

The Feasts of the Lord: The Sacrifice - Jesus in the Feast of Passover

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Introduction

As we saw in the introduction to this series, God has selected seven different events in the history of the world for the nation of Israel to rehearse year upon year through the observance of a feast. God instructed Israel to keep specific feasts at key appointed times throughout the year as a lasting ordinance. Now let me say that these feasts are amazing in the clear portrayal of Jesus' death, burial, resurrection and the events surrounding His return. The first feast that we will study is Passover. It is interesting that God didn't give a feast concerning the birth of Jesus or even his earthly ministry... the first feast goes right to the heart of Christianity with His death - the cross and crucifixion of Christ. In this study, and in subsequent studies in this series, we will look at the Biblical passages concerning each feast as well as examining what we can learn from the Jewish observance of each feast. For each feast we will explore the Messianic significance of the feast as well as what we can learn for our own personal lives. Let's dive right in!

Background to the exodus

The nation of Israel had been down in Egypt for 430 years (Exo 12:40-41). While it started fine while Joseph was alive, the subsequent generations of Israelites became slaves to the Egyptians. As their bondage increased and their cries came before Heaven, God remembered the promises that He had made to their fathers - the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of a great nation with a land of their own. And so, in the fullness of time, God instructed Moses to lead His people out of Egypt. But that was easier said than done for Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was not about to let them go. His heart was hardened and he wanted to keep the Israelites enslaved. So a series of judgments were brought against Egypt but still Pharaoh would not relent. Finally, through the Passover (and the death of every firstborn male child in Egypt) Pharaoh relented and let them go. Well, for a while anyway! But that part of the story can await another study!

It is interesting to see even in this background how this historical event is also a picture of the believer's salvation. Egypt is a type of the world. Just as Egypt was under the control of Pharaoh so this world lies in the power of Satan, the evil one. (1 John 5:19) The slavery of the Israelites in Egypt pictures the slavery to sin that imprisons those in the world (John 8:34). Just as Pharaoh was not about to let go of his slaves, so Satan will do all he can to hold onto those who haven't yet seen the truth (2 Cor 4:4). But there is hope! Just as God provided a way of escape for the Israelites through the blood of the 'Passover Lamb' so there is salvation today in the one who is the true Lamb of God - Jesus Christ. So let's explore God's way of escape through the Passover.

What does the Bible say about the Passover?



So let's look at this way of escape. Let's look at how the Israelites were able to escape the clutches of Pharaoh and how believers today are freed from their debt and slavery to sin. The historical account of this is given in Exodus 12.

(See also an [earlier look at the Passover here](#) if interested.)

We'll look at each verse and add some thoughts on how this is fulfilled from both a Messianic and personal application. The Messianic application is obviously what Jesus did to fulfil this feast. The personal aspect is how we appropriate and apply this truth.

Verse

Exodus 12:1-2 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, (2) This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.

Exodus 12:3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.

Exodus 12:4 If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.

Messianic Fulfillment / Personal Application

God changes Israel's calendar to make this month, the month of Nisan, their first. To this day the nation of Israel has both a civil and religious calendar that have different start and end points.¹ Now why would God do that? Simply put, from a spiritual point of view everything starts at the Passover. When someone believes in Jesus as the lamb that was sacrificed for their sin, they are born again and are a new creation. It is a whole new beginning for them as a child of God. It all starts here and that is what God wants to emphasize. Have you experienced that? There is a new life in Christ.

This verse shows how the Passover affects EVERYONE. The whole community of Israel had to be involved. 'Each man' had to take a lamb for their household. God doesn't have a plan B here. This is His way and it affects everyone. We will see later that this process really was, quite literally, a matter of life and death. Note also that it was on the 10th of Nisan that the lamb was taken. In direct fulfillment of this, Nisan 10 was the day that Jesus presented Himself to Israel by riding into Jerusalem on a foal of a donkey.

There was not to be any of the lamb left over - it had to be fully consumed. So if a household was too small to finish the entire lamb they could join with their neighbors. The Rabbi's would later declare that a lamb should be for 10 or more people but no more than 20. So a single family may be insufficient for a lamb but the lamb would never be insufficient for the family! This verse drives home the point how Jesus, as the true lamb of God, would give all. It would not be a partial sacrifice and He would pay for all sins and be 'fully consumed'.

