘For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that *our Fathers* were all under the *Cloud* and all passed through the Sea and all were *baptized* into Moses in the *Cloud* and in the Sea and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual Rock which followed them and the *Rock* was the Messiah.’

First, Paul says ‘our Fathers’ including the Gentile believers of Corinth with the Sons of Israel in the Wilderness. This complements that the Gentile believers have been grafted into the House of Israel (Rom. 11:1-36; Eph. 2:1-22) in a most poignant way. They are fully brothers with the literal descendants of Is-

rael in the Wilderness because of their belief in the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua.

Second, all Israel was ‘baptized into Moses’ at the Red Sea. We know that baptism into Yeshua means that we die to self and are alive unto Him. That’s what it should have meant to the Sons of Israel in the Wilderness, in relation to Moses, but their stubborn carnal nature led most of them another way.

Third, we come to the ‘Rock’ from which the Sons of Israel got water in the Wilderness. This was a picture of Messiah Yeshua giving the Water of life to both Jew and Gentile who believe. Water from a rock is a pretty impossible thing, but it parallels setting Israel free from Egyptian slavery.

Water not only sustains life as we drink it, but we also use it to clean ourselves with, hence the cleansing of our soul with Living Waters from Above. The Rock is also a picture of stability in a very shaky world. These and other symbols are used by God to denote His qualities. In Jeremiah 2:13 God says,

‘For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of Living Waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.’

In Revelation 7:17 it states,

‘for the Lamb in the center of the Throne will be their Shepherd and will guide them to Springs of the Waters of Life and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’

God uses natural water to point us to Waters that are Living. In the Hebrew language, water is always plural: *waters*. When we look at the Earth we see that we not only get our food from it, but we also live upon it. This is a picture of Yahveh as our Rock and our Provider. In Dt. 32:4 it says,

‘The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are righteous! A God of faithfulness and without injustice! Righteous and upright is He!’

This speaks of Yahveh as One who is stable, secure and can be trusted. The Lord’s Supper¹ is the eating of the body and blood of Yeshua, which is the food of God for His people Israel, both Jew and Gentile who have been Born Again in Yeshua the Messiah.

The Feasts of Israel picture Yahveh’s ability to save His people from slavery, sustain and provide for them, both physically and spiritually, which is really one and the same thing in Hebraic terms.

Why Celebrate Passover Today?

1. Passover is a picture of salvation.

- The Hebrew people went from slavery to freedom; from darkness to light. With the Second Passover, both Jew and Gentile were released from slavery to sin, Satan and eternal death, to walk in the Kingdom of Yeshua, the Light of the world.

2. Passover remembers the death of the lamb in Egypt, which freed the Hebrews from slavery.

- Yeshua is called the (Passover) Lamb of God.² Paul tells us that as often as we eat Messiah’s body and His blood we do it in remembrance of His death, which means that we, too, must die to self (1st Cor. 11:25-26; Rom. 6:1f.).

3. The essence of the Passover is where the Lord’s Supper (1st Cor. 11:20f.) comes from.

¹ The term, the Lord’s Supper, is biblical (1st Cor. 11:20), but the term the Last Supper isn’t. It’s a Roman Catholic invention designed to hide the ‘Jewish’ Passover.

² John 1:29; 36; see also: Revelation 5:6, 8, 12-13; 6:1, 16; 7:9, etc.

- The Lord's Supper was *in* the ancient Passover all the time. When Yeshua says that the ancients said not to murder, but that He says that we are not to hate our brother in our heart, Yeshua isn't making up a new commandment and discarding the commandment not to murder. He's explaining that the *essence* of the commandment not to murder is not to hate your brother. *It was there all the time*, at the commandment's very core, center or essence. So too, with the Lord's Supper in the First Passover.
4. Yeshua and every Apostle celebrated Passover all their lives (1st Cor. 5:6-8).
 - If we really want to know who Yeshua was and is now, we must realize that He not only celebrated Passover all His life on Earth in Israel, but that He commanded it to come into existence in the beginning, and as we'll see we'll also be celebrating it with Him in Eternity.
 5. Passover is the ancient Hebraic heritage of every Gentile who has been grafted into the House of Israel (Rom. 11:11–12:3; Eph. 2:11-22).
 - It's time to start learning some of the God-given Family values.
 6. Passover also offers you a great lead in with *Jewish* people.
 - Tell a Jew that you celebrated or learned about Passover and their ears will perk up. They'll think, 'A Gentile knows about Passover?!' It's a great way to start a conversation about the Passover Lamb, whose blood will deliver us from the wrath of God on the Day of Judgment, just as the blood of the lamb saved the Hebrew people from the wrath of God on that First Passover in Egypt.

The Dual Reality of the Three Spring Events

Passover proclaims the death of the lamb that freed Israel from Egyptian slavery. With the death of *the* Lamb, Israel was freed from slavery to Satan, sin and eternal death.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a seven day picture of 'death to self/sin' for us. Yahveh demands that Israel walk in holiness and sanctification. This is symbolized by the eating of bread without yeast; *matza* (unleavened bread). It was the first day of this Feast (15 *Aviv*),³ that begins at dark, a couple of hours after the sacrifice of the lamb on 14 *Aviv*, that Yeshua dies as both the Passover Lamb of God and the Grain from the Heavens that was crushed in order for His followers to eat of Him as the lamb of Passover and also the *Matza* (Unleavened Bread) of Life. Before His death Yeshua said:

'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the round and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life will lose it, but he who hates his life in this world, will keep it to life eternal' (Jn. 12:24-25).

In the seven days of Unleavened Bread we are called to evaluate our position in Yeshua: are we dying to self daily that His life might be seen? Are we seeking to be made into His Image? Are we seeking to do His Father's will as He did? (John 4:34) This is pictured in the Lord's Supper: death to self, which is eaten on the first day of the Feast of *Matza* and every day of the seven thereafter.

The First Sheaf wave offering always came on the Sunday of the Feast of Unleavened Bread week.⁴ It

³ 15 *Aviv* begins both the Passover (meal) and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In the afternoon of 14 *Aviv* the Passover lamb is slain. *Aviv* is the first biblical month, coming in late March or early April. The biblical day ends at darkness and another biblical day begins at darkness.

⁴ There is an asterisk to First Sheaf always coming on the Sunday of Unleavened Bread week. When Passover begins on the seventh day Sabbath (Friday night at dark), First Sheaf comes not on the next day (Sunday), but a

was the time that Israel recognized that Yahveh had provided grain (bread/food and life) for His people and that giving the first of it to Him, in gratitude for all He provided, sanctified the rest of the three harvests for Israel (spring, summer and fall). All the harvest is Yahveh's, for He caused it to come forth and He was seen as giving it to Israel for her needs of life.

This also pictures Yeshua as that Grain from Heaven *risen* from the dead, caused to rise or to come forth by Yahveh, and that all that who follow Yeshua will be acceptable to Yahveh. The First Sheaf is dedicated or given to Yahveh, thereby making the rest of the harvest acceptable for consumption by Israel, and also, making Israel acceptable to Yahveh. Yeshua, rising from the dead, is seen as the First Sheaf (1st Cor. 15:20). We, as priests, can eat of Him because He has been given to us by Yahveh for our food for life. As we walk with Him and are made into His Image, others are able to eat of Messiah Yeshua from us. (The Aaronic Priests were the only ones able to eat of the First Sheaf Offering.)⁵

The Meaning of Passover

The first Passover in Egypt was a time of entering into God's covenant, of being cleansed and protected by the blood of a lamb and of release from slavery. It's a time of new beginnings or new birth. Israel was birthed out of the womb of the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of Light. The Hebrew word that God uses to speak of bringing Israel out of Egypt is the same word used for a woman giving birth. The new birth that Yeshua speaks of is the parallel and greater reality of what Yahveh had already done for His people in freeing them from Egyptian slavery. It doesn't do away with the First Passover—it amplifies it.

With Adam we have the Creation of the World. In Moses we have the Creation of the people of Yahveh—Israel.⁶ In Yeshua we have the re-Creation or new Creation of the people of Yahveh—Israel; both Jew and Gentile.

Romans 8:18-25 says that all creation awaits this new Creation. In Gen. 1:3 God's first recorded words were, 'Let there be Light!' and Light was. Now that Light is in us! For the Light that appeared on the first day of Creation was not the sun, moon nor the stars as they were made on the fourth day. The Light that manifested that First Day was the Light of the World, Yeshua, the uniquely begotten Son of God. Yeshua was *not* created. He is the uniquely *begotten* Son of the Father, fully deity, and with His conception in the womb of Miryam (Mary), fully human. With His death and resurrection He is now the God-Man glorified, the first of many brethren.⁷

Israel was conceived in one man, Abraham, and the re-created Israel was also conceived in one Man also: Yeshua, who also came from Father Abraham (Mt. 1:1f.; Lk. 3:23f.). Abraham left his family and country to come to Israel, and so did Yeshua.

Three thousand, four hundred years ago, Yahveh moved in a way that He had never moved before. To Fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He appeared in dreams and visions. To Joseph He worked behind the scenes. In Moses Yahveh *exploded* onto history!

week later on the following Sunday, a day after the Feast of Unleavened Bread ends. More on this in [First Sheaf](#).

⁵ Lev. 2:1-3, 10; 5:11-14; 6:14-17; 7:10, 13-14.

⁶ In the Song of Moses at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:16), it speaks of God purchasing Israel. The Hebrew word in relation to God means to create. קנה Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, based on the lexicon of Wilhelm Gesenius; Edward Robinson, translator and E. Rodiger, editor, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* Abridged (Accordance Bible Software), n.p. 'of God as originating, creating.'

⁷ See [Salvation—The Promise!](#) for what the Gift is that the Father holds out to us.

Egypt was the United States of its day, the superpower in the world, and therefore the gods of Egypt were considered invincible by everyone. The Hebrew slaves were not in any position to negotiate their freedom. There was nothing that they possessed that they could offer Pharaoh in exchange for their freedom. Pharaoh owned them as slaves, and so everything they had was Pharaoh's. There was no way out. It was an impossible situation for them. Slaves for eternity. Before Yeshua died we were also slaves of Satan for eternity. There was no way out except for the Passover Lamb of God.

Passover begins in Exodus 3 when Yahveh and the Messenger of Yahveh, commonly mistranslated as the Angel of the LORD, appear to Moses and *send* him to save the Hebrew slaves from Pharaoh and Egyptian oppression. The Prophets also speak of 'being sent' by Yahveh, as well as Yahveh speaking of sending the Messiah,⁸ and so the term 'the Sent One' (of God) becomes an actual term for the Messiah. In the Great News according to John, Yeshua refers to Himself as the Sent One 39 times.⁹ Here are two of those cites:

'I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who *sent* Me.' (Jn. 5:30)

'As the living Father *sent* Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.' (Jn. 6:57)

A messenger is 'a sent one.' He's someone sent with a message. In Hebrew the word used for 'angel' is *mahl'ahch* מַלְאָךְ, literally, a messenger. Generally, messengers sent from God are angels, but in the case of 'the Angel' of the LORD, this Messenger is none other than Yeshua. Why English translations continue to use the word 'Angel' instead of 'Messenger,' when all know that it refers to Jesus (note the capital A for this Angel), is beyond comprehension because this gives rise to doctrines of Satan that make Jesus out to be a created being.¹⁰ What else can an *angel* be? The text should be translated 'the Messenger of the LORD,' with a capital 'M' for Messenger (and of course, even more properly, it should be translated as the Messenger of Yahveh). In the places where the Messenger of Yahveh is seen, the Messenger not only receives worship, something that no angel of God would accept (Rev. 19:10), but also speaks in the first person as God Himself,¹¹ again, something an angel of Yahveh would never do.

The ten plagues in Egypt are judgments against Egypt and her gods. The first plague, the Nile being changed into blood, gets the attention of the Egyptians in two powerful ways. First, the Nile was the source of ancient Egypt's rich fertility, and therefore, her food and life. Without the Nile there never would have been an Egypt as we know it.

Second, because it was seen as the *source* of life (water), religious hymns were sung to the Nile because it was also considered a god. The Nile was deified by the Egyptians.¹² These hymns are found in museums in Cairo and London today. They are prolific.

⁸ Ex. 3:10, 12-15; 4:28; Is. 6:8; 19:20; 48:16; 55:11; 61:1; Jer. 1:7; 7:25; 25:4; Ezk 2:3-4; Hag. 1:12; Zech. 2:11; 4:9; 6:15; Mal. 3:1, etc.

⁹ John 3:34; 4:34; 5:23, 24, 30, 36, 37, 38; 6:29, 38, 39, 44, 57; 7:16, 28, 29, 33; 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42; 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44, 45, 49; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20:21.

¹⁰ The so-called Jehovah Witnesses love to point this out when they witness to Christians, using the Bibles of the Christians. The *Jesus* of the Jehovah Witnesses is a created being, and not God the Son, hence, why they use passages speaking of the Angel of the LORD 'to prove' that Jesus isn't God the Son. For more on why Jesus is God the Son see [Yeshua—God the Son](#).

¹¹ See Gen. 16:13; 22:11; 31:11-13; 48:15-16; Ex. 3:2-6; Num. 22:21-35; Joshua 5:13-6:2. For a fuller understanding of these cites, see the 7th Jewish Newsletter: [The Angel of the Lord](#).

¹² J. I. Packer and M. C. Tenney, Editors, *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), p. 120.

The Nile being changed into (red) blood would also picture the last judgment upon Egypt, death; the (red) blood of the firstborn of Egypt being required because of Pharaoh's stubbornness. The number ten is the number one with a zero after it. The biblical significance is that the number one remains the same in *essence*, but it's magnified, therefore, the first plague pictured the tenth plague.

The second plague was frogs. The Egyptians also worshipped them and they symbolized a god of fertility to them. Through the plague it is as though Yahveh were saying, 'You like to worship frogs—I'll give you frogs!'

All ten plagues were directed at a particular god or goddess of Egypt. The ninth plague was darkness upon all the land of Egypt, except in Goshen where the Hebrew slaves dwelt. This plague was directed at the highest Egyptian god, Ra, the sun god. Pharaoh was worshipped as an incarnation of Ra (the son of the sun god in the flesh). The incarnation of the sun god as a 'human being' was a common pagan concept in most ancient nations.¹³ Satan is the master deceiver and has set up pagan religions to mimic the true religion of the God of Israel. Many get caught in his trap, thinking that if the ancient religions of the world had an incarnate sun god, with him dying and being resurrected for the sins of man, surely Christianity's Jesus is just another version of that.

The tenth plague was the death of the firstborn of Egypt. Pharaoh and the Sun-god Ra (Satan) could do nothing to protect their people or stop it. Pharaoh's son, also an incarnation of the sun god and next in line to the throne of Egypt, was killed, as well as all the other firstborn sons and all the firstborn of their animals. Yahveh struck at the very heart of Egypt. The firstborn son signifies the strength of a man or a nation (Gen. 49:3). Just as Adam is the head of all mankind, so the firstborn of Egypt were the head of their race. In the Passover, Yahveh claims all the firstborn of Israel for Himself because of His protection of them. They belong to Him and would have been priests unto Yahveh, from every Tribe and family of Israel, had Israel not rebelled in the rebellion of the Gold Calf (Ex. 32:1-35; Lev. 3:12; Num. 3:41, 45).

