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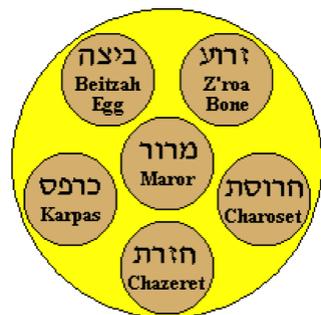
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Pesach: Passover

- Significance: Remembers the Exodus from Egypt
- Observances: Avoiding all leavened grain products and related foods; Family or communal retelling of the Exodus story
- Length: 8 days

Level Basic

And this day shall become a memorial for you, and you shall observe it as a festival for the L-RD, for your generations, as an eternal decree shall you observe it. For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove the leaven from your homes ... you shall guard the unleavened bread, because on this very day I will take you out of the land of Egypt; you shall observe this day for your generations as an eternal decree. - Exodus 12:14-17



Seder Plate

Pesach, known in English as Passover, is one of the most commonly observed Jewish holidays, even by otherwise non-observant Jews.

According to the 2000-01 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), 67% of Jews

routinely hold or attend a Pesach seder, while only 46% belong to a synagogue.

Pesach begins on the 15th day of the Jewish month of Nissan. It is the first of the three major festivals with both historical and agricultural significance (the other two are Shavu'ot and Sukkot). Agriculturally, it represents the beginning of the harvest season in Israel, but little attention is paid to this aspect of the holiday. The primary observances of Pesach are related to the Exodus from Egypt after generations of slavery. This story is told in Exodus, Ch. 1-15. Many

of the Pesach observances are instituted in Chs. 12-15.

The name "Pesach" (PAY-sahch, with a "ch" as in the Scottish "loch") comes from the Hebrew root Pei-Samekh-Cheit, meaning to pass through, to pass over, to exempt or to spare. It refers to the fact that G-d "passed over" the houses of the Jews when he was slaying the firstborn of Egypt. In English, the holiday is known as Passover. "Pesach" is.

Pesach Laws and Customs

Probably the most significant observance related to Pesach involves avoiding chametz (leaven; sounds like "hum it's" with that Scottish "ch") throughout the holiday. This commemorates the fact that the Jews leaving Egypt were in a hurry, and did not have time to let their bread rise. It is also a symbolic way of removing the "puffiness" (arrogance, pride). Pesach lasts for eight days.

And if your son asks you in the future, saying, What are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, that the L-RD our G-d commanded you? You will say to your son, We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt; and the L-RD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. The L-RD gave signs and wonders, great and harmful, against Egypt, against Pharaoh, and against all his household, before our eyes: And he

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brought us out of there to bring us in, to give us the land that he promised our fathers. -Deuteronomy 6:20-23

In Exodus 12:3-14 we read, “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 when I strike the land of Egypt... This day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord. Throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.”

As we approach the celebration of **PASSOVER** we must remember that Passover is a celebration designed by God! This Feast and Event was given to increase our faith and prepare us to enter in the fullness His blessing! Passover was commanded by God for the Jews in the Old Testament to teach them the importance of redemption by the blood. But it was also observed by Christians in the New Testament to remember and understand God’s redeeming work! The Bible tells us it is to be a permanent ordinance... a celebration for all time!

Many Christians don’t realize that Passover is just as much a New Testament Feast as an Old Testament Feast! It’s all through the New Testament! Jesus and the apostles all celebrated Passover! The original Lord’s Supper was a Passover meal! The apostles taught the Gentile churches to celebrate Passover. In 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote to a predominantly Gentile church and said: “Christ OUR Passover Lamb has been slain, therefore let us celebrate the feast!” For hundreds of years, Passover was the most important yearly celebration in the early church!

What makes Passover so important?

Derek Prince once said that the most powerful faith declaration for deliverance is this: *“I am redeemed by the blood of the Lamb out of the hand of the enemy!”* He said that if you can make that declaration in faith, and keep on making it, something will happen. You will be delivered from the power of the enemy! That’s really the message of Passover. The Feast of Passover is a faith declaration that we are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb!

