

# ***The Haggadah for Christians***

## **A Guide for Celebrating the Biblical Feast of Passover**

### **Introduction**

*Before the service begins, the wine or grape juice is poured and the symbolic foods are placed on the table in front of the leader. The references for the Scriptures do not need to be read aloud.*

### **Leader (traditionally the father of the family):**

Welcome to our Passover Seder. Tonight we have gathered to tell the story that has been repeated every year for more than 3,000 years. We are remembering an event when God acted on behalf of his people, rescuing them from bondage in Egypt.

As Christians, we are also remembering another event when God acted, rescuing all people from spiritual bondage. It took place during the annual celebration of Passover and is a continuation of the story of God's love.

Let us begin by hearing the words of instruction from Scripture:

### **Participant:**

The Lord said to Moses, "These are the Lord's appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times: The Lord's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month" (Lev. 23:1, 4–5, NIV).

### **Participant:**

"This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance.

It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians" (Ex. 12:14, 27, NIV).

### **Family/Group:**

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. (Matt. 26:17–19, NIV)

### **Lighting the Celebration Candles**

#### **Leader:**

Our Seder begins with the lighting of candles and with prayers of praise and blessing.

#### **Woman (traditionally the mother of the family):**

*The candles are lit as the blessing is recited.*

*Lighting the first candle:* We praise you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth light out of darkness.

*Lighting the second candle:* Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

As I light these candles and place them to give light to all who are in this room, light our lives with the great love of your Son, Jesus.

## **Leader:**

Four times during the Seder service, we drink from a cup of wine or grape juice. The first cup is called the Cup of Sanctification.

## **Kiddush**

### **Leader (holding the cup):**

We praise you, O Lord our God, creator of the fruit of the vine.

We praise you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has chosen us out of all the people of the world and made us holy through your Word. With love you have given us commandments to follow, which include festivals for rejoicing, holidays for gladness, and Sabbaths for rest. In this feast of Passover you provide an annual remembrance of our freedom and deliverance from Egypt. You have chosen us. You have given us this holy festival with loving-kindness and have blessed us with your favor.

We praise you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, for giving us life and sustaining us so that we may celebrate this season of joy.

The cup is a symbol of joy. Let us drink from it and be reminded of the joy that is ours as a result of our salvation.

*All drink from the first cup, the Cup of Sanctification.*

## **Washing of Hands**

### **Leader:**

Traditionally, the high priest washed his hands before entering the Holy of Holies. For us this is a reminder of our need to be cleansed by Christ.

## **Karpas**

### **Leader:**

Parsley and salt water remind us that God brought His people safely through the Red Sea (salt water) and made them a new nation (green vegetable).

*The leader dips some parsley into salt water. Each person takes a piece.*

*The following blessing is spoken before eating the Karpas.*

### **Leader:**

We praise you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the produce of the earth. Thank you for all of the ways you have cared for your people through the centuries.

*All eat the Karpas (parsley).*

## **The Bread**

### **Leader:**

There are three loaves of unleavened bread on the table. They are called a Unity. As Christians we realize that this is the unique unity of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The middle piece of unleavened bread represents Christ, the second person of the Trinity. As I break this piece in two, be reminded of His broken body and His death. I will wrap the larger piece in a napkin and hide it under a pillow. It is called the Afikomen (aph-e-go-man). Christ's burial is dramatized in this act. Then I will put the other piece back into the fold of the napkin.

*The leader carries out these instructions.*

## **The Invitation**

### **Family/Group:**

This is the bread of affliction, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come in and eat; let all who are in need join us as we celebrate this Passover feast.

### **Leader:**

The second cup is called the Cup of Instruction.

## **The Questions**

*It is traditional for the youngest child present to ask the following questions. In some celebrations several children take turns so that more may participate.*

### **Child:**

Why is this night different from all other nights? On other nights we eat either leavened or unleavened bread; why on this night only unleavened bread?

On all other nights we eat any kind of green vegetables; why on this night must it be a bitter one?

