

Passover: A Time for Redemption



Passover E-Book

Table of Contents

The Meaning of Passover	3
Passover FAQ	9
A Guide to Celebrating Passover in Your Home	15
Passover Recipes	20
The Removal of Leaven	26
The Origin of the Afikomen	27
Why We Eat Horseradish at Passover	29
Firstfruits of the Resurrection	31



Jesus the Messiah celebrated the Seder with His disciples. Join us as we take a quick tour through a traditional Passover seder and highlight those points that are especially meaningful to believers in Jesus.

Want to celebrate Passover with us? [Click here](#) to find a Messiah in the Passover presentation in your area!

The removal of leaven

Before the beginning of the Passover, all leaven, which is a symbol of sin (1 Cor. 5:6-8), must be removed from the Jewish home. The house is cleaned from top to bottom and anything containing leaven is removed. Then, the evening before the Passover, the father of the house takes the traditional cleaning implements: a feather, a wooden spoon, and a bag, and searches the house for any specks of leaven which might have been missed (my mother used to leave it on top of the refrigerator so my father shouldn't spend all night hunting!).

Washing the hands

Once the leaven is removed, the family sits around the table and ceremonially washes their hands with a special laver and towel. Jesus also took part in this tradition, but rather than wash his hands, he got up from the table and washed the feet of his disciples, giving us an unparalleled lesson in humility (John 13:2-17).

Lighting the candles

Once the house and the participants are ceremonially clean, the Passover seder can begin. The woman of the house says a blessing and lights



the Passover candles. It is appropriate that the woman brings light into the home, because it was through the woman that the light of the world, Messiah Jesus, came into the world (Gen. 3:15)

Haggadah

Haggadah means "the telling" - the telling of the story of Passover. The story is told in response to four questions asked by the children: why is this night different from all other nights? The father proceeds to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt, reading from a book called "The Haggadah" and using symbols and object lessons in order to keep the attention of the little ones.

The first cup

The seder begins with a blessing recited over the first of four cups: "Blessed art thou, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast created the fruit of the vine." Jesus himself blessed the first cup in Luke 22:17-18.

The second cup

The second cup is to remind us of the Ten Plagues and the suffering of the Egyptians when they hardened their heart to the Lord. In order not to rejoice over the suffering of our enemies (Prov. 24:17), we spill a drop of the fruit of the vine (which is a symbol of joy) as we recite each of the Ten Plagues, thus remembering that our joy is diminished at the suffering of others.

Afikomen

A very curious tradition now takes place. At the table is a bag with three compartments and three pieces of matzah. The middle piece of matzah is taken out, broken, and half is put back into the bag. The other half is wrapped in a linen napkin and hidden, to be taken out later, after the meal.

The seder plate

The rabbis have devised a series of object lessons to keep the attention of the little ones during the Passover seder. These items are tasted by each person, as each is instructed to feel as if they themselves had taken part in the flight from Egypt.



Karpas - greens

The first item taken is the karpas, or greens (usually parsley), which is a symbol of life. The parsley is dipped in salt water, a symbol of tears, and eaten, to remind us that life for our ancestors was immersed in tears.

Beitzah - egg

A roasted egg is on the seder plate to bring to mind the roasted daily temple sacrifice that no longer can be offered because the temple no longer stands. In the very midst of the Passover Seder, the Jewish people are reminded that they have no sacrifice to make them righteous before God.

Maror - bitter herb

This is usually ground horseradish, and enough is eaten (with Motza) to bring a tear to the eyes. We cannot appreciate the sweetness of redemption unless we first experience for ourselves the bitterness of slavery.

Charoset

Charoset is a sweet mixture of chopped apples, chopped nuts, honey, cinnamon, and a little sweet kosher wine (kosher for Passover) just for color! This sweet, pasty, brown mixture is symbolic of the mortar that our ancestors used to build bricks in the land of Egypt. Why do we remember an experience so bitter with something so sweet? The rabbis have a good insight: even the bitterest of labor can we sweet when our redemption draws nigh. This is especially true for believers in the Messiah. We can find sweetness even in the bitterest of experiences because we know our Lord's coming is near.

Shankbone of the Lamb

In every Jewish home, on every seder plate, is a bare shankbone of a lamb. In the book of Exodus, Jewish firstborns were spared from the Angel of Death by applying the blood of a spotless, innocent lamb applied to the doorpost of their homes as God brought the people from slavery into freedom. Today, we believe Jesus is that perfect Passover Lamb, and when we apply His blood to the doorposts of our heart, we too go from death into life, from the slavery of sin into the freedom of being a redeemed child of God. As John the Baptist said when he saw Jesus coming towards him, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)



The Meal

Ah, even through the wonders of modern technology, we still cannot bring you the most memorable part of the Passover... the meal, just like grandma used to make! Just picture it: steaming hot chicken soup with huge, fluffy matza balls; some matzah; slices of pungent, home-made gefilte fish with just-ground make-you-cry horseradish; more matzah; chopped liver (with lots of schmaltz and crunchy fried onions) on a bed of lettuce; more matzah; enough delectable green salad to feed a colony of hungry rabbits; more matzah; more crispy fried onions on the side; more matzah... and that's just the appetizer!

