

## **Haggadah: A Christian Celebration of Passover**



Leader: Welcome to this special celebration of Passover, a celebration that is very rich with symbolism and full of worship.

Passover is a meal that God designed and a story that God wrote. Passover is the story that we eat. It is a braided story that we eat, for Passover recalls 3 stories that God has woven together.

On one level, Passover recounts the story of the Hebrew people, who were rescued from slavery in 1446, B.C. But as believers in Christ, we understand that what happened 3500 years ago in Egypt was a foreshadowing and a symbol of a greater reality, which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ 2000 years ago. Those are two strands of the braided story.

The third strand is our own individual Passover experiences, as the blood of the Lamb of God was applied to the doorposts of our own hearts and as spiritual death was made to PASS OVER each of us personally, setting us free from the slavery and suffering of sin.

## Hallel: Songs of Praise

The Jews of Bible times used a group of hymns, called the Egyptian Hallel, in their Passover festivals.<sup>1</sup> These celebratory songs are recorded in our Bibles as Psalms 113-118.

Jesus and His disciples sang Psalm 113 and 114 before the "Last Supper," which was a Passover meal. Let's begin our celebration with these very same words of worship.

**ALL:** Praise the LORD.

Praise, O servants of the LORD,  
praise the name of the LORD.

1. \_\_\_\_\_: Let the name of the LORD be praised,  
both now and forevermore.

From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets,  
the name of the LORD is to be praised.

2. \_\_\_\_\_: The LORD is exalted over all the nations,  
his glory above the heavens.

Who is like the LORD our God,  
the One who sits enthroned on high,  
who stoops down to look  
on the heavens and the earth?

**ALL:** He raises the poor from the dust  
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;  
he seats them with princes,  
with the princes of their people. . . .

3. \_\_\_\_\_: When Israel came out of Egypt,  
the house of Jacob from a people of foreign tongue,  
Judah became God's sanctuary,  
Israel his dominion.

**ALL:** Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,  
at the presence of the God of Jacob,  
who turned the rock into a pool,  
the hard rock into springs of water.

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<sup>1</sup> *Hallelu Yah* is the Hebrew translation of "praise the LORD."

## Sanctification

Leader: The traditional Jewish Passover incorporates four cups: the cup of sanctification, the cup of deliverance, the cup of redemption, and the cup of praise. These four cups correspond to four promises that God gave in Exodus 6:

I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.

God gives these promises of sanctification, deliverance, redemption, and praise to each believer in Christ.

We begin with sanctification, which means being set apart for a special purpose. God set the Hebrew people apart for a special purpose: to belong exclusively to Him. Today God sets apart believers in Christ Jesus for a special purpose: to belong exclusively to Him.

We now want to sanctify this time by setting it apart for the special purpose of celebrating Passover, of celebrating God's works of redemption and deliverance for us. We light these candles now to represent that we are devoting this time to celebrating and worshipping God.

4. \_\_\_\_\_: "Jesus, You are the Light of the world."

ALL: "Jesus, You are the One who shows us the way to the Father God.  
You are the One who dispels the darkness from our souls.  
You are the One who brightens our hearts with the knowledge of God,  
and You are the One who delights us with the radiant splendor of Your glory."

5. \_\_\_\_\_: "Jesus, bring the light of who You are to us, we pray,  
and shine brightly in this hour, in this room, and in each heart. Amen."

Leader: More than just sanctifying this time, however, we especially come now to sanctify ourselves: we set ourselves apart for a special purpose; we set our lives apart for the special purpose of belonging exclusively to God.

6. \_\_\_\_\_: "LORD God Almighty, we yield to Your sanctifying Spirit now. We commit to belonging exclusively to You. Thank you for the words of the apostle Peter, who wrote that "we are a chosen people. We are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, we can show others the goodness of God, for He called us out of the darkness into His wonderful light.

'Once we had no identity as a people;  
now we are God's people.  
Once we received no mercy;  
now we have received God's mercy.'"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter 2:9-10, NLT

Leader: Now with joy, we drink from the first cup, the Cup of Sanctification, rejoicing that God has chosen us to be His.

The story of the Passover, which is both the Jews' story and our story, begins with suffering.