On all other nights we don't dip the vegetables in salt water; why on this night do we dip them?

On all other nights we eat in an ordinary manner; why on this night do we dine with a special ceremony and put a pillow at our leader's place?

### **Leader:**

“And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever” (Exodus 12:24).

### **Child:**

“And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’” (Exodus 12:26, NIV).

### **Leader:**

“Then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians’” (Exodus 12:27, NIV).

## **The Reply**

### **Family/Group:**

We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, and the Lord our God rescued us with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. And if the Lord had not brought our forefathers out of Egypt, then we, our children, and our children's children would be slaves.

### **Leader:**

Our children have asked, “Why do we put a pillow at our leader's place?”

The chair in which our leader reclines is luxurious with a pillow symbolizing the spirit of freedom and comfort that is found in our

homes tonight because we are no longer slaves serving taskmasters but free men and women seated around this table.

### **Family/Group:**

We who are Christians can rejoice as we keep the Passover in remembrance of our own slavery to sin. We know that with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm the Lord our God rescued us.

So that is why, even though we might all be wise, learned, full of experience and understanding, knowing God's Word well, it is still our responsibility to tell the story of the going out from Egypt and to praise the Lord.

### **Leader:**

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month is to be for you the first month ... of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.

This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover" (Ex. 12:3–11, NIV).

The Israelites did just what the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron.

At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead. (Exodus 12:29–30, NIV)

## **Introduction (to the Midrash, which is the heart of the story)**

### **Family/Group:**

We praise you, O God, for keeping your promise to Israel. For the Lord planned in advance the end of the bondage, doing what He promised Abraham in the covenant: "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions" (Genesis 15:13–14, NIV).

## **The Midrash**

### **Leader:**

My father and his family went down to Egypt and sojourned there. We were few in number when we went, only seventy people. We moved there because there was a famine in Canaan and we needed

food and pasture for our flocks. Joseph arranged with Pharaoh for us to sojourn in the land of Goshen.

While we were there, we became a nation. We multiplied and became like the stars of heaven. We grew strong, great, and powerful, and the Egyptians were afraid. They mistreated us and made us suffer. We cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice, saw our affliction, toil, and oppression, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and awesome power, and with signs and wonders (from Genesis 47:4; Deuteronomy 10 and 26; Exodus 1 and 2).

**Family/Group:**

The Lord brought us out of Egypt.

**Leader:**

“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord” (Exodus 12:12, NIV).

**Family/Group:**

With “a mighty hand” means the cattle blight (disease).

**Leader:**

“The hand of the Lord will bring a terrible plague on your livestock in the field—on your horses and donkeys and camels and on your cattle and sheep and goats” (Exodus 9:3, NIV).

**Family/Group:**

With “an outstretched arm” means redemption.

**Leader:**

“I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment” (Exodus 6:6, NIV).

**Family/Group:**

And “with great awe” means His divine presence.

**Leader:**

“Where else will you ever find another example of God’s removing a nation from its slavery by sending terrible plagues, mighty miracles, war and terror? Yet that is what the Lord your God did for you in Egypt, right before your very eyes” (Deuteronomy 4:34, TLB).

**Family/Group:**

And “with signs” means the staff of Moses.

**Leader:**

“Take this staff in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it” (Exodus 4:17, NIV).

**Family/Group:**

And “with wonders” means the blood.

**Leader:**

“Take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs” (Exodus 12:7, NIV).

**Leader and Family/Group:**

The ten plagues that the Lord brought upon the Egyptians are these: blood, frogs, lice, flies, cattle blight, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and slaying of the firstborn.

It is our prayer tonight that God will cast out the plagues that surround and threaten us, beginning in our own hearts.

**We Should Have Been Content**

Leader and Family/Group alternate (bold for Family/Group):

**Leader:**

God has blessed us so many times with acts of kindness.