Exodus 12:5 The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

The animal was to be a male without defect. In terms of the fulfillment of this being a male, the letter of Romans tells us that '...For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!' (Romans 5:15) But notice also that the scripture had to be fulfilled by a male that was without defect... and they are not so easy to come by! Well, in all of human history this planet has only seen one. Peter tells us that believers have been redeemed 'with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.' (1 Pet 1:19)

Exodus 12:6 Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.

The people were to keep, care and inspect their lamb from the 10th of Nisan until the 14th. It would then be killed at twilight. The Bible Knowledge commentary says that 'twilight' is between the sun's decline and sunset (3-5pm). In direct fulfillment of this, Jesus died on the 14th of Nisan at this exact time, 3pm, while that nation of Israel was beginning the process of killing their lambs.² Notice also in the passage how all the people had to slaughter their lamb.³ This shows us that all were involved in Jesus' death. Not just the Jews, not just the Romans... He died for your sin and mine. We all played a part.

Exodus 12:7 Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

With the lamb dead, the people then had to do two things: 1) They had to apply the blood onto the doorframes of their house and 2) they had to eat the lamb. Jesus Christ died for everyone but not everyone applies the results of His death to their life. John 6:53-54 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. (54) "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.' We apply the effects of His death by believing in Him and His work on our behalf, by receiving Him into our life and by feeding on His word.

Exodus 12:8 That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast (leaven).

It had to be eaten the same night for God's judgment and wrath poured out upon Jesus would be complete on that same day - the 14th Nisan. Notice also that it was eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. The bitter herbs reminded the Israelites of the bitterness they experienced in their life of slavery in Egypt. In like manner it reminds the believer of what their life was like before knowing the Lord. The unleavened bread reminds us that Jesus was sinless and that we are now 'unleavened' in Him (1 Cor 5:7). It also reminds us of the ongoing need for a holy walk.

Exodus 12:9-10 Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire--head, legs and inner parts. (10) Do not leave any of it till

The lamb could not be eaten raw or boiled. It had to be roasted with fire. Fire speaks of the judgment of God (Mal 3:1-5, 4:1-3, Matt 3:12) which would consume the lamb of God upon the cross. Any of the lamb that was left had to be fully burned.

morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.

Again this is pointing to the fact that Jesus' judgment was complete. The fires of God's wrath burned out upon the cross for all those that will place their trust in Him. But wrath remains for those that will not believe. John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Exodus 12:11 This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.

For the Israelites, the Passover was eaten in haste because they were to quickly leave Egypt and embark on their journey to the Promised Land. This has its fulfillment in the life of the believer today. We also should realize that believing and partaking of Christ begins a whole new journey. We are not to stay where we were in worldly thoughts and actions. The sandals should be on our feet and the staff in our hand for the new life is before us.

Exodus 12:12 On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn--both men and animals--and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.

For those in Egypt, who didn't have the blood applied over their household, God would strike down the firstborn of both men and animals. Why the firstborn you ask? In the Bible the firstborn often speaks of our natural, fleshly birth in comparison to our second 'spiritual' birth.⁴ The point is that we must be born again. The world is under the judgment of God. But there is a way of escape provided by God Himself!

Exodus 12:13 The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

In the days of the Exodus, the angel of death came and 'passed over' any that had the blood over their door frames. But death came to those that weren't under the blood. Please note that this salvation from the angel of death didn't come down to personal worthiness. The angel didn't go inside the house and see whether the inhabitants were worthy through their own righteousness to be spared. No! It just came down to whether they had believed God and followed that by eating the lamb and applying its blood as he had commanded. It is the same today. The provision of salvation is there to be accepted by grace through faith. It doesn't come down to personal worthiness. Only the Lamb is worthy! But we must follow God's way of salvation and not our own!

Exodus 12:14 This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD-- a lasting ordinance.

