

MESSIAH IN THE PASSOVER

By

Dr. Hal Harless

Foundation Fellowship of Greenville, TX

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I. Introduction

A. Our calendar is based on 365-day solar years. We have inherited this system from ancient Rome. However, the Jewish calendar is based on a system of 360-day lunar years. That is why Good Friday and Passover do not stay synchronized, but sort of dance with each other.

B. This year the Passover season and the Easter season are fairly close to each other. However, if we followed the Jewish calendar, Palm Sunday would have been last Thursday, April 14th. Maundy Thursday would be tomorrow, April 18th. Good Friday would be on Tuesday, April 19th and Easter Sunday would be on Thursday, April 21st. At least next year, the days will line up completely.

II. Messiah in the Passover

A. Passover in the OT (Exod 12:1–13:10)

1. The background of the Exodus

a. Let My People go!

b. The first nine plagues

i. Nile turned to blood (Exod 7:14–25)

- ii. Frogs (Exod 8:1–15)
 - iii. Gnats (Exod 8:16–19)
 - iv. Swarms of insects (Exod 8:20–32)
 - v. Livestock died (Exod 9:1–7)
 - vi. Boils (Exod 9:8–12)
 - vii. Hail and fire (Exod 9:13–35)
 - viii. Locusts (Exod 10:1–20)
 - ix. Darkness (Exod 10:21–27)
- c. The tenth plague
- i. After the ninth plague, Pharaoh told Moses, "Get away from me! Beware, do not see my face again, for in the day you see my face you shall die!" (Exod 10:28).
 - ii. Moses replied, "You are right; I shall never see your face again!" (Exod 10:29).
 - iii. Moses spoke prophetically:

Thus says the LORD, "About midnight I am going out into the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of the Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the millstones; all the firstborn of the cattle as well. Moreover, there shall be a great cry in all the land of Egypt, such as there has not been before and such as shall never be again. But against any of the sons of Israel a dog will not even bark, whether against man or beast, that you may understand how the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel." All these your servants will come down to me and bow themselves before me, saying, "Go out, you and all the people who follow you," and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger (Exod 11:4–8).

d. God would protect Israel and provide a powerful lesson for all time through the Passover.

i. The Heb. word פֶּסַח *Pesah* ("Passover") is from the verb פָּסַח

pāsaḥ that means "to pass over, jump."¹

ii. God said:

I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt (Exod 12:12–13).

iii. God was about to redeem Israel from bondage through the Passover.

2. The elements of the Passover

a. Lamb and the blood of the Lamb

i. The lamb

1) The Passover

a) God instructed Moses:

Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, "On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. Your lamb shall be an **unblemished male** a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the **fourteenth day** of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight (Exodus 12:3–6 NASB).

b) God also told Moses that, for any offering to be acceptable to Him, "it must be **perfect** to be accepted; there shall be **no defect** in it" (Lev 22:21).

2) Jesus is that sinless sacrifice.

a) John the Baptist "saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, **the Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29 NASB). Later, John the Baptist "looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God!'" (John 1:36 NASB).

b) Peter writes:

You should be aware that the ransom paid to free you from the worthless way of life which your fathers passed on to you did not consist of anything perishable like silver or gold; on the contrary, it was the costly bloody sacrificial death of the Messiah, **as of a lamb without defect or spot** (1 Pet 1:18–19 CJB).

c) The author of Hebrews writes:

For if sprinkling ceremonially unclean persons with the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer restores their outward purity; then how much more the blood of the Messiah, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God as **a sacrifice without blemish**, will purify our conscience from works that lead to death, so that we can serve the living God! (Heb 9:13–14).

d) Jesus was killed on the 14th of Nisan, Passover eve, at the same time as the Passover lambs were being slaughtered. John notes, "Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour" (John 19:14).

ii. The blood of the lamb

1) The Passover

a) God commanded Moses:

Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.... The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt (Exod 12:7, 13).

b) Moses instructed the elders of Israel:

You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you (Exod 12:22–23).

c) The author of Hebrews says, "By faith he [Moses] kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them" (Heb 11:28).

