

Lesson 4 – Passover (פסח, *pesach*) – Part 2

The Passover Seder (Meal)

Relevant Jewish Texts

Mishnah – The first major written collection of the Jewish oral traditions known as the Oral Torah. It is the first major work of rabbinic literature. It was completed at the end of the 2nd century A.D.

Gemara - Rabbinical analysis and commentary on the Mishnah written in 63 books. After the Mishnah was published, it was studied by many generations of rabbis in Babylon and Israel. Their discussions were written down in a series of books completed at the end of the 5th century A.D.

Talmud - The central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish religious law and theology. The term normally refers to the writings specifically called the “Babylonian Talmud” (an earlier collection is called the “Jerusalem Talmud”). This text is comprised of the both the Mishnah and the Gemara.

The Mystery of the Cup

When Jesus celebrates the Passover with His disciples (**Mt 26:17–25; Mk 14:12–21; Lk 22:7–13; Jn 13:1–30**), it is clear that “the cup” is an integral part of the meal (“seder”). Jesus raised a cup at least twice to make important statements about Himself (**Luke 22:17, 20**). However, the original institution of the Passover in **Exodus 12** makes no mention of a cup, and the cup is not associated with Passover anywhere in scripture other than this “Last Supper”.

By the time the Mishnah was compiled at the end of the 2nd century A.D., it contained detailed instructions for the Passover seder (**Mishnah Pesachim – “Ps”**) including the prescription that each participant is to drink from the cup four times during the ceremony (**Ps 10:1**):

Each of these cups is a symbol, though the exact meaning is debated to this day. Many believe they are intended to represent terms of deliverance from **Exodus 6:6-7**:

Four Cups of the Passover Seder (Only Red Wine)		
<i>The cups represent how God will redeem Israel as described in Exodus 6:6–7</i>		
1. Cup of Consecration (Sanctification)	“I will bring you out...”	Ex. 6:6
2. Cup of Plagues (Judgment)	“I will deliver you...”	Ex. 6:6
3. Cup of Redemption or Blessing	“I will redeem you...”	Ex. 6:7
4. Cup of Praise (Hallel)	“I will take you for my people...”	Ex. 6:7

So, how did the cup become a symbol during the Passover Seder when it is never mentioned in the Old Testament? In truth, this remains a mystery even though there are many theories. Two examples of these theories include:

Roman Influence – During the time of the Roman Empire, it was customary at Roman Banquets or “Symposiums” (sym – “together”, posium – “drinking”) to begin the festivities by drinking wine. This was followed by going into the dining hall and eating the main meal which was accompanied by more wine. At the end of the main meal, more wine would be served to the guests. Some say this tradition influenced the rabbis of Israel (in Roman times) who added a fourth cup of praise to God.

Melchizedek – Some say the precedent for including wine during a “Holy” meal goes back to **Gen 14:18** when Melchizedek, King of Salem, brought bread and wine when he blessed Abram.

The Passover Seder - Preparation

Leaven - All leaven (made with yeast, or *chametz*) is removed from the house (**Ex 13:3, 6, 7**)

- The father would use a feather and a spoon to sweep up any last bit of *chametz*.
- A candle is used to search any dark areas where *chametz* might be located (**Ps 1:1**).
- During the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread only foods with no yeast are eaten.
- The most well-known unleavened food is the bread, *matzah*.

Robe - The head of the household wears a *kittel*, a white ceremonial robe.

Table - The table is set with the following items:

- The Seder plate*, which contains, in clockwise order:



1. *Maror or Chazeret* – Bitter herbs or lettuce
2. *Zeroah* - Shank bone – lamb or roasted chicken leg*
3. *Charoset* - A mixture of nuts, fruit, wine, and spices
4. *Maror* - Bitter herbs – typically horseradish
5. *Karpas* - Vegetable – parsley or other vegetable
6. *Betzah* - Egg – a roasted hard-boiled egg

