

Be Prepared for Passover



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Passover and the spring holydays will soon be upon us. Are you ready? Do you have to get ready? Don't let Passover sneak up on you without a lot of thought. Or are you missing our Father's and our Beloved Yeshua's love for us because we're listening to Satan's messages of unworthiness and failure? May you be blessed in your Passover preparation with this message of our God's great love for you. Hallelujah! Praise our loving God and review how to have your best Passover ever.

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One of my earliest memories of Passover goes back to when I was probably about 7 years old. We have a photo of it, one of the few I actually have from my early childhood. Back then, each picture taken was precious and potentially costly, because unlike cell phone/cameras today, you couldn't just click off 20 pictures and then pick the best one. You could, but you'd have to pay for the developing of each picture first. Young people reading this must think I'm very, very old, but I'm not even 65 yet.

Anyway, that Passover was around 1960 or so, maybe later. There's my mom with her brood of little ones around her as she read the Passover scriptures, both in Exodus 12 and then the gospel accounts of Christ's last supper.

Now *we're* coming up to Passover, 60 years or so after my mom showed us the way. And we need to BE ready. One big reason why – is that in this most beautiful and heart-touching of all the holydays, Satan will very likely do one of two things with many of you:

1. **Satan will try to distract you so you get caught off guard**, unprepared for Passover and you don't experience the soul-cleansing Passover you should. Distractions can come from severe unexpected trials you suddenly have, pain, tests – like losing a job, or having family issues, or financial issues, or other concerns. *Don't let Pesach – the PASSOVER – when God sees the Blood of the Lamb covering us – don't let this momentous time sneak up on you! BE ready for it.*

2. **Or Satan can put thoughts into your mind of how worthless you are; how you don't deserve the Passover and shouldn't take it.** He'll whisper in your ear about how far short you fall from the high calling you've been given; how unworthy you are, and how dare you take the Lord's Passover.

Both of those leave you with deadly wounds and instead of feeling at peace, instead of feeling our Father's and Yeshua's indescribable love for us, instead of breaking out into hallelujah shouts of JOY for what our older brother and Master has done for us and what our awesome Daddy in heaven has done —too many of you can feel down, hassled, distracted and like failures – even at Passover season. Maybe I should say “especially” pre-Passover.

Don't let Satan get to you.

Now just briefly as an aside, of course I hope you realize the early Christians – after the resurrection – clearly continued to keep Passover. This included the Gentile believers in Corinth who clearly kept Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread (**1 Cor. 5:6-8; 11:23-34**). They obviously kept the holydays.

In fact the new covenant *ekklesia*—the body of called out ones, what's called “the Church” – started on a holyday, on **Pentecost (Acts 2)**, when our Father sent his spirit and the seal of his calling. There are references to the “the Fast” (Atonement – **Acts 27:9**). And we certainly have no question that Yeshua kept all the holydays of YHVH. So therefore I keep the holydays, and probably most of you who come to this website do. Some of you just keep Passover and nothing else. Well, let's talk about Passover.

Passover will be here in a few weeks as I prepare this in early March. Whether you keep the rabbinic date or the non-rabbinic calendar date based on sighting of the new moon in Jerusalem or locally, it's going to be here soon.

ARE YOU READY for Passover? This sermon today is about being ready. Have you not ever, in years past, come up to Passover realizing it somehow “snuck up” on you, and you weren't ready? That could partly be **the pastors' fault** if they weren't talking about Passover even weeks before. But ultimately, we have to be responsible for our own lives and whether we're ready or not. We can't blame anyone else. But I'll do my part as a teacher and be sure that Passover is what we're talking about leading up to this sacred time.

Certainly if you haven't heard the 2 recent sermons (Feb 2018) about “our Greatest Quest” and then the one on “Falling Deeper in Love with Yeshua” – please do. They have everything to do with Passover. *Because ultimately Passover's focus is*

not about us, but about the Son of God who was sent – and who certainly agreed – to come and be our Passover Lamb and pay for our sin-caused penalty of death for sin. And as the Bride of Christ, we are not just to love Him, *but fall in love, be in love, with him.* So that's the topic today: "Are you READY for Passover"?

Big FIRST STEP:

1. DON'T just GET READY, BE ready for Passover. Be in a **Passover awareness of mind all year long.**

We shouldn't be thinking about The Passover --- just once a year. The Passover of our Beloved Saviour that culminated on Golgotha in 30 AD should be something on our mind throughout the year, year after year. So though I focus much more on Passover in the spring, the more I grow in love with my Beloved, the more I find myself remembering what He did for me and for all mankind – throughout the year. Our minds should be ready to think about it, talk about it, praising our Savior all the day long, all the year long, as fill ourselves with what our God did for us – all the time, throughout the year.

