



THE FIRST PASSOVER MEAL

The first Passover meal, as commanded by God in **Exodus 12**, took place on the night when God delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt. Each detail of the meal carried profound symbolism, both for the Israelites at that time and as a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ, the ultimate Passover Lamb.

1. THE PASSOVER LAMB

Each household was to select a male lamb without blemish on the 10th day of the month, keep it until the 14th day, and then slaughter it at twilight, applying its blood to the doorposts and lintel of their house. The lamb was roasted whole over fire and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, with any leftovers burned the next morning. The lamb's purity and innocence symbolized God's requirement for a perfect sacrifice, while its blood protected the Israelites from God's judgment during the final plague, sparing their firstborn when God "passed over" their homes. This event points to Jesus Christ, the sinless ****Lamb of God****, whose sacrificial death and shed blood deliver believers from sin and God's judgment. The lamb roasted over fire also symbolizes the ****judgment Jesus bore on the cross**** for our sins.

Description:

- Each household was to select a **male lamb without blemish** on the 10th day of the month and keep it until the 14th day (**Exodus 12:3-6**).
- The lamb was slaughtered at twilight, and its blood was applied to the doorposts and lintel of the house (**Exodus 12:7**).
- The lamb was roasted whole over fire and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Nothing of the lamb was to remain until morning; any leftovers were to be burned (**Exodus 12:8-10**).

Significance:

- The lamb without blemish symbolized purity and innocence, reflecting God's requirement for a perfect sacrifice.

- The blood of the lamb applied to the doorposts protected the Israelites from God's judgment during the final plague, the death of the firstborn. God said, *"When I see the blood, I will pass over you"* (**Exodus 12:13**).

Pointing to Christ:

- Jesus is the Lamb of God, without sin or defect (**1 Peter 1:18-19**). He was sacrificed to take away the sins of the world (**John 1:29**).
- His blood is the means of our salvation, delivering believers from sin and God's judgment. *"For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed"* (**1 Corinthians 5:7**).
- The lamb being roasted over fire symbolizes the judgment Jesus bore on the cross for our sins.

2. THE UNLEAVENED BREAD

The Israelites were commanded to eat unleavened bread during the Passover meal, as it was a practical necessity when they left Egypt in haste with no time for the dough to rise. This bread symbolized the urgency of their departure and later came to represent purity and freedom from sin, as leaven was seen as a symbol of corruption that spreads throughout dough. Removing leaven signified separation from Egypt's sinful influences and a call to holiness. This points to Jesus Christ, the sinless Bread of Life, whose body was broken for us on the cross. Believers are called to remove the "old leaven" of sin from their lives and live in purity and righteousness because of Christ's sacrifice.

Description:

- The Israelites were commanded to eat unleavened bread during the Passover meal (**Exodus 12:8**). Leaven (yeast) was removed from their homes, and the bread was made without it.
- This bread was a practical necessity because they left Egypt in haste and had no time to allow their bread to rise (**Exodus 12:39**).

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Significance:

- The unleavened bread symbolized haste—the urgency with which the Israelites were to leave Egypt.
- Leaven later came to represent sin, corruption, and impurity (as it spreads throughout dough). Removing leaven symbolized purification and separation from Egypt's sinful influences.

Pointing to Christ:

- Jesus is the Bread of Life (**John 6:35**). He was without sin, like unleavened bread.
- During the Last Supper, Jesus took unleavened bread, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is given for you" (**Luke 22:19**). The bread symbolizes Christ's sinless body, broken for us on the cross.
- Believers are called to "*cleanse out the old leaven*" of sin and live in purity because of Christ's sacrifice (**1 Corinthians 5:6-8**).

3. THE BITTER HERBS

The Passover meal included bitter herbs, likely greens such as endive, chicory, or horseradish, which symbolized the bitterness of Israel's slavery in Egypt and served as a reminder of their suffering under Pharaoh's oppression. This element prompted the Israelites to reflect on their past bondage and God's deliverance. The bitterness also points to the suffering and affliction that Jesus endured to accomplish our deliverance from sin. For believers, the bitter herbs serve as a powerful reminder of the ****cost of redemption**** and the bitterness of life apart from God's saving grace.

