



Preparing for Passover

A quick overview to help you get ready...

אָנִי לְדוּדֵי וְדוּדֵי לִי הִרְעָה בְּשׁוֹשַׁנִּים

*“I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine,
he pastures among the lilies.” (Song 6:3)*

The Passover Lamb of God...

To celebrate the holiday of Passover, we first must remember *why* it is so important for us. We must understand how the great Exodus of Israel from Egypt (יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם) constitutes the central parable (or story) of the Torah, and indeed of the entire Bible. The bondage of the Israelites to Pharaoh represents humanity’s slavery to sin; deliverance from cruel bondage is effected by trusting in the blood of the sacrificial lamb of God; the exodus from death to life symbolically comes through baptism into the Sea of Reeds; the journey to truth represents the pilgrimage to Sinai, and so on.

We must further remember that the redemption in Egypt led directly to the revelation given at Sinai. When God personally manifested his glory to Israel, he did not begin by saying he was our Creator, but rather our Redeemer: “I am the LORD your God (אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ), who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Exod. 20:2). God began with these words because the purpose of the creation itself is to demonstrate God’s redemptive love and to be known as our Savior and Redeemer, just as Yeshua is the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9).

“All things were created by Him (i.e., Yeshua), and for Him” and in Him all things consist (συνεστηκεν, lit. “stick together”) (Col. 1:16-17). Creation therefore begins and ends with the love of God as manifested in the Person of Yeshua our Redeemer, the great Lamb of God and our Savior... He is the Center of Creation - the Aleph and Tav - the Beginning and the End (Isa. 44:6; Rev. 1:8). All the world was created for the Messiah: “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36).



For more information see the Hebrew for Christians Passover Seder Guide “Worthy is the Lamb” that is available for free on the Hebrew for Christians website.



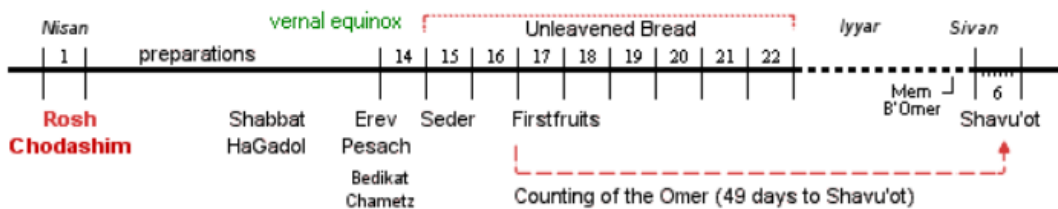
Understanding the Calendar...

Although it may be a bit confusing to understand the overlap and sequence, the Torah instructs us to prepare for Passover by first noting the first “new moon” of the Spring (aviv), which is called the first day of the month of Nisan on the Jewish calendar. This is called “Rosh Chodashim,” meaning the “head of the months,” and it therefore serves as the start of the new year as well (Exod. 12:2). From the outset of the new moon until the full moon of the same month marks 14 days, which at sundown marks the appointed time or holiday of Passover. Technically speaking Passover runs only one day, from the evening of the 14th until the 15th, but since it begins concurrently with the first of the seven days of unleavened bread (Exod. 12:15-20), Passover is often regarded as week-long holiday.

Now to make matters a bit more complicated, the Torah instructs us to count 49 days – “seven weeks of days” – from the day following Passover until Shavuot (i.e., Weeks or “Pentecost”). This period of time is called *Sefirat HaOmer* (ספירת העומר), or the “counting the sheaves” (Lev. 23:15-16; Deut. 16:9-10). Of particular interest to us is the second day of the count, on Nisan 17, called *Yom HaBikkurim* (יום הבכורים), “the Day of Firstfruits,” which marks not only the “first of the harvest” but the resurrection of Yeshua from the dead - the “firstfruits” of redeemed humanity secured by his sacrifice for us as the Lamb of God.

