

K-014 Christ in the Jewish Passover

by Art Katz

Art Katz explores the deep symbolism of the Jewish Passover and its fulfillment in Christ as the ultimate Passover Lamb.

Duration: 35:11

Topics: "Passover"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the significance of the Passover observance and its connection to the Christian faith. The speaker explains the ritual of dipping the finger in the wine cup and dropping 10 drops of wine on the plate, which symbolize the plagues brought upon Egypt to free the Israelites. The second cup is referred to as the cup of judgment. The youngest son asks four questions about the significance of the night, reclining, and making a sop. The speaker also highlights the importance of the unleavened bread, which represents purity and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

The Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you. Speaking unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house.

And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls. Every man according to his eating shall make your account for the lamb. And your lamb shall be without blemish a male of the first year.

You shall take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month. And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

They shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper doorposts of the houses wherein they shall eat it. They shall eat the flesh, and that night roast with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs they shall eat it, eat not of it raw, nor soften at all with water, but roast with fire, his head with his legs, and with his pertinence thereof. And you shall let nothing of it remain until the morning.

And that which remaineth of it until the morning you shall burn with fire. And thus shall you eat it with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand. You shall eat it in haste, for it is the

Lord's Passover.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon 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. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and you shall keep it for a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.

Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread. Even the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses. For whosoever eateth unleavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

Seventeenth verse, and you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread. For in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore shall you observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever.

Nineteenth verse, seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses. For whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger or born in the land. You shall eat nothing leavened in all your habitation, shall you eat unleavened bread.

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said unto them, draw out and take you a lamb according to your families and kill the Passover. You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin and strike the lintel in the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning.

For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians. And when he seeth the blood upon the lintel and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And you shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever.

And it shall come to pass when you be come to the land, which the Lord will give you according as he hath promised, that you shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, what mean ye by this service? Then you shall say it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel and Egypt when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses. And the people bowed their head and worshiped.

And the children of Israel went away and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. This table is essentially the same kind of Passover table that Jews have been observing since the first Passover and essentially the same table that Jesus himself sat at with his disciples in that last day. Let's ask the Lord's blessing as we show forth some of these things in their traditional Jewish meaning.

We usually label this the Christ in the Passover because there are deep, rich, symbolical things that are hidden in the practices which Jews have been observing for centuries, which are concealed even to them. They're practiced in darkness. God is waiting for that moment when the light shall be revealed that in the very act of the things which we shall perform this morning, they shall recognize what they signify and what God has all along hidden in them.

Let's just join our hearts together. This might be a very rich Pesach, a Passover observance, especially significant breaking of bread and drinking of wine for us this morning. So precious holy God, thank you, Lord, for this ordinance.

Thank you, gracious God, for the unleavened bread, a type of yourself, pure of the ingredients of flour and water. Thank you, Lord, for those things which come from the plucking of seed and the grinding of the kernel, from the plucking of grapes and the piercing of its skin, from the life, Lord, which comes out of every process of death. Be with us now, Lord God, to speak by your spirit and to reveal to us the deep and rich content of the things that are before us.

Bless this people, almighty God. Thank you and praise you in the wonderful name of the Lamb of God, Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

I think I have to spend just a minute or two describing what precedes the Passover in the traditional Jewish home, because it's preceded by a very exacting spring cleaning that far surpasses anything known by most housewives or West Point, what do they call that, where they pass with the white gloves and make their inspection. From the attic right through to the basement, through every room of the house and nook and cranny, the Jewish housewife just scours that house and removes from it every aspect of leaven that might have accumulated in the course of the year. And we know that leaven is a type of sin.

And there's, in most Jewish homes, a second set of dishes, silverware, glasses, and all of the things that pertain to table service. And if a Jewish family is not wealthy enough, and this may come to as a surprise, a great many are not, my own including, they take the service which has been used through the course of the year and boil it so that this will be kosher for Pesach. So everything has been brought out, the house has been cleansed, and the last thing that's done to assure the fact that the house has been prepared for Pesach is that a few grains of leaven or crumbs have been significantly or what, what's the word, conspicuously left for the father's detection.

And he finds them on some windowsill, and he clucks his tongue and berates his wife for so conspicuous a failure. And traditionally, he takes a feather and a wooden spoon and sweeps the last crumbs of leaven into the spoon. Then he's faced with a predicament.