**This is in substitute of the Passover lamb since the destruction of the temple in AD 70.*

- A covered plate that holds three pieces of *matzah*
- A bowl of salt water
- A wine glass for each person
- An extra wine glass for Elijah the Prophet who would precede the Messiah
– *Talmud Peaschim 118a*

The Passover Seder - Lighting the Yom Tov (Holiday) Candles

Before the start of every Sabbath or Jewish holiday, it is traditional for the women of the household to light two candles in honor of the holiness of the day and recite a blessing

The Passover Seder – The Order

This is an example of the order of a Passover Seder. Not all elements presented here are universally observed:

1. Kadesh קדש – recital of *Kiddush* blessing and drinking of the first cup of wine
2. Urchatz ורחץ – the ritual washing of the hands in preparation for eating the parsley
3. Karpas כרפס – dipping of the karpas in salt water. The parsley symbolizes both the humble origins of the Jewish people as well as the rebirth of spring.
4. Yachatz יחץ – breaking the middle matzo; the larger piece becomes the *afikomen*



The middle *matzah* on the plate is broken in half. One half is put back with the stack; the other half is placed in a napkin (or special holder) and designated the *Afikomen* (the dessert) and put aside. It is traditional in some homes to hide the *afikomen* now for children to find before it is eaten after the meal, or for children to “steal” the *Afikomen* and “hold it ransom.”

5. Maggid מגיד – retelling the Passover story (**Ex 13:8**), including the recital of "the four questions" and drinking of the second cup of wine.

This includes the reading of the text of the *Haggadah*, an ancient work derived from the *Mishnah*. The *Haggadah* contains the narrative of the Israelite exodus from Egypt, special blessings and rituals, commentaries from the Talmud, and special songs.

6. Rachtzah רחצה – recital of the blessing “Al Netilas Yodayim” and second washing of the hands in preparation for eating the *Matzah*
7. Motzi מוציא, Matzo מצה – recite the blessing “Hamotzi” before eating matzo
8. Matzah – blessing over Matzah which is passed among the participants and eaten
9. Maror מרור – blessing and eating of the *maror* (bitter herbs; **Ex 12:8**)
10. Koreich כורך – eating of a sandwich made of *matzo*, *maror*, and *charoset*
11. Shulchan oreich שלחן עורך – lit. "set table" – the serving of the holiday meal
12. Tzafun צפון – finding and eating of the *afikoman*
13. Bareich ברך – reciting the blessing “Birkat Ha-mazon” (Grace after the Meal) and drinking of the third cup of wine (fourth cup is filled along with the cup for Elijah)...the front door of the home is opened to allow Elijah to enter.
14. Hallel הלל – recital of the *Hallel*, traditionally recited on festivals; singing praises to God; drinking of the fourth cup of wine
15. Nirtzah נירצה – say "Next Year in Jerusalem!"

The Passover Seder - The Four Questions

The youngest child (or any individual) asks (or sings):

Why is this night different from all other nights?

1. On all other nights we eat either bread or *matzah*; on this night, why only *matzah*?
2. On all other nights we eat herbs or vegetables of any kind; on this night why bitter herbs?
3. On all other nights we do not dip even once; on this night why do we dip twice?
4. On all other nights we eat our meals in any manner; on this night why do we sit around the table together in a reclining position?

The rest of the participants at the Seder answer:

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and God brought us out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. And if God had not brought our ancestors out of Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would still be subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if we were all old and wise and learned in Torah, we would still be commanded to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. And the more we talk about the Exodus from Egypt, the more praiseworthy we are.

Background Passages

Genesis 14:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)

Exodus 6:6–8 (ESV)

⁶ Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. ⁷ I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.' "

Exodus 12 (ESV)

¹ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ² "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. ³ Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴ And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶ and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

⁷ "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸ They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹ Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. ¹⁰ And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹ In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. ¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. 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.

¹⁴ "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. ¹⁵ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. ¹⁷ And you shall 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 statute forever. ¹⁸ In the first month, from the fourteenth

day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹ For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. ²⁰ You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread.”

²¹ Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. ²² Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. ²³ For the LORD will pass through to strike 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 enter your houses to strike you. ²⁴ You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. ²⁵ And when you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. ²⁶ And when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ ²⁷ 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.’ ” And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

²⁸ Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

²⁹ At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. ³⁰ And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead. ³¹ Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, “Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. ³² Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!”

