

# **SEDER SERVICE**

## **CHRIST IN THE PASSOVER CELEBRATION:**

*Reader 1:*

Jesus and His disciples shared the Passover meal on the Thursday night before He died. Gathering his disciples in a small room in Jerusalem, he led them in a *seder*. "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," he said. (Luke 22:15) Jesus chose that last supper with his disciples to reveal to them the mystery of God's plan of redemption. He spoke to them of his body and blood. He explained to them that he would have to die.

*Reader 2:*

The Passover was celebrated every year in remembrance of the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt and slavery 1000 years before Christ. *We* celebrate this Passover meal in remembrance of God's great redemption of us. It is a feast that normally could last three or four hours! We will only take around 15 to 20 minutes this evening to remember that special supper that Jesus had, and to learn the significance of the various things they did.

*Reader 3:*

On the table in front of you, each person has some grape juice, some parsley, charoseth, horseradish, salt water, and matzo. Let's sit quietly and meditatively as the leader takes us through the various steps. As we participate in the Passover *seder*, may we experience once again God's great redemption.

## **The Lighting of the Candles:**

*Leader:*

As we kindle the festival lights, we pray for the illumination of the Spirit of God to bring great personal meaning to this our Passover celebration.

*Woman 1:*

*(while lighting the candles, says)* "Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who sanctifies us by Your commandments and has ordained that we light the Passover lights."

*Reader 4:*

We celebrate the promises of redemption and relationship by drinking from our cups four times. With each cup, let us remember the union that God desires.

## **The First Cup: The Cup of Sanctification:**

*Leader:*

( lifts the first cup and explains,) "Sanctification means to be set apart. We are setting apart this ceremony as special to our Lord God who performed miraculous deeds to free Israel from Egypt. As believers in Christ Jesus, we remember the death of Jesus to free us from sin. And so let us drink this first cup." (everyone drinks)

## **Dipping the Parsley:**

*Leader:*

Passover is a holiday that comes in the springtime, when the earth is becoming green with life. This vegetable, called *karpas*, represents life, created and sustained by Almighty God.

*Reader 5:*

We dip one sprig of parsley in the saltwater to remember the tears shed in slavery by the Israelites. (Eat it)

*Reader 6:*

We dip another sprig of parsley to remember the drowning of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea and the miraculous deliverance of the nation of Israel as a result.

## **The Four Questions:**

*Leader:* The answers to the following four questions explain the major features of the seder: We were once slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD our God brought us out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. If the Holy One, blessed be he, had not brought our ancestors out from Egypt, then we, our children, and their children would still be slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. Therefore, we recount the Exodus from Egypt.

*Reader 7:* (Question 1) Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we eat leavened *or* unleavened bread. Why on this night only matzoh- the unleavened bread?

*Adult 1:* On this night we eat only matzoh to remind us of the swiftness of God's salvation, which came so quickly there was no time for dough to rise. Further, the purging of leaven from our houses reminds us to purge our lives of sinful thoughts and actions.

*Reader 8:* (Question 2) On all other nights we eat any kind of vegetable. Why on this night only maror- the bitter herbs?

*Adult 2:* On this night we eat maror to remind us of the bitterness of bondage in Egypt. Similarly, as believers in Jesus the Messiah we remember the bitterness of bondage to sin and death from which he has freed us.

*Reader 9:* (Question 3) On all other nights we are not required to dip our vegetables even once. Why on this night two times?

*Adult 3:* On this night we dip the greens into salt water to remind us of the tears shed in bondage. Similarly, as believers in Jesus the Messiah we remember how he turned our tears of sadness into joy. We praise him for the abundant life into which he has brought us.

*Reader 10:* (Question 4) On all other nights we eat sitting upright *or* reclining. Why on this night do all recline?

*Adult 4:* On this night we recline because in ancient times that was the posture of free people at meals. Those whom God liberated in the Exodus were no longer slaves. Similarly, as believers in Jesus the Messiah we have been made new creations. We are freed from our past sin and pain, freed from bondage to sin, freed to live with joy in the present and freed to live and reign with God forever!