2) Jesus: The blood of the Lamb protects us.

a) Striking the two doorposts and the lintel makes the sign of the cross.

b) The Prophet Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah seven centuries before His birth:

He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon

Him, and by His scourging we are healed. 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 slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth (Isa 53:3–7).

c) John also speaks of "Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood" (Rev 1:5 NASB).

d) John records that the elders in heaven sing to the Lamb, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev 5:9).

iii. The flesh of the lamb

1) Passover

a) God told Moses:

They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs along with its entrails. And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire. Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the LORD'S Passover. For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD (Exod 12:8–12 NASB).

b) The Lord told Moses, "It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, **nor are you to break any bone of it**" (Exod 12:46 NASB).

2) Jesus

a) King David predicted, "He keeps all his bones, **not one of them is broken**" (Ps 34:20).

b) John records:

Then, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not stay on the crosses on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was an especially important one), the Jewish leaders asked Pilate to have the victims' legs broken and the bodies taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men who had been crucified with Jesus, first the one and then the other. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and blood and water flowed out immediately. And the person who saw it has testified (and his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth), so that you also may believe. For these things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled, "Not a bone of his will be broken." And again another scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced" [Zech 12:10] (John 19:31–37 NET).

c) Concerning Himself, Jesus said:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh (John 6:47–51 NASB).

i) Since the Last Supper had not yet taken place, Jesus' saying should be understood as a reference to Himself as the Passover lamb.

ii) This also introduces the next element of the Passover meal.

b. Unleavened bread

i. The Passover

1) God commanded Moses:

Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you. You shall also observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land. You shall not eat anything leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread (Exod 12:14–20 NASB).

2) When the Israelis left Egypt, there was no time for their bread to leaven.

3) In addition, leaven is a sign of corruption in the Bible. All leaven had to be removed.

ii. Jesus

1) During the Passover, three pieces of the unleavened bread (Heb. *matza*) have a special significance.

- a) At the beginning of the Passover meal after the first cup of wine is drunk, the middle one of those three *matzot*, called the *Afikoman*, is broken and hidden away.²
 - b) Before the third cup, this *matza*, the *Afikoman*, is brought forth and eaten.³
 - c) At the Last Supper, Jesus "took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me'" (Luke 22:19 NASB).
 - d) The blessing over the bread has been the same for thousands of years, *Baruch atah Adonay Elohaynu Melech ha-olam motzi lechem min ha-aretz* ("Blessed be You Lord King of the Universe who brings forth bread from the earth").
- 2) Jesus fulfilled this type by His death, burial, and resurrection on the third day.
 - 3) Paul writes, "Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7 NASB).
- c. Bitter herbs
 - i. The Passover
 - 1) God instructed Moses that the Passover lamb was to be eaten "with bitter herbs" (Exod 12:8 NASB).

2) This symbolized the fact that Pharaoh and the Egyptians had "made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them" (Exod 1:14 NASB).

ii. Jesus

1) Jesus said at the Last Supper, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy" (John 16:20 NASB).

2) This was fulfilled by Christ's death and resurrection turning the tears of Jesus' followers into joy.

d. The four cups

i. The four cups of wine are named after the four promises of God in Exod 6:6–7:

Therefore, tell the Israelites, "I am the LORD. I will bring you out from your enslavement to the Egyptians, I will rescue you from the hard labor they impose, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you to myself for a people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from your enslavement to the Egyptians" (NASB).

ii. We know the blessing for these cups of wine because it has not changed in thousands of years: *Baruch atah Adonay Elohaynu Melech ha-olam borē p^eri ha-goafen* ("Blessed be You Lord King of the Universe who creates the fruit of the vine").

iii. The Cup of Sanctification

- 1) "I will bring you out from your enslavement to the Egyptians" (Exod 6:6 NASB).
- 2) Jesus prayed, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth" (John 17:19 NASB).

iv. The Cup of Deliverance

- 1) "I will deliver you from their bondage" (Exod 6:6 NASB).
- 2) Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32 NASB).

v. The Cup of Redemption

- 1) "I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments" (Exod 6:6 NASB).
- 2) Paul writes, "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal 4:4–5 NASB).

vi. The Cup of Praise

- 1) "Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (Exod 6:7 NASB).