When we grasp and realize how much we've been forgiven, we will love Yeshua very, very deeply – as the story in Luke 7 explains.

The very sinful woman who was bawling her eyes out at Christ's feet as she washed his feet in her flowing tears, and wiped his feet with her long hair, and then sweetly anointed his feet with expensive ointment – she was doing all that because she recognized what an awful, awful human being she was, what an awful sinner she was, and what a holy and kind person HE was. And don't think I'm overstating it. Yeshua himself said, "Her sins, which ARE many..." (**Luke 7:44-47**).

IF we realize how much we've been handed by the Son of God, that – as Paul says – that "he died for ME, and gave himself for ME" (**Gal. 2:20**)—***we will be SO much more aware of Him, of what he's done – and not just at Passover, but every single day of our lives.***

Yeshua's sacrifice was so complete, so perfect, that he only dies once, for all time, for all who will accept him.

In the Old Covenant, the priests had to offer sacrifices every day, as the blood of bulls and goats ultimately cannot remove sin. They merely pointed to Christ and his *one* sacrifice that *does* remove sin – but only for those who accept what he did for them. Those who do not accept him and his sacrifice, still have God's wrath abiding on them (**John 3:36**). Accept that HE took on himself the penalty, guilt, the wrath, the shame,

separation, the pain, the beating and the death that *you* incurred – all of it – is done for you. Accept it. Love him for it.

Hebrews 7:26-27

“For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.”

We should be SO aware of this, that though HE is crucified only once, WE should be so aware of what he's done for me and for you that we “take up our cross daily and follow him” (Luke 9:23-24). That means we're willing to die for him as he was and is, for us. Someone carrying their own cross was on the way to their own death.

My point: we don't just love Christ at Passover, nor do we only think of the crucifixion at Passover – but every day, all the time.

9/11 Example: In the USA, every year, every Sept 11, we remember the horrors of 9/11 and we read out the names of the thousands killed and have a ceremony lest we ever forget. So once a year we do that as a memorial. But I guarantee you **THIS**:

Those who lost loved ones, and realize their HUGE loss, think about 9/11 all the time.

Of course, the FOCUS on 9/11 comes a few days before and on 9/11 itself –even for the survivors and their families. *And we have a FOCUS also like that at Passover but those truly involved, think of it throughout the year.*

When we really understand the meaning of Passover, it's not something we get ready for, but forget the rest of the year. Sure, we are to examine ourselves. And more on that in a minute, but Passover is something we appreciate always, all the time.

I caution you: if that's not what is happening in your life, I warn and lovingly caution you – you may not be fully aware yet of just how much sin you've been forgiven and what a GREAT universe-shaking event it was when GOD, the one true living God, sent his Son, to come as a man and live a perfect life so he could offer that life for you! I'm not aware of any other religion where their GOD came and died for humanity!

So if Passover is sneaking up on us, we're not aware of how much we've been forgiven and how much Christ went through for you and for me.

In my case, I feel like Paul. I truly do. I have so much that had to be paid for, atoned for, and removed from my record. So much. I say with Paul: “Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom 7:24-25), and I thank God, through Yeshua my Messiah, my beloved Saviour, and I’m SO, so thankful, grateful and appreciative of my Beloved.

THIS is the main point of this message today. BE ready for Passover, always, and don’t just make it a once-a-year time to be thankful to Christ, the Son of God, for what he did for YOU, yes YOU. And for me. And for everyone who will accept him.

Sinner, are you still in a prison of your mind, or maybe even a literal prison for your sins and crimes? NO sin you’ve committed is beyond the blood of Yeshua. Only sins you won’t repent of, only sins you cling to yourself, only sins you refuse to heed the Spirit’s prodding of you to repent – only those sins, against God’s spirit – are the ones that won’t be forgiven: only sins you won’t give up. But if you repent, and thank Yeshua for what he’s done, you have life everlasting handed to you. If you refuse Him, you stay in your condemnation. Don’t be so foolish.

Remember, if you do see yourself as an awful sinner, or a reforming sinner, that the ones Yeshua was most comfortable with and who were called his friends – were the scum of society, at least as seen by self-righteous religious folks. He was a friend of sinners. The most perfect Being ever – the son of God – was a friend of sinners. So whatever your past, yes, you have a FRIEND in the royal Son of God and he will invite you to be part of his life and to come into your life.

