

THE TELLING

## THE PASSOVER SEDER

The Telling

“Let my people go that they may serve me.”

A Haggadah: A Guide for Celebrating the Passover Meal

The Telling

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# The Passover Seder

## A Haggadah: A Guide for Celebrating the Passover Meal

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1. The Hebrew word “seder” means “order” because the night consists of 15 orderly steps that each seder follows (indicated by a number and its Hebrew equivalent).

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## Introductory Readings (Pages 4-9)<sup>1</sup>

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*“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses...” (Exodus 12:15)*

**Reader:** Passover is a story that has been told for hundreds of years. It is a story of the miraculous transformation from slavery to freedom. It is a story that tells of God revealing Himself to the world and demonstrating authority over the earth and over the gods of Egypt. It is a story of God’s divine love for His children. It is a story of redemption.

**Reader:** To prepare for Passover, we have removed leaven from our homes.<sup>2</sup> The physical act of searching for leaven should inspire us to search for the sin in our own lives. Throughout this seder and the remaining days of Passover, we should closely scrutinize our lives and honestly answer questions like these: Are there any areas of repetitive sin in our lives? Does our sin cause distress to others? Do we think ungodly thoughts? Do we have unrighteous relationships? And, what needs to be thrown out of our lives?

**Reader:** The seder plate holds the ceremonial items of Passover. The elements will help us to remember different parts of the Exodus story and will give us opportunities to tell about our own personal freedom from slavery to sin. Tradition states that each individual, in any age, should tell

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1. If time permits, read these together after your search for leaven (Appendix C) is finished but before you begin your seder.

2. See Appendix B & C.

his children how he was saved from Egypt, as if he had been physically present when God delivered Israel.<sup>1</sup> The singular purpose for having a seder is to pass it on to the next generation.

**Reader:** Tonight is also a night to remember that the Messiah earnestly desired to eat the Passover with His disciples before He died on the cross.<sup>2</sup> Jesus used the familiar items on the seder plate and the four cups to explain the mystery of God's plan to them. Tonight, as we eat the matzah and drink the cups, we proclaim the Lord's death until he returns!<sup>3</sup>

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1. See Exodus 13:3-8.

2. See Luke 22:15.

3. See 1 Corinthians 11:26.

# The Seder Plate

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**Reader:** Each of the foods on the seder plate symbolizes a part of the Passover story.<sup>1</sup>



## The Unleavened Bread (Matzah)



**Reader:** The matzah is unleavened to remind us that the children of Israel left Egypt in such a hurry, that the bread didn't have time to rise. The matzah also reminds us that Jesus is the bread of life, Who was without sin.

## The Shank Bone (Z'roa)



**Reader:** The roasted shank bone reminds us of the first Passover lambs, whose blood on the door posts caused the Angel of Death to pass over the Israelite's homes. The Hebrew word for the bone means "arm" and reminds us of the "outstretched

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1. As each section is read, make sure to let the kids look at, hold and smell each item.



arm” with which the LORD took Israel out of Egypt.<sup>2</sup> It also reminds us of the manner in which Jesus died on the cross.

### *The Bitter Herbs (Maror)*



**Reader:** The bitter herbs represent the bitterness of slavery in Egypt. They can also remind us of the bitterness of our slavery to sin before the LORD sets us free.

### *The Apple/Nut Mixture (Charoset)*



**Reader:** The apple and nut mixture is made to resemble the mortar with which the Israelites built the Egyptian cities. It's taste is sweet, reminding us that one day we will live in a city not built by human hands.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Leafy, Green Vegetable (Karpas)*



**Reader:** The green vegetable, represented by parsley, reminds us of hyssop, a leafy, sponge-like plant that was used to spread the blood of the lamb on the door posts that first Passover. It also reminds us of spring time, the promise of new life and new beginnings.

### *The Boiled Egg (Beitzah)*



**Reader:** The egg is a symbol of mourning, reminding us of the destruction of the Temple. We mourn because without the Temple, we are not able to offer the festival offering, which is a symbol of peace between God and man.

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2. See Exodus 6:6.

3. See 2 Corinthians 5:1.

# The Four Cups: The Cups of Salvations

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**Reader:** During the course of the seder, we will drink four cups of wine or juice, which are symbols of joy and thanksgiving. The four cups represent the four-fold promise the LORD made to the children of Israel in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The LORD promised to sanctify Israel, deliver her, redeem her and give her hope.

## *The 1st Cup: Sanctification*

**Reader:** The first cup is called the cup of sanctification. God chose Israel to be His holy, separated people, as it says, “*Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.’*”



## *The 2nd Cup: Deliverance*

**Reader:** The second cup is the cup of deliverance. God promised to deliver Israel because, as slaves, Israel could do nothing to free herself, as it says, “*... and I will deliver you from slavery to them.*”

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1. See Exodus 6:6-7.

### *The 3rd Cup: Redemption*

**Reader:** The third cup is the cup of redemption. God revealed that His plan of redemption would come at a great price and would include His power and His judgement, as it says, “... and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.”

### *The 4th Cup: Hope*

**Reader:** The fourth cup is called the cup of hope. God spoke of an immediate hope that Israel would be His people and live in the Promised Land of Israel.

The fourth cup also speaks of a future hope of redemption which will never come to an end, when everyone will know that He is the LORD<sup>1</sup> and when Jesus will reign as King in Jerusalem, as it says, “I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.”

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1. See Jeremiah 31:31-40.

## Lighting the Candles

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**Host:** Before we kindle the festival lights, let's ask God to bring each one of us personal meaning during this Passover celebration. (*Pray.*)

☀ (*It is customary for a woman to light two candles at the start of an appointed time of the LORD. Light the candles now, and say the blessing below.*)

**The person lighting the candles:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who sanctifies us by your commandments and saves us through the blood of The Lamb, in Whose name we kindle the Passover lights.

# The First Cup: The Cup of Sanctification (#1 Kadesh)

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☀️ *(Fill the cups with wine or juice, but don't drink them until after the last blessing. It is customary, throughout the seder, to pour one another's juice to illustrate that we are free people.)*

**Reader:** The first cup represents God's promise to free Israel from the burdens of the Egyptians. Israel needed God's intervention because she could not free herself from slavery. Nor did she have the freedom to worship God. God said to Pharaoh, "Let my people go, that they may serve Me." But, because Pharaoh refused, God made this first promise to set Israel apart.

**Reader:** At His last seder, Jesus took the cup and said a blessing.<sup>1</sup> In imitation of our Master, let's read the traditional blessings and then drink this first cup as a means of separating this time apart as holy.