If He had rescued us from Egypt, but not punished the Egyptians,

**we should have been content.**

If He had punished the Egyptians, but not destroyed their gods,

**we should have been content.**

If He had destroyed their gods, but not have killed their firstborn,

**we should have been content.**

If He had killed their firstborn, but not given us their property,

**we should have been content.**

If He had given us their property, but not divided the Red Sea before us,

**we should have been content.**

If He had divided the Red Sea before us, but not brought us through it dry,

**we should have been content.**

If He had brought us through the sea dry, but not supplied us in the desert for forty years,

**we should have been content.**

If He had supplied us in the desert for forty years, but not fed us with manna,

**we should have been content.**

If He had fed us with manna, but not given us the Sabbath,

**we should have been content.**

If He had given us the Sabbath, but not brought us to Mount Sinai,

**we should have been content.**

If He had brought us to Mount Sinai, but not given us the Torah,

**we should have been content.**

If He had given us the Torah, but not brought us to the Land of Promise,

**we should have been content.**

If He had brought us to the Land of Promise, but not built us the Temple,

**we should have been content.**

If He had built us the Temple, but not provided permanent salvation,

**we should have been content.**

But, praise the Lord! God provided permanent salvation through the sacrifice of our Messiah.

**Leader and Family/Group:**

Then how much more, doubled and redoubled, is the claim the Lord has upon our thankfulness! For He took us out of Egypt, and punished the Egyptians, and destroyed their gods, and killed their firstborn, and gave us their property, and tore the Sea apart for us, and brought us through it dry, and supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and fed us with manna, and gave us the Sabbath, and brought us to Mount Sinai, and gave us the Torah, and brought us to the Land of Promise, and built the temple of his choosing, and provided permanent salvation through the sacrifice of our Messiah, making atonement for all our sins.

## **Passover Sacrifice, Unleavened Bread, and Bitter Herbs**

**Leader:**

*There are three symbols in the Passover Seder that are so important that no Seder is complete unless they are explained.*

Rabbi Gamaliel used to say: “Whoever does not make mention of these essentials of the Passover Seder has not fulfilled his duty: the Passover Sacrifice, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs.”

**Leader (holding up the shank bone):**

The Passover Sacrifice, the lamb which our ancestors ate during the time when the temple still stood—what was the reason for it?

**Family/Group:**

“It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians” (Exodus 12:27, NIV).

**Leader:**

The children of Israel were told how to protect themselves from the last plague. Each family was to take a lamb and kill it and drain the blood into a basin; and then take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood and strike the upper lintel and the two side doorposts of the house. “The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt” (Exodus 12:13, NIV). By making the sign of the cross on each door, a refuge against death was provided.

But why did the children of Israel need to be protected against the angel of death who was sent out to execute judgment upon the oppressor?

**Family/Group:**

The answer can be found throughout Scripture: “There is not a righteous [person] on earth who does what is right and never sins” (Ecclesiastes 7:20, NIV).

“The soul who sins is the one who will die” (Ezekiel 18:20, NIV).

Every person who fails to live up to the moral law of God is guilty and has to pay with his or her life. The blood of an innocent lamb became the symbol of an innocent life covering a guilty life from the eyes of a holy and just God. The prophecy of Isaiah 53:7 reads, “He [Messiah] was led like a lamb to the slaughter.” John the Baptist, seeing Jesus, said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, NIV).

**Leader:**

Prophecy and history meet.

**Family/Group:**

“For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7, NIV).

**Leader (holding up the unleavened bread):**

This is the unleavened bread that we will eat. Our children have asked, “What is the reason for it?”

**Family/Group:**

It is because there was not enough time for our ancestors’ dough to rise when the Lord redeemed them. As it says, “With the dough they had brought from Egypt, they baked cakes of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves” (Exodus 12:39, NIV).