- 2) Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:11 NASB).

B. The Passover and the Last Supper

1. The first cup

- a. Luke records that

they prepared the Passover.

When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles 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 when He had taken a cup and 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 22:13–18 NASB).

- b. This was the first cup, the Cup of Sanctification, the *Kiddush*.
- c. Jesus prayed, *Baruch atah Adonay Elohaynu Melech ha-olam borē p^eri ha-goafen* ("Blessed be You Lord King of the Universe who creates the fruit of the vine").
- d. Jesus redirected the focus of this Passover forward to the establishment of the Kingdom of God.
- e. Then, the youngest disciple (probably John) would ask, *mah nistana halaylah hazeh mikol halaylot?* ("Why is this night different from all other nights?").
- f. In response, Jesus would have recounted the story of the Exodus from Egypt beginning with, "We were slaves"
- g. Then the second cup was blessed and drunk, and the meal consumed.

2. The *matzot*

- a. Luke records, "And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me'" (Luke 22:19 NASB; see Matt 26:26; Mark 14:22).
- b. Jesus prayed *Baruch atah Adonay Elohaynu Melech ha-olam motzi lechem min ha-aretz* ("Blessed be You Lord King of the Universe who brings forth bread from the earth").
- c. When the *Afikoman* was brought forth from hiding, Jesus equated it with His body that was to be broken for our sins.

3. The third cup

- a. This is the third cup, the Cup of Redemption.
- b. Luke reports, "And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood'" (Luke 22:20 NASB, see also Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24).
- c. Again, Jesus prayed, *Baruch atah Adonay Elohaynu Melech ha-olam borē p^eri ha-goafen* ("Blessed be You Lord King of the Universe who creates the fruit of the vine").
- d. Jesus equated this cup with His blood.
 - i. His blood is the sacrifice that inaugurates the new covenant. This is the new way that God relates to us in grace and grants us forgiveness.

- ii. His blood is an atoning sacrifice that satisfies God's justice. John writes, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2 NIV).
- 4. The fourth cup and the singing of the *Hallel*
 - a. Matthew records "After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Matt 26:30 NASB).
 - b. The Passover meal included singing Ps 115–118. Therefore, the final hymn would have been Ps 118 with its repeated refrain, "His lovingkindness is everlasting."
- 5. Since the destruction of the temple in AD 70, two things have changed in the Passover meal.
 - a. First, the Passover lamb is no longer sacrificed.
 - i. Instead, a lamb's shank bone is placed on the plate in memory of the Passover lamb.
 - ii. This is appropriate since, as the author of Hebrews says, "but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD" (Heb 10:12 NASB).
 - b. At the end of the ceremony, Jews say, *l' shana habah bi-Yerushalim!* ("Next year in Jerusalem!").
 - i. Paul writes, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor 11:26 NASB).

- ii. Paul also writes that we are waiting "for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess 1:10 NASB).
- iii. One day Messiah Jesus will rule the world from Jerusalem and faithful believers will rule with Him.

III. Application:

- A. The Passover meal helps us understand the Last Supper.
- B. Jesus fulfilled this prophetic ritual with His redeeming death.
- C. If you are not a believer in Messiah Yeshua, please receive the atonement that He has made, and trust Him today.
- D. If you are a believer ...
 - 1. Lay up treasures in heaven.
 - 2. Live so that you will reign with Jesus Christ as one of His servant kings.

¹ HALOT 2:947. See also *m. Pesahim*; *b. Berakot* 17a.

² "Kiddush—Yachatz—English Haggadah with Instructional Guide—Passover," *Chabad.org* [on-line], accessed April 9, 2011, <http://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/1736/jewish/Kiddush-Yachatz.htm>.

³ "Tzafun—Berach—English Haggadah with Instructional Guide—Passover," *Chabad.org* [on-line], accessed April 9, 2011, <http://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/1738/jewish/Tzafun-Berach.htm>.