The festival of Shavuot (“Weeks, “Pentecost”“) marks the culmination or “jubilee” of the Passover redemption, and it is therefore called *Atzeret Pesach* (עזרת פסח), or “the Gathering rally of Passover.” According to the traditional sages *the new moon of Nisan* (חודש ניסן) marks the start of sacred time, the Passover remembers the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb, the first day of Unleavened Bread remembers the Exodus from Egypt, the seventh day of Unleavened Bread remembers the crossing of the Red Sea, the counting of the Omer recalls the days before the giving of the Torah at Sinai, and Shavuot (Pentecost) remembers the giving of the Torah exactly seven weeks (שבעה שבועות) after the Exodus (on Sivan 6 in the Torah’s calendar). Followers of Yeshua understand Pentecost to the appointed time for the advent of the Holy Spirit as was promised by our Savior (see Acts 1:3-2:4; John 15:26, John 16:7).

Season of our Liberation



In a sense Shavuot stands in contrast to Passover that requires unleavened bread (matzah), since two loaves of bread made from the first fruits of the wheat harvest were baked with chametz (yeast) before being “waved before the LORD” (Lev. 23:15-21 which pictures the “one new man” (Jew and Gentile) gathered before the altar (Eph. 2:14).



Preparations for Passover...

Some Christian traditions observe a 40 day period of repentance and preparation leading up to “resurrection day” (which they reckon to always fall on a Sunday based on an exegetical error). This tradition may have been derived from the 40 days of teshuvah observed by the Jewish people during the time of the High holidays in the fall, and some theological correspondences can be made between Passover and Yom Kippur regarding atonement. That said, there is no indication given in Scriptures that we should fast or otherwise undergo dietary restrictions in preparation of the holiday of Passover, though of course we are instructed to remove all “chametz” from our homes and to abstain from eating any during the days of unleavened bread. We need to use the “good eye” with those who may differ with us regarding the observance of the holidays, and we must be sure to keep focused on what is most essential regarding all of this heart of the Lord...

From the Jewish perspective, we get ready for the Passover today by planning for a “Seder,” or commemorative meal, that remembers the great Exodus from Egypt and that retells how the Lord faithfully saved Israel with a “mighty hand and an outstretched arm.”

The traditional Passover Seder that has been developed over the centuries has more or less been distilled into a formulaic text recited during the commemorative meal by a designated seder leader (or leaders). This text is called *the Haggadah* (הגדה, “telling”) and it was designed to guide the order of the Passover service... Everybody gets involved in the seder and often discussions can be lively and intense. And while there is no “official” Passover seder, most *haggadot* (seder guides) will set forth the traditional sequence of 15 “steps” (or activities) that we will do to commemorate our deliverance from our bondage in Egypt...

So one of the first steps to prepare for Passover is to select a *Haggadah* that you will use for the family service and familiarize yourself with its content. You then can make a checklist of needed items for the meal. If we make some time to do this, we will feel more comfortable as we go through the Passover service with our family and friends.

To help you get started, you can download the (free) **Hebrew for Christians Passover Seder** and print a copy for yourself and for each participant at your Seder. The seder is guide is called “Worthy is the Lamb,” and it will guide you through all the 15 steps of the traditional seder with constant reference to the ministry of Yeshua as the Lamb of God.

Worthy is the Lamb

A Messianic Passover Haggadah





Removing the Chametz...

The Torah tells us to remove any trace of leaven or “chametz” from our houses before the Passover begins (Exod. 13:7; Duet. 16:8). Because of this we clean our homes of all possible chametz (products or residue which might contain leavening such as bread, crumbs etc.) before the holiday begins. The cleaning culminates in the Erev Pesach ceremony of Bedikat Chametz, when the last vestiges of leaven are removed from the house. For the entire week of Chag HaMatzot we are not to have any leavened products in our homes, nor are we to consume any leavened products outside our home. We are to be “leaven-free.”

