

First Lutheran Church



Seder Meal

April 1, 2010

THE PASSOVER

The Last Supper was a Jewish Passover, a “SEDER” or a solemn sacrificial meal carried out according to ancient Jewish ritual by our Lord and His disciples. The Passover ceremony we follow here is not precisely the same as the ceremony observed when first commanded by God, when the angel of death was to “pass over” homes marked with the blood of the lamb. That meal was eaten with haste and standing.

Nor are we following the Passover ceremony currently in vogue in either orthodox or reformed Jewish homes. The original Passover had changed to some degree already by the time of Christ and has been altered down to the present day.

The ceremony we are following is an attempt to reconstruct and dramatize the Passover meal which Christ ate with His disciples before His sorrows. Some of the elaborate additions which the Passover gained through the centuries, we have omitted; rather, our emphasis has been to show how Jesus observed the Passover according to the Gospels.

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING HYMN #484, verses 1, 2, 6

All praise to thee, my God, this night
For all the blessings of the light.
Keep me, oh, keep me, King of kings,
Beneath thine own almighty wings.

Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son,
They ill that I this day have done;
Teach me to die that so I may
Rise glorious at the awesome day..

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow,

Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

THE SEDER

Commentator: According to ancient Jewish custom, it is the task of the mother (*hostess*) to light the festival candle in every service which takes place in the home. The candle certainly symbolizes Jesus, the Messiah, Who is the Light of the world.

Women and Girls: Blessed are Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us by Thy commandments and given us the privilege of celebrating this festival. Blessed art Thou, O God, Who has kept us alive and brought us to this season. May our homes be consecrated, O God, by the Light of Thy Countenance, shining upon us in blessing and bringing us peace. Bless us this night, our homes and our dear ones, with the light of Thy Spirit.

All: Amen.

(Hostesses light the candles and all are seated.)

(1) KIDDUSH – THE BLESSING OF THE FEAST

Commentator: Every food used in the Passover was blessed before it was eaten. With a blessing over wine, the Jew ushers in every Sabbath and Festival. Kiddush – to sanctify the name of God, is spoken over the ceremonial wine by all. Four cups of wine are normally used at each Passover. Each cup has a special name: the first cup – the cup of joy; the second cup – the cup of praise; the third cup – the cup of redemption; and the fourth cup – the cup of hope. We ask you to use the one cup at your place four times.

Leader: Praise be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine. Praise be Thou, O Lord our God, Who did choose us from among all people for Thy service, and

exalted us by teaching us holiness through Thy commandments. Out of love Thou has given us seasons of gladness, holy days, times for rejoicing, this day of the feast of unleavened bread, the time of our freedom, a memorial to the exodus from Egypt and slavery. For Thou has chosen us and has sanctified us above all peoples, and Thou has given us Thy sacred seasons for our inheritance. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Who dost sanctify Israel and the Festivals.

All (*lifting up wine cup*): Praise be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has kept us in life and sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Commentator: Originally, the wine was passed in one large goblet around the table as a symbol of unity or poured out to each family member from a large goblet. At the Last Supper, Christ passed this first cup of unconsecrated wine to His disciples saying (*Luke 22:17-18*), "Take, and divide it among you for I say to you that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine till the kingdom of God comes."

All (*after taking the first sip of wine – the Cup of Joy*): Blessed are Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who dost create the fruit of the vine.

(2) RECHATZ – WASHING OF THE HANDS

Commentator: The washing of the hands during the paschal meal is symbolic of the interior cleansing necessary for those partaking in the ritual. It was perhaps at this point in the ritual that our Lord washed the feet of His disciples, as an expression of His new commandment of love and to show the need of all for forgiveness. "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me," Jesus said.

Leader (*washing his hands*): Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has hallowed us with Thy commandments and has commanded us concerning the washing of hands and hearts.

(3) KARPAS – EATING OF A GREEN VEGETABLE

Commentator: The green vegetable is a symbol of springtime. (*Passover is always celebrated at this time.*) In this season when earth arrays itself in new life, we remember how God gave new life to the people of Israel through the Exodus and how He has given us new life through the death and resurrection of our Lord.