Israel's firstborn sons were spared in Egypt, saved or delivered from death, by a ceremony that sacrificed a lamb instead of them, and placed its blood upon the doorposts and the lintel of their homes. Passover literally means, 'to leap over; to *pass over*.' This pictures the Lord Yahveh passing over the homes of the Hebrews *because of the blood of the lamb* that protected those homes. Exodus 12:23 reads:

'For Yahveh will pass through to smite the Egyptians and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, Yahveh will pass over the door and will not allow the Destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.' (Ex. 12:23)

The Destroyer is most likely Yeshua (cf. 2nd Sam. 24:15-17) and Yahveh, in this instance is God the Father, for Yeshua is also Yahveh, God the Son. The passage is a picture of what will happen to all believers in Yeshua on the Day of Judgment. Having the blood of *the Passover Lamb* within us means that the wrath of Yahveh will 'pass over' us. We will be saved from eternal death. Exodus 12:27 reads:

“It is a Passover sacrifice to Yahveh, who passed over the houses of the Sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes,' and the people bowed down and worshiped.”

The 10th plague of death shattered the very fabric of Egyptian reality. It was not only the death of their firstborn, but the total dismantling of their religious system and of how they perceived the universe. They

¹³ Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, 2nd American ed. (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1959), p. 91ff. In *The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop*, Avram Yehoshua's PDF of the book, it's p. 70ff. Hislop overwhelmingly proves that the Roman Catholic Church is the Babylon of the New Testament (Rev. 14:8; 17:5; cf. 18:4). Read and/or download [The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop](#). Any further page cites come from *TFH*.

were completely devastated. The Egyptian gods had failed them and they could do nothing against the God of the Hebrew slaves—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Passover is a mini-Judgment Day. Yahveh could have destroyed all the Egyptians, but chose to keep the rest around to proclaim His name and what He had done to mighty Egypt.¹⁴

The Time and Food of Passover

Exodus 12:1-14 records the commandment to keep Passover, along with when the Passover was to be kept and the three foods that are required for a biblical Passover: lamb, *matza* and bitter herbs. Exodus 12:1-2 states:

“Now Yahveh said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ‘This month shall be the beginning of months for you. It’s to be the first month of the year to you.’”

This speaks of the month in which Passover falls, that it will be the beginning of the months for the Hebrews, in distinction to the Egyptian calendar.¹⁵ Passover always occurs in the spring, when new life has come back to the Earth from the dead of winter.

Exodus 12:3-5 speaks of Israel separating the lamb on the 10th day of the month, four days before the Passover lamb is sacrificed. Interestingly enough, the sacrifice of the Passover lamb on 14 *Aviv* (the name of the first month in the biblical Hebrew calendar) is not a holy day, but the night the Passover lamb is eaten, a few hours after the sacrifice, 15 *Aviv*, is the holy day for the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.¹⁶

“Speak to all the Congregation of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth day of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers’ households, a lamb for each household. If the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.’”

Setting the lamb apart for four days meant that it would become like a pet. At the end of the four days it would have been *very* hard to sacrifice it. These feelings carry over to the Apostles as they watched the Passover Lamb of God being crucified. Yeshua came into Jerusalem four days before His death ‘to be inspected’ by the Elders of Israel for ‘flaws or blemishes’ (i.e. sins, and if He really was the Messiah). In John 12:1, 12-13 it states:

‘Yeshua, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead... On the next day the large crowd who had come to the Feast, when they heard that Yeshua was coming to Jerusalem took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!’”

In Hebraic counting the day of the Passover would have been included in John’s description. Therefore, what we might think of as five days before Passover was actually four days before the Passover lambs

¹⁴ Ex. 9:16; Joshua 2:10; 9:9; Ps. 78:12, 43, 51; 105:38; 135:8, etc.

¹⁵ This is also in distinction to the Jewish calendar today, which starts the new year in September.

¹⁶ The ‘day’ in biblical reckoning begins at night in darkness (after dusk) and continues through daylight and ends at darkness according to Creation (Gen. 1:3-5f.), where the ‘evening’ is darkness or night time. See [When Does The Sabbath Begin?](#)

would have been sacrificed. ‘Without blemish’ means that the lamb would be healthy. It doesn’t mean that it had to be pure white. It would be a male of the flock, one year old and it would picture Yeshua in the prime of His life. John the Baptist declared, ‘Behold the (Passover) Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’ (Jn. 1:29)

John’s disciples might not have understood the full ramifications of his words, as we do today, but they would have associated it with the Passover lamb who brought them forth from Egyptian slavery. Some of what might have clouded their thinking was that they were looking for the Messiah to be like King David and rise up against Rome and her oppression of the Jewish people and defeat it. They weren’t expecting the Son of David to die for their sins.¹⁷

Everyone ‘participated’ in the sacrifice of the lamb because God had said,

‘You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; then *the whole assembly* of the Congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.’ (Ex. 12:6).

The ‘*whole assembly* killing it at twilight’ meant that everyone, not just the ones slaying the lamb, and not just the firstborn whose lives were on the line, but everyone *had to see the sacrifice* of the Passover lamb in order to leave Egypt—to the Glory of Yahveh. This is the way it is with deliverance from Satan’s Kingdom.

Anyone who desires to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven must *look upon* Messiah crucified—to the Glory of the Father. No one can enter ‘on the coattails of his mother or father’s faith.’ The heavenly work of Yeshua’s sacrificial blood must be upon each and every individual life.

Exodus 12:7 speaks of where the blood was to be placed—upon the doorposts and the lintel:

‘Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.’

Houses are often used in cartoons as a picture for a face: the door is the mouth and the windows are the eyes. The blood of the lamb was symbolically being placed upon the mouth of Israel. This is one part of the Lord’s Supper because wine is symbolic of blood, and blood is represented in Scripture as wine. In Gen. 49:11 it states of the future Messiah:

‘He ties his foal to the vine and His donkey’s colt to the choice vine. He washes His garments in wine and His robes in the *blood of grapes*.’

The juice of the grape is called the *blood* of the grapes. In an allusion to Yeshua defeating His enemies and their blood flowing like wine, Rev. 14:20 states:

‘And the *wine press* was trodden outside the city and *blood came out from the wine press* up to the horses’ bridles for a distance of two hundred miles.’

In Deuteronomy 32:14 it says:

‘Curds of cows and milk of the flock with fat of lambs and rams, the breed of Bashan and goats. With the finest of the wheat and of the *blood of grapes* you drank wine.’

This dual reference, wine picturing blood and wine, is why Yeshua could use the wine at the Passover Table to picture His blood sacrifice. Even though wine is not commanded in Exodus 12 as part of the ‘food’ to have, wine was there on the Passover Table of Yeshua (and all Israel) to symbolize the blood of the lamb that had saved Israel from Egyptian slavery.

¹⁷ See [The Davidic Lineage of Messiah Yeshua](#) for how Messiah descends from King David through Joseph and Mary.

Exodus 12:8 reveals the three biblical foods for Passover:

1. Roasted lamb, which pictures Yeshua's brutal death as the Passover Lamb of God.
2. Bitter herbs, which stand for the life of bitterness that the Hebrews had in Egyptian slavery, and
3. *matza*, which also speaks of their being afflicted, and of Yeshua being the Bread of Life. In Jer. 11:4 Yahveh calls Egypt an iron furnace:

“which I commanded your Fathers in the Day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the *iron furnace*, saying, ‘Listen to My Voice and do according to all which I command you so you shall be My people and I will be your God.’”

An iron furnace is a furnace that is so hot, it literally melts iron. It's symbolic of the intense suffering and agonizing affliction that Israel suffered under the oppression of their Egyptian taskmasters. For us it pictures the bitterness of trusting in ourself before we came to Yeshua and the fruitlessness of walking in carnality after we come to Him.

Matza (unleavened bread) is symbolic of pure bread because it has no yeast (corruption) in it. Yeast (or leaven) pictures sin at Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread.¹⁸ Yeshua is the Bread of Heaven pictured in the *unleavened* bread of Passover. Unleavened bread (*matza*) is a picture of sinless or holy bread because yeast ‘puffs up’ the dough and when we see a man who is full of pride (sin), we say that he's puffed up. Yahveh told Israel to eat the Passover lamb roasted over the fire:

‘Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs along with its entrails’ (Ex. 12:9).

This pictures that in His sacrifice Yeshua would die a brutal death and that He would be ‘whole,’ with not a bone broken. In Ex. 12:10 it states that nothing was to be left to eat for the next day:

‘And you must not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning you shall burn with fire.’

This refers to the one-time sacrifice of Yeshua. He doesn't have to come back in each generation and be sacrificed again (Heb. 9:23-28). In Ex. 12:11 it speaks of how Israel was to eat it:

‘Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand, and you must eat it in haste—it is Yahveh's Passover.’

In preparation for leaving Egypt the Hebrews were to have a belt or a sash on their waist, which meant that the bottom of their garments could be lifted up and secured in it to make walking a long distance easier. Sandals on their feet spoke of the distance they had to travel and of the necessity for protecting their feet. A staff in their hand would also help them to walk on their long journey.

Every time we take the Lord's Supper we need to be ready to leave our life of sin and indifference in order to walk with Yeshua in His Kingdom. It's a picture of what happened when we first said, ‘Yes!’ to Yeshua. He took us out of the Kingdom of Darkness and brought us into His Kingdom of Light.

Exodus 12:12-14 speaks of the destruction and judgment that Yahveh would cause to happen upon Pharaoh, who was stubborn to his core. He would not accept the blood of the lamb for his firstborn son, even though he had seen the Wonders that the God of the Hebrew slaves had done in the first nine plagues. He had been forewarned. Pharaoh pictures the world that refuses what Yahveh has done for it in

¹⁸ Before the time of Yeshua the terms Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread had become interchangeable (2nd Chronicles 30:2-3, 13-15, 17-18; Mt. 26:17-19; Mark 14:1, 12, 14, 16; Luke 22:1, 7-8, 11, 13, 15; Acts 12:3-4).

offering it the precious Gift of His Son.

When we take the *matza* and the wine, the body and blood of Yeshua, we are entering into, re-enacting the Passover drama and taking upon ourself the Father's provision for our salvation. Without the blood of the Passover Lamb it would have been just as impossible for us to leave Satan's Kingdom as it was for Israel to leave Pharaoh's Kingdom:

'For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am Yahveh! The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live and *when I see the blood I will pass over you* and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. Now this day will be a memorial to you and you must celebrate it as a Feast to Yahveh throughout your generations. You are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.'

Passover was a 'show-down' between the powers of darkness and the God of Light. God wants us to celebrate the Feast of Passover forever because it honors the Father and the Son and what they have done for Their people Israel in giving us the Passover Lamb—to free Israel first from slavery to Pharaoh, and then from Satan. That's why it's still valid and important for us today. God wasn't shortsighted in commanding Israel to keep Passover for all generations.

The Passover Ceremony

In celebrating the Feast a ceremony arose with the eating of the lamb, the *matza* and the bitter herbs. The Passover ceremony can be divided into three parts:

1. The ceremony before the meal,
2. The meal, and
3. The ceremony after the meal.

At Yeshua's last Passover, as the meal was ending, He took the already present *matza* and wine and spoke of them being His body and blood. The *matza* pictured death to self (crucifixion), sinlessness, humility and holiness. The wine pictures the blood of the lamb/Lamb that God used to set Israel free from slavery to Pharaoh and slavery to Satan. Both sets of meanings for Passover remain valid, with Yeshua's body and blood setting us free and transforming our nature into His. The two sets of meaning are one and complement each another because God set it up that way. This allowed Yeshua to walk into an already established feast and identify Himself in the *matza* and the wine.

I'm going to interweave an ancient Passover ceremony, one that Yeshua would have participated in all His life, and one that you might see today if you were to be invited to a traditional, non-believing Jewish Passover ceremony this year.

Before the Ceremony

Traditionally, before the Passover ceremony, all yeast and leavened bread would have to be out of the house and out of the Land of Israel. It would have been burned in a fire. Bread with yeast must not be eaten for seven days or even seen in the Land (Ex. 14:15-20). It speaks of Israel being sinless and holy and points to the resurrection of glory that awaits the faithful in the New Jerusalem.

Many times in the Gospels, Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are used interchangeably. Luke 22:1 reads, ‘Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.’¹⁹

Biblically Passover usually refers to the sacrifice of the lamb, which would happen in the late afternoon of 14 *Aviv*.²⁰ The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins a couple of hours later at dark, with the new day, 15 *Aviv*. Yeshua would have eaten the lamb that night, on 15 *Aviv*, as darkness begins the next biblical day.²¹ The symbolism to Israel for the Feast of Unleavened Bread is this:

- a. Leaven represents sin;
- b. The house represents the person;
- c. Seven days represents completion, perfection and holiness (from Creation week) and a complete unit or cycle of time; a week or a year.

The ancient Israeli saw this seven day feast as removing sin from himself, his people and his country, to walk in holiness. It also spoke to Israel of walking in holiness for the greater cycle of time—a year; until the next Passover, even though after the seven days they could eat leavened bread. Passover was a powerful divine reminder that Yahveh had freed Israel from Egyptian slavery, not to do their own thing, but to be a holy, sinless people unto Yahveh. That was the goal, and God provided sacrifice when anyone failed.

The Ceremony Begins!

The Blowing of the Shofar

Numbers 10:10 speaks of the silver trumpets announcing the beginning of the holy feasts to Israel. They would announce the Passover in Yeshua’s time in Jerusalem. The Temple priests would blow the trumpets from atop the Temple. In many places of Scripture the *shofar* (ram’s horn) is also used as a trumpet.

The Lighting of the Oil Lamps (or Candles)

Light symbolizes God’s Creation (Gen. 1:1-5). The lighting of oil lamps in Yeshua’s day (or candles today) thanked God for the Light of Creation. The first Words of Yahveh in the Bible are, ‘Let there be Light!’ Before that there was only darkness. Israel is seen as coming out of the darkness of Egyptian slav-

¹⁹ See p. 10, note 18 for more cites on their interchangeability.

²⁰ The month of *Aviv* (Abib in English) is mentioned seven times in Scripture: Exodus 12:6; 13:4; 23:15; 34:18 twice; Deuteronomy 16:1 twice.

²¹ Traditional Judaism begins the day at sunset, but this is rabbinic. To understand that they realize that the biblical day begins at dark one only has to ask a rabbi when the Sabbath is over. It’s not sunset, but darkness, with either two or three major stars needing to be seen before the Sabbath is officially over. See p. 8 note 16.

ery into the Light of God's Freedom. We too, are called out of darkness into His marvelous Light. The Apostle Peter said:

'But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. That you should show forth the praises of Him who has *called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light.*' (1st Peter 2:9)

The lighting of the oil lamps is always done by a woman. Isn't it interesting that Yeshua, the Light of the World, came through Miryam (Mary), a Jewish woman.

The First of the Four Wine Cups (Glasses) of Blessing

Four times during the traditional ceremony, cups full of wine are raised and God is blessed and thanked for something different:

1. The *first* cup is called the Cup of Sanctification. This officially begins the ceremony and has as its theme the sanctification or setting apart of the Passover meal as holy. God has commanded it to be done (Ex. 12:14) and that makes it holy. The first cup pictures this. This is not an ordinary meal, but one that God has called Israel to observe because of what He has done in freeing them from slavery.
2. The *second* cup is called the Cup of Remembrance. It will be drunk just before the meal is eaten. It calls to mind the death of the Egyptian firstborn, and all the plagues that preceded it in.
3. The *third* cup is called the Cup of Redemption. It takes place immediately after the Passover Meal. It will be this third cup of wine that Yeshua lifts up and tells His followers to drink, for it's not only a picture of the blood of the lamb in Egypt that God used to spare the Hebrew firstborn sons, but also a picture of the blood of the Passover Lamb of God whose death spares all the firstborn sons of God who believe in His Firstborn Son (Heb. 12:23).
4. The *fourth* cup is called the Cup of Praise. It concludes the ceremony, giving praise to God for the great redemption that He has accomplished.