**Leader:**

The unleavened bread is a picture of Christ. It is made of pure flour and water—without yeast to ferment and sour it. Yeast is a vivid symbol of sin and what it does to a human life. After the dough is flattened, before it is baked, it is pierced and striped with a pointed tool to keep it from bubbling under the flame. The Gospels report they crucified Jesus. Psalm 22:16–18 (NIV) says, “They have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.” John 19:33–34 (NIV) reports, “They did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear....” The prophecy of Zechariah 12:10 (NIV) was fulfilled: “They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.” The prophecy of Isaiah 53:5 (NIV) declares, “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”

**Leader lifts the bitter herbs:**

These are the bitter herbs that we will eat. Our children have asked, “What is the reason for them?”

**Family/Group:**

It is because the Egyptians made the lives of our ancestors in Egypt so bitter and miserable. As it is said, “They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly” (Exodus 1:14, NIV).

**Leader:**

These bitter herbs, called *maror* (ma-ror), are symbolic of the bitterness of slavery and the miserable existence in Egypt. To us as Christians, the eating of bitter herbs reminds us of our lives before we knew the Savior. The *maror* also symbolizes the bitter cup our Lord tasted on our behalf. The horseradish brings tears to our eyes as we taste it and remember.

**Family/Group:**

On that day tell your children, “I do this because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt” (Exodus 13:8, NIV).

**Leader:**

Our children have asked, “Why do we dip green vegetables in salt water?”

**Family/Group:**

The meaning of this act is to show how God brought the children of Israel safely through the Red Sea (salt water) and made of them a new nation (green vegetables).

In every generation let all look on themselves as if each one, individually, came forth out of Egypt. It was not only our ancestors that the Lord redeemed, but He redeemed us as well.

As it says, “He brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers” (Deuteronomy 6:23, NIV).

We are therefore duty-bound to praise, thank, glorify, and exalt, honor, bless, and adore Him who performed all these miracles for our ancestors and for us. He brought us out of slavery into freedom, out of misery into joy, out of mourning into rejoicing, out of darkness into His light, and out of bondage into redemption. Let us praise Him!

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NIV).

**The Hallel**

Leader and Family/Group alternate (group in bold):

**Leader:**

Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord.

**Praise the name of the Lord.**

Blessed be the name of the Lord

**from this time forth and forever.**

From the rising of the sun to its setting

**the name of the Lord is to be praised.**

The Lord is high above all nations,

**His glory is above the heavens.**

Who is like the Lord our God, who is enthroned on high,

**who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth?**

He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap,

**to make them sit with princes, with the princes of His people.**

Praise the Lord!

Let us all drink from the second cup, the Cup of Instruction.

### **The Symbolic Meal**

*A bowl of water and a towel are offered to all participants to wash their hands.*

**Leader:**

Before we eat, let us wash our hands and say together:

**Family/Group:**

We praise you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, for this reminder of our need to be cleansed by you. *Wash your hands.*

*Leader breaks pieces from the upper and middle loaves of unleavened bread and passes them. Each participant takes a piece. The following blessing is spoken.*

**Leader:**

We praise you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

We praise you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who sanctified us and commanded us concerning the eating of unleavened bread.

Let us all eat this unleavened bread.

*The leader breaks the bottom piece of unleavened bread. It is passed and each participant takes two pieces and makes a “Hillel Sandwich” with some horseradish, the bitter herb, and charoseth.*

**Leader:**

We praise you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who sanctified us and commanded us concerning the eating of bitter herbs.

**Family/Group:**

“They are to eat it [the Lamb] with unleavened bread and bitter herbs” (Numbers 9:11).

**Leader:**

Let us eat this symbolic sandwich and remember.

**Leader:**

It is customary to begin our meal with a hard-cooked egg splashed with salt water. The egg represents the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart. The salt water symbolizes the tears of the Hebrew slaves under the bondage of the Egyptian taskmasters.

### ***Dinner is served.***

After dinner the Seder continues.

**Leader:**

According to the directions from the Hebrew Passover Haggadah (Hag-ga-da), the eating of the *Afikoman* (aph-e-qo-man)—the hidden loaf—is next. The Haggadah says, “The eating of the *Afikoman* is an essential part of our Seder service, for it is a reminder of the Paschal lamb.” The prayer says it is eaten “in memory of the Passover sacrifice.” Who can find the *Afikoman*?

