



This Spring we offered our congregation the opportunity to experience Passover in a manner as close as possible to that which Jesus and His disciples might have known. In the Jewish Calendar PASSOVER is a very special Festival, and one which 2,000 years ago ushered in the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We re-enacted the PASSOVER SEDER carefully taking note of the many places in this Service that reveals our Messiah, Jesus.

Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover together, and during that meal the Lord changed the centuries old Service and inaugurated the Sacrament of Eucharist, or Communion, into what many of us call The Last Supper.

It has been suggested that The Last Supper was not, in fact, a Passover Meal. Some people think that the Last Supper derives from a simple weekly meal shared by small groups of males, very often by a Rabbi and his disciples, known as Kiddûsh.

The reasoning is as follows – Passover was strictly a family festival, and Kiddûsh was always a group of male friends. Passover had the Pascal Lamb; Pascal Lamb was not mentioned at the Last Supper. Unleavened Bread was always used at Passover, ordinary bread was used for Kiddûsh and the Last Supper [The Greek in the New Testament used the word for ‘bread’ and not ‘unleavened’ bread] Several cups were drunk at Passover, only one cup at Kiddûsh and only one is mentioned at the Last Supper. Passover rehearsed many readings from the Old Testament; these are not mentioned at the Last Supper. From the beginning of the Church the Last Supper was celebrated frequently, normally weekly, as was the Kiddûsh. And at Kiddûsh water was mixed with the wine and this practice was adopted by the early Church.

It is also suggested that if the Passover had begun on “the night on which He was betrayed”, our Lord could not have been tried and executed on that day, for it was against the Law of the Jews to hold a trial or execution during the Passover. But the Last Supper took place, according to Jewish reckoning, on the same day as the trials and crucifixion. However, it was also the custom for some who lived outside of Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover the day before the Pharisees inside Jerusalem. This would make it possible for Jesus to celebrate the Passover on 14th Nisan instead of the usual 15th Nisan, in order to celebrate the Feast with His disciples before becoming the actual Paschal Lamb Himself.

We also have the witness of the Gospels that state clearly that the Last Supper was in fact the Passover. See = Matt. 26 v 17ff; Mark 14 v 12; Luke 22 v 7. Therefore, we celebrated the Last Supper as the traditional PASSOVER SEDER.

Before we began our Passover Meal we spent some time singing in Hebrew and learning more about the seating in Jesus' time, the meaning of the Passover Symbols on the Seder Table, and generally prepared ourselves to spend this time contemplating what it might have felt like to be there with Jesus 2,000 years ago.

If anyone would like to know more, please contact me – Mavis Gibbs at mavisgibbs@gznet.co.uk

HAGGADAH.

(Explanation is in bold italics)

LIGHTING THE CANDLES.

Before we begin, we need to remember that just as we all celebrate Christmas and yet each family also has its own traditions connected with Christmas, so all Jews celebrate Passover but each family has its own way of celebrating. There are, of course, certain set things that MUST be acted out.

In this Seder I have tried to put together as comprehensive a Passover Seder as I can, but have left out some of the long, long explanations that would be necessary if we were Jews. Also, I have attempted to make our Passover as simple as possible to bring out the important areas that mean so much to us as Christians. This Passover will be as kosher as I can make it, but might differ in some areas with individual Jewish families.

THE SEDER BEGINS WITH THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES.

The Festival cannot begin unless a woman lights the candles. Neither the Jewish Sabbath nor Passover can begin without a woman lighting the candles. This means that there must have been a woman there with Jesus and the disciples even if it was just for that initial action of lighting candles.

It is always a woman, since according to tradition; the Israelites were redeemed from Egypt because of the pious women of that generation, who were considered to be more righteous than the men.

It is a woman, therefore, who brings LIGHT to her family. We remember that it was a woman – Mary – who brought the LIGHT OF THE WORLD to us, her brothers and sisters in Christ.

It is therefore a woman's privilege to kindle Sabbath and festival lights in the home.

MOTHER Blessed art Thou O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by the commandments and commanded us to kindle the festival light.