7. \_\_\_\_\_: "Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph or what he had done. . . . So the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves. They appointed brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down with crushing labor. .... So the Egyptians worked the people of Israel without mercy. They made their lives bitter, forcing them to mix mortar and make bricks and do all the work in the fields. They were ruthless in all their demands.... Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: 'Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River.'"<sup>3</sup>

Leader: The Israelites suffered greatly as slaves in Egypt; and we, too, have suffered greatly as slaves of sin. Let us dip the **parsley** into the **salt water**, which symbolizes the tears and sorrow of slavery.

8. \_\_\_\_\_: "So the slave drivers and foremen went out and told the people: 'This is what Pharaoh says: I will not provide any more straw for you. Go and get it yourselves. Find it wherever you can. But you must produce just as many bricks as before!' So the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt in search of stubble to use as straw. Meanwhile, the Egyptian slave drivers continued to push hard. 'Meet your daily quota of bricks, just as you did when we provided you with straw!' they demanded. Then they whipped the Israelite foremen they had put in charge of the work crews. 'Why haven't you met your quotas either yesterday or today?' they demanded."<sup>4</sup>

Leader: The **haroset** represents the bricks that the Israelites were forced to make and the mortar which they used in their building for the Egyptians. The **haroset** represents suffering and is sometimes made with vinegar. More often, however, the **haroset** is sweet, made with honey. This reminds us of God's sweet kindness to us even in the midst of our suffering.

Let us eat the **haroset** now.

God commanded the Hebrews to eat bitter herbs at their Passover meal to symbolize the cruel suffering of slavery. Now we, too, eat bitter herbs, the **maror**, to remind us of the misery and destructiveness of sin.

## Deliverance

9. \_\_\_\_\_: God spoke to Moses: "The LORD said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. <sup>8</sup> So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey....'"<sup>5</sup>

10. \_\_\_\_\_: "Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I

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<sup>3</sup>Exodus 1:8-22

<sup>4</sup>Exodus 5:10-14

<sup>5</sup>Exodus 3:7-8, NIV

will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.”<sup>6</sup>

Leader: Our God is the God of the outstretched arm—how wonderful! Motivated by love, He extends His power on our behalf.

ALL: We rejoice that our God rescues us!  
We rejoice that our God delivers us!

Leader: With joy, let us drink the second cup, the Cup of Deliverance.

God said, “I will rescue My people!” And so He sent Moses to lead the Hebrew people and to confront Pharaoh. As Pharaoh repeatedly refused to free his slaves, God sent plagues of water-turned-to-blood, frogs, gnats, flies, diseased livestock, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness. But there would be no freedom until blood was shed; there would be no deliverance until someone died.

In the same way, we would never be free until blood was shed and until Someone died. Only the death of Christ could break the stranglehold that our slave-master, sin, had on us.

11. \_\_\_\_\_: “Then Moses called all the elders of Israel together and said to them, ‘Go, pick out a lamb or young goat for each of your families, and slaughter the Passover animal. Drain the blood into a basin. Then take a bundle of hyssop branches and dip it into the blood. Brush the hyssop across the top and sides of the doorframes of your houses. And no one may go out through the door until morning. For the LORD will pass through the land to strike down the Egyptians. But when he sees the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe, the LORD will **pass over** your home. He will not permit his death angel to enter your house and strike you down.”<sup>7</sup>

Leader: The parsley that we dipped earlier into the salt water reminds us of the hyssop plant, which was used often by Old Testament priests as a part of ritual cleansing. The hyssop in the first Passover in Egypt was used to put the blood of the lambs on the doorframes. The blood dripped down the door at the top and down the sides in the same way that it would later drip down from the head and hands of Jesus as He hung dying on the cross.

Hyssop appears again at the crucifixion when the stalk of a hyssop plant is held up to the Lamb of God. It is as if God is pointing out, “Here is the true Passover Lamb!”

When the Jews eat the Passover lamb, they remember only animals, slaughtered in ancient days. As believers in Jesus, we know that those animals in themselves were meaningless. They were representations of the True Sacrifice, who was yet to come. When we eat the Passover lamb, we remember Jesus, who has come as the true Passover Lamb.