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Passover is very important to God!

But Satan HATES Passover! The enemy has worked diligently to steal Passover away! The good news is: God is restoring Passover. But it is a battle! The battle for Passover is the battle for the blood. Satan wants to give us a bloodless religion, because a bloodless religion has no power! The power is in the blood! There’s always a battle for PASSOVER. We see it in church history!

In the 4th century, when the emperor Constantine tried to merge Christianity and paganism, it sounded like a good deal to many! He legalized Christianity! You could go to church without having to fear being thrown to the lions!

At the council of Nice, Constantine outlawed Passover and directed that Christ’s death and resurrection be celebrated on “the Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox,” ...a time associated with the spring festival of the pagan fertility goddess Ishtar... also known as Eastre! (That’s why in the church today we celebrate the resurrection at Easter instead of Passover!) Constantine’s goal was to remove Jesus from the context of Passover!

The Battle Continues!

Many in the church resisted Constantine’s edicts, so for many centuries after Constantine, the battle for Passover continued! In the sixth century, for

“The missionary paced the room in a conflict of fear and faith.”

example, Emperor Justinian sent the Roman armies throughout the empire to enforce the prohibition on Passover! In his attempt to wipe out the “heresy” of Passover, thousands of men, women and children were brutally murdered! Entire cities were massacred for refusing to stop celebrating Passover! (The battle for Passover has had many casualties!) Pressured by the government, the Roman church joined in the attempts to stamp out Passover! Notice some of the decrees passed against Passover by various church councils.

The battle for Passover is seen clearly in church history!

That battle against Passover is nothing new! We see the same thing in the Bible: Satan always tries to steal away Passover, because he knows the celebration of the blood releases power!

Look what happened in Hezekiah’s Day:

“Hezekiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He repaired and cleansed the temple, tore down the false altars, restored the sacrifices, and Davidic praise. Then Hezekiah sent word to all Israel and Judah, inviting them to come to celebrate Passover. Couriers went throughout Israel and Judah: “People of Israel, return to the Lord.” The hand of God was on the people to give them unity of mind to carry out what the king had ordered. A very large crowd of people assembled in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast. They slaughtered the Passover lamb and celebrated the Feast for seven days with great rejoicing, while the Levites sang to the Lord every day, accompanied by instruments of praise. The whole assembly then agreed to celebrate the festival seven more days; so for another seven days they celebrated joyfully. There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David, king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached Heaven, His holy dwelling place.” (2 Chron. 29-30)

The same thing was happening in Josiah’s Day: “Josiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. In the 18th year of his reign, while repairing the temple, they found the TORAH scroll in the temple.” When the king heard the words of the Torah scroll, he tore his robes. He went up to the temple with all the people. He read in their hearing all the words of the Covenant. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant. The king ordered them to remove from the temple all the idols made for Baal and Asherah

and all the starry hosts. He tore down the quarters of the male prostitutes, which were in the temple. The king gave this order to all the people: “Celebrate Passover to the Lord your God, as it is written in this scroll of the Covenant.” In the 18th year of King Josiah, this Passover was celebrated to the Lord in Jerusalem. Not since the days of the judges who led Israel, nor throughout the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah, had such a Passover been observed.” (II Kings 22-23)

We see a biblical pattern! In both of these passages, God’s people had drifted far from the Lord and turned to idolatry, and the blessing of God was lost. They turned back to God and sought Him, and the first thing God did was restore Passover! As they turned from pagan idols and celebrated Passover, they were restored to God and experienced great joy and blessing! That’s an interesting pattern! Over and over again in the Bible, we discover that Passover had been LOST! Even during the Old Testament era, and even among the Jews, generations lived and died without celebrating Passover. Why had Passover been lost? Satan had STOLEN it away! Satan always wants to steal Passover! Then, as a new generation turned back to the Lord, and began to read the Bible... they read about Passover for the first time. It seemed strange to them! They said, “We’ve never done this!” (That’s exactly what we see in much of the church today!) But as the Holy Spirit moved on their hearts, they celebrated God’s feast of redemption, and God’s power and joy were restored!