Father of Mercy, O continue Your loving kindness to my dear ones,....Keep far from us all manner of shame, grief and care. O grant that peace, light and joy ever abide in our house. For with You is the fountain of life and in Your light do we see light.

ALL Amen

HEAD (or Father) blesses the children.

To the sons: - The Lord make thee like Ephraim and Manasseh,

To the daughters: - The Lord make thee like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.

To both he gives the Aaronic blessing: - The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord cause His Presence to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee, the Lord turn His face towards thee and give thee wholeness, peace, shalom.

We now come to KIDDUSH which means Sanctification or Blessing.

KIDDUSH – SANCTIFICATION

The first cup of wine is poured...

[Luke chapter 22 v 17 "After taking the cup, He gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.']

THE BLESSING OF THE WINE (*Raise the first cup*) ("The Cup of Blessing").

HEAD Blessed is our Lord, God, King of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

ALL Blessed is God, Who chose us among all people to seek holiness through His commandments. With love, Thou hast given us, O Lord, festivals for joy – this Passover Feast – this Feast of Freedom, a Holy gathering to remember the Exodus from Egypt. Thou hast chosen us and given us a heritage of festivals for joy and gladness. Blessed be God Who has sanctified Israel and all the festive seasons. Thanks be to God Who kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this moment.

THE FIRST CUP IS DRUNK

In silence, the Head washes his hands. Each person takes a piece of KARPAS (Parsley/Lettuce) and dips it into the salt water, and eats.

ALL Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the earth.

The Jews do not understand clearly why they enact the following.

Head takes three loaves of unleavened bread.

For us as Christians, these three loaves represent the Trinity.

They are put into three 'pockets' of a folded piece of cloth. The middle loaf is then removed, broken in half and the smaller piece returned to the cloth. The larger piece is hidden under another piece of cloth until later.

It was probably at this point that Jesus broke the bread and gave it to His disciples.

[Luke 22 v 19 "And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'"]

Now Kosher Matzos have to be striped and pierced. The Jews don't really understand why it's just tradition – but we know why...

for we remember that Isaiah teaches that "by His stripes we are healed", and the Bible says that "they will look upon Him whom they have pierced".

Ands this is the second piece of unleavened bread = Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity was broken and hidden away in the tomb until His resurrection.

Now do you understand why it was at this point that Jesus said – "This is My body broken for you...?"

The Head lifts the dish with the cloth and unleavened bread and states: -

HEAD This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all those who are hungry enter and eat thereof; and all who are in need, come and celebrate the Passover. At present we celebrate it here, but next year we hope to celebrate it in the land of Israel; this year we are servants, aliens here, but next year we hope to be free men in the land of Israel.

THE SECOND CUP IS Poured BUT NOT DRUNK – ("The Cup of Plagues.")

The Head of the Feast carefully drips out the Second cup 10 times, each drip depicting one of the 10 plagues inflicted on the Egyptians before Pharaoh let the Children of Israel leave Egypt.

With each drip the Head names one of the plagues.

- HEAD
1. Blood – (Dam)
 2. Frogs – (Ts'farday-ah)
 3. Gnats or lice – (Kinnim)
 4. Flies – (Arov)
 5. Pestilence (diseased livestock) – (Dayvayr)
 6. Boils – (Sh'chin)
 7. Hail – (Barad)
 8. Locusts – (Arbay)
 9. Darkness – (Chosbech)
 10. Firstborn Slain – (Makkat B'chorot)

MAH NISHTANAH – FOUR QUESTIONS. (This part of the Seder can take 2 ½ hours)

This is where the young people learn all about their salvation. This long portion of the Passover Seder allows the children to learn by heart what happened when God saved their people, how it happened, why it happened and why they must learn to worship Yahweh and continue to live lives committed to His service.

We need to remember that Hebrew children in Bible times were sung and recited the Scriptures right from birth. The sound of the Hebrew Scriptures became associated with the comfort and warmth of being at their mother's breast while she recited and sang to them. Scripture was to them a JOY, never a chore. No wonder it was possible for the famed Aural Tradition to guarantee that the Word of God wasn't lost.