If he throws it into a garbage can in the house, the leaven is still in the house. If he opens the door and chucks it out, a gust of wind might bring it back in. So traditionally, both the spoon, the feather, and the few crumbs are wrapped in a white linen napkin, and the youngest son is sent to take the entire apparatus out of the house.

And in the usual Jewish communities that existed in Europe for centuries, a shtetl, a little village of Jews, a bonfire had been lit, and the sons from the different homes would be coming out and taking the entire thing, the crumbs, the spoon, the feather, the napkin, and dumping it into the fire. And so the last vestiges of leaven have been consumed and burned away. And even then, to make sure that in case there's a single crumb yet concealed somewhere in the house that would somehow spoil the house for Pesach, the father recites a prayer in Hebrew to the effect, Lord, if there be yet a crumb unbeknownst to us somewhere in this house, we ask that you count it null and void.

Quite a very extensive preparation that the house might be prepared for the Pesach. And I think that in the light of that, we ought to read what Paul, a Jew who is very familiar with these preparations, had written in 1 Corinthians, the fifth chapter. 1 Corinthians, fifth chapter, six through eight verses.

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Why is it that the Jewish people were required to eat unleavened bread? Because when they left Egypt, the only way that they could have had leavened bread is if they had taken a portion of leaven with them. And leaven in those days was created, maybe some women are familiar in farm circles where the process might still be used.

A portion of batter in the making of bread would be left aside to be covered with damp cloth and put in a dark and moist place in the house to fester and to become leaven. And this then would be mixed into the new batter, and that would make that bread to rise. Well, God would not allow them to take the leaven of Egypt into the pilgrimage journey with them, and therefore they were required to eat unleavened bread.

And so is it that God will not allow us to take the leaven of the Egypt of our old life and allow it to be commingled and mixed in the unleavened purity of the new walk to which he's called us. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? It only takes a grain.

Purge out therefore the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrifice for us. Therefore let us keep the feast not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Amen. I want to describe what some of the objects are on this table. Usually they're contained on a Seder plate, and if you've been in Jewish homes, you've seen them.

Round plates usually imported from Israel with a bluish color, and it has the word in Hebrew Seder, meaning service, and it has several indentations, usually of an oval shape to receive the ingredients that are on this table this morning. And one of the things is an onion, and that onion is a symbolical reminder that the root of life is bitter and has caused us Jews much weeping and much tears. There's been a great deal of travail and oy vey in the course of our existence, and as we know as believers, so much needless because of the ignorance of the fact that the Messiah who is depicted in this Pesach is unknown to us.

So the root of life for Jewish existence has been traditionally bitter and been the occasion of much weeping. And then something that's symbolical of the hyssop, which was dipped in the blood to mark the doorpost and the lintels by which the angel of death would pass over. There are usually some greens of some kind on the Seder plate, and in the course of the Seder, the ceremony, the service, each piece, each person around the table, including children, are given a sprig of parsley and they dip it in salt water and eat it.

And this is a reminder that greens, green represents life, and that for us Jews at least, that our life has been immersed in tears, the salt water. Some say that it represents going into the Red Sea, or that the salt water actually represents the blood into which the hyssop was dipped. Another item on the Seder plate represented by this apple this morning is something called harosef, and it's a compound made up of ground apples and raisins and wine and cinnamon and spices, and it's beaten into the consistency of a kind of a paste or a mortar, and this represents the bricks over which we Jews labor to build the treasure cities of Pharaoh.

So we're to be reminded on this occasion once a year that we sweated and labored in Egypt for in the making of bricks for the treasure cities. And another item is a roast egg, and that's a kind of a poignant reminder of the sacrifices which we Jews once observed when we had our temple. Now that we no longer have a temple and the sacrifices can no longer be performed and the priesthood has been dispersed, all

that we have is the melancholy egg to remind us of the time when the glory of Israel was such that our temple stood, our sacrifices were performed, and we had communion with God.

There's one further element that's not on this table. We don't have it this morning. It's usually even more melancholy an item than a roasted egg.