So LOVE Passover. All the time. Not just at Passover season. And you love Passover because YOU recognize how much you’ve been forgiven.

2. BE SURE YOUR RECOUNTING OF PASSOVER FOCUSES ON YESHUA, not just on the Old Testament events that foreshadowed him and pointed to him.

As you pray and do Bible study on Passover, where is your focus? On Ex 12 – or Matthew 26?

So many times – and I’ve done it myself – when we get together for the evening meal at the end of Passover day – which we call “Night to be much observed”, we can end up recounting the story of the Exodus 12 Passover and the death angel and all that, and not even mention the last Passover of Yeshua or talk about our Beloved, and how what HE did on the cross has cut the chains of our bondage to sin!

What did Yeshua himself talk about at HIS last Passover? *Do you know there is no record of him even talking about the Exodus 12 account?* He spoke of HIS life, of why he was washing feet, of being the Vine and how we're the branches, and the Peace he leaves us, and how HE is the truth, the Way and the Life... and then his majestic prayer in John 17 – which again, was about what HE was doing with Father.

Our New Covenant Passover is all about YESHUA. It's NOT all about the Exodus 12 story—except that the Ex 12 story POINTED to Yeshua.

Up until Christ, yes – absolutely yes – they were to recount and recite the Ex 12 story and were told to recount it. But once Christ came, we need to focus on HIM, and not the death of the first born Egyptians who did not come under the Blood. YES – God said, “When I see the blood, I will Pass Over you” – but now in the New covenant, it must be that God sees the blood of Yeshua covering us and our household.

And what did Yeshua say about HIS Passover: “This is MY Blood of the NEW covenant (not “renewed” please; it’s brand new).”

Luke 22:19-20

And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "**This is MY body** which is given FOR you; **do this in remembrance of Me.**"

20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is **the new covenant in My blood**, which is shed for you."

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "**Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.**" 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, **in remembrance of Me.**"

This point is – in everything you do and say about Passover, be sure your focus is on Yeshua. If you're talking or having pictures for the children that shows lambs or blood on the door lintels, be sure you explain how all that pointed to Messiah. As you put out leaven, and buy and bake unleavened bread, focus on Yeshua, the Manna from heaven. DO this in remembrance of ME, he says.

And yes, it would be a great time to be reviewing the gospel stories of Yeshua – especially his final week leading up to His crucifixion, the last few chapters of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

So Point 1 – BE ready, all the time, for Passover. Be in a Passover spirit all the time, deeply appreciating him.

Point 2 – let all your focus be on Yeshua, not on the TYPES that pointed to him.

3: Passover is not just about forgiveness – but receiving Christ's new life.

As we focus on Passover, and eat of the unleavened bread of Passover, remember you are taking in Yeshua, symbolized by that bread. No, I don't believe at all in the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation -- meaning the bread literally turns into the present body of Christ. But we must realize that we are what we eat. And Christ has come inside us, and promised in fact, that he and his father would come abide or dwell in us (**John 14:23**).

That indwelling of GOD inside us should produce a conversion that is evident. Yeshua said, "Unless you be converted, and become like little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 18:3**). CJB just says, "Unless you *CHANGE* and become as little children..."

Converted means changed. Different than what you used to be. It means we're turning; we're changing, to a different way. When you convert US dollars to Euros, you're changing your money. When we convert from what we were, to the holiness of God – made possible only by God's indwelling in us by his Holy Spirit – there needs to be a change going on.

GOD is the Creator. HE is also the Creator of our new clean heart and life. David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, Elohim (God), and renew a right spirit within me..." (Psalm 51:10). You don't create your own new creation, YHVH does. But we have to let him and open ourselves up to that. Passover is a great time to recommit.

So our lives should be more and more representative of HIS new life. As we focus on him, we should see more and more of Him, and less and less of us, as John the Baptist said ("He must increase, but I must decrease" – John 3:30).

It is those who overcome who inherit the best and fullest rewards. Revelation 2-3 is full of that phrase "to him who overcomes..." So we must take stock to see what sins and lifestyles we're not doing anything about.

- Becoming a better father or mother, or better husband or wife?
- Keeping Sabbath in a more focused, holy way?
- Whatever sins continue to lurk in our lives unchecked, the same sins we had at our baptism, have to go! What are they? Gluttony, over-drinking, porn, little

lies, big lies, Sabbath breaking, cheating God of his tithes, gossiping... take stock. Yes, I preach to myself very much on this and all points.

- And hypocrisy. Espousing one way of life but living another. I've been guilty of that. Still am at times. So are you. We have to stop and change.

So as we deleaven, again, focus on the *spiritual*, what the leaven is all pointing to. Yeshua said, "avoid the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." (**Luke 12:1**). That is the more serious leaven to CAST OUT. As you throw out anything with leaven in it, be throwing out of your life how we're a hypocrite.

In Matthew 16:5-12 he also advises us to avoid the leaven of false doctrine. What we study and listen to what is FALSE – it will AFFECT our lives and our thinking.

I believe it is possible to have a well-deleavened home – but to still be full of spiritual leaven that we're ignoring. Yes, throw out the physical leaven. But you know what? I don't spend weeks doing it. God gave them ONE DAY to do it – Exodus 12:13. Let's not be more righteous than God. Get rid of the leaven and spend most of your time praying about the spiritual leaven still in your life. Then give it to Christ to pay for, and remove.

But we're physical. So it's easier to focus on the physical and to feel good that all the food products that have leaven in them are gone. But DON'T forget the more important leaven – the spiritual sins we let continue in our lives.

Paul said to eat the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

"Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 **Therefore purge out the old leaven**, that YOU may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 8 **Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven**, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, **but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**"

So let's be prepared by eating of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Who is truth? Yeshua is. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, NO one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) Take HIM in. Remove hypocrisy and false doctrine and hidden sins.

This is a time to rededicate yourself to coming on top of, over-coming finally, some of the flaws, sins, character issues and so on – that have plagued us all our lives. Passover is to recommit to real change in our lives.

Revelation 2-3 is full of the phrase, to the 7 churches of Christ in Asia Minor –“to him who OVERCOMES, I will...’ – and then the rewards are mentioned.

*As you **DELEAVEN** – sure, get rid of the physical leaven. But more importantly, as you do so, be asking yourself what sins (leaven) are you leaving in your life, untackled and not thrown out.*

4. THE POINT OF SELF-EXAMINATION is to realize you NEED, DESIRE AND ACCEPT the perfect Lamb of God and His Passover.

1 Corinthians 11:26-32

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 **But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.**

29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”

The point I want to make here is this: yes, evaluate whether you value what Christ has done for you – and appreciate his family, his Body the Church. Examine that, and then it says, “So LET HIM EAT of the bread and drink of the cup” (v. 28)

We don't examine ourselves and then decide NOT to obey his command to take the Passover. NO! We examine ourselves, repent where we must, and then so gratefully accept the Passover.

“Not esteeming the body” in context of the whole book of 1 Corinthians, I believe is clearly about the body of Christ, the church (Col 1:18).

Whose feet would you prefer not to wash? Whose offences have you not forgiven? Beware, because mercy is shown to the merciful. Forgiveness is shown to those who extend forgiveness. As we come to Passover, resolve to reconcile with anyone you know is not “at one” with you.

I wrote a letter just today to someone who won't reconcile with me, though I've asked for reconciliation many times. So as much as it's possible to do so, please be reconciled. Paul goes on to say that it's at least partly because of the way we're NOT all one in the body, that we have so much unhealed sicknesses and even death going on within the *ekklesia*.

So forgive one another. **There's someone else hurting out there that many of us have not forgiven. Do you know who?** I speak of your own horrid sins of your past. **Forgive yourself too.**

Passover is also a time to forgive yourself. To obey the golden rule of loving others AS you love yourself. But do you love yourself now?

Or do you have such deep regrets that you can't live in God's GIFT that he's given us – called "the present"? Too many of us ruin our lives by stewing over the past and fearing the future – that we can't enjoy and praise Him in the present or FOR his "present".

And examine yourself and then in prayer say – "Lord, I've examined myself... and boy oh boy, do I need you in my life, and need you to keep me clean and to keep my feet washed. Thank you for all you've done, and I look forward to eating of your bread and drinking of your cup. Thank you so much"

And then take the Passover. Examine yourself – and then "so let him/her EAT of the bread and drink of his cup". Be there. Don't let Satan's thoughts of unworthiness keep you from being at the Passover. Be there! "So LET him (or her) eat ... and so LET him drink of the Lord's cup".

5. AND REMEMBER to take Passover with solemn JOY.

Passover should not be just a funeral service – but a VICTORY celebration! So many in the past that I've been to, felt like an Irish Wake or something.

In the newer version of "Amazing Grace" there is a new chorus:

"My chains are gone. I've been set free. My God my Saviour, has ransomed me; and like a flood, his mercy reigns, unending love, amazing grace."

