
הַפֶּסַח הָאַחֵרוֹן שֶׁל יֵשׁוּעַ

THE LAST PASSOVER OF YESHUA

A Proposed Reconstruction of the
Final Seder of Yeshua Messiah

by Paul Sumner

“Why is This Night Different?”

THE FOLLOWING Passover Seder (“Order”) is a reconstruction of a Passover service as it may have been celebrated by Yeshua and his disciples on the night before his arrest, trial and execution.

This seder is based primarily on the research of the 19th century Messianic Jewish scholar Alfred Edersheim, as found in his book *The Temple (Its Ministry and Services as they were at the time of Jesus Christ)*. Edersheim sought to recover, outline and interpret the significance of the Last Passover meal of Yeshua, as it was observed prior to the developments and customs found in later Rabbinic Judaism. Among other sources, he used the tractate on Passover from the Mishnah (Pesachim 10) (AD/CE 200) and the Babylonian Talmud (AD/CE 500).

Some Passover background . . .

- **P**assover originated in Egypt some 3,400 years ago when God told Moses to lead the people of Israel out of their long slavery, so they might become a free nation to serve the Lord God. The story is told in the book of [Exodus \(chaps. 11-12\)](#).

An unblemished male lamb (or goat) was to be slain in the late afternoon of 14 Nisan (in March–April), and its blood wiped on the doorposts and top mantle of each Hebrew home. This blood protected everyone inside from “the Destroyer” (Ex 12:23), who passed through and killed the first-born children and animals throughout Egyptian—but passed over the homes with blood. Some Egyptians chose to enter Hebrew homes and were protected by the blood. The Passover lamb was eaten that evening, accompanied by unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Then around midnight, the Hebrews left Egypt under the spring full moon.

- The exodus from Egypt was symbolically the birth of God’s “son” (Exodus 4:22— “Israel is my son, my first-born”). His birth was accompanied by the shed blood of other first-born sons. Thus Passover became a Memorial of Remembrance: remembering Israel’s identity (as the Father’s son) and God’s rescuing love for his enslaved children.
- Passover became one of three annual festivals requiring attendance at the House of God in Jerusalem (Leviticus 23). It was a “pilgrim” festival for which people traveled long distances to go up to celebrate at the Jerusalem Temple. Certain psalms (called “Songs of Ascent”—Psalms 120-134) were sung by the pilgrims as they ascended the hills into Jerusalem.
- **I**n later generations, Passover also became a Festival of Renewal, when Jewish identity and mission needed recovery: Joshua at Jordan River (Joshua 5); Hezekiah’s reforms (2 Chronicles 30); Josiah’s reforms (2

Chronicles 35); Ezra's restoration after exile (Ezra 6); and Ezekiel's vision of the future (Ezekiel 45:21).

- Personal identification and involvement were the keynotes in later generations. Each person looked back to the original "Egyptian" Passover with a sense of connection. They explained why they kept the festival each year, "It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out Egypt" (Exodus 13:8).
- **P**assover at the time of Yeshua had become both a memorial of thanksgiving and a celebration of prophetic hope. It commemorated the past deliverance of the ancestors from Egypt, as well as the ongoing deliverances performed by God for his people. It also looked forward to the grand redemption in which God would finally end Israel's slavery to ungodly powers by sending the Messiah. Among several Jewish groups at the time of Yeshua, there was strong messianic expectation during this season. Many believed Messiah would come the night of Passover. This is still true among Orthodox Jews today.

Thus, the Passover meal emphasized Past, Present and Future.

- **A**ccording to the Gospel accounts, the "Lord's Supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20) was a Passover meal, complete with a lamb that was called "the Passover" (Matthew 26:19; Mark 14:16; Luke 22:7-8).

Early Jewish disciples of Yeshua continued to celebrate Passover for centuries. For them the Festival of Redemption had deeper meaning in light of his death and resurrection. Paul of Tarsus alludes to terms and concepts from the Feast in his first letter to believers in Corinth, Greece (e.g. 1 Corinthians 5:7; 10:16; 11:26).

