

SEDER

A Salvation History



MAUNDY THURSDAY



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MAUNDY THURSDAY

Leader's Guide

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About This Service

This digital download includes everything you will need to host a Passover Feast—recipes, diagrams, shopping lists, invitations, an order of service and a script for the leader and readers to help guide the group through the service (incorporating elements from the Last Supper). Music for the festive Dayenu is also included.

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Newsletter Notice

Join us for a very special Seder Meal for Maundy Thursday. Those gathered will engage in the rituals associated with the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples, the traditional foods and the meanings behind them will be presented, and an ancient song of deliverance will be sung. The meal will end with Holy Communion, pointing to the Lamb who has slain for us on the cross.

Bulletin Notice

Welcome to this very special Seder Meal for Maundy Thursday. Experience the rituals associated with the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples. Learn about the traditional foods of this feast and the meanings behind them. Sing an ancient song of deliverance sung in the manner the Israelites did. Then take and eat, take and drink, in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, the body and blood of the Lamb, who was slain to deliver us from sin and death forever.

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Script for the Leader (L)

Besides the Leader (L), who is most likely speaking from a small lectern near his or her place at the head table, only one speaking part is essential to the celebration—a small boy (B) who asks a string of questions after the pouring of the Second Cup Of Wine and has one small line in the reading of Exodus 12. The Leader could read ALL other parts. However, for the sake of variety, we have listed additional parts: A Reader (R, I) and another voice (II) may be employed to read the Scripture verses. Or, a single Reader may read all three parts (R, I and II).

- This WELCOME and introduction are made.

L Passover is a family festival. This ritual is taken from a number of sources, including those supplied years ago by a sympathetic rabbi. Some parts of the Seder are required, others seem to be able to be adapted to suit the particular circumstances. There is meaning to almost everything—the things that are already on the table and those that will be put there ... and how they will be used. A simple rule of thumb is probably to say: Don't eat or drink anything until you are told to, until its meaning has been explained ... and until it has been prayed over.

What we are celebrating, of course, is the wondrous salvation our God brought to pass more than 3000 years ago when he delivered our ancestors from bondage in Egypt. Except that Jews would not word it that way: “When the Lord delivered US from the bondage ...” That is important. This ceremony is more than just a remembrance (even as the Lord's Supper,

instituted this very night in a setting just like this) is not just a “remembrance,” (although it is certainly that), but also a *participation* in the events we commemorate.

What we are doing tonight is clearly a simplified version of the traditional Seder meal; I’ve left out almost all of the traditional Hebrew titles. But, since significant parts of the ceremony are spoken (or at least introduced) in Hebrew, I have retained one significant phrase, which will become a kind of liturgical introduction to virtually all of the prayers in this Passover Seder. The phrase (as you can see in the “candles” ceremony at the very beginning of your folder) is “Baruch Attah Adonai Elohenu,” which means exactly what you respond: “Blessed are you, O Lord our God.”

The ritual for Passover, like the ritual for the Sabbath on Friday evening each week, begins with the LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES—traditionally done by one of the married women at the table. Matches are available ... and when you are ready, we will begin with the proper prayer, as found at the beginning of your folder.

- CANDLES are lit by married women.

ℓ Baruch Attah Adonai Elohenu ...

☑ **Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, for you kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this season. May this place be made holy by the light of your presence, shining upon us in blessing and giving us peace.**

ℓ The WASHING OF HANDS is next. Don’t do it until we’ve prayed, of course. The way it will be done is simply to dip your fingers in the cup of plain water, and then wipe them on your napkin. In some families, someone goes around with a pitcher and another with a basin, and the water is poured from the pitcher to the basin over your hands.

It was probably at this time, under those circumstances, that our Lord Jesus Christ went one step farther, and washed the feet of his disciples. Find the water cup at your table, and have one person hold it up, as we pray.

- The WASHING OF HANDS is performed by dipping fingers into a cup of water.

ℓ Baruch Attah Adonai Elohenu ...

☑ **Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, for you have blessed us with your commandments that we might serve you with pure and holy hands.**

ℓ Now, dip your fingers into the water. When your fingers are washed, you need to fill your wine cups. I use the word “fill” symbolically. There will be a total of four cups of wine throughout the evening, so you might want to pace yourself.

Like everything else at the Seder, even the simple drinking of wine is done in honor of the Lord, recognizing his benefits, and the goodness that makes possible everything. In ancient Israel, wine was as common at the table as coffee and tea are today ... but not therefore to be partaken of without thanks to God. That's the point ... of all of this ... beginning with this first humble taste of wine. Hold your glasses high as we pray.

