

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE



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DID JESUS CELEBRATE PASSOVER?

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



WAS THE LAST SUPPER A PASSOVER SEDER?

The washing of hands during the Passover Seder is foundational to foot washing.

Dear friends,

We are approaching the Passover /Easter season, and I pray this will be a spiritually enriching time for you and your family. Hundreds of Jewish people—both believers in Jesus and seekers—will be attending Chosen People Ministries’ Passover events around the globe. Please remember to pray for these outreaches, as many Jewish people will be introduced to the Lamb of God for the first time in a very “Jewish way.”

Your Mission to the Jewish People has produced two new books, which are now available. Both books cover similar material, but the longer book, *Messiah in the Passover*, goes into greater depth regarding Passover in the Bible, Jewish history, and even Church history. *The Gospel in the Passover* focuses on the way in which Jesus fulfills the festival.

PASSOVER AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

My chapter in *Messiah in the Passover* focuses on the Gospel of John, and so, based on that wonderful Gospel, I will try to answer this question: “Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder?” The following is a small portion of the chapter.

The Gospel of John is critical to understanding the Jewish story of Jesus. Many scholars argue that the Gospel of John was primarily written to Gentiles, perhaps because of its A.D. 90 date of authorship as well as for a variety of textual reasons. However, the Gospel of John really should be viewed through a Jewish lens. John himself was Jewish and one of the earliest disciples of Jesus.

Traditionally, and without argument, he is thought to be the author of the Gospel that bears his name, the Epistles (First, Second and Third John), and the Book of Revelation. According to early Church tradition, John lived longer than any of the other apostles and died as an exile in the late first century on the island of Patmos.



John’s first-hand experience with Jesus gives him great insight into the details of Jesus’ life. He traveled with the Messiah, heard His sermons, and was perhaps the one who was described as “beloved.” He was present at the foot of the cross, unlike his peers, and was given the task of caring for Miriam (Mary), the mother of Yeshua (John 19:26-27).

He was present with Jesus at every Jewish festival the Savior celebrated. Perhaps this is why we learn some unique aspects of the last Passover supper of Jesus through John—especially from the teaching of the Savior during that meal, generally referred to as the Upper Room Discourse.

John mentions Passover quite often in his Gospel. In his very first mention of Jesus, John refers to Him as “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). We may assume that his hearers would have understood this comment in light of the Passover.

John describes three different Passovers observed by Jesus: John 2:13, 6:4, and the final Passover, the focus of this chapter, found in John 11:55, 12:1, and 13:1, with additional references in John 18:28 and 19:14. It should also be noted that Luke tells us that John was asked by Jesus to make preparations for this final Passover meal (Luke 22: 8-13).

THE FOOT WASHING

We understand that the Seder observed by Jesus and His disciples would have been more primitive and not as well developed as what was described 200 years later in the Mishnaic tractate, *Pesachim*,¹ or found in the modern *Haggadah*, the guide to our modern Passover Seder. However, some of the traditions recorded by John run parallel to our modern day Passover Seder and cause us to think that, in fact, Jesus observed a similar Passover to what we know today and what I was raised celebrating each year! As most of us know, Jesus washed His disciples’ feet during the Last Supper.

THE WASHING OF HANDS DURING THE PASSOVER SEDER IS FOUNDATIONAL TO FOOT WASHING

The modern *Haggadah* calls upon participants to wash their hands twice for the sake of establishing ritual purity.

The first ritual hand washing is called, in Hebrew,

Urchatz.² In this instance, water is poured from a cup, once over each hand and recited without a blessing in preparation for taking the greens, either parsley or lettuce, which is part of the traditional Seder meal.

The second hand washing is called *Rachtzah*³ and it is done a little later in the Passover service just prior to eating the matzah (unleavened bread). This time, a blessing is said when pouring the water over the hands: “*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His laws and commanded us to wash our hands.*”

These washing traditions harken back to those linked to ritual purity found in the Torah and in particular to various commandments associated with the priesthood and Temple offerings, especially the preparation of the priests for their duties.⁴

Again, our modern Passover Seder rituals developed over centuries and cannot be simply “read into” the Passover Seder of Jesus. In this instance, however, it appears that the washing of the disciples’ feet should be associated with the liturgy of the Last Supper (or Last Seder) rather than the common washing of feet when entering a house as a guest.

The strongest indication is that the disciples are already sitting at the table and engaged with dinner when the foot washing begins.⁵

Jesus decided to use His washing the disciples’ feet rather than their hands to teach the disciples some early lessons about true humility, suggesting that true spirituality is not simply a matter of performing rituals correctly but a matter of the heart. The lessons in humility demonstrated and then taught through changing the hand washing into a foot washing is dramatic and powerful.

