

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG138 – An Introduction to Passover

We are approaching the Feast of Passover, and I want to give an introduction to the Feast so that people have an understanding of why we as Christians should celebrate it. This podcast will give basic explanations of it. I was concerned, because it is actually so simple and basic that I felt for some it may be a little too simplistic. But on the other hand, I am concerned because I do believe there are many people who have not heard of the Feast of Passover, or the concepts of why we as Christians should be celebrating and observing it. It is such a rich experience. The Passover, to me, is one of the greatest joys that we have. To be included in and to celebrate this tremendous time is so meaningful within our Christian experience that I think everybody needs to really come to grips and have a revelation of it. And that is why I am going ahead with this.

As I was concerned about it, and praying about it, I thought, “Well, I’ll just wrestle this through.” But the Holy Spirit spoke to me out of Second Peter 1:12-13, which says, “Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder.” So for those of you who know these things and have heard these things before, and are well aware of Passover and how to celebrate it, I encourage you to listen and to be reminded of those things that we know are true and are present truths with us. I bless you in it. Those of you who do not know about the Passover, I just really believe this is going to be a tremendous impartation of life to you, something that really adds to your walk with the Lord and your growth in Him.

Passover in the Hebrew Scriptures is pronounced Pesach. Jews today will refer to this feast by that Hebrew name; and so, if you hear the term Pesach, you can know what is being spoken of. When we talk about the Feast of Passover, or Pesach, we really are talking about the night of Passover, the deliverance that came for the children of Israel out of Egypt. We include in that the seven days of Unleavened Bread, which were also directed by the Lord for this time. So we tend to take the terminology of Passover and bundle all of this together. If you are actually giving an emphasis to it, you would talk about it being the time of Unleavened Bread, because that is seven days long, and the Passover itself is only the one evening; but we are going to understand that more clearly as we go through Exodus the twelfth chapter.

First of all, before we get into that, I want us to understand that this was the establishment of the beginning of months. Exodus 12:2 says, “This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you.” That can be confusing to some people, because we say, “I thought in the Jewish calendar that the Day of Trumpets, or Yom Teruah, was the New Year’s celebration,” and it is. But we also see that Passover was established by the Lord as the first month of the year. So what is going on? Well, it is really very simple. The first month, Nissan, which is what Passover falls in, is the first month of the ecclesiastical year; this became the beginning of the spiritual year, or the celebrations of the Feasts of the Lord and the spiritual things. Trumpets was announcing the beginning of the civil year; that is the month of Tishrei. So don’t let it be confusing to you, it is really very simple. Yes, there are two New Year’s: one is civil, and one is ecclesiastical. Passover begins the ecclesiastical year, as stated in Exodus 12:2.

As we continue reading in Exodus 12, we want to get this picture of the wonderful time of Passover. Exodus 12:1-10: "Now the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 'This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, "On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their father's households, a lamb for each household. Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two door posts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs, along with its entrails. And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire.'"

We are at verse 10, right in the middle of seeing all these instructions that God is giving to Moses for how they are to celebrate this wonderful time of Passover. They are to take the lamb, they are to keep it with them in their home; and on the night of the fourteenth, all of Israel is to slay it. Now they take the blood and put it over the doorpost – this will be for the protection for them. The way they eat it is unusual; they don't dress it out as a normal animal would be readied for barbecue. Instead, they eat it all intact; the legs, the entrails, everything is there. They are not to boil it in water or to eat any of it raw; they roast it with fire. And it says, "Do not leave any of it till morning." That doesn't mean they had to eat the whole thing, but it means there was none of it being used for leftovers the next day. Whatever was left, they were to burn to ashes with the fire. So we have all these unique instructions. And as you study each of these elements, they become significant to our salvation in Yeshua.

As we go on, we will read from verses 11-13. ""Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the Lord's Passover. For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."" So here we have the name Passover. God goes through the land with the death angel, and He says, "When I see the blood on the doorposts, I will not strike you, but I will pass over your homes." But He is going to strike everyone in Egypt that does not have that sign over the door. Verse 14: ""Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance."" This is always, forever, to be celebrated, this Feast of Passover. It is one of the key moments that brings a whole story about God's salvation – about the children of Israel, about the body of Christ – into a tremendous understanding; and therefore, it will always be celebrated.

