

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Unleavened Bread in Old Testament

The Hebrew *matstzah* (pronounced mats-tsaw'), Strong's #4682, means sweet (i.e., not soured or bittered with yeast), an unfermented cake or loaf, the festival of Passover, to squeeze or compress.

Genesis 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High God.

Genesis 18:6-8 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them [the Eternal and two angels]; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

Genesis 19:3 And he [Lot] pressed upon them [the two angels] greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

The Passover Was Eaten With Unleavened Bread

Exodus 12:8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

Numbers 9:11 The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

Feast of Unleavened Bread Separate Seven-Day Feast Following Passover

Exodus 12:15-20 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

Exodus 13:6-7 Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

Exodus 34:18 The Feast of Unleavened Bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat

unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt.

Leviticus 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

Numbers 28:17 And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten.

Deuteronomy 16:3-8 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there any thing of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee: But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place His name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the Passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents. Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread: and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord thy God: thou shalt do no work therein.

Feast of Unleavened Bread Commemorates Israel's Exodus From Egypt

Exodus 12:17 And ye shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.

Exodus 12:39 And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

Exodus 34:18 The Feast of Unleavened Bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt.

Numbers 33:3 And they [Israel] departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the Passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

Deuteronomy 16:3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.

We Are to Teach Meaning and Purpose of Feast of Unleavened Bread to Our Children

Exodus 13:6-9 Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread

be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread an Everlasting Institution

Exodus 12:17 And ye shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.

Exodus 13:6, 10 Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread One of Three Pilgrimage Festivals

Deuteronomy 16:16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose; in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty.

II Chronicles 8:13 Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

Offering to the Eternal Commanded on the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Exodus 23:15 Thou shalt keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty).

Deuteronomy 16:16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose; in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty.

Special Sacrifices Were Given Each Day of the Feast

Leviticus 23:6-8 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

Numbers 28:17-24 And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. In the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work therein: But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire for a burnt offering unto the Lord; two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year: they shall be unto you without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil: three tenth deals shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram; A several tenth deal shalt thou offer for every lamb, throughout the seven lambs: And one goat for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you. Ye shall offer these

beside the burnt offering in the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering. After this manner ye shall offer daily, throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord: it shall be offered beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

Unleavened Bread Used in the Sacrificial System

Leviticus 2:4-5 And if thou bring an oblation of a meat offering baken in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil.

Leviticus 6:16 And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat: with unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it.

Leviticus 7:12 If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried.

I Chronicles 23:29 Both for the shewbread, and for the fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for that which is baked in the pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size.

Unleavened Bread Used in the Consecration of the Priests

Exodus 29:1, 2, 23 And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the Lord.

Leviticus 8:2,26-27 Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread And out of the basket of unleavened bread, that was before the Lord, he took one unleavened cake, and a cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, and put them on the fat, and upon the right shoulder: And he put all upon Aaron's hands, and upon his sons' hands, and waved them for a wave offering before the LORD.

Unleavened Bread Use in Nazarite's Sacrifices

Numbers 6:15-19 And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings. And the priest shall bring them before the Lord, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering: And he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering. And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven: During Feast of Unleavened Bread,

God Reminds Israel That All the Firstborn Are His

Exodus 12:29 And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of the cattle.

Exodus 13:1-3, 12-13 And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine Remember this day, in which ye came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place: there shall be no leavened bread be eaten That thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the Lord's. And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.

Exodus 34:18-20 The Feast of Unleavened Bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male. But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.

Gideon's Unleavened Sacrifice Was Acceptable to God

Judges 6:19-21 . . . Gideon . . . made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes . . . and the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth, and he did so. Then the angel of the Lord put

forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes

Unrighteous People Using Unleavened & Leavened Bread

I Samuel 28:24 And the woman [witch of Endor] had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof.

II Kings 23:9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

Amos 4:4-5 Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years: And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God.

Chronology of Feast of Unleavened Bread Observance

Joshua 5:11 [On the plains of Gilgal before Jericho] And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

II Chronicles 8:13 [Solomon's time] Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the

commandment of Moses, on the Sabbaths, and on the New Moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles.

II Chronicles 30:13, 21 [Hezekiah's time] And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month, a very great congregation And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord.

II Chronicles 35:17 [Josiah's time] And the children of Israel that were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days.

Ezra 6:22 [Ezra's time, at return of Jews from Babylon] And kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy: for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

Feast of Unleavened Bread Also Called Passover

Ezekiel 45:21 In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.

Unleavened Bread in New Testament

The Greek *azumos* (pronounced ad'-zoo-mos), Strong's #106, means unleavened, i.e. uncorrupted.

Unleavened Bread Can Refer to Entire Passover Season

Matthew 26:17 Now the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?

Mark 14:1 After two days was the feast of the Passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by craft, and put Him to death.

Mark 14:12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover, His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the Passover?

Luke 22:1, 7 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed.

Feast of Unleavened Bread in Acts of the Apostles

Acts 12:3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the Days of Unleavened Bread.)

Acts 20:6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

Meaning of Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread

I Corinthians 5:7-8 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Leavening in the New Testament

"Leavening" in the New Testament is Strong's #2219, *zume* (pronounced dzoo' may) and #2220 *zumoo* (dzoo-mo'-o).

The Kingdom of Heaven is Like Leaven!