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Significance:

- The bitter herbs symbolized the bitterness of Israel's slavery in Egypt. They were a reminder of

their suffering and oppression under Pharaoh's rule.

- This element prompted the Israelites to reflect on their past bondage and God's deliverance.

Pointing to Christ:

- The bitterness points to the suffering and affliction that Jesus endured to accomplish our deliverance from sin.
- Christ's sacrifice was bitter in its experience—He bore our griefs, sorrows, and the weight of our sin on the cross (**Isaiah 53:4-5**).
- For believers, the bitter herbs remind us of the cost of our redemption and the bitterness of life apart from God.

4. THE BLOOD ON THE DOORPOSTS

The Israelites were instructed to apply the lamb's blood to the doorposts and lintel of their homes using hyssop, demonstrating faith and obedience to God's instructions. The blood served as a sign of protection, as those marked by it were spared when God passed through Egypt to strike down the firstborn. This act symbolized salvation through substitution, as the lamb died in place of the firstborn. The blood on the doorposts foreshadows the blood of Christ shed on the cross, where Jesus became our substitute, bearing God's judgment in our place. Just as the Israelites were saved by the blood of the lamb, believers are saved and cleansed by the redemptive power of Christ's sacrifice.

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- The Israelites were commanded to take the lamb's blood and apply it to the doorposts and lintel of their homes using hyssop (**Exodus 12:7, 22**).
- This act was a demonstration of faith and obedience to God's instructions.

Significance:

- The blood served as a sign of protection. When God passed through Egypt to strike down the

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firstborn, He spared those whose homes were marked with the blood (**Exodus 12:13**).

- This symbolized salvation through substitution—the lamb died in place of the firstborn.

Pointing to Christ:

- The blood on the doorposts foreshadows the blood of Christ shed on the cross. Jesus is our substitute who bore God's judgment in our place.
- Just as the Israelites were saved by the blood of the lamb, believers are saved by the blood of Jesus. *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins"* (**Ephesians 1:7**).
- The use of hyssop connects to the cleansing work of Christ's blood (**Psalms 51:7; John 19:29**).

5. EATING IN READINESS

God instructed the Israelites to eat the Passover meal with their belts fastened, sandals on, and staffs in hand, symbolizing readiness, trust, and expectation for God's deliverance. This posture reflected their obedience to God's timing and their preparedness to leave Egypt quickly at His command. For believers, this readiness serves as a reminder to live with watchfulness and anticipation of Christ's return. Just as the Israelites awaited their deliverance from Egypt, we await our final deliverance when Christ returns to establish His kingdom.

Description:

- God instructed the Israelites to eat the Passover meal with belt fastened, sandals on their feet, and staff in hand. They were to eat it in haste, ready to leave Egypt at God's command (**Exodus 12:11**).

Significance:

- This posture symbolized readiness, trust, and expectation. The Israelites were to be prepared for God's deliverance and obedient to His timing.

Pointing to Christ:

- For believers, this readiness points to our need to live with watchfulness and expectation of Christ's

return. Jesus tells His followers to be ready, as He will return at an unexpected hour (**Matthew 24:42–44**).

- Like Israel's deliverance from Egypt, we await our final deliverance when Christ returns to establish His kingdom.

SUMMARY

The first Passover meal, with its detailed elements, was both a memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and a foreshadowing of the greater redemption to come through Jesus Christ:

- The lamb without blemish points to Christ, the sinless Lamb of God.
- The blood on the doorposts symbolizes His atoning sacrifice for our protection and salvation.
- The unleavened bread represents His sinless life and our call to holiness.
- The bitter herbs remind us of Christ's suffering and the bitterness of bondage to sin.
- Eating in readiness calls us to live in expectation of Christ's return.

Each element of the Passover meal serves as a beautiful and powerful reminder of God's provision, salvation, and His unfolding plan of redemption, fulfilled perfectly in Jesus Christ.