Washing the Hands

In the Passover ceremony there are a number of Jewish traditions that have sprung up over the centuries. One of them is the ceremonial washing of hands. Older children will come around the Table with pitchers of water, a basin and a towel and the people will wash their hands, saying the appropriate traditional blessing to God.

In the Christian world, Jewish tradition has about as much value as legs on a snake. We must remember, though, that the Lord didn't come against *all* Jewish tradition (Mt. 23:23), but only those which nullified the Word of God (Mt. 15:1-9).

Tradition is like a picture frame. If we were looking for a good picture frame to enhance a picture that we have, we wouldn't buy one that distorted or hid the picture. The Word of God is the Picture. Traditions can be either good picture frames or bad picture frames. They can either enhance the meaning of the Word of God (like the wine at Passover) or they can distort, pervert and deny it. The tradition of washing the hands and blessing God has a scriptural foundation in Psalm 24:3-4:

'Who has the right to climb the Mountain of Yahveh? Who has the right to stand in His

Holy Place? He whose *hands are clean*, whose heart is pure, whose soul does not worship worthless things and who never swears to a lie.’

The symbolism for the traditional washing of the hands speaks of the Passover participants wanting their souls to be clean. Yeshua, though, refused the ‘washing of the hands’ ceremony for both Passover and every day (Lk. 11:37) because the Pharisees had turned it into a matter of sin or righteousness.²² They had made it so that anyone who didn’t say their blessing was sinning against God with ‘unclean hands’ (Mt. 15:1-20), at least in their eyes.²³

Yeshua uses the concept of hand washing, though, to springboard off of it and establish a *tradition* within the believing community. In John 13:4-5 we read,

‘He rose from supper and laid aside his garments and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poured water into a basin and began *to wash the disciples feet* and to wipe them with the towel in which He was girded.’

Of course, the ‘supper’ is the Passover Meal,²⁴ and the towel, the basin and the water were there as part of the hand washing ceremony. Yeshua, as He had done with explaining the commandments of murder and adultery and what they ultimately meant (Mt. 5:21-32), radically changed the hand washing ceremony into a ceremony on humility and serving one another (Jn. 13:1-15).

The Three Matzot—A Messianic Tradition

Matzot is plural for *matza* (unleavened bread). If you were to be invited to the next Passover by a Jewish man by the name of say, Max Goldstein, you would see a ceremony involving three *matzot* at this time in the Passover ceremony. He would most likely be using store-bought *matza*, which is usually square, about 10 inches by 10 inches (25 x 25 cm) and tastes very dry and plain, like cardboard. It’s a big cracker without yeast and salt.

Max, as the head of the house, would have the three *matzot* layered in three napkins so that they didn’t touch one another, or a special Passover ‘pouch’ that would contain three sections within it so that each piece of *matza* would have its own separate compartment. He would then take out the middle *matza*, break it in half, and put half back into the pouch, and the other half he would wrap up in a linen napkin.

Max will place the half that was wrapped in a linen napkin next to his place setting until the meal begins. Then, while everyone is eating, he will discreetly get up and hide it somewhere in the house. Once the

²² Rabbi Nosson Scherman and Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz, General Editors, *The Artscroll Siddur* (Brooklyn, N.Y: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., January, 1987), pp. 224-225. The blessing that the Pharisees said while washing their hands is known as נְטִילַת יָדַיִם (*netilat yadie'im*) literally, the ‘taking of the hands,’ not the ‘washing of the hands.’ ‘Blessed are You, *Hashem*’ (a rabbinic way of circumventing the name of Yahveh) ‘our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and *commanded us regarding the washing/taking of the hands.*’ It’s still practiced today in Orthodox Judaism. If a Jew doesn’t say this blessing, then according to the Rabbis their hands are seen as ‘unclean’ or ‘defiled.’ Therefore, *any* food that a Jew might eat with those hands would also be considered unclean and defiled. This is why Yeshua refused to have any part in it, and also why we shouldn’t observe it either. This was the blessing spoken in Yeshua’s day, as seen in the Hebrew translation of the New Testament for Mt. 15:2, 20 and Mark 7:2, 3 in *The Torah, Prophets, Writings and The New Covenant* (Jerusalem: The Bible Society of Israel, 1991), p. 20-21, 52.

²³ See [Law 102](#), p. 6, *Jesus and the Pig*, for why the Lord never meant that we could eat pig when He said that it wasn’t what went into a man, but what came out of him.

²⁴ See [Passover and the Apostle John](#) for how John’s account of the supper is the Passover and how it aligns with the other three Gospel accounts for when Yeshua ate the Passover that year.

children finish their meal they will be excused from the Table to try and find the hidden *matza*. Max then presents the child who found it with a *silver* coin and leads everyone in thanking God for *His redemption of Israel* by the eating of *that* piece of *matza*.

We Jewish people pride ourselves on being very smart. We normally have at least two good reasons for doing anything we do, but if you were to ask Max why he just did what he did, and what it has to do with the redemption of Israel, and having three pieces of *matza*, breaking the middle piece and hiding it, etc., he would have absolutely no *satisfactory* answer for you. The best that the Rabbis can do for Max is to suggest two possible groups of three, but neither group ‘fits’ or explains the ceremony:

1. The Fathers of Israel: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or,
2. the three parts of Israeli society: the Aaronic Priests, the Levitical Priests and the rest of Israel.

The grouping of three is there, but what the Rabbis cannot answer is why would Isaac, or the Levitical Priests, the ones in the middle of the groups representing the middle *matza*, be broken in half? There is no rabbinical explanation for this because what we see in this traditional ceremony of the *matza* is an ancient Messianic tradition that obviously found its way into the traditional Jewish community. The broken middle *matza* is a picture of the death (breaking), burial (wrapped in a napkin) and resurrection (found alive!) of Messiah Yeshua:

1. The middle *Matza* is a picture of the middle Person of the Godhead—Yeshua.
 - a. The other two *matzot* are the Father and the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The placing of the three *matzot* in the linen pouch, so *they can't be seen*, is a picture of the God who is with us, yet invisible.
2. The *breaking* of the middle *Matza* is a picture of Yeshua's crucifixion. The wrapping of the middle *matza* in a linen napkin pictures Yeshua being wrapped in a linen burial cloth after His death (Mt. 27:59: ‘And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth’).
 - a. The *hiding* of this *Matza* is a picture of His burial.
 - b. The finding of the *Matza* is a picture of His being found alive from the dead; His resurrection.

It's extremely interesting that Jewish people do this ceremony year after year, century after century, yet don't question it nor realize that it's a *perfect* picture of Messiah Yeshua crucified, buried and resurrected. During the time of Passover, my prayer is that when they break the middle *matza*, that the Lord Yeshua will manifest Himself to them and they will give their lives to Him. I base this prayer on Luke 24:30-31, where the two disciples (Cleopas and Simon; Lk. 24:18, 34) who walked with Yeshua on the road to Emmaus, *recognized* Him only *after* He blessed His Father for the *matza* and broke it at dinner with them that Sunday night:

‘When He had reclined at the table with them, Yeshua took the bread (*matza*) and blessed (His Father) and breaking it, He began giving it to them. *Then their eyes were opened* and they *recognized Him* and He vanished from their sight.’ (Lk. 24:30-31)

The bread had to be unleavened (*matza*) because it was still Passover week (the Feast of Unleavened Bread) on that Sunday night.

The Four Questions

Religious Education at its Best—Designed by God

Exodus 12:24-27 and 13:8 set up the Ceremony to be expanded with future generations of Israel:

“And you must observe this event as an ordinance for you and your sons *forever*. When you enter the Land which Yahveh will give you, as He has promised, you must observe this ceremony, and when your sons say to you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ you shall say, ‘It is a Passover sacrifice to Yahveh, who passed over the houses of the Sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.’” (Exodus 12:24-27)

“You must tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of what Yahveh did for *me* when I came out of Egypt.’” (Ex. 13:8)

Even this coming Passover, when Max retells the Passover story, he will say the Lord ‘did it for *me*, when I came out of Egypt.’ We Jews see ourselves as coming from the loins of our Fathers, whom Yahveh delivered from Egyptian slavery. If Yahveh hadn’t saved us we would still be making bricks for Pharaoh.

Tradition assigns four questions to the youngest child who is able to read and understand. The logic behind this is divine. As the Passover was the highlight of the year, it was imbued with much value and honor. The only part of the ceremony that wasn’t done by the father, as the head of the household, would be the lighting of the oil lamps by his wife and the asking of the four questions by his youngest son. The honor of being the youngest son of the family *would fall upon every son*, no matter how many sons the family had, as Passover would come around once a year and the son that was in that position would enter into the honor of asking the questions.

This would, of course, make a holy imprint upon the boy, that he had been able to be an active member of the Passover when there would be many people there who didn’t have a part, and here he was, with a key role. This would help to reinforce the reality of the value of the Passover among all the Sons of Israel. As we saw from Ex. 12:24-27 and 13:8, it was Yahveh, the God of Israel, who set the question up; ‘when your son asks you...’

The first two questions the Jewish people assign to the son are from the scriptural account. The last two questions are from rabbinic tradition:

1. Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we can eat any bread that we want, but on this night we eat only *matza*. Why?
2. On all other nights we can eat any herb we like, but on this night we must have bitter herbs. Why?
3. On all other nights we don’t dip, but on this night we dip twice. Why?
4. On this night we recline at the (Passover) Table. Why?

The head of the household, usually the father or a rabbi, answers:

1. *Matza* is eaten because when I left Egypt there was no time to wait for the dough to rise.

“The Egyptians urged the people, to send them out of the land in haste, for they said, ‘We will all be dead!’ So, the (Hebrew) people took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls bound up in the clothes on their shoulders.” (Ex. 12:33-34)

‘They baked the dough, which they had brought out of Egypt, into cakes of unleavened

bread (*matza*). For it had not become leavened, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.’ (Ex. 12:39)

Yeast in dough must have time to set. If the dough is moved about the yeast won’t properly affect it. Also, when Israel left Egypt, it says that the dough was in their kneading bowls and wrapped up in cloth. This way, the yeast from the air couldn’t get into the dough to leaven it.

The picture for those who love Yeshua is clear: get out of the land of sin and darkness as fast as your spiritual feet can carry you, leaving all your sin (leaven) behind!

2. Bitter herbs are eaten tonight to reflect on the bitterness of our slavery in Egypt. In Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, both Moses and Yahveh call Egypt an iron furnace:

‘But Yahveh has taken you and brought you out of *the iron furnace*, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as you are today.’ (Dt. 4:20)

“which I commanded your Fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from *the iron furnace*, saying, ‘Listen to My Voice and do according to all which I command you, so you shall be My people and I will be your God.’ (Jer. 11:4)

An iron furnace was a furnace that was so hot it literally melted iron. It’s a picture of intense suffering, pain and humiliation. Isn’t that what Yeshua went through for us and what many believers go through before they come to Jesus?

The bitter ‘herb’ (*maror* מָרֹר) is usually horseradish. This brings tears to the eyes, an appropriate response to the time of suffering in Egypt. (Others eat watercress, celery, baby greens, radish and/or leaves, or anything else bitter. The word ‘herbs’ is not found in the Hebrew, so, it can be anything bitter, including horseradish.)

When I look back before I came to believe I thought that I was a *somebody*, going *some-where*, doing *something*. I was totally deceived by the Prince of Darkness. I was actually a *nobody*, going *nowhere*, doing *nothing!* Life was bitter.

3. We dip twice tonight in salty water, the father would say, to convey that God brought Israel through the Red Sea on dry land, but when the Egyptians tried to follow us, God caused the Sea to turn back on them.

Parsley is dipped twice into a glass of very salty water and then eaten. It pictures both Israel *and* Egypt going into the Red Sea. The parsley being eaten after the second dipping pictures the Egyptian Army being ‘swallowed up’ by the Red Sea.

4. We recline at the Passover Table tonight to symbolize that we are no longer slaves. God saved us from Egyptian slavery so that we could be free.²⁵

Max will recline at the Passover Table now, with a pillow on his chair, to picture that the salvation that God has given to him and to all the Jewish people has made us a free people. In Egypt we had to stand and eat—there was no rest or freedom for us. We were slaves. Isn’t that how we all were before we came to Yeshua—slaves to Satan?

²⁵ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), p. 808, note 18: ‘The Talmud puts it that slaves were wont to take their meals standing, and that this reclining best indicated how Israel had passed from bondage into liberty.’

The Ancient Passover Table

In Yeshua's day the Passover Table was made up of three rectangular tables making a sort of square U, low to the ground, only a foot or so off the ground (a third of a meter). They didn't use chairs, but long pillows to lay upon, expressing their freedom, which would surround the outer three sides of the tables. They would lie down on the large pillows with their bodies parallel to the Table, with their feet jutting out at an angle from the Table so that another could use that space for their body. In other words, their head and trunk would be closest to the Table, with their legs going away from the Table. They would lean on their left side and arm, and with their right hand they would pick up the food and eat. The Apostles and Yeshua would form a sort of large horseshoe around the Table. The open part of the U allowed for food and wine to be placed on the Tables and then taken up.²⁶

The seating, or rather laying down order, would be hierarchical. Picturing a U, the youngest would be at the upper right hand side with feet at the very top of the U. Going down the U the host would be next, and then the guest of honor, and after him the next in honor until one got all the way around the U to the upper left hand side where the 'least' honored would be.

The youngest member in Yeshua's day, situated in the upper right hand corner would have been John. If any questions were asked that night, John would have asked them ('Why is this night different than all other nights,' etc.) As we'll see, he asked the most important question of the evening—one that wasn't on the traditional menu.

The host (the person in charge) of the Passover ceremony was Yeshua as the head of the group. He would have most likely assigned the seating arrangements, including the place for the guest of honor, the one whom the host desired to honor the most. Yeshua didn't place Peter there, but Judas in the position as the guest of honor, as Scripture shows us, once we understand the seating arrangements.²⁷ John records,

“When Yeshua had said this, He became troubled in spirit and testified and said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.’ The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. There was *reclining on Jesus' bosom* one of His disciples whom Jesus loved.” (Jn. 13:21-23)

That's John, the one 'whom Jesus loved.' He was able to be 'in the bosom' or chest area of Yeshua because John was laying with his back close to Yeshua's front torso. The *beloved one* tells us what happened next at the meal: “So, Simon Peter *gestured* to him (John), ‘Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking!’” (Jn. 13:24)

Where was Peter? He was at the opposite side of the Passover Table, facing John. In other words, it seems that Peter was directly across from John. This is very interesting as the assignment of places at the Table *was in order of importance*; the youngest would be on the host's right, then the host, then the guest of honor, then the next in honor, the next, the next until the very last 'honored' at the opposite end of the Table as the last person. That's most likely where Peter was, in the most humiliating place at the Passover Table. He was either symbolically being humbled by the Lord, something that would happen in reality to Peter during the next three days when he came to see his heart, or Peter, in carnal humility, took the place of 'least honored.'²⁸

That night Peter would deny he even knew Yeshua, three times. Peter's pride would be crushed. Peter

²⁶ Ibid., p. 815.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 814-815.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 816.

would be humiliated and in that humiliation he would cry out to the Lord for help and forgiveness; be forgiven and take the place as the chief Apostle of Messiah Yeshua.²⁹ In that state Yeshua would be able to use him. God cannot use those who walk in pride. Pride exalts itself above God and is at war with God. Getting rid of the pride in us is what Passover is all about. John further records in 13:25-26:

“He, leaning back thus on Yeshua’s bosom, said to Him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ Yeshua then answered, ‘It is he for whom I shall dip the *morsel* and give it to.’ So, when He had dipped the *morsel*, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.”