Matthew 13:33 Another parable spake He unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Luke 13:20-21 And again He said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Beware of Spiritual Leaven -- False Doctrine

Matthew 16:6-12 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, He said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Mark 8:15 And He charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

Luke 12:1 . . . Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

A Little Leaven (Sin, False Doctrine) Leavens (Corrupts) The Whole Lump (Everything)

I Corinthians 5:6-8 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Galatians 5:9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

First Day of Unleavened Bread a Great Sabbath, a "MEGA Sabbath"

John 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

COMMENT: The Greek word for "high" is Strong's #3173, *meegas*, meaning "exceedingly, great, high, large, loud, mighty, strong." We use the word "mega" to mean million, such as megatons, megabytes. Holy days are "MEGASabbaths," much more important than other Sabbaths or other days.

Feast of Unleavened Bread References

This section gives summaries from various reference material on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, along with our comments.

Passover: Its History and Traditions, by T. H. Gaster

Passover is one of the oldest festivals in the world. It has been observed by Jews for over 3,000 years. For the modern Jew, it lasts for eight days, from Nisan 15 to 23 (actually, Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread last from Nisan 14 through 21). Passover marks the beginning of the barley season in Palestine. It also commemorates the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and that God passed over their houses and smote Egypt's firstborn.

Jews refer to Passover as "the season of our liberation." Every detail of the Jewish Passover ceremonies is connected with the Exodus. The paschal meal is eaten hastily because of their hasty departure from Egypt. Unleavened bread is eaten because the people had no time to add leaven to bake their bread. The name Passover signifies that God passed over their homes.

In Temple times, people brought lambs to Jerusalem to be slaughtered. After 70 A.D., sacrifices ended. Jews continued to eat unleavened bread, along with bitter herbs in a home ceremony called the Seder, or "order of service." The recital of the story of the Exodus was termed the Haggadah ("story"), based upon the command in Exodus 13:8 (tell the story to your son).

Extra days were added to the Feast because the proclamation from Jerusalem took time to reach outlying communities. Orthodox and Conservative Jews keep eight days of unleavened bread. Reform Jews keep seven days.

Origin of Passover

Passover was already an established institution at the time the Israelites came out of Egypt. The Exodus story tells not how the festival began, but how it came to be preserved.

*The central feature of Passover is a common meal eaten by all members of a family at the full moon in the first month of the year. The Bible says that anyone who abstained from this meal "cut himself off from his people." Gaster states, "such eating together is a standard method, all over the world, of establishing ties of kinship or alliance" Our word "companion" means "one who shares bread with another." The Gaelic word for family, *cuedich*, means "those who eat together."*

Thus, when Melchizedek made a treaty with Abraham, he did so by offering bread and wine, Genesis 14:18-24. When Abimelech allied with Isaac, they did the same, Genesis 26:26-30. See also Joshua 9:14; Obadiah 7.

Therefore, "the original purpose of the paschal meal was to re-cement ties of kinship, infuse new life into the family, and renew the bonds of mutual protection at the beginning of each year."

Not only how you eat, but what you eat, is important. Three features of the meal were: (1) Meal was eaten in haste, not allowed to spoil, so that unconsumed meat was burnt at dawn; (2) Unleavened bread was eaten because leavened food is fermented; (3) Bitter herbs are a cathartic (cleanser, or purifier), and a widespread popular notion holds they are a remedy against demons and witchcraft. During the paschal meal, herbs were to neutralize any impurity which might accidentally have been consumed.

The Passover feast was also a reunion and guarantee of divine alliance and protection during the coming year. The meal was eaten in the presence of God with Himself as participant. Exodus 18:12 records a meal of reunion with Jethro, priest of Midian, and Israel "in the presence of God."

Before the ceremony could take place, the ties of kinship which it established had to be made manifest by an outward sign. The essence of kinship is blood. We all remember the story of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn becoming blood brothers by holding their two cut fingers together. So it is that kinship is signified by the sign of a blood covenant. For the paschal supper, the signing of the people was done on the door posts of their houses, rather than on their bodies.

Passover also had the meaning of a ransom. The slaughter of the animal was a propitiatory offering to God, designed to assure that God would pass over and spare the household from hurt or harm. If the animal were maimed or if a bone was broken, it would not be accepted.

Some scholars point to the fact that the Hebrew name for Passover, pesach, can also mean "to limp." In I Kings 18:26, the term is used in reference to the priests of Baal challenging Elijah. Limping signified mourning in the Arabic and Syriac languages. Some scholars say that Passover is derived from the customs relating to Osiris-Tammuz, in that the god died in the winter and was resurrected in the spring. We know, however, that these customs come from Nimrod, and that the Creator's ordinances preceded pagan customs.

Jewish Passover Legends

Whether true or not, there are some interesting Hebrew legends concerning Passover events. Rabbinical tradition says that every day the Egyptians set a quota of bricks to be laid, Exodus 1:14. For every brick short, they took an Israelite child and sealed it alive in the building.

It is said that Moses became a shepherd, Exodus 3:1, to learn how to feed God's flock and to know the wilderness through which he would lead Israel. God showed Himself in a lowly bush of thorns rather than a lofty cedar. Garden hedges are made of thorns, so God was showing Israel to be the hedge of the world, which is God's garden.

Moses' rod was cut, it is believed, from the Tree of Life, handed from God to Adam, who passed it down to Enoch, Noah, Shem, and from thence to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. At Joseph's death, it was stolen by the Egyptians and placed in Pharaoh's palace, was removed by Jethro and plucked up by Moses. Written on the rod was the name of God and the initials of the

ten plagues.