So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.” (John 13:12-17)

There are many rabbinic teachings found in the Mishnah and Talmud that emphasize the importance of humility.⁶ We find similar thoughts about humility in the words of Jesus Himself spoken during the Sermon on the Mount, especially as gleaned from the first three beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-5).

RECLINING AT THE TABLE

Once again, we have good evidence that this meal is a Seder as Dr. Don Carson, in his commentary on the Gospel of John, suggests that the “reclining” posture of the disciples during the meal is another hint that the meal was a Passover Seder: “In

short, the posture of Jesus and his men is a small indicator that they were in fact eating the Passover meal.”⁷

The reclining posture of the disciples and Jesus indicates that the meal was a “special meal” and in this instance, because of the other elements mentioned and the date it took place, it may be seen as a Passover Seder.

THE SOP AND THE BETRAYAL

Another key to understanding this meal as the *Last Seder* of Jesus comes when Jesus indicates to His disciples that Judas is going to betray Him. In response to Peter’s asking who the perpetrator will be, Jesus responds, “*That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.*’ So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot” (John 13:26).

The dipping of the “morsel” likely refers to one of the various “dippings” that are part of the Seder. It could refer to the dipping of the greens (parsley or lettuce), the bitter herbs, or the *charoset* (the sweet mixture of apples, nuts, and honey used to symbolize the sweetness of redemption in the midst of the bitterness of slavery represented by the other dippings). We might not know which dipping Jesus is referring to exactly, but clearly this is an unusual action for a regular meal, but not for a Passover Seder.

There are many other reasons why we believe that the dinner recorded by John was an early version of a Passover Seder, but perhaps the above will suffice

for now and give you a hunger to learn more about the Passover and the ways Jesus, the Lamb of God, fulfills the Feast.

Enjoy the rest of the newsletter and remember to pray for our staff serving in 17 countries around the globe as they present the Messiah through the Passover in churches, homes, and Messianic congregations and speaking one-on-one with Jewish people who need to know the Lord.

Thanks for you prayers and generous support of our ministry. Happy Passover and may the power of His resurrection give you strength to serve Him faithfully!

Your brother,



Mitch



1 The tractate of the Mishnah about Passover

2 Literally, washing or cleansing

3 Literally, To wash or bath

4 Leviticus 8:6, Leviticus 16:24-25

5 Craig S Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 906.

6 *Ibid.* 906-907.

7 Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John.* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), p. 473.



MESSIAH IN THE PASSOVER BOOK REVIEW

When we picture the Last Supper, many of us recall Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper." Jesus and His disciples partake of fluffy rolls more characteristic of an Italian-style Sunday afternoon dinner than a first-century Jewish Passover Seder. So, what was different? What was the same? Was the Last Supper a Passover

Seder? *Messiah in the Passover*, edited by Dr. Darrell Bock and Dr. Mitch Glaser, addresses these questions with thorough studies of Passover in the Old and New Testaments.

Messiah in the Passover is a comprehensive volume of the most pertinent information about

Jewish tradition, the Gospels, and the Passover from Bible scholars and seasoned Chosen People Ministries' teachers. *Messiah in the Passover* expands upon themes of promise and fulfillment within a first-century context, which helps the reader to see the New Testament through Jewish eyes and have a deeper knowledge of Jesus and His relationship to His people. Understanding the Jewish background of the New Testament allows us to better understand the links between Jesus and the Passover. Understanding Jewish life, culture, and history across the millennia is layered and multi-faceted. Like a tapestry, each individual thread connects, and the reader can't tug on one without pulling on the other.

Each year, Christians honor Holy Week and Jesus' death and resurrection, while Jewish people

remember the Exodus out of Egypt. *Messiah in the Passover* explains how these two observances, separated by time, share the same origin, and how we can better understand Jesus' life and ministry in light of the Passover. *Messiah in the Passover* also covers the Seder in Jewish tradition and Church history, as well as practical applications for teaching the Passover and having a family Seder in your home. See the back page of this newsletter for information on how to order your copy!

DENNIS KARP'S TESTIMONY

When Dennis Karp accepted an invitation to attend a presentation on a feast he had celebrated all of his life, he never anticipated that he would be forever changed by the experience! Like many Jewish people from observant families, Dennis grew up attending synagogue and summer camp regularly. As he grew older, he was increasingly saddened by the shallowness he perceived, and by the time he went to university, he wanted nothing to do with the religion of his childhood. Instead, he studied philosophy, experimented with yoga and transcendental meditation, and partied. Not finding what he was seeking in any of those, he gave up his search and resigned himself to the pursuit of a nice family and lots of money.