Verses 15-20: "Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you. You shall also observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day

throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land. You shall not eat anything leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.” Here we have this emphasis about the Days of Unleavened Bread, which are seven in number, and we see that this Passover is really the evening. There was a lot of preparation that went into it beforehand; but what is really referred to as Passover is that night, starting from sundown through till the time that the children of Israel were run out of town from Egypt because of the death angel and what happened to the Egyptians.

We will go on and read now from verses 29-36 to continue the story. “Now it came about at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle.” So it was the animals as well as humans that were killed. “Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead. Then he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, ‘Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship the Lord, as you have said. Take both your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and go, and bless me also.’ The Egyptians urged the people, to send them out of the land in haste, for they said, ‘We will all be dead.’ So the people took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls bound up in the clothes on their shoulders. Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.”

To really get the totality of the story, and I encourage you to do this, go back to the first chapter of Exodus; read all the way through from the first chapter through chapter 12 to really get the story. And you can go beyond that to see what happens as they are thrust out of Egypt. But this part that we are reading here says they went and they asked the Egyptians for gold and silver and items of clothing – thus they plundered them. This was sort of God’s way of payback. God was paying them for the years of their slavery in Egypt. And it says they literally plundered the Egyptians. In other words, the Egyptians gave them everything that they owned, and they came out of Egypt with great, great wealth. It was this wealth that they used later on to build the Tabernacle. This was a great part of the story; but remember, to get the whole concept of it, go back and read Exodus 1 through 12 as you are studying and preparing to be immersed in this great Feast of Passover.

Continuing with verses 38-41, “A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock. They baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt into cakes of unleavened bread. For it had not become leavened, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves. Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.” Now, why do they emphasize the timeframe here? Well, you have to go back into Genesis where God spoke to Abraham, because Abraham said they would be in Egypt for four hundred years. This was, I think, referring to the time of their slavery, not to the entire time that they were there; because obviously it says “to the very day,” and it says they were there for four hundred and thirty years. The prophecy to Abraham was four hundred years. So, you had the days of Joseph, in which they were not slaves in Egypt. Anyway, there

are many ways to talk about that and think about it, but it is one of those wonderful mysteries and the exciting things that we find alive to us during the study of this Feast of Passover.

So the Lord gives us the story here. Then we go on to see that the Lord also commanded the continual observance of Passover and Unleavened Bread, as well as the instructions for celebrating them, and even gives more about the way it is supposed to be celebrated. I am going to give some of the Scriptures now, going through the Tanakh, of how this great Feast was to be celebrated, showing us that it was to be a permanent ordinance, and showing that there were some additions to the way they celebrated it at different times, depending on where they were.

Leviticus 23:4-11 says, ““These are the appointed times of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the Lord’s Passover. Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the Lord. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.”” Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, “When you enter the land which I am going to give you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord for you to be accepted; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.””

Here again we see the admonition that they must celebrate this, and that it is a holy convocation; in other words, it was counted as a Sabbath. Whenever you see in the Hebrew Scriptures that we have a holy convocation and we don’t do any work, then that is the same thing as a Sabbath time. And so, this was celebrated as a Sabbath by them. Obviously, in the first time of the removal from Egypt, it wasn’t a Sabbath – they walked all day and they went through the whole process of departing from Egypt. But He is directing them now in what it is going to be like when they get into the land. And there is such a unique point here: when you get into verse 10 and it talks about reaping the harvest and the sheaf of the first fruits that is to be waved by the priest on the day after the Sabbath, what is this referring to? This is one of the things I want to point out, because as Christian believers, we may be saying, “What is the significance for us in this? What do we find in here? It’s not really making sense to me.” Okay, well keep studying it, because it will, and this is one of the points that comes alive. The sheaf of the first fruits – who is that? That is Yeshua. And Yeshua, the Sheaf, was waved as the first fruits on the day after the Sabbath. This is the sign of the resurrection. Christ came forth the day after the Sabbath, and He was the first fruits of all creation to bring forth and to enter into this time of resurrection. And we know He was the first fruits, because with Him came those who emerged from the graves and walked the streets of Jerusalem during that time. So again, we see something added here that was not part of the first Passover that was celebrated, but certainly for us, has tremendous significance in this waving of the sheaf of the first fruits. And I’m telling you, there are so many aspects of Passover that have these deep revelations and significance to them.