Many non-Jewish believers also celebrated a "Messiah Passover" as a testimony to being "grafted in" and made partakers "of the rich root of the olive tree" (Romans 11:17). These Gentile Christians were "fellow-heirs, fellow-members, fellow-partakers of the Promise in Messiah Yeshua" (Ephesians 3:6).

- **A**ccording to the Law of Moses, on the first day of the week (our "Sunday") following the first day of Passover, an emblematic ceremony was to be observed. Sheaves of the first grain-producing plants (wheat, barley) were to be cut down and brought to the high priest. He then waved the sheaves "before the LORD" as an offering of "the first fruits" of that spring season (Leviticus 23:9-13). They represented first life, new life, following the exodus and the entrance into the new land which God had given to his people.

For Yeshua's disciples in any age, Passover memorializes his resurrection. His death and descent into the "Egypt" of Sheol was not his final destiny. God raised him on the third day, as the First Fruit from the dead. When his followers participate in a memorial Pesach, they join with

him in being freed from death and slavery (to sin), in order to become new people and begin a new life-journey. The end purpose of Passover and the exodus was to lead captives to a new life in a promised new land.

- **A** theological war began in the second century. Disciples in Western Asia (now Turkey) were especially devoted to observing the death and resurrection of Yeshua on 14 Nisan, the traditional day of Passover. Bishop Melito of Sardis even composed a “Christian seder.” This activity outraged Pope Victor in Rome, who excommunicated any Christians who observed a Resurrection-Passover. But his edict did not stop them from doing what they knew to be Jewish apostolic practice. So the controversy continued.

Over a century later, at the Council of Nicea in 325, Emperor Constantine issued an edict requiring Christians throughout the Roman/Christian Empire to observe the Resurrection when and how the Church of Rome observed it—not when (in the words of Constantine) “the odious Jews” did. His weighty imperial nix on the celebration of Passover essentially severed Christians from their spiritual connections with the Hebrew Bible and the people of Israel. Yet even that didn’t stop every vestige of loyalty to the Hebraic roots of the faith. For decades later, Bishop John Chrysostom of Constantinople was still denouncing disciples in Antioch for commemorating Yeshua’s death and resurrection at Passover time.

- **Some Terminology**

Yeshua’s first disciples so identified him with the Passover meal that they sometimes called it “the Lord’s Supper” (kuriakon deipnon, 1 Corinthians 11:20). Later, in the post-NT Greek-speaking church, the word “Eucharist” (from the verb “to give thanks”) became a common designation for the commemorative meal. The word “Paschal” comes from the Aramaic word Pascha (Hebrew, Pesach), meaning Passover.

The English word “Easter” derives from the Old English “eastre” meaning dawn. Some historians trace its origin to the name of the Germanic goddess Eostre, who was worshiped at dawn at the Spring equinox. Beyond that, her German name may derive from the Babylonian fertility goddess Ishtar (Ashtaroth in the Hebrew Bible). The King James (Authorized) Version of 1611 uses “Easter” one time, at Acts 12:4: “. . . intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.” The Greek word here is Pascha (“Passover”).

- A Passover Seder in the first century is not identical to one observed today in Jewish communities.

Today lamb is not served. Three symbolic matzahs are used, whereas only two were apparently used in ancient times. The original messianic emphasis of the festival has been largely muted, especially among Conservative and Reform Jews. However, a table setting and special cup are reserved for Elijah (the forerunner of Messiah; Malachi 4), and the start of the meal a child goes to the door to see if the great prophet is coming to

announce the Messiah's arrival.

Even with these differences, the essential order in the ancient and modern seders is identical.

The following Passover Seder contains what are thought to be the original blessings, recited scriptures, and prayers from the time of Yeshua. However, I have slightly altered or added to some of the blessings in order to reflect the view that God's ultimate sanctification comes not from obedience to Torah, but through the sacrifice of the Messiah.

The traditional steps of the Seder are numbered. Many steps are followed by quotations from the gospel accounts that (1) seem to parallel the Seder steps or (2) make appropriate commentary.