The process for removing chametz from your house is a fairly involved, and frankly very few people have the time and energy to perform a thorough cleaning in the traditionally prescribed manner. Nonetheless, the traditional steps include:

1. *Cleaning* all possible locations where *chametz* might have been eaten or might be found in the house. This means searching for crumbs under the cushions of your sofa or stuffed chairs, in the pockets of your coats and pants, on closet floors, and so on. After a room is entirely cleaned and declared chametz-free, it is called “Pesachdik” and no further eating in that room is allowed until after Passover.
2. Emptying and scrubbing down the entire *refrigerator* to remove all traces of chametz. This includes washing out the *freezer* as well.
3. “Kashering” your *stove* and *oven*. This involves a thorough scrubbing of the entire oven, stove top, and racks and then turning the stove (and stove tops) on for over one hour at the highest temperature. A microwave oven can be kashered by boiling a bowl of water inside it for more than 20 minutes.
4. Putting away all dishes, silverware, pots, utensils, etc. that are normally used during the year. Only dishes, silverware, pots, utensils, etc. that are “dedicated” for Passover may be used during Passover Week.
5. “Kashering” your dining room and kitchen tables by pouring boiling water over them and then thoroughly scrubbing them down with soap and water. After kashering, the tables are covered until Passover.
6. Scouring the sink, counters, and all other appliances with boiling water.
7. Scrubbing down the floors, windows, and all other parts of the house.

The Hebrew word *chametz* (חַמֵּץ) derives from the same root as the word “sour” (סוּר), and is generally considered to be any corrupting influence, a hidden uncleanness that manipulates purer elements. Like the influence of a lump of leaven in a batch of dough, “spiritual” leaven functions as an evil impulse within us that corrupts and sours our soul. As such chametz is considered a metaphor of sin which we are commanded to put away from us. The removal of chametz is a metaphor of our sanctification. Part of observing Passover, then, means being careful not to eat anything with chametz (yeast) during the entire seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (i.e., from Nisan 15 through Nisan 22).



The *search for hidden chametz* is not unlike the soul searching we do before the fall High Holidays, when we perform *chesbon hanefesh* (חשבון הנפש) by taking inventory of our spiritual condition before the LORD. In other words, we are commanded to search and remove sources of inner impurity so that we might experience the truth that we are a “new lump” -- that is, a new substance that is untainted by the sour and rotting influences of our past lives. Since Yeshua has been sacrificed as your Passover Lamb, you are indeed *a new creation* (ברייה חדשה) and are made “unleavened” by the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 5:17). Therefore we are likewise commanded put away the “old nature” - the *yetzer ha’ra* (יצר הרע) - and purge from your life the old influences that inwardly canker you and make you sick. Walk without hypocrisy in the truth of the love of God for your soul.

Keeping the Feast...

Observing Passover is crucial for God’s people. In the Torah we read: “And the LORD spoke to Moses in the desert of Sinai, in *the first month* (בחדש הראשון) of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ‘Let the people of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time; according to all its statutes and all its rules you shall keep it’ (Num. 9:1-3).

Ultimately all true Torah points to Yeshua, who is the divinely appointed Redeemer and the beginning and goal of all of creation... “When the fullness of time (τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου) had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the Torah, to redeem those who were under the Torah, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). As the psalmist later declared: “He made the moon for the appointed times” (Psalm 104:19). And since Yeshua came to perfectly fulfill the meaning of these appointed times, it is clear that he observed this calendar as well (Gal. 4:4-5).

Therefore, friends, let us keep the feast of Passover according to the appointed time of the LORD, namely, on the 14th day of the month of Nisan, the first month of the Biblical calendar, at twilight, as a time to be remembered and guarded for all generations (Exod. 12:42). As the Apostle Paul wrote: “Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened for Messiah our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed for” (1 Cor. 5:7-8). Amen!

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!



וַיַּעַשׂוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַפֶּסַח בְּמוֹעֲדוֹ:

"Let the people of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time." (Num. 9:2)

καὶ ποιείτωσαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ τὸ πασχα καθ' ὥραν αὐτοῦ (LXX)





The Cermonial Passover Plate...

