

Gospel, Passover and Lord's Supper

Outline

1. Passover in Exodus 12 in Egypt (called the Egyptian Passover)
2. Annual Passover
3. Passover Meal, Lord's Supper and the Gospel

1. Passover in Exodus 12 in Egypt (called the Egyptian Passover)

vv 1-3: The Jewish calendar is set with Passover as its first month (Nisan) —showing its importance. Passover instructions were only given to the Hebrews.

vv 3-7: On the 10th Nisan, each Israelite household chose an unblemished-year- old lamb. They kept observing it for four days. Then every Israelite household killed the lamb on the 14th Nisan “*evening*” [literally—*between the evenings*, a Hebrew phrase for between 12 noon and 6 pm]. They put some of the lamb's blood on the top and sides of the door frames of the household where the lamb was eaten. If the household were small, they would invite neighbours to make a group that could share the eating of the lamb to avoid waste because whatever remained not eaten was burnt (**v10**).

v8: The lamb was roasted (not boiled) and eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread on the same night. These three items (roasted lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread) are the vital elements of the Passover—without which there is no Passover meal. Now it takes a few hours to roast the lamb, and by then, it is past 6 pm, which, according to Jewish time, occurs on the next day—the 15th Nisan. (Our day starts in the morning and ends in the evening. But Jewish day starts in the evening and ends in the morning as in Gen 1:5). It is essential to note that two separate events occur:

- Killing the lamb on the 14th Nisan afternoon — performing the Passover
- Eating the lamb on 15th Nisan — eating/celebrating the Passover meal, known in a family setting as the **seder meal** on the 1st day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

vv 11, 39: Israelites had to eat the Passover in haste because soon the Egyptians would start howling at their firstborn son's death, and Pharaoh will tell Moses and the Israelites to leave Egypt. There was no time for the bread to rise. Therefore, the bread was unleavened (vv 11, 39), reflecting their hasty departure. {Leaven in the New Testament is a symbol of sin, corruption, and hypocrisy}

v13: The blood on the doorpost was done **only** on the Egyptian Passover (1st Passover in Egypt), and the destroying angel killed the Egyptian's firstborn son only on that Passover.

2. The Annual Passover (Exodus 12 v14, 17)

Every year for generations to come, the Israelites must have a memorial to **remember** the event (but **not re-enact** the event, so they did not put blood on the doorpost anymore and did not eat in haste. Instead, they would recline, relax and eat to celebrate their freedom. Jesus and His disciples were reclining at the table in the Lord's Supper — (Luke 22:14).

- i. *Killing the Passover lamb* was done in the household during the wanderings in the desert after the Exodus till a Temple was built in Jerusalem. Henceforth, the lamb was killed in the Temple as given in

Deut 16:2, "And you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the LORD your God, from the flock or the herd, at the place that the LORD will choose, to make his name dwell there. [The lambs were sacrificed in the Temple during Jesus' time. After the destruction of the Temple, the Jews no more sacrifice a lamb, but they share only a part of the lamb's leg at the Passover meal in the family].

- ii. *The three vital elements*—Every Passover meal must have **roasted lamb** (or its shank), **bitter herbs** and **unleavened bread**. The unleavened bread, called the bread of affliction, signifies the affliction of slavery in Egypt and the hasty departure from Egypt. The bitter herbs made of horseradish (strong '*mulla*' in Hindi) have a sharp pungent, bitter taste that guarantees to bring tears to your eyes. The idea was that every generation celebrating the Passover meal must identify with the bitter years of slavery in Egypt.
- iii. A commentary would accompany the seder meal given in Exodus 12:26-27, "And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" Also, in Exodus 13:8, "You shall tell your son on that day, 'It is because of what the LORD did for **me** when I came out of Egypt.'" (Note: "for me" makes it personal).