In Numbers 9:1-5, it says, “Thus the Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ‘Now, let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time. On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall observe it at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances.’ So Moses told the sons of Israel to observe the Passover. They observed the Passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the Lord

had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did.” So here we see that in the wilderness, they were commanded and celebrated the Passover; not just in the beginning in Egypt. And as we go along, we will see that this pattern continues.

Going down in Numbers chapter 28, in verses 16-17 it says, “Then on the fourteenth day of the first month shall be the Lord’s Passover. On the fifteenth day of this month shall be a feast, unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days.” Deuteronomy 16:1-8: “Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover to the Lord your God, for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night.” And you say, “Wait, wait, wait! What is this month of Abib thing? I thought this was the month of Nissan.” Okay, well, Abib was the name in Babylon. Abib was the seventh month of the civil year while they were in Babylon. When they came out of Babylon, they started calling it Nissan, and that became the first month of the ecclesiastical year; and they stopped using Abib. But this is where the terminology came from. So don’t let it confuse you, it still was the month of Nissan.

We go on into verse 2: “You shall sacrifice the Passover to the Lord your God from the flock and the herd, in the place where the Lord chooses to establish His name.” So again, we have another addition here: when they come into the land of Canaan, they do not just celebrate it in all the land, in all of their homes, wherever they live; they are to celebrate it only where the Lord chooses and establishes His name – which we know becomes Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. And this is what we see in the time of Yeshua. We see that everyone from all Israel came into Jerusalem; they came and they bought the lambs, and they were slaughtered in the Temple. The celebration of the seder meal or the sacred meal happened in the individual homes, but the lambs themselves were killed only at the place, and the lamb was eaten only in the place, where the Lord had chosen to put His name. Verse 3, “You shall not eat leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat with it unleavened bread, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), so that you may remember all the days of your life the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. For seven days no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory, and none of the flesh which you sacrifice on the evening of the first day shall remain overnight until morning. You are not allowed to sacrifice the Passover in any of your towns which the Lord your God is giving you; but at the place where the Lord your God chooses to establish His name, you shall sacrifice the Passover in the evening at sunset, at the time that you came out of Egypt. You shall cook and eat it in the place which the Lord your God chooses. In the morning you are to return to your tents. Six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord your God; you shall do no work on it.”

Here we have this wonderful thing that we see carried out during the time of Israel and the land of Canaan, that they all came in to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. This is very significant when it comes to the story of Yeshua and what transpired surrounding Him. There are so many wonderful stories based upon Passover throughout all of the Hebrew Scriptures; so I encourage you, do a concordance search. This is one thing that will help you, to do a concordance search or just a word search through your Bible. Search on the word Passover and study all of the places where the word Passover is found, and the different celebrations that are expressed that took place through the Hebrew Scriptures. I am just touching on the surface of what is there, but it is such a deep, deep, meaningful time and celebration.

The Passover is significant in the Hebrew Scriptures, but as we move forward into the New Testament, it is also significant in the life of Yeshua. We see that Yeshua, or Jesus, observed the Passover in Jerusalem and celebrated it as He was growing up. This was required by the Torah, as we have been reading; and

so, as an orthodox and observant Jew, Yeshua would have been celebrating this time in Jerusalem with His parents. In Luke 2:41-42, it says, "Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when he became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast." So the parents went up every year. The Scripture is very careful to tell us this was a tradition of Jesus' family, to go up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover as was instructed by the Torah. They did, and they took Him with them; so this was something that He experienced. This is emphasizing the twelfth year, because as He goes up, you know, He stays there and kind of gets left behind, and His parents are worried about Him; but He was talking to all the scribes and the scholars in the Temple.

In John 2:13-17, it says, "The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, 'Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business.' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house will consume Me.'" This is what He experienced as He went up. So here we see that Yeshua went up, not just with His parents as He was younger; but once He was in His ministry, He also went up traditionally to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Passover. In John 2:23-25, it says, "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man." So here, again, we find Christ in the Temple at the time of Passover, performing miracles, speaking to the crowds and giving them the gospel of the Kingdom of God. We also recognize that it was during this time of Passover that Yeshua goes up to Jerusalem; we find that He is betrayed, He is arrested, He is tortured, He is crucified, and He is resurrected – all of that transpires during this great season of Passover. So once again, I encourage you as believers, dig into all of the elements of what makes the Passover; because they are things that show us and teach us the deep meanings behind and the deep things that transpire in the Spirit surrounding the Savior and the sacrifice that was made for us upon the cross.