Alfred Edersheim writes that the *morsel* or *sop* was a piece of lamb and bitter herbs on *matza*.³⁰ This feeding or serving the guest of honor by the host pictures the honoring of the guest of honor by the host. Yeshua serving or feeding Judas, the one who was about to betray Him, is an incredible picture of Who Yeshua is. Earlier in this chapter, one reads that Yeshua, washing the feet of all His followers, would certainly have also washed the feet of Judas. In Yeshua’s day, the only slaves who washed the feet of others were non-Jewish slaves, and the lowest slave in the house.³¹ That’s why Simon Peter recoiled and rebuked Yeshua when Yeshua wanted to wash his feet (Jn. 13:8).

Why did Yeshua wash the feet of Judas and assign His betrayer the place of honor at the Passover Table? Because Yeshua loved Judas, too. This is our God and how He wants us to live; trusting in our Father and loving our enemies, and with His heart we are able to do that (Ezk. 36:25-27).

Yeshua knew that Judas would betray Him, but as a father loves all his sons, Yeshua as Creator loves all His sons and daughters. It’s a very tender and poignant reality that the King of the Universe had taken on the role of the lowest slave in the Land, to show Judas, the other Apostles, and all of us today that there is *nothing* that He will not do *to serve us*—to see us set free from sin and death; to help us to grow into His Image in this lifetime; to help us to overcome every physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and any other ‘reality’ that would seek to keep us from walking in intimate fellowship with Him and being Light to a world in darkness, and to live eternally with Him who is Life, in the future manifestation of the New Jerusalem. *This* is our Messiah. John states,

“After the *matza* (*sop/morsel*), Satan then entered into Judas. Therefore, Yeshua said to him, ‘What you do, do quickly.’ Now, no one of those *reclining at the Table*³² knew for what purpose He had said this to him. For some were supposing because Judas had the money box that Yeshua was saying to him, ‘Buy the things we have need of for the Feast,’ or else, that he should give something to the poor” (Jn. 13:27-29).

²⁹ “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, *strengthen your brethren.*” (Luke 22:31-32)

³⁰ Ibid., p. 824. “This, we believe, was ‘the sop,’ which Jesus, having dipped it for him in the dish, handed first to Judas, as occupying the first and chief place at Table.” This understanding of the ‘sop’ or ‘morsel’ is seen in the Jer. Chall. 57b, which was written about the time of Hillel (who lived a generation before Yeshua).

The NRSV, HCSB and the NIV call it a piece of bread, which, of course, for the Passover was *matza*. The Greek word for *sop* (*morsel*) is the same in both the Textus Receptus and the Majority Text.

³¹ I. Howard Marshall, Author; I. Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasque, Editors, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), p. 146. Taken from *Midrash Exodus* 21:2 (82a); *Keth.* 96a. ‘Only non-Jewish slaves were required to perform this menial duty for their masters.’

³² By this term we know that this was the Passover meal, and not any alleged meal a day before the Passover meal. Jews only reclined at the Passover Table. See also Mk. 14:18 (*reclining*; NASB, NIV, HCSB). This is only one point. For more see [Passover and the Apostle John](#).

Edersheim dismantles the argument that the ‘supper’ of John wasn’t a Passover meal by stating:

“Sufficient here to state, that the provision and preparation of the needful food, and indeed of all that was needful for the Feast, was allowed on the 15th Nisan³³...the mention of these two suggestions by the disciples seems almost necessarily to involve, that the writer of the Fourth Gospel had placed this meal in the Paschal Night. Had it been on the evening before, no one could have imagined that Judas had gone out during the night to buy provisions, *when there was the whole next day for it*, nor would it have been likely that a man should on any ordinary day go at such an hour to seek out the poor. But in the Paschal Night, when the great Temple-gates were opened at midnight to begin early preparations for the offering of the *Chagigah*, or festive sacrifice, which was not voluntary but of due, and the remainder of which was afterwards eaten at a festive meal, *such preparations would be quite natural*. And equally so, that *the poor, who gathered around the Temple*, might then seek to obtain the help of the charitable.”³⁴

Edersheim reveals that this was the time of the Passover meal when all Israel would be celebrating it, and that it wasn’t a night early, so Yeshua could be crucified when the Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple. Yeshua kept the Passover at the right time, for on 15 *Aviv*, the annual Sabbath of the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover meal is eaten in the evening, He would be crucified on the following morning; the day when Israel began to leave the slavery of Pharaoh. It’s 15 *Aviv* when the effect of the Passover lamb/Lamb took place, for we, too left a kingdom, the Kingdom of Satan, when Yeshua was crucified and shed His Life-giving blood for us.

Then John concludes:

‘So after receiving the *matza* he immediately went out and it was night.’ (John13:30)

Why hadn’t the Apostles realized that Jesus was pointing to Judas as the traitor? It could have been that Yeshua only spoke in a whisper to John.

Hagada—the Telling of the Passover Story

Hagada means ‘to tell’ and in this case refers to the telling of the Passover story. It explains why the Jewish people are celebrating what they’re celebrating. ‘The telling’ may start at Creation and go on for hours!, as the host would recount how Yahveh chose Father Abram and changed his name to Abraham and promised him a great seed (many people) would come from him, and that God would give Father Abraham the Land of Israel, and on and on and on until he would come to the plagues and the salvation of Israel from Egyptian slavery.

In the days before movies and television this part of the Passover hagada was what everyone waited for. It was a reinforcing of who we were as Jews and how we had come to be God’s chosen people. There was much joy and excitement at the Passover Table. Only recently, in the course of human history, could every household have a Bible, and more than one, but the Passover hagada goes back 3,400 years, during which most of that time Jewish families didn’t have a Bible or a scroll. The hagada or telling of the Passover story, was a very special time of remembrance; especially because God had commanded it to be so. This

³³ Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah*, p. 825, note 30: ‘The Mishnah expressly allows the procuring even on the Sabbath of that which is required for the Passover, and the Law of the Sabbath-rest was much more strict than that of feast days. See this in Appendix 17.’ (Nisan is equal to Aviv.)

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 825.

was religious education at its best. This was the way the faith was passed on from fathers to sons in all Israel.

The Passover Seder Plate

Pesach, Hebrew for ‘to pass over or to leap over,’ comes into English as Passover. It speaks of Yahveh passing over the houses of Israel where the blood of the lamb was, but striking the houses of Egypt where the blood of the lamb wasn’t. *Seder* is a Hebrew word for ‘order,’ as in an arrangement of things and hence, the order in which the Passover ceremony proceeds. The Passover Seder Plate is a plate that has a place for the biblical and traditional Passover foods on it. Each food item tells a story.

In the days of Yeshua there would be Passover lamb meat from the sacrifice at the Table for all to eat. The Passover lamb, eaten once a year, would picture both the lamb of God at the First Passover and the Lamb of God as the Second Passover (for the Apostles after the resurrection, etc.).

Today, Max and millions of Jewish people that celebrate Passover will not have lamb meat. There are two reasons for this:

1. When the Temple in Jerusalem, the heart of the Jewish people, was destroyed by the Roman Army under Titus in 70 AD, all sacrifice obviously ceased. Yet, in the centuries after that, they would still have lamb at the Passover Table, but not sacrifice it. They would usually butcher it a day before 14 *Aviv* (*Nisan*) so that it wouldn’t be seen as a sacrifice. The Rabbis believed that sacrifice could only take place in the Temple.
2. It wasn’t until ten centuries after the crucifixion, with the rise of Roman Catholic anti-Semitism and the demonic ‘blood libels’ that some would accuse the Jews of, that the Jewish community in Europe stopped having lamb at Passover ‘to show’ the Church community that they didn’t sacrifice any more.

The blood libels leveled against the Jews continued though, throughout the last one thousand years. It says that at Passover time the Jews kidnapped Christian boys and murdered them in order to use their blood for making *matza*. Horrible? Yes, but even in this day, Israel’s Arab enemies still teach this to their children.

This accusation would be preached ‘as Gospel’ from pulpits by the Catholic (and Protestant) clergy and many Jews would lose their lives when Church mobs, *led by the clergy*, would riot and destroy whole Jewish communities, venting their rage at the ‘Christ killers,’ as they called them. These were names given to them by theologians such as Martin Luther, Augustine and Jerome. It wasn’t a great way to win Jews to Jesus.

Six million Jewish men, women and children were murdered by the Nazis, just because they were Jewish. The Nazis, after the war at the Nuremburg trials, would use as their defense that they ‘were only doing to the Jews what the Church had been doing for centuries.’ Unfortunately, they weren’t lying, which is a sad and vile commentary on the European Church(es) and their relationship to the Jewish people; the literal brothers and sisters of ‘their Lord.’ Anti-Semitism wasn’t known in India nor China until the Roman Catholic Church came to those lands.

I realize that not many Christians today know this dark side about Church history, but validating this is not hard. One can read any Jewish history, of which there are many paperback books out, one of which is ‘God, Jews and History,’ by Max Dimont, which will give you specific dates, towns and accounts where whole Jewish communities were burned to the ground and their property and goods plundered, their chil-

dren taken from them, their women raped and all the Jews, many times children, murdered *in the Name of Jesus*.³⁵ As hard as that is to imagine, this was Church theology toward God's chosen people, the Jews, and much of that theology is still in place today in the hearts of Catholics and Protestants.

In order to avoid the appearance of sacrifice, all Jews who have come from Europe, for almost every country of Europe turned against the Jews in the last thousand years, have stopped eating lamb altogether at Passover. Instead, they have beef or chicken as the meat dish.

1. At Max's Table in the United States there will be the shank bone of a lamb (a part of one of the leg's of a lamb). This will symbolize the lamb of the First Passover in Egypt for Max and the others at the Table.
2. *Maror* (bitter herbs) will also be on the plate. This is generally made up of horseradish, designed to put tears in their eyes to remember the life of bitterness in Egyptian slavery.
3. Parsley, lettuce or watercress is used for the tradition of dipping twice into salt water to picture the Red Sea and Israel going through it, but Pharaoh's Army being overcome by the Sea.
4. Next is the hard boiled egg, which is also a traditional food that is used to represent Pharaoh's hard heart. There are people who say that God isn't fair because God Himself says that He will harden Pharaoh's heart. The reasoning of these people go like this: 'If God hardens someone's heart, what chance is there for that person to have anything but a hard heart?!

This sounds reasonable, but if any of us have any sense of fairness or justice within us it must come from God who is righteous. In the Scriptures Yahveh does say that He will harden Pharaoh's heart (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10), but it also says that Pharaoh will harden his own heart (Ex. 8:15, 32; 9:34). What is happening here?

If a brick of clay and a brick of wax are placed on the pavement in the heat of the sun on a hot day in July, the brick of clay will harden and the brick of wax will soften and melt. No one can rightfully accuse the sun and say, 'It's the sun's fault!' It's the *nature* (substance) of the two bricks that determines what will happen to them, and so it is with the human heart. We can either harden ourselves before the living God or we can melt and allow Him to use us for His Glory; a glory that makes us become like Him. We all have free will—the ability to choose God or Satan, and so did Pharaoh.

Every new plague was like 'a ray of very hot sunshine' to Pharaoh, revealing the one true God of the Hebrews to him. After every plague Pharaoh had an opportunity to free Israel of his own volition. Pharaoh obstinately chose to rebel, time and time again, against the Most High God, and so each plague hardened him or revealed his true nature—his heart of stone. The price he paid is a picture of all who rebel against the God of the Jews and

³⁵ Even a simple Google check on Catholic/Protestant persecution of the Jews will bring up much:

Christianity and its Persecution of the Jews at http://www.heretication.info/_jews.html.

Seventeen hundred years of Christian persecution of the Jews at <http://jesuswouldbefurious.org/Catholic/ChurchvsJews.html>: In 1272 AD, Pope Gregory X defended the Jews: 'It happens sometimes that Christians lose their children and that the enemies of the Jews accuse them of having kidnaped and killed these children in order to offer sacrifices with their heart and blood, and it also happens that the parents themselves, or other Christians who are enemies to the Jews, hide the children and attack the Jews, demanding of them, as ransom, a certain sum of money, on the entirely false pretext that these children had been kidnaped and killed by the Jews.'

Christian Persecution of Jews over the Centuries: Introduction at <https://www.ushmm.org/research/the-center-for-advanced-holocaust-studies/programs-ethics-religion-the-holocaust/articles-and-resources/christian-persecution-of-jews-over-the-centuries>.

reject the blood of the Passover Lamb of God, over the doorway of their souls. God is just, and Scripture speaks of Him warning Pharaoh of the dire consequences of his refusal to let Israel go. When Moses was at the Burning Bush God said to him:

“Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says Yahveh! ‘Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My Son go that he may serve Me, but if you refuse to let him go, indeed *I will kill your son, your firstborn.*’” (Exodus 4:22-23)

5. Another food on the Seder Plate is the dessert of the meal: *haroset*. It’s a finely chopped mixture of apples, honey, nuts, cinnamon and wine. It’s delicious! Once the mixture is made you can imagine that the apples will begin to oxidize. This is done intentionally because now the mixture will look like the mortar we Jews were forced to use to make the pyramids and the other building projects for Pharaoh.

The question arises, ‘Why would anything that is supposed to represent our painful labor under Pharaoh taste good?!’ The Rabbis say that it is symbolic of the pleasure that Israel had, even in Egyptian slavery. It’s a picture of the enjoyment of sin in the land of darkness. This is a *great* tradition from the Rabbis and very appropriate for all of us who believe in Messiah Yeshua, for we too, take our sins of pleasure with us when we come into His Kingdom and hence, the need to die to self and live for Messiah—what Passover is all about.

The Second Cup of Blessing—the Cup of Remembrance

After Max explained each food item and everyone had eaten a little of all of them, the Seder Plate would give way to the Second Cup of Blessing (with another ceremonial washing of hands). The First Cup announced the sanctification of the ceremony and the Passover Table because Yahveh commanded Israel to do it. The Second Cup, which would be used to begin the actual meal, is called the Cup of Remembrance because it *remembers* the Egyptian firstborn sons who died in the last plague of judgment and that Israel’s freedom came about by the death of many firstborn sons.

Max will fill up the, as yet unused, second wine glass and place it on his plate, right in the center of the plate. At each place setting there will be four wine glasses, not just one wine glass used four times (although in poorer homes allowance is made for just one glass used four times). Max will then recite every plague that God brought against Egypt, starting at the first; the Nile River being turned into blood, etc. *Every time* he mentions a plague, he, and all those present, will take their finger and dip it slightly into the wine glass to pick up some wine on their finger tip. They will drip it onto the plate in sympathetic remembrance of those awesome plagues and the havoc, destruction and death of all the firstborn of Egypt.

With the 10th plague finished, Max will lift up his slightly less than full wine glass and say the blessing, thanking God for the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. A full glass of wine symbolizes fullness of Joy. What this glass pictures is that their Joy is slightly diminished in their knowledge that their freedom came at the expense of Egyptian lives.