- WINE CUPS are filled ... held high for the prayer ... and then drunk.

ℓ Baruch Attah Adonai Elohenu.

© Blessed are you, O Lord our God, for you have created the fruit of the vine.

ℓ These greens (traditionally parsley) at this point are a symbol of springtime, the renewal of nature which makes our spirits rise as well. But along with that joy, they are a reminder of the hardship that often precedes it. The greens are dipped into salt water as a symbol of the tears that may need to be shed before joy can be experienced.

- The GREENS ... parsley dipped in salt water ... are prayed over and eaten.

ℓ Baruch Attah Adonai Elohenu ...

© Blessed are you, O Lord our God, for you have created the fruit of the earth.

ℓ Now would be a good time for a word about unleavened bread. In our day we are accustomed to the commercial form it has taken in matzos, which can be purchased, as these were, especially at this time of year. The bread is unleavened, of course, because it was made in haste—there was no time for God's people to waste on the way to freedom.

The ritual requires that one piece of the middle matzo (of three symbolically placed at the head of the table)—one piece is to be wrapped and hidden for later. But the ritual doesn't really say what that "later" is. It has become a kind of children's game in recent times; the child who finds the hidden matzo gets a little prize.

But ... what fascinates me is that this matzo really doesn't have a purpose in the ancient ritual. It's just set aside for ... Well, to me it looks as if it's just waiting for Holy Communion, along with a convenient cup of wine. That is how we will use it later, once we have broken it now.

- BREAKING THE BREAD ... a portion is hidden for later.

ℓ This is the poor bread which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. The meaning of the first Passover bread is the same today.

Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in need join this celebration. Now many are still enslaved. Next year may all be free!

- FILL THE SECOND CUP OF WINE ... but do not drink it yet.
- ℒ We now pour our second glass of wine. But before we drink it, there is some business to attend to.
- The QUESTIONS are asked by the youngest boy.
- ℒ At this point in the festivities the youngest male member of the family asks a set of questions which help to put this meal into its proper perspective.
- B Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights, we eat leavened bread and matzos; on this night, we eat only matzos. On all other nights, we eat all kinds of herbs; on this night, we eat only bitter herbs. On all other nights, we do not dip even once; on this night we dip twice. On all other nights we eat either sitting straight or reclining; on this night we all recline.
- ℒ We were slaves in the land of Egypt ...
- ℞ Ruled and oppressed by a pharaoh who knew not Joseph and the wisdom of his ministry over Egypt in earlier years. This was a pharaoh who sought security in the bondage of people he ruled, as a bulwark against would-be invaders, as a slave army to fashion monuments to his pride. Human beings reduced to the state of beasts of burden—something far less than that for which the Lord God had created us in the beginning.
- ℒ In this dark hour, Moses ...
- ℞ Graced by God with wondrous powers—God acting through Moses, opposed Pharaoh, the incarnation of sullen force—Pharaoh, who would yield to the will of God only in time of danger, but revert to character when the crisis passed.
- ℒ And the Lord took us out of Egypt ...
- ℞ With a mighty hand ... With an outstretched arm ... With revelation ... And with signs and wonders.
- THE TEN PLAGUES ... “Diminish” your wine as each is named.
- ℒ At this point in the ceremony we “diminish” our wine as each of the ten plagues is listed. But not by drinking it. Instead, as you hear each plague, dip a spoon into your glass of wine and dab it onto your napkin.
- ℞ Blood ... frogs ... vermin ... wild beasts ... cattle disease ... boils ... hail ... locusts ... darkness ... the death of the firstborn!

L Then ... Pharaoh thrust Israel from Egypt.

- EXODUS 12:21-27 is read.

I Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them,

II “Go, select lambs for your families, and slaughter the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin. None of you shall go outside the door of your house until morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike down the Egyptians; when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over that door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you down. You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children. When you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this observance. And when your children ask you,

B ‘What do you mean by this observance?’

II you shall say,

I&II ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses.’ “

- THE MIRACLE AT THE RED SEA is recounted.

I And the children of Israel journeyed from Ramses to Succot, about six hundred thousand men, besides children; and people other than Hebrews departed with them.

And so it was that after 430 years, on the fourteenth day of Nissan, that very day, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.

I&II And the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart,

I and Pharaoh pursued after Israel, encamped by the Red Sea. And those just freed saw the Egyptian charioteers descending upon them and were afraid. And Moses said to the people:

II Fear not! Stand still! Witness the salvation of the Lord which he will work for you today.