**All:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who has granted Gentiles repentance that leads to life.<sup>2</sup>

**AIP:** Blessed are you, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who has chosen Israel for Your service from among the nations, exalted her above every tongue and sanctified her with Your commandments and by the blood of The Lamb, Jesus the Messiah. In love, You have given Israel appointed

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1. See Luke 22:17-18.

2. This blessing, said by Gentiles, is based on Acts 11:18.

3. The following blessings are based on the traditional blessings said at the beginning of Passover.

festivals for gladness and times for joy. For You have chosen Israel, and You have sanctified her above all peoples and granted to her, as a heritage, Your holy festivals. Blessed are you, LORD our God, Who sanctifies Israel and the festivals.

**All:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who has kept us in life and sustained us and enabled us to reach this festive season.

**All:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

☀️ *(Drink the 1st cup now: The Cup of Sanctification.)*

## Washing Hands (#2 Urchatz)



**Reader:** Washing hands is a means of separating this time apart as holy. It is a symbolic act of purification,<sup>1</sup> which reminds us to come before the LORD with clean hands and clean hearts, as it says, *“Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.”*<sup>2</sup>

**Reader:** Tonight, let us also remember that Jesus washed His disciples’ feet at the beginning of their seder. *“When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, ‘Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.’”*<sup>3</sup>

☀ (Each person can wash his hands. Or, you can wash one another’s hands in remembrance of Jesus’ example. You may want to play music during this time.<sup>4</sup>)

1. The priests began each day of Temple service with a complete immersion for ritual purity. Just before approaching the altar or the sanctuary, they would wash their hands and feet again with water.

2. Psalm 24:3-4

3. John 13:12-17

4. Recorded song suggestion: “The Pesach Song” by Steve McConnell

## Dipping Parsley' (#3 Karpas)

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**Reader:** This first food eaten at our seder represents the first event in the Exodus story. The red wine vinegar tells the story of when Joseph's brothers dipped his coat into goat's blood to show their father that Joseph was dead. This betrayal initiated their eventual descent into Egypt.

Dipping parsley into the vinegar represents redemption of that event and recalls the very first Passover in Egypt. Parsley reminds us of the hyssop that was used to place the blood of the lamb upon the doorposts in Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

This ritual also reminds us of Jesus on the cross when he said, *"I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, 'It is finished,' and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*<sup>3</sup>

**All:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the earth.

☀️ (*Dip the parsley into the red wine vinegar twice, and eat it.*<sup>4</sup>)

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1. Modern seders use salt water as a substitute for red wine vinegar. But during the days of Jesus, red wine vinegar was used. Salt water is said to represent the tears shed by the Israelites because of their slavery and the salt of the Red Sea.

2. See Exodus 12:22.

3. See John 19:28-30.

4. Recorded song suggestions: "Deliver Us," the Prince of Egypt Soundtrack and "You Were There," by Michelle Gold.



## Breaking the Middle Matzah (#4 Yachatz)



☀ (Take three matzot in your hand as you explain this part of the seder.)



**Host:** There are many interpretations of what these three matzot represent. Tonight, this first matzah will represent the unleavened bread Israel ate in their haste to leave Egypt. The second matzah, called the Bread of Affliction, is considered a token of the Messiah. The third matzah will represent us being able to live our lives free from sin because of our faith in Messiah.

In a seder like ours, where a sacrificial lamb is not present, the middle matzah symbolizes the Passover Lamb. Since a Passover lamb can only be eaten within the walls of Jerusalem, when the Temple is standing, when a family celebrates Passover away from Jerusalem, the second matzah is eaten, later in the seder, in the lamb's absence.

Just as the matzah has holes, so it will not rise, and has bruises left by the heat during baking, and has stripes left by the grate on which it was cooked, so too, Jesus, was *“wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and by His stripes we are healed.”*<sup>1</sup>

Just as this middle matzah will return at the end of our seder, so too Jesus will return one day. This ritual reminds us that Jesus' body was broken; He was buried, and, then, He rose from the dead.

☀ (Break the middle matzah in two. Put one piece back between the two whole matzot and the other piece in an afikoman bag.<sup>2</sup> During the meal, hide the afikomen bag so that the children can find it after the meal.)

1. See Isaiah 53:5.

2. An afikoman bag is just a small bag that the matza can be put into.

# The Four Questions<sup>1</sup>

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**A child<sup>2</sup>:** Why is this night different from all other nights?

**Reader:** Because once the people of Israel were slaves to Pharaoh, and on this very night, the LORD, in His goodness and mercy, brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. It was also on this night that Jesus gave His life for our freedom.

Question #1



**A child:** Every other night we eat bread. Why do we only eat matzah tonight?

**Reader:** Matzah was the bread of slaves and the poor because it was cheap and easy to make. We eat matzah to remember we couldn't even wait for the bread to rise before leaving Egypt. Matzah is a sign that God loves us and wants to deliver us quickly.

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1. Each one of these four practices is symbolic of slavery, freedom, or both.
  2. Traditionally, the youngest child asks these questions. Children were regarded as learners in Jesus' day and were teachable. (See Mark 10:15.) Judaica stores sell finger puppets that are fun for the children to use while asking. Recorded song suggestion: "What Makes Dis Night" by Reality Shock.

### Question #2



**A child:** Every other night we eat all kinds of herbs. Why do we only eat bitter herbs tonight?

**Reader:** We eat bitter herbs to remember the bitterness of slavery, and how, without God's help, it is impossible to gain freedom.

### Question #3



**A child:** Every other night we don't dip our vegetables. Why do we dip our vegetables two times tonight?

**Reader:** The first time we dip parsley in red wine because it represents the story of how we became slaves and reminds us of the blood on the doorposts that kept the firstborn safe. The second time we will dip bitter herbs in an apple mixture to remind us of the cement used to create bricks in Egypt. But, the sweetness of the apples also helps us to remember that God can sweeten the bitterness and suffering of our lives.

### Question #4

**A child:** Every other night we sit while we eat. Why do we recline while we eat tonight?

**Reader:** We recline while we eat because that is how royalty and nobility eat, and it reminds us that we are children of the King!

## Telling the Passover Story (#5 Maggid)



**Reader:** Abraham's father Terach, worshiped idols. But God called Abraham to leave his home and go the land of Canaan. God told Abraham that his children would be strangers in another land for 400 years. Then God would judge that nation and send Abraham's children a deliverer.

**Reader:** God promised Abraham that He would make him a great nation and a blessing to all the families of the earth. God blessed Abraham with the miraculous birth of his son, Isaac. But then, God asked Abraham to sacrifice his one and only son.