All (*pick up parsley, dip in salt water, symbolic of tears and sorrow, and say together before eating*): Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who dost create the fruit of the earth.

(4) YACHATZ – BREAKING THE MATZAH

Commentator: For the daily meal in Jewish homes there is one loaf of bread. For the Sabbath there are two loaves of bread as a reminder of the double portion of manna which fell on Friday for the Sabbath. In honor of the Passover, a third matzah was added specifically for the Seder. To Christians, the three matzah represent the Trinity – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Each person has two matzah at his/her place. Your hostess has two wrapped in napkins. She will now unwrap a matzah, break it into two unequal pieces, rewrap the smallest piece and hide it somewhere at your table. This hidden piece, called the Afikoman, is eaten at the end of the meal. The one who finds it may claim a reward. (*This was for child interest in family Passovers.*) To Christians, the broken matzah and Afikoman are very significant. The broken matzah represents Christ, Who was broken in suffering and death for us. The hiding of the Afikoman represents the burial of Christ in the tomb, and its discovery later in the Seder represents His resurrection. Some commentators believe that Christ used the Afikoman as the bread for Holy Communion to teach that we eat His resurrected body in communion.

At this point in Jewish Passover, the door of the home

is opened by a young person, to invite any poor and needy person in to share the hospitality.

Leader: Behold the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in want come and celebrate the Passover with us. Now we are here: next year may we observe the Passover in the Land of Israel. May it be God's will to redeem us from all evil and from all servitude.

(5) MAGGID – TELLING OF THE DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT

Commentator: Now the story of the first Passover is retold as God commanded in the book of Exodus. God wanted this for instruction so that the meaning would not be lost. The youngest person present at the Last Supper – this was probably St. John – asks the four traditional questions:

Children and Youth: Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we eat either leavened or unleavened bread. Why on this night do we eat only unleavened bread?

On all other nights, we eat all kinds of herbs. Why on this night do we eat especially bitter herbs?

On all other nights we do not dip herbs into spices. Why on this night do we dip them in salt water and haroses (*hair-o-sez*)?

On all other nights, we eat without special festivities. Why on this night do we hold this Passover service?

Leader: The Syrian pursued our fathers who went down into Egypt and sojourned there in a very small number and grew into a nation great and strong of an infinite multitude. The Egyptians afflicted us and persecuted us, laying on us most grievous burdens. And we cried to the Lord God of our fathers, Who heard us, and looked down upon our affliction and labor and distress. And He

brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand, and a stretched-out arm, with great terror, with sign and wonders.

Therefore, even if all of us were wise and well-versed in the Torah, it would still be our duty from year to year to tell the story of our deliverance from Egypt; indeed, to dwell at length on it is accounted praiseworthy.

Reader (*an abridged version of Exodus 12 is now read*): “Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ‘From now on, this month will be the first and most important month of the Jewish calendar. Annually, on the tenth day of this month (announce this to all the people of Israel) each family shall get a lamb, a year-old male, without any defects. On the evening of the fourteenth day of this month, all these lambs shall be killed, and their blood shall be placed on the two side-frames of the door of every home and on the panel above the door.

“Everyone shall eat roast lamb that night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Eat it with your traveling clothes on, prepared for a long journey, wearing your walking shoes and carrying your walking sticks in your hands, eat it hurriedly. This observance shall be called the Lord’s Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt, and execute judgment upon all the gods of Egypt...for I am Jehovah. The blood you have placed on the doorposts will be proof that you obey Me.

“You shall celebrate this event each year to remind you of this fateful night. This annual celebration with unleavened bread will cause you always to remember this day so it is a law that you must celebrate this day annually, generation after generation.

“And when you come into the land that the Lord will give you, just as He promised, and when you are celebrating the Passover, and your children ask, ‘What does all this mean? What is this ceremony about?’ you will reply, ‘It is the celebration of Jehovah’s passing over us, for He passed over the homes of the people of Israel, though He killed the Egyptians. He passed over our houses and did not come in to destroy us.’