I&II And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea,

I and the Lord caused the sea to go back and to be pushed before a strong east wind all night.

I&II And the children of Israel walked over the bed of the sea,

I the Egyptians in pursuit.

I&II And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea;

I its waters flowed together engulfing the Egyptians. And there was awe of the Lord because of his wondrous deliverance. And the children of Israel sang songs of praise:

I&II I will sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted; horse and rider he has cast into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.

L (*looking directly at the boy who originally asked the question*) THEREFORE, the Lord our God commanded us to celebrate Passover in its season from year to year, so that his Torah shall be in our mouths and that we shall declare his might to our children, his salvation to all generations.

Now, at last, the Second Cup of wine is drunk, after we pray.

• **DRINK THE SECOND CUP OF WINE, after saying this prayer:**

L Baruch Attah Adonai Elohenu ...

C *Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, for you have created the fruit of the vine.*

L What follows in the Seder is a song entitled DAYENU (pronounced “die-YAY-new”). The word means “It would be enough for us,” and it is one of the most unique expressions of thanksgiving in all of liturgical worship. Not only does it recount the story of God’s mighty acts of salvation made evident in the Exodus, but it does so in such a way that they are literally “heaped up” in an ever-growing “mound” of humble gratitude.

Here’s how it works: “If God had freed us from slavery but had not split the Red Sea, ‘Dayenu’ ... it would have been enough for us! If God had split the sea but had not allowed us to walk through it on dry ground, ‘Dayenu’ ... it would have been enough for us! If God had allowed us to walk through the sea on dry ground but had not drowned our pursuers, ‘Dayenu’ ... it would have been enough for us!”

In between each of these sorts of verses is a refrain which GROWS with each verse, and which recounts everything we have said so far ... in REVERSE.

Over the centuries many versions of the “Dayenu” have arisen, most of them sung to jolly folk tunes (familiar to Jewish ears, though probably not familiar to ours). The “Dayenu” we will be using tonight is a modern original, written in the spirit of the traditional “Dayenu” and following its form, but sung to a tune that may be more familiar to us—the German folk tune “Schnitzelbank,” which also has a unique, growing refrain. It is conceivable that German Jews in centuries past sang “Dayenus” quite similar to the one we will be singing tonight. Perhaps it is advisable to simply LISTEN to the first verse, joining in as you feel comfortable with the tune. But, by all means, do join in.

One final word of explanation. The folk versions of the “Dayenu” often add an extra

syllable to the word, saying “DA-Dayenu” in the refrain. As near as I can tell, this is done simply because they needed an extra syllable for the tune ... and because it SOUNDS better (in the same way that we say “hip-hip-hurrah,” when really only one “hip” is needed, if any). In keeping with the tradition, therefore, our setting of the “Dayenu” also employs the extra syllable.

- A SONG OF THANKS, “DAYENU,” is sung. Melody: “Schnitzelbank.”

What if God had set us free from Egyptian tyranny;
What if God, who set us free, had not opened up the sea?

Open sea • Set us free
Da-dayenu, da-dayenu, da-dayenu ... DA-YE-NU!

What if God, who set us free and who opened up the sea,
Had not let us walk dry-shod when that seaward path we trod?

Path we trod • Walk with God • Open sea • Set us free
Da-dayenu, da-dayenu, da-dayenu ... DA-YE-NU!

What if, when the sea we trod where God let us walk dry-shod,
Had not turned again to drown those who sought to hunt us down?

Drowned the foe • Way to go • Path we trod • Walk with God
Open sea • Set us free
Da-dayenu, da-dayenu, da-dayenu ... DA-YE-NU!

What if God, who drowned the foe, had not shown us where to go,
Forty years been near to bless in the savage wilderness?

Wilderness • Near to bless • Drowned the foe • Way to go
Path we trod • Walk with God • Open sea • Set us free
Da-dayenu, da-dayenu, da-dayenu ... DA-YE-NU!

What if God, so near to bless forty years in wilderness,
Had not manna sent each day to sustain us on our way?

Manna here • Forty years • Wilderness • Near to bless
Drowned the foe • Way to go • Path we trod • Walk with God
Open sea • Set us free
Da-dayenu, da-dayenu, da-dayenu ... DA-YE-NU!

What if God, who sent each day manna to sustain our way,
Had not made us further blest, granting us a Sabbath rest?

Sabbath rest • Richly blest • Manna here • Forty years
Wilderness • Near to bless • Drowned the foe • Way to go
Path we trod • Walk with God • Open sea • Set us free
Da-dayenu, da-dayenu, da-dayenu ... DA-YE-NU!