One day, a friend invited him to church to hear a Jewish man talk about Jesus in the Passover. He accepted the invitation with the goal of proving him wrong. The Sunday morning arrived, and he was shocked to hear things about this important feast that he had never heard before. This disturbed him, and, intent on using his arguing skills to dispel the notion that Jesus could be the Messiah, he began meeting with the speaker. Using the Hebrew Scriptures, the speaker addressed every one of Dennis' questions on topics ranging from the virgin birth to the necessity of blood for the remission of sin. At their last meeting, Dennis sought to challenge him by asking why there is so much chaos in the world if we are in the "Messianic Age." The speaker directed him to Daniel 9, which refuted the last of his objections.

The following Saturday while singing *Hatikvah* in synagogue, he came to the realization that Jesus was, in fact, not just a national Messiah, but his personal Messiah. Since then, he has devoted his life to the ministry and served within Chosen People Ministries in a variety of capacities, both in the United States and in Israel. He currently works as the director of the mid-Atlantic region of Chosen People Ministries, leads Son of David Congregation in Maryland, and oversees the outreach in the Washington, D.C. area.

The Messiah in the Passover presentation will enrich your faith and serve as an evangelistic tool in reaching your Jewish friends. To schedule a presentation at your church, call 1-888-405-5874.

THE FOODS OF PASSOVER

Most Jewish holidays are marked by the enjoyment of special foods. Passover, in particular, is generally associated with a wide array of dishes designed to remind partakers of both the bitterly high price that was paid for their deliverance, and the sweetness of this redemption. Culinary traditions differ based on the background of the family celebrating it, but there are a few staples that are characteristic of most Passover celebrations.



Tzimmes

Tzimmes (TSIM-ess) is one of those Jewish dishes that doesn't sound good when reading the ingredients, but one taste of this gooey, sticky, roasted vegetable dish will have you wanting more! The sweetness of this dish reminds us of the sweetness of redemption.

Ingredients:

8 carrots, chopped	8 ounces dried apricots, chopped
2 yellow onions, chopped	1 cup honey
2 turnips, chopped	2 teaspoons salt
4 sweet potatoes, peeled and diced	1 teaspoon pepper
8 ounces apple juice	2 teaspoons tarragon

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Heat the apple juice, honey, salt, pepper, and tarragon and simmer in a small pot.
3. Place the vegetables and apricots in a 4-inch deep casserole dish.
4. Pour the honey and juice mixture over the vegetable/apricot mixture.
5. Cover and cook in oven at 350°F for 90 minutes.
6. Remove cover and cook for 30 minutes more. Serve.

Yield: 10 to 12 portions

Charoset

Charoset (khah-ROH-set) is a sweet apple mixture made with dates, nuts, and honey. This symbolizes the mortar used in Egypt for making bricks.

Ingredients:

4 red apples (finely chopped)	¼ cup of honey
1 cup chopped walnuts (finely chopped)	½ cup sweet red wine or grape juice
½ cup chopped dates (finely chopped)	½ teaspoon cinnamon
	¼ teaspoon nutmeg

Instructions:

1. Peel and grate the apple.
2. Mix in the nuts, dates, honey and spices.
3. Add the wine or juice and mix well.
4. Refrigerate until serving. The mixture will turn brown.

Yield: 12 portions



Grandma Belle's Matzah Brie

Ingredients:

