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THE MYSTERY OF THE PASSOVER CUP

By David Brickner, Executive Director

The Passover cup is one of the central symbols of this holiday known as the Feast of Redemption. Yet the original Passover story makes no mention whatsoever of a cup. In fact, the only biblical mention of a cup in connection with Passover is in the New Testament. When Jesus celebrated this feast with His disciples He raised a cup at least twice during the meal to make important statements about Himself (Luke 22:17,20). What is the significance of the cup Jesus uses during His Passover observance?

Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures the cup is often used as a symbol of God's judgment. For example, the cup of fury, the cup of judgment, the cup of trembling and the cup of horror and desolation appear throughout the Old Testament. Yet we also find the Psalmist crying out, "I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord" (Psalm 116:13). So the symbol of the cup carries with it pictures of both wrath and redemption, of judgment and blessing.

None of these references mentions the Passover. Yet, the themes of judgment and salvation are woven together beautifully in the Passover story. God poured out His judgment on the Egyptians, but spared the Israelites who obeyed Him by placing the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their homes. Each year Jewish families retell these events



THE ORIGINAL PASSOVER STORY MAKES NO MENTION WHATSOEVER OF A CUP.

through the *seder*, the ceremonial meal that commemorates Passover.

Yet, how the cup became a Passover symbol remains a mystery. We do know that by the time Jesus observed the Passover, drinking a cup during the meal was an official part of the observance. In fact, an ancient rabbinic source, the Mishnah, instructs those celebrating to drink from the cup four times during the Passover *seder* (Pesachim 10:1). That tradition remains to this day.

Each time the cup is filled, it has a different name. Opinions vary as to

what certain cups actually symbolize. Most agree that the first cup is the *Kiddush*, which means sanctification. With this cup, we begin the Passover *seder*. The second cup is called the cup of plagues. The third cup is referred to as either the cup of redemption or the cup of blessing. The fourth cup is often called *hallel* which means praise, though some traditions call it the cup of acceptance while still others use it as the cup of Elijah. The latter combine the second cup (plagues) with *hallel*—because we praise God for the plagues He used to bring us out of Egypt.

Jewish tradition says little else about the cups—though we're told they should be filled with red wine to remind us of the blood of the Passover lamb.

The New Testament names one of the cups—the cup taken after supper, which is traditionally the third cup. Jesus calls this cup "the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). The Apostle Paul calls it, "the cup of blessing which we bless," as well as "the cup of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 10:16,21).

Both Jesus and Paul draw on something from Jewish tradition to provide insights not previously understood. By calling the cup "the new covenant in my blood," Jesus makes a direct reference to the promise of Jeremiah 31. God had

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declared that He would make a new covenant because the previous covenant had become “broken” (Jeremiah 31:32). To violate a covenant agreement with God would surely incur His wrath and judgment—a terrible cup! But instead, God promised a new covenant of grace and salvation.

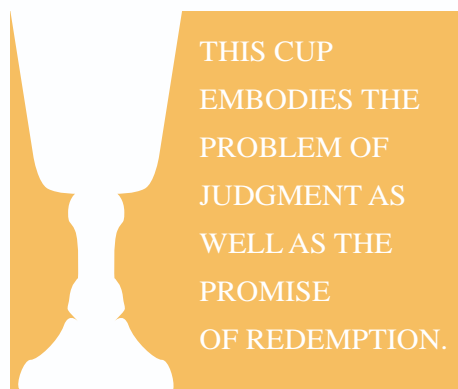
Jesus declared that this new covenant would be poured from the cup of salvation in His blood. The cup of redemption stood for more than the Hebrews’ escape from Egypt; it stood for the plan and purpose of God for all the ages. Judgment and salvation, wrath and redemption are brought together in the mystery of one cup, explained by the Messiah in that upper room. Jesus was not speaking of the cup in a purely symbolic manner. He was describing events that would soon occur in His own life.

Later that evening in the garden of Gethsemane He cried out to the Lord in anguished prayer, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). In His humanity, Jesus could wish that this cup of judgment—the one that everyone *except* Him deserved for breaking of God’s covenant—would pass over Him. Yet, as the obedient Son of God, Jesus knew that the cup of blessing could only be poured out for the salvation of many if He would first drink the cup of God’s judgment on all humanity.

Despite the agony of separation from the Father, our Lord was willing to drink this cup, to bear this judgment, to suffer this horror and death that we might be free and forgiven. No

wonder the Apostle Paul calls this “the cup of blessing which we bless.” What greater blessing can there be than that which Messiah purchased for us in His death, burial and resurrection?

In calling this the cup of blessing as it was known in the Jewish Passover, the Apostle Paul points out the powerful connection between Passover and Holy Communion. The roots of this sacrament are sunk deep in the eternal



plan of God, which is unfolded through the pages of Scripture, as well as in the traditions of God’s chosen people, the Jews.

This cup embodies the problem of judgment as well as the promise of redemption. It reminds me of another cup that blends the problem and the promise.

Do you remember the story of Joseph and his brothers? After they betrayed and sold him into slavery in Egypt, God exalted Joseph to a place of great prominence and power. During a famine his brothers came to Egypt to buy grain. They didn’t recognize the mighty prince of Egypt as their own brother, yet Joseph recognized them.

He kept his identity a secret and demanded that they return with their youngest brother, to prove they weren’t spies.

Joseph had a plan. He hid his own silver cup in his youngest brother’s sack of grain. As the sons of Israel were returning home for the second time, Joseph’s soldiers intercepted them. They found Joseph’s cup and accused Benjamin of theft. That cup became an indictment against Benjamin and a symbol of judgment—certain death, as far as the brothers could see. They all tore their clothes in horror and returned with Benjamin to Egypt.