**Reader:** God spared Isaac because of Abraham's faithfulness. And then, God made the same promise to Isaac as He had to Abraham, that He would make him into a great nation. Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. God made a covenant with Jacob, and Jacob was faithful to God. God changed Jacob's name to Israel. Israel had twelve sons.

**Reader:** A great sorrow came upon Jacob for he lost his most beloved son, Joseph. Joseph had been secretly sold to a caravan of Ishmaelites. The brothers told their father that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast, and Jacob grieved deeply for his son.

**Reader:** Joseph was faithful to God, and because he interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, he was made a ruler over all Egypt. When the great famine came, Joseph saved his entire family from certain death. It was in the midst of this famine

that Jacob and his sons moved to Egypt and settled in the land of Goshen.

**Reader:** A new Pharaoh came to power in Egypt who chose not to know Joseph and honor his family. Pharaoh worried about the number and the strength of Israel, and so, he ordered their newborn baby boys to be drowned in the Nile river. He also forced the children of Israel into slavery. But, one Hebrew baby was hidden away among the reeds of the river. One day when Pharaoh's daughter went down to the river to bathe, she spied the baby in the basket and took him to be her own. She named him Moses.<sup>1</sup>

**Reader:** One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked upon their burdens. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and Moses killed the Egyptian. To escape Pharaoh's wrath, Moses fled to the desert of Sinai. There he encountered the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the burning bush. God had heard the cries of His people in bondage to slavery and asked Moses to lead His people out of Egypt.

**Reader:** Moses and his brother Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, *"The LORD, the God of the Hebrews sent me to you saying, 'Let my people go that they may serve me.'"*<sup>2</sup> Pharaoh refused saying, *"I know not your God!"*<sup>3</sup> Now the contest of the gods was to begin: the God of Israel versus the gods of Egypt, Moses versus Pharaoh.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Someone dressed up as Moses could appear at this time.

2. See Exodus 7:16.

3. See Exodus 5:2.

4. A fun Readers Theatre type book to read is Let My People Go by Tilda Balsley.

# The Ten Plagues



☀ (Each person can be in charge of a plague and act it out.<sup>1</sup>)

**Reader:** The Egyptian gods were supposed to be in control of the forces of nature. Yet, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob brought His people out with great acts of judgment against these gods. The purpose of the plagues was that the Egyptians, and, in fact, the whole world, would know that the LORD is God. God wanted to declare that *He* was the rightful owner of His people, not the pagan gods of Egypt.

**Reader:** Since Pharaoh said he did not know the LORD, the first three plagues were to prove the LORD's existence. The next three plagues were to separate the LORD's people from Egypt. The last three plagues were to prove that the LORD was unmatched by any power.

*Plague 1: Water turned to blood.<sup>2</sup>*

**Reader:** When the Nile river turned into blood, the god of the Nile,<sup>3</sup> represented by a crocodile, was mocked because the

1. Finger puppets, masks and “toys” add to the fun. Put each plague’s “things” into a paper bag and pass the bags out. See the footnote on each plague for ideas. As similar plagues appear in Revelation, references are noted with each plague. Recorded song suggestion, “The Plagues,” The Prince of Egypt Soundtrack.
2. Prepare a large, clear pitcher, empty except for some red food coloring or Kool-aid placed inconspicuously at the bottom. Pour water in the pitcher and watch the water turn to blood. See Revelation 11:6.
3. (The names of the pagan gods will appear in the same order as is in the text.) God of the Nile, [Hapi], guardian of the Nile, [Khnum], goddess of the Nile, [Tauret], god of the underworld, [Osiris]

crocodiles had to leave the water. Even though the magicians were also able to turn water into blood, the guardian of the Nile, the goddess of the Nile and the god of the underworld, were all powerless to stop this plague.

### *Plague 2: Frogs<sup>1</sup>*

**Reader:** When frogs literally covered the land, the goddess of fruitfulness,<sup>2</sup> symbolized by a frog's head, was derided. The magicians added to the misery of the frogs by producing even more frogs. The frogs found their way even into the kneading bowls of bread. Because frogs were holy to the Egyptians, they could not be killed. So when they died, they were gathered into heaps, and the whole land stank.

### *Plague 3: Lice<sup>3</sup>*

**Reader:** When the sacred dust of the ground turned into lice, it was a slap in the face to the earth god.<sup>4</sup> The lice made the Egyptian priests ceremonially unclean so that they could not even plead to their gods to make the plague stop. Pharaoh's magicians could not copy this plague as they had with the first two.

### *Plague 4: Swarms<sup>5</sup>*

**Reader:** Swarms came next. The swarms could have been scarab beetles, known as the Egyptian fly. The scarab beetle was the sacred emblem of the Sun god,<sup>6</sup> the king of the gods. The beetles destroyed wood and were like a dog fly that fastens itself to humans. It is also possible that "swarms" referred to wild beasts that invaded the land. Regardless

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1. Buy plastic frogs, or hop around the room. See Revelation 16:13-14.

2. Goddess of fruitfulness, [Heqt]

3. Toss bugs into the lap next to you, or itch like crazy. See Revelation 9:20.

4. Earth god, [Geb], Sun god [Ra]

5. Use swarms of toy bugs or wild beasts such as lions, snakes, bears or gorillas. See Revelation 6:8.

6. Sun god [Ra]

of what kind of swarms came, it was with this plague that the LORD made a distinction between His people and the Egyptians. No swarms could be found in the land of Goshen, so that Pharaoh would know that “*the LORD was in the midst of the earth.*”<sup>1</sup>

#### *Plague 5: Livestock died*<sup>2</sup>

**Reader:** When the livestock died, the goddess of love<sup>3</sup> was ridiculed. The god of fertility, represented by a bull, and the goddess of the desert, represented by a cow, were unable to keep the livestock alive.

#### *Plague 6: Boils*<sup>4</sup>

**Reader:** Moses threw ashes into the air in the sight of Pharaoh, causing boils to break out on man and beast. The magicians could not even stand before Moses thus insulting the god of medicine, the god in charge of healing and the god of medical learning.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Plague 7: Hail*<sup>6</sup>

**Reader:** When hail mixed with fire rained down and destroyed crops and every living being left in the fields died, the sky god and goddess, the god who protected the crops and the wind god were all taunted.<sup>7</sup> Again, Pharaoh’s heart was hardened.

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1. See Exodus 8:22.