It's a dry shank bone of a lamb, and that's all there is to remind us of the lamb of the Pesach which we would have consumed entire. In traditional Jewish homes, lamb is not eaten on Passover because the lamb cannot be prepared as it was in the days of old by the priests in the courtyard of the temple, and so we eat some other meat, chicken, turkey, or something like that. And the only reminder of the Paschal lamb is the dry shank bone which is on the Seder plate, and I can't think of a more melancholy thing in Jewish life than a dried up shank bone.

And every time I speak about that, and oftentimes I have it in my hand to hold up, I think to myself before the congregations where I'm speaking, for how many in the congregation calling themselves Christian, has Christ become for them not a living savior or a baptizer or a healer, but a dried up shank bone? Well, we're going to begin the actual Seder. The whole service is going to be telescoped for you this morning and just condensed into a few minutes. Ordinarily, this is something that runs for several hours, beginning something like six o'clock or seven o'clock with the sun setting, the dusk coming in, and might run until one or two in the morning.

It's a joyous occasion, a commemoration, and in the course of it, the entire story of the Exodus, the coming out of Egypt, the emancipation of the Jews, is related to the children around the table. Well, the Jewish housewife and mother has prepared the Pesach by making the house free from from leaven. What's the word for that? Do you remember? Free from hummets.

And she has one further function. Of course, she's been all day long preparing this glorious meal. And if you've never had such a meal, you have a treat coming.

And her last function before the father, who is the priest of the home, and in Orthodox homes, he dons a kittel, a white robe, and puts on the crown of his authority in conducting this service. But before he begins, the wife has one further function, and that is that she lights the Shabbat, the Shabbos candles, and introduces the festival light, the Sabbath light, into the home. I think this is a beautiful Jewish tradition, and I think that it's a wonderful reminder that God has significantly used women to bring light into the world.

There are many men who are sitting in this room now, who would not be sitting here, were not for the fact that God used their wives, or perhaps their daughters, to bring to them the knowledge of the light of the Messiah Jesus. And God used the Jewish woman by the name of Miriam, Mary, to bring the light of God into the world. And we're going to invite a Jewish woman who labored last night to bake the matzo for us, the unleavened bread, Lois, to come now and to light these candles and to welcome the light of God into our service, and to recite the traditional Hebrew prayer, and whatever else that the Lord has placed in her heart, in English.

Lois? Baruch atah adonai, ohei melech haolam, Yahnei y'manei yadmei. Lord, we thank you for your grace. Lord, we thank you that the Lamb that was slain, now that brings us from life.

Lord, we thank you that you show us many things through this. Our Sabbath is established now, and we're in the Passover Seder. Picture the Father with his white kittel on, and his mitre, his crown of authority, and

the family around with shining faces, and the kids scrubbed and wearing their best clothing, and a great sense of expectancy and joy.

And we have a table setting here, but just picture that the chairs around the table, and every chair has a pillow, because in the Jewish tradition, we recline in the Passover, because we're not eating this meal any more in haste. And we want to be reminded that we're no longer slaves and bondage, but now we're free men, and we're eating this meal at our leisure, and we're eating it joyously. And that's the symbolical meaning of the pillow.

It's very important about the wine on the table. Even the children have a wine glass, and however poor a Jewish family might be, they'll scrimp and save to assure themselves that they'll have wine for the Pesach Seder. And there are four glasses of wine that are traditionally drunk in the course of the Seder.

Each one has special meaning. The first one is called the Kiddush, and the Father raises the glass and recites the traditional Hebrew prayer, and it goes, or he might sing it, Baruch ha-Toranoi, Eloheinu melech olam, borei paree ha-gofen, blessed art thou, King of the universe, who has given us the fruit of the vine. Everybody takes a sip, and then the Father takes the sprig of greens and distributes it to all the members of the family, and they dip into the salt water and eat that as I described before.

The one thing that I've not shown you is the unleavened bread which is on the table. And I think that what we have with us this morning is more representative of the actual unleavened bread that's been eaten through the generations than what's to be found commercially and purchased in boxes. This was made by Lois last night.

It's made of pure ingredients of flour and water, and this flour is ground of wheat which has been especially grown for the Pesach season, especially supervised, kept apart, separate from other wheat, supervised in its grinding, and baked in a very hot oven, rolled flat and corrugated and striped by a certain instrument, and round to suggest something of the perfect, the perfection of God. This is a type of God Himself, a type of the Son of God, pure, pure ingredients, ground, plucked for us, ground for us, broken for us, baked in an exceedingly hot oven, rolled flat, corrugated, and given to us as the bread of life. And I don't know if you can see through this bread this morning, but usually when it's corrugated, you can see the little piercing places in the bread.

