

Should Christians Celebrate Passover?

Jesus is called the Passover lamb, the Lamb of God, the lamb without blemish and the lamb led to slaughter. Jesus is at the center of this feast. So, should Christians celebrate Passover as an opportunity to understand our covenant relationship with God better, drawing nearer to His Father-heart?

Yes!

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Passover this year is from Monday, Apr. 22, through Tuesday, Apr. 30. As Jesus' blood covers our iniquities and His stripes heal our diseases, let's explore what Passover means to all believers.

Understanding the Blood of the Lamb

When the Jewish people were in slavery in Egypt, the God of Israel invaded their captivity. He provided deliverance, and it started by issuing a blood covering: "The blood shall be to you for a sign on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt. This day shall be a memorial to you, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord. Throughout your generations you shall keep it a feast by an eternal ordinance,'" (Exod. 12:13-14, MEV).

A Lasting Ordinance: A Festival Unto the Lord

This is only the beginning of the Passover story! If you've ever asked, "Should Christians celebrate Passover?" then

you've likely felt called to go deeper into your faith journey—into the roots of your faith. Maybe you've felt there was something more to this appointed time but are unsure what it is.

First-century believers never had to ask these questions because they understood the connection between Passover and their covenant relationship with God. However, due to a devastating rupture from the Jewish roots of our faith, we have been robbed of our inheritance as those grafted into the house of Israel; as people nourished by the root (Rom. 11).

If you belong to Jesus, Passover belongs to you, too. It is part of your inheritance. Notice how God does not call this a feast unto Judaism, but unto Himself.

Why Is This Distinction Important?

Throughout Jewish history, Jesus the Messiah, Yeshua Hamashiach, is central to Israel's present moment and promised future. His centrality is foundational in all things. His eternal covenant with the Jewish people is for His name's sake (1 Sam. 12:22). Through Israel, He reveals to all humanity something critical about His character, nature and heart. Likewise, in each of the holy days He called them to keep. In each, He shows us Himself and our need, revealing a gaping breach that, apart from Him, has no remedy.

This Is Why Christians Celebrate Passover!

Look what Paul tells us about Jesus in Colossians 1:15-16: "He is the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of every creature. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him." Jesus is the firstborn over all creation (hold onto that). All things were created through Him and for Him.

Jesus tells us this in Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill." He came to fulfill. He is central. This is a foundational framework when approaching the feasts, especially Passover.

The Story of the First Passover

To grasp the beauty of Jesus' perfect fulfillment of this feast, let's circle back to the first Passover story found in Exodus. If you are unfamiliar with the full Exodus story, I encourage you to read through it as we approach this year's Passover. In summary, God saw the oppression of His people in Egypt and heard their cries. He raised up a man, tested in the desert, to return to Egypt and confront Pharaoh with a message. The message being, "Let my people go."

Pharaoh's heart was hard, and in response God sent 10 plagues, each intentionally designed to make a mockery out of Egypt's gods. Pharaoh would not relent, and the last plague, "the death of the firstborn," was the most severe. This is where we find the institution of the Passover: "Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 'This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: "On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household...Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it,"'" (Exod. 12:1-3, 5-7). Death would pass over those who put the blood of a spotless lamb on the doorposts of their homes.

Can you feel the weight of this? Again, this is why Christians

celebrate Passover—to remember the Lamb without blemish that was slain for us!

The Jewish people know better than anyone the unimaginable cost of sin. The gravity of innocent blood shed on behalf of others. For the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). They carried the holy burden of the sacrificial system as a people set apart to God. But God did not create people to die. We were created for relationship. We were made to be connected to a Holy God, and yet all creation has been tormented by death since sin tore us from Eden. Only God can save us from death, and yet the cost to Him is that He must go there Himself.

The Fulfillment of Passover

Jesus' earthly ministry began with a bold declaration from His cousin, John the Baptist. He looked up to see Yeshua, Jesus, approaching him one day and declared loudly, as the voice of one "crying out in the wilderness," "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world," (John 1:29). From the beginning, the one ordained to make straight the way of the Lord was telling us, this is God's Lamb.

In Matthew 26, at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, His disciples approach Him with a question: "Where will You have us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?" (Matt. 26:17). He told them to find a large upper room. Hours before His death, Jesus sat down to His Passover. This moment is often referred to as the Lord's Supper, but in full context, it was a Passover seder meal.

This is how Luke 22:15-20 records it: "And He said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will never eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' And He took the cup and gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' Then He took the bread, and

when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.' In like manner, He took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you.'"

This was the appointed moment. The blood of His covenant. The initiation of the satisfactory, eternal, atonement and covering. As the blood of lambs filled the Jewish temple, the blood of the Lamb of God filled time and space. He cried out, "It is Finished."

Death passed over you and took the firstborn over all creation. The firstborn became the Passover Lamb. As He faced death, He "disarmed authorities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them by the cross," (Col. 2:15).

Multitudes of angels now encircle the throne of the resurrected, living, breathing Messiah proclaiming: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Rev. 5:12). Worthy is the Lamb!

Coming to the Table: The Symbolism of the Seder

There is power in Jesus' fulfillment of Passover: "...For even Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us," (1 Cor. 5:7). Discover what He invites you into in this annual feast unto Him, this holy convocation. There is rich meaning for believers to draw from the Passover seder. The word *seder* means "order" in Hebrew. The title shows us more about His character. He is not a God of disorder but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33).

The Passover tradition and the seder meal itself include several key elements, including the seder plate that symbolizes God's deliverance of His people from slavery, and pointing to how Jesus rescued us from spiritual captivity. There is also the symbolism of the four cups of the Passover,

representing sanctification, plagues (judgment), redemption and healing and praise. Though many Jewish people do not yet see Yeshua Messiah in the Passover celebration, He is right there, waiting to be found by them. As we approach the appointed time of Passover, pray for the Jewish people to encounter Yeshua as the Lamb in the seder. Seek out a local seder demonstration and experience the sacred feast for yourself.

The Invitation: Will You Have a Meal with Jesus?

Under Jesus' blood covering and His fulfillment of Passover, keeping this feast is not a requirement, it's an invitation. As Christians celebrate Passover, let this be our heart posture! We don't participate to be saved. We participate to celebrate how we've been saved.

In Revelation, He tells us He stands at the door and knocks. And if we open to Him, He will come in and have a meal with us, and us with Him (Rev. 3:20). Will you have a meal with Him this Passover, the Lamb of God who has taken away the sins of the world? He's waiting for you. Come and see.

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