Legend says that the plagues lasted a year, the time appointed by God for a man to pay the penalty of his sins. Likewise, the Flood lasted a year, as well as the affliction of Job. God designed the first plague to be blood on the river, because Egyptians regarded the Nile as a god. A lamb was chosen to sacrifice because the Egyptians worshipped the ram (Aries), and Israel had to show publicly that they disavowed such idolatry before God would release them from bondage. Blood on the side posts and lintels signified Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Hyssop symbolized the House of Israel, lowly, yet bound together by the grace of God.

The Seder Meal

The central feature of Passover among Jews today is the Seder, held on two successive nights (because of date conflicts). After the Seder are a series of songs. For Jews, the Seder takes the place of the paschal meal.

Before Passover, all leavened food (such as bread, flour, beer [sic.], etc.) are carefully removed from the home. At nightfall of the preceding evening, the master of the house makes a thorough search, using a candle to search for even the hidden crumbs. Leavened foods are burned the next morning. The mistress of the house had previously conducted a "spring cleaning." A few crumbs are left for the master of the house to "discover." If the eve of Passover falls on a Sabbath, they search for leavening on Thursday night and burn any leavening on Friday morning.

The following articles appear on the Seder table: (1) Three cakes of unleavened bread, one above the other (these are said to represent the three fold division of Israelites into Priests, Levites, and regular Israelites); (2) bitter herbs, such as horseradish, Exodus 12:8, symbolizing the bitterness which the Egyptians inflicted upon the children of Israel Exodus 1:14; (3) haroseth, a mixture of chopped apple, nuts, raisins and cinnamon, pounded into a kind of paste (this allayed the sharp taste of the bitter herbs, and symbolized the mortar which the Israelites were forced to tread during their bondage in Egypt); (4) a roasted egg, commemorating the special additional sacrifices offered in the Temple during Passover (Pagan Easter customs also include special painted eggs.); (5) the shank bone of a lamb, symbolic of the paschal sacrifice; (6) parsley or radishes. These six items are placed in a special order on a large dish.

In addition, sufficient wine must be present to serve each member four cups during the ceremony. Why are there four cups of wine? Some say they correspond to the four expressions used in Exodus 6:6-7, "I will bring you out . . . I will rid you . . . I will redeem you . . . and I will take you to Me for a people." Yemeni Jews use five cups, while earlier usage may have been only three. Lastly, in the center of the table is a large goblet filled with wine for the prophet Elijah, who is believed to come as a guest to every Seder meal as a precursor of the Messiah.

Through the Seder meal, it is customary to lean on pillows or cushions, instead of sitting upright. This is symbolic of the ease and freedom which Israel came to enjoy as a result of its liberation from Egypt.

The Haggadah

The recital of the narrative of the story of the exodus during the Jewish seder is called the Haggadah. The exact contents of the recital have some variations among Jews scattered around the world. There are ten basic elements of the service:

(1) The service begins with the kiddush, or sanctification, the traditional inauguration of Sabbaths and Festivals in Jewish homes.

(2) The first cup of wine is poured with a blessing from the master of the house. All join in thanking God for the Festival of Unleavened Bread, "the season of our liberation."

(3) The master washes his hands and distributes parsley dipped in salt water to everyone. This is symbolic of the tears Israel shed in bondage.

(4) Then he takes the middle piece of unleavened bread, breaks it in half, and lays aside one half in a napkin. He takes the other half and says it represents the bread of affliction of our forefathers in Egypt. He invites all who are hungry to come and eat and all who are needy to come and celebrate the Passover feast, adding that though this year we be here, next year may we be in the land of Israel; though this year we be slaves, next year may we be free men!

(5) The second cup of wine is poured, and the youngest person present asks four questions: Why is this night different from all other nights? For on all other nights we eat leaven and unleavened alike, but on this night only unleavened. On all other nights we eat any kind of herbs, but on this night only bitter herbs. On all other nights we do not dip even once, but on this night twice. On all other nights we eat either upright or leaning, but on this night we all lean! There was originally another question, "Why is it that on other nights we eat meat boiled, roasted or stewed, but on this night only roasted?" This was dropped when the Temple was destroyed and sacrifices ceased.

Deuteronomy 6:21 is paraphrased, "We were slaves in Egypt, and would still be so, had not the Lord our God brought us out thence with a strong hand and an outstretched arm." After further answers to these questions are given, the celebrant lifts the cup of wine and pronounces the theme of the Seder:

God's promise it is that has stood by our fathers and us. For it is not one alone that has risen up to destroy us, but the Holy One, blessed be He, delivers us out of their hand!

The story of the sojourn in Egypt and the miraculous Exodus is told in summary form. The "mighty hand" was the plague of murrain, because the Scripture says, "The hand of the Lord fell upon the cattle," Exodus 9:3 (paraphrase). The "outstretched arm" was the sword of God (see I Chronicles 21:16).

A poem called Litany of Wonders is recited, citing fifteen blessings of God upon Israel. Fifteen is the sum numerical value of the Hebrew letters Y and H, which spell YAH, one of the names of God, and there were fifteen steps in the Temple leading to the Holy of Holies. Each line ends with the refrain Dayyenu, "alone 'twould have sufficed us!" Here are a few lines:

If He had cleft the Sea for us,

nor let us pass dry shod,

DAYYENU!

If He had let us pass dry shod,

nor sunk our foes therein,

DAYYENU!