Why does Satan Hate Passover?

Satan hates Passover because Passover is the celebration of JESUS. When the church gave up Passover, it invented other celebrations of Jesus. That is how we shifted the timing of our celebration to Christmas and Easter. It’s not bad to celebrate Jesus



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on those other days! (It's always good to celebrate Jesus!) But the celebration of Jesus that God gave us is called Passover!

The New Testament tells us that Jesus IS the Passover Lamb!

When John introduced Jesus He said, "Behold the LAMB!" Paul said: Christ, our PASSOVER LAMB has been slain! Celebrating Passover IS celebrating Jesus! As the Passover Lamb, He shed His blood to redeem us from the enemy! When His blood is "on the doorpost" of your life, God delivers you from the destroyer! So if you understand Passover, you automatically understand what Jesus did!

On the original Passover night, everything pointed to Jesus! Every father in Israel was told to stand at the door of his house with a basin containing the blood of the lamb. He was to dip a branch of hissoop into the blood and smear the blood on the two door posts of the house... then he was to repeat the action and put the blood on the lintel over the door. If you can picture the motion he made with that blood-soaked branch of hissoop, you'll see he was making the sign of the cross!

On Passover night, every father in Israel made the sign of the cross in the blood of the lamb. And a result, the family experienced redemption from the power of the enemy! God's deliverance always comes by His cross and by His blood. That's what Passover celebrates! You see, it was not by accident that Jesus died on Passover! God could have had Jesus die any time of year! But it was God's will for Him to die at Passover, so we would recognize that He is the Passover Lamb!

Passover is so important to God that He chose to have the most important event in history (the death and resurrection of Jesus) take place at Passover! God went to great lengths to CONNECT the sacrifice of Jesus to Passover. (This is interesting: Constantine's goal was to separate the work of Jesus from Passover... God's goal was to connect Jesus' work to Passover!) God wants us to think of Jesus in the context of the Passover celebration!

The Timetable of Passover

It's interesting to compare the timetable of Jesus' crucifixion with the Passover celebration. According to the Torah, at the time of Passover a number of events had to take place in a specific order, and at very specific times....

1. The Passover Lamb had to be selected on a specific day.

Exodus 12 instructs that the Passover lamb be chosen on the 10th day of 1st month. By the time of Jesus, only lambs from Bethlehem were considered eligible to serve as Passover lambs. So the lamb born in Bethlehem was chosen and brought into Jerusalem from the east (down the Mount of Olives) and entered the city through the sheep gate. On the 10th day of 1st month Jesus, the Lamb born in Bethlehem, came down the Mount of Olives and entered Jerusalem through the sheep gate. (This is called His "triumphal entry!") As He entered, the people waved palm branches and shouted "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the LORD! Save us, son of David!" By mass acclamation Jesus is designated as Israel's Messiah! The crowds had chosen their Passover Lamb!

2. The Lamb then had to be examined. The Torah instructed that once the lamb was chosen, it had to be carefully examined for blemishes. Only a perfect, spotless and unblemished lamb would suffice for the Passover. After arriving in Jerusalem, Jesus went to the Temple to teach. While there, He was approached by the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and the teachers of the Law. Each group posed difficult questions, trying to trap him. Essentially, they were looking for any blemish which might disqualify Him as Messiah. But no one could find fault with Him. He was without blemish.

3. The Leaven (impurity) must be cast out.

Torah instructs that before the feast, all leaven (impurity) must be cast out of every Israelite home. Each mother took a candle and searched out impurity, removing it from her house. This regulation is still observed today. Passover is a time to cleanse every house. Every observant Jewish family carefully cleans their house before Passover. Every trace of impurity is removed. After Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, He entered the Temple and cast out the moneychangers. He

was following the biblical instruction to prepare for Passover by cleansing His Father's house.