2. Play dead or pretend a stuffed cow dies. See Revelation 6:8.

3. Goddess of love, [Bast], god of fertility, [Apis], goddess of the desert, [Hathor]

4. Prepare gloves that have red spots on them. Or, pop bubble wrap. See Revelation 16:1-2.

5. God of medicine, [Imhotep], god in charge of healing, [Serapis], god of medical learning, [Thoth]

6. Have a hail ball fight with marshmallows or styrofoam balls. See Revelation 8:7, 16:21.

7. Sky god/goddess, [Horus & Nut], protector of the crops, [Isis & Seth], wind god, [Shu]



### *Plague 8: Locusts<sup>1</sup>*

**Reader:** The goddess of crops, the god of grain and the goddess of fertility and crops<sup>2</sup> stood silently by as locusts devoured what was left of Egypt. As the locusts covered the face of the land, the land grew dark. Pharaoh's servants tried to convince him to let the men go pleading, "Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?" Yet, Pharaoh refused to let *all* the people go.

### *Plague 9: Darkness<sup>3</sup>*

**Reader:** The LORD caused a darkness to come upon the land for three days that was so dark the darkness could literally be felt. The sun god, the king of the gods, the god of creation and the god of the sunset <sup>4</sup> were all unable to bring light to Egypt. Pharaoh conceded to let the people go but without their flocks, which were necessary for worship. When Moses refused to go without the necessary sacrifices and burnt offerings, Pharaoh threatened Moses that on the day he saw Moses, Moses would die.

### *Plague 10: Death of the firstborn<sup>5</sup>*

**Reader:** When all of Egypt's firstborn died, the Egyptian gods failed to keep Pharaoh's son safe: the god who presided at childbirth, the god of procreation, the god who guarded Pharaoh and the god who guarded life.<sup>6</sup> Pharaoh finally conceded to let the LORD's people go.

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1. Buy plastic grasshoppers, or hop around the room. See Rev. 9:3.

2. Goddess of crops, [Ermutet], god of grain, [Nepri], goddess of fertility and crops, [Thermuthis]

3. Have everyone put on sunglasses, turn off the lights, or have a blindfold contest to see who can get around the room. See Rev. 8:12.

4. Sun god, [Ra], king of the gods, [Atum], sun god and creator, [Ptah], god of the sunset, [Tem]

5. Have a moment of silence for those who died. See Rev. 20:7-10.

6. God who presided at childbirth, [Meskhenet], god of procreation, [Min], guardian of Pharaoh, [Renenutet], guardian of life, [Selket]

☀️ *(Pour the second cup, but do not drink it at this time. The second cup will be drunk after the Psalms of Praise are recited.)*

**Host:** Our full cups are a symbol of complete joy. And yet, our joy cannot be complete because so many suffered. Therefore, we are going to decrease the juice in our cups, as a visual reminder of the price of redemption. We will recite the name of each of the plagues as we dip our finger into the juice and place a drop on our plates. Let each drop represent hope and also a prayer that people everywhere will cast out the plagues that threaten them.

☀️ *(It is customary to place ten drops of wine around your plate, one for each plague. The host can recite each plague slowly, one at a time, while everyone else repeats the plague name after the host.)*

**Host:** Blood.  
Frogs.  
Lice.  
Swarms.  
Death of the livestock.  
Boils.  
Hail.  
Locusts.  
Darkness.  
Death of the firstborn.

# “It Would Have Been Enough” (Dayenu)

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**Reader:** The customary song “Dayenu” means “it would have been enough.” “Dayenu” celebrates each step toward freedom, as if it were enough by itself and then goes on to celebrate the next step. If we reject one step because it is not the whole deliverance, we will never be able to achieve freedom in its totality.

☀ (Sing, recite or play<sup>1</sup> the Dayenu song.)

## Dayenu (Traditional Lyrics)

If the LORD had brought us out of Egypt, but had not punished the Egyptians,  
it would have been enough

If the LORD had punished the Egyptians, but had not destroyed their idols,  
it would have been enough

If the LORD had destroyed their idols, but had not killed their firstborn,  
it would have been enough

If the LORD had killed their firstborn, but had not given us their wealth,  
it would have been enough

If the LORD had given us their wealth, but had not split the Sea,  
it would have been enough

If the LORD had split the Sea, but had not led us across it on dry land,  
it would have been enough

If the LORD had led us across it on dry land, but had not drowned the Egyptians  
it would have been enough

If the LORD had drowned the Egyptians, but had not taken care of our needs in  
the desert for 40 years,  
it would have been enough

If the LORD had taken care of our needs in the desert for 40 years, but had not  
fed us the manna,  
it would have been enough

If the LORD had fed us the manna, but had not given us the Sabbath,  
it would have been enough

If the LORD had given us the Sabbath, but had not brought us to Mt. Sinai,  
it would have been enough

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1. Recorded song suggestion: “Dayenu” by Michelle Gold.

If the LORD had brought us to Mt. Sinai, but had not given us the Torah,  
it would have been enough  
If the LORD had given us the Torah, but had not brought us to the land of Israel,  
it would have been enough  
If the LORD had brought us into the land of Israel, but had not built the Temple,  
it would have been enough.

## **Dayenu (by Michelle Gold)**

If You had only blessed this day in history, rescued my people from the darkness of the enemy and never given us more than we ever hoped or planned, we would have praised You for Your mighty hand and faithful love, said it would have been enough.

You brought us out from slavery, from our oppression to a life that's free. From sadness to joy. From mourning to dancing. Hallelujah.

Dayenu. Dayenu. Dayenu. It would've been enough. (2X) Dayenu.

If You had only given us the blessing of your love and never shown us all the wonders that we saw. Your loving voice has given us wisdom and power, we would praise You every hour, the things we're not worthy of, saying it would've been enough.

Your Word has lasted throughout the years. It's liberation from all my fears. And all the miracles, and the future of the world is yet to come. Hallelujah.

Dayenu. Dayenu. Dayenu. It would've been enough. (2X) Dayenu.

And if Yeshua had only come to atone, a paschal lamb for the redemption of my soul, giving us freedom, giving us heaven here on earth, we would have praised You for Your matchless worth and mercy on us, saying it would've been enough.

He died and rose again, giving us life. He lives in our hearts, and we will never die. There's a mansion in the sky, where there's no more tears and no more wars to fight. Hallelujah.

Dayenu. Dayenu. Dayenu. It would've been enough. (2X) Dayenu.

Give thanks. Dayenu, it would've been enough.