Max will then bless God for the meal and the eating will really begin. We Jews love to eat and the meal can go on for an hour or more. As the children are always the first to get done with eating, the ceremony of the three *matzot* in the pouch was especially designed for them to be occupied in looking for the hidden *matza* while the adults continued to eat and enjoy the time that the Lord had provided in the Passover. The children would be dismissed to find the hidden *matza* and the one who found it would be given a silver coin. Silver is the metal of redemption in Scripture:

“Yahveh also spoke to Moses, saying, ‘When you take a census of the Sons of Israel to number them, then each one of them shall give a *ransom* for himself to Yahveh when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as an offering to Yahveh. Everyone who is numbered, from twenty years old and over, shall give the offering to Yahveh. The rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less than the half shekel, when you give the offering to Yahveh to make atonement for yourselves. You shall take the atonement money from the Sons of Israel and shall give it for the service of the Tent of Meeting, that it may be a memorial for the Sons of Israel before Yahveh to make atonement for yourselves.’” (Ex. 30:11-16)

The shekel that is spoken of is a silver shekel. Scripture speaks of where all those silver half shekels went—to become part of the structure on the Tabernacle:

“And the silver of them that were numbered of the Congregation was one hundred talents, and one thousand, seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary: a *bekah* for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the Sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty men.’ (Exodus 38:25-26)

“And from the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil: *one hundred sockets from the hundred talents*, one talent for each socket.” (Exodus 38:27 NKJV)

The foundation for holding together the Tabernacle of Moses were 100 silver sockets, each weighing about 80 pounds (36 k). The rest of the silver (1,775 shekels) was made into silver bands to stabilize the wooden planks overlaid with gold of the inner Tent that made up both the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (Ex. 27:11).³⁶ Because God spoke of each Israeli over 20 redeeming himself with a silver half shekel, silver became the biblical metal symbolizing redemption, and as such it pictures Yeshua as the Savior-Redeemer of Israel. The silver sockets were the foundation for the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, while the silver bands and hooks literally held the outer curtain ‘fence’ together (Ex. 27:10-11, 17). Here, in picture form, is Yeshua’s redemptive ministry, holding together the place where Israel met God.

The child who finds the hidden *matza* is acting the part of the women who first saw Yeshua alive from the dead and who proclaimed Him as such. In essence, the child is being rewarded in the form of what he has symbolically found: the Redeemer Alive from the dead—redemption for Israel has come!

At this time Max will take the half piece of *matza* that was found, what I call the picture of the resurrected Bread of Life, but what Max calls ‘dessert,’ and say, ‘All who are hungry and afflicted, come to *this* Table and eat!’

Now, after eating for an hour or more, no one is hungry, but the profound significance of his declaration is that *this* Table, the Passover Table, is the Table of Freedom, and the food he is holding out is the Bread of Freedom (which we know to be Messiah Yeshua). This is why Yeshua, when He sat down to His Passover meal before His death, could align Himself, who is Freedom, with the *matza* that was *already* on the Passover Table picturing sinlessness, purity, affliction and freedom. Yeshua wasn’t making something

³⁶ For a seven CD series of teachings (with paperwork) on The Tabernacle of Moses, see it under [BOOKS AND CDS](#).

new, but giving the *matza* a deeper meaning, in representing Him who gives freedom from sin and death.

How Max could not question this anomaly, of calling this piece of *matza* dessert, is beyond my comprehension. This *matza* is so very symbolic, even to him. To say that it's *dessert* defies reason and common sense. The only association it has with dessert is that it is taken after the Passover meal, but to call this *Matza* of Freedom/Redemption dessert isn't rational. It makes something that is divine into something that is base, but Max isn't alone in this blindness. The whole of Judaism is with him, for the past two thousand years.

After blessing God for the redemption that He has given Israel, Max, and all present, will eat of the 'dessert.' He will then take the Third Cup, fill it full with wine and bless God *for redeeming Israel from Egypt. Matza* and wine. This is the heart and the high point of the Passover for Max and his guests.

Yeshua takes *this* cup, after the Passover Meal, and speaks of it being His blood sacrifice shed for the New Covenant. This Third Glass is known as the Cup of Redemption and this section of the Passover ceremony is the origin of what Scripture calls the Lord's Supper.³⁷ It is the heart or essence of the Passover.³⁸

The Lord's Supper is actually a mini-Passover meal, having within it the essence of the Passover. Biblically, the Lord's Supper can be taken twice a day (Ex. 29:38-43), but once a year the Lord *commands* His people to observe the fuller, yearly Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread in honor to Him and the great deliverances that He has performed for Israel: the First Passover in Egypt—delivering the Hebrew slaves from Egyptian slavery, and the Second Passover in Jerusalem—delivering Israel, both Jew and Gentile who love Yeshua, from slavery to sin, sickness, Satan and death.³⁹

Matza is known both as the bread of affliction and the bread of freedom. God is still calling people to the Passover Table.

Max calls the middle *matza* that is broken *afikomen*. This is a Greek word that can mean 'dessert.' From the very first time that I heard that, the meaning didn't sit well with me. Why would Max have to use yet another piece of *matza*, bless God for it, say that it spoke of *redemption* from Egypt and then call it *dessert*?

Afikomen can mean 'dessert,' but literally means, 'it came' (i.e. the portion after the meal; dessert), but it also means, 'He came!' What the child is proclaiming in the hidden *matza* that was found is, 'He came!' (i.e. He has risen!). This ceremony of breaking the middle of the three *matzot*, hiding it and finding it must have originated with Greek speaking Jewish and Gentile believers (as the word is Greek and not Hebrew). Obviously, it originally spoke of Yeshua, as the Rabbis *to this day* don't have a plausible biblical explanation for the *three matzot*, with the middle one being broken, hidden, found, and eaten 'after the meal' as part of the *redemptive* story.

Some Rabbis say that it's only recently that *afikomen* found its way into the Passover Seder (ceremony), but that's not possible. The ceremony is old enough that Jews all over the world have been doing it for a

³⁷ 1st Corinthians 11:20.

³⁸ An interesting side point is that wine is not mentioned as one of the three biblical foods of the Passover (Ex. 12:8); just lamb, *matza* and bitter herbs. So, one half of the Lord's Supper, the wine, comes from a Jewish tradition! Jesus had no problem with this Jewish tradition. He used it to picture His blood. The other half of the Lord's Supper *comes from the Law* where it speaks of *matza* having to be at the Passover meal (Ex. 12:8). So, one half of the Lord's Supper comes from the Law (*matza*) and the other half comes from a Jewish tradition (wine). Every time a Catholic or a Protestant takes the Lord's Supper he is walking in the Law of Moses and Jewish tradition. Please don't tell him about this unless there is someone standing by ready to catch him.

³⁹ For more on why the Lord's Supper can be taken twice or more a day, see [Mosaic Sacrifice and the Blood of Jesus](#).

long time. It's also alluded to in the Talmud, *Pesachim* 109a, so it's at least 1,800 years old...old enough to have come from the Passover of believers in the days of the Apostles, and thereafter, picked up by the traditional Jewish community for their Passover.⁴⁰

With tens of thousands of Jewish believers in the first century (Jews like Peter that believed Yeshua was the Messiah), this ceremony of the three *matzot* came into being. It's very clear that it relates to the death, burial and resurrection of Yeshua: the breaking of the *matza* at the beginning of the ceremony is Yeshua being broken: His crucifixion/death. The wrapping of the *matza* in a linen napkin is His burial and the child finding the *matza* is the proclamation and celebration of His resurrection.

The Book of Acts speaks of many thousands of Jews who came to Yeshua on *Shavu'ot* (known as the Feast of Weeks in the Old Testament⁴¹ and Pentecost in the New):

'So, then those who had received his word were baptized and that day there were added about three thousand (Jewish) souls.' (Acts 2:41)

These 3,000 were men because women and children were seldom counted in a tally.⁴² Luke notes that many thousands of Jewish men (not counting the women) came to the Lord a few days after that:

'But many of those who had heard the message believed and the number of the *men* came to be about five thousand.' (Acts 4:4)

The first Gentile doesn't come into the Kingdom until about nine years *after* the resurrection. That's Cornelius, as Acts 10:28, 44–11:1-18 clearly speak of. Later on in Acts it's written that there were many tens of thousands of Jews that believed:

"And when they heard it they began glorifying God and they said to him, 'You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law.'" (Acts 21:20)

Now we can better understand how the Jewish believing ceremony of the resurrected Savior would overflow into the traditional Jewish community. Of course, the traditional community that didn't believe in Jesus would not use the true meaning, but everything else stayed the same so that today, when Max comes to this part after the Passover meal, he is in form taking the Lord's Supper; the *matza* and the wine, without realizing it!

It's very interesting that, in the breaking of the *matza*, Yeshua was seen (Lk. 24:30-31). He was broken for us that we might see God and that's why I will pray at Passover that the Lord Yeshua will reveal Himself to Max and all the Jewish people around the world, that He is the One who was broken for their redemption from sin and death. I believe that it will happen one day because the Word of God says of Messiah Yeshua and the Father:

'I will pour out on the House of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will *look upon Me whom they have pierced* and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a (dead) firstborn son.' (Zech. 12:10)

⁴⁰ 'Ta'amei Minhagim' 529, quoting *Chok Yaakov* 477:2 at http://judaism.about.com/library/3_askrabbi_o/bl_simmons_pesachafikomenorigin.htm: Also <http://www.chaim.org/afikomen.htm> and <http://www.adatheshurun.org/calndr/holsupp/06Pesach/Afikoman.htm> and http://wonderful1.com/wst_page3.html (the section on *afikomen* is about halfway down the page of questions and answers. Put in *afikomen* and you'll find it).

⁴¹ Ex. 34:22; Num. 28:26; Dt. 16:10, etc.

⁴² Num. 1:1-4, 20, 22; 2:32; 26:1-4; Mk. 14:21; Lk. 9:14; Jn. 6:10, etc.

‘In that Day a Fountain will be opened for the House of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem *for sin and for uncleanness.*’ (Zech. 13:1)

The two Jewish disciples on the road to Emmaus saw their Messiah in the breaking of the *matza* (Lk. 24:30-31), so one day, millions of Jews may very well see Yeshua as they break the *matza* in the Passover ceremony. Passover is the time when the Jewish people believe that Messiah will come and Passover may be the time when Yeshua will reveal Himself to them. Why? Because Passover is a picture of going from slavery to freedom, and in that day all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

“and so all Israel will be saved, just as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion. He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them when I take away their sins.’” (Rom. 11:26-27)

What better place to take sin away than at the Table of Freedom—the Passover Table. That these verses cannot apply to those who are already in the body of Messiah is seen in that they are already saved, having their sins already washed away by the blood of the Lamb. Paul is writing about the Jewish people who have not yet come to know their Messiah. This is Yahveh fulfilling His word to Father Abraham when He said that He would be the God of Abraham’s sons:

‘I will establish My Covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an *everlasting* Covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, *for an everlasting possession* and I will be their God.’ (Gen. 17:7-8)

The Third Cup and the Sacrifices

The Lord’s Supper comes from the Third Cup at Passover—the Cup of Redemption. When Yeshua sat down at the Table, the Table was already waiting for Him because the First Passover is the basis for the Second Passover that would come. What the *matza* and the wine symbolized would now take on even greater meaning. The foundation for the Lord’s Supper in the Old Testament is seen in three places:

1. Passover,
2. the daily sacrifices,
3. and the last or ultimate sacrifice of the Mosaic sacrificial system; the oblation (grain offering) and the libation (wine offering).

In the daily sacrifices it’s biblically revealed that the Lord’s Supper can be taken at least twice a day:

‘Now this is what you must offer on the Altar: two one year old lambs each day, *continuously*. The one lamb you shall offer in the morning and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight and there shall be one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering with one lamb. The other lamb you must offer at twilight and shall offer with it the same grain offering and the same drink offering as in the morning, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to Yahveh. It shall be a continual burnt sacrifice throughout your generations at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting before Yahveh, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there.’ (Ex. 29:38-42)

The daily sacrifices were done twice a day; at the beginning of light and at the end of light. It’s almost as if they formed two pillars that stood between light and darkness, encapsulating the light and keeping the

darkness out. The daily sacrifices were a picture and reminder of the First Passover and how Israel came to walk in freedom. Deuteronomy 16:3 commands Israel to remember every day, the day of their salvation (Passover). It's a great lesson for us:

‘You must not eat leavened bread with it. Seven days you *must* eat with it unleavened bread, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), so that you may remember *all the days of your life* the day *when you came out of the land of Egypt.*’
(Dt. 16:3)

‘The day’ they came out of Egypt was the first day of the Feast of *Matza*, 15 *Aviv* (Ex. 12:29-32; Num. 33:3), an annual Sabbath. The night before was the beginning of 15 *Aviv*, when they ate the Passover lamb, having slain the lamb a few hours earlier in the afternoon (on 14 *Aviv*). Yahveh killed all the first-born of Egypt that night (15 *Aviv*; Ex. 12:29), but spared Israel’s firstborn because of the blood of the lamb, passing over the homes that had the lamb’s blood on the doorposts and the lintel. When they left in the morning dawn it was 15 *Aviv*, the first day of the Feast of *Matza*.

The daily lambs, which were sacrificed, were a whole burnt sacrifice representing Israel, meaning that Israel was to see itself as being totally consecrated to Yahveh; wholly consumed in the fires of the Bronze Altar. The only thing left of them was the smoke, ascending to God as a sweet smelling sacrifice because it spoke of Israel totally walking in God’s will.

The fine flour without yeast (the oblation) pictured the *matza* of Passover. The libation or wine pictured the blood sacrifice of the lamb. All three pictured or looked forward to Yeshua as the Passover Lamb of God and the Bread of Life. The lamb and the flour picture His body; and the wine, His blood. So, the daily sacrifices pictured the past, current, and future state of redemption/salvation.

Only the priests could eat of the flour (bread or *matza*) and the wine of the daily sacrifice. Believers, as priests of Yeshua, may eat from the eternal sacrifice of Messiah, and even though it happened 2,000 years ago, it can be eaten anytime ‘today.’ This eternal sacrifice is also pictured in the Heavens. This writer of Hebrews says, ‘We have an Altar from which those who serve the (earthly) Temple have no right to eat’ from. (Heb. 13:10; Rev. 6:9; 11:1)

The reason the Temple priests had no right to eat from the heavenly Altar, where the eternal sacrifice of Yeshua continually goes up, is because they didn’t believe in Him, but we who believe in Him take of His body and His blood daily. Yahveh set up the daily sacrifice of the lambs for Israel to realize that it was the blood or death of the lamb that gave them their new life (freedom). Theologically, one can have the Lord’s Supper twice a day; in the morning and in the late afternoon just before dark, but I also see here that anytime during the day or night would be alright as the two speak of a continuous offering, and therefore, one may have it as many times a day as he feels led to have it.

Also, the Altar mentioned in Hebrews is not the gold Altar of Incense, where only incense was burned (picturing the prayers of the High Priest for His people Israel and the prayers of Israel). No one ate of anything placed on the gold Altar in the Holy Place because only incense was placed on it. The only Altar that the priests could eat from was the bronze Altar of Sacrifice. It’s this Altar that Hebrews is pointing to and it’s the eternal or heavenly body and blood of Yeshua as the Passover Lamb of God that is on it for us to eat of today and to thank our Messiah for eternally. We can eat from His body and drink from His blood anytime, day or night.

Looking at it from another biblical perspective, we also see that the flour and the wine, the oblation and libation, are the highest sacrifice in the Mosaic sacrificial system.⁴³ These sacrifices speaks of transforma-

⁴³ See both of these articles on Mosaic sacrifice at [Mosaic Sacrifice and the Blood of Jesus](#) and [Mosaic Sacrifice in the New Testament](#) for a biblical understanding of the Mosaic sacrifices in relation to the sacrifice of Yeshua and

tion—flour was once whole kernels and wine was once grapes. Both had to be *crushed* in order for them to be eaten or drunk. Yeshua was crushed (tortured and crucified) for us that we might eat of Him who is Life. Again, only the priests could eat from this sacrifice (Lev. 22:10-16).

Yeshua was the Passover Lamb. These three things; the Passover, the daily sacrifices, and the grain and wine sacrifices, pointed to Him as the Passover Lamb, and they still point to Him as such. That's what the Apostle Paul is saying in Col. 2:16-17, for it speaks of Passover (the Feasts) as being a shadow of things to come; in the future, who is Messiah Yeshua. When we take the Lord's Supper we are walking in the triple biblical reality of the daily sacrifice; the ultimate sacrifice in the Mosaic sacrificial system (the grain and the wine), and the Passover Lamb of God.