Explanation is given of the elements of the shank bone, unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Then an important message of Passover is given:

Every man in every generation is bound to look upon himself as if he personally had gone forth from Egypt It is not only our fathers that the Holy One redeemed, but ourselves also did He redeem with them. For does not the Scripture say, And He brought us out thence that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers (Deuteronomy 6:23)?

The second cup is raised, and the Hallel (Psalm 113-118) is recited. These Psalms are part of every newmoon and feast. Jesus and the disciples sang them at the Last Supper. The Hallel is appropriate to the Passover since Psalm 114 begins, "When Israel went forth out of Egypt" The second cup is drunk and all wash their hands.

(6) The sixth element of the Seder meal is when the celebrant breaks the topmost piece of unleavened bread and half of the middle piece, and gives pieces to each person, along with a small portion of horseradish.

(7) The evening meal is served.

(8) The celebrant unwraps the reserved half of the middle cake and everyone receives two pieces, called afikoman, which some say comes from the Greek epikomion, or "dessert." Children sometimes hide the reserved portion of unleavened bread, and claim a ransom for it before delivering it up to their fathers.

(9) "Grace" is the Jewish blessing at the close of a meal. After grace is said, the third cup is drunk. The "goblet of Elijah" is filled, and the main house door is flung open while the following words are recited:

Pour out Thy wrath upon the heathen that know Thee not and upon the kingdoms that call not on Thy name; for they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation (Psalm 79:6). Pour out upon them Thy fury, and let the heat of Thine anger overtake them (Psalm 69:24). Pursue them in anger, and destroy them from under the heavens of the Lord (Lamentations 3:66).

Why is Elijah associated with Passover? Some say that since Passover is a "night of watchings," one of these watchings is for Elijah, the precursor of the Messiah. The cup of Elijah is not for him to drink, but for him to give the heathen to drink, the "cup of reeling." It also symbolizes the "cup of comfort" to be drunk by Israel. Recitation of the Hallel is resumed, followed by miscellaneous hymns.

(10) The conclusion to the Seder is when the doxology is recited, and the fourth and last cup of wine is drunk.

Samaritan Passover

A few Samaritans are left today in Palestine. In 1949 there were only 200 Samaritans. They claim they are the surviving remnant of the House of Israel, descendants of men who were never carried into captivity. Bible students know that the Samaritans revere Mount Gerizim in central Israel as their equivalent of Jerusalem, and accept only the Torah (Genesis through Deuteronomy) as their Bible. Gerizim is near Nablus, site of ancient Shechem. Gaster records some of their customs. Samaritans actually sacrifice paschal lambs today on the slopes of Mt. Gerizim.

On the fourteenth day of the first month, Samaritans remove all yeast from their premises, wash their clothes and change their garments. They eat no bread whatsoever, leavened or unleavened. When they eat their Passover, on the fifteenth, their stomachs must be free from any fermenting leaven. About 4:00 PM, the Samaritan high priest lights the oven fires, and a half hour later the altar itself, with burning wood. The celebrants are dressed in white clothes. Lambs are inspected by the priests, and are rejected for any imperfection. About 15 or 20 minutes before sunset, the priest begins to sing hymns to the praise of God, sung in ancient Hebrew. He gives a short prayer for the slaughtering:

For I call on the name of the Lord; ascribe ye greatness unto our God, The Rock, -- His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice; a God of faithfulness and without perversity, righteous and upright is He (Deuteronomy 32:3-4). Blessed be our God forever, and blessed be His name forever!

Then the Samaritan priest reads the portion in Exodus 12 commanding the Passover sacrifice. When he reaches the words, "And all the congregation of the community of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight," the slaughterers proceed to slay the lambs quickly, sprinkling the blood on the altar round about, saying three times, "There is no God but one!" When is the sacrifice actually done? Within "two minutes after the actual going-down of the sun."

The fleece is removed, along with the innards, which are placed above the wood on the altar. The lamb is washed and all blood drained off. Deep gashes are cut into the lamb, while care is taken not to break a bone. The ischiac nerve is removed (see Genesis 32:32). The whole body of the lamb is placed on wooden spits, head downward. While all of this is done, the worshipers recite Exodus 12:1 through chapter 15, singing hymns of praise. The priest gives unleavened bread and bitter herbs to each to eat. The lambs are taken on spits to the oven, where they are cooked for three hours. The fire is left burning on the altar until no trace is left of the fat or legs. It is a "pleasant savor unto the Lord."

When night has fallen, and the Evening Prayer has been recited, they come and remove the sacrificial meat from the oven, having their loins girded, sandals on their feet, and staves in their hands, per Exodus 12:11. The meat is picked off by hand and they all sit down and eat the meal in haste, along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Afterwards, all the fragments are gathered together and burnt on the altar. When dawn breaks, the Morning Prayer is recited,

which continues for two hours. Then each man returns to his tent in joy and gladness of heart.

Lambs rejected because of imperfections are removed to a separate place and burnt. They may not be given to a Gentile to be eaten. During the whole Samaritan Passover ceremony, no Gentile may come into contact with a Samaritan, nor may anyone eat of the sacrifice if he is ritually unclean. Although the Samaritans may have corrupted certain things, their ceremony is the closest thing today to the original Hebrew Passover before Christ.

Passover and the Springtime Song of Songs

The Song of Songs (The Song of Solomon, also called Canticles) is read by Jews on the eighth day of Passover. This book is an allegory. It shows "the passion of a Divine Lover [the Eternal] for his beloved people Israel." The Christian Church believes this Bible book displays the love of Christ for His Church.

