

## **Maundy Thursday at home: A Simple Seder**

This Thursday is Maundy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter when we remember Jesus gathering with His disciples to celebrate the Passover with a meal, as all Jews do each year. We, as Christians, also remember the Passover every year on Maundy Thursday, but we celebrate a bit differently than the Jews. While the Jews eat a special meal to remember when God saved them and brought them out of slavery in Egypt, Christians eat a new meal that was instituted by Jesus on Maundy Thursday—the Lord’s Supper, also called Holy Communion. In Holy Communion, Jesus gives us His body and blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of our sins.

This year, we are unable to be together to worship on Maundy Thursday, so we have put together a shortened form of that special meal that the Jews eat to remember and celebrate the Passover and Exodus. That special meal is called the Passover Seder.

The traditional Seder has 15 different parts and takes hours to celebrate. Pastor Willsea and Grace Lutheran put on one of these full Seders every few years, and they are a great deal of fun and very informative! This Seder activity, however, will not contain all the parts. We will mainly focus on the story of the Passover and Exodus and on the foods that make up the Seder meal along with their symbolism.

## **Preparing for the Seder**

### **Foods to buy/make:**

- Wine/Grape Juice
- Parsley
- Salt Water
- Matzah, or other unleavened bread
  - Try making your own: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/213682/matzah/>
  - You could also use pita bread, naan, crackers without leavener, or even a tortilla, in a pinch!
- Lamb shank bone or lamb meat
  - If lamb is unavailable to you or you don’t wish to go out to buy it, you can substitute with “pretend” lamb (another type of meat or bone; no pork).
  - The lamb on the plate is not meant to be eaten. Just as sacrifices are no longer offered by the Jews because the Temple no longer stands, so this lamb that is representative of the sacrificial lambs offered to commemorate Passover is also left untouched. That being said, we are not Jews and we know that there is no more need for sacrifice because of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice, so you are free to eat the meat you put on the Seder plates if you wish.
- Horseradish (bitter herb)
  - Can also use romaine lettuce
- Charoset
  - Finely chop two large apples and place them in a bowl. Add 1 cup chopped walnuts and up to ½ cup of sweet red wine or grape juice. Add cinnamon and sugar or honey to taste. (You can substitute raisins for the walnuts to avoid allergy concerns.) Mix.

- The above recipe is just one option. There are a zillion different charoset recipes online. Feel free to alter the above to your own taste or find a different recipe.
- Hard-boiled egg (traditionally roasted after it is hard-boiled)
  - Be careful! Roasted eggs can explode in the oven.

### **Plating your Seder:**

Each place at the table should contain a bit of everything listed:

- Parsley
- Lamb (if enough for each plate, otherwise keep the lamb/bone on one person's plate)
- Matzah
- Horseradish (bitter herb)
- Charoset
- Small dish of salt water (can be shared)
- Cup for wine/grape juice
- Roasted egg (it is not necessary to have one for each plate)

### **Simple Seder Outline**

#### **The Story**

The point of the Seder is to remember God's saving work in the Exodus. Reading and recalling this story first sets the stage for the eating of the Seder meal, which is made up of a number of food items that remind us of different parts of the account.

There are many ways you can remember this story. The obvious choice would be to read the story from the Scriptures. If you have "The Story Bible," which all of our Sunday School students should have received in the third grade, you can read the account of Moses and the Exodus beginning on page 98 and ending on page 112. If you want to read a smaller portion of the account, focus on the plagues and Passover (101-108).

If you are not using a children's Bible, you can read the account from Exodus chapters 1-12, or portions thereof. Even just chapter 12 would be a good set up for your Seder, but the more you read, the more you will get out of your meal.

You may also consider watching one of the films that cover these events, including the 1956 film, "The Ten Commandments," or the more recent animated feature, "Prince of Egypt."

#### **The Meal**

God commanded the Israelites to remember that first Passover, with its feast of roasted lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread by eating a commemorative feast every year throughout all generations. The expanded Passover feast contains all of the elements we are about to see and eat. Each element on our plates is symbolic of part of the story of God's salvation of the Israelites.