The Lord's Supper

The Third Cup of Wine and the Matza After the Passover Meal

In the last Passover that Yeshua celebrated with His disciples He took the *matza* and the cup of wine and infinitely amplified its meaning. Both the *matza* and the cup already meant freedom from slavery because of the lamb slain in Egypt and God having the Hebrews to eat *matza*. Now, Yeshua spoke of the *matza* and the wine picturing His body and blood. Before I share on what the full ramifications of the Lord's Supper is, I want to explain the Apostle Paul's admonition to the Christians in Corinth.

In 1st Cor. 11:23-32 Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper. Unfortunately, it's not his theological dissertation on the Lord's Supper, but mostly a negative rebuke to Gentile Christians to stop practices that were contrary to the Spirit of Messiah (1st Cor. 11:17-22). To understand Paul's attitude in dealing with the problem in the Corinthians' taking of the Lord's Supper, some highlights from a few chapters of his letter will reveal a very frustrated Paul with the Corinthians. Corinth was one place where we might expect to see the Apostle wanting to pull out some of his Jewish beard (Lev. 19:27).

1. In the first chapter Paul speaks of factions in Corinth. One group is for Apollos, one is for Paul and another for Peter!
2. In the third chapter Paul rebukes them for their carnality, calling them infants in Christ.
3. In the fifth chapter a man is sleeping with his father's wife and is still a member in good standing in the church!
4. In the sixth chapter church members are taking one another to court, and that, in front of unbelievers. Others are practicing fornication, which biblically means that they were having sex with cult prostitutes.⁴⁴ This was quite a lively congregation! This means that having the baptism in the Holy Spirit, as all of them obviously had (1st Cor. 1:4-7), doesn't mean that one knows how to walk out their faith in holiness, and hence, why we see so many Spirit-filled believers today walking 'every which way,' but holy.
5. In the eighth chapter Paul tells them not to eat food *sacrificed to idols* in the temple of their gods for it will cause a weaker brother to stumble.
6. In the 10:21 he warns them, 'You cannot drink the Cup of the Lord and the *cup of demons!* You

sacrifice in the New Testament.

⁴⁴ For a biblical understanding of *fornication* and its implications for every believer, both here and in Acts 15:20, read my book, [The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21](#).

cannot partake of the Lord's (Passover) Table and the Table of Demons!' This means that there were Christians who professed belief in Jesus *and* drank the cup of demon gods! What they drank would have been either real blood from an animal sacrifice (to the god or goddess) or a blood substitute (made of wine, honey and flour) to imitate the characteristic of blood.

In chapter eleven Paul is still putting out brush fires, with men looking like women and vice-versa. In 1st Cor. 11:17-22 he comes against them for *how* they came to the Lord's Supper:

'But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you because you come together not for the better, but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper for in your eating each one takes his own supper first and one is hungry and another is drunk. What?! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the congregation of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you!'

Then Paul goes on to speak about the body and blood of Yeshua:

"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Yeshua, in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread (*matza*) and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.'"

"In the same way He took the cup also *after* supper, saying, 'This cup is the New Covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'"

"For as often as you eat this *matza* and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's *death* until He comes. Therefore, whoever eats the *matza* or drinks the cup of the Lord in an *unworthy manner* shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord, but a man *must examine himself* and *in so doing he is to eat* of the *matza* and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself *if he does not judge the body rightly*. For this reason many among you are weak and sick and a number sleep, but if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged, but when we are judged we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world." (1st Cor. 11:23-32)

1st Cor. 11:23-32 says very little of what the Lord's Supper is, but it does say that we should not come to it in an unworthy manner. If we do we are guilty of not taking His body and blood for the reason that it was given—to cleanse and deliver us from sin and to transform us to be like Yeshua. Paul says to examine ourselves and to judge ourselves.

What Paul is saying is that *before* we take the Lord's Supper, if there is sin in our life we must separate ourselves from it and confess it to Yeshua and ask Him to forgive us and to deliver us from it. If we have bitterness in our heart from pain caused by someone we are to tell Him about it and ask Him to heal us that we might be able to walk in His forgiveness and love. *Now*, we may take the Lord's Supper, *relying* upon His blood and His body to free us from sin and make us like Him. This is the 'negative side' of the Lord's Supper, which most are aware of. We are to examine and judge ourselves. His body and blood are made the real food of Passover to us, by His Spirit. Those who are hungry, hungry for His righteousness, in need of the *Matza* and wine of Heaven, may confidently come in faith toward Him and know that they will be strengthened.

What does it mean to 'proclaim His death' every time we take the Lord's Supper (vv. 24-26)? It means

that we are to die to self so His Life can move unhindered within us. This is part of judging oneself. We are to enter into His death, by faith, that we might die to ourselves and be as consecrated to our Father as Yeshua was. We ‘proclaim His death’ by dying to self and if we take the Lord’s Supper thinking that we don’t have to die to self, that we can walk in our own carnal sins, we take the Supper to our own condemnation. Yeshua did not die to sanctify our carnality, rebellion, stubbornness, sins of pleasure and pride.

On the other hand, if one feels unworthy and refuses to take the Lord’s Supper because of it, they are rejecting Jesus and His body and blood (death) for them. No one is ‘worthy enough’ to take the Lord’s Supper! It’s only for those who know their lack of worth before the most holy God and realize that this is what the Father has given to us to make us worthy. The attitude of ‘unworthiness’ that refuses to accept what God has done for him is really one of inverted pride. *It refuses to believe God and trust in the sacrifice of Yeshua, but in self.* It says, ‘I will make myself acceptable to God, my way,’ but we can never get ‘good enough’ to take the body and blood of Yeshua.

The positive side of the body and blood of Yeshua has another major aspect to it, which all stems from the symbolism of the First Passover, Paul making mention of it, but not explaining it. It is the word *remembrance*, and from this flows the Passover Table fellowship, and also, the attitude with which God wants us to eat of the body and blood of His Son.

Remembrance

As the Lord Yeshua passed the *matza* around the Table that night of Passover, Paul says that the meaning was to eat it in ‘remembrance of Him.’ Yeshua also said this (Lk. 22:19). The very next verse (1st Cor. 11:25) declares that the wine pictures His blood and that we are to drink it in ‘remembrance of Him.’ We do this in remembrance of His death—this was the *price* for our freedom.

In Hebrew the concept ‘to remember’ means, ‘to *experience* the event by going back to it.’ This is the reason for the Feasts of Israel, especially the Passover. Ex. 13:8 says,

“And on that day you will explain to your son, ‘This is because of what Yahveh did *for me when I came out of Egypt.*’”

We Jews still say this today when we celebrate the Passover even though we obviously weren’t part of the group that left under Moses. When we sit at our Passover Table we envision ourselves at that First Passover in Egypt. This is seen from the above passage where God commands us to say that we came out of Egypt. As believers in Messiah, both Jews and Gentiles, we also see ourselves at the Second Passover with Yeshua and all the Apostles, with all believers present. That’s quite a gathering!

Corporate identity is a term that theologians use to express the body of Christ: past, present and future, and we who believe in Yeshua are part of that body. Hebrews 7:4-10 states that Melchizedek was a greater priest than the Levitical Priesthood (or the High Priest Aaron), and uses the concept of corporate identity. The writer says that Levy *was in the loins of his Father Abram* when Abram gave a tithe to Melchizedek and Melchizedek blessed Abram (Gen. 14:18-20). Therefore, Hebrews tells us that, without a doubt, the lesser is blessed by the greater. Levy, in a biblical corporate identity sense, was tithing to a greater priesthood even though he hadn’t been born yet. Corporate identity allows us to consider Levy doing this even though the Levitical Priesthood wouldn’t come into existence until after the First Passover 400 years later.

Passover is God’s yearly rehearsal for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, which is a Passover (Rev. 19:6-9). The BrideGroom and His Bride are sitting down at His (Passover) wedding Table. It’s a covenant of marriage for His Bride; the body of Messiah, for Passover is the basis of the covenant that God has

with Israel. That's why it's so important that we are totally dedicated to Yeshua when we take His body and His blood, and all time thereafter. We know that as we eat the Passover *matza* and wine that we are eating and drinking God the Son and becoming like Him. This is not magic, but the real work of the Holy Spirit. This is how Yeshua can marry us, for in our earthly state, we are not able for God the Son to marry us. He is sinless and we are still in our mortal bodies sinning, but as we become like Him in this lifetime, and are finalized or glorified to be like Him on Judgment Day, He is able to marry us because He will be marrying 'after His own kind' (Gen. 6:20; 7:14).

All the creatures that were created could only marry/mate after their own kind: Man with Woman, an eagle with an eagle, a lion with a lioness, etc., and so in order for God the Son to have a mate, that mate would have to be like Him. This is the miracle of His Life transforming blood.

The original seven day Creation is a picture of the heavenly Creation. A wife for Adam came from the side of Adam, and so a wife for Messiah came from the blood of His pierced side. Yeshua's side was pierced and His blood and water came out unto the Earth (from which Man was created), to form His Bride, Israel. Man was created from the dust of the Earth, and now any 'dust' that believes in Yeshua is effected by His life-giving and transforming blood and water. The blood is for cleansing, sanctification and transformation and the water for eternal life. The reality is that our nature, Adamic, will one day be made like the nature of Yeshua—perfect, incorruptible human deity, for Yeshua is the glorified God-Man now.

As we truly eat of His flesh and drink of His blood, which is real food and drink, pictured in the *matza* and the wine, we call upon the Holy Spirit to bring into our presence the reality of His great sacrifice, which is pictured in the Second Passover with Yeshua and all that it implies for us. His death means that we enter into it, by faith, dying to ourselves, which is what the Passover Lamb and baptism are all about:

'What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that Grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?! Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Messiah Yeshua have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Messiah was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life! For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin, for he who has died is freed from sin.' (Rom. 6:1-7)

'Death to self' is the basic concept behind both Passover, the Lord's Supper and baptism. This is a death that brings freedom. Baptism is done at the beginning of our walk with Yeshua, and Passover is done once a year. The mini-Passover (the Lord's Supper) can be done twice a day (Ex. 29:38-46), and in practice can be done anytime, and as many times during the day as one is led of the Lord to do it.

Table Fellowship

When anyone in the ancient Middle East would eat with anyone else, even an enemy, they were now bound to be like blood brothers. This is how powerful table fellowship or eating together is. It's a sign of the strongest possible friendship. At the Passover Table we have God the Father in Yeshua (who is God the Son), and Israel sitting down and becoming friends. This is the New Covenant given to the House of Israel and the House of Judah, as the prophet Jeremiah spoke of (31:31-34). God did not make the New Covenant for Gentiles, but only for the Houses of Israel and Judah. The Gentiles, though, have been invit-

ed into the New Covenant by God. Isaiah prophesied, but it was Yeshua speaking, who said:

“And now says Yahveh, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him, for I am honored in the sight of Yahveh, and My God is My strength! He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the Tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel...I will also make You a Light to the nations (Gentiles) so that My salvation may reach to the ends of the Earth!’” (Is. 49:5-6; see also 42:6)

We who were enemies of God, as the Apostle Paul says, are now His friends (Rom. 5:8) because of the blood and body of the Passover Lamb. Yeshua makes it possible for God the Father and us to be friends because of His Passover sacrifice. The God of Israel is our Friend. If we have any need He will meet it. That’s the nature of friendship.

Rejoice! The Biblical Attitude for the Lord’s Supper

I have seen many people ‘prepare’ for the Lord’s Supper as though they were going to have to eat two pounds of sand. This is not the way we should come to the Table. In Ex. 12:14 Yahveh explains what the proper attitude for Passover, and therefore the mini-Passover, must be:

‘And this day will be for you a day to remember (and enter into) and *you must celebrate it*, a Feast (celebration) to Yahveh for all your generations, an eternal decree. *You must celebrate the Feast!*’

The Passover is to be celebrated in honor of Yahveh and what He has done, not how we might feel over our sins that drag us down. Because of what He has done our sins are forgiven and we are set free from them! *That* is cause for tremendous celebration! The word *celebrate* means ‘to dance, to reel about, to be giddy and to rejoice,’ to rejoice mightily! The picture that best captures the emotional reality that God desires for us to have at the Passover or the Lord’s Supper is seen on the face of the Hebrews when they watched their enemies, the Egyptian Army who wanted to murder them, engulfed in the Red Sea. Initially, complete dumbfounded amazement. Can you imagine having seen that?! Then slowly, grasping what had just happened, amazement gave way to incredible Joy! Look what the Lord has done for us!!!

The Psalmist rejoices in Yahveh and says that Passover is one of the *great and mighty deeds* of Yahveh (Ps. 77:12-20; 114:1-8). *Salvation* (redemption) from Egypt is an unbelievable act that Yahveh did for His beloved Israel. *Creation* is the other mighty deed of Yahveh (Ps. 115), but the sacrifice of His Son, Yeshua, is *the* greatest and mightiest deed of Yahveh, and it combines both creation and redemption through it. This is the center of the universe and God’s Truth.

We have been set free from our enemies: sin, disease, Satan and eternal death, and God has given us His divine Nature! This is creative miracle and a revelation of God’s heart for us. Who would give up their son for the likes of humanity?! What kind of a God is the God of Israel?! How to respond to all this? God commands us to rejoice, sing and dance unto Him! This is the biblical attitude for observing Passover, and taking the *matza* and the wine (the Lord’s Supper). With this understanding of ‘remembrance,’

1. women can picture themselves next to Miryam as the Lord *reveals* Himself to her at the Tomb.
2. Men can be at the Passover Table and *feel* the Lord’s friendship as He gives them the *matza*.
3. We can ask to be at the tree where Yeshua is dying, our hearts breaking, standing shoulder to shoulder with the Apostles and the women, and feeling His pain as His life slowly ebbs out of Him.

4. We can also be at the Tomb and rejoice at His resurrection. The Holy Spirit desires to reveal all these things to us and more (e.g. that we can also picture ourself at the First Passover and the Red Sea).

Matza—the Crucified Lord

God has placed many word pictures within the *Tanach* (Old Testament) that speak of Yeshua. There are few greater than Isaiah 53:5, which gives us an extraordinary picture of Messiah Yeshua as the crucified One:

‘He was *pierced* through for our open rebellion and He was *crushed* for our perverse heart. On Him (Yeshua) lies the punishment that brings us *Shalom* (Peace with Papa God) and through His bruises (*stripes* or scourging) we are healed.’ (my translation)

For those of you who haven’t seen or tasted store-bought *matza* yet, it’s a thin cracker with small holes in it and black streaks on it and tastes like the cardboard box that it comes in. The holes or piercings are done so as not to have one big ‘heat bubble’ while it’s being baked and the black streaks are fire marks.

In the days of Yeshua the *matza* was also pierced through and streaked, but the texture was a lot more like bread without yeast. *Matza* made with water, salt and olive oil is supple and has a wonderful taste and nutritional quality to it. (It can also be more cracker-like, but it tastes great.)

Yeshua was literally *pierced through*. Not only were His hands and His feet pierced through, but also His side (Jn. 19:34). Isaiah said that our open rebellion to God was the reason for this: ‘He was pierced through for our open rebellion.’

The *matza* was once hard kernels of wheat or barley. Those kernels had to be *crushed* in order for it to be baked and made bread to eat. Yeshua was crushed at His crucifixion because of our perverse and twisted hearts. The punishment we deserve is crucifixion, but He took our place that we might have *shalom* with His Father.

The brown/black markings on the *matza* are known as stripes or bruises, which come from the fire. Yeshua’s back was lashed open by the Roman whips until His flesh was bruised and torn in pieces: ‘and by His stripes (bruises) we are healed.’