ALL: We think of Jesus,  
LEADER: the only one righteous enough to be an acceptable sacrifice  
before God.  
ALL: We think of Jesus,  
LEADER: the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.<sup>8</sup>  
ALL: We think of Jesus,  
LEADER: the one without blemish or defect—perfectly sinless—  
who willingly gave His life in atonement for us.

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<sup>6</sup> Exodus 5:5-6, NIV

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 12:21-23, NIV

<sup>8</sup> John 1:29

Leader: Let us eat the **lamb** with immense gratitude in our hearts for Jesus, the Lamb of God.



The bread that they ate on that first Passover night was flat.

12. \_\_\_\_\_: "The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. 'For otherwise,' they said, 'we will all die!' So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing."<sup>9</sup>

Leader: The Israelites fled Egypt in haste. This provides a dramatic lesson that we should run quickly when God provides the way of escape from sin; we dare not linger a moment. We are reminded, too, that we must be prepared to leave quickly, at any moment, at the sudden call of God to leave this earth, our land of bondage and groaning.

For us, the bread represents the body of Jesus, who is the Bread of Life. The flat bread, made without yeast, represents the life of Jesus, who was without sin. The **matzoh** bread has stripes, just as the body of Jesus was striped with the brutal lashes of a Roman flogging. The **matzoh** bread is pierced, just as the body of Jesus was pierced with the nails and the spear.

ALL: "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."<sup>10</sup>

Leader: Jesus observed a Passover meal with his disciples the night before His death.

13. \_\_\_\_\_: "As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, 'Take this and eat it, for this is my body.'"<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Exodus 12:33-34, NIV

<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 53:5, NIV

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 26:26, NIV

Leader: This bread represents the broken body of Jesus, the sacrifice for our sins. Let us eat the bread, remembering the great price that Jesus paid with His body for our salvation.



## Redemption

The third cup is the Cup of Redemption, or Salvation. For the Jews, it represents redemption from Egypt. For us, it represents the redemption which God has given us through the blood of Jesus. His death gave us Life. It is His blood that symbolically covers us so that the death which we deserve passes over us, having come with judgment on Him instead.

When Jesus took the third cup, He used several words from the Jewish betrothal ceremony. He was proposing a covenant of exclusive commitment, made with solemn and binding vows.

14. \_\_\_\_\_: "Then [Jesus] took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to [the disciples], saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. <sup>28</sup>This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"<sup>12</sup>

Leader: Let us drink with joy as we thank God for redeeming us!

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<sup>12</sup> Matthew 26:27-28, NIV

## Praise

The fourth cup is the Cup of Praise. Jesus made a new covenant with us—not one based on doing good works or on accomplishment. This new covenant is based not on earning but on receiving: our friendship with God is received as a gift.

Jesus said that He would die for us if we would live for Him. Jesus says to us, "I will give all of Me for all of you."

It is the great exchange of our guilt and death and misery and loneliness and darkness and fear—exchanged for His righteousness and life and joy and intimacy and light and love.

When we celebrate Passover or the Lord's Supper, it is as if we are renewing our vows to God—vows of exclusive devotion to Him. We are not only remembering what He gives to us, but we are also remembering that we have given ourselves to Him.

We die to being spiritual single. We now live a shared life with Christ. We promise to belong to God as His people. And He promises to belong to us as our God.

After Jesus and his disciples observed Passover, they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.<sup>13</sup> The hymn which they sang probably came from Psalms 115-118. Before we read from these same songs of praise, we will drink from the fourth cup, the Cup of Praise.

ALL: Not to us, O LORD, not to us  
but to your name be the glory,  
because of your love and faithfulness.

15. \_\_\_\_\_: I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;  
he heard my cry for mercy.  
Because he turned his ear to me,  
I will call on him as long as I live.

16. \_\_\_\_\_: The cords of death entangled me,  
the anguish of the grave came upon me;  
I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.

ALL: Then I called on the name of the LORD :  
"O LORD, save me!"

17. \_\_\_\_\_: The LORD is gracious and righteous;  
our God is full of compassion.

ALL: Be at rest once more, O my soul,  
for the LORD has been good to you.

18. \_\_\_\_\_: How can I repay the LORD  
for all his goodness to me?  
I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the LORD.

ALL: For great is his love toward us,  
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.