“That night, at midnight, Jehovah killed all the firstborn sons in the land of Egypt, and also all the firstborn of the cattle. Therefore, Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron during the night and said, ‘Leave us, please go away, all of you; go and give me a blessing as you go.’ And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people of Israel to get them out of the land as quickly as possible. For they said, ‘We are as good as dead.’

“That night the people of Israel left and there were six hundred thousand of them, besides all the women and children going on foot. The sons of Jacob and their descendants had lived in Egypt 430 years, and it was on the last day of the 430th year that all of Jehovah’s people left the land. The same night was selected as the date of the annual celebration of God’s deliverance.”

Commentator: Before the Passover, the book of Exodus tells us about plague after plague that God brought upon the Egyptians in order to cause Pharaoh to let Israel go free. With a spoon, spill into your plate a little wine as each plague is mentioned. The wine reminds us that each plague was an act of God’s grace to set His people free.

Leader: There were 10 plagues that God, the Holy One, brought upon the Egyptians: (1) blood; (2) frogs; (3) gnats; (4) flies; (5) cattle disease; (6) boils; (7) hail; (8) locusts; (9) darkness; (10) smiting of the firstborn.

Commentator: To make clear how the paschal supper symbolizes the deliverance from Egypt, the leader will explain the significance of the ceremonial foods. Before this explanation, please consider how the lamb and matzah bread are full of prophetic significance to Christians.

The Passover lamb had to be a male, unblemished; it was roasted on a cross-like spit, one branch penetrating its length, the other separating its front feet; and no bone of it could be broken. So Jesus, the true Lamb of God, was an unblemished man (*perfect*),

who was crucified on a cross and had no broken bones.

The matzah was unleavened bread, which was called the bread of affliction. It symbolized Israel's afflictions in Egypt, including the afflictions of sin and death. Some Bible commentators believe that Jesus consecrated this bread of affliction to be His body in the Lord's Supper. If so, Jesus is teaching that all of our afflictions are taken away by His body when we eat His body in the Lord's Supper.

Furthermore, the matzah, being unleavened, was without contamination as our Savior, Jesus, was without sin. Also, matzah is usually pierced and striped, which points to Jesus, Who was pierced and striped for us.

Now the leader will explain the meaning of the ceremonial foods for the Jewish Passover.

All: What is the meaning of pesach? (*pay-sock*)

Leader: Pesach means the paschal lamb which our forefathers sacrificed to the Lord in memory of that night when the Holy One passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt.

(The Hostesses uncover the second matzah and hold it up.)

All: What is the meaning of matzah?

Leader: This is the bread of affliction which our fathers took with them out of Egypt as it is written: "With the dough they had brought from Egypt, they baked cakes of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves." *Exodus 12:39*

All: What is the meaning of moror?

Leader: Moror means bitter herbs, which represent the sorrow

and suffering of the Israelites in slavery. As the bitter herbs bring tears to our eyes, so slavery brought tears to the eyes of the Israelites.

(6) DAYYENU – SONG OF THANKSGIVING
(all stand)

Commentator: A prayer of thanksgiving for deliverance is now offered to God,, and one of the Hallel Psalms is read responsively. These Psalms of praise are like our Sanctus in the Communion service. Hallel (*in English, it's Alleluia*) means "Praise ye the Lord." Our Lord often used these Psalms in His prayers.

Leader (*holding up his wine cup*): In every generation, each one ought to regard himself as though he had personally come out of Egypt, as it is written: "And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying, this is what the Lord did to me when I came forth out of Egypt." *Exodus 13:8*

Therefore, it is our duty to thank, praise, laud, glorify, extol, bless, exalt, and adore Him Who did all these miracles for our fathers and for ourselves. He has brought us forth from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to festive day, from darkness to a great light, and from subjection to redemption. Let us then sing a new song.

All (*sung*): Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is your health and
salvation!
Let all who hear, Now to His temple draw near,
Joining in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, Who o'er all things is wondrously
reigning,
And, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining.
Have you not seen All that is needful has been
Sent by His gracious ordaining?

All: Hallelujah, praise ye the Lord!

Leader: When Israel went out of Egypt; the house of Jacob from an enslaved people:

All: Judea was made His sanctuary: Israel His dominion.