A special cermonial “seder plate” (i.e., *ke'arah*: קערה) is used as a “visual aid” to help tell the story of Passover. Although there are different ways to arrange the ceremonial items (“simanim”) on the plate, one arrangement is to order them according to the narrative of the events of the great Exodus from Egypt. In a sense, the seder will revolve around this plate and the symbolism of its items:



1. **Karpas** (כַּרְפָּס) – A vegetable (such as parsley) that is dipped into salt water near the beginning of the Passover Seder. The presence of karpas represents the growth and fertility of the Jewish people in Egypt (Exod. 1:7).



2. **Charoset** (חַרוֹסֶת) – An apple, wine, and nut mixture that represents the mortar used by the Jewish slaves to build the storehouses of Egypt. Charoset symbolizes the toil and labor of the Jewish people in Egypt (Exod. 1:13-14).



3. **Maror** (מָרוֹר) – A bitter herb, such as horseradish, that symbolizes the bitterness and harshness of the slavery of the Israelites (Exod. 1:13-14).



4. **Chazeret** (חֲזֵרֶת) – An inedible bitter herb (such as horseradish root) that symbolizes the atrocity of infanticide (i.e., Pharaoh’s decree to murder the Jewish baby boys). This herb is inedible because it “cannot be swallowed” or accepted, and therefore represents the repudiation of assimilation.



5. **Zero'a** (זְרוּעָה) – A roasted lamb (or goat) shank bone that symbolizes the *korban Pesach* (i.e., the sacrificed lamb whose blood was put upon the doorposts). Note that the usual word for “bone” is *etzem* (עֵצֶם) in Hebrew, but the sages refer to the lamb as *zero'a* - “arm” - as in the “outstretched arm” (*zero'a netuyah*) of the LORD. The “arm of the LORD” is evidenced in His mighty deliverance of the Jewish people given in Yeshua!



6. **Beitzah** (בֵּיזָה) – A roasted egg that recalls the additional offering that was given at the Temple during the season of Passover (*korban chagigah*).



7. **Salt Water Bowl** (קְעָרָה מִי מַלַּח) – The bowl of salt water recalls the sweat and tears of the Jewish slaves – and also recalls the splitting of the Sea and destruction of Pharaoh’s army. We use the salt water to dip the karpas, near the beginning of the Seder and to dip the egg before the start of the meal.



8. **An Orange** – Some add an orange to the plate to express welcome to the “stranger” or those who may feel like outsiders... *Passover is for all people!*



Let Israel keep the Passover...

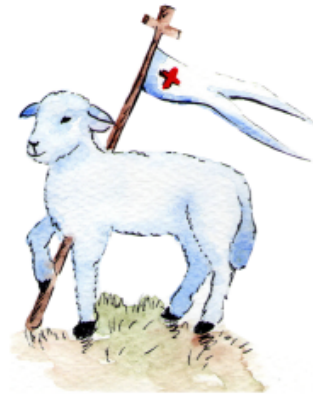
בְּמוֹעֵדוֹ	אֶת־הַפֶּסַח	בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל	וַיַּעֲשׂוּ
be'-mo-a-doh'	et'- ha'-pa'-sakh	ve'-nei' – yis-ra-eil'	ve'-ya-a-soo'
בְּ - pfx; "in" מוֹעֵד - n ms cstr "appointed time" וַיַּעֲשׂוּ - 3ms sfx לִיעֹד - to appoint	אֶת - d/o marker הַ - "the" פֶּסַח - n ms "passover" לִפְסוֹחַ - to skip	בְּנֵי - n m "son" pl cstr בְּנִים יִשְׂרָאֵל - n לְשֵׁרֹת+אל to struggle w/God	וַיַּעֲשׂוּ - "and" עָשָׂה - v "do, make" qal imprf 3mpl לַעֲשׂוֹת - to do
the Passover at its appointed time		and let the people of Israel make	



וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַפֶּסַח בְּמוֹעֵדוֹ:

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Easy Charoset Recipe:

1. 4 oz - chopped, pined dates
2. 4 oz - seedless raisins
3. 1 apple - cored, peeled, & chopped
4. 1/4 cup chopped pecans
5. Wine or grape juice to moisten
6. Cinnamon and cloves (to taste)

Combine ingredients in a food processor (or chop finely), mix and refrigerate.