Next comes the meal... can you smell it? Tender, sweet brisket with cabbage; stewed chicken, roasted chicken, broiled chicken, boiled chicken, sautéed chicken, baked chicken; a whole roasted turkey; fresh-cut green beans with onions; carrot and prune tzimmes; sweet potato and raisin tzimmes; home-made mashed potatoes swimming in butter; more matzah...

Did you save room for dessert? Well, you will have to wait, because now it's time go on with the seder!

The Search for the Afikomen

After the meal is finished, the leader of the seder lets the children loose to hunt for the Afikomen, which was wrapped in a napkin and hidden before the meal. The house is in a ruckus as everyone rushes around to be the first to find the Afikomen and claim the prize as grandpa redeems it from the lucky locator. The going rate is \$5.00! Once the leader has retrieved the Afikomen, he breaks it up into pieces and distributes a small piece to everyone seated around the table. Jewish people don't really understand this tradition, but traditions don't need to be understood - just followed! However, it is widely believed that these pieces of Afikomen bring a good, long life to those who eat them.

The tradition perhaps dates back to the time of Jesus. If this is the case, then Luke 22:19 takes on a greater meaning: "And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." For Jesus the Messiah would have taken the middle one of the three pieces of matzah, the piece that stood for the priest or mediator between God and the people, broken it as His body would be broken, wrapped half in a linen napkin as he would be wrapped in linen for burial, hidden it as he would be buried, brought it back as he would be resurrected, and distributed it to everyone seated with him, as He would distribute His life to all who believe. As He did this, he was conscious that this middle piece of matzah represented His own, spotless body given for the redemption of His people. As the matzah is striped and pierced, His own body would be striped and pierced, and it is by those wounds that we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). This middle piece of matzah, or the Afikomen, is our communion bread.

Third Cup

The third cup is taken after the meal. It is the cup of redemption, which reminds us of the shed blood of the innocent Lamb which brought our redemption from Egypt.

We see that Jesus took the third cup in Luke 22:20 and 1 Corinthians 11:25, "In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." This was

not just any cup, it was the cup of redemption from slavery into freedom. This is our communion cup.

Fourth Cup

The fourth cup is the Cup of Hallel. Hallel in Hebrew means "praise," and we see in the beautiful High Priestly Prayer of John 17, that Jesus took time to praise and thank the Lord at the end of the Passover Seder, His last supper. The spotless Passover Lamb had praise on His lips as he went to His death.



Elijah's Cup

A place setting remains empty for Elijah the prophet, the honored guest at every Passover table. The Jewish people expect Elijah to come at Passover and announce the coming of the Messiah (Malachi 4:5). So a place is set, a cup is filled, and hearts are expectant for Elijah to come and announce the Good News.

At the end of the seder meal, a child is sent to the door to open it and see if Elijah is there. Every year, the child returns, disappointed, and the cup is poured out without being touched. My people wait and hope for Messiah - they do not realize that Messiah has already come. But those of us who believe in Yeshua know that He is the one the prophets spoke of. He is the spotless, unblemished Passover Lamb, whose body was broken for us, whose blood was shed, and who now lives to distribute His life to all of us who apply His blood to the doorpost of our hearts and have passed from death into His eternal life.



1. How is the timing of Passover calculated? Why does Passover sometimes fall *after* Easter?

The two holidays are based on two different calendars. Easter is based on the solar calendar, the calendar commonly used today. In Western churches, Easter is dated as the first Sunday after the first full moon of spring. It therefore occurs somewhere between March 22 and April 25. Eastern Orthodox churches have a different approach based on the lunar calendar.

Passover, on the other hand, is based on the Jewish calendar, a lunar calendar that has twelve 28-day months. Every two or three years, there is a thirteenth month called Adar II included in the calendar. Over the course of a 19-year cycle, this "extra" month occurs in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years. The year 2008 was one of those years with an extra month. Passover occurs from the 15th to the 21st of the month of Nisan - which is the month right after the "extra" month of Adar II. The inclusion of the "extra" month in the lunar calendar thus caused Passover to fall nearly 30 days after Easter in 2008.

In 2013, Passover is March 25 - April 2.