*Let one of the children find it behind the pillow and give it to the leader.*

**Leader:**

This is the broken piece of unleavened bread that was hidden away early in the service. *Afikoman* means “dessert.” It is to be eaten at the end of the meal. No food should follow it, so the taste will linger.

When this loaf was broken at the start of the service, it symbolized the breaking of the body of the Son of God, who is our High Priest. When the loaf was wrapped in linen, it spoke prophetically of the wrapping of the body of Christ in linen after the Crucifixion. When the broken and wrapped bread was put under the pillow, it symbolized His burial in the sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:57–60). Now after the meal is over, the pillow is removed, symbolizing the stone that was removed by the angel (Matt. 28:1–2). Then the wrapped loaf was taken out and unwrapped, symbolizing the Resurrection. The bread is broken into small pieces, and every participant takes a piece. This symbolizes the believer feeding upon the Bread of Life, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 6:35). Jesus made this *Afikoman* the symbol of His broken body as a sacrifice for our sins. Each person must find Christ individually.

*The leader breaks the Afikoman into small pieces. They are passed to each participant.*

**Leader:**

This is the place in the Passover service that is recorded for us in the New Testament. Jesus, our Messiah, “took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me’” (Luke 22:19, NIV).

*All eat a piece of unleavened bread.*

**Leader:**

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for all that He has given you (from Deuteronomy 8:10).

**Grace****Leader:**

The third cup is called the Cup of Redemption.

Let us say the blessing.

**Family/Group:**

May the name of the Lord be praised from now to eternity.

**Leader:**

Let us praise Him whose food we have eaten.

## **Family/Group:**

We praise you, O Lord our God, for the food we have eaten. It is from you we receive every good and perfect gift, and through your goodness we live. We praise you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who feeds the entire world with your goodness, with grace, loving-kindness, and compassion. You give bread to all. You give Christ to all, for your mercy is forever.

Let us give thanks to you, O Lord our God, for food with which you feed and sustain us continually, at all times and at every hour.

Take pity, O Lord our God, on Israel, your people, and on Jerusalem, your city, and on Zion, the dwelling place of your glory, and on the kingdom of the House of David, your anointed.

Our God and Father, shepherd us, feed us, maintain us, sustain us, and ease us from all our troubles.

Let us not be needing gifts at the hands of flesh and blood, but only at your hand, that is full and open, holy and broad.

## **Leader (lifting the third cup):**

This cup is called the Cup of Redemption. It is to be shared after the meal. The Lord said, "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm." This is the place in the Passover service that is recorded for us in the New Testament, where it says, "In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. Take this and share it among yourselves'" (from Luke 22:20, 17).

Let us all drink the third cup, the Cup of Redemption.

## **The Hallel**

### **Leader:**

The fourth cup is called the Cup of Praise.

### **Leader and Family/Group alternate**

(Family/Group in bold):

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us;

**but unto your name be the glory.**

For your great mercy and kindness

**and for your truth's sake.**

Why do the nations say,

**"Where is their God?"**

Our God is in heaven;

**He does whatever pleases Him.**

Their idols are silver and gold,

**made by human hands.**

They have mouths, but cannot speak;

**they have eyes, but cannot see.**

They have ears but cannot hear;

**they have a nose, but cannot smell.**

Their hands cannot feel;

**their feet cannot walk;**

they can make no sound with their throat.

**I love the Lord because He hears my prayers.**

***Together: O Israel, trust in the Lord!***

The Lord is gracious and just; our God is compassionate.

You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.

How can we repay the Lord for all His kindness?

**I will raise the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. All the days of my life I will walk in your presence. Thank you, Lord, for I am your servant.**

We will bless the Lord

**from this time forth forever.**

The Lord is my strength and song,

**and He is become my salvation.**

I will give thanks to you,

**for you have answered me.**

***Together: And have become my salvation.***

The stone which the builders rejected

**is become the chief cornerstone.**

This was indeed from the Lord,

**it is marvelous in our eyes.**

This is the day which the Lord has made.