Passover is a love story, John 3:16. It signifies release from bondage and beginning of new trials in the wilderness. The real message of Passover is that only when "a people has ceased to be enslaved and is prepared to brave disaster" is it truly free. Passover signifies redemption not only because Israel went out of Egypt, but "because they set their faces toward Sinai."

Passover marks the beginning of the season in Palestine when heavy showers of winter are replaced by light rains of spring. On the first day of the festival, special prayers for these "dews" are inserted in the morning synagogue services, based on Isaiah 26:19 and Hosea 14:5, which have the theme of resurrection and blossoming of Israel.

The Sabbaths of God by James L. Porter

Passover Pictures Past, Present, and Future Events

Porter states that "Passover is a memorial of an actual event God caused to occur long ago in Egypt. Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were also shadows of events to occur later, as recorded in the New Testament. Jesus Christ was to become God's true Passover Lamb. The shadow of what Passover means was fulfilled only in part when Jesus was killed as the Lamb which God had provided. Jesus spoke of a fulfillment of Passover yet in the future . . . God's people were identified and kept separate when God judged the people about them. Israel was safe even in the midst of a terrible judgment from God upon the whole nation about them. This is the central meaning of the past, present and future Passover." God has delivered, and will continue to deliver, His people.

Passover was kept by a small group of people in each house, the count determined by the number needed to consume a year-old lamb. Christ's Passover had only thirteen in attendance. Individually, small groups will be protected by the Eternal.

The Passover is a solemn occasion. For Israelites, it was the night the plague slew Egypt's firstborn. For Christians, it is the memorial of Christ's death. On the Egyptian Passover, God executed judgment on the false religion of the Egyptians. He demonstrated that He is completely different and distinct from the "gods" of Egypt. See Exodus 12:11-13.

Christ was probably taken captive at the same time (midnight) as the death angel came on the first Passover. His doom to death was sealed from that time.

Coarsely ground flour needs to be made into dough and allowed to soften over night to bring out the gluten. Leavening was added in the morning for preparation for baking. Early in the morning of the fourteenth, the message came to depart. There was no time to add leavening or bake. Thus, Israel took their dough in the kneading troughs.

Christian Fulfillment of Passover

Christ is our Passover Lamb, I Corinthians 5:7. His blood shed for us identifies us and serves as a mark in the same way that the blood of the Passover Lamb identified the Israelites of Egypt.

A Christian cannot understand the true meaning of the New Testament Passover without a knowledge of the meaning of the ancient ceremony which it replaces. That's why we ought to know the meaning of the symbolism of the Old Testament Passover.

God's judgment will soon come on this present evil world. The blood of the Lamb, the Messiah, will serve the same purpose of identifying God's people, sparing them during the "Day of the Lord." On the first Passover, God judged the "gods" of Egypt. After Christ finished His Last Supper, He said that the prince of this world, Satan, was now judged. This judgment on Satan was pronounced, but is not yet carried out. Satan still rules this world. The coming Passover of the future will be the deliverance of God's people and the judgment of Satan and his world.

Porter states, "Passover is primarily concerned with a future event, as are all of God's holy days that He has set aside to be observed by His people." Colossians 2:16-17 refers to the Holy Days as "a shadow of the things to come." The New American Standard Version translates Luke 22:15-16 as "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." The Great Future Passover has not yet been fulfilled!

A Christian's present condition is similar to that of ancient Israel. They had killed the Passover lamb on the beginning of Nisan 14, had marked their homes, and were waiting for God's wrath to be visited upon the Egyptians about them. We have been marked with Christ's blood. As strangers and pilgrims in this world, we are waiting for God's judgment on the world, and our orders to leave and be with Christ. Judgment on this world will occur just before the Kingdom of God comes to this earth in power, I Peter 1:13-21.

As God judged the gods of Egypt on Passover night, the future Great Passover will be a judgment on all false religions when they will all be destroyed. To escape this future wrath, we need the mark of our Passover lamb.

The Passover of 70 A.D. was the time the Romans came on Jerusalem, surrounding some three million Jews, most of whom were killed in the fighting or died by sickness and starvation. See Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews, V, iii. "The Passover of which Egypt was a type and Jerusalem [of 70 A.D.] an example, is yet to come." Read Hebrews 10:26-31, and Revelation 18:1-5. That is why like Egypt, this Babylonish system will receive plagues. One cannot engage in

Babylonish festivals [such as Christmas, Easter and Halloween] and still have protection of the blood of the Savior.

Isaiah 26:20-21, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

Isaiah 31:5, "As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and passing over He will preserve it."

Christian Fulfillment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

The first day of Unleavened Bread was the night Israel left Egypt. The present meaning is that Christians are freed from sin to become servants of God, Romans 6:15-18, 22-23; John 8:31-36. God is still setting people free from slavery to sin. In the future, He will set the whole world free from sin.

The seven days of Unleavened Bread picture a Christian's life, his death, burial and future resurrection. Romans 6:1-11 and especially I Corinthians 10:1-11. In I Corinthians 10, there is a warning to Christians. Although they have been baptized following conversion, they must live obedient and pleasing lives unto God. Israel was baptized in crossing the Red Sea on the last Holy Day of the Feast. God was later displeased with them and they died in the wilderness. Will we learn the lesson of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread and follow the Eternal always?