God wanted this day to be celebrated as a lasting ordinance among the children of Israel. Each year, between the 10th and 14th of Nisan this feast was celebrated. But also remember that is a rehearsal. It is a shadow of the reality that is in Christ. It is a pointer to the true Passover - the Lord Jesus Christ - the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.⁵

Jewish Observance

'Seder' (meaning order, arrangement) is the name given to the Jewish traditional observance of the Passover feast. The 'Seder' is generally a fifteen step process⁶ of celebrating the Passover

and feast of Unleavened Bread. One aspect I want to draw your attention to today is the four cups of wine that are used in the ceremony. Edward Chumney in his book 'The seven festivals of the Messiah' writes:

'During the course of the Seder, the four cups of wine that are served to the people present at the Seder are used in the following manner, and are called:

- 1. The cup of blessing (Luke 22:17; 1 Corinthians 10:16). This cup is called the cup of sanctification, or the Kiddush.*
- 2. The cup of wrath (Luke 22:42-44). This cup is not drunk, but is poured out on the table as the plagues of Egypt are recited. Yeshua drank of this cup for us in the Garden of Gethsemane and when He died on the tree.*
- 3. The cup of blessing, salvation, or redemption. This cup is filled to overflowing, symbolizing an overflowing salvation (Psalm 116:13).*
- 4. The cup of the kingdom (Luke 22:18,20; Matthew 26:28-29). Yeshua spoke of eating and drinking afresh in the Messianic age with His disciples after His resurrection.'*



I found this very interesting and it certainly sheds more light on 'the last supper' where Jesus wouldn't drink of the cup of the kingdom⁷: Luke 22:15-20 And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; (16) for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (17) And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; (18) for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." (19) And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." (20) And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

It also shed more light upon the 'cup of wrath' that He alone had to drink. As noted above, this is a cup that is poured out. Thank God again that all those that have come to know Jesus as their Passover Lamb, will not drink from God's cup of wrath. For us, it can be poured out and missed. But Jesus did drink of this cup on our behalf. This was the cup that He asked, if it were possible, might be taken from Him. Yet, even in the midst of facing such incredible difficulty, He again won the victory by finishing His prayer with the words 'yet not my will, but yours be done'. (Luke 22:42-44)

Always time for one last hymn... Especially this one!

Matthew 26:30 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The Bible says that at the end of the last supper, on Passover, Jesus and the disciples finished by singing a hymn and then went out to the Mount of Olives. When we think 'hymns' some beauties may come to mind like 'Amazing grace' or 'Be thou my vision'. But for the Jews, they think 'the Psalms'. On the feast days (most notably Passover and Tabernacles) the Jews would sing the 'Hallel' which is Psalms 113-118. They would close with Psalm 118 so it is likely that this was the Psalm sung by Jesus and His disciples as they finished their Passover together for the final time. Why is that interesting you ask? Well, it is interesting due to the content of the Psalm. And one final point before reading this part of this song - we need to remember that it wasn't just Jesus and the disciples singing this... it was all of Israel singing this Psalm during this special day of Passover. They were all declaring it at the top of the lungs! It is a song that the vast majority of Israel, with blinded eyes and hardened hearts, had no idea as to what they were saying at the time of Jesus' first coming. But it also foretells of a day when they will see the meaning of what they sang!



Psalms 118:21 I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, And You have become my salvation.

The Hebrew word for 'salvation' is 'Yeshua' - which is Jesus' name in Hebrew. The song thanks Yeshua (Jesus) for becoming my salvation.

Psalms 118:22-25 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone. (23) This is the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. (24) This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. (25) O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!

At this time of Passover they sang that the stone that the builders rejected (which is Jesus, Mat 21:42) has become the chief corner stone! And it is marvelous in our eyes! Again, they had no idea what they were singing at the time of Jesus' death on the cross but one day this Psalm will be sung and believed by Israel!

Psalms 118:26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.

This is a Messianic title. They sung this to Jesus at His 'triumphant entry' but still rejected Him 4 days later. Jesus said that Israel would have to say this once more before they would see Him again (Mat 23:39). This will happen in the days leading up to the return of Jesus.

Psalms 118:27 The LORD is God, and He has given us light; Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.

It is amazing that all of Israel would have been singing 'bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar' at the same time that Jesus was being nailed and possibly tied to the

cross. And yet they didn't understand the truth that God had ordained for them to sing at this time.

Conclusion

We have looked briefly at the first of seven feasts that God has ordained and have seen that it is directly fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ on our behalf. As noted, each verse in the Exodus 12 account of the Passover has direct relevance for Jesus and our life today. Chumney notes that '*Passover (Pesach) has been given by the rabbis the appropriate title of the "Feast of our Freedom !!!".*' And so it is. Everything starts with the Passover. But this is only the beginning... The next feast we will look at is that of Unleavened Bread and believe me when I say that it is equally as instructive and enlightening! God has given us His feasts as a prophetic insight into the work of the Lord Jesus Christ so we would do well to pay attention to them!