The commentary was later simplified to 4 questions:

- On all other nights, we eat leavened bread and unleavened bread; on this night, we eat only unleavened bread. Why? (**Answer:** Unleavened bread called the bread of affliction, signifies affliction in Egypt and haste in leaving it. Leaven also represents the **sin** we must leave behind in our new life of freedom).
- On all other nights, we eat all kinds of herbs; on this night, we eat only bitter herbs. Why? (Answer: To remember the bitterness of slavery)
- On all other nights, we do not dip the hyssop even once; on this night, we dip twice. Why? (Answer: First dipping in salt water to remember dipping of hyssop in blood (salty) and tears in Egypt. Second dipping in bitter herbs to remember bitter slavery in Egypt)
- On all other nights, we eat either sitting or reclining; on this night, we eat only reclining." Why? (Answer: To celebrate with ease and joy our freedom from slavery).

By these four questions and answers, the father could answer his son by retelling the Exodus story (Exod 12:26-27, 13:8)

Additional Traditions practised in Seder Meal, in 1st century BC-AD

- a. **Four cups of wine**--The Mishna (oral traditions) teaches that these cups correspond to the four verbs describing God's redemption in Exodus 6:6-7.

*v6a: I will **bring you out** from under the yoke of the Egyptians*

*v6b: I will **free (deliver) you** from being slaves to them.*

*v6c: I will **redeem you** with an outstretched arm & with mighty acts of judgment*

*v7: I will **take you as my own people**, and I will be your God*

The four cups divide the Passover meal into four parts. After each cup, the Jews praised God, saying, "May You be blessed, LORD our God, king of the world, who creates the fruit of the wine". [They don't bless the food, but they bless the LORD by thanking Him for His goodness]

- b. **Karpas** is hyssop (mint, Hindi-pudina) dipped into salted water. It should be allowed to drip off to represent the tears shed by Jews during their enslavement in Egypt under Pharaoh.

- c. **Reciting the Great Hallel Ps 113-118** as part of the commentary telling the story of Israelites. They recited Ps 113-114 just before drinking the 2nd cup of wine and Ps 115-118 after the 4th cup of wine.
- d. **Roasting the Passover lamb on a cross** made from the pomegranate tree (see Internet pictures of Jewish practice)

The Passover meal is probably the oldest ritual meal in the world. The Jews still eat it annually, 3500 years after the Exodus (1500 BC). And over the years, many more traditions (e.g., afikomen) were added to the Seder Meal that differed in each Jewish community.

3. Passover Meal, Lord's Supper and the Gospel

In several places in the Gospels, Jesus mentions He would die. But when He wants to explain the meaning of His death, He chooses to bring it out in the Passover Meal that He transforms with a whole new perspective. We call this transformed Passover meal the Lord's Supper. Therefore, we must understand the relationship between the Lord's Supper and the Passover Meal.

Let us examine Luke 22:7-21

Many Bible scholars say that Jesus celebrated the Passover Meal about 12-24 hours before Jews did so in Jerusalem—because Jesus, our Passover Lamb, would soon be crucified on the Passover (Friday) evening. He celebrates Passover Meal on Thursday night/Friday morning around 1 am on 14th Nisan to save time.

Lk 22:9 Jesus gives secret instructions about the place of celebration to avoid detection by those trying to arrest Him. (Jesus told His disciples to look for a man carrying a water jar. That's easily noticeable because a woman usually carries the water jar, not a man).

Lk 22:14 The disciples recline around a low U-shaped table. [Note: Though it was a custom to recline and eat, yet it was to remember and **celebrate** their freedom from slavery in Egypt].

Lk 22:15-16 *And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds **fulfilment** in the kingdom of God."*

At this point, the disciples would be perplexed because the Passover Meal was celebrating the Passover in Egypt—the past. But Jesus pointed to the future "**fulfilment**", — which begins with His crucifixion and resurrection in the next few days. It brings us out from under the yoke of sin, Satan, and death. But the complete **fulfilment** refers to the Messianic Banquet after the 2nd Coming (Rev 19:9). Jesus' death as the unblemished Passover Lamb (1Cor 5:7) is the perfect atoning sacrifice for believers. But it is only when He returns that we experience the full effect of His sacrifice on our behalf. The Lord's Supper, which looks back to Jesus' death, points forward to the complete fulfilment of His return. That's what it means whenever we partake of the Lord's Supper with faith, we proclaim the Lord's death till He comes (1 Cor 11:26).

The Passover meal in point 2 above has four movements marked by 4 cups of wine with four blessings, given in **2 (a)** above.