Passages from the New Testament are introduced by the words "Concerning [such and such element in the Seder] . . . it is written."

Compiled by Paul Sumner
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**An Early Passover Meal compared with
Gospel accounts of Yeshua's Last Passover**

Order of Early Passover	Gospel Accounts
A sacrificed lamb called "the Passover" is prepared (Exod 12:21)	"They prepared the Passover" (Matt 26:19; Mark 14:16). "The Passover . . . had to be sacrificed" (Luke 22:7, 8). "Messiah our Passover has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the Feast" (1 Cor 5:7-8)
Seders after Egypt eaten in relaxed posture, reclined around a low table.	"He was reclining at table with the twelve disciples" (Matt 26:20; cf. Mark 14:18; Luke 22:14; John 13:12)
1) First Cup ("Kaddesh")	"Having taken a cup, when he had given thanks, he said, 'Take this and share it among yourselves . . . I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes'" (Luke 22:17-18)
2) First Hand Washing	"Yeshua . . . rose from supper . . . and taking a towel . . . he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet" (John 13:3-5)
3) Bitter Herbs	Yeshua's "Table Talk" (John 14–17)
4) Four Questions	"
5) Explanation of Meaning of Passover	"
6) First Hallel (Psalms 113-114)	"
7) Second Cup	"
8) Second Hand Washing	"

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| 9) Breaking & Dipping of Unleavened bread | “He who has dipped his hand with me in the bowl will betray me” (Matt 26:23; cf. Mark 14:20). “So when he had dipped the morsel, he took and gave it to Judas . . .” (John 13:26) |
| 10) Passover Meal itself | |
| 11) Third Hand Washing | |
| 12) Grace After Meal | |
| 13) Afikoman (“dessert”) | “While they were eating, Yeshua took some bread, and after a blessing, he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat: this is my body’” (Matt 26:26; cf. Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19) |
| 14) Third Cup (“Cup of Blessing”) | “He took a cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’” (Matt 26:27; cf. Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:20). “Is not the Cup of Blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Messiah?” (1 Cor 10:16) |
| 15) Second Hallel (Psalms 115-118) | |
| 16) Fourth Cup (“Cup of Salvation”) | |
| 17) The Blessing of the Song | “After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” (Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26) |
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THE ORDER OF PASSOVER

Jews living in the first century celebrated the Seder in a reclining posture around a low table. This is different from the original “Egyptian Passover” when people ate the meal, ready to travel. In later times there was no imminent exodus, for redemption had already come.

1) First Cup — קִדְּשׁ — Kaddesh (Cup of sanctifying God)

[The Head or father of the house takes the cup of wine and offers the following blessing:]

Blessed are You, O LORD our God, Creator of the fruit of the vine.
Blessed are You, O LORD our God, King of the universe, for us have you chosen and set us apart from among the nations, and exalted us from among all languages, and You have given us, O LORD our God, in love, the solemn days for joy, and the festivals and appointed seasons for gladness, and this the Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the season of our freedom, a holy convocation, the memorial of our departure from Egypt.

Blessed are You, O LORD, who sanctifies Israel and the appointed seasons.

Blessed are You, O LORD, King of the universe, who has preserved us alive and sustained us and brought us to this season.

* * *

Assuming that Yeshua was the Head of his company gathered in the “upper room” in Jerusalem, concerning this First Cup, it is written:

When the hour had come he reclined, and the disciples with him. And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.” And having taken a cup, when he had given thanks, he said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the Kingdom of God comes.” (Luke 22:14-18)

[Company drinks First Cup]

2) First Hand Washing — וְרַחֵץ — Urchatz

[After offering the Kaddesh/Blessing, the Head of the house washes his hands.]

Blessed are You, O LORD our God,
who has sanctified us and enjoined us concerning the
washing of hands.

* * *

Concerning the washing of hands, it is written:

Yeshua, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come forth from God, and was going back to God, rose from supper and laid aside his garments; and taking a towel, girded himself about. Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

And so he came to Simon Peter. He said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Yeshua answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now; but you shall understand hereafter." Peter said to him, "Never shall you wash my feet!" Yeshua answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and head." Yeshua said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean, but not all of you." For he knew the one who was betraying him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

And so when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and reclined again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right; for so I am. If then I, the Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you." (John 13:3-15)

[Passover plate is brought out and placed on the table.]

3) Bitter Herbs — כַּרְפַּס — Karpas

[The Head of the house dips the bitter herbs in salt water and eats, then gives some to the company who also eat.]

4) The Four Questions — מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה — Mah Nishtanah?

[The youngest son or member of the company asks the head of the house the following:]

Why is this night distinguished from all other nights?
(For) on all other nights we eat leavened or unleavened bread,
but on this night only unleavened bread.
On all other nights we eat any kind of herbs, but on this night
only bitter herbs.
On all other nights we eat meat roasted, stewed or boiled,
but on this night only roasted.
On all other nights we dip the herbs only once, but on this night
twice?

5) Explanation of Passover Elements — הַגְּדָה — Haggadah

[In response to the questions, the Head of the house reads from Deuteronomy 26:5-11 then gives the following explanations:]

It will come about when your children will say to you, “What does this rite mean to you?” that you will say, “It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians and spared our homes” (Exodus 12:26-27). “And you shall tell your son in that day saying, it is because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt” (Exodus 13:8).

[The Head of the house takes the Matzah, holds it up and says:]

This Unleavened Bread, why do we eat it?
Because it is written concerning our ancestors: “And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough, which they brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they made any provisions for themselves” (Exodus 12:39).

* * *

(In Jewish homes, it has long been the custom prior to Passover to go through the house and remove any form of leavening, including the smallest bread crumbs.)

Concerning the Unleavened Bread, it is written:

Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Clean out

the old leaven. . . . *Let us therefore celebrate the Feast*, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8).

[The head of the house takes the bitter herbs, holds them up and says:]

These Bitter Herbs, why do we eat them?

Because it is written concerning our ancestors: “And they made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and bricks and in all kinds of labor in the field” (Exodus 1:14).

We dip the herbs twice: once, to recall our tears; twice, to season their bitterness with a taste of joy.

[The Head of the house takes the shankbone of the lamb, holds it up and says:]

This Passover Lamb, why do we eat it? What does it denote?

As it is written: “It is a Passover [Heb. Pesach] sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians, but delivered our homes” (Exodus 12:27).

* * *

The roasted lamb reminds us of the story of Abraham:

God said, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here am I, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” And Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” (Genesis 22:2, 6-8)

The lamb also reminds us of the portrait of God’s Servant in the book of Isaiah:

All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on him.
He was oppressed and he was afflicted,
Yet he did not open his mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,

And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So he did not open his mouth. . . .
He poured out his soul unto death,
And was numbered with the transgressors;
Yet he himself bore the sin of many,
And interceded for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:6-7,12)

The roasted lamb also reminds us of the New Testament portrait of Yeshua, who suffered the fires of God's wrath on sin: "[God] made him . . . to be sin on our behalf" (2 Cor 5:21).

The next day John saw Yeshua coming to him and said, "Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

Messiah our Passover has been sacrificed. (1 Corinthians 5:7; compare the phrase "Slay the Passover" in Exodus 12:21)

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. (Revelation 5:12)

Conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Messiah. (1 Peter 1:17-19)

6) First Hallel — הַלֵּל — Songs of Praise

[The company sings or recites Psalms 113 & 114. Then the Head offers the Blessing over the Wine:]

Blessed are You, O LORD our God, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

7) Second Cup

8) Second Washing of Hands — רַחֲצֵי — Rachatz

9) Breaking of Bread — יַחֲצֵי — Yachatz

[The Head of the house takes one of the two matzahs and offers this blessing. Note: later Jewish tradition used *three* matzahs.]

Blessed are You, O LORD our God, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Blessed are You, O LORD our God, who commanded us to eat unleavened bread.

[The Head then breaks one of the matzahs in half; places one piece in a linen cloth and hides it away. This portion will return later to be dessert or **afikoman**. The Head dips the other half in the Bitter Herbs and charoseth (a mixture of honey, dates, nuts and wine), and hands it to the group.]

Concerning this Dipping of the Matzah, it is written:

“I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled: ‘He who eats my bread has lifted up his heel against me.’ Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray me.”

The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one he was speaking. There was reclining on Yeshua’s bosom one of his disciples, whom Yeshua loved. Simon Peter therefore gestured to him, and said to him, “Tell us who it is of whom he is speaking.” Leaning back thus on Yeshua’s bosom, he said to him, “Lord, who is it?”

Yeshua therefore answered, “That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he took it and gave to Judas, the son of Iscariot. And after the morsel, the Adversary then entered into him.

Yeshua therefore said to him, “What you do, do quickly.” (John 13)

The mixture of bitterness and sweetness found in the dipped portion of the matzah reminds us of the statement concerning the Messiah:

Let us lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Yeshua, the Author and Perfector of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame; and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

[Everyone eats the dipped matzah.]

10) The Supper — שֻׁלְחַן עֹרֵךְ — Shulchan Orekh

[The full Passover dinner is now served. Afterwards, the dishes are removed and the Passover Plate is brought back.]

11) Third Washing of Hands — רַחֲצֵי — Rachatz

12) Grace After the Meal — צְפוּיַן בְּרַךְ — Psalm 126

13) The Dessert — אֶפִיקוֹמָן — The Afikoman

(Some historians believe the word *afikoman* is Greek and means “he who is coming” or “he who has come.” In modern Jewish practice the word is usually translated “dessert.”)

[The hidden matzah is brought back before the company and unwrapped, then broken and dipped only in the *charoseth* and distributed to all. The Head then offers the blessing:]

Blessed are You, O LORD our God, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Concerning the broken matzah, which was wrapped in linen and hidden away for a time, it is written:

Joseph bought a linen sheet, took him down, wrapped him in the linen sheet, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. (Mark 15:46)

Concerning the Afikoman and the dipping in the sweet mixture, it is written:

Having taken some bread, when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:19)

Related to the concealment and reappearance of the afikoman, we read:

I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

Messiah also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, not to bear sin, [but] for salvation, to those who eagerly await him. (Hebrews 9:28)

[Eat the Afikoman.]

14) The Third Cup — כּוֹס־הַבְּרָכָה — The Cup of Blessing

[The Head of the house offers the Kiddush:]

Blessed are You, O LORD our God, who creates the fruit of the vine.

* * *

Concerning this third Cup of Blessing, it is written:

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."
(Luke 22:20)

The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Messiah? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Messiah? (1 Corinthians 10:16)

As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

[Drink the Cup of Blessing, and fill the Fourth Cup.]

15) Second Hallel — הַלֵּל — Songs of Praise

[The company sings or recites Psalms 115—118.]

16) Fourth Cup — כּוֹס־יְשׁוּעוֹת — "Cup of Salvation" (Psalm 116:13)

17) The Blessing of the Song

[The company sings the ending Blessing.]

All Your works shall praise You, O LORD our God,
And all Your holy ones, the righteous, who do Your good pleasure,
And all Your people, the House of Israel, with joyous songs,
Let them praise and bless, and magnify and glorify, and exalt and reverence,
And sanctify and ascribe the kingdom to Your name, O our King!
For it is good to praise You, and pleasure to sing praises to Your name,
For from everlasting to everlasting You are God.

* * *

Concerning the Second Hallel and the Blessing of the Song, it is written:

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

Concerning the Messianic passage in the Hallel (Psalm 118:26), it is written:

I say to you, from now on you shall not see me until you say,
“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” (Matthew 23:39;
see 21:9)

To conclude the Passover, we remember the words of Yeshua in Revelation 22:20:

“Yes, I am coming quickly” — אָכֵן, אָנִי בָּא מְהֵרָה
[Achen, ani ba maher]

To which the Congregation replies:

“Amen. Come, Lord Yeshua!” — אָמֵן, בּוֹא נָא הָאָדוֹן יֵשׁוּעַ
[Amen, bo na ha'Adon Yeshua]