So the bread is really a wonderful symbolic representation of that body that was pierced and broken for us. And as a matter of fact, there are three pieces of this bread on the traditional Jewish table. They're either in what they call a matzo bag, which has three compartments, or they're like, as we have it this morning, three pieces between three white linen napkins.

And it's interesting that the Father does not take from the first piece, nor from the bottom piece, but he reaches in and he takes from the middle piece. What do these three pieces represent? Well, that's a mystery to Jewish people. Some say that it represents Israel and the priesthood and or something else.

But we want to suggest that the three pieces of unleavened bread, separated by white linen, and yet comprising together one unity, represents the Godhead himself. The Father takes out the middle piece, and if you would ask Jewish fathers why, they have no answer except to say that this is tradition. Tradition.

But we want to suggest and we pray that the day is now coming when the Jewish fathers will take out that middle piece and the light of God will blink open their eyes and they'll understand that the three pieces

represent Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And it's the middle piece, the Son, which is taken out and broken. And what's done with this broken piece? A white linen napkin is taken like a funeral shroud and this piece of broken unleavened bread is wrapped just like a body and it's buried beneath the pillow in one of the chairs.

Why is that done? We don't know. We just simply do it year after year, generation after generation. We don't understand why.

But you watch in the course of this traditional Passover Seder how that bread is going to come up from burial at a very significant moment. Then another piece of the unleavened bread is broken off and a piece is given to each of the family members around the table and they take and they dip into the sop which is made of the bitter herbs and the test of that the sop has really sufficiently been taken is that tears are supposed to come from the face and a real burning in the throat that we might be reminded in that moment of the real bitterness of bondage. And sometimes the sop is taken with the herbs and with the ground apple, the khorosif, and Jesus said of that sop, remember in the scriptures, that he who has his hand with me in the plate now, he it is who shall betray me.

That's the same sop that Jews have been taken throughout all of the centuries. It's time now for the second cup of wine and an interesting thing is done. Every one of the family follow the father in this little ritual.

He dips his finger in the wine cup and he takes out 10 drops of wine and drops it on the plate. You can imagine what these 10 drops commemorate. They commemorate the plagues which God brought upon Egypt that the pharaoh would let his people go.

And the second cup is called the cup of judgment. And with that, the youngest son asks the fir manashtana or the four questions and they have to do something like this. I'm just kind of paraphrasing and putting it together.

Why is it on this, why is this night different from all other nights? Why is it on this night that we recline? Why is it on this night that we make a sop? Why is it on this night that we eat bitter herbs? Why is it on this night we eat unleavened bread rather than leavened bread? And in response to these questions recited in Hebrew by the youngest son of the family, the father picks up the haggadah, which means the narrative, and he begins to relate the story of exodus, of the emancipation of the Jewish people from bondage through the giving of the life of the lamb. And usually the haggadah is contained in a wonderfully illustrated book. It's a family heirloom that might be passed on from generations, jacketed in silver or something like that.

The story is related in response to the questions and when that's finished then the table is moved away and the meal is brought on and it's joyously eaten. It might take a couple of hours to go through all the courses that the Jewish mother and housewife has prepared. When the meal is concluded, it's time for the third cup of wine.

And I want you to turn with me in Luke, the 22nd chapter, because this was exactly the point which was reached in the Pesach Seder that Jesus was conducting with his own disciples. Because with the drinking of this third cup and the conclusion of the meal and the returning again to the Seder ceremony, that piece of buried matzah comes up out of burial. The meal has been finished and it's time for the dessert.

And according to Jewish tradition, the dessert is to be taken from this piece of buried matzah and a piece is given to each of the celebrants around the table. It was this bread that was raised when Jesus spoke as recorded in the 19th verse of the 22nd chapter, and he took bread and gave thanks and broke it and gave unto them saying, this is my body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me. Likewise, also the cup after supper, saying this cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you.