Leader: The sea saw and fled: Jordan was turned back!

All: The mountains skipped like rams and ye hills like lambs of the flock.

Leader: At the presence of the Lord the earth moved: At the presence of the God of Jacob.

All: Who turned the rock into pools of water; and the stony hill into fountains of water. Hallelujah, praise ye the Lord!

All (sung): "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"

Praise to the Lord,
Who will prosper your work and defend you;
Surely His goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.
Ponder anew, What the Almighty can do
As with His love He befriends you.

Praise to the Lord!
Oh, let all that is in me adore Him!
All that has life and breath,
come now with praises before Him!
Let the amen Sound from His people again.
Gladly forever adore Him! ♪

(All are now seated.)

(7) THE SOLEMN BLESSING OF THE FOOD

Leader *(holding up the wine cup):* Blessed art Thou, O Lord our

God, King of the Universe, Who hast redeemed us and hast permitted us to live unto this night, to partake of the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs. So may the Lord our God and the God of our fathers, permit us to live unto other festive seasons and holy days...May Thy will be done through Jacob, Thy chosen servant, so that Thy name shall be sanctified in the midst of all the earth, and that all peoples be moved to worship Thee with one accord. And we shall sing new songs of praise unto Thee, for our redemption and for the deliverance of our souls. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Who dost redeem Israel.

All *(holding up wine cup):* Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who dost create the fruit of the vine. *(All now drink a second sip of wine – The Cup of Praise)*

(The Hostesses now hold up whole unwrapped matzo for the blessing)

Leader: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who dost bring forth the bread from the earth.

Commentator: As in the case of wine shared from a single goblet, the breaking and distributing of a single piece of matzo to all present signifies unity. Our Christian unity is brought about in the Lord's Supper when we eat the bread, which holds the body of Christ. St. Paul wrote, "For we, being many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." *1 Corinthians 10:17*

It was customary for the householder at the Passover to dip a piece of bread in haroses and give it to one of his guests as a token of affection. You will remember that Jesus dipped a piece of bread and handed it to Judas. It was a last loving appeal to him, but as the Gospel story says, "He therefore having received the morsel, went out immediately." *John 13:30*

(All Hostesses take the unwrapped matzo and break it into enough pieces for each one at her table. After everyone has their piece, they hold it in their hands and say:)

All: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us by Thy commandments and has commanded us concerning the eating of unleavened bread (*all eat their matzah piece*).

Leader: Let us now combine the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs and eat them together, as it is written: "With unleavened bread and with bitter herbs, they shall eat it."

(all take their two matzah on their plate, put some bitter herbs between them, and say:)

All: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us by Thy commandments and commanded us concerning the eating of bitter herbs. (*all eat their matzo-moror sandwich*)

Commentator: All hostesses will now take the large piece of matzah which was previously broken in half. They will break it into pieces for each one at their table and distribute the pieces. As stated previously, some Bible commentators believe that it is this bread, called the bread of affliction, that Jesus consecrated to be His body for the Lord's Supper. At the least, this bread is yet another foreshadowing of Jesus, Who was broken with our sin and death.

(all hold their matzah morsel and stand)

Leader: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who dost feed the entire world with Thy goodness, with grace, with loving kindness and pity. He gives bread to all flesh, for His loving kindness endures forever. And because of His great goodness, food has not been, and shall never be, lacking for us; for He is God, Who feeds and supports all, and does good unto all, and provides for all His creatures which He did create.

All: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Who feedest all Thy creatures.

(all eat the matzo morsel – all lift up their wine cup of blessing)

Leader: What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?

All: I will take the cup of salvation and will call upon the name of the Lord.

Leader: I will pay my vows to the Lord before all His people.

All: Thou has broken my bonds; I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise, and I will call upon the name of the Lord.

Leader: I will pay my vows to the Lord in the sight of all His people; in the courts of the house of the Lord, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.

All: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has created the fruit of the vine.

(all drink the third sip of wine – The Cup of Redemption)

Commentator: Some Bible commentators believe that Jesus consecrated the Cup of Redemption to be His blood for the Lord's Supper. If so, Jesus is teaching that when we drink His blood, we are redeemed from sin, death, and the devil!