## Psalms of Praise (Hallelujah)

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**Reader:** *Hallelujah.<sup>1</sup> Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. Let the name of the LORD be praised, both now and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the LORD is to be praised.*

**Reader:** *The LORD is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens. Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people. He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Hallelujah.*

**Reader:** *When Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of foreign tongue, Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion. The sea looked and fled, the Jordan turned back; the mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.*

**Reader:** *Why was it, O sea, that you fled, O Jordan, that you turned back, you mountains, that you skipped like rams, you hills, like lambs? Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turned the rock into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water.*

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1. The word "Hallelujah" means "Praise the Lord."

**Reader:** “... they sang a new song: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.’”<sup>1</sup>

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1. See Revelation 5:9-10.

## The Second Cup: The Cup of Deliverance! (#6 Rachtzah)

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**Reader:** The second cup represents God’s second promise of deliverance. In Luke’s account of Jesus’ last Passover seder with the disciples, he began with this second cup to emphasize that Jesus is our deliverer.<sup>2</sup>

The word “deliverance” implies that the one who needs to be rescued is helpless to affect any change on his or her own. The root word for deliverance in Hebrew carries the ideas of rescue, escape, snatching away and deliverance. As we drink this cup, let us be reminded that the LORD Himself rescued us from the darkness of our enemy.

**Reader:** *“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”<sup>3</sup>*

**All:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe,  
Who creates the fruit of the vine.

☀ (Drink the 2nd cup: The Cup of Deliverance.)

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1. The second cup is drunk only after the telling of the Exodus story.

2. See Luke 22:14-17.

3. See Colossians 1:13-14.

## Washing Hands (Urchatz)

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- ☀ (It is customary to wash hands a second time now with the following blessing: Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who sanctifies us by Your commandments and teaches us regarding washing hands.)

## Blessing for the Matzah (#7 Motzi #8 Matzah)

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- ☀ (Each person should break off three pieces of matzah and hold them as you collectively say the blessings.)

**All:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth.

**All:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who sanctifies us by Your commandments, and teaches us about eating matzah.<sup>1</sup>

- ☀ (Eat a piece of the upper and middle matzah. The bottom matzah is for the korech on the next page.)

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1. Leviticus 23: 6 says, “And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.”



## Bitter Herbs (#9 Maror)

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**Reader:** Now we will eat bitter herbs combined with the apple/nut mixture to remember the bitterness of slavery and how it can be sweetened by God's redemption.

**All:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who sanctifies us by your commandments and teaches us about eating bitter herbs.<sup>1</sup>

☀ (Eat bitter herbs<sup>2</sup> dipped in charoset.<sup>3</sup>)

## Matzah and Bitter Herb Sandwich (#10 Korech)

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**Reader:** Now we'll eat matzah, bitter herbs and the apple/nut mixture together. The custom in Jesus' day was for the host to dip bitter herbs and lamb into the charoset to make a 'sandwich' and divide it among his guests.

At this point in the seder, Jesus *"troubled in spirit, testified, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.'* The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining

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1. Numbers 9:11 says, "In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight they shall keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs."

2. Bitter herbs, such as horseradish.

3. See Appendix A for a charoset recipe.



## Search for Afikoman (#12 Tzafun)<sup>1</sup>



☀ (The children should search for the hidden afikoman. It is customary to buy, [redeem], the afikoman from the child for money. After the host buys it back, hold the afikoman and continue with the following.)

**Host:** This is the time when Jesus said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”<sup>2</sup> In ancient times, the Passover lamb was the last food to be eaten. Without the Temple and the passover lamb, this piece of Afikoman is eaten in place of the lamb.

This matzah, which was broken, wrapped, hidden and recovered reminds us of Jesus. Before we share this afikoman, let’s examine ourselves, as the Scriptures teach and reflect on taking and eating this matza.

*“Whoever, therefore, eats the bread of drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”<sup>3</sup>*

☀ (Give a piece of the afikoman to each person to eat. It would be appropriate to pray, have some time for inner reflection or to play a worship song.)

**Host:** As we eat this last piece of matzah, let’s remember that it proclaims the Lord’s death and the surety that He will return.<sup>4</sup>

☀ (Eat the matzah.)

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1. “Tzafun” means “hidden.” “Afikoman” means “that which comes after” and traditionally means “dessert.”

2. See Matthew 26:26.

3. See 1 Corinthians 11:27-28.

4. See 1 Corinthians 11:26.

## Blessing After the Meal<sup>1</sup> (#13 Barech)

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**All:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who feeds the entire world with His goodness, with grace, with kindness, with mercy. He gives food to all flesh. His kindness forever endures. And through His great goodness we have never lacked, may we never lack food for all of eternity. For the sake of His great name because He is God Who feeds and sustains and benefits all and prepares food for all of His creatures which He has created. Blessed are You, LORD, Who feeds all. Amen.

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1. Blessings after meals are based on Deuteronomy 8:10, “*And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.*” Traditionally, there are four blessings. This is the first blessing.

## The Third Cup: The Cup of Redemption, Also Called the Cup of Blessing<sup>1</sup>

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☀ (Pour the 3rd cup, but wait to drink it.)

**Reader:** The third cup represents God's third promise: "I will redeem you." It is a picture of the Father's willingness to pay the necessary price of redemption.

In Egypt, the price of freedom was the lives of the firstborn and also the lambs who gave their lives to protect Israel's firstborn.

Two thousand years ago, the Father was willing to pay the price of eternal redemption even when that price was nothing short of giving His son's life.

This is the cup of which Jesus said, *"Drink all of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."*<sup>2</sup>

A blood covenant represents the strongest of all relationships. None is more sacred or binding. As the lamb's blood atoned for Israel's firstborn, we too are covered by Jesus' blood. Those who bear the marking of the covenant blood can enter into God's presence. It is by this cup that we may see God and live.

**Reader:** Jesus commanded all of His disciples to celebrate Passover in remembrance of Him. Paul reminded his readers of this when he said, *"For I received from the Lord*

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1. It is called the cup of blessing because it accompanies the blessing after the meal. See Luke 22:20 and 1 Corinthians 11:25.

2. See Matthew 26:28.

*what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'"<sup>1</sup>*

Let's drink this cup in gratitude for the freedom the LORD granted Israel from slavery and for the freedom the LORD grants us from sin.

**All:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe,  
Who creates the fruit of the vine.

☀️ *(Drink the 3rd cup: The Cup of Redemption. Each person should save a little to pour into the Cup of Elijah in the next section.)*

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1. See 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.

# Elijah the Prophet: A Rehearsal of Anticipation<sup>1</sup>

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**Reader:** This evening is referred to as “a night of watchings.” The Hebrew phrase is plural because it refers to two redemptions: the redemption from Egypt and the final redemption of peace that is still yet to come.