Jewish Encyclopedia (1907 edition), article "Passover"

Pesach comes from the root meaning "to pass by," or "to spare," "to skip like a lamb," or "to dance." The Pesach feast tended to merge with the Mazzot festival. Leviticus 23 is clear that Passover is the fourteenth day of the first month, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is the 15-21 of the month. "The setting aside, slaughtering, and eating of the paschal lamb was introductory to the celebration of the festival [of Unleavened Bread]." Rabbis set the time when no leaven was to be eaten at noon on Nisan 14, and later moved it up an hour to be "safe." Others advised refraining after 10:00 in the morning. The hamez (leaven) inspection was set aside for the night of the 13th, or the preceding evening if Nisan 14 fell on the Sabbath.

The Passover lamb represented a haburah, or "company." The owner of the lamb, and his haburah, had to be pure, circumcised, and not defiled by touching the dead. His ownership of the lamb must be beyond doubt. Members of the family were kept apart by sexes to avoid provoking levity.

Jewish speculation has it that Passover preceded the Egyptian experience. Passover would be a festival celebrated in early spring by shepherds before setting out for the new pastures, as the participants "danced" around the sacrificial offering. The sacrifice of the firstling of the flock was a propitiation, to save the rest of the herd and even the shepherds. Hence the word pesach came to mean "spared."

Circumcision was also a rite of propitiation, like the Paschal lamb, possibly a substitute for human sacrifice. Passover is connected with circumcision, for one must be circumcised to keep it. That may be the reason why the lamb is set aside on the tenth day. Three to four days were required to heal the wound of circumcision, Joshua 5:8 and Genesis 34:25.

Article, "Holy Days"

On Holy Days, except Atonement, Rabbis recommend rejoicing. "It is customary to give new toys and fruit to children, newgarments and ornaments to women, and have meat and wine on the table during these days. The day should be divided into halves, one to be spent in eating, drinking, and amusement, the other in worship and study. Fasting or the delivering of funeral orations is forbidden. Too much drinking and excessive hilarity, however, are not encouraged."

Weekdays of Passover and Tabernacles are considered "semi holy days," and only certain kinds of work are permitted. "No marriage should be celebrated on these days, on the principle that one joy should not be confused with another joy."

The haftarah (portion of prophets read after the reading of the Torah during the morning services on Sabbaths and Feast Days) for Passover is the vision of the dry bones, Ezekiel 36:37 to 37:14. For Tabernacles, it is the wars of God and Magog, Ezekiel 38:18 to 39:16.

Article, "Festivals"

The Hebrew word for festival is hag, and means "a day or season of joy."

Article, "Leaven"

Leaven is called "the bread of affliction" because of its association with Egyptian slavery. With few exceptions, Leviticus 7:13 and 23:17, leaven was forbidden in sacrificial offerings: Exodus 23:18, 34:25; Leviticus 2:11, 6:10-17. In later times, "leaven" and "corruption" were regarded as synonymous, Matthew 16:6-12; Mark 8:15; I Corinthians 5:6-8.

During the festival of mazzot, it was strictly forbidden to eat anything leavened, or even to keep such food on the premises. The punishment was karet, or excommunication.

Article "Mazzah (plural, Mazzot)"

Mazzah is the primitive form of bread, known as poor man's bread, as he could not afford to wait even 24 hours for it to leaven. Mazzah was necessary when a meal was to be prepared at short notice for an unexpected guest. For example, Abraham and the Lord, Genesis 18:6; Lot at Sodom for the angels, Genesis 19:3; and for Saul by the witch of Endor, I Samuel 28:24.

Mazzah is made hastily, lest even any spontaneous fermentation take place. The usual form is round. "Mazzah is a symbol of purity, while leaven represents the evil impulse of the heart." Jewish tradition holds that mazzah is "an antidote to Egyptian slavery and corruption and a symbol of freedom and idealism. Mazzah was to cure Israel and prepare him for the acceptance of the Torah."

Article, "Seder"

Scripture does not record how and where the Passover lamb was eaten during the many centuries before the reform of King Josiah, II Kings 23, only that Passover was not celebrated properly. There is no information as to how the night was celebrated in Temple times by Jews outside the Holy Land who did not go to the feast. It appears that only the men were bidden to attend the chosen place, and Passover lost much of its character as a family festival.

Articles "Month," "Moon," and "New Moon"

Psalm 104:19 says "He appointed the moon for seasons." Moons determine the Holy Days. According to Jewish tradition, Nisan is the month of coronations, and is a sacred month because of the Passover.

The Hebrew word for moon is yerah, meaning "the wanderer." The word for new moon is hodesh. The moon can be harmful to man, Psalm 121:6, or beneficial, Deuteronomy 33:14. It is a symbol of eternity, Psalm 72:5, 7, 89:37; and its eclipse and turning to blood are tokens that God's wrath is at hand, Isaiah 13:10, 24:23; Joel 2:10, 31. The moon will shine like the sun, and the sun seven times as hot, in a future plague, Isaiah 30:26, just preceding the time when God's people will be restored.

In rabbinical literature, "the moon, on account of its monthly reappearance, is considered as the emblem of Israel; the latter, like the moon, undergoing several phases through persecution without being destroyed." And as the moon will shine like the sun, Israel will be restored by the Messiah.

Jewish tradition established a ceremony for the blessing of the new moon, with a prescribed formula chant. In it was an expression of the Jew's messianic hope, because the Messiah was to be a descendant of David, whose kingdom it was promised would "be established for ever as the moon," Psalm 89:37. The moon is thus a symbol of God's eternal covenant with David.