God has extended his amazing grace to us, his boundless favor. It's more, much more, than just pardoning us. It's his favor upon us. And his amazing grace has saved a wretch, a wretch even like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind – but now, I see."

When the ancient Israelites partook of that first Passover, as they heard the wails of the Egyptian families discovering their dead firstborn sons or husband... the Israelites were solemnly relieved.

Later in the Promised Land, when there were no Egyptians around, I'm sure their Passovers were knock-the-walls-down joyful as they sang and worshiped.

So we have a solemn joy when we partake our Passovers. Sure, we're remembering how Christ died in the next 18 hours or so, and how awful that was, but in his death, he completely demolished Satan's hold and claim on you and me. We are like people on death row who have been told someone else took their penalty and they can walk out now – a free man or woman.

We have overcome Satan, sin, and our own natures – by the BLOOD of our Lamb, by our Master's precious blood (Rev 7:14; 12:11). Remember, we are pledging to faithfully drink of his cup, and if he chooses to let you or me die for him and his Way, then so be it. We will not love our own lives but be willing to confidently stand up for him to the death, as he did for you and me. But now we're free. Our chains are gone.

Can you imagine the relief, the joy – and solemn gratitude someone like that would feel? It's a solemn joy – and should not feel like a funeral. Hallelujah!!! Hallelujah!! My Yeshua, MY Savior has set us free. Our King paid my penalty. Our husband took lashes for me and you. My God suffered for you and me, Our Rock of our Salvation saved each of us from further shame, disgrace, separation and anger. That's a cause to celebrate him, even as we – like the woman of Luke 7 – drown his bloodied feet with tears flowing from our own eyes, recognizing how much he has loved us. The woman of Luke 7 is me, is you, and is all of us. We don't know her name, for she is all of us.

I LOVE my hero. I LOVE my Father too for offering this Way out for me and you as this is the good news (gospel) of the kingdom: when the king dies for his own people, opening up eternal life and the kingdom to each one who accepts him.

WE love you, Beloved. I love YOU, Yeshua. I love YOU, and can't wait to say this to you --face to face---how much I appreciate all you've done and all you've been to me. Master, I speak for all of us on this. I want to shout it from the housetops! “MY Savior LIVES – and lives in me and wants to live in you, if you will just REPENT of your sins, turn from your way of life and accept him.”

So on Passover, we are joyful – in a solemn way. Passover service should not feel like a funeral. You see, our King, our husband, our beloved King and Husband, our Beloved Savior – did all this for me and for you.

Yeshua: well done, our king, well done. Well done, our Beloved husband.

Closing prayer:

HOLY, Righteous Father, thank you for offering your Son, the Word, to come and be sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him. Thank you for loving us so much.

Holy Beloved Yeshua, our Prince, our King, our Redeemer and our future husband, Thank YOU for *offering* to lay down your life for me, and for who love you. You were as good as slain from the foundation of the world. I don't deserve it, none of us do, but you did it anyway.

All this means SO much that we ponder it and think of it all year long. You're the best. Thank you for offering to come down and be our way out of damnation and death. As we come to Passover, let us be there in a worthy frame of mind, ready to drink and eat of you, our Master. Help us throw out the real leaven and focus more time on the spiritual deleavening and not just wear ourselves out on the physical deleavening. Help us forgive all – and any – who have offended us, and ask for their forgiveness wherever we have offended them. Yeshua, you died for us while we were yet sinners. Let us be of the same mindset, to be willing to give up our lives even for those who persecute and malign us. If you choose for any of us to die for you or your cause, may we rise to the occasion with your help, and be willing to die for you too.

And as we come to Passover, please Lord Yeshua our Master, let us focus on you, YOU, on you Master – as we deleaven, as we read of your scriptures, as we reconcile with all others, as we try to grasp the awesomeness of your calling for each of us to be a part of you, a part of your holy body. Help us appreciate it all, and love you, so much more than we do.

We love you Yeshua. We love you Father. Fill us and all your sons and daughters with an overflowing of the Holy Spirit in our lives. LIVE in me more each day, my Master, and I speak for all who are hearing this: Live in US, dear Beloved. Live in us. Let people see YOU, Yeshua, more and more as they watch us.

Again, thank you for being our Passover Lamb, dear Yeshua. And wonderful Father, what YOU went through having to let your eternal companion go through all this – and not intervene – because of your love for all of US! Wow! We love you, Father. We love you Yeshua.

In your name, Yeshua ... amen.