## **The Story of Passover:**

*Leader:*

The Lord told Moses and Aaron to tell the Israelites what they were to do on the tenth day of the first month. They were to kill a lamb, and spread its blood on the doorposts of the house to protect the home from the 10<sup>th</sup> plague—the slaying of the first-born. God said He would PASS OVER the house when He saw the blood. They were to eat unleavened bread because they could not take time to wait for dough to rise. They had to be ready to leave quickly. Even more than that, scripture teaches us that leaven (yeast) is a symbol of sin. During this celebration of Passover, let us break our old habits of sin and selfishness and begin a fresh, new, and holy life.

## **Song: “Dayenu”**

*Leader:* The song “Dayenu” answers the question, “For how many favors do we owe praise to God?” The answer is ***unending!*** If the LORD had done any one of the mighty acts of the Exodus, that would have been enough for us or, in Hebrew, “Dayenu.” However, the LORD does much more! He continually saves and provides!

*All sing:* “Dayenu”

## **The Second Cup: The Cup of Deliverance**

*Leader:*

God poured out 10 plagues on Egypt, the last of which, the slaying of the firstborn, convinced Pharaoh to let the people of Israel leave the land. Now let us lift our cups and drink, thanking God that He not only delivered the nation of Israel from the plagues, but that, through Jesus, He delivered us from the plague of sin, which brings death that we all deserve. (*all drink*)

### **The Bitter Herbs:**

*Leader:*

On other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables, but on Passover we eat only *Maror*, bitter herbs. As sweet as our lives are today, let us still remember how bitter life was for the children of Israel in the land of Egypt.

Now take the horseradish and place it on a matzo and eat it, remembering the bitterness of Israel's slavery.

### **Eating of the Charoseth:**

*Leader:*

The children of Israel toiled to make treasure cities for Pharaoh, working in brick and clay. We remember this task in a mixture called *Charoseth*, made from chopped apples, honey, nuts, and juice.

Now place charoseth on a matzo. Remember the mortar that was used to make bricks by the Israelites and also remind ourselves that even the most bitter of circumstances can be sweetened by the hope we have in God.

### **The Third Cup: The Cup of Redemption**

*Leader:*

Redemption means to buy out of slavery. The lamb offered on Passover was the price to deliver the nation of Israel. This third cup is what Jesus drank with His disciples as a symbol of His blood, the price he paid for our redemption. When we have communion in church, this is the cup we are drinking. (drink cup)

### **The Fourth Cup: The Cup of Praise**

*Leader:*

The fourth cup is the last one and it is the cup of praise. Let us give thanks to God our Great Redeemer.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

*All:* His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords.

*All:* His love endures forever.

To him who alone does great wonders,

*All:* His love endures forever.

Who by his understanding made the heavens,

*All:* His love endures forever.

Who spread out the earth upon the waters,

*All:* His love endures forever.

Who made the great lights—

*All:* His love endures forever.

The sun to govern the day,

*All:* His love endures forever.

The moon and stars to govern the nights:

*All:* His love endures forever.

To him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt

*All:* His love endures forever.

And brought Israel out from among them

*All:* His love endures forever.

With a mighty hand and outstretched arm:

*All:* His love endures forever.

To him who divided the Red Sea asunder

*All:* His love endures forever.

And brought Israel through the midst of it,

*All:* His love endures forever.

But swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea;

*All:* His love endures forever.

To him who led his people through the desert,

*All:* His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of heaven.

*All:* His love endures forever.

Psalm 136:1-16,26

*Leader:*

Let us lift our cups to bless the Name of the Lord! The Jewish nation looks forward to a golden age where everyone will be at peace. We, as believers in the Lord Jesus, eagerly wait for His return when He will take us home to heaven.

*All:* Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus. (drink fourth cup)

*Leader:*

Our Passover Seder is now complete, just as our redemption is forever complete. Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe.