

# Passover Haggadah Basics for Christians



### ACKNOWLEDEMENTS

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## **A Note From the Author**

Each year during the 15th day of Jewish calendar month of Nisan (usually around the time of Easter), Jews from around the world celebrate the ancient feast of Passover, commemorating God's deliverance of the people of Israel from their slavery in Egypt 4000 years ago. Typically a Jewish family would use a Passover Haggadah (a book outlining how to celebrate the Passover). The story of the Passover is more than a story of God delivering his people out of the land of Egypt. It is a reflection of a greater deliverance and redemption. It is my hope that you will find this version both educational and enlightening.

Sincerely,

Neil

## **Preface – The Bigger Picture**

To understand the real significance of the Passover and its true meaning we need to go back much further than the book of Exodus (where the Passover is recorded), back to the beginning of time, and to the book of Genesis which records this.

The story begins with some basic questions: "Who are we? Why are we as human beings here on earth?" The very first verse of the Bible begins to answer that. We read in Genesis 1:1 (the very first verse of the Bible), "*God created the heavens and the earth.*" Further on we read, "*God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us' "*" (Genesis 1:26). Here God clearly differentiated the creation of humans from all other living things, since human beings are created in the image of God. As soon as God made humans, he immediately establishes a "covenant" with him. A covenant is a little like a legal contract, or a marriage contract (in fact marriages used to be called "covenants"). This covenant, like a contract, made clear to the first humans how they must obey God so that they could continue enjoying the wonders and blessings of the world he had made for them to enjoy. We read about this in Genesis 2. "*The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. But the LORD God warned him, 'You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden – except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you are sure to die' "*" (Genesis 2:17).

At this point in history, men and women created in the image of God lived in a world not marred by the effects of sin and evil, and had fellowship with their creator, God. This relationship was based upon the conditions of the "*covenant*" mentioned above, namely humans could not break the commandment that the Lord gave the first man of not eating the "*fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*" If the man did, the covenant would be broken, and this would bring immediate and severe consequences. We read later on that Adam (the name of the first man) did break the commandment by eating of the "forbidden fruit" resulting in the immediate judgment of being thrown out of the lush Garden of Eden. Yet the consequences of this single act are more far-reaching than is often realized. First, the relationship between mankind and God was totally changed from that point on—Adam, as well as his decedents, no longer has close fellowship and relationship with God. Second, not only was a judgment curse put on man, but also on all of creation—mankind is now subject to miseries and hardships in life and destined for physical death. This death mirrors the spiritual death humans already experience in our broken relationship with God. Finally, the nature of mankind changed from that point onward, so that the heart of all humankind has from that time forward been bent in sinful rebellion against God.

Adam's banishment from the Garden of Eden was evidence of this broken relationship between humanity and God due to human sin. Without access to the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life that was in it, humanity is doomed to spiritual and physical decay and death. No longer can a descendant of Adam (a human being) find

eternal life knowing and enjoying God, because all of Adam's descendants by ordinary generation are sinful and unrighteous in God's sight. Not only are we guilty with Adam of his rebellion, but we show that we share his rebellion when we add our own sin to his—doing things in our lives like lying, stealing, hating, and not humbly worshipping the God of the Bible. Even when we try to do good, we do it with pride and arrogance in our hearts, showing that our sin is lodged deep in our hearts, making us “slaves of sin.”

For this curse of sin to be broken and humanity's separation from God to be overcome, we need help. Sadly we as covenant-breakers and slaves of sin cannot fix this on our own. We need help, we need a new heart, we need redemption from slavery to sin, so that we can again become servants of God. And this isn't something we can do, God will have to do it. We need him to provide a Redeemer—someone who is without sin and can therefore be righteous before God and earn the rewards first promised to Adam, namely eternal life with God and his people in a world without sin.

This Redeemer who would rescue his people from sin, the prince over sin (called the “serpent” or “Satan” or the “devil”), and death was promised all the way back in Genesis 3. Right before Adam was removed from the garden God pronounced his judgment. Yet with the judgment also came a glimmer of hope in the form of promise. We read, in Genesis 3:15, of God's curse on the serpent, in which God includes promise, *“I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head and you will strike his heel”* (Genesis 3:15). The promise in the second sentence of Genesis 3:15 is that though the serpent's offspring (slaves of sin) will strike the “heel” of the woman's offspring (promised Redeemer), indicating that the Redeemer will suffer to save his people. But the promise goes on to say that the serpent's head will ultimately be crushed, showing that the serpent will ultimately be defeated by the Chosen One who would come from the woman's offspring, the people of faith. Thus, even as the serpent is being cursed, a Redeemer is promised.

As the Bible unfolds, it becomes clear that this Redeemer, also described as the promised Messiah (“anointed one”), is Jesus Christ, who we come to know in the Gospels of the New Testament. He was qualified to do what Adam could not do, because he was both the Son of God (divine) and human. While he was an offspring of a woman (Mary), he had no human father, but was instead conceived by the Holy Spirit. Thus, he was not a descendant of Adam, so he was not born a slave to sin, but could instead live a sinless, holy life, perfectly obedient to God's laws, which he did (2 Corinthians 5:21). Yet even after doing this, he died a sinner's death on the cross. Why? To pay the penalty that his sinful people deserved, so that they could be redeemed, “purchased by his blood,” and no longer slaves of sin but servants of the living God. Who are his people? Those who confess their sin, asking God's forgiveness, and put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Redeemer. When we do this, God credits his righteousness and obedience to us, and credits his sin to him on the cross.

Jesus was and is the Redeemer who suffered in his life and death in fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 3:15. Yet though his heel was struck, ultimately he defeated sin and the devil (serpent), dealing the head-crushing blow by his substitutionary death on the cross and resurrection from the dead, so that he might restore his people to a right relationship with God. He also rose from the dead, proving that he was the Son of God and that he had the power to grant resurrection and eternal life to all who believe in him.

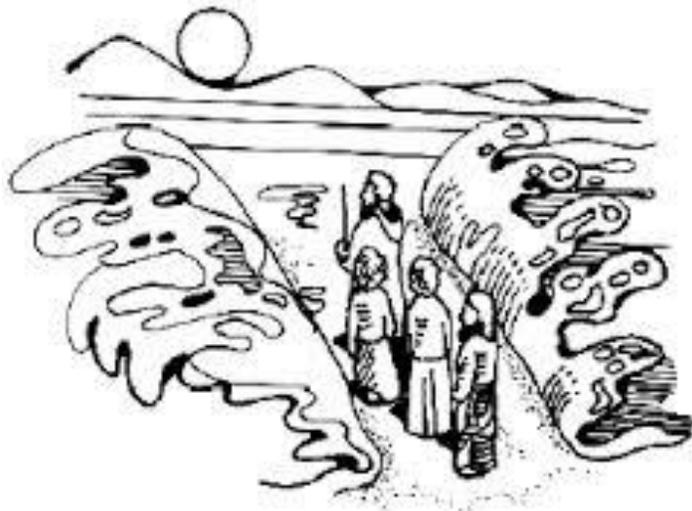
That's the whole great history of redemption that is told in the Bible. So how does the Passover play a part in all this? Well, the Passover was a specific event in the history of Israel as God's people long ago, that was a mini-story of their redemption as a nation, in order to point forward and explain to them the bigger story of redemption that comes to fulfillment in Jesus Christ. So let's see how the Passover did this!

## **Introduction to the Passover**

The Passover is the ancient Jewish feast celebrating the redemption of Israel from bondage in Egypt. It is the central feast of redemption in the Old Testament. God demanded worship because He was the one who brought Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 5:6). The Sabbath was to be observed to commemorate this great redemptive event as well (Exodus 5:15).

As New Covenant believers, we recognize that the Messiah has come to bring the fulfillment of Passover. Jesus is the ultimate Passover lamb who causes the judgment of death to “pass over” us. He brings us freedom from the bondage of sin and leads us into His kingdom. The setting of the Lord’s Supper is the Passover Seder. At that time Jesus proclaimed himself to be our Passover lamb, represented by the unleavened bread and the wine. He brought the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34) and redemption through his sacrifice for sin and resurrection. As the Jewish people gathered together every year for the Passover, commemorating the Lord’s awesome work of redemption for his people, so New Covenant believers today gather weekly to hear of how Messiah redeems his people from bondage to sin and to commemorate these events through the Lord’s Supper.

The word “*Haggadah*” comes from the Hebrew word meaning “to tell.” A Passover Haggadah tells the wonderful ancient story of the Exodus from Egypt. Many additions and embellishments from Jewish tradition and folklore are also added to the Haggadah. Today we see a great variety of Passover Haggadah’s. Some are tailored to being back in the land of Israel; some have been designed for ecumenical gatherings; some have been written for Messianic Jewish celebrations; and some have been written as an educational tool for Christians to gain insight into the Jewish Passover celebration. It is hoped that this Haggadah will be a helpful addition to this tradition as well as enhance your understanding of the Jewish Passover as seen from a Christian world view.



## **Preparing for the Seder**

*Seder* means “order of service.” Pesach (Passover) is celebrated primarily in the home. In an observant Jewish home, careful and thorough spring cleaning is carried out weeks prior to the holiday. Special dishes and cooking utensils are brought out from storage. Everything used must be absolutely pure and leaven-free. All leaven, which is symbolic of man’s evil inclination and sin, must be removed from the house or isolated and temporarily sold to a non-Jewish friend so that, technically, no leaven is in possession during the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread which the Passover celebration initiates.

The night before Pesach, the final search for leaven is conducted by the head of the household. A candle, wooden spoon, feather, and an old cloth napkin or bag are used to seek out and remove the leavened bread which has been conspicuously placed for the express purpose of discovery and removal. The leaven is burned and a proclamation is made that the home has been made free of leaven and the family is ready for the Passover.

The Passover Seder is conducted in the evening, which is the beginning of the first day of Passover. (In orthodox homes, a second Seder is held on the second day of the feast.) The Seder meal is a joyful, yet solemn feast occurring in the midst of a family religious service. The meal is eaten while leaning on a pillow. A ritual washing precedes the meal. The head of the household conducts the Seder, and in religious families, wears a white garment called a *Kittel*, which is symbolic of purity and the priestly role of the father.

We hope you are looking forward to having a complete Passover Seder. First we go through part of the service for about one hour, then we eat, then we have another half an hour. Allow at least 2½-3 hours. (This is a rather *short* time for a Seder!)

For the sake of authenticity (not because we are bound by ceremonial law in any way) nothing with leaven (yeast) should be eaten. (Also no pork, ham or shellfish.) In other words, keep it (more or less) kosher! There may be some Jewish friends in attendance, and we want them to feel as comfortable as possible.

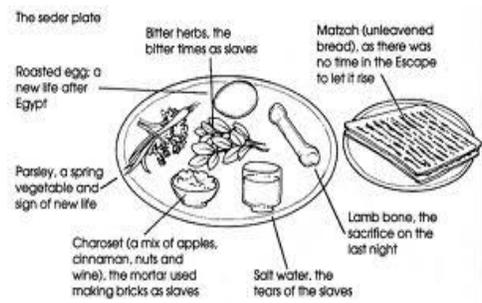
**Suggested Main Menu** (See also [www.kosher4pesach.com](http://www.kosher4pesach.com) and [www.jewish-food.org](http://www.jewish-food.org))

Matzah Ball Soup (This can be bought in jars, but this is expensive. Instant mixes are pretty good if you add some carrots and celery to the broth. Beware: do not make the matzah balls too big! They expand like dumplings when cooking!)

Gefilte fish (store bought, serve with horseradish) and/or chopped liver  
Chicken, brisket of beef, or roast turkey  
Candied carrots or sweet potatoes  
Green vegetables and/or salad  
Potatoes or *kugel*  
Macaroons or sponge cake  
Coffee, tea, grape juice (if you don't want to serve real Passover wine).

**Ceremonial Foods for the Seder Plate (one plate per table):**

Horseradish (red is not as hot!)  
Parsley  
Onion or piece of whole horse radish root  
Roasted egg (boiled is ok)  
Shank-bone of lamb or chicken leg bone  
Charoset (see recipe below)



Arrangement of the Seder Plate

**Matzah** (wrap three in a napkin and place on a separate plate)

**Accouterments for each table:**

A plate for the Seder plate (center of table)  
Plate and cloth napkin for matzah (head of table)  
Cup or small bowl of salt water (next to Seder plate)  
Wine glasses (one per person)  
A bowl with water and a wash cloth and towel (head of table)  
A pillow (head of table on chair)

**Note:** Leave an empty place setting somewhere for "Elijah!"

**Recipe for Charoset (serves 10-20 people):**

6 apples  
2/3 cup walnuts  
2-3 tbsp. honey  
2-3 tbsp. sweet red wine  
1/2 tsp. cinnamon

Core the apples (no need to peel). Chop the apples and the walnuts (a food processor is great for this). Mix in the rest of the ingredients. It should look like a coarse "mortar" mix! A little extra couldn't hurt. It makes a nice condiment to eat with meats! For a variation add raisins, dates, or figs.

## **The SEDER Begins**

**Note:** You will notice the Haggadah has sections for various groups of readers as indicated by the “→” symbol. Before starting, divide the group into these sections. Feel free to skip sections if you like to save time. *Text taken from either the Old or New Testament bibles are in quotes and italics.* Also to note, in a traditional Jewish Passover Seder, many of the prayers are read first in Hebrew and then in English. For this Version of the Haggadah, the reading of any Prayers in Hebrew is Optional and left to the discretion of the Leader conducting the Seder.

**Leader:** The Passover service we are about to have is called a “**Seder.**” The compilation of passages and rituals used for this are called the “*Haggadah.*” The Haggadah we are using has been adapted for Christians to show the link between the Jewish practices and the fulfillment in Christ.

### **CANDLE LIGHTING (Optional)**

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu *b’Yeshua, or ha-olam.*

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us through *Yeshua, the light of the world.*

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech ha-olam, shehechyanu ve-kimanu ve-higiyanu la-zman ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, O LORD our God, King of the universe, Who has blessed us with life, has preserved us, and has enabled us to reach this season.

### **THE SEDER PLATE**

**Leader:** The Seder plate occupies the most prominent place on the table. Here we find a number of important symbolic items.

**Reader(s) 1:** Maror, ground bitter herbs (usually horseradish) represent the bitterness of the slavery in Egypt.

**Reader(s) 2:** Hazaret, the whole root of bitter herbs, also reminds us of the bitterness of slavery. Unless God delivers us, we are slaves to sin and death.

**Reader(s) 1:** Karpas, usually parsley, is symbolic of new life springing up. However some Seder’s will include Lettuce along with parsley in this category.

**Reader(s) 2:** Charoset, a mixture of chopped apples, nuts, honey and wine, represents the mortar the Israelites used when slaves to Pharaoh. The rabbis say that even the bitterest work is made sweet by the promise of redemption.

**Reader(s) 1:** The roast egg, or Beytzah, represents the sacrifices offered in the Temple which have now ceased. Yet the significance of what the sacrifices showed is still important for us, for in the bloody sacrifices that were burned we see a powerful picture of the horrible consequences of sin. Hard boiled eggs were traditionally the

food of mourners and hence they were an appropriate symbol for the loss of these sacred sites. One other interpretation of Beytzah is that it symbolizes new life after Egypt.

**Reader(s) 2:** The shank bone, or Zeroah, represents the Passover lamb.

## **THE FOUR CUPS OF WINE**

**Leader:** As we read through the Haggadah we see the cup of wine is drunk four times. These four cups stand for the four “I wills” recorded in Exodus 6:6,7:

The Cup of Sanctification -

*I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*

The Cup of Deliverance -

*I will rid you out of their bondage.*

The Cup of Redemption -

*I will redeem you with an outstretched arm.*

The Cup of Praise -

*I will take you to me for a people*



## **KADDESH (SANCTIFICATION)**

**Leader:** During the Seder we partake of the four cups of wine. Each cup represents one aspect of the fourfold redemption God promised Israel: Sanctification, Deliverance, Redemption, and Completion (or Praise).

**All:** *“Therefore say to the Israelites: I am the LORD and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them and will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.”* (Exodus 6:6-8)

**(→ All fill wine glasses)**

## THE CUP OF SANCTIFICATION

**Leader:** The term “*sanctification*” means “setting apart for a holy purpose.” Both people and items that were part of Temple worship had to first be sanctified for this sacred purpose of serving God in his presence. The importance of this concept and its significance will be further clarified as we as we continue through this Haggadah.

**Leader:** (→ Lift the cup of wine and chant or say the blessing.)

“Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam, borey pri hagafen.”

Blessed are you LORD our God, King of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.”



“Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu vekimanu vehigianu l’zman hazeh.”

Blessed are you LORD our God, King of the Universe, who has preserved us, sustained us, and brought us to this season.”

(→ All partake of the first cup.)

(Note: It is customary lean to the left while partaking of the cup.)

## URCHATZ (WASHING)

**Leader:** We now come to the traditional washing associated with the Seder. Here we remember the various washings and rites of purification associated with the Levitical code. God requires purity among His people. New Covenant believers recognize the cleansing from sin Messiah has brought us. He has washed us and made us clean. It was at that great Passover Seder in the upper room that Jesus washed his disciples’ feet. (John 13:1-17)

**All:** God says: “*I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.*” (Ezekiel 36:24-26)

**Leader:** Jesus said: “*Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.*” (John 13:8) He told us: “*Now that I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you should also wash one another’s feet.*” (John 13:14) *So we have been given his example to serve each other.*

(→ Optional : All help wash *each other’s* hands.)

## **KARPAS (PARSLEY)**

**Leader:** We now come to the dipping and eating of the parsley. The green vegetable reminds us of springtime and of newness of life. The salt water represents the tears shed under slavery in Egypt. Out of our tears shed in bondage God hears our cry and brings new life.

**All:** Let us now partake of the green vegetable remembering God's promise to give us new life as we cry out to him.

**Leader:** "Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam, borey pri ha-adamah." Blessed are you LORD our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the ground.

**(→ All eat Parsley dipped in salt water)**

## **YACHATZ (BREAKING OF MIDDLE MATZAH)**

**Leader:** We now take the middle matzah and break it in half. Half we hide. This is the "afikomen." We will reclaim this portion at the end of the Seder. This will be the last morsel of food we consume tonight.

**(→ He breaks the middle matzah, wraps it in a napkin, and hides it.)**



## **MAGEED (THE STORY)**

**Leader:** The story of the Exodus is found in Exodus, chapter 12, verses 1-13, and it tells how God redeemed His people from Egypt by His mighty Power. Literally, it is the Passover story of redemption by the shedding of blood of the Passover lamb. It is the story of death, of life, and of resurrection. Essentially it has the elements of the Gospel, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. And so, God, taught Israel to keep the Passover as a memorial feast of the physical salvation, which He brought about in Egypt and to keep the Messiah's Passover (Lord's Supper) as the memorial feast of his spiritual salvation, when He saved his people from sin. The story of the Passover serves a model pointing to the permanent Passover Lamb, whose blood was shed solely for the purpose of reconciliation between God and Man as promised in the book of Genesis. As a further note worth mentioning, at the time of Passover it had been nearly 400 years since God last spoke to his people. Then suddenly He appears with great power and wonders to Moses. Likewise, from the time of the last Prophet Malachi until the birth of Jesus Christ another 400 years passed. Once again God breaks into human history with great power and wonders this time to save His people from slavery to sin.

**Leader: (→ While lifting up the plate of matzah.)** This is the bread of affliction our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. All who are hungry, let them come and eat. All who are needy, let them come and celebrate with us.

**(→ He then returns the plate of matzah to the table.)**

**(→ The second cups of wine are refilled.)**

## **MA NISHTANAH (THE FOUR QUESTIONS)**

**(→ Have a young child rise and ask the four questions.)**

**Child:** Ma nishtanah ha-layla ha-zeh mi-kol ha-laylot, mi-kol ha-laylot ? Sh'bekol halaylot anu achlim hametz u matzah, hametz u matzah, ha layla ha-zeh, ha layla ha-ze kulo matzah, ha layla ha-zeh, ha layla ha-ze kulo matzah?

Why is this night different from all other nights?

**Question 1:** On all other nights we eat leavened or unleavened bread. On this night why only unleavened bread?

**Question 2:** On all other nights we eat vegetables of all kinds. On this night why bitter herbs?

**Question 3:** On all other nights we do not dip our herbs even once.

On this night why do we dip them twice? (One time the parsley in salt water and one time the bitter herb in the charoset?)

**Question 4:** On all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining. On this night why do we recline?

## THE ANSWER

**All: (→ In answer to introductory question):** We were slaves to the Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD our God brought us out from that place with a strong and mighty hand and his outstretched arm of salvation. If the Holy One, blessed is he, had not brought our fathers out of Egypt, We and our children would still be slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if all of us were wise and learned we could not have saved ourselves from bondage. We celebrate the Passover to remember our deliverance from Egypt, from bondage to the oppressor in the land of death.

**Leader:** Likewise we know that God, in the fullness of time, sent the Messiah, to bring a greater redemption from our bondage to sin and death. It was this greater work of redemption to which God's redemption from Egypt pointed. Jesus said, *"Everyone who sins is a slave to sin. . . . if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."* (John 8:34-36)

**All (in answer to question 1) :** On this night we eat unleavened bread because our ancestors were in haste to leave Egypt and had no time to let their dough rise. Leaven is a symbol of sin. God calls us to turn from sin. He commanded the Israelites to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread for seven days to remember the redemption he brought.

**Leader:** God says to us, *"Your pride and boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast--as you really are. For Messiah our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth."* (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)

**All (in answer to question 2) :** On this night we eat bitter herbs to remember the bitterness of our slavery in Egypt. "And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and brick, and in all manner of service in the field" (Exodus 1:14). Likewise let us remember the bitterness of slavery to sin.

**Leader:** God has warned us *"Make sure no bitter root grows up among you. such a person thinks `I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way"* (Deuteronomy 29:18-19) and *"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."* (Hebrews 12:15)

**All (in answer to question 3) :** We dip twice this night to remind us of our redemption. We cried out to the LORD and he saw our tears and heard our groaning. The Holy One of Israel delivered us from our bitterness and brought us to the sweetness of a new life among the redeemed.

**Leader:** It may have been on the occasion of the dipping of the bitter herb that the Messiah indicated who would betray him. (John 13:26) Let us seek the LORD that we may walk in his ways and enjoy his redemption.

**All (in answer to question 4) :** We recline this night to remind us we are free to enjoy God's redemption. He calls us to enter into his Sabbath rest, not trusting in our own labors or righteousness to save us from bondage, but rather resting on the work of Messiah for us. (See Hebrews 4:1-11)

**Leader:** We are reminded of how our Messiah reclined at the table with his disciples. Now we can rest in close fellowship with our Redeemer through faith.

## **THE FOUR SONS**

**Leader:** Jewish tradition speaks of the four sons: the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who does not know how to ask.

**Reader(s) 1:** The wise son says, “*What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded us?*” (Deuteronomy 6:20) Instruct him in all the precepts of the Passover, even to the last detail of the afikomen.

**Reader(s) 2:** The wicked son says, “What does this mean to you?” He says “to you” and not “to us”, thus excluding himself from the company of the redeemed, for we all are to consider it as though we were there at the Exodus. Answer him “*I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.*” (Exodus 13:8) For me, not for him, for if he had been present, he would not have been redeemed.

**Reader(s) 1:** The simple son says “What is this?” Tell him, “*With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*” (Exodus 13:14)

**Reader(s) 2:** As for the son who does not know how to ask, say to him, as it is written in the scriptures, “*I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.*” (Exodus 13:8)

**Leader:** Let us all be warned by the four sons! May we not be as the wicked son and exclude ourselves from the LORD’s Passover redemption, either the first or the last.

## THE STORY OF THE PASSOVER

**Leader:** From the beginning the Creator had purposed to redeem from sin and death a people for himself, for his own glory and praise as fulfillment of the promise he made to man recorded in Genesis 3:15. Amidst the darkness mankind had fallen into, God chose a Godly remnant who knew him.

**Reader(s) 1:** God called Abraham to leave Haran and to travel to the land God would show him. He promised to give an heir to an old man and a barren elderly woman past child-bearing age. Through this seed of Abraham would blessing, restored life in fellowship with the creator, come to all nations. Indeed Abraham would become *“the father of many nations”*, many *“goyim (Genesis 17:5). “By faith Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6)*

**Reader(s) 2:** God told Abraham: *“Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions” (Genesis 15:13).* God made a covenant with Abraham and promised the Land of Israel to his descendants.

**Leader:** The covenant of blessing was renewed with the Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**Reader(s) 1:** Jacob’s name was changed to *“Israel,”* meaning *“he who has wrestled with God.”* One of Israel’s twelve sons, Joseph, was sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers. They were angry with him because of the exalted position he said he would have among his brothers. God had revealed this to him in a dream. Joseph was raised to the highest position in all Egypt, next to Pharaoh.

**Reader(s) 2:** The children of Israel settled in Egypt to avoid a great famine. Joseph said, *“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives” (Genesis 50:20).*

**Reader(s) 1:** But after the children of Israel had increased and multiplied a pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph. He made the Hebrews slaves and treated them with cruelty.

**Reader(s) 2:** *“The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them, he heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham.” (Exodus 2:23-25)*

**Leader:** So we see that the redemption from Egypt was based upon the covenant with Abraham. The Abrahamic covenant is the foundation upon which the Mosaic covenant is built.

**All:** The Lord had said to Abram. *”I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12:1-3)*

**Leader:** *“Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6)*

**Reader(s) 1:** Pharaoh tried to kill all the male children of Israel, but, instead, God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to lead the people out of Egypt.

**Reader(s) 2:** Moses, God’s chosen deliverer was at first rejected by the people, but after many years God called to him from the burning bush and told him to go to Pharaoh and demand the people be freed to worship God. Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to believe God, even after many signs, wonders, and plagues.

**Reader(s) 1:** Finally God brought the plague upon the firstborn in which the firstborn in every household in Egypt would die. The Israelites were commanded to sacrifice a spotless lamb and place the blood upon the top and sides of their doors. Only then would they be spared this last judgment upon Egypt (Exodus 12).

**Reader(s) 2:** God delivered the people from the house of bondage. He brought a “mixed multitude” out of Egypt with plunder from the Egyptians. The people ate unleavened bread because they had no time to prepare the dough.

**Reader(s) 1:** The people passed through the Red Sea, which God had parted, as the army of Pharaoh hotly pursued them. The sea closed and brought judgment on the army of the oppressor.

**Reader(s) 2:** Many saw and feared the LORD. The promise to Abraham to be the channel of blessing to all nations was passed on from Israel to the Davidic king (Psalm 72:17).

**Leader:** Finally, in the fullness of time, God sent the Messiah to bring deliverance from bondage to sin and death. He has become the Passover Lamb for all people. He was sacrificed that we might be spared God’s judgment. He rose again, conquering death, and providing newness of life in freedom from sin’s bondage and in service to God.

**(→ Refill the Glasses)**

## THE TEN PLAGUES

When Moses first approached Pharaoh, and spoke these words to him, it was more than just a friendly request. Through Moses God wanted to demonstrate to his people, as well as to the Egyptians, that there is only one true living God, namely the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the Creator of the universe and therefore rules over all of his creation, including powerful earthly rulers like Pharaoh, who claimed to be divine. God's Words through Moses were therefore a direct challenge from the true God of Israel to the all of the Egyptian gods and to Pharaoh himself. Thus, as each plague represented a particular Egyptian god it served as an assault on that particular god. The conclusion of each plague was a victory for the God of Israel, and a defeat for each false god. Ultimately, the challenge was against Pharaoh himself, more so than the individual Egyptian deities because Pharaoh was considered a god. The LORD launches these assaults on Pharaoh's claim of sovereignty.

The 10 plagues on Egypt can be divided into three main sections. The first few plagues affected both the Egyptians and the Israelites. Then the God of Israel turned and drew a stark difference between the people of God and the people of Egypt. Hence, the second wave of plagues affected only the Egyptians. Finally, God further refined this distinction, focusing the final plague on the person of Pharaoh himself by the death of the first-born. With the country of Egypt in ruin, God had clearly demonstrated his sovereignty and power over all that Egypt had to offer, for the God of Israel is a jealous God and tolerates no rivals (Exodus 34:14).

(→ As each plague is recited a drop of wine is poured out.)

**Leader:** Let us recite the ten plagues. Our joy, like the wine, is diminished when we consider the judgment on those did not believe.

**All (slowly) :** Blood, frogs, gnats, flies, cattle disease, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, slaying of the firstborn.

**Leader:** May we be warned not to harden our hearts as did Pharaoh!

**DAYENU (sing or say together)**

Ilu hot-zi ho-tzi-anu, ho-tzi-anu mi mitzraim, ho-tzi-anu mi mitzraim, dayenu. Da-da-ye-nu, da-da-ye-nu, da-da-ye-nu, dayenu, dayenu.

**All:** If he had only saved us from the Egyptians, but had not brought judgment upon them, it would have been enough, more than we deserved.



## THE THREE SYMBOLS

**All:** We now come to the three symbols of Passover. God said, “*That same night they are to eat the meat (of the Passover lamb) roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast*” (Exodus 12:8).

**Leader:** Rabbi Gamaliel, under whom the Apostle Paul studied, taught whoever does not explain these three things at the Passover has not fulfilled his duty: the Passover sacrifice, the Matzah, and the Bitter Herbs or Maror.

**Reader(s) 1:** Tonight we remember the Passover lamb our fathers ate in Temple times. What was the purpose of the lamb? God gave Israel sacrifices and offerings to atone for sin and restore fellowship with him. Because of the Passover lamb God spared Israel from the judgment of the firstborn and passed over our houses.

**Reader(s) 2:** Even so in the fullness of time Messiah came as the “*Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29) that we might have a final and universal atonement. Let us bow and worship the King of Israel.

**Reader(s) 1:** Why do we eat the unleavened bread? Because when the King of Kings revealed himself to our forefathers and redeemed us from Egypt we had to leave in haste and we had no time to prepare leavened bread.

**Reader(s) 2:** Even so, God says to purge out the leaven of sin from our lives and to join the Exodus from sin and death.

**Reader(s) 1:** Why do we eat these bitter herbs? We eat the Maror to remember the bitterness of our bondage in Egypt. Even so let us remember how bitter is slavery to sin and death, and the great redemption our Messiah has achieved through conquering the grave.

**Reader(s) 2:** In every generation let each of us consider it as if we had come out of Egypt. God not only redeemed our forefathers, but us as well. The final messianic redemption has come. Let each of us who believe consider that the Messiah, the Lamb of God, suffered for each individual by name.

**(→All Participants lift their cups of wine and say)**

**All:** Let us therefore thank, praise, worship, exalt, honor and love the One who brought about miraculous redemption for our forefathers and for us! In every generation let each one consider it as if he had himself come out of Egypt. God brought us from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from darkness to *Messiah's* light, from sin to service, from death to life. Let us therefore worship Him with joy!

**HALLEL - Excerpts from Psalms 113-115 (Optional)**

**Leader:** Praise the LORD. Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD.

**All:** Let the name of the LORD be praised, both now and forevermore.

**Leader:** From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets the name of the LORD is to be praised.

**All:** The LORD is exalted over all the nations, His glory above the heavens.

**Leader:** Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?

**All:** He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap;

**Leader:** He seats them with princes, with the princes of their people.

**All:** He settles the barren mother in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the LORD

**Leader:** When Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of foreign tongue, Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel His dominion.

**All:** The sea looked and fled, the Jordan turned back; the mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.

**Leader:** Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory. Because of your great love and faithfulness.

**RACHATZ** (This second washing may be omitted if desired.)

### **THE CUP OF DELIVERANCE**

**Leader:** We are now to partake of the second cup.



Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam, borey pri hagafen.

Blessed are you LORD our God, King of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

(→ **All partake of the second cup.**)

### **MOTZI MATZAH** (BRINGING FORTH THE MATZAH)

**Leader:** (→ **holds up the three matzot and says**)

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz. Blessed are you LORD our God, King of the Universe, who makes bread come forth from the earth.

(Hold up the top matzah and the remaining half of the middle matzah and say:)

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam, ahser kidshanu bemitzvotav, v'tsivanu al achilat matzah.

Blessed are you LORD our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us through his commandments and has commanded us concerning the eating of the matzah.

(→ **All eat matzah** )

## **MAROR (THE DIPPING OF THE BITTER HERB)**

**Leader:** Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheynu melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu bemitzvotav, v'tsivanu al achilat maror. Blessed are you LORD our God, King of the Universe, who sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us concerning the eating of the bitter herb. We are mindful that it was by a dipping that the Messiah revealed who would betray him. (John 13:26) Let us be reminded of the bitterness of slavery to sin and the sweetness of God's redemption.

**(→ All take matzah, or a spoon, and dip it into the bitter herb and then into the charoset.)**

## **KORECH - THE "HILLEL SANDWICH"**

**(→ Make a little sandwich of the bitter herbs and the bottom matzah.)**

**Leader:** In Temple times, before Messiah came, during the first century Rabbi Hillel observed the commandment to eat the matzah together with the bitter herbs by putting them together in a sandwich. Even so we remember the bitterness of slavery to sin and death.

**(→ All eat the sandwich)**

## **SHULCHAN ORECH - DINNER IS SERVED!**

**Leader:** Let us thank God for the meal. Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam, sh'ha-kol nihiyeh bid'varo. Blessed are you LORD our God, King of the Universe, by whose word all things exist.

