

Passover Celebration

“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.”

1 Corinthians 5:7

“For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.”

Exodus 12:23

Passover is a celebration that records God’s deliverance of the Jews in Egypt by means of the spilt blood of a Lamb that was placed on the doorposts and lintels of their homes. Indeed the original language indicates that the blood of the Lamb was struck to the doorpost and lintels; meaning that the Lamb was in fact struck by God on behalf of those who embraced it (Isaiah 53:4-6). Consequently, when the Angel of Death passed over their homes they were saved because he saw the blood on their doors. All of this is a picture of what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross and so in the symbolism of this Passover Celebration we learn more about what God, in Christ, has done for us.

The meal Seder, or order of the ceremony, surrounds four cups of wine:

- 1. The cup of Sanctification and Thanksgiving**
- 2. The cup of Blessing**
- 3. The cup of Redemption...and,**
- 4. The cup of Elijah**

The drinking of these four cups tell us different facets of the Passover or Redemption story and we learn a lot about what it means to follow Jesus Christ by doing this.

The Passover Seder

The question put to us by the young people in the meeting: Why is this night different from all other nights? (Exodus 12:26)

Answer: It is the night when God by Jesus Christ delivered us from our slavery to sin and ungodliness. Jesus said:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”

John 8:34-36

1. The drinking of the Cup of Sanctification and Thanksgiving

The hiding of the Afikomen. The Afikomen is the middle piece of three pieces of the Matza Bread. It is wrapped in a cloth and hidden away and then brought out later when the cup of redemption and therefore Communion is celebrated. It is wrapped to remind us of the burial of Christ. Also, Matza bread is unleavened, a picture of the sinless life of Christ; is striped; a picture of the lashes of a whip applied to His body and pierced; a picture of the nails that pierced his hands and feet. At this point the ritual washing of hands takes place by which the participant sanctifies (sets apart) himself/herself to engage in this holy celebration. It is at this point that Jesus got up and washed His disciples' feet (John 13:3-5, 14-15).

The Dipping

Karpas or Parsley and salt-A reminder of the hyssop by which the blood of the lamb was applied (struck) to the doorposts and lintel of the home (Exodus 12:21-22) and salt; a reminder of the tears of the Egyptians and that of God.

Charoset or Apples and walnuts-A reminder of the harsh servitude that the Jews lived under in Egypt and by which they had to make bricks.

Maror- Horseradish and the reminder of the bitterness of sin.

2. The drinking of the Cup of Blessing

We now recount the blessings of God upon our lives. This part of the celebration is called the Dayeinu or "It would have been enough." We remember that God has richly blessed us in Christ Jesus and all because of His great love for us in sending Jesus into the world to rescue us from the slavery of sin and the domination of the Devil over our lives. So, after each statement we exclaim Dayeinu!

If God only took us out of Egypt (Sin). Dayeinu!

If God only took us out of Egypt and judged the Egyptians (The world and the Devil).

Dayeinu!

If God only parted the Red Sea (Overcame our carnal hearts). Dayeinu!

If God only fed us with Manna (The word of God) for forty years in the wilderness. Dayeinu!

If God only gave us Sabbath (Rest). Dayeinu!

If God only gave us Laws (Teachings about his character) at Mt. Sinai. Dayeinu!

If God only brought us into the Promised Land (Heaven). Dayeinu!

The saying of grace for the meal.

After the meal the Afikomen, symbol of Jesus' life and passion will be found. It is hidden away to remind us that Christ is not easily recognized by us. We search for Him as God, His Father, draws us to Him (John 6:65).

The Celebration of Communion Luke 22:14-23 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

It is to be noted that it was after the meal that Jesus inaugurated the celebration of communion.

The bread is now a symbol of his broken body and the cup of wine of His blood poured out for sinners on the cross. This is the new covenant that Jeremiah the Prophet wrote about in chapter 31:31-34.

The Cup of Redemption

The Passover concludes with the singing of the Great Hallel (Psalms 113-118), a collection of the Psalms; or more correctly the Sepher Tehillim, that is The Book of Praises! (Mark 14:26)

The Cup of Elijah

This last cup gives expression to the fact that we are filled with joy and thanksgiving to God for His great redemptive work in our lives and that we are enthusiastically looking forward to the day when Elijah will come back and herald again the second coming of Jesus. This is why we celebrate the Lord's death "until He comes again" (I Corinthians 11:26) (Malachi 4:4-6)

Even so Lord Jesus come! Amen!

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