Because the future Messianic redemption will be heralded by Elijah, he is remembered tonight. In fact, Elijah has three eras of ministry: one during the time of King Ahab, one when John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah and one when Elijah will announce and anoint Jesus as King when Jesus returns.

May the Merciful One send us Elijah the Prophet, may he be remembered for good, to herald good news, salvation and comfort, as the verse states, *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers.”*<sup>2</sup>

☀ (Each person can now pour a little left from their 3rd cup into the “Elijah” cup symbolizing each person’s responsibility toward bringing about redemption in the world. This would make a 5th cup, an allusion to the final redemption that Elijah will someday announce.)

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1. It is a rehearsal of anticipation because we still await the day when Elijah will herald the coming of Messiah, and Jesus will be crowned King over the whole earth and bring the final redemption of peace.

2. See Malachi 4:5-6.

**All:** Elijah the Prophet, Elijah the Tishbite, Elijah the Gileadite. May he come soon and in our days with Messiah, the Son of David.

☀️ (*A child opens the door, and all sing Eliyahu Hanavi.*<sup>1</sup>)

### **Eliyahu Hanavi**

Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu hatishbi  
Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu ha giladi  
Bimhera v'yamenu yavo alenu  
Immashiach ben David,  
Immashiach ben David  
Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu hatishbi  
Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu hanavi

### **Translation:**

Elijah the Prophet, Elijah the Tishbite  
Elijah the Gileadite.  
May he come soon and in our days  
With Messiah, the Son of David.

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1. It is customary to fill a cup and/or set a place at the table for Elijah, to open the door to see if he has arrived yet and to sing “Eliyahu Hanavi.” Recorded song suggestions: “3rd Cup: Yahu” by Matisyahu or “Eliyahu Hanavi” by Moshav Band.



## Psalms of Praise<sup>1</sup> (#14 Hallel)<sup>2</sup>

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**Reader:** I love the LORD, because he has heard  
my voice and my pleas for mercy.  
Because he inclined his ear to me,  
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.  
The snares of death encompassed me;  
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;  
I suffered distress and anguish.  
Then I called on the name of the LORD:  
“O LORD, I pray, deliver my soul!”

**Reader:** Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;  
our God is merciful.  
The LORD preserves the simple;  
when I was brought low, he saved me.  
Return, O my soul, to your rest;  
for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.

**Reader:** For you have delivered my soul from death,  
my eyes from tears,  
my feet from stumbling;  
I will walk before the LORD  
in the land of the living.

**Reader:** I believed, even when I spoke:  
“I am greatly afflicted;”  
I said in my alarm,  
“All mankind are liars.”

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1. Psalm 116-118

2. Jesus and His disciples sang the Hallel at the end of their seder as well. See Matthew 26:30.

**Reader:** What shall I render to the LORD  
for all his benefits to me?  
I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the LORD,  
I will pay my vows to the LORD  
in the presence of all his people.

**Reader:** Precious in the sight of the LORD  
is the death of his saints.  
O LORD, I am your servant;  
I am your servant, the son of your maidservant.  
You have loosed my bonds.  
I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving  
and call on the name of the LORD.  
I will pay my vows to the LORD  
in the presence of all his people,  
in the courts of the house of the LORD,  
in your midst, O Jerusalem.  
Praise the LORD!

**Reader:** Praise the LORD, all nations!  
Extol him, all peoples!  
For great is his steadfast love toward us,  
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures  
forever.  
Praise the LORD!

**Reader:** Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever!

**Reader:** Let Israel say,  
“His steadfast love endures forever.”  
Let the house of Aaron say,  
“His steadfast love endures forever.”  
Let those who fear the LORD say,  
“His steadfast love endures forever.”

**Reader:** Out of my distress I called on the LORD;  
the LORD answered me and set me free.  
The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.  
What can man do to me?  
The LORD is on my side as my helper;  
I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

**Reader:** It is better to take refuge in the LORD  
than to trust in man.  
It is better to take refuge in the LORD  
than to trust in princes.

**Reader:** All nations surrounded me;  
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!  
They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;  
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!  
They surrounded me like bees;  
they went out like a fire among thorns;  
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!  
I was pushed hard, so that I was falling,  
but the LORD helped me.

**Reader:** The LORD is my strength and my song;  
he has become my salvation.  
Glad songs of salvation  
are in the tents of the righteous:  
“The right hand of the LORD does valiantly,  
the right hand of the LORD exalts,  
the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!”

**Reader:** I shall not die, but I shall live,  
and recount the deeds of the LORD.  
The LORD has disciplined me severely,  
but he has not given me over to death.

**Reader.** Open to me the gates of righteousness,  
that I may enter through them  
and give thanks to the LORD.

This is the gate of the LORD;  
the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me  
and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.

This is the LORD's doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**Reader.** Save us, we pray, O LORD!  
O LORD, we pray, give us success!

**Reader.** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!  
We bless you from the house of the LORD.

The LORD is God,  
and he has made his light to shine upon us.

Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,  
up to the horns of the altar!

**Reader.** You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;  
you are my God; I will extol you.

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever!

## The Fourth Cup: The Cup of Hope Also Called the Cup of Completion<sup>1</sup> or Praise<sup>2</sup>

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☀ (Pour the 4th cup, but wait to drink it.)

**Reader:** The fourth cup represents God's promise of the final redemption that awaits us in the future. Though the redemption from Egypt freed Israel from slavery and even took her to the Promised Land, that redemption was not complete or final.

There will come a day when the Messiah will come back, gather the exiles from the four corners of the earth, restore them to the Land of Israel and set up His Kingdom in Jerusalem. We eagerly await the redemption that Jesus will bring when He returns to reign as King over the whole world! Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!

**All:** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

☀ (Drink the 4th cup: The Cup of Hope.)

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1. It is called the cup of completion because it comes at the conclusion of the seder.
  2. It is called the cup of praise because it is drunk after the recitation of the Psalms.

# Prayer (Nirtzah)

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**Reader:** As we close our Passover seder, let's think about why God sets people free.

Every time Moses told Pharaoh, *"Let my people go!"*, the LORD gave this reason: *"That they may serve Me."* In Hebrew, the root word for "slavery" and for "worship" is the same. The LORD freed us from slavery to sin that we might be His bond servants to worship Him.<sup>1</sup>

*"It is for freedom that Messiah has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."*<sup>2</sup>

Freedom is not doing whatever we want to do. Freedom gives us the ability to choose God's ways.