And the cup that he's referring to is called the third cup or it's called the cup of blessing or the cup of salvation. And so with the raising of the third cup and the eating of the bread which has come up out of burial, Jesus said, this is my body broken for you, this is my blood in the new covenant. He used the traditional cup of blessing, the cup of salvation.

And that's the cup which he extended to his disciples that they should drink in remembrance of him. There's one last cup, the fourth cup. And if we had the complete table setting, you would have noticed that there's one setting and one chair that's been unoccupied throughout the entire ceremony.

And that chair is called Elijah's chair. And that's been reserved for the prophet Elijah who is the forerunner, as we know, of the Messiah. And we come to the time in the Seder now when everyone around the table stands and raises the fourth cup and the youngest son goes to the front door of the house and he opens the door and everybody looks to the door expectantly that perhaps on this Seder, on this Passover, the prophet Elijah will come and take the place that has been reserved for him.

Because if he comes, we know that the Messiah is soon to follow. So everybody stands with the glass raised and the doors opened and alack and alas this year as in the previous year and all the years that have preceded, no Elijah comes. And the father says something like next year or next year in Jerusalem, Yerushalayim, and they drink this fourth cup and they end the Passover Seder with benediction and with Hallel with praises out of the Psalms.

So I'd just like to take this opportunity to ask why it is that in a ceremony like this that's so richly suggestive of the Lamb of God, of the Messiah of Israel, why it is that Jewish people have been unable to recognize in the thing which they've practiced year after year that the Messiah has come. This is so, the name Jesus Christ is so alien to Jewish life and been suggestive only of pain, of persecution, of oppression, of forced conversion that it's so far removed from their understanding to link that name with this Passover Seder. God is waiting for an Elijah to come and I believe that is preparing an Elijah body, a forerunner in advance of the coming again of our soon coming King.

Someone who shall prepare the way, prepare a people for repentance and for return and to suggest to them that the Messiah has come and is coming again soon. I pray that something is kindled in your heart this morning that if you have so much as that one Jewish family in the community where you live, that somehow you'll wheedle yourself an invitation to their own Passover Seder and be present at that table. And when the time comes for the things that we've described this morning, that God by His Spirit might give you special unction, that you might suggest to them in a very tender and sensitive way what it is that the things which they practice in complete darkness by tradition actually mean.

Who is this one whose body that has been broken for us, who comes up out of burial with the drinking of the third cup of wine, the cup of redemption? For surely except that they understand that, and not just Jewish people alone but modern men everywhere, God is again bringing a cup from which men must drink. And the world is either going to drink from the cup of judgment or the cup of God's blessing. I think that the issue is going to hang largely on whether we ourselves are going to be willing to be ground very

small, beat, baked in hot ovens of affliction, be willing to be crushed and to be poured out, that a people who are in darkness now might have a bread of life to eat and drink from the cup of God's salvation.

Let's bow in prayer and I'll call Jack up. We'll use the same bread that we've used in this demonstration and break it into the plate and invite you to come one by one and eat of this bread and drink of this cup. Let's just bow our heads now as we enter this precious ceremony.

Gracious God, thank you, Lord, that in your great wisdom you've called us to be one loaf, one body, Jew and Gentile together. And Lord, that we're grateful that we have some small contribution as Jews to make to the body of Christ, to draw deep out of our tradition, out of our Jewish life, out of the peculiar people which we are in your sight and by your fashioning, that we might remind your body and your people who have not had the advantage of this tradition, the deep and rich symbolical meaning of the things which they so often partake. The bread, the unleavened bread, striped, broken, pierced for us, the cup of wine, the poured out blood, the cup of blessing and of salvation.

And precious God, as we come this morning, let us come, help us to come, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Let us take stock now and let us make an exacting inventory, going through the attic of our own lives and the house of our life, right up in our minds, our thoughts, our memories, and working down through every room and cranny and vestibule. Let us purge our house of all leaven for a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump.

And if there be in us the leaven of sin, of malice, of anger, of bitterness, of resentment, of jealousy, of hatred, of resentment, be it so much, Lord God, against Jewish people or whatever, we ask this morning, gracious Lamb of God whose blood was poured out for us, make our houses clean, that we might celebrate this morning with you, this Pesach, this Passover Seder. In the name of Jesus, Lord, richly blessed by your Spirit. Partaking now of your body and of your blood, in the name of Yeshua HaMashiach, we pray.

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