2. Why do we still celebrate Old Testament holidays such as Passover, since Jesus has risen?

Believers in Messiah Jesus have a freedom to celebrate these holidays or not to celebrate them. To celebrate, one must do so in a way that is consistent with New Testament doctrine. Each of the appointed festivals in Leviticus 23 points to

Jesus, and they look forward to His first and second comings. Celebration of these festivals is a great way to draw attention to Him.

Regarding Passover, this holiday is a powerful foreshadowing of His sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection. Paul exhorted the Corinthian believers to "celebrate the seder" (1 Corinthians 5:8). Doing so can be a great way to teach our children their biblical heritage; it can also be a testimony to Jewish family and friends.



3. How is Passover related to the Last Supper?

The Last Supper was itself part of a celebration of Passover. Knowing that He would be put to death in a few hours, Jesus told his disciples that He "eagerly desired to celebrate this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15). At this celebration, He took elements of the Passover (the unleavened bread and the cup) and identified them as his body and blood, symbolizing his death.

Other elements of the Passover are important symbols as well. The "lamb" points to the Lamb of God (John 1:29). Indeed, Jesus is the Passover Lamb. Paul tells us that as often as we eat this bread and drink of this cup (elements of the Passover and the heart of the Last Supper, or Communion), we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:26).

4. Is it appropriate for Gentile Christians to celebrate Passover?

There is a freedom that believers have in matters like this, and it can be quite meaningful for Gentile Christians to celebrate Passover. It can be a way of

enjoying and identifying with their biblical heritage and as a testimony to Jewish friends and neighbors.

There is a wider dimension to this as well: after many Gentiles had come to faith in Jesus the Messiah (Acts 11:19-26), the issue of Gentile believers' obligation to the Jewish Old Testament law became a major concern (Acts 15:5). The disciples gathered at what became known as the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:6ff) and determined that the Gentiles should not feel obligated to observe the law (with a few requests, nonetheless). They further noted that the teachings of the law and its benefits would be available in the synagogues every Sabbath.

We see, therefore, that Gentile Christians can celebrate the Passover and reap benefits from doing so.

5. Passover is a seven-day celebration. How are each of the days celebrated?

In the Bible, in Israel today, and in Reform Judaism, Passover lasts seven days. But among most observant Jews outside of Israel - including North America - an eighth day is added, since originally the matter of differing time zones gave concern that the festival was being observed during the correct dates.

In the Bible (Leviticus 23:4-8) the first and seventh days are emphasized, calling for gathering of a sacred assembly and abstaining from regular work. Among modern observant Jews, the first two and in some cases the last two days are emphasized; the observance of the seder, including a full meal, is common. This works better if there is more than one home and one cook for these evenings!

The other days are known as "intermediate days" and only the week-long eating of unleavened bread instead of leavened bread is prescribed. On the evenings when there is a seder, the family gathers around the table and follows the fourteen items in the haggadah ("the telling"), thereby partaking of the various Passover elements, including the unleavened bread, bitter herbs, drinking of the four cups, etc.



6. What preparations are typically made for the Passover, both in the time of Jesus and today?

In the time of Jesus, a good number of the traditional observances had not yet become a part of the celebration. But the three major component parts were in place: the lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs. The washings and cup(s) of wine were a part of the seder, and it appears that the dipping of the bitter herbs in a bowl of salt (?) water also took place (Matt. 26:23). The observance of Passover was a good deal simpler than today.

Nowadays, the celebration has become highly developed and is a major event in the Jewish community. For weeks beforehand, the home gets a thorough spring cleaning geared toward getting all the leaven out of the house, since Passover introduces the week-long feast of unleavened bread.

The *seder* is a family event, and the table is ornate - graced by flowers, candles, and the various Passover elements, including the shank bone of the lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, greens, salt water, egg, a sweet dish, and the four cups of wine. Many people have a special *seder* plate for the elements, as well as a *matzo tash* - a covering for the unleavened bread. A special book known as the Haggadah ("The Telling") is provided for the purpose of telling and living out the story of Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. The *seder* ("order") is the telling of that story.

7. What typically is eaten for the main Passover meal? Why is lamb no longer eaten?

Actually, many Jews do eat lamb, notably the Sephardic Jews (those of Spanish descent). Many Sephardic Jews live in Israel today. It is the Ashkenazi Jews (those of eastern European descent) who do not eat lamb - as a reminder that the temple no longer stands and the lamb cannot be sacrificed. Turkey, chicken, or beef might be served instead.

8. John says that Jesus died on the day of preparation of Passover Week, just before a special Sabbath (John 19:14, 31). The other three gospels seem to say that Jesus was arrested on the first day of Passover and crucified the following day.

How can this apparent contradiction be resolved, and on what day of the week was Jesus crucified?