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

The Lord is God, and has given us light.

**Blessed be the One that comes in the name of the Lord.  
The Breath of Every Living Thing Shall Bless His Name**

**Leader:**

To you alone we give thanks. Even if our mouths were filled with song as the sea, and our tongue with joyous singing like the multitude of its waves, and our lips with praise like the expanse of the sky, and our eyes shining like the sun and the moon, and our hands spread out like the eagles of heaven, and our feet swift like deer—we would still be unable to thank you enough, O Lord our God, and to bless your name, for even one of the thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads of miracles and wonders that you have done for our ancestors and for us.

**Family/Group:**

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise His holy name.

**Leader:**

Let us all drink the fourth cup, the Cup of Praise.

**Elijah’s Cup—The Cup of Hope**

**Leader:**

Will the children please open the door.

At our table we have set an extra place. No one occupies the chair. Tradition says that this is for Elijah. The door is opened in hopes Elijah will arrive to announce that the Messiah has come. We remember the day Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a high mountain. There He was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white! “And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.” Then a cloud appeared and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son whom I love. Listen to him!” (Mark 9:2–8, NIV).

**Family/Group:**

We praise and thank you, O Lord our God, for providing Elijah and Moses that day on the Mount of Transfiguration to verify and announce that all the years of waiting were over and that your promise to send a Savior, Messiah, had finally been fulfilled.

**Leader:**

Tonight we shared four cups, remembering the celebration of our deliverance in the past and our thankfulness in the present. This cup of Elijah focuses attention on the future. It is a symbol of hope for the Jews.

The Haggadah has challenged us: “In every generation, each person must view himself as if he personally went out from Egypt.”

Exodus 12:3 reminds us, “They are each one to take a lamb for themselves.”

**Family/Group:**

But we know Messiah has come. We are free.

**Leader:**

Some people are not. By tasting the bitterness of bondage tonight, we share, we know, we feel their suffering.

**Family/Group:**

Our covenant, our eternal mission, is to share the Good News—tonight and forever. Our task is to take the Cup of Hope to all people. Jesus said, “Go into all the world and share the good news with everyone!” (Matt. 28:19, author’s paraphrase).

**Leader:**

Will the children please close the door.

**The Shank Bone and the Egg**

**Leader:**

You will notice some items on the Seder plate have not been eaten. Jewish people, since the destruction of the temple, are unable to observe the Passover according to their understanding of the Law of Moses. That law said the Passover lamb was to be offered in the tabernacle where God placed His name. (See Deuteronomy 16:5; 1 Kings 9:3.)

God allowed the destruction of the only place where the Passover lamb could be offered because the Messiah, who was to take the place of the Passover lamb, has already come.

In the years that followed, the Jews provided a symbol of the Passover lamb by placing a shank bone from a roasted lamb on a plate. To it the rabbis have added an egg. This is to be a reminder of the *Hagigah* (Ha-gi-gah), which was the “voluntary peace offering” on the second day of Passover.

**Family/Group:**

We praise you, O Lord our God, for providing all of these symbols to lead us to your Son, Jesus. Through His death, symbolized by the shank bone, He voluntarily offered himself, making peace with God, reconciling us to Him.

As Christians, we recognize that sacrifice is no longer necessary. The offering of our Messiah satisfied this requirement. In His death there is life. In the shedding of His blood there is atonement for our sin. In Messiah’s coming our Passover is completed.

**Conclusion**

**Family/Group:**

The Seder of Passover is now complete, even as our salvation is complete.

We were privileged to celebrate it this year. May we live to celebrate it again.

We praise you, O Lord, who dwells in our hearts, for our redemption. Speedily lead all people, redeemed, to Zion in joyful song.

**Leader:**

And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising God.

**All:**

**NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM!**

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