So, our youngest participant asks the four big questions....

- YOUTH. Why is this night different from all other nights?
- On all other nights we may eat either leavened or unleavened bread, but on this night only unleavened bread;
 - On all other nights we may eat any kind of herbs, but on this night we eat bitter herbs,
 - On all other nights we do not dip food even once, but on this night twice;
 - On all other nights we eat and drink either sitting or reclining, but on this night we all recline.

HEAD At the first Passover our forefathers prepared dough, but before it could be leavened Moses commanded them to leave Egypt. As they travelled in the desert the hot sun baked the dough and it baked flat without leaven.

We eat bitter herbs to remind ourselves of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt.
We dip the bread TWICE because dipping symbolises planting and growth. God planted us in Egypt and we grew into a great nation.
We eat reclining at table because only slaves eat standing or sitting. We recline at our ease to show that we are now FREE.

(Company reclines on LEFT elbow)

We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord our God brought us forth from thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. And if the Most Holy, blessed be He, had not brought forth our ancestors from Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would still be in bondage (Deuteronomy 6:21f)

ALL How thankful must we be to God, the All-Present, for all the good He did for us!

HEAD If He had brought us forth from Egypt and had not inflicted justice upon the Egyptians

ALL [It would have been sufficient] = ***Da-yenu***

HEAD If He had inflicted justice upon them and had not executed judgement upon their gods,

ALL [It would have been sufficient] = *Da-yenu*

HEAD If He had inflicted justice upon their gods and not slain their first-born,

ALL [It would have been sufficient.] = *Da-yenu*

HEAD If He had supplied us with necessities in the wilderness forty years, and had not given us the manna,

ALL [It would have been sufficient.] = *Da-yenu*

HEAD If He had given us His Law, and not brought us to the land of Israel,

ALL [It would have been sufficient.] = *Da-yenu*

HEAD How greatly we are indebted, then for the manifold favours He conferred on us. He brought us forth from Egypt, executed judgment on the Egyptians and on their gods, slew their first-born, gave us their wealth, divided the sea for us, caused us to pass through on dry land, plunged our oppressors in the midst thereof, supplied us with necessities in the wilderness, gave us manna to eat, gave us the Sabbath, brought us near to Mount Sinai, gave us the Law, brought us into the land of Israel, and built the chosen Holy Temple for us to make atonement for our sins.

A Hymn of Praise is sung = "Da-yenu"

[The Praise Psalms that Jesus would have sung are the Hallel Psalms = 115 – 118. Later on you might find it interesting to take a good look at those psalms and see how poignant it was for Jesus to have sung them at this time. Because we don't know how to sing these psalms, we will use short choruses that we know well.]

(We will sing "Praise the Name of Jesus")

ELDER (1) The Paschal lamb, which our ancestors ate during the existence of the Holy Temple, what did it denote?
It denoted that the Most Holy, blessed be He, passed over our fathers' houses in Egypt, as it is written: - Exodus 12 v 27.

ELDER (2) (lifting the plate of Matzah) These unleavened cakes, why do we eat them?
Because there was not sufficient time for the dough of our ancestors to leaven before the Holy supreme King of kings, blessed is He, appeared unto them and redeemed them, as it is written: - Exodus 12 v 39.

ELDER (3) (lifting the dish of herbs) This bitter herb, why do we eat it?
Because the Egyptians made bitter the lives of our ancestors in Egypt, as it is written: - Exodus 1:14.

ELDER (4) It is the duty of every Israelite in every generation to look upon himself as if HE had actually gone forth from Egypt, as it is written, "You shall tell your son on that day. It is because of what the Lord did for ME, when I came out of Egypt."

SING = "Set my Spirit Free that I may worship Thee" (En Kelohenu)

HEAD We therefore are in duty bound to thank, praise, adore, glorify, extol, honour, bless, exalt and reverence Him Who wrought all these miracles for our ancestors and for us.

The Cup of Plagues has now become the Cup of Redemption, so we all raise this cup and praise God aloud....

HEAD From slavery ...