**All:** LORD, though You tarry, allow us to enter into new life, new growth and a new beginning of Your redemptive cycle. May this year be one of growth, prosperity and health. We ask that You would return soon. We ask that You would reestablish Your throne in Jerusalem, and bring Your righteous rules, statues and judgments by restoring Your kingdom. So, we shout for our redemption, and may we all be...

## Next year in Jerusalem!<sup>3</sup>

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1. In the Hallel, it says, "O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant, You have loosed my bonds." (Psalm 116:16)

2. See Galatians 5:1.

3. Song suggestions for a time of celebration: "I am Free" by Desperation Band, "Shackles" by Mary Mary or "Jerusalem" by Matisyahu. Noisemakers, silly string or confetti also add to a festive atmosphere.

# Appendix A: Passover Seder Checklist

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**Seder plate (6 items):** (*You can use any large plate if you do not have a traditional seder plate. Just place the items in smaller dishes on the large plate.*)

- Lettuce i.e. romaine
- Bitter Herbs i.e. horseradish (*the stronger the better!*)
- Shank Bone of a lamb (*a kosher market should have one*)
- Roasted/Boiled Egg (*Boil a white egg with a tea bag.*)
- Parsley
- Charoset *Recipe: Mix 2 cups of chopped apples, 2 cups of chopped walnuts, 2 teaspoons of cinnamon & 2 tablespoons of red wine.*

## **Other:**

- Red wine vinegar (*in small bowls, to dip the parsley*)
- Matza (*enough for everyone to have at least 3 pieces*)
- Afikoman bag and money for the trade (*See footnote on "Breaking the Middle Matzah" page*)
- Basin with water and a towel (*for hand washing*)
- 2 candles & matches
- Cups & juice for everyone (*You will need enough to pour juice four times into everyone's cup.*)
- Food for a shared meal
- Any props you may want to use (*ie. for the plagues. See the Ten Plagues section for ideas in the footnotes.*)
- Music (*Song suggestions are throughout the book in footnotes.*)
- An Elijah cup and/or a place setting
- A folded copy of the Passover Quick Reference Guide for each place (*See Appendix E.*)

## Appendix B: What is Leaven?

*“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven [seor] out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened [chametz], from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.” (Exodus 12:15)*

- “Seor” is the first Hebrew word found in Exodus 12:15 that is translated as “leaven,” and it indicates a leavening agent such as yeast or soured bread dough.

- “Chametz” is the second Hebrew word that is translated as “leavened” in Exodus 12:15, and it indicates a grain product which has been leavened. Any flour of the five species of grain, which is mixed with water and allowed to ferment before being baked is chametz. The five species of grain are wheat, spelt, oats, barley and rye. The Sages established that the time necessary for the fermentation process to take place is eighteen minutes after water has been add to the flour. Watch out for products you may not realize are chametz like pasta, mustard, distilled vinegar (that is made from wheat), beer and soy.

Leaven in the Scriptures represents sin. Some sins, like the *seor* of yeast, are obvious. Other sins, however, are more subtle, like *chametz*, and we might not even be aware that they are hiding in our “pantry.”

Starter dough leaven represents the old way of life (such as sin, bad company or old habits). Like starter dough, these things can continue to leaven our lives day to day. The apostle Paul said to get rid of the old leaven and to start over with a new batch.<sup>1</sup> Passover is a perfect time to make a fresh start and to get rid of the leaven in our lives.

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1. See 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.



## Appendix C: A Ceremony for Removing Leaven

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Exodus 23:18 says not to offer the blood of God's sacrifice with leavened bread. 1 Corinthians 11:27-28 warns us to examine ourselves before eating the bread or drinking the cup. So, there is a tradition to search one's house for any leaven the night before Passover (on the 14th of the Biblical month Nissan).

According to an old custom, one searches for any crumbs with a candle (representing God's Word), a feather (representing the Holy Spirit), a wooden spoon (representing the cross) and a linen cloth. This is a fun search for children, and the host can hide crumbs (ie. in small baggies). Any leaven that is found is swept with the feather into the wooden spoon and wrapped up in the linen and removed from the house and burned.

The important thing is not the ritual, or how it is done. The search should remind us that it is time for us to search our hearts, souls and minds for any lingering sin.

*"Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."*

*(1 Corinthians 5:6-8)*

## Appendix D: Miscellaneous Guidelines

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- **The size of a seder.** Based on Exodus 12:3-5, a host might base the number of people to be invited to a home seder according to how many people could consume a lamb. Typically, this might be 2-4 households. This creates an intimate atmosphere where everyone can be an integral part.
- **Eating lamb.** Though some do eat lamb for the main meal of the seder, one might consider not appearing as if the lamb had been sacrificed, as any sacrificial service would be unlawful outside of the Temple context. The lamb shank bone on the seder plate is in remembrance of the Passover lamb, and the afikomen matzah that is eaten is also in remembrance of that lamb.
- **The length of Passover.** The Passover seder begins at twilight on the 14th day of the Biblical month, Nissan (you can find the Gregorian date on the internet). The rest of the festival, lasting for seven days total, is called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In today's vernacular, "Passover" simply covers all seven days. The first and seventh days of Passover are Sabbaths. (See Lev. 23:5-8.)
- **Eating matzah.** Exodus 12:18 speaks of eating unleavened bread (matzah) each day of Passover.
- **A festival within a festival: Counting the Omer/ The Feast of Firstfruits.** Leviticus 23:9-22 describes a festival within the festival of Passover called the Feast of Firstfruits. The Feast of Firstfruits reminds us that Jesus was the firstfruits of the resurrection (See 1 Corinthians 15:20). Firstfruits begins the count of the "omer," which is a 49 day count-up to the Feast of Weeks, AKA: Pentecost. The count begins on the evening of the 15th of Nissan, i.e. the night after the seder.

# Appendix E: Quick Reference Guide

(A print-friendly version can be downloaded at:  
[www.fluidchurch.us/festivals/passover](http://www.fluidchurch.us/festivals/passover))

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**Passover:** The term Passover comes from the Hebrew, “Pesach,” which means “passing over” (referring to the Angel of Death who passed over the homes that had applied the blood of the lamb to the doorposts. See Exodus 12:23). “Pesach” is the term for the Festival sacrifice that was offered in the Temple. Leviticus 23:5 refers to the 14th of Nissan, at twilight, as the Lord’s Passover. Passover is the night on which a Seder is conducted. However, today, the entire seven day Festival of Unleavened Bread that Leviticus 23:6 refers to is commonly referred to simply as Passover.