19. \_\_\_\_\_: O LORD, truly I am your servant; ...  
you have freed me from my chains.  
I will sacrifice a thank offering to you  
and call on the name of the LORD.

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<sup>13</sup> Matthew 26:30



ALL: Praise the LORD, all you nations;  
extol him, all you peoples.

20. \_\_\_\_\_: Open for me the gates of righteousness;  
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.

This is the gate of the LORD  
through which the righteous may enter.

ALL: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.

21. \_\_\_\_\_: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.  
From the house of the LORD we bless you.

ALL: I will give you thanks, for you answered me;  
you have become my salvation.

22. \_\_\_\_\_: The LORD is God,  
and he has made his light shine upon us.

ALL: This is the day the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

23. \_\_\_\_\_: You are my God, and I will give you thanks;  
you are my God, and I will exalt you.

ALL: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.

## ***Dayenu:*** **A Christian Version**

*"Dayenu" is a well-known and well-loved Jewish song, having been used in celebrating Passover for over a thousand years.*

*Using a similar pattern and the same refrain, I have adapted the lyrics to create a Christian version.*

*Ask individuals to read the stanzas, but have everyone respond together after each stanza with the refrain (in bold), "It would have been enough!"*



If He had created the universe with beauty and splendor  
And had not given it to us to tend and to enjoy,  
***It would have been enough!***

If He had given us the universe to tend and to enjoy  
And had not created us in His image,  
***It would have been enough!***

If He had created us in His image  
And had not revealed Himself to us as our Creator,  
***It would have been enough!***

If He had revealed Himself to us as our Creator  
 And had not loved us as our Shepherd,  
***It would have been enough!***



If He had loved us as our Shepherd  
 And had not loved us as our Father,  
***It would have been enough!***

If He had loved us as our Father  
 And had not sent His prophets to tell us of His love,  
***It would have been enough!***

If He had sent His prophets to tell us of His love  
 And had not sent His wonderful Son to us,  
***It would have been enough!***

If He had sent His wonderful Son to us  
 And had not sacrificed Him for our sins,  
***It would have been enough!***

If He had sacrificed Him for our sins  
 And had not made us new creations,  
***It would have been enough!***

If He had made us new creations  
 And had not put a new Spirit within us,  
***It would have been enough!***

If He had put a new Spirit within us  
 And had not brought us into His glorious kingdom,  
***It would have been enough!***

If He had brought us into His glorious kingdom  
 And had not adopted us into His precious family,  
***It would have been enough!***



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If He had adopted us into His precious family  
 And had not given us every spiritual blessing in Christ,  
***It would have been enough!***

If He had given us every spiritual blessing in Christ  
 And had not given us Himself,  
***It would have been enough!***

But He has given us all that He has  
 And all that He is.  
***It is more than enough!***

There is no one like our God. He has done exceedingly, abundantly above all that we could ask or imagine. His goodness is more than enough to earn our unceasing gratitude and our eternal praise. Let God's people say:  
***It is more than enough.***

***Hallelujah!***

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<sup>14</sup> Image courtesy of stockimages at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

## Scripture Handouts for Pentecost

*Print this page, and then cut into strips to distribute to your readers.*

Matthew 4:4, NIV:

But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Psalms 119:103, NIV:

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psalms 119:105, NIV:

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

Psalms 19:7-11, NLT:

The instructions of the LORD are perfect,  
reviving the soul.

The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.

The commandments of the LORD are right,  
bringing joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are clear,  
giving insight for living.

Reverence for the LORD is pure,  
lasting forever.

The laws of the LORD are true;  
each one is fair.

They are more desirable than gold,  
even the finest gold.

They are sweeter than honey,  
even honey dripping from the comb.

They are a warning to your servant,  
a great reward for those who obey them.

## Scripture Handouts for the Feast of Tabernacles

*Print this page, and then cut into strips to distribute to your readers.*

Deuteronomy 16:14-15, NLT:

"Be full of joy during your special supper. ... You will be full of joy because the Lord your God will bring good to you in all the food you grow and in all the work you do."

1 Corinthians 10:3-4, NIV:

"They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ."

Leviticus 23:40, NLT:

"On the first day gather branches from magnificent trees—palm fronds, boughs from leafy trees, and willows that grow by the streams. Then celebrate with joy before the LORD your God for seven days."