John 19:14 tells us that it was the day of preparation of Passover week, but it is not to be assumed that this was the preparation for the Passover. There were also the weekly Sabbath and the first day of the feast of unleavened bread taking place at that time.

John 19:31 tells us that it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. The special Sabbath may mean a weekly Sabbath that was special because it was at the time of Passover, or it may refer to the feast of unleavened bread.

A scenario to consider is as follows:

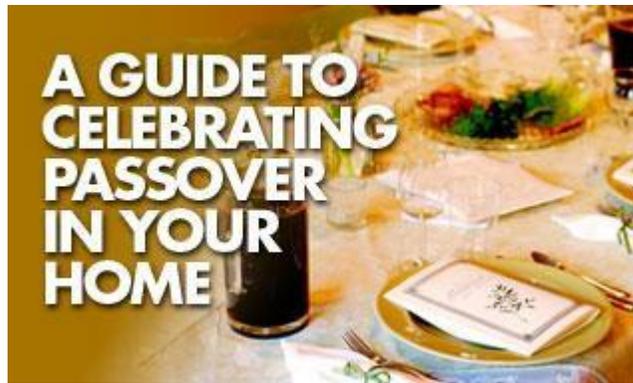
- The Passover lamb was slain at twilight Wednesday, just as Thursday was beginning (Jewish days go from sunset to sunset).
- Thursday was the preparation for the Passover and that evening (the beginning of Friday) the Passover was eaten-including the Passover meal eaten by Jesus and his disciples (initiating the Lord's Supper).

- Later that night was Gethsemane, the arrest, and the trial by Annas and Caiphas, going very late into the night. The rooster crowed, indicating that it was early in the morning (John 19:27) and that was confirmed in John 19:28.
- It was now Friday morning, still the day of Passover, and Jesus was taken by the chief priests and elders to Pilate (Matthew 27:1; John 19:28). Jesus was taken to be crucified, and was dead and buried before the weekly Sabbath began.
- A guard was placed on the tomb for the Sabbath (Friday evening to Saturday sunset).
- Early Sunday morning the tomb was discovered empty, because Jesus was risen.

It is sometimes thought that the day of the week in which Jesus was crucified was Wednesday or perhaps Thursday, but the above approach suggests Friday. It is true that Jesus was to be dead three days and three nights (Matthew 12:40), but we must understand that the Jews of that time considered any part of a day to be considered as a day, and so Jesus spoke of rising from the dead on the third day (Luke 24:46).

We of course know that the important thing is that He arose (1 Cor. 15:3-4)!

If you would like to invite a Celebrate Messiah speaker to your congregation or home group, [click here](#).



Passover, which celebrates the exodus of the Jewish people from their bondage in Egypt under Pharaoh, is one of the festivals that grounds Jewish life in history and tradition. You too can celebrate it with your family, friends, and neighbors as the Jewish people have celebrated from before the time of Jesus.

The *Haggadah* (the telling), which has changed little over the centuries, is our guide to the *Seder* (the order of the ceremony). Just follow the steps below and you will experience the blessing of gathering to celebrate the Passover, just as Jesus the Messiah gathered with His disciples at the Last Supper.

The Passover involves two separate kinds of food: the Passover meal, and the special elements that are part of the ceremony—the bitter herbs, the parsley, the hard-boiled egg, the lamb shank, the *matzah* (unleavened bread), the salt water, the *charoset* (chopped apple and nut mixture) and the Four Cups. Three pieces of *matzah*, separated by napkins or else placed in a special pouch called the *Matzah Tash*, are placed alongside the *Seder* plate.

Light the Candles

The woman of the house lights the candles, reciting the Passover blessing:

“Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commands us to kindle the Festival candles.”

The Four Cups

Each of the Four Cups of Passover stands for one of the four "I wills" of Exodus 6:6-7:

- Sanctification: "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

- Judgment: "I will rescue you from their bondage."
- Redemption: "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm."
- Praise: "I will take you as My people."

The red color of the fruit of the vine reminds us of the blood of the lamb, which was applied to the doorposts and lintels of Jewish homes to avert the terrible judgment of the Lord upon the wickedness of Egypt. While drinking, we recline to the left, to symbolize the freedom of our liberation from slavery.

The First Cup—The Cup of Sanctification

The leader of the *Seder* offers the blessing: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine." All partake of the cup together.



The Karpas (Parsley)

All dip greens in the salt water—the greens symbolize hyssop, the plant used to brush the blood of the lamb upon the Jewish homes at the first Passover, and the salt water represents the tears shed by the Jewish people while in bondage.

The Breaking of the Matzah

The middle *matzah* is removed from the napkins or *Matzah Tash* and is broken in half. One half is wrapped up in a cloth napkin and hidden for the children to search for during the dinner. The remaining half is replaced in the *Matzah Tash*.