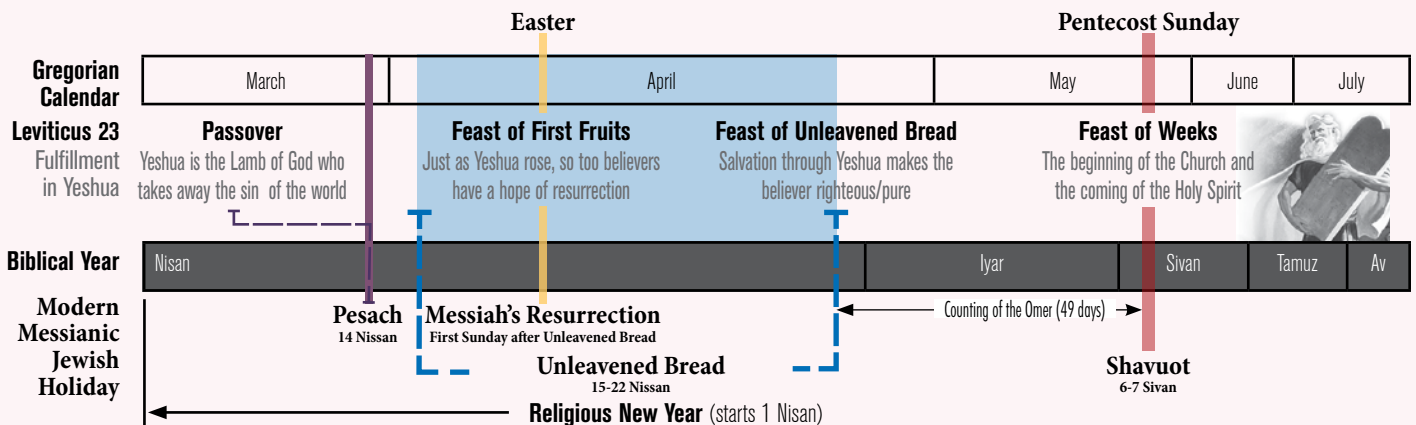
3 pieces of matzah
1 egg
1 tbsp butter
Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Break the three pieces of matzah into small pieces, and place them in a bowl. Add about ¾ cup of water—just enough to dampen the matzah without soaking it.
2. Drain any excess water and mix matzah with the egg.
3. Melt the butter in a pan, and add the mixture, frying it like a pancake until both sides are brown and crispy. Season it to taste. It's good with jelly or sugar!

Yields: 1 portion

THE SPRING FEASTS



Hebrews 10:1-18

A Concluding Argument



Dr. Rich Freeman, D. Min. serves as the Vice President for Church Ministries and Conferences with Chosen People Ministries and lives in South Florida with his wife, Julia.

This study begins with the writer of Hebrews concluding his argument on the superiority of the priesthood of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah that began in chapter seven. He states in 10:1 that the Mosaic Law by its very nature could never accomplish what Messiah's sacrifice accomplished, that is, making the believer acceptable to God. First, he says the Law was "a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things." The Greek word *skia*, translated "shadow," refers to the unreality of an object as contrasted with the reality. It is used to describe a rough sketch or outline as opposed to the final product. The Levitical sacrificial system was a type or rough sketch of the finished work Messiah would accomplish on that horrible Roman cross. Since it was only a rough sketch it could never achieve what Messiah accomplished—full access to God by "making perfect those who draw near." The Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) was a continual yearly reminder to the Israelites that their sins needed removing so they could continue to have fellowship with God. The writer states in verse four that "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." Today, we do not need a yearly reminder of sin because Yeshua's sacrifice has made us perfect in God's sight. Therefore, Yom Kippur is now a reminder to all who believe in Yeshua's final sacrifice of what He has accomplished for us.

In Hebrews 10:5-10—the next section—the writer applies Psalm 40:6-8 to Yeshua's incarnation with the phrase, "When He comes into the world." The passage he quoted clearly shows Messiah's commitment to offer His body as a sacrifice to God because animal sacrifices of all types were simply not adequate to God. God's will was the sanctification of believers. Yeshua was not a mindless animal that offered its life unwillingly. Yeshua intentionally,

consciously, and willingly offered His life in obedience to God's will. Two times in this section, the writer states that God "had taken no pleasure" in the Old Covenant sacrifices. It's important to state that this does not suggest that the old sacrificial system was wrong or that those bringing sacrifices with sincere hearts received no benefit from obeying God's Law. It only means that God had no delight in sacrifices apart from the obedient hearts of the worshipers. No amount of sacrifices could substitute for obedience. And ultimately, the intent of the sacrifices was to point people to the Messiah. Hebrews 10:9 says, "He takes away the first in order to establish the second." Psalm 40 announced the abolition of the old, inadequate Levitical sacrificial system and in its place established the New Covenant, based on Messiah's greater sacrifice. This was God's will, and it satisfied Him. The writer's view of sanctification in verse ten is positional rather than progressive. God sets aside all believers to Himself as they come to faith in Messiah. That is what is meant when it says, "By this will we have been sanctified."

In Hebrews 10:11-18, these last verses, the writer of Hebrews stresses the finality of Yeshua's offering. The Levitical priests never sat down because their work was never finished, but Yeshua sat down beside His Father because He "offered one sacrifice for sins for all time." His work was done and now He awaits the last days and the destruction of His enemies. Quoting Jeremiah 31:33-34, the

writer of Hebrews states in verses 16-17 that the New Covenant believer can say that his sins and iniquities are remembered no more. There is "no longer any offering for sin." This is something the believers under the old Levitical system could never say. This is why Yeshua's sacrifice is superior!

Hebrews 10:1, 9-12, 18 NASB

¹The Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come... [can never] make perfect those who draw near. ⁹...He takes away the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹²but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, ... ¹⁸Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.