The *matza* that we eat for the Lord’s Supper, coming from the Passover Table, is a perfect picture of our crucified Messiah. This, too, is why Yahveh instituted *matza* for the First Passover.

The Third Cup

Wine comes from grapes being *crushed*. This pictures Yeshua being crushed so that we could drink His blood, pictured in the wine. The Rabbis say the wine for Passover must be red, for it reflects the sacrificial blood of the Passover lamb.

Wine in the Bible is a symbol of both of death (sacrifice) and life. Psalm 104:15 states, ‘and wine which makes man’s heart glad.’ Wine is not a part of the biblical commandment in Exodus, but Yeshua uses this Jewish tradition to form one half of the Lord’s Supper. This is one reason why it’s important to understand the Hebraic perspective of our faith and not throw out all traditions.

When Yeshua came upon the scene 2,000 years ago everything was already set up for Him by His Father 1,470 years earlier in the First Passover. In Yeshua’s time, as the meal was ending, He identified Himself

who is freedom (redemption), with the *matza* and the wine, which already pictured freedom from slavery, thus overlapping and intensifying the picture of the Passover *matza* and wine.

Things to know for the Lord's Supper

Judge yourself and die to self: If there is sin in your life ask Yeshua to forgive you and to take both it, and the desire to do it, away. Hebrews 12:1-3 speaks of the weight that so easily besets us: sins of pleasure, pride and sins that seduce and entice. The sin that so easily entangles or besets us ensnares us and trips us up so that we can't fully walk with Yeshua as He wants us to.

If you feel bitterness from relationships and injustices done to you, ask Yeshua to heal you so that you can forgive and love that person, as He has forgiven and loves you. Unforgiveness is bitter enslavement.

Now you're ready to take the body and blood of our Lord Yeshua. The traditional Jewish blessing Yeshua said that night is evident from the words He used: 'the fruit of the vine:'

'But I say to you, I will not drink of this *fruit of the vine* from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom' (Mt. 26:29, cf. Mk. 14:25).

The term 'fruit of the vine' is taken from the Greek and is a direct quote from the traditional Hebrew blessing to God for wine. Because of this phrase we know that Yeshua said the traditional Jewish blessing, thanking His Father for the *fruit of the vine* (wine). Understanding this, we realize that He also blessed His Father with the traditional Jewish blessing for the bread (*matza*). Interestingly enough, these traditional Jewish blessings refer to Yeshua as the Wine and the true Bread (*Matza*) from Heaven.⁴⁵ This is what Yeshua said that night in thanking His Father for the wine, and for His blood, which is heavenly wine:

'Blessed are You, Yahveh our God, eternal King, Creator of the *fruit of the vine*.'

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן.⁴⁶

The traditional Jewish blessing thanking God concerning *matza* (or bread) that Yeshua spoke that night was:

'Blessed are You, Yahveh our God, eternal King, the One who causes bread to come forth from the ground.'

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם המוציא לחם מן הארץ.⁴⁷

In turning to God realize these things:

1. Remember! We can ask the Holy Spirit to help us to go back to the First Passover and the slavery before it. We see what God did for us as He brought Pharaoh to his knees, killing the firstborn of Egypt and parting the Red Sea for us, and drowning all the Egyptians who wanted to murder us.
2. The Second Passover: We can ask the Holy Spirit to help us to be at the Table with Yeshua: We desire to feel the warmth of His friendship and His love and to know that He is pleased with us because of what He has done for us and our love for, and faith in Him.
 - a. We can ask the Holy Spirit to help us to be there at His death. We can stand at the tree and feel

⁴⁵ Yeshua, the true Bread from Heaven, has no sin in Him. The bread that Yeshua speaks of about Himself in John is *matza*, sinless bread (John 6:32-33, 35, 41, 48-51, 53-58).

⁴⁶ *Baruch ah'ta Yahveh eh'lo'haynu melech ha'olam bo'ray p'ri ha'gafen.*

⁴⁷ *Baruch ah'ta Yahveh eh'lo'haynu melech ha'olam ha'motzi leh'chem min ha'ar'retz.*

His pain as He took *our* sins upon Himself and died in our place, and know that our sins have been forgiven by Him and His great sacrifice.

- b. We can ask the Holy Spirit to help us to see Yeshua alive from the dead that day! We can rejoice with Miryam and the Apostles! The Lord Yeshua is risen! *All* our enemies are defeated! Not the least of which is our sinful self, and know that one day we will be glorified like Him.

A Place Setting for Elijah

At every traditional Passover Table there is a place setting for Elijah. Food is placed on his plate and wine is poured into his glass. Why? Because the Jewish people believe that Elijah would come before the Messiah. This was not just a rabbinic understanding, but from the Lord Himself:

‘Behold! I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of Yahveh! He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their sons, and the hearts of the sons to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the Land with a curse.’ (Mal. 4:5-6)

This is why the disciples of Yeshua asked Him about Elijah:

“‘Why is it that the Scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ And He said to them, ‘Elijah does first come and restore all things, and yet, how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.’” (Mark 9:11-13)

At this point in the Passover ceremony Max will allow the children to leave the Table and go to the front door. They’ll open it and shout as loud as they can, ‘Elijah! Come quickly!’ The Jewish people realize that the prophet must come before Messiah, and so they want Elijah to come to herald the coming of the Messiah. Why at Passover? Because Passover speaks of freedom and what better time for the Savior to come then at the time of our freedom from Egypt?

The Fourth Cup of Wine — The Cup of Praise

The fourth cup of wine praises Yahveh for His *completed* work of redemption, as seen in the First Passover and at the Red Sea. The Hebrew people that came out of Egypt were *completely saved* from Egyptian slavery.

Just about every believer who does the Passover drinks from this fourth cup, but there’s a problem with this. Yeshua didn’t! Matthew 26:29, which takes place immediately after Yeshua drank from the third cup that He said was His blood, has Yeshua saying, ‘I tell you, *I will not drink this fruit of the vine* again until the day I drink new wine with you in the Kingdom of My Father.’

Traditional Jews drink from the fourth cup because God’s work of redemption (salvation) from Egyptian slavery was completed at the First Passover and the Red Sea. We shouldn’t, though, because our redemption won’t be complete until we stand before the Lord on Judgment Day and become like our Messiah; glorified. *That’s why Yeshua didn’t drink of the fourth cup* that night—we are not yet like Him. Before that Day we have the heavenly promise sealed by the death of Yeshua and the Holy Spirit within. Our glorification is more certain than the rising of the sun in the east tomorrow.

The fourth cup symbolizes *the completed work of redemption for Israel in Messiah*. This is what is meant

when He said on the tree, ‘It is finished.’ (John 19:30) Yeshua will drink that fourth cup of thanksgiving with us in the New Jerusalem, when we are glorified like Him. *This*, to the *praise* of Papa God who has wrought this great redemption.

That’s why Yeshua didn’t drink from the fourth cup on the night on the Second Passover. He will, though, with us on the Third Passover, what Revelation calls the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6-9).

Another aspect of why Yeshua didn’t drink the fourth cup is that God is still calling people to the Second Passover Table. It’s as though *time* has stood still for 2,000 years and has allowed us, who weren’t literally at that Second Passover Table with Yeshua, to sit down and eat of His body and blood that we might be part of the Kingdom of God. This time period will end on the Day of Judgment when all those who have really eaten of Messiah Yeshua will have the wrath of God pass-over them, but those who haven’t will spend eternity in Hell Fire.

Hallel—Psalms of Praise Sung

At the Passover meal it’s traditional to sing psalms of praise to Yahveh.⁴⁸ In Matthew 26:30 it states, ‘After singing the *Hallel* (hymns), they went out to the Mount of Olives.’ *Hallel* means *praise* in Hebrew. *Hallelu* means, ‘you praise!’ It’s in the imperative form (a command). *Halleluyah* means (you) praise Yahveh! ‘Yah’ is a shortened form of Yahveh. In Exodus 15:2, in this most ancient Hebrew poetry-song, the Song of the (Red) Sea, it reads from the Hebrew, ‘Yah is my strength and my song and He has become my salvation!’⁴⁹

Psalms 113–118 are known as the *Hallel* and are traditionally sung or read at the Passover and that’s what the reference to ‘hymns’ refers to (in many English Bibles for Mt. 26:30), although one would never realize this from the English word alone. The Lord Yeshua and the Apostles sung those Psalms that night, lifting up the God of Israel as the Creator of the universe and the Redeemer of Israel.

The Lord Yeshua and His Apostles went out that night to Gethsemane and He desired that His friends stay awake, ‘watch’ and pray with Him. Exodus 12:42 states that the Sons of Israel weren’t to fall asleep on this night because Yahveh had ‘kept watch’ for them that night so long ago in Egypt:

‘Because Yahveh kept *vigil* that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all Israel is to keep *vigil* to honor Yahveh for the generations to come.’ (Ex. 12:42; see also Dt. 16:9-12)

The Hebrew word *shmurim* שְׁמֹרִים is translated as ‘*vigil*’ (NIV, NRSV and HCSB, while the NKJV has ‘solemn observance’) and comes from the verb that means, ‘to keep, (to) *watch*.’⁵⁰ The Scripture is saying that the night the Passover lamb is eaten is a night ‘of watching’ or staying awake all night. Yahveh commanded this because He ‘kept watch’ that night to bring Israel out of the Kingdom of Egypt. Every one of the Hebrews stayed awake that night *in anticipation of leaving Egypt*. God also commanded Israel to stay awake on this night in the future, as a *remembrance* because it symbolized that they, too, were there in Egypt with their Fathers who left Egypt at dawn. At the First Passover, no Hebrew slept that night...they

⁴⁸ Psalms 113-114 are sung after the second cup is drunk and Psalms 115-118 are sung after the fourth cup is drunk (along with Ps. 136 and other songs). This order may not have applied in Yeshua’s day, but we know that He and His disciples sang at least some of them at this time, and most likely, all of them (Ps. 113-118).

⁴⁹ The name Yah is used for Yahveh about 50 times in Scriptures, about half of which are part of Hallelu-Yah, with the rest standing alone.

⁵⁰ Benjamin Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), p. 727.

had to be ready to leave the Kingdom of Darkness quickly.

The Apostles should have stayed up all night long. Matthew specifically records that Peter, James and John fell asleep and broke the commandment. They also failed Yeshua, who had asked them to stay awake with Him and pray:

“Then Yeshua came with them to a place called Gethsemane and said to the disciples, ‘Sit here while I go and pray over there.’ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.’” (Mt. 26:36-38)

“He went a little farther and fell on His face and prayed, saying, ‘Oh My Father, if it is possible, let this Cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’ Then He came to His disciples and found them sleeping and said to Peter, ‘What? *Could you not watch with Me one hour?* Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’” (Mt. 26:39-41)

“Again, a second time He went away and prayed...and He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again and prayed the third time saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.’” (Mt. 26:42-46)

The Lord, even among His closest friends, was alone in His final hours of agony and pain, yet it didn't deter Him from setting His heart and mind to do the will of His Father. He not only *kept watch* all that night, He put into practice what that night meant: death to the old way of life so that the new life could come forth. Now, He is able to nurture those who are also walking alone because they are following Him with all their heart.

If the Apostles had known that Passover night would require the death of Yeshua they would have forced themselves to stay awake, as the Hebrew slaves had done that night more than 1,400 earlier. The Apostles, though, thought this Passover would be like all the other Passovers that they had observed with Him. They were wrong, and that speaks directly to us that this Passover may not be like all the others before.

Gethsemane means ‘oil press.’ This is where the olives were crushed by a massive stone rolling over them, to squeeze the oil out from them. It was here that Yeshua determined to do the will of His Father, saying, ‘Father, if You are willing, remove this Cup from Me...yet, not My will, but Yours be done.’ (Lk. 22:42) Because Yeshua was willing to surrender His life and be crushed, the Oil of the Holy Spirit that was within Him as God the Son is available to all those who call upon His Name.⁵¹

There are ‘only’ three Passovers: the First in Egypt, the Second in Jerusalem, and the third in the New Jerusalem. At each Passover, Yahveh moves in such a way that He never did before nor will again:

1. At the First Passover we see the death of the firstborn sons of Egypt and the sparing of Israel's firstborn sons because of the blood of a lamb, and the freeing of Israel from slavery to Pharaoh.
2. At the Second Passover there is the death of *the* Firstborn Son of God, Yeshua, and again the sparing of Israel's *firstborn* sons (which we all become in Yeshua) from Satan's Kingdom.⁵²

⁵¹ John 16:7: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you, but if I depart I will send Him to you.”

3. At the Third Passover, because of the blood of the Passover Lamb, we have the wrath of God pass-over us and we are transformed into the Bride of Messiah, to the praise of Abba El (Papa God), who has brought this great creative-redemption to His people Israel at the cost of His Son.

Passover and the Gentile

Passover is also for the Gentile believer, for he is a part of Israel (Rom. 11:11f.; Eph. 2:11f.). Celebrating Passover glorifies the Lord even and especially *after* His death and resurrection and is still a picture of things to come (the Marriage Supper of the Lamb). More Christians each year are experiencing the Passover in their homes and congregations.

Church history records that *all Christians celebrated Passover* until about 120 AD. Then, what would later become the Roman Catholic Church (in Rome) substituted Easter for it. Easter is a pagan ‘holy’ day that commemorates the resurrection of the god *Tamuz* by his mother-wife *Ishtar*. ‘Easter’ is just the Anglicized name for *Ishtar*, an ancient pagan goddess. Well past 400 AD many Christians were still celebrating Passover. Why did the Roman Catholic Church change it? Because they didn’t want to associate with anything ‘Jewish,’ even Jewish believers, because of persecution of the Jews by the Roman Empire. Little did they realize or care that what made the Jewish people ‘Jewish’ was their observance of the ways of Yahveh. Passover was given to the Jewish people by God; the Jewish people didn’t make it up. In 1st Cor. 5:6-8 Paul admonishes the Corinthian Christians to keep Passover: ‘Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?’ (v. 6) This was nothing new to the ancient peoples. All Gentiles knew that a little leaven leavened the whole lump of dough, but then Paul went on to say,

‘Therefore, *purge out* the old leaven that you may be a new lump (loaf), since *you* truly are unleavened.’ (1st Cor. 5:7)

This would only have meaning to them if they understood the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread. No other ancient or modern people has a feast in which yeast and leavened bread is forbidden. Paul goes on to say, ‘For indeed, Christ our Passover *was* sacrificed for us.’ (1st Cor. 5:8) Indeed, by the time First Corinthians was written (51–52 A.D.) the Messiah had already been sacrificed more than 20 years earlier. Paul then writes, ‘Therefore, *let us celebrate the Feast*.’ This phrase, in the present ongoing tense, reminds one of God commanding Israel to celebrate the Passover forever. (Ex. 12:14) Then Paul finishes by saying to celebrate the Passover, ‘not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.’ This is the very attitude that the ancient Hebrew were to walk in for their Passover—holiness. (Passover is celebrated on the first day of the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread, and so when one speaks of Passover, it’s understood that the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a part of it.)

Measures against the Jewish people, wherever they lived, whether in Israel, Greece, Egypt or Rome, grew because the Jewish people in Judah rebelled against the Roman Empire in 66 AD. In order not to be mistaken for a Jew, the Gentile believers in Rome began changing things like the Passover and the 7th day Sabbath (to Sunday) and threw out the Law of Moses. Before the rebellion Luke mentions one repressive measure by the Rome Empire against the Jews in Acts 18:2, about 50 AD It reveals the attitude of the

⁵² Hebrews states we’re all firstborn sons: “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the *firstborn* who are registered in Heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Yeshua the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:22-24)

Roman Emperor Claudius toward the Jewish people in Rome:

‘And Paul found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontius, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome.’

