



TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

PASSOVER MEAL

Introduction

General Introduction: To be read by the Narrator to the participants at the beginning of the meal.

Are you ready to celebrate the Passover? What is Passover? It's the celebration of one of the greatest miracles in history: when God set an entire people free from slavery in Egypt. In Jesus' day it was one of the three great pilgrim festivals of the Jewish people, for which they went up to Jerusalem every year to worship and celebrate the feast.

This meal has been celebrated ever since Moses led Israel out of Egypt 3,466 years ago. It is a yearly celebration, done in obedience to the command of God to the Jewish people in Exodus 12 and elsewhere in the Old Testament. Much of the meal as we will celebrate it tonight is the way it was observed in Jesus' day, and as Jesus himself celebrated it every year of his life on earth.

For the Jewish people, the Passover Meal celebrates their deliverance by God from years of slavery in Egypt. Through miraculous signs and wonders, and horrible plagues, God led his people out of Egypt to the promised land of Israel.

For those who believe in Jesus, the Passover Meal is also a celebration of our deliverance by him from the bondage of sin. At Jesus' last Passover, which he ate with his disciples in the Upper Room, he explained this hidden meaning of the Passover. Christian churches still celebrate this teaching in the Lord's Supper, or Communion service, today.

In the early years of Christianity, Christians celebrated the Passover in a way very similar to the way we will do it tonight: a Christian version of the Jewish Passover Meal. They called it the Feast of the Savior's Passover (or the Passover of the Lord). Only later did Christians start to celebrate Holy Week, in which different events in Jesus' last week were celebrated at different times during the week. Tonight, we will join in the practice of the earliest Christians.

Among the Jewish people, Passover is a family event, usually celebrated at home with family members. But tonight we will all celebrate it together as one big family. As in every family, we have a Father: [introduce the person playing the part of the Father]. We also have a Mother: [introduce the person playing the Mother]. And we have a Child: [introduce the Youngest]. The things they will do are part of the regular Jewish Passover.

But many of us have never celebrated Passover before. So to help us understand what is going on, we have two readers: Reader #1 and Reader #2: [introduce]. The sections they will read are not in a typical Jewish Passover, but will help us as Christians understand the meaning of what is happening.

[If you are having a separate Jesus table:] We also want to remember what Jesus did at his last Passover with his disciples. So to help us understand what he did, we have a special Jesus table for Jesus and the disciples: [introduce]. They will read the special sections called "The Lord's Supper" in the program. But they would also have done all the other things that we will all be doing.

As with every Passover, we have some special food on the table:

Matza: A flat bread made without any leaven or yeast [lift up and show an example].

Bitter Herbs: For bitter herbs, we'll be using this plate with fresh vegetables [show]. When the program says to take a piece of bitter herb, you can choose a piece of any of the vegetables on this plate. If you want to be really authentic, choose one that is bitter.

Juice: We will all pour and drink four cups of juice during the meal. You don't have to drink a whole cup each time, but you must still pour and drink at least a little each time. [Mention any restrictions on how much to pour each time if you're short on juice.]

Chicken bone [at the head table: lift and show]: The Jewish people no longer use a lamb bone during the meal because of the destruction of the Temple. As a result, they use a chicken bone instead. [Skip this if using a lamb bone.]

Candles [at the head table]: We will be using candles to mark the beginning of our Passover celebration. In Jesus' day, they would have been oil lamps instead. [(If you have oil lamps: show): We will be using oil lamps of the kind used in Jesus' day to mark the beginning of our Passover celebration. Today a pair of candles is used in most Jewish homes.]

Please do not eat anything at your table until you are told to! The main meal will not begin until about halfway through the program. If you get hungry—you're supposed to! This is to help us remember the days of slavery in Egypt. It's a good opportunity to exercise self-control!

Timing: **Do not start a new section or action until the preceding words or actions are finished. Take** does not mean **Eat!** There are times when you will hold a piece of food or a cup of juice for a while before eating. Wait until instructed in the booklet.

Any questions?

At the end of the meal, everyone is welcome to help clean up. But please do not start cleaning up until the entire program is finished!

Practice Hebrew: One last thing before we start: There is a Hebrew phrase we will say several times during the meal: Baruch attah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam (bar-UCH a-TAH a-do-NAI el-o-HEI-nu ME-lech ha-o-LAM). [Have them repeat it after you, word by word.] What does it mean? "Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe." [Hear the Hebrew at www.totheends.com/music.html (go down the page to "Blessing").]