

A Passover Meal for Maundy Thursday

Welcome to this Passover meal. Tonight we share in the drama of the last meal Jesus ate with his disciples before he was arrested and crucified. This drama is part of a tradition that goes back three thousand years.

Before the Meal

It is the duty of the youngest child to ask some questions about the Passover meal.

Why is this night different from other nights?

(Leader:) We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt: and the Lord our God brought us out of Egypt. On this night Jesus Christ our Messiah gave to his disciples the Bread of Life.

Why do we eat lamb on this night?

The lamb was an offering made to God on the night when He led our fathers out of Egypt. Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. He is the Lamb of God, who was sacrificed for us.

Why do we eat unleavened bread on this night?

When our fathers fled from Egypt, there was no time to wait for the yeast to work. Jesus told us that the bread He broke was His body, given for us.

Why do we eat bitter herbs on this night?

When our Fathers were captive in Egypt their lives were made bitter by the hard work they were forced to do. We remember, too, the bitterness of Christ's suffering on the cross as He died for us.

Why do we drink wine on this night?

It was to celebrate the freedom our Fathers gained from the Egyptians. Jesus shared the wine and called it His blood.

Readings

Exodus 12:1-14 and Matthew 26:17-30

Prayer and Peace

Father God, we have come here tonight to share this meal. We know that your Son is here with us because we meet in his name. Bless the food we eat and our fellowship with one another. **Amen.**

The peace of God be with you all. Let's greet each other.

Song

Baruch haba b'shem àdonai, Alleluia
Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

'Mother' lights a candle and says:

May the Lord be gracious unto us and bless us. May He make his face to shine upon us. May He keep this family in peace and in love for ever and ever. Amen.

All: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation. You have given us this feast of the Passover. Bless us, and bless the food we eat. Amen.

After the meal

We remember that Jesus and his disciples celebrated together as we have done tonight. During that that meal Jesus shared bread and wine with his friends:

We may share bread and wine using these words:

Christ's body, broken for you.
Christ's blood, shed for you.

Reading for Good Friday

Matthew 27:27-37

The Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread

Exodus 12

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. 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 neighbour, having taken into account the number of people there are.

"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 members 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. Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.

"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.

"On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. 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.

"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.

The Last Supper

Matthew 26

On the first day of the Festival 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.

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."

They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?"

Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?"

Jesus answered, "You have said so."

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus is mocked and crucified

Matthew 27

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spat on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him.

Then they led him away to crucify him.

As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it.

When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there.

Above his head they placed the written charge against him:

THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.