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1. The different order of the months between the civil and religious calendar can be seen below:
Civil Calendar
1. Tishrei 2. Cheshvan 3. Kislev 4. Tevet 5. Shevat 6. Adar 7. Nisan (Aviv) 8. Iyar 9. Sivan 10. Tammuz 11. Av 12. Elul

Religious Calendar (as established in Exodus 12)
1. Nisan (Aviv) 2. Iyar 3. Sivan 4. Tammuz 5. Av 6. Elul 7. Tishrei 8. Cheshvan 9. Kislev 10. Tevet 11. Shevat 12. Adare ↵
 2. In his book 'Unlocking the secrets of the feasts' Michael Norton notes something very interesting here. He spoke to a Jewish friend who said that in later times Jewish families would also take the lamb to the temple to be sacrificed. They would put the family name around the neck of the lamb to make sure that they received the same lamb back for the Passover dinner. Norton notes that when Jesus went to the cross, we read: 'Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS." (John 19:19) This inscription was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Norton then makes the very interesting point that this title in the Hebrew is "Y'shua HaNatzri V'Melech HaYehudim". Taking the first letters of each word spells 'YHVH' - the name of God! Norton writes 'Just like the Jews put their family name on their lamb for sacrifice at the Temple, God put His name on His Lamb for His family, which includes you and me!' ↵
 3. Edward Chumney in The seven festivals of the Messiah, page 45-46 gives this amazing parallel writing:
'On the fourteenth of Nisan, at the third hour of the day (9:00a.m.), the high priest took the lamb and ascended the altar so he could tie the lamb in place on the altar. At the same time on that day, Yeshua was tied to the tree on Mount Moriah (Mark 15:25). At the time of the evening sacrifice (3:00 p.m.) for Passover (Exodus 12:6), the high priest ascended the altar, cut the throat of the lamb with a knife, and said the words, "It is finished." These are the exact words said after giving a peace offering to G-d. At this same time, Yeshua died, saying these exact words in John 19:30. Yeshua died at exactly 3:00 p.m. (Matthew 27:45-46,50). ↵
 4. This is seen in the lives of several 'high profile' brothers in the Bible where the firstborn has traits of the 'flesh' - that is, unspiritual and self-focused. Some examples are Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob. First the fleshly, then the spiritual. ↵
 5. This statement by John the Baptist is truly remarkable. Jesus hadn't even begun His ministry when this statement is made. He hadn't spoken about Himself or what He intended to do. Yet

John the Baptist, speaking through the Spirit of God, summed up Jesus' mission for His first coming. He was to be the Lamb of God and in doing so He would pay for, and take away, the sins of the whole world! Remarkable! ↵

6. The fifteen steps in the Jewish Seder Passover are generally described as follows:
 1. Kadesh - Recite Kiddush, first cup of wine
 2. U'rchatz - Washing of your hands w/o a blessing
 3. Karpas - The Appetizer - dip green herbs into salt water, eat
 4. Yachatz - Breaking of the middle Matzah
 5. Maggid - Tell the story of the Exodus, second cup of wine
 6. Rachtzah - Wash your hands, with blessing
 7. Motzi - Blessing of the unleavened bread
 8. Matzah - Matzah is eaten
 9. Maror - Bitter herbs are blessed and eaten (horseradish/romaine lettuce)
 10. Korech - Matzah is dipped in bitter herbs and eaten
 11. Shulchan Orech - The meal is eaten (often lamb)
 12. Tzafun - Children search for afikomen, everyone eats a small piece (dessert)
 13. Berach - Grace after the meal, third cup of wine
 14. Hallel - Praise, read Psalms, fourth cup of wine
 15. Nirtzah - Seder is complete, accepted, give thanks

We will speak about the 'Matzah' and 'afikomen' in our next study of the Unleavened Bread feast. This is really interesting! ↵

7. You have probably heard the expression 'if you have two Jews you have three opinions'. Well, it should be noted that the cups of wine in the Seder are a little like that. There is some variation in what the cups stand for. Another common description of the four cups is:

1. The cup of blessing
2. The cup of praise
3. The cup of redemption
4. The cup of the kingdom

This is based mostly on the great promise God made to Israel in Exodus 6:6-8:
'Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. (7) I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. (8) And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.' " ↵