The Four Questions of Passover

An introductory question is asked: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" This is an invitation to tell why the Passover is so meaningful. The following questions are one of the most well-established centerpieces of the Passover celebration. They are usually asked by the youngest child at the table.

1. On all nights we eat either leavened or unleavened bread; why on this night do we eat only *matzah* (unleavened bread)?
2. On all nights we eat vegetables and herbs of all kinds; why on this night do we eat only bitter herbs?
3. On all nights we never think of dipping herbs in water or in anything else; why on this night do we dip the parsley in salt water and the bitter herbs in *charoset*?
4. On all nights we eat either sitting upright or reclining; why on this night do we all recline?

The Maggid (Telling of the Story)

In reply to the Four Questions, the Passover narrative is read from Exodus 12:1-13, placing special emphasis upon the essentials of the Passover—the lamb, the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs and the manner in which the children of Israel were instructed to eat the Passover meal.

The Ten Plagues

The Second Cup is filled and the ten plagues that the Lord visited upon Egypt are now recited in unison. The participants in the *Seder* spill a drop from the Second Cup for each plague. This represents the belief that we must have compassion for our enemies, and our joy is diminished by remembering the Egyptians' suffering.

The Second Cup—The Cup of Judgment

We partake together of the Second Cup, with the traditional blessing (see First Cup above).



The Matzah

The leader of the *Seder* elevates the unity of the three pieces of *matzah*. Then he breaks olive-sized pieces from the top and middle *matzahs* and distributes them to the others. After the following prayer, they are eaten:

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commands us concerning the eating of the unleavened bread."

The Maror (Bitter Herbs)

Everyone dips a small piece of *matzah* into the *maror*, and eats after the following blessing:

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commands us concerning the eating of bitter herbs."

The Charoset (Mortar)

A small piece of *matzah* is dipped into the *charoset*, a mixture of finely chopped apples, nuts, honey, and cinnamon, which symbolizes the mortar with which the children of Israel fashioned the bricks for Pharaoh's building projects.

The *matzah* is eaten.

Shulchan Orech (The Passover Dinner)

Dinner is served. It may be as simple as chicken, potatoes and cooked carrots. Matzah ball soup is a common dish. Adventurous cooks may want to find a

Jewish cookbook and try Jewish recipes from around the world. Throughout the dinner, the children search for the piece of *matzah* that was previously hidden.

The Afikomen (The Hidden Matzah)

After the meal, the hidden *matzah* is presented by the fortunate boy or girl who has found it. The leader of the Seder "redeems" it with a gift of money. It is then broken, distributed and eaten. This, together with the Third Cup, forms the basis of the Lord's Supper.

The Third Cup—The Cup of Redemption

The Third Cup is consumed with the appropriate blessing (see above). This cup is a reminder of the shed blood of the Passover Lamb that purchased our redemption from slavery.

Elijah's Place

Throughout the evening, one place at the table has been left unoccupied. This is Elijah's place, and the door is now opened to see if he will enter, and bring with him the long-awaited Messiah of Israel.



The Zeroah and the Betzah (Shankbone and Egg)

The shankbone and egg, symbols of sacrifices that are no longer offered because of the destruction of the Temple, are referenced for the sake of their presence on the Passover Plate.

The Fourth Cup—The Cup of Praise

As the Passover is brought to conclusion, the blessing is said and the Fourth Cup is taken, while the following phrase is said in unison:

“Next Year in Jerusalem!”



Thoroughly Modern Matzo Balls

You can't play golf with them...you can't play tennis, and you certainly can't go bowling with them... or at least you're not supposed to! Matzo balls (pronounced mat-zah, not mat-zoe), a traditional Passover delicacy, are supposed to be so light and fluffy that, although they are served as an appetizer, they almost float away before the meal.



Everybody has an opinion on matzo balls. Who makes the lightest and fluffiest? We want to share a secret recipe that will help you win any matzo ball opinion survey hands down.

Of course, you start with matzo meal: you can buy it, you can make your own by running pieces of matzo through a food processor until they make a fine flour, or you can do it my way: pick up a package of Matzo Ball Mix!

In a small bowl, lightly beat four eggs together with four tablespoons of vegetable oil. Blend in one cup of matzo meal, about 2 teaspoons of salt, and a bit of garlic

and onion powder to taste. Then add the secret ingredient: 1/4 cup of club soda or seltzer (the bubbles are what make the matzo balls so light!).

The mixture needs to rest, covered, in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. While the matzo ball mixture is resting, bring about 3 quarts of chicken soup or stock to a brisk boil.

Now wet your hands and begin to form the matzo ball mix into 1-inch balls... but it's really important that you don't squeeze them! Remember, the key word is light and fluffy, so be gentle! You should have about 16 matzo balls - don't worry if you have a few more or less.