A reason why Passover falls on a FULL moon is that this shows that God delivers Israel fully, or COMPLETELY. The Passover sacrifice is the first step to making us full and complete, and is an eternal sign of God's covenant. The full moon Passover will either smite you, Psalm 121:6, or if protected by Christ's blood, protect you, Deuteronomy 33:14. As a symbol of the covenant, the moon is an essential element of the Passover season.

McClintock and Strong, Bible Cyclopedia, Article "Passover"

The lamb selected on Nisan 10, four days before Passover, is supposed to represent the four generations which had elapsed since the children of Israel had come to Egypt, Genesis 15:16.

Blood sprinkled on the two side-posts and lintel of the house represents the parts of the house most obvious to passers-by, and to which Scripture texts were afterwards affixed, Deuteronomy 6:9.

The phrase "between the two evenings" in Exodus 12:6 is greatly disputed. The Samaritans and others take it to denote the space between the setting of the sun and the moment the stars

become visible, or when darkness sets in, i.e., between about six and seven o'clock in the springtime. A Jewish commentator, Aben-Ezra says it means the first evening is when the sun sets, the second is when reflected light from the sun disappears, an interval of about eighty minutes. The majority of Jewish tradition, however, says the phrase means from afternoon to the disappearing of the sun, and that therefore the paschal lamb was slain after the daily sacrifice, and generally took place from 2:30 to 5:50 P.M. See Josephus, Wars, vi, 9, 3.

The Passover observed in Egypt was different than that in the land of Israel. These are the differences between the "Egyptian Passover" and the "Permanent Passover": (1) In the former, the animal was killed by the head of the family in his own house, instead of with a priest's assistance at the sanctuary; (2) no firstlings were required to be offered, Exodus 23:14-19, 34:18-26; (3) no sacrifices were brought, Numbers 28:16-25; (4) the Hallel and other hymns were not sung, as required in later times, Isaiah 30:29.

With two million Israelites, assuming fifteen people per lamb, there would have had to have been 150,000 year-old-male lambs slain.

Some believe that the Passover was not kept from the wilderness of Sinai until Gilgal because the people did not practice circumcision and were legally excluded from keeping it. Many Jewish commentators state that Exodus 12:25 and 13:5-10 plainly show that after the first Passover in the wilderness, the Israelites were not to keep it again until they entered Canaan.

Ancient Jewish Observance of the Passover

The "Great Sabbath" is the Sabbath immediately preceding Passover. According to tradition, Nisan 10 of the first Passover was on a Sabbath. This would make Nisan 14 on a Wednesday. On the Great Sabbath, the people were instructed in the duties of the festival. Malachi 3:1-18 and 4:1-6 were read as the maphtir, or lesson for the day.

The evening of Nisan 13 was called "the preparation for the Passover." Every head of the family searched for and collected by candlelight all the remaining leaven in the house. After the search, he said, "Whatever leaven remains in my possession which I cannot see, behold it is null, and accounted as the dust of the earth." What constituted leaven? "Nothing is prohibited on the Feast of Passover because of leaven except the five kinds of corn, viz., wheat, barley, spelt, oats and rye." Rice and millet were excluded, presumably because they aren't used in leavened products.

Nisan 14 was also, till the evening, called "the preparation for the Passover." Leaven could be eaten only until midday. All leaven collected the previous evening and discovered on this day had to be burned. In modern times, all firstborn males above the age of 13 fast on Nisan 14, called the "Fast of the Firstborn." Every Israelite who was not infirm, ceremonially impure, or uncircumcised, appeared before the Lord in Jerusalem with an offering in proportion to his means, Exodus 23:15, Deuteronomy 16:16-17.

Israelites themselves killed their own paschal sacrifices, while the priests caught the blood and sprinkled it on the base of the altar. The Hallel was repeated all during the killings. The lamb was then suspended on iron hooks from pieces of wood, and its skin taken off. The viscera were

taken out with the internal fat. The fat was separated and placed in a large dish, while the viscera was washed and replaced in the lamb's body, Leviticus 1:9, 3:3-5. The fat was then burned on the altar, along with incense, that same evening. The lambs were roasted on a spit in an earthenware oven.

Nisan 16 is to the rabbinical Jews the "morrowafter the Sabbath," the time when the omer of the first produce of the harvest was brought to the priest, to be waved before the Lord, Leviticus 23:10-14. The Samaritans and Sadducees maintain that the morrowafter the Sabbath is the first day of the week after the Sabbath during the Feast of Passover. The omer was of barley, which is the grain that ripens first, before the wheat. The barley was ground to a meal, sifted, and mixed with a half pint of oil and a handful of frankincense, Leviticus 2:15, as on other meat offerings. Immediately after the ceremony, bread, parched corn, green ears, etc., of the newcrop were placed on sale in Jerusalem. Prior to this, no newproduce could be sold. The fifty-day count to Pentecost began on the morrowafter the Sabbath.

The days Nisan 17-20 are referred to as "half holydays." People either left Jerusalem and returned home, or remained and danced, sang or played games. No newgraves were dug, nor wives espoused, nor houses, slaves or cattle purchased, except for festival use. In the Temple, the additional festival sacrifices were offered. Nisan 21 was another holy convocation, a high Sabbath.

Meaning of the Passover

The exodus was thus looked upon as the birth of the nation; the Passover was its annual birthday feast. Nearly all the rites of the festival appear to point to this as its primary meaning. It was the yearly memorial of the dedication of the people to Him who had saved their firstborn from the destroyer, in order that they might be made holy to Himself."

