

THE AMAZING PARALLELS BETWEEN THE HOLIDAY OF PASSOVER AND THE CELEBRATION OF OUR REDEMPTION BY THE MESSIAH

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The famous Last Supper was actually a Passover Seder conducted by Yeshua (later anglicized to "Jesus"). The parallels between the deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian slavery, which is commemorated by the Passover celebration, and Yeshua's atoning death [which delivers us from our own personal bondages to guilt, bad attitudes, and sinful habits] are manifold and a sign of God revealing Himself and His Redemption to us in both the Old and New Covenants.

The Passover story is told in Exodus 11 and 12. The Jews were enslaved in Egypt under Pharaoh's oppressive rule. Moses begged Pharaoh to "let my people go." But Pharaoh chose to harden his heart, show no mercy and be lord of his own life.

God sent 10 plagues to Egypt in an effort to get Pharaoh to repent and show mercy and grace, but Pharaoh refused.

The final plague was the death of the first born of each home in Egypt, but God provided a plan of redemption for His people. They were instructed to slaughter an unblemished lamb [to be observed and inspected for 4 days!] and smear its blood on the doorposts and lintel of their homes. This act of obedience was a sign to the Angel of Death to "pass over" those houses and by His grace, spare them. The blood of the Passover lamb provided redemption to those willing to heed the voice of the Lord.



Did God need this blood covering to know where the Jews lived? Of course, not. Then why did He require it? It seems clear that it was so that His chosen people could show their trust in the Almighty by obedience to His instruction. Further, this introduced them to all the wonderful rituals of the Temple. Concerning these rituals the Torah later says, "It is the blood that makes atonement." This is an extension of the Passover statement where God instructs Moses "When I see the blood, I will pass over (Hebrew: pasakh) you."

Yeshua's story parallels the Passover in that He is identified as "G-d's lamb! The one who is taking away the sin of the world!" He interacted intensely with Jewish scholars and leaders, particularly during the same days as when the people were supposed to observe their lamb for blemishes, and no one ever found a blemish in His words, deeds, or character. Nowhere in Jewish literature is he ever condemned for any misdeed. He also was an unblemished lamb, closely inspected.

Another parallel is that the Jewish people were told to slaughter the lamb "at dusk." In later Jewish history, in Temple times, Josephus, a Jewish General, testifies that it was customary to offer the lambs as part of the Mincha Service around 3:00 pm the day of the festival. The analogy to the Messiah as a Passover lamb is from the New Covenant: "At about three o'clock, Yeshua . . . yielded up his spirit [expired]." That is, His death was just about simultaneous with the slaughter of the Passover lambs.

The people of Israel had to come into the houses marked by the blood. In a spiritual sense, we come into His house by repentance and faith in Him as the Lamb of God. That is, we read that Yeshua "took the cup after the meal, [which Jewish people now call the Cup of Redemption] saying, "This cup is the New Covenant, ratified by my blood, which is being poured out for you." If we believe in His death for our sins and His blood being poured out in our behalf, we come through the doorway of His salvation, and we receive the gift by God's Spirit of a sense of forgiveness and peace and



blessing. He takes us across the Red Sea, from a place of slavery to bad habits, and feeds us with manna of joy and deep shalom. Another Passover parallel is that Yeshua called Himself the Bread of Life. (John 6:35) The Matzah, which is unleavened bread, is striped and pierced, just as Yeshua was striped and pierced.

Lastly, at the Passover Seder, there is a "game" instituted in the first century that is played with the Afikoman, which is the 2nd of three stacked matzah. This middle matzah is broken, wrapped in a cloth, hidden and then searched for by children. Whoever finds the broken matzah is rewarded with a prize. Yeshua is like that middle matzah, who was wrapped in a burial cloth and hidden in a grave. Many search for Him and some find Him and receive a great reward. May everyone reading this, yearn to search for and find their eternal reward, the Jewish Messiah, prophesied long ago in the Old Covenant. (Isaiah 53, Jeremiah 31, etc.)