Reduce the heat and drop the matzo balls one by one into the boiling soup. Cover the pot tightly and cook for about 30 minutes. Serve them nice and hot, two or three per person. Between the bubbles in the club soda and your gentle, loving touch in forming them, I guarantee that you'll have the lightest and fluffiest matzo balls on the block. Enjoy!

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Passover *Tzimmes*

- 1 lb carrots
- 5 sweet potatoes
- 1/2 cup pitted prunes
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 tsp cinnamon



Tzimmes is a wonderfully sweet, delicious vegetable dish served at Passover. It's such a mushy mixture of tastes that it has come to be an expression in the Jewish vocabulary, as in "Oy, don't make such *atzimmes*, sweetheart!" (meaning don't mix things up and make them such a big deal!).

To make Passover *tzimmes*, first preheat the oven to 350°F. Then peel and chop the carrots and sweet potatoes into 1-inch pieces. Cook them together in a large

pot of water for about 15 minutes over medium heat, until they are a little tender but still firm. Then mix in the prunes and put the whole *tzimmes* in a casserole dish. In a separate bowl, mix together the honey, orange juice and cinnamon, and pour over the vegetable mix. Cover and bake for about 30-45 minutes. Take off the cover, stir, and bake for another 10 minutes or so until all the vegetables are nice and soft. *Tzimmes* tastes better if you refrigerate it overnight, but be sure to reheat it in a very slow oven. Serves 6-8. Enjoy!

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Chocolate Macaroons

What's a meal without dessert? Every Jewish mother loves the excitement that follows when dessert is finally revealed - but on Passover, we need to be a little more creative. These chocolate macaroons (sort of like cookies only better!), one of my special recipes, are sure to bring smiles to your Passover table!

- 3 egg whites
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup cocoa powder (unsweetened)
- 2 cups shredded coconut (unsweetened)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Just a pinch of salt

First mix the sugar and cocoa together. Then in a separate bowl, beat the egg whites (adding the pinch of salt) until stiff peaks begin to form. Slowly sprinkle the sugar and cocoa mixture, and blend into the egg whites. Then fold in the coconut and vanilla extract. That's it! Now line a baking sheet with parchment paper, and drop the mixture by spoonfuls about an inch apart. Bake them for 15-20 minutes at 350°F, and then share a few! Makes about 3-4 dozen.

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Coconut Macaroons

If you're invited to a Passover Seder this year, you'll be the favorite guest if you bring along a batch or two of these light and fabulous coconut macaroons, kosher for Passover! They're super-easy to make (or else I wouldn't be giving you the recipe - super-easy is the only thing I know how to do!).

You'll need:

- 2 egg whites
- 1/2 tsp. Vanilla
- Pinch of salt
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 1/3 cup coconut flakes



All you do is beat the egg whites, vanilla and salt until soft peaks form. Then VERY SLOWLY sprinkle in the sugar, just a little at a time, and then gently fold in the coconut with a spatula. That's it! Now drop spoonfuls onto a greased cookie sheet and bake in a preheated oven at 350° for 20 minutes. Makes about 2 dozen. Enjoy!

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Holiday cranberry mold

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

- Family Size packet of Raspberry Jell-o – 1 box
- Whole cranberry sauce – 1 can – 14 oz (crushed)
- Crushed Pineapple – 1 can – 14 oz (drained)
- Walnuts chopped – 1/2 cup
- Pineapple juice – 1/2 cup



Directions:

1. Boil 2 cups of water and add dry jello mix
2. Add crushed pineapple
3. Add cranberry sauce
4. Add 1 cup of cold water and 1/2 cup of pineapple juice
5. Add mixture into a mold
6. Refrigerate for 1 day
7. When ready to serve, dip mold in warm water and flip to place on a plate

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Flourless Chocolate Espresso Cake

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more to grease pan
- 6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 6 large eggs, separated, at room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons instant espresso powder
- 1/4 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- Parchment paper



Chocolate Espresso Sauce:

- 3 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped

- 1 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup heavy cream
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon instant espresso powder
- 1/4 teaspoon coarse salt

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Using parchment paper, trace the removable bottom of a 9-inch springform pan and cut to fit. Return bottom to the springform pan and grease the pan with butter. Place the parchment cut-out over the bottom of the pan.
2. Melt butter and chocolate in a double boiler or heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Set aside.
3. With a mixer beat egg yolks with 1/2 cup sugar until thick and pale, about 3 minutes. Add espresso and salt, and beat for 1 minute. Add vanilla and melted chocolate mixture, and beat for 1 minute.
4. In a separate, clean bowl beat egg whites until foamy. Slowly add remaining 1/2 cup sugar, beating until stiff peaks form. Fold whites into chocolate mixture in 3 additions. Pour batter into prepared pan.
5. Bake until set, 40 to 45 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a rack. Remove pan sides. Carefully lift cake with a spatula, and remove parchment.
6. Make the sauce: Place chocolate, butter, and vanilla in a bowl. Bring remaining ingredients to a boil, stirring, and pour over chocolate mixture. Whisk until smooth.
7. Serve sauce warm over cake.



During Passover, observant Jewish people refrain from eating leaven. This tradition comes from God's commandment to Israel in the Torah, "For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread" (Ex 12:19-20). As Jewish people prepare for Passover, each family removes the leaven from their home. Then, during a ceremony called *Bedikat Chametz*, every traditional household conducts a final search for leaven throughout the house, gathers it together and burns it, after which the house is kosher for Passover.

Paul uses this Jewish practice as the background to his discussion in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, "Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

At that time, the believing community of Corinth was tolerant of gross immorality. Paul compares sin to leaven and commands the congregation at Corinth to clean out the sin from within their midst in the same way the Jewish community removes leaven from their homes during Passover. Just as leaven permeates an entire lump of dough, sinful behavior affects the entire life of an individual and congregation. If the congregation at Corinth did not deal with the wicked behavior in their midst, then this behavior would defile the whole community.

When making Challah, the traditional Jewish bread for Shabbat, a small amount of yeast is added to the dough, and this bit of yeast leavens the entire loaf of

bread. In the same way, sin affects a person's entire life. We cannot compartmentalize our lives and isolate sin in a particular area so that it does not affect the other areas of our lives. God created us as holistic people, and we deceive ourselves when we think the small or hidden sins in our lives will not affect the other areas of our soul. Even small and hidden sins will permeate and corrode our entire being. As Paul wrote, the reason we must remove the wicked behavior from our lives is that our Messiah was sacrificed, like a Passover lamb, to remove our unrighteousness.

Therefore, we should pursue righteousness, since our Messiah has removed the *chametz* (leaven) from our lives. Paul describes people with leaven as depraved and wicked, whereas people who are pure in motives and upright in character have no leaven. The "unleavened" person does not have a hidden or secret life.

The preparation for Passover can remind us to think about the unrighteous behaviors we tolerate in our own lives. If we tolerate immoral thoughts or actions, they will begin to affect our spiritual lives and ultimately destroy our soul. If we are serious about honoring God and having a healthy spiritual life, then we cannot tolerate the hidden and secret sins. In the spirit of Passover, let us remove the sin from our lives, so that we are kosher for Passover.



The Passover Seder (celebration) contains many poignant traditions, but the eating of the afikomen after the meal is one of the most fascinating customs. The Seder contains 15 separate steps or stages, and the *afikomen* comes during the twelfth step, which is called *tzafun*. The Hebrew word *tzafun* means "hidden" or "concealed," which accurately conveys the uncertain and peculiar origin of the ritual.

Early in the Seder, the leader lifts up the three pieces of matzah, removes the middle piece and breaks it in half. He then takes the larger half of the broken matzah and sets it aside until later in the ceremony. This broken piece of matzah is the *afikomen*. In some traditions, the children in the home attempt to steal the *afikomen* during the meal, while in other traditions the leader hides the *afikomen* from the children, who then search for it. In both traditions, the leader attempts to redeem the *afikomen* from the children, often in exchange for a small gift.

Surprisingly, *afikomen* is not Hebrew, but a Greek word, the precise meaning of which is difficult to determine. Some have proposed the derivation of this word from the Greek verb meaning "I have come." The writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 40 in the following passage:

Then I said, "Behold, I have come—

In the volume of the book it is written of Me—

To do Your will, O God."

Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will..." (Hebrews 10:7-9)

Despite the Messianic emphasis of this reading, it does not seem likely this is the meaning of *afikomen*.

Others suggest that the word *afikomen* originates from an ancient Greek tradition known as *epikomion*. In this tradition, the ancient Greeks participated in pagan after-dinner festivities by traveling from one party to another, so the Rabbis named this piece of matzah *afikomen* to show how the Jewish community must not imitate the pagan parties in their celebrations. Rather than a continuous evening of festivities, the Jewish people must approach the Passover meal with reverence.

Before the destruction of the Temple, the Jewish community concluded the Passover meal with the eating of a small (olive-sized) piece of lamb. This ritual emphasized the importance of the Pesach sacrifice. Today, the *afikomen* represents this sacrifice, and Jewish people concludes the Passover meal with the eating of a small piece of the *afikomen*.

When Jesus celebrated His last Passover with His disciples, He gave them matzah as the symbol of His body. The matzah is unleavened, striped and pierced, just as the prophet Isaiah describes the Messiah: "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5).