(8) THE HAROSES, LAMB and BEITZAH

Commentator: Three items of the festive portion of the Passover are on your plate. The haroses – a mixture of chopped apple, nuts, cinnamon, and wine – is used to recall the mortar used by the Jews in building the palaces and pyramids of Egypt during their centuries of forced labor.

You have a small slice of lamb to eat as the disciples also had that Passover in Holy Week. Since the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., lamb is not served at Passover,

The last of these three items you should now eat first. It is a

roasted egg. The Beitzah is a symbol of new life. Dip it into the salt water. To Jews, it is a symbol of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and their obligation to rebuild Zion. To Christians, it is the symbol of new life in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. (*You may eat these festive foods.*)

(9) TZAFUN – THE HIDDEN MATZO PORTION

Commentator: The conclusion of the Passover meal includes locating the Afikoman which was hidden. The hostess at your table will break it into pieces for each one at the table. Remember, the hidden Afikoman represents the burial of Christ, and its discovery represents His resurrection. Some Bible commentators believe that Jesus consecrated the Afikoman to be His body in the Lord's Supper. (*You may eat your piece of the Afikoman.*)

(10) BAREKH – BLESSING AFTER THE MEAL

(all shall rise)

All: *Psalm 126*

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion
We were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter
And our tongue with shouts of joy;
Then they said among the nations,
"The Lord hath done great things for them."
the Lord hath done great things for us, We are glad.
Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
Like the water-courses in the Negeb (*knee-gibb*).
May those who sow in tears
Reap with shouts of joy!
He that goes forth weeping,
Bearing the seed for sowing,
Shall come home with shouts of joy,
Bringing the sheaves with him.

Leader: Let us say the blessing for our food.

All: Praise be to the Lord from this time forth and forever.

Leader: Let us praise our God, of whose bounty we have partaken.

All: Praise be to our God of whose bounty we have partaken and through whose goodness we live.

(all are now seated)

Commentator: If we would have filled our wine cups each time, it would now be filled the fourth and final time. The cup empty at your table by the empty chair would also be filled now. The empty place at a Jewish Passover is for Elijah. You will recall several references in the New Testament of him...people are asking...Are you Elijah, or do we look for one to come?

Elijah in Jewish legend is the champion of all oppressed, the forerunner of the Messiah, miracle worker, messenger of joy and peace; and just about anything else cheerful you could imagine. The New Testament teaches us that "Elijah" was John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, the Messiah.

At this point in the ceremony, the youngest child in the family at the Passover runs to the door and opens it for Elijah to come in and bring the Messiah. Here is the continuing tragedy of Jewish hopes – still looking and waiting for the Savior to come...the very Lamb of God Who has already come and has taken away the sins of the world. Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for sin, not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.

(11) HALLEL – CONCLUDING SONG

All (*sung twice*): "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below, Praise Him above, O heavenly host, Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

All: *Psalm 117*

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!

All thy words shall praise Thee, O Lord our God, and the pious ones, the just who do Thy will, together with all Thy people, shall praise Thee in joyous song. They shall thank, exalt, revere, and sanctify Thee, and ascribe sovereignty to Thy name, O our King, for it is good to give thanks to Thee, and it is fitting to sing praises to Thy name, for Thou art God from everlasting to everlasting.

(all stand – all hold up their wine cup)

All: Praise be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

(all now finish their wine – The Cup of Hope)

Commentator: The Cup of Hope symbolized the Jew's hope for the Messiah. Of course, we know that the Messiah has come in the person of Jesus. Some Bible scholars believe that Jesus consecrated the Cup of Hope to be His blood for the Lord's Supper. If so, He is teaching us that when we drink His blood, our hope for the Messiah and the eternal life that comes through Him is fulfilled!

To summarize, Bible scholars believe that Jesus consecrated to be His body and blood either the bread of affliction and the Cup of Redemption, or the Afikoman and the Cup of Hope. Both possibilities have great meaning for us Christians.

CLOSING PRAYER