

The Gospel in the Passover Seder

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Passover is the story of redemption. It reveals how God redeemed our people, the Israelites, from the bondage of slavery in Egypt and also delivered “a mixed multitude,” perhaps including some Egyptians who chose to identify with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod. 12:38). Any and all who acted in faith and obeyed God’s instructions given through Moses experienced God’s deliverance from His judgment on Egypt.

It is likely that those who offered the lamb originally did not fully comprehend the significance of sacrificing an animal, shedding its blood, and then placing that lamb’s blood on the two doorposts and lintel of the house in which they were to eat it (Exod. 12:7). From our vantage point, we recognize that this sacrifice foreshadows the death of the Messiah, Yeshua (Jesus), the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world for both Jewish and Gentile people. For everyone who believes and receives Yeshua as their atonement, it is as if, by faith in His atoning sacrifice, they personally put His blood over the doorposts and lintel of their lives and are redeemed from the bondage of sin and death.

The Passover *Seder*, a Hebrew word that means “order” or “service,” refers to the ancient ceremonial meal that has become the primary means of celebrating the Passover today.. The Passover Seder proclaims the message of salvation for all people, and each aspect of the ceremonial meal can be used to proclaim the good news of Messiah Yeshua. It makes sense, therefore, that we examine in this chapter the many elements of the Seder, some directly from Scripture and some introduced by Jewish tradition over the years, which point to redemption through Messiah Yeshua’s death and resurrection. We will focus on how various aspects and

elements of the Passover Seder can be explained to your Jewish friends and family that by faith they might see with hearts unveiled the glory of Messiah in the Passover (2 Cor. 3:12–18).¹

Sharing the Good News through the *Karpas* (Dipping of the Parsley)

The Passover ceremony revolves around a plate (called a Seder plate) with various elements placed on it to remind us of the key aspects of Passover. One such element is green parsley. After initiating the Passover Seder by drinking the first cup of the fruit of the vine, the ceremony continues with the dipping of the parsley (Hebrew, *karpas*). The leader of the Seder, generally the father in the home, asks everyone to take a sprig of the herb and hold it up as he explains its significance. He begins by stating the obvious, that the *karpas* is green. The color is supposed to remind everyone that in springtime, during the first months of the Hebrew calendar, God's mighty arm brought the people of Israel forth from slavery in Egypt to freedom (see appendix 2).

He then goes on to explain that the *karpas* is dipped twice in salt water. The first time is to remind us that we were redeemed from the bitterness of slavery and many tears. The second time reminds us that we were brought forth through the Red Sea, which God parted for us but closed over the Egyptians. The Red Sea is also salty and so this second dipping once more reminds us of God's deliverance.

¹ For more on how the Passover Seder can be used to explain the truths of the Gospel to Jewish as well as non-Jewish friends, see chapter 16, "Passover in Your Home," by Cathy Wilson, and chapter 18, "A Messianic Family Haggadah," by the Staff of Chosen People Ministries.