Lk 22:17-18 *After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."*

This was the **1st cup** and giving thanks (Blessing after the cup). This cup meant, "*I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians*" (Exod 6:6). But Jesus transforms this to mean, He will bring us out from under the yoke of sin, Satan and death. After the first cup, they would have the Karpas (see 2(b)).

Usually, there would be a **commentary** (with questions) at this place (see **2(iii)** above). The Gospels don't mention this; instead, Jesus would teach the disciples. After the commentary, they would drink the **2nd Cup** of wine with the blessing following (2(a)). Then follows **v19**.

Lk 22:19 *And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This **is** my body given*

for you; do this in remembrance of me.

This also shocks the disciples because Jesus takes a past symbol, unleavened bread (bread of affliction of slavery in Egypt), and Jesus points that to the future when He would die on the cross about 12 hours later. The word “is” signifying “representation”, Jesus says; this bread represents His body (broken on the cross) that would be given **for you** (whereas Exodus 13:8 says **for me**) because Jesus is the real Passover Lamb dying for you. The Passover was a constant reminder and proclamation of God’s redemption of Israel from bondage in Egypt. In the same way, the Lord’s Supper would be a continual reminder and proclamation of our deliverance from bondage to sin through Jesus’ atoning sacrifice on the cross (“*do this in remembrance of me*”).

After eating bread, they eat the hyssop dipped in bitter herbs (see **1A**).

Then it would be time to eat the roasted lamb. But there was no roasted lamb on the table because the Passover in Jerusalem was yet to occur, and the lambs were not yet slaughtered in the Temple. Furthermore, Jesus, our Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7), was not yet crucified. Most Catholic and Protestant scholars agree on this. E.g., Cardinal Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict and Presbyterian Pastor Tim Keller, founder of The Gospel Coalition, said there was no lamb on the table. However, the Lamb of God (Jesus) was presiding **at** the table.

Lk 22:20 *In the same way, after the supper, he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.*

This is the **3rd Cup**—the cup of redemption (Exod 6:6c *I will **redeem you** with an outstretched arm & with mighty acts of judgment*). Once again, Jesus shocked the disciples with His interpretation—for this was no longer the blood of a little lamb but the blood of their Master—Jesus, who would shed His blood to redeem all humanity. They ended by singing Ps 115-118.

Covenants are how God moves forward to redeem, save and relate with His people. All biblical covenants were ratified by blood sacrifice.

- In the Old Covenant (Testament), God rescues the Israelites from bondage to Pharaoh through the blood of the Passover Lamb. But the Old Testament prophets understood Israel’s failure to obey God because of sinful hearts (Ps 51:5). They prayed for a more profound deliverance (Ps 51:10-11) that pointed out to a new covenant that God would make with people equipping them with a new heart and a new spirit (Jer 31:31-34, 32:39, Ezk 11:19-20, 36:25-27).
- In the New Covenant, through the blood of the Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus, God rescues believers from all humanity from the deeper bondage and slavery to sin, Satan & death. This is **the gospel**—the good news!

The 4th cup is not mentioned at the Lord’s Supper. Probably there wasn’t any because Jews rejected Jesus so that He couldn’t say in Exodus 6:7 *I will **take you as my own people**, and I will be your God*. But He will drink it with those who believe in Him in the complete fulfilment of His Kingdom in the end-times (Rev 36:25-27)

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Shemot 12:1-14

1. On the 10th of Aviv choose the lamb.
2. Kept for 4 days of inspection for any blemishes need to be tested.
3. On the 14th day the lamb will be slayed it at twilight "between the eve (1500hrs)
4. When the Kohen HaGadol finishes the slay of the lamb he shouted "It is finished"

First wash, shed the wool of the lamb; kosher slaughtering, then drain the blood for sacrifice use and then skin clean it

AN ANCIENT WAY OF COOKING THE LAMB



End Notes:

The Jews roasted the whole lamb: "Not a bone of it was to be broken" (Exodus 12:46). Justin Martyr (100-165 AD) says that they prepared the lamb for roasting using two wooden spits, one perpendicular and the other horizontal, which made it like a cross.