4. The Lamb is taken to the altar for public display. On the morning of the 14th day of 1st month, when all has been set in order, the lamb was led out to the altar. At 9 AM that morning, the lamb was bound to the altar and put on public display for all to see! On the morning of the 14th day of the 1st month, when all had been fulfilled, Jesus was led out to Calvary. At 9 AM that morning, just as the lamb was being bound to the altar... Jesus was nailed to the cross and put on public display at Calvary!

5. The Lamb was slain at a specific time. At exactly 3 p.m. the high priest ascended the altar. As another priest blew a shofar on the temple wall, the high priest cuts the throat of the sacrificial Lamb, and declared, "IT IS FINISHED!" At 3 p.m. on that high holy day, at the moment the Passover lamb was killed, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "IT IS FINISHED," and gave up His spirit! In Greek, "It is finished" is tetelista! It means, "The debt has been paid in full Glory of Zion 2010

Yet we must remember the passion of Christ, his pleas to the Father in the garden, the horror of his betrayal by Judas, the shameful flight of disciples, the shocking reversal of the cries of adoration to cries of condemnation, the religious hypocrites who handed him over to the authorities for execution while calling for the release of a criminal, and finally his crucifixion and death. The devil reveled with glee as Christ was put to public shame, murdered for all to see, then sealed in his tomb.

God allowed an orgy of evil seemingly to prevail, but only to punctuate the dramatic reversal by the most glorious event in human history -- the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! He arose victoriously from the tomb! He appeared alive to his disciples and more than 500 others. He delivered the "Great Commission" to his followers, commanding them to proclaim the Gospel to every creature, and he promised always to be with us as we go. Then he ascended in triumph to heaven where he now sits at the right hand of the Father ever making intercession

for us. But more, he poured out his Spirit upon all who receive him, distributing spiritual gifts and power to fight the good fight of faith, destroy the works of the devil, and advance his Kingdom through the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a blessing to the nations. Indeed, oppressive darkness preceded the glorious resurrection of the Son of God and the launch of the worldwide proclamation of the Good News that continues to change hearts and nations and epochs. Evil may prevail for a season but righteousness will ultimately prevail. So let us look at the present darkness in America in the light of the ultimate triumph of Christ over death and the devil in the resurrection. And let us repent of our own sin, unbelief, apathy, and the like, and anything else that would prevent us from being salt and light in the earth and from carrying the Gospel to every person and to the ends of the earth, as we have been commissioned by Christ, himself. And let us celebrate his triumph this weekend!

Up from the grave He arose, With a mighty triumph o'er His foes, He arose a Victor from the dark domain, And He lives forever, with His saints to reign. He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Father, help us recognize that we are not simply "doing politics" when we register and vote, when we speak out on issues and support God-fearing men and women for office, when we speak biblical truth to those in power who will determine the direction of our communities, states, and nation. Help us labor and sacrifice to make sure the Constitution with which we have been entrusted is respected, upheld, and preserved, as far as consistent with your word.

May we hold to the declarations of allegiance that the ancient Jews proclaimed: "The LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King; He will save us" (Is 33:22) and to which our American Fathers rallied, "No King but King Jesus!" May we exult in our Resurrected Lord, and praise him always in word and deed. Be exalted O God! (Gen 17:1; 35:11; Ps 2: all; Pr 22:28; Mt 28:18-20; Eph 4:1-10; Jude 1:2-3; Rev 15:3)

In case you missed it, I urge you to watch Dr. Paul Jehle's FRC Speaker Series event, "John Robinson, Shepherd of America." In it he tells how this little-

known pastor to the Pilgrims disciplined his flock in the principles of Scripture and sent 75 of his 250 Plymouth England Church members to form a new church and body politic in the New World. That little band of men and women, half of whom died the first winter, forged the Mayflower Compact, established the Plymouth Colony and laid principles of godly government that were embraced by all, and have impacted America for nearly 400 years – Pierre Bynum - FRC PRAYER TARGETS..

Educating and informing our intercessors is vital to this ministry. This week celebrate Passover as did Jesus. Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit during this eight day feast. Praise God for sending His Son that we might be saved. Know that our nation can be saved. Help us pray in a revival of souls.

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