## Wine

We begin our meal with a glass of wine. (Pour wine or grape juice.) During the Seder, each person traditionally drinks four cups of wine. They come from Exodus 6:6-7, one cup for each promise of freedom. "Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and **(1) I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and (2) I will deliver you from slavery to them, and (3) I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.** <sup>7</sup>**(4) I will take you to be my people,** and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.'" We enjoy our beverages and remember God's love and salvation!

## Parsley

The first food we eat is the *karpas*, or green vegetable. Traditionally, this element is parsley. The parsley is a symbol of springtime and the miracle of nature's renewal. In spring, God arrays the world in fresh growth. We dip our parsley in salt water. The salt water represents the salty tears shed by the oppressed Israelites. (Eat the parsley after dipping it in the salt water.)

## Lamb shank bone/Lamb meat

This represents the Passover Lamb that was slain. The blood of the Passover Lamb was spread on the door posts of our forefathers in Egypt so that the angel of death might pass over their houses and spare their firstborn sons. The lamb on our plate reminds us of this event.

1 Corinthians 5:7 tells us that Jesus is our Passover Lamb. "Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed." Just as the blood of the Passover Lamb saved the Israelites from death, the blood of our Passover Lamb Jesus now saves us from death, too!

(The lamb is no longer eaten by the Jews during the Seder. Sacrifices are no longer offered by the Jews because the Temple no longer stands, so this lamb that is representative of the sacrificial lambs offered to commemorate Passover is also left untouched. That being said, we are not Jews and we know that there is no more need for sacrifice because of Christ's ultimate sacrifice, so we are free to eat the meat of we so choose.)

## Matzah

This matzah reminds us that in their haste to flee, our ancestors did not have time to let their dough rise before God redeemed them. As the scriptures say, "and they baked dough, which they had brought out of Egypt, into matzah cakes; for it had not risen, because they had been driven out of Egypt and could not tarry prepare food."

You will note that the *matzah* is unleavened. In its baking, it is also pierced, and it is striped. It is unleavened because it is to be without contamination, as our Savior Jesus was. Pierced and striped, it becomes a beautiful symbol of our Messiah, who being without sin, yet was pierced according to the Scriptures.

"They have pierced My hands and feet—they divide My garments among them, and for My raiment they cast lots." (Psalm 22:16b, 18)

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and by His stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

### **Horseradish (Bitter Herbs) and Charoset**

We now eat the *maror*, or bitter herbs. The horseradish reminds us of the bitterness of the lives of our fathers in Egypt. Their lives were made bitter by the slavery they endured. As the Scriptures say in Exodus 1:14, “They made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.”

We eat the bitter herb with the *charoset*, a sweet salad of apples, nuts, wine, and cinnamon that represents the mortar used by the Hebrew slaves in the labor spoken of in the verse we just read from Exodus 1.

(Eat the horseradish and charoset. You can eat them together or try them separately.)

### **Roasted Egg**

The final item on our plate is the *beizak*, or whole roasted egg. This egg speaks of sacrifice. It is somewhat strange that an egg is used to represent sacrifice. But one must remember that sacrifice not only means death; it also means life. The sacrifice of the Passover Lamb during the story of the Exodus meant life for the firstborn Hebrews, and the sacrifice of our Passover Lamb, Jesus, means life for us!

### **Nirtzah**

The last of the 15 parts of the Seder is called *Nirtzah*, the affirmation of God’s acceptance. This is the Nirtzah from the Christian Seder we do at church every few years.

The order of the Passover is now complete.

- L. He is risen.
- C. He is risen indeed.
- L. Death could not hold our Lord and Savior. The Passover Lamb was sacrificed, buried, and the rose from the grave.
- C. And he is coming back for us.

We thank and praise Thee, O God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that you have accepted us as your children because Jesus, the perfect Passover Lamb, has taken away the sins of the world! Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

- L. The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you **shalom**.

(Numbers 6:24-26).