

JESUS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT PASSOVER

Every year baptized members of the Church of God meet together to observe the Passover in a particular way. Here is why and the Bible story behind it.

by Karen Meeker

Jesus and His family had always kept the Passover, as well as all of God's annual festivals. But the last Passover Jesus kept was quite different.

First, He shocked His disciples by performing an act of humble service. Then He introduced symbols to remind them of the meaning behind His coming sacrifice.

THREE NEW THINGS

Here are three new things that He did:

He washed their feet. Jesus and the disciples gathered together in a special room at the beginning of the 14th of Abib at twilight. Jesus knew that He would soon be killed, and He said to them, "I have really wanted to eat this Passover with you before I die. I won't eat it again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."

After they had finished eating, Jesus got up and took a towel. He poured water into a basin and began to wash and wipe dry the disciples' feet. Peter stopped Him and said, "You will never wash my feet."

Peter was upset because foot washing was a job for the lowest of servants—not for Jesus, the great Teacher. Jesus replied, "If I don't wash your feet, then you are not a part of Me or the work I am doing."

Peter loved Jesus and didn't want to displease Him, so he said, "Then wash my hands and head too!"

Jesus loved Peter too, and He patiently explained, "If I wash your feet, you are clean all over."

Jesus continued until He had washed each disciple's feet—even the feet of Judas, the man who would betray Him. Then He said, "I have given you an example. Now you are to do just as I have done."

He had just introduced the first change of the Passover service. He had shown them that they were to serve one another. (You can read this in John 13:1-20.)

He introduced the symbolic reminders of bread and wine. Then Jesus took some bread. He said a prayer over it and broke it into small pieces. "This is My body which is broken for you. Take a piece, and when you eat it, remember Me."

QUIZ TIME

Why was Peter upset?

QUIZ TIME

Whose feet did Jesus wash?

After each disciple had eaten his piece of the bread, Jesus took a cup of wine. He prayed over it and offered it to each man. “All of you must drink of this, because this is My blood, which will soon be shed for you. It’s My blood that will let you be forgiven of your sins.”

Just as the Passover lamb’s blood saved the children of Israel from the destroyer (Exodus 12:23), now the blood of the Lamb of God was going to save people from the second death that comes from breaking God’s commandments without being forgiven. (The full account is found in Luke 22:14-23.)

SOME OF JESUS’ LAST WORDS

Then Jesus spent time talking to them about God and the wonderful plans He has for those who really believe and obey Him. He told them that they were His friends and that He loved them. And He also warned them that following Him would not be easy, but that He would always be there for them.

After they sang a song, they walked over to the Mount of Olives. Only Jesus knew what lay in store that night, and the pain He would soon suffer.

AWFUL EVENTS FOLLOWED

Religious leaders and others wanted Jesus dead. They didn’t believe He was the Son of God. One of His own disciples betrayed Him to them.

Soldiers beat Him until He was bloodied. They made fun of Him in front of people. The leaders accused Him when He was innocent. And finally the rulers pressured the Roman governor to crucify Him, causing a very painful death normally reserved for criminals.

JESUS OFFERED FORGIVENESS

After all that had been done to Him, some of His last words were amazing: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34). He loved them and gave His life for them—and for all the rest of us.

THE MIRACLE OF THE RESURRECTION

Three days and three nights after Christ died and was buried, God brought Him back to life again. (He was “resurrected.” You can read about this in Matthew 28.) His disciples saw Him several times before He went to stay with God the Father. Jesus told them what He wanted them to do. He also gave them a promise:

“Go and teach all nations, baptize them, and teach them to do what I have told you to do,” He said to them. “And I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”

THE CHURCH OF GOD TODAY

The Church of God, a Worldwide Association, today observes the Passover (and all the other festivals) just as Jesus and the disciples did so long ago. Baptized members meet together on the beginning of the Passover in the evening. They wash each other’s feet. They eat a small piece of unleavened bread and remember Christ’s beaten body. And they sip a tiny cup of wine that symbolizes Christ’s shed blood.

QUIZ TIME

What happened three days and three nights after Jesus died?

This is God's way of reminding His people each year that we need to repent when we disobey Him. Christ's sacrifice makes it possible for God to forgive us. And it's His sacrifice that gives us a continuing opportunity to learn to love and obey God.

QUESTIONS

Here are some questions to think about or talk about as a family:

1. Why did Jesus wash the disciples' feet?
2. What do the unleavened bread and wine mean at the New Testament Passover service?

Read more about this story in the articles "[A Story of the First Passover](#)" and "[Passover: What Did Jesus Do for You?](#)"



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Neither religion nor science has satisfactorily addressed these issues, so people today are of divided opinions, confused or, worst of all, don't care anymore. The ancient words of the prophet Isaiah ring so true today: "Truth is fallen in the street." Why? Is it because God was right when He warned that humans are inclined to reject Him and usually choose not to know Him?

We are here for people who are searching for answers, who are ready to prove all things or who are hungry for more than what they've been taught most of their lives about God, the Bible, the meaning of life and how to live. We want to help you truly understand the good news of the gospel and fulfill Jesus Christ's admonition to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

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