## **TSAFUN - THE EATING OF THE AFIKOMEN**

**(Note: We do not know, but it may have been at this point in the Seder that Jesus instituted the communion service. If a local body wishes to celebrate the Lord's Supper, we suggest it be done at the end of the Seder. Here we partake of the afikomen and the cup of redemption simply as traditional parts of the Seder.)**

**Leader:** (Retrieves the afikomen, breaks it and gives a piece to everyone and says) We have now come to the eating of the afikomen.

**All:** This is the last morsel we consume this evening. The afikomen represents the Passover Lamb.

**Leader:** Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheynu melech ha-olam, ha-motzi lechem min ha-aretz. Blessed are you Lord our God, who has caused bread to come forth from the earth.

**(→ All eat the afikomen.)**

**Leader:** The afikomen is without leaven, even as the Passover lamb was to be without defect. It may have been at this point in the Seder that Jesus gave his disciples the unleavened bread, which represents his body broken for us as the sinless Lamb of God.

## **BARECH - Grace after the meal**

**Leader:** Let us thank the LORD for the food we have eaten.

**All:** Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forever! Blessed are you LORD our God, king of the universe, who feeds the whole world with His goodness, grace, loving kindness, and mercy.

**Leader:** May we remember your mercy and receive the merit of Jesus our Messiah in his life of obedience, sacrificial death, and resurrection on our behalf.

**All:** Build up the heavenly Jerusalem --your people who trust you in faith —speedily in our days! May you restore the Jewish people to Messiah, bring all nations to your light, and bring healing and restoration to the earthly Jerusalem as Jews and Gentiles turn to you in faith! May all see the glories of your Temple, the body of Messiah!



(→ **The third cup of wine is filled**)

## THE CUP OF REDEMPTION

**Leader:** Let us now partake of the third cup. It may have been at this point in the Seder when Jesus spoke of the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah, who wrote:

**All:** *“The time is coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt.”* (Jeremiah 31:31)

**Leader:** Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheynu melech ha-olam, borey pri ha-gafen. Blessed are you Lord our God, king of the universe, who created the fruit of the vine.

(→ **All drink the third cup. Then fill the fourth cup** )

**ISAIAH 53** (This passage is not part of the traditional Haggadah, but it is certainly appropriate!)

**Leader:** Isaiah 53, from the Hebrew Bible, was written 700 years before Jesus’ birth. It was often interpreted as messianic by ancient rabbis. In the Bible, God’s “arm” symbolizes God’s power to save. The word for “arm” is “**zeroah**,” the same word we use for the shank bone on the Seder plate symbolizing the Passover lamb.

**All:** *“Who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”* (Is 53:1)

**Leader:** *“He grew up before Him like a tender shoot and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.”* (Is 53:2)

**All:** *“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering.”* (Is 53:3)

**Leader:** *“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.”* (Is 53:4)

**All:** *“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”* (Is 53:5)

**Leader:** *“We all, like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”* (Is 53:6)

**All:** *“He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.”* (Is 53:7)

**Leader:** “Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.” (Is 53:7)

**All:** After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.



## THE CUP OF PRAISE AND COMPLETION

**Leader:** The time has come to drink the fourth cup. Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheynu melech ha-olam, borey pri ha-gafen. Blessed are you Lord our God, King of the universe, who created the fruit of the vine.

(→ All drink the fourth cup.)

**THE CUP OF ELIJAH** (The Words to the song Eliahu Ha Navi are found in the songs section.)

**Leader:** There is the expectation that the Messiah will come at Passover. Malachi told us Elijah would come to prepare the way for Messiah. (Malachi 4:5 & 6)

**All:** This is why it is traditional to leave a place for Elijah and open the door to invite him to the feast. We notice the place left for the prophet Elijah and a cup of wine for him.

**Leader:** The rabbis rightly recognized that the process started at the redemption from Egypt comes to completion with the coming of the Messiah. As was the first redemption, so the last. It has been debated among the rabbis as to whether there should be a fifth cup at the Seder. This is known as the cup Elijah. It was concluded that the fifth cup will be partaken of when the Messiah comes.

Even so we know that God sent the prophet John the baptizer in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Messiah (Matthew 11:14). Messiah came as the ultimate and universal Passover Lamb (Isaiah 53). It was at the time that the lambs were being slain that the Messiah suffered and died to pay for our sins and spare us the judgment of God we deserve for them. Even as hyssop was used to apply the blood of the Passover Lamb to the doors of the Israelites, so hyssop, with vinegar, was lifted up to Jesus’ lips as he died to provide the finished redemption. (John 19:28-31)

**All:** “Messiah our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed for us”. (1 Corinthians 5:7)

**Leader:** Moses led Israel out of bondage in Egypt. Messiah leads His people out of bondage to sin and death and into freedom to serve God from the heart. He brings us the promise of eternal life.

## NIRTZAH (CONCLUSION)

**Leader:** We thank and praise the God of Israel for the Passover deliverance of our forefathers in the faith from the land of Egypt and we rejoice that God has brought liberation from sin and death for us through the Messiah, our Passover Lamb.

**All:** May He who is most mighty build up His Holy Temple. Those who receive the Messiah become the living Temple of God’s Spirit.

**Leader:** As you come to him, the living Stone --rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus our Messiah.

**All:** Our Passover Seder is now complete.

**Leader:** We have kept the ancient customs. May we live our lives this coming year and in future years with the same remembrance of God's redemption as we have experienced this night.