³³ The Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste. For they said, “We shall all be dead.” ³⁴ So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their cloaks on their shoulders. ³⁵ The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. ³⁶ And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

³⁷ And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. ³⁸ A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. ³⁹ And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

⁴⁰ The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. ⁴¹ At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. ⁴² It was a night of watching by the LORD, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a night of watching kept to the LORD by all the people of Israel throughout their generations.

⁴³ And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, ⁴⁴ but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. ⁴⁵ No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it. ⁴⁶ It shall be eaten in one house;

you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. ⁴⁷ All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. ⁴⁸ If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. ⁴⁹ There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.”

⁵⁰ All the people of Israel did just as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron. ⁵¹ And on that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.

Exodus 13:1–16 (ESV)

¹ The LORD said to Moses, ² “Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.”

³ Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. ⁴ Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. ⁵ And when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month. ⁶ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. ⁷ Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. 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.’ ⁹ And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. ¹⁰ You shall therefore keep this statute at its appointed time from year to year.

¹¹ “When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, ¹² you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD’s. ¹³ Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. ¹⁴ And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. ¹⁵ For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ ¹⁶ It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.”

Matthew 26:17–25 (ESV)

¹⁷ Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?” ¹⁸ He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’ ” ¹⁹ And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

²⁰ When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. ²¹ And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” ²² And they were very sorrowful and began

to say to him one after another, "Is it I, Lord?"²³ He answered, "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me."²⁴ The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."²⁵ Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so."

Mark 14:12–21 (ESV)

¹² And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"¹³ And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him,¹⁴ and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'¹⁵ And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us."¹⁶ And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

¹⁷ And when it was evening, he came with the twelve.¹⁸ And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."¹⁹ They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?"²⁰ He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me."²¹ For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

Luke 22:7–13 (ESV)

⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.⁸ So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it."⁹ They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?"¹⁰ He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters¹¹ and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'¹² And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there."¹³ And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

John 13:1–30 (ESV)

¹ Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God,⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand."⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only

but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?" ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. ¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

²¹ After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." ²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. ²³ One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, ²⁴ so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵ So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." ²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

The Four Questions

The youngest child (or any individual) asks (or sings):

Why is this night different from all other nights?

1. On all other nights we eat either bread or *matzah*; on this night, why only *matzah*?
2. On all other nights we eat herbs or vegetables of any kind; on this night why bitter herbs?
3. On all other nights we do not dip even once; on this night why do we dip twice?
4. On all other nights we eat our meals in any manner; on this night why do we sit around the table together in a reclining position?

The rest of the participants at the Seder answer:

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and God brought us out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. And if God had not brought our ancestors out of Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would still be subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if we were all old and wise and learned in Torah, we would still be commanded to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. And the more we talk about the Exodus from Egypt, the more praiseworthy we are.

Mishnah Pesachim 10:1

עַרְבֵי פֶסַחִים סְמוּךְ לַמִּנְחָה, לֹא יֵאָכַל אָדָם עַד שֶׁתְּחַשֵּׁף. וְאֶפְלוּ עֲנֵי נְשִׁיטָרְאֵל לֹא יֵאָכַל עַד נְשִׁיטָב. וְלֹא יִפְתְּחוּ לוֹ מֵאַרְבַּע בּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל יַיִן, וְאֶפְלוּ מִן הַתְּמַחִי:

On the eve of Passover, adjacent to *mincha* time, a person may not eat until dark, so that he will be able to eat *matza* that night with a hearty appetite. **Even the poorest of Jews should not eat** the meal on Passover night **until he reclines** on his left side, as free and wealthy people recline when they eat. **And** the distributors of charity should **not give** a poor person **less than four cups of wine** for the Festival meal of Passover night. **And** this *halakha* applies **even** if the poor person is one of the poorest members of society and receives his food **from the charity plate**.

For the remainder of Mishnah Peasachim, see the following link:

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Pesachim.1.1?lang=bi