*Also Known As:*

• **Festival of Unleavened Bread (Chag Ha-matzot):**  
Leviticus 23:6 refers to the seven days of this Festival as Unleavened Bread because during the seven days one eats only unleavened bread (matzah).

## **Time of Year:**

Spring: March or April. Passover begins on the 15th day of the 1st Biblical month, Nissan, and lasts for seven days. On the 14th of Nissan, in the evening, it is customary to hold a Seder (meaning “order”) in one’s home to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

**Scripture References:** (The following references are just a sampling of the many found in Scripture.)

Exodus 12, Leviticus 23:4-8, Numbers 9:1-14, Deuteronomy 16:1-8, Matthew 26:17, Luke 22, 1 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 11:28

## Themes:

*A celebration of spring, of birth and rebirth, and firsts*

- The month of Nissan signals the reawakening of the physical world which speaks to the human spirit of renewed hope and new beginnings.
- It is said that Passover is the time when God judges whether or not the world's crops will be successful. The ripening of crops is comparable to freedom in that crops lie hidden in the ground, imprisoned until the ripening process releases them and gives them freedom. The first day of Passover is traditionally a time to pray for dew to fall (as opposed to rain which would cause the sheaves of grain in the fields to rot).
- We are on a journey through life, and Passover is a time each year to see if we have progressed or stayed in the same place. Each Passover should bring new interpretations and new understandings. We know we haven't grown if we say, "We've already heard this story; there is nothing new."
- The month of Nissan is the first month in the Biblical calendar (See Exodus 12:2) even though the new year begins in the fall at Rosh Hashanah (Feast of Trumpets). Why? Possibly because Passover, the Day of Redemption, is greater than any other event. The Hebrew, Biblical calendar and all other Festivals are determined from the month of Nissan.

*A journey from slavery to freedom: The Passover Seder*

- The story of the Exodus occurred more than 3,300 years ago, yet the Scriptures say to personalize the story as if you had been redeemed (See Exodus 13:8). Traditionally, the Passover Seder has been the means to this end. The Seder helps everyone present to feel the feelings and experience the sensations of that journey from slavery to freedom. The Seder is infamous for using symbols to tell the Exodus story: matzah, 4 cups of wine and the Seder plate which holds six ritual items (bitter herbs [2], a roasted lamb shank bone,

charoset [an apple mixture made to look like the mortar of bricks], a roasted egg, and karpas [a green vegetable like parsley]).

- Passover is a time to consider that the freedom “from” things (like anger, hatred or slavery) is often more precious than the freedom “to” be able to do things. Freedom “from” represents the ability to make choices, that ability to “pass over” or “skip over” choices that are harmful.

### *Spring cleaning and casting out leaven*

- “Spring cleaning” possibly originated from the intense cleaning and searching for leaven in one’s home, in order to cast it out before Passover. The physical act of searching for leaven should inspire us to search for the sin in our lives as leaven is a symbol of sin (See 2 Corinthians 5:8).
- Exodus 12:15 defines two types of leaven. “Seor,” the first Hebrew word for “leaven,” indicates a leavening agent such as yeast or soured bread dough. “Chametz,” the second Hebrew word for “leavened,” indicates a grain product which has been leavened. Any flour of the five species of grain (wheat, spelt, oats, barley and rye) which is mixed with water and allowed to ferment before being baked is “chametz.” (The Sages established that the time necessary for the fermentation process to take place is eighteen minutes after water has been add to the flour.) Some sins, like the “seor” of yeast, are obvious. Other sins, however, are more subtle, like “chametz,” and we might not even be aware that they are hiding in our “pantry.” Starter dough leaven represents the old way of life (such as: sin, bad company or old habits). Like starter dough, these things can continue to leaven our lives day to day. The apostle Paul said to get rid of the old leaven and to start over with a new batch (See 1 Corinthians 5:6-8). Passover is a perfect time to make a fresh start and to get rid of the leaven in our lives.

## **Messianic Significance:**

- Passover is ripe with Messianic significance. Jesus celebrated a last seder (Last Supper) with His disciples. At the seder, Jesus used the familiar items on the seder plate and the four cups to explain the mystery of God's plan of salvation to His disciples. Afterwards, Jesus was crucified on the 14th of Nissan, the day when the Passover lambs were sacrificed in the Temple. During the week of Passover, He resurrected from the dead and appeared to His disciples. The Gospels tell the story of Jesus' last Passover on earth, and also anticipate a future time when Jesus will again drink from the cup (See Matthew 26:27-29).
- As we celebrate Passover, eat the matzah and drink the 4 cups, we proclaim the Lord's death until he returns (See 1 Corinthians 11:26).
- Passover is considered to be the First Redemption. The Last Redemption will be like the First Redemption and will occur when Messiah comes back to the earth to rule as King.

## **Traditions:**

*It is customary to:*

- Fast on the 14th of Nissan if you are a firstborn (if the 14th falls on a Sabbath, the fast is observed the previous Thursday). The Fast of the Firstborn commemorates the miracle which spared the firstborn sons from the 10th plague in Egypt.
- Consider the 14th of Nissan also as a festival day since the Passover sacrifice was offered on the 14th (ie. work is forbidden after midday). The 14th of Nissan is also a day to contemplate Jesus' trial and crucifixion in preparation for the Seder that night.
- Hide pieces of leaven and conduct a last minute search for it. Once the leaven is found, it is burned and one renounces ownership of it. (See Exodus 13:7, 12:19.) Traditionally this ceremony is performed on the eve of the 14th of Nissan (at twilight on the 13th of Nissan, ie. 24 hours before the Seder).

The search for leaven is symbolic of the purification of one's heart and tongue before singing praises to God (ie. during the Seder). The search for leaven represents one's effort to purify the heart before the Seder begins.

- Participate in a Seder. Seder means "order" and is a 15-step ritual revolving around the Passover dinner. The Haggadah, meaning "the telling," is a book of instructions, prayers, blessings and stories used at the Seder to tell the Passover story.
- Give charity, as at other Festivals, so that the less fortunate can also celebrate Passover.

### **Scripture Readings:**

**1st Day of Passover:** Exodus 12:21-51, Numbers 28:16-25, Joshua 3:5-7, 5:2-6:1, 27. **2nd Day of Passover:** Leviticus 22:26-23:44, Numbers 28:16-25, 2 Kings 23:1-9, 21-25. **Intermediate Sabbath of Passover:** Exodus 33:12-34:26, Numbers 28:19-26, Ezekiel 37:1-14. **7th Day of Passover:** Exodus 13:17-15:26, Numbers 28:19-25, 2 Samuel 22:1-51

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