When the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman Army in 70 AD many Jews around the Roman Empire rioted in their cities. The Temple was the heart of the Jewish people, as you might well imagine. Many repressive Roman measures would be enacted against the Jews after that.

Samuele Bacchiocchi, in his book, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, notes that the celebration of Passover in Christian communities continued for hundreds of years after the resurrection of Yeshua, even though the Roman Catholic Church snuffed it out wherever it could. Here are two excerpts from Epiphanius, the bishop historian who lived from 315-403 AD:

‘The controversy arose (literally, ‘was stirred up’) after the exodus of the bishops of the circumcision, 135 AD (of which there were 15), and it has continued *until our time*.’⁵³

Bacchiocchi remarks:

‘The bishop makes specific reference to the 15 *Jewish* Christian bishops who administered the Church of Jerusalem up to 135 AD and who up to that time had practiced the Quartodeciman Passover⁵⁴ since they based themselves on a document known as the Apostolic Constitutions, where the following rule is given:’

‘You shall not change the calculation of the time, but you must celebrate it at the same time as your brethren *who came out from the circumcision*. *With them observe the Passover*.’⁵⁵

The phrase, ‘as your brethren who came out from the circumcision’ speaks of the Jews who believed in Yeshua. They continued to honor the Lord through the Passover, not Easter. The historian Eusebius, 260-340 AD also speaks of the Passover being celebrated by Christians in the second century and the conflict within the Roman Catholic Church over it. Bishop Victor of Rome, 189-199 AD, whose office would later become that of the Pope’s,

‘threatened to excommunicate the recalcitrant Christian communities of the province of Asia *which refused to follow his instruction*’ (to stop celebrating Passover).⁵⁶

This would be the entire Christian communities in Asia Minor (present day Turkey), which would have included all the churches spoken of in chapters two and three of Revelation, and many more churches that Paul had both gone to and had written to because other churches had sprung up in the more than hundred years since Paul and John were there. ‘Asia’ would have also included modern day Syria and Lebanon, as well as points east:

‘Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus and representative of the Asian churches, strongly advocated the traditional (biblical) Passover date of the 14th of *Nisan*, commonly called ‘Quartodeciman Passover.’ Polycrates, *claiming to possess the genuine Apostolic tradi-*

⁵³ Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath To Sunday* (Rome, Italy: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), p. 161. Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses* 70, 10, PG 42, 355-356.

⁵⁴ This word speaks of the Passover sacrifice on the 14th day of the biblical month and not at the time of Easter. *Quartodeciman* means four (*quarto*) and ten (*deciman*), hence, 14 Aviv (Nisan).

⁵⁵ Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath To Sunday*, p. 161. PG 42, 357-358

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

tion transmitted to him by the Apostles Philip and John, refused to be frightened into submission by the threats of Victor of Rome.’⁵⁷

Quartodeciman breaks down into ‘quarter’ (fourth or four) and decimal (ten). This four and ten equals fourteen, the day that God commanded Israel to sacrifice the Passover on: the 14th day of the first Hebrew month. That’s why the controversy was labeled the ‘*Quartodeciman* Passover.’ The Roman Catholic Church celebrated Easter at the traditional pagan time of Easter Sunday, which has nothing to do with Passover. God commanded in Ex. 1:6;

‘You must keep it (the Passover lamb) until the fourteenth day of the same month; then the whole assembly of the Congregation of Israel is to sacrifice it at twilight.’

Bacchiocchi further writes of many others that kept the Passover, saying that,

“Athanasius of Alexandria mentions the ‘Syrians, Cilicians and the Mesopotamians’ as observant of the ‘*Quartodeciman* Passover.’”⁵⁸

Gentile Christian observance of Passover was very prevalent and not confined to just one locality: all of Turkey, Syria, the Middle East, Iran and Iraq, etc., kept it despite the threats of Rome, and as we saw with the Apostle Paul, all Christianity (i.e. those in Rome and Egypt and Greece, etc.), kept the Passover in the days of the Apostles. This is confirmed by Jerome and Severian:

‘Jerome paraphrases a statement from Irenaeus’ work (176 AD) on the *Paschal Controversy*, where the latter warns Pope Victor not to break the unity with ‘the many bishops of Asia and the East, who, *with the Jews* celebrated the Passover on the fourteenth day of the new moon.’⁵⁹

‘Severian, Bishop of Gabala’ (400 A.D.) ‘strongly attacks those Christians who still maintained the Jewish Passover ritual.’⁶⁰

This means that as late as the fifth century, Gentile Christians were still celebrating Passover! That’s 400 years after the Resurrection. It hadn’t been done away with, as the Roman Catholic Church teaches and as the Protestant churches unquestioningly accepted in the 1500s. Another bishop adds to the confirmation:

“Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis” (315-403 A.D) “deals extensively with the *Quartodeciman* controversy in his *Adversus haereses* 50 and 70. The Bishop suggests in various instances that the *Quartodeciman* custom, which he calls ‘heresy,’ was *widespread*.”⁶¹

It would take a long time for the Roman Catholic Church to stamp out the God-given observance of Passover among Gentile Christians, so that today, most Christians don’t realize what has been taken away from them by the Church of Rome. There were no large Protestant groups around to vie with the Roman Church then. Protestantism wouldn’t arrive on the scene until the Reformation in Europe around 1500 AD. For all the good they would do, they would still take Rome’s pagan ‘holy days’ with them and anti-Mosaic Law theology.

Rome’s ‘holy’ days are pagan *through and through*, like Easter. The biblical celebration of Passover is the ancient Hebraic heritage for the body of Messiah today, that the Lord by His Spirit is revealing to His people. In Daniel 7:25 it says that Satan’s agent would change the *times* of God, as well as the Law of

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 198-199.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 199, note 97.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 199, note 97. See *De viris Illustribus* 35, NPNE, 2nd, III, p. 370. Jerome lived from 347–420 A.D.

⁶⁰ Ibid., see Gabala’s *Homilia 5 de Pascha*, ed. J.B. Aucher (Venice: 1827), p. 180.

⁶¹ Ibid.

God:

‘And he shall speak great words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High and think *to change times and laws*. And *they* shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.’

That’s exactly what happened with the Roman Catholic Church throwing out Passover and bringing in Easter, a pagan holy day. The reason why Protestant churches celebrate Easter (or the now fashionable ‘Resurrection Sunday’) is because they got it from the Roman Catholic Church and never scrutinized it in the Light of God’s Word. There’s not a single verse in Scripture that authorizes, or even mentions, Easter.

Why Shoud We Celebrate Passover?

On this night Yahveh moved in a way that He would never do again. Whether the First Passover with the Sons of Israel being freed from Egyptian slavery by the blood of the lamb and the death of Egypt’s first-born sons, or the Second Passover where God offers His Lamb, His Firstborn Son Yeshua, to die for us, to free us from slavery to sin, eternal death and the Kingdom of Satan.

Passover is our ancient Hebraic covenant heritage given to us by Yahveh to honor what He has done in setting us free from sin and death by the blood of Yeshua, the Passover Lamb. God commanded it for His people Israel forever—both Jew and Gentile (Ex. 12:14; 1st Cor. 5:6-8), to His glory and praise.

If you are a Gentile believer in Jesus then you have been grafted into the House or the Family of Israel (Rom. 11:11f., and Eph. 2:8f.). You should learn of their, now your, Feasts. You have been adopted into the Family to become like the Family, not that the Family has to become Gentile, which at its root means pagan. It’s not for the House of Israel to celebrate pagan holy days, even if the Name of Jesus has been plastered upon them for 1,900 years. Christmas, Easter, Sunday, Thanksgiving, Halloween and Valentine’s Day are all pagan holy days commemorating various gods and goddesses,⁶² and putting Christ’s name on them doesn’t make them holy for the followers of the Messiah of Israel, nor does it glorify Him.

Passover—A Celebration Of Yahveh’s Salvation

Passover remembers and honors what Yahveh has done in saving Israel from slavery by the blood of the lamb. Passover also reaffirms the covenant that Yahveh had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and paves the way for Yeshua to come as the Passover Lamb of God. God commands us to celebrate His goodness and what He has done for us forever (Ex. 12:14).

The next 3 Feasts all date from Passover, which always falls on 14 *Aviv* (*Nisan* in modern Judaism), the middle of the first lunar month, which means that the moon is full. Biblically, Passover generally refers to the sacrifice of the lamb, but today it speaks of the meal, which is eaten on 15 *Aviv*. The time for the sacrifice of the lamb on 14 *Aviv* would have been about 5:00 PM for the First Passover in Egypt. The eating of the sacrifice didn’t come until that evening, which at darkness begins 15 *Aviv*. The lamb was skinned and roasted, and then eaten in the night of 15 *Aviv*. The 15th of *Aviv* begins the first day of Unleavened Bread (an annual Sabbath, which can fall on any day of the week), the beginning of the seven day Feast of *Matza*.⁶³

⁶² See Alexander Hislop’s classic, [The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop](#) for more on how paganism has infiltrated the Church.

⁶³ Some insights into Exodus 12—the Passover chapter:

In Ex. 12:3 it speaks of taking the lamb and setting it apart for four days until it's sacrificed. This would have made the lamb a beloved pet and so much harder to sacrifice it on the 14th, but this is exactly why God commanded it. It's a picture of our affection and love for Yeshua and how we would feel if we were there watching Him being sacrificed.

In Ex. 12:5 it speaks of the lamb being a one year old male without blemish. This pictures Yeshua being without sin and sacrificed in the prime of His life.

In Ex. 12:6 it speaks of the lamb being slain by the whole community, not that everyone had a knife, but that *everyone had to watch* the lamb being sacrificed. All who would seek salvation must *look* upon Yeshua crucified. They cannot get into the New Jerusalem on the faith of their friends or their parents.

In Ex. 12:7 the blood was to be placed upon the lintel and the two doorposts as a sign to God so that He wouldn't destroy the firstborn son within. A house can picture the face of a man and the blood being placed upon the doorposts can represent his mouth. Drinking the blood of Yeshua is the only way to survive the wrath of God on Judgement Day.

In Ex. 12:8 God commands the three foods for Passover: the lamb, *matza* and (something) bitter. The lamb speaks of Yeshua as the Passover Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29), the Savior of Israel. The *matza* speaks of Yeshua being sinless and humble. The bitter thing speaks of our life of bitter slavery to Satan without God.

In Ex. 12:9 the lamb was to be whole and roasted over the fire, which pictures Yeshua's brutal crucifixion.

In Ex. 12:10 it speaks of not leaving anything of the sacrificed lamb remain until morning (light). Anything left at dawn was to be burned. The lamb was not to be eaten after dawn, but burned up. This speaks of the one-time sacrifice of Messiah Yeshua. It wasn't necessary for Him to be sacrificed in every generation (Heb. 7:27; 9:12).

Ex. 12:11 speaks of wearing sandals and having a staff in one's hand, etc., in order to leave Egypt quickly (see also v. 39). When we are set free from slavery to Satan and his kingdom we're to leave as fast as our (spiritual) feet will carry us.

Ex. 12:12 speaks of God going through Egypt and slaying the firstborn sons of Egypt, as well as passing judgment on the gods of Egypt. The gods of Egypt were considered the greatest gods in the world at that time because Egypt was the greatest nation, but the God of the Hebrew slaves revealed that He was greater. All the plagues of Egypt were aimed at the Egyptian pantheon of gods. Pharaoh was supposed to be the incarnation of the sun god, and so the ninth plague of darkness for three days showed that his power was no match for the God of the Hebrew slaves.

Ex. 12:13, 21-24 speak of the blood on the doorposts and the lintel being a sign to God that the firstborn was protected or covered by the blood of the lamb. The firstborn are the 'cream of the crop' and they represent all the others (the entire nation). The blood of the Passover Lamb of God is needed over the soul of a person so that on Judgment Day the Lord will *pass-over* him and not send him to Hell, but bring him into everlasting life.

Ex. 12:14 speaks of the day (the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread when the Passover meal is eaten) as being a memorial forever, something that was to be reenacted every year at this time. It was on this day (at midnight) that God killed all of Egypt's firstborn sons, and it was on this day, a few hours after that, most likely at dawn, that Israel left Egypt (see also Num. 33:3-4).

Ex. 12:15 commands that we eat *matza* for the seven days of the Feast. Anyone eating leaven products during the Feast was 'cut off' from Israel, a form of punishment more severe than death (if actual death wasn't the punishment). To be *cut off* from one's people was tantamount to losing one's identity—their own soul. Also, the verse speaks of removing the leaven from our houses *on* the first day. The Rabbis say that all of it must be removed by the afternoon of 14 Aviv at the latest, but the first day is 15 Aviv, so a tiny portion of leavened bread for each person should be kept until *after* the taking of the Lord's flesh and blood on the night of 15 Aviv because only after eating and drinking of our Lamb are we cleansed from our sins, pictured in the last piece of leavened bread being burned or flushed down the toilet.

Ex. 12:16 reveals that the first and last days of the Feast are Sabbaths. There is to be a holy assembly on those days and no work is to be done on those days except for the making of food for the Feast. The first day pictures us eating of Yeshua and leaving the Kingdom of Satan. The seventh day is holy perfection and pictures our walk on this Earth with Yeshua.

Ex. 12:17 speaks of Israel leaving Egypt on the first day of the Feast. This was 15 Aviv (Num. 33:3).

Ex. 12:18-19 speak of the Feast beginning on the evening of 14 Aviv and going to 21 Aviv. What this means is that the Feast begins at the *end* of 14 Aviv when 15 Aviv comes. This is supported by a reference to the Day of Atonement *beginning* in the evening of the ninth day of the seventh month, when actually, God speaks of it being only on the tenth day (Lev. 23:26-27, 32). The Feast of Unleavened bread is only seven days, not eight days, as it might seem to be from a 14 to a 21 Aviv inclusive counting, and yet, God could also be saying that the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, done on the 14th, 'begins' the Feast in a sense that it is most important part of the procedure for the Feast.

Ex. 12:26-27 speak of the Passover ceremony being a time of training for the sons of Israel in asking their fathers what the Passover sacrifice and meal, etc., means. *Every year* as we celebrate and remember the Passover we are being trained by our Father and His Spirit as to the meaning of the Sacrifice of our Messiah.

Ex. 12:40-42, 51 speak of the time that Israel was in Egypt and that God brought them out 430 years later on the same day that they had gone into Egypt. It was to be a night observed by everyone every year and it speaks of both the perfect timing of Yahveh in our lives, and also, that we, like Yeshua, are to stay up on this night to symbolize our remaining *alert in the Spirit* (unlike the five foolish virgins; Mt. 25:1f.). This night symbolized the entire coming year and our being *alert* means that the Lord can move upon us in a way that He might never have done before and might never do again.

Ex. 12:43-45, 47-48 explains *who* of non-Israel was eligible for keeping Passover and that those who were eligible and wanted to keep it had to be circumcised. This has raised concern among some Gentiles who think that they should be physically circumcised, but with Acts 15:1-21; 1st Cor. 7:17-19 and Gal. 1:3 declaring otherwise, it must not be. The circumcision made without hands (Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11) allows the Gentile (and the Jew!) to partake of Messiah's Passover. See [Gentile Circumcision?](#) for why the Gentile must not be physically covenantally circumcised.

Ex. 12:46 commands Israel not to break any of the bones of the lamb. This points to the body of Yeshua. Although He was beaten beyond recognition and then crucified, not one of His bones was broken.

Ex. 12:49 speaks of there being one law for the native-born Israeli and the stranger. This is a powerful Scripture for the Gentile, leading him to walk in all of the laws of the Torah (the Law of Moses) *that apply to him*. See [The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21](#) for why the Lord wants all believers to walk out their faith in Him through all the laws and rules of Moses that apply to us.

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