ALL to freedom.

HEAD From anguish ...

ALL to joy.

HEAD From mourning ...

ALL to festivity.

HEAD From darkness ...

ALL to great light.

HEAD From bondage ...

ALL to redemption.

HEAD Let us therefore sing to God a new song.

ALL *(Shout!)* HALLELUJAH!

SINGING = "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice"

SECOND CUP IS DRUNK

In a Jewish house everyone washes their hands. Because we are using the Passover Seder and not the Kiddush to re-enact the Last Supper, we will say that at this point Jesus washed the disciples' feet.

Therefore, we will wash feet.....

ALL Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who bringest forth bread from the earth. Blessed art Thou Who has commanded us to eat unleavened bread.

Every one takes a piece of the top piece of Matzah and of the broken part of the middle one. The top Matzah is dipped into the Charoset (mortar)

ALL Blessed art Thou, Eternal Our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who made us holy with His commandments and commanded us concerning the eating of Charoset. *(all eat)*

Broken lower Matzah is dipped into horseradish.

ALL Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments, and commanded us to eat bitter herbs. *(all eat)*

This is repeated but with onion as well as horseradish. This will definitely bring tears to our eyes to emphasize the tears shed by the Israelites in Egypt.

The 'Sop' is a piece of unleavened bread dipped in horseradish and Charoset.

*The 'Sop' is dipped by the Head of the Feast.
(To give the 'Sop' is a sign of great love; the Head of the Feast usually dips the 'Sop' and gives it to his wife)*

The Bible tells us that Jesus gave the 'Sop' to Judas! Perhaps He was telling Judas that he was still beloved even though he was going to betray Jesus. I think that Jesus was trying to tell Judas that if he eventually repented of what he was going to do, then he would be forgiven because Jesus loved him so very much.

I wonder what Judas felt when he received that 'Sop' knowing all that it represented.

SUPPER IS SERVED AND EATEN.

APHIKOMAN

At the end of supper the APHIKOMAN (hidden piece of 2nd Matzah) is eaten with the last morsels of lamb [Luke 22 v 19]), or of the meal.

The APHIKOMAN has represented the "Coming One" or the Messiah to the Jews for generations. Here we have the "Messiah" taken out of His hiding place (the tomb) and eaten with the sacrificial lamb, thus identifying the Messiah with the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.

With this thought of REDEMPTION, the Third Cup is poured and drunk almost immediately. This is the Cup of Redemption, the celebration that because of what has gone before we are REDEEMED!

THIRD CUP POURED ("The Cup of Redemption") [Luke 22 v 20]

[It was probably at this point – THE CUP OF REDEMPTION – that Paul reports: - 1Corinthians 11 v 25

"In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'"]

The drinking of this cup is followed with prayers of thanks and praise, pleas for the return of the Jewish people to Israel, for the coming of the Messiah, and the establishment of God's Holy Jerusalem.

We will have a few moments of open prayer, so that we too can give thanks for the glorious REDEMPTION that we have received because our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, has been for us the APHIKOMAN, the broken, pierced and striped Being who became the Passover Lamb to bring us into the freedom of being Children of God.

We will now try to say the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic.

THIRD CUP OF WINE IS DRUNK

HEAD Take the fourth wine and open the door for Elijah the prophet. *(all rise)*

FOURTH CUP IS POURED AND DRUNK, WITH A CUP FOR ELIJAH – WHICH, OF COURSE, IS NEVER DRUNK

The Cup for Elijah is there because the Jews are still awaiting their Messiah. They don't realise that John the Baptist was the Elijah who would herald the coming of the Messiah. Neither do they realise that their Messiah has already come, and has already given His life as a ransom for their sins.

....Close the door, be seated

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

SINGING = "Bind us together Lord".

HEAD *(All stand)* Ended is the Passover Seder, according to custom, statute and Law. As we were Worthy to celebrate it this year, so may we perform it in future years.

O pure One in Heaven above, restore the Congregation of Israel in Your love. Speedily lead Your redeemed people to Zion in joy.

ALL *(shout)* **NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM!!**