The lamb was regarded as "the great annual peace-offering of the family, a thank-offering for the existence and preservation of the nation." It was the LORD's sacrifice, Exodus 23:18, 34:25. And "it was more ancient than the written law, and called to mind that covenant on which the law was based."

The use of unleavened bread, called bread of affliction, Deuteronomy 16:3, is significant, because the "meat [meal] offering" was unleavened, Leviticus 1:4-5, 7:12, 10:12, as was shewbread, Leviticus 24:5-9, and especially because unleavened bread was used in consecration of the priests, Exodus 29:23, and in the offering of the Nazarite, Numbers 6:19. This shows that unleavened bread is connected with the consecration of the person. Unleavened bread is pure, not corrupted.

Aben Ezra reports the tradition that the army of Sennacherib was smitten on the night of the Passover, showing that Passover signifies deliverance. The offering of the omer may have denoted a deliverance from winter, as the lamb signified deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. The consecration of the firstfruits is a natural type of the consecration of the firstborn of the Israelites.

Abib means "the month of green ears." According to Gesenius, Nisan, the Babylonian

equivalent, possibly means "the month of flowers," or "the month of newyear's day."

Hastings Bible Dictionary, Article, "Passover"

There are three views as to the meaning of Passover:

(1) Passover is the offering of the firstborn. Genesis 4:2-4 shows that Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock. "The Passover is the shepherd's offering, given in thankful recognition that the fruitfulness of the herd is from Jehovah," Exodus 13:12. Moses often repeated the demand to let the people go to keep a feast in the wilderness, Exodus 3:18, 7:16, 8:27, etc., and thus the exodus resulted from the command to keep the feast.

(2) Passover is a feast of atonement, because the Passover sacrifice is offered in place of the firstborn of men. The firstborn were God's, Exodus 13:12, not Molech's, Leviticus 18:21, II Kings 23:10, Jeremiah 32:35.

Ewald in Antiquities of Israel, page 352, writes: "from the earliest times an atonement offering was an indispensable constituent of every Spring festival." Passover comes at a time of transition in the year, winter to spring. Man felt himself impelled to offer "sacrifices of purification and reconciliation, not alone on account of particular transgressions of which he knew himself to be guilty, but also to secure the Divine exemption and grace . . . during the newyear . . . [so that God] might not slay him, as he perhaps deserved, but might graciously pass him over." The lamb was thus an expiatory offering.

(3) Passover is a blood covenant which in the eyes of Jews signifies "the right of marriage" between them and God. The certification of the union, and welcome of God to the household, is the blood on the doorway. Notice that the blood was not on the bottom of the door so entrance could be made without stepping on blood. Hyssop was seen as a feminine symbol. In the rite of circumcision, Abraham and his descendants supplied the blood of the covenant; while in Passover, the Eternal commanded the substitute blood of the lamb in token of His blood covenanting.

Festivals of the Jewish Year by T.H. Gaster

Omer Days

The seven weeks between Passover and Pentecost are known as Days of Omer [Hebrew for "sheaf"]. Every evening during the Days of Omer is a ceremonial counting, prefaced with citation of Leviticus 23:15, and followed by recitation of Psalm 67, "the earth has yielded her produce; God, our own God, is blessing us."

Omer Days are "a kind of Lent," accompanied by fasts and austerities in which certain activities, such as marriages, newclothes, etc., are curtailed. Why the ban on marriages? When the annual lease of life is running out, human increase is also arrested. The Romans believed May marriages were unlucky.

Some Commentaries on Key Passover Passages

I. Adam Clark's Commentary.

Exodus 12:

4 Rabbis allowed at least 10, not more than 20, people per lamb.

8 Jewish custom was to boil flesh.

Some think the command to roast the Passover was in opposition to the Egyptian custom of eating rawflesh in honor of Osiris.

9 with the purtenance thereof. Purtenance means intestines, for these were used by heathens for divination, so when roasted with the entire carcass, they could not be so used.

10 let nothing of it remain til morning. This would prevent putrefaction or corruption. Messiah's body saw no corruption, Psalm 16:10 and Acts 2:27.

11 loins girded, shoes on feet, staff in hand, in haste. In other words, ready to travel.

12 gods of Egypt. This could also be translated "princes of Egypt." They too were judged, and punished in the plagues.

22 bunch of hyssop. Hebrew word is ezob, an herb used in sprinkling the blood of the paschal lamb and in cleansing for leprosy, Leviticus 14:4, 6, 51-52; in composing the water of purification and sprinkling, Numbers 19:6, 18. Hyssop is a type of the purifying sacrifice of Christ, Psalm 51:7. Moses used hyssop at the ratification of the covenant, Hebrews 9:19.

II. Cook's Commentary (1871).

Exodus 12: 9

The entire consumption of the lamb constitutes one marked difference between Passover and all other sacrifices, in which either a part or whole was burned and thus directly offered to God. Except for the blood which was sprinkled (and the fat and kidneys, which were burnt), first on the doorposts, later on the base of the altar, the entire substance entered into the people. The head of the family always slew the lamb, even during Temple times. Christ's blood was shed as a propitiatory sacrifice "but His whole humanity is transfused spiritually and effectually into His Church . . . in . . . the Christian Passover."

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[**Passover -- 14th or 15th?**](#)

[**Passover, Lord's Supper, or Communion?**](#)

[**Drink the Pure Blood of the Grape**](#)

[**The Order and Meaning of Passover**](#)

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