CONCERTS BRING JOY TO HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Staff members in Moscow, Kirill and Vera, hosted a series of concerts for Holocaust survivors when they visited Israel. The first one was held at the Jerusalem Messianic Center, and more than fifty Holocaust survivors attended. The second was held in the city of Ofakim, located in southern Israel close to the Gaza Strip. This concert was actually held in a bomb shelter! The room was small and could barely accommodate sixty people. However, Kirill and Vera were very surprised when about

120 people came! The entire hall was packed with standing room only! A third concert took place at the Ramat Gan Messianic Center in greater Tel Aviv. A tour bus brought sixty elderly people from the city of Migdal HaEmek. All three concerts were a great success! These are very open people, ready to hear the Good News of salvation in Yeshua the Messiah. The Lord continues to perform miracles! Today Russian Jews in Israel are the most open Jewish people, and they receive the Good News with grateful hearts.

ORTHODOX FAMILY HEARS ABOUT JESUS

The Bible says in John 4:37, "For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows, and another reaps.'" Staff member Greg S. recently saw this verse in action when he ran into Lydia* at the grocery store. She recognized Greg because he had done a Messiah in the Passover presentation at her church last spring. She told Greg that the day after he spoke at her church, she was invited to her Orthodox supervisor's Passover Seder. Lydia shared the Gospel truths that she had learned at the Messiah in the Passover presentation. Lydia even had the **chutzpah** (Yiddish for "nerve") to offer the family some evangelistic literature that she had picked up at the presentation. Lydia said, "The family was literally stunned. They were speechless, so they kept on reading the Hebrew liturgy." Please pray for this family, that the Gospel seeds will take root!



ISRAELI TRAVELER FINDS PEACE AT THE ZULA LODGE, NEW ZEALAND

"Ela* is an Israeli girl that your prayer and support is helping reach with the Gospel," writes staff member, Stephen A. You can tell that her time at the Zula Lodge had an impact on her by what she wrote in the guest book:

Right at the first moment when I arrived at the Zula, I felt at home. Something in me just calmed down. I didn't know yet how this place would soon become a real home for me. This is the first place I felt like this after six months of travels, and this is not just because the Zula facilities are so amazing. It is because of the special family that you are. Thanks for not only opening your house to me and including me in all your daily routines, but more than that, for opening your hearts and really letting me feel that I belong in the most natural and generous way. These days with you were a unique opportunity to learn and get to know a different way to live life in this world... Thanks for making me ask questions and having the patience to answer them too. You are, without a doubt, a big and meaningful part of my trip around the world, and of my life journey.

Stephen continues, "It was such an amazing opportunity for us to talk with Ela more about the Gospel in Isaiah 53 and live out our faith before her eyes."

*names have been changed



Simcha

May 25-28, 2018
Bongiorno Conference Center

Plan to join us May 25-28 at Chosen People Ministries' annual retreat in Carlisle, PA. Come to Simcha and let your whole family be renewed by the Holy Spirit as we go deeper into God's word and fellowship with one another! Our special speaker will be Seth Postell, the Academic Dean of Israel College of the Bible and a prolific author. Steve Wiggins, a five-time Grammy award nominee, will return to lead our worship times. There will be programs for all age groups, plus recreational opportunities and family activities.

Call 212-223-2252 for registration information or visit us online at **CHOSENPEOPLE.COM/SIMCHA**

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SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE OF YESHUA WITH GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE — *And make a tax-wise decision for your family, too!*

You share our zeal to proclaim the Good News through Jesus the Messiah to Jewish people around the world, and we're grateful to you. We also want to help you make the best financial decisions for yourself and your family as you support Jewish evangelism.

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- If you're 70-1/2 years or older, you can give a rollover gift from your IRA without adding a penny to your taxable income.
- Or you can potentially avoid capital gains tax and give more to ministry by donating appreciated stocks and property.

For more information on either of these important options, please contact **Cindy Forbes at 212-223-2252 or cforbes@chosenpeople.com.**

Thank you!

MESSIANIC RESOURCES



The Gospel in the Passover is written for those who want to explore the traditions of the Passover and deepen their understanding of the links between Passover, the Last Supper, and Communion (softcover). **The Gospel in the Passover (#3176) • \$14.95^{US}**

Messiah in the Passover covers a full range of topics including the biblical foundations for the Passover and the Lord's Supper, the Passover throughout Jewish and Church history, and how Jewish people celebrate Passover today. Get your copy of this amazing new reference book today! **Messiah in the Passover (#3175) • \$24.95^{US}**



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