Isaiah 44:3, NIV:

"For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants."

Isaiah 12:2-3, NIV:

"Surely God is my salvation;  
I will trust and not be afraid.  
The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defense;  
he has become my salvation."  
With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation."

John 7:37-39, NLT:

On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him.)

## Braided Bread

1/3 C. honey  
1¼ C. warm water  
2¼ t. active dry yeast  
1½ t. salt  
2/3 C. olive oil  
2 eggs  
5 C. flour  
additional flour, as needed  
optional: egg for glaze

1. In a large mixing bowl, dissolve the honey in the warm water.
2. Stir in the yeast. Set aside for about 15 minutes. The yeast will form a creamy, foamy layer on top of the water.
3. Stir in the salt, oil, and eggs.
4. Gradually add the flour.
5. Using additional flour as needed, knead the dough for about 10 minutes until smooth.
6. Place the dough in a greased bowl. Set in a warm, draft-free place for 1 ½ hours. The dough will nearly double in size.
7. Punch the dough down, and divide into two loaves. Then divided each loaf into five portions. Roll each portion into a strand.
8. For each loaf, connect 5 strands together at the top before braiding them. Connect them again after braiding.

To braid the 5 strands:


Lay 3 strands to the right, and lay the other 2 strands to the left. Take the outermost strand on the right and move it to the center, just to the right of the 2 strands.

Now take the outermost strand on the left (where there are now 3 strands) and move it to the center, just to the left of the 2 strands that are now on the right.

Continue this pattern.

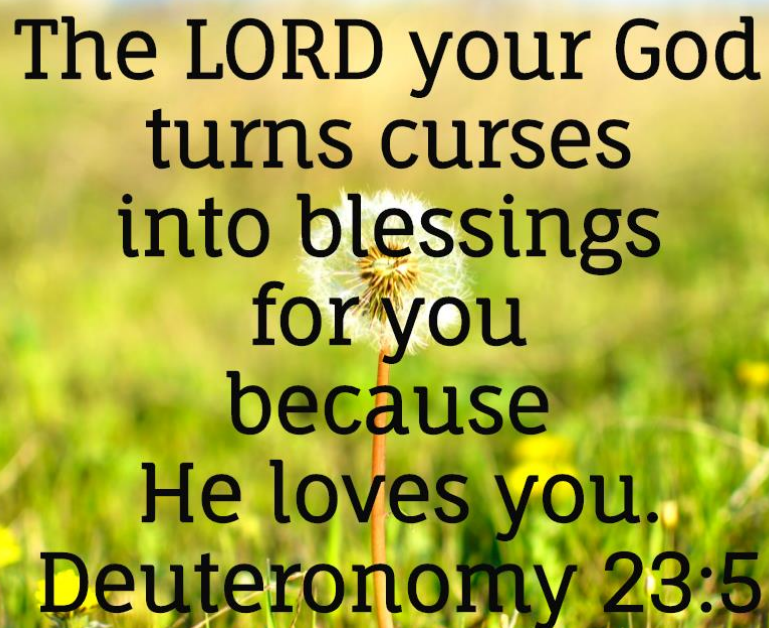
9. Carefully lay each loaf on parchment paper or foil on a baking sheet. Let each loaf rise for 1 hour, again in a warm, draft-free place.
10. Apply an egg-wash glaze, if desired. (Beat the egg, and then brush on the top of each loaf.)
11. Put the bread into preheated 350° oven. Bake for 30 minutes.





*The enemy "intended to harm me, but God intended it for good."*

Genesis 50:20, NIV



The LORD your God  
turns curses  
into blessings  
for you  
because  
He loves you.  
Deuteronomy 23:5



Purim:  
*A Celebration*

**Course One**

Xerxes' First Feast  
Salad

**Course Two**

Xerxes' Second Feast  
Soup

**Course Three**

Vasthi's Feast  
Bread

**Course Four**

Wedding Feast  
Vegetables

**Course Five**

Fasting

**Course Six**

Esther's First Feast  
Entrée

**Course Seven**

Esther's Second Feast  
Side

**Course Eight**

Purim Feasts  
Dessert