In Matthew 26:1 it says, "When Jesus had finished all these words, He said to His disciples, 'You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion.'" He realized what was going to happen. He is in Jerusalem, and He is prepared now for this great Passover event that is going to mean the fulfillment of His ministry. We go down to Matthew 26:17-24: "Now on the first day of Unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?' And He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, 'My time is near; I am to keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'" The disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at table with the twelve disciples. As they were eating, He said, 'Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me.' Being deeply grieved, they each one began to say to Him, 'Surely not I, Lord?' And He answered, 'He who dipped His hand with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me. The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.'"

Verses 25-30: "And Judas, who was betraying Him, said, 'Surely it is not I, Rabbi?' Jesus said to him, 'You have said it yourself.' While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant,

which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until the day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.' After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." What a beautiful picture that ties together the whole concept of Passover. We see that Christ with His disciples is eating the Seder meal; and I encourage you, try to partake. If you have never been involved in a Seder, find a synagogue or find a Jewish group somewhere that is welcoming to visitors, and you can go celebrate the Seder with them. It is something that will add to your experience and your education so you will have a greater understanding of really what it is that is taking place. I guarantee you, if you will do that, it will change your perception every time you enter in to partake of the Lord's Supper of Communion. You will see the origins of it, and you will relate yourself to that great Passover when this was established as something through the Lord's instruction.

In Luke 22:7 we read, "Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. And Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us.'" So we see the story being told again; and it is told several times. During this time of His going and preparing for the Passover, preparing to be crucified, to be suffering for us, we see the story not just told in Matthew as we read, but Matthew 26, Matthew 27, and Matthew chapter 28 all relate to this story. I encourage you, go through and read the whole thing. I have just skipped through it lightly, but there is more to it. And beyond that, there is Mark chapters 14, 15, and 16, where the story is also told. You will find it in Luke chapters 22, 23, and 24. You will also find it being told in chapter 12 and 13 of the Gospel of John. Read through these all very carefully. Get the points that God is wanting you to receive from it.

There are some things I really want you to carry with you from this podcast. One, the beginning of the story: Joseph saves Israel by bringing them to Egypt. It wasn't a horrible thing. It wasn't a mistake that they were in Egypt and became slaves. Joseph brought them into Egypt, and they were saved alive during the famine. Following the death of Joseph was when there rose up a Pharaoh that did not know him, and he began to enslave the children of Israel. So we understand how that takes place. Another point that is so important is that Moses, by the Word of the Lord, brought plague after plague upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. As you read about each of these plagues, realize that they were specific plagues and judgments against the gods of Egypt. These were done to show that God Almighty, the Creator of the universe, is truly the One, the only, the sovereign God, and is to be worshiped. And so, in bringing them out of Egypt, He didn't just loose them from slavery and deliver them from bondage; He brought judgment on these gods that the Egyptians worshiped, and He showed that they were not gods at all. God continues to do that through Passover to prove that He Himself is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the King of kings. There is none other like Him. And during the days of Passover, we should believe to see judgment on the gods of this world, and our release from bondage to them.

One other point that is so important during this final plague of death on the firstborn: Israel was protected by placing the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their homes; and with this plague, Israel was delivered from their bondage to Egypt. This was a true deliverance and release from slavery, from bondage. We take that point into the last concern that I have, that we as Christians recognize that we too place the blood of Christ upon the doorposts of our heart. And as we do that, we are protected from the death angel and the bringing of eternal judgment into this world. We are also delivered from the bondage of a life to sin, and we are freed into a life as free men and women to serve the Lord with all of our heart, and to live for Him and to live with Him.

Once again, I encourage you: an activity that would be so tremendous is to find a synagogue or those that would be open to visitors coming to their Seder meal, and to partake. Learn about the Seder. Learn how it is celebrated today by the Jewish people, and receive the significance in your own life from that as you live in your communion with the Lord.

I bless this podcast, these words to you. I want this Passover to be one of the greatest experiences you have as you grow in your relationship and your walk with God.

Amen.