**All:** L'shanah ha-ba-ah b'irushalayim. Next year in Jerusalem!

## **EPILOG (For Further Reading)**

I hope you have enjoyed this Christian view of the Passover Seder and gained a better understanding of how God delivers and redeems his people. To tie together all the points made in this presentation, I would like to present to you the reader a summary of conclusions and clarifications to help you better understand the message of this educational material. They are as follows:

### **Who is God?**

From Genesis 1:1, we read “*God created the Heavens and the Earth.*” This single sentence, once unpacked, contains a great deal of information about who God is. Perhaps the best definition of this can be summarized by the “Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms”, (WCS), written by a group of Christian Theologians in England in the year 1643 as a summary of what the Bible teaches. It states:

“*God is a Spirit<sup>1</sup>, Infinite<sup>2</sup>, Eternal<sup>3</sup>, and Unchangeable in His Being<sup>4</sup>, Wisdom<sup>5</sup>, Power<sup>6</sup>, Justice<sup>7</sup>, and Truth<sup>8</sup>*” (WSC QA 4).

### **Who wrote the Bible?**

The Bible is a collection of 66 books written by men over more than a thousand years guided by the Holy Spirit (the third person of the “Triune Godhead,” the other two being God the Father and God the Son, Jesus). In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read:

“*All Scripture is inspired of God, useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in Righteousness.*”

So, in short, God wrote the Bible. Its consistency and accuracy continue to confirm its character as the “Word of God.” If God were not the author of the Bible and all we had was a collection of 66 books written independently by just men unaided by God, one would expect all sorts of conflicting statements and historical inaccuracies.

### **What do the Scriptures Principally Teach?**

A good summary of this question also comes from the “Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms” which simply states that:

“*The Scriptures principally teach what human beings are to believe about God (who he is), and what duties God requires of them<sup>9</sup>*” (WSC QA 3).

### **How are we to worship God?**

This is a complex question and serves as the conclusive summary and main point of the Passover Seder presented in this booklet. In the book of Hosea chapter 6, verse 6 God states:

“*I want your constant love not animal sacrifice*”.

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<sup>1</sup> John 4:24

<sup>2</sup> Job 11:7

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 90:2

<sup>4</sup> James 1:17

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 3:14

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 147:5

<sup>7</sup> Revelation 4:8

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 34:6

<sup>9</sup> 2 Timothy 1:13

Just like our family and friends want us to show them love by doing things they like rather than things we like, so God makes clear in the Bible that he is to be worshipped as he has commanded. When we consider a church where you will join God's people to worship him, we should look for one that is worshipping according to what the Bible has commanded (Bible reading, prayer, preaching, singing, celebrating the Lord's Supper and Baptism).

### **Is Man basically good or bad?**

This is a very controversial topic. Most polls taken on this subject overwhelmingly indicate that most people think that man basically good. However, what really matters is what God says about this subject. In Romans 3:15 we read:

*“All men are sinners and fall short of the glory of God”*

And in **Isaiah 64:6** we read:

*“. . . all are good deeds are as filthy rags”*

To further illustrate this point, we see the first violent act recorded in the book of Genesis is when Cain kills Abel. Reading further we see that mankind had become so wicked that God decided to destroy all of mankind except for Noah and his family. Even after this new beginning the sinful nature passed on to all humans from the first man, Adam, prevailed, leading to wars, crime, and idolatry (loving anything more than God). So to answer the question, from God's perspective, mankind is by nature prone to rebellion and sin.

### **Differences between Christianity and Judaism**

The term “Jew and Judaism” can somewhat be confusing. Is it a religion, a race, or a culture? Technically speaking, the term Jew is anyone who is a descendant by birth through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is a race of people who, in the book of Exodus, were referred to as Hebrews. The term Judaism can best be described as a religion of the worship of God in a particular manner that can consist of Jews by birth and non-Jews who convert to the Jewish faith. Both Judaism and Christianity claim to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They both accept what is commonly referred to as the Hebrew Bible (which Christians call the “Old Testament”) as the basis of their religion. Judaism does not accept the Christian New Testament as a basis for their religion. However, the biggest difference that separates “biblical Christianity” from not only Judaism, but all other religions in the world, is that all other religions seek to base their relationship with God on what each individually person does here on earth. If your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds then you gain God's favor. In contrast, Christianity is founded on the good work that Jesus Christ (the second person of the Holy Trinity) did in taking human flesh, living a perfectly obedient life, dying a substitutionary death for his people, and rising from the dead on the third day. A Christian is not someone who does something great to make God love him or her, but a Christian is one who simply responds to Jesus Christ by confessing their sin and need for a savior, and then receiving Jesus Christ's work as a substitute for the punishment they deserve. This is what “faith” is in Christianity. Trusting Jesus to have paid for all our sin and for guaranteeing that we will one day rise from the dead with him and enter everlasting heaven.

## **What about the Temple and the Sacrificial System?**

Here we get to the last and final point the Sacrificial System. The ten commandments were given to Moses in Exodus chapter 20 as set of rules from God. They were further expanded upon into 613 rules and regulations outlined in the book of Leviticus which is the basis of the sacrificial system practiced by the Jewish people upon the completion of the tabernacle. The purpose of the sacrificial system from a Christian perspective and contrary to Jewish belief is that the sacrificial system was instituted not to bring reconciliation between God and humans, but to show humans how sinful they really are and their need for a permanent solution to bring reconciliation with God through heartfelt belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The role of the sacrificial system and its ability to restore a broken relationship between God and man can best be illustrated by Daniel and his companions in the book of Daniel when the Hebrew people where in exile. Also, Ruth, Esther, and many other Old Testament figures who did not observe the sacrificial system but by faith in God were considered as righteous foreshadow the reality that the sacrificial system was never the final solution for sin and salvation. Instead it pointed forward to the one great sacrifice that Jesus, God the Son made on the cross by dying as the perfect substitute for sinful man. The question for you is, "Will you receive him by faith? Will you repent of your sin and believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, as your God, as your King?" I hope you can answer with a hearty, "Yes!"