Prior to the meal, this matzah was broken, wrapped in linen, and hidden away. Following the dinner, the matzah reappears. For the Messianic Jewish community, the *afikomen* symbolically represents the Messiah, as Jesus' body was broken, wrapped in linen, buried, and raised on the third day.

It is interesting that the eating of the *afikomen* occurs during *thetzafun*, which means "hidden" or "concealed." Although the *afikomen* provides a remarkable symbol of Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, many Jewish people have not yet discovered Him. The Messiah thus remains hidden from much of the Jewish community.



Every year, Jewish people gather in family dining rooms around the world to celebrate the Passover Seder and remember God's redemption of Israel from slavery in Egypt. The Seder is designed to involve all five senses in the retelling of the Exodus story to the next generation. As we celebrate, we imagine that we too were once slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, because "if the Eternal God had not brought our forefathers out from Egypt, then even we, our children, and our children's children might still have been enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt" (from the traditional Passover service).

We tell our children the story of our deliverance from Egypt so that they can remember the severity of our people's slavery and the wonder of our redemption. According to Rabbi Gamaliel, who tutored the apostle Paul when he was a

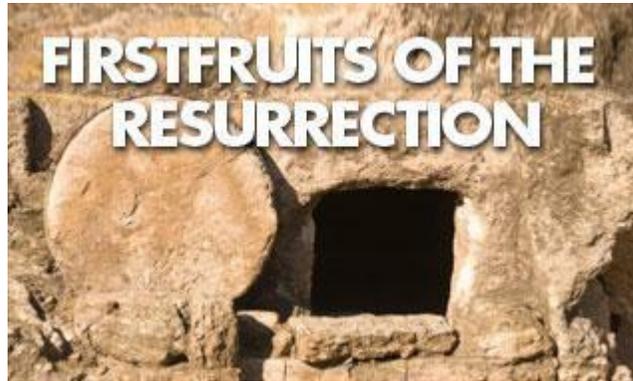
student, any father who has not taught his children about the Passover lamb, the unleavened bread, or bitter herbs (typically horseradish), "has not fulfilled his duty."

Horseradish – normally used as a garnish – completely overpowers the senses when you eat it on a small piece of matzah. According to Jewish tradition, one must eat enough bitter herbs (*maror* in Hebrew) to bring tears to the eyes. The tears and the bitter herbs remind each Seder participant how the great affliction the Jewish people endured brought tears to their eyes.

If we fail to remember the bitterness of our slavery in Egypt, we might be tempted to return to the source of our enslavement. Shortly after the Israelites left Egypt, they began to romanticize their affliction and complain to Moses about their perceived lack of food (Ex. 16:1-3). Even though their rations in Egypt were meager, they remembered that "we sat by the pots of meat and... ate bread to the full!" (Ex. 16:3). Their brief adversity in the desert caused them to forget their suffering in Egypt (Ex. 3:7-9; 4:31), not to mention the abundance of plunder they received as a result of their deliverance (Ex. 12:32-38). This is why it is vital to recall the anguish we endured under Pharaoh during the Passover Seder.

If our ancestors, who had personally experienced the bitterness of slavery in Egypt, were so apt to forget the goodness of their redemption, how much more do we tend to overlook the great disparity between our previous anguish and our present deliverance? In the same way, if we don't remember the bitterness of our enslavement to sin, we will not appreciate the wonder of our redemption, which Yeshua the Messiah provided through His death and resurrection. This is why Paul instructs the Ephesian church to remember how they were previously alienated from the covenants of promise and without the hope of God in a desolate world (Eph. 2:11-12).

By "suffering" symbolically through the consumption of horseradish, we remember the bitterness of our slavery and recall the joy of our redemption.



The Apostle Paul writes that Yeshua's resurrection, which we celebrate at Easter, is the most significant event in history for believers (1 Cor. 15), as our faith would be meaningless without it (15:14).

Paul says that Jesus' resurrection represents the firstfruits of those who have already died (I Cor. 15:20-23). Paul intentionally chooses the word "firstfruits" as an allusion to the Jewish holiday by the same name. God commanded the Nation of Israel to offer the firstfruits of their harvest to Him on the first day following the Sabbath of Passover (Lev 23:9-14).

When God commanded the nation of Israel to offer the firstfruits of their harvest, He was asking the nation to make a sacrifice of faith. If God had already provided the nation a bountiful initial harvest, then the nation could expect an even more bountiful harvest in the coming months. In the same way, Jesus' resurrection gives us hope that we too will experience the resurrection in the future. For us as believers, the resurrection is not simply an historical event, but also a foretaste of what is to come in the future, when God gives us new, redeemed bodies.