There they discovered the true identity of the prince of Egypt and were reunited with the brother who had every right to execute all but the youngest—not for his silver cup—but for selling him into slavery. The cup that brought them back to Egypt was, to them, a symbol of judgment and death. Yet, it became the occasion for redemption and forgiveness.

How I long for my Jewish people to find redemption and healing and forgiveness in the cup of the New Covenant, through Messiah Y’shua (Jesus). I pray that every gospel tract our Jews for Jesus staff distributes, every book or video we mail, every personal visit we conduct may become like that cup of Joseph, hidden away for God’s purpose, leading to final salvation in Jesus. As we remember the story of Passover, as we celebrate the triumph of the Lamb this Resurrection season, won’t you join me in praying that the mystery of this cup of blessing which we bless will be made known to my Jewish people as well?

WE EXIST TO MAKE THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS AN UNAVOIDABLE ISSUE TO OUR JEWISH PEOPLE WORLDWIDE.



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THE BYG PIC*

*Behold Your God Picture

By Bob Reynolds, guest columnist

Our church, Valley Baptist, in San Rafael, California has a strong emphasis on missions. As an annual part of our church outreach, our board selects special projects to support with offerings above our normal giving. These are normally missions projects of some kind for which the church sees a special need, something outside the normal scope of the groups we support.

Last Easter, the board selected the first Jews for Jesus Behold Your God campaign as our special project. We have been supporting the Jews for Jesus ministry since its early years, but we wanted to do something beyond

our usual support. The campaign was in San Francisco and had a local appeal. More importantly, we saw it as a great opportunity to reach out—during the time we celebrate the resurrection of the Messiah, Jesus Christ—to our Jewish friends and others with the good news that He had come and was risen. We wanted to join with Jews for Jesus in this campaign and encourage the unsaved to look up and behold their God.

Our Easter offering brought in a significant sum of money to help launch the first of the campaigns. It also stimulated our congregation to prayerfully follow the progress of the Behold Your God campaign, which was a blessing to us as well as to Jews for Jesus. We undertake similar projects at Thanksgiving and Christmas as part of our holiday celebrations.

We still have many cities where there are 25,000 or more Jewish people to reach during Operation Behold Your God. If your church is interested in taking a special offering to evangelize one of these cities, we will gratefully receive it. If you would like more information about a particular city, please call 415-864-2600 and ask to speak to David Stone about a Behold Your God offering.


COMING SOON!


Many of you have seen our Christ in the Passover presentations and have asked if we have the presentation on video. We are working on it and will let you know when it's available. Meanwhile, please check and see if there's a flyer with your newsletter announcing one of our missionaries coming to your area. If we are presenting Christ in the Passover near you, we would love for you to come, and please bring friends who need to know Jesus (we would be glad to meet your Christian friends as well!).





PRAYER PROMPTERS


Please pray for:


 many Jewish people to come hear the gospel at the Christ in the Passover presentations we are doing in churches, as well as the Passover banquets in our branches; that many will hunger for God's redemption and recognize the truth about Jesus


 our staff to be renewed spiritually during this Festival of Redemption, and that the joy of our salvation will strengthen us to reach many people this month

 salvation for our staff's unsaved relatives and a steady walk with God for the children of our staff, most of whom professed faith at an early age

 blessings for Christians who have been bold enough to invite Jewish friends to hear our message, and continued opportunities for them to witness

 salvation for Judith (New York) and Brian (San Francisco) (p. 8)

 grace and strength for new Jewish believers Monica (San Francisco), Vic (Los Angeles) and Joseph (Moscow) (p. 8)

 God's work in Mark's life, to renew him spiritually and get him deeply rooted in his faith (Moscow) (p. 8)



THE CHRISTMAS-RESURRECTION

CONNECTION

As I write, it's December and we've barely finished celebrating Jesus' birth. But in the land of newsletter editing, it's March—time to think about Jesus' death and Resurrection. It's all part of the joy of publications—doing everything so far ahead of time that you're never quite sure what month it is.

But you know, the more I think about it, the more sense it makes to think about the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection all at once. And of course now it really is March for you, our friends who take the time to read the Jews for Jesus Newsletter. (God bless you!) So the shoe is on the other foot as I talk to you a little from the not-too-distant December past.

Have you ever thought about how the glitter and glamour of contemporary Christmas are oddly detached from the real drama of Jesus' arrival on this earth? After all, He was haunted by death almost from the moment of His birth. Herod's plot to kill the Messiah forced Miriam (Mary), Joseph and baby Y'shua (Jesus) to flee and live as refugees. Not a very joyous scene, and one you don't see in many pageants.

Even without the machinations of an evil Herod, Jesus was dogged by death from His very birth. Remember Simeon's prophecy as he held the baby? He joyously recognized Y'shua as the Messiah, but in the next breath he warned His mother that a sword would pierce

her own soul. Simeon understood that this child was born to die.

We sing "Joy to the World" as we celebrate the birth of this baby for whom there was no room, this baby who entered the world through a stable—this wondrous child of promise who is shadowed by menacing threats and the darker promise of a painful death. Because beyond the stable smell, beyond the doom and gloom cast by the cross is the centerpiece of the gospel: Resurrection.

Did you ever notice that God's cure for sin is the exact opposite of a sugar-coated pill? He never promised a solution that would taste good to us. Sin is a bitter disease and its antidote is not pleasant. But at the core of the antidote is a sweetness that cuts through all the bitterness.

God addresses the bitter truth head on and, in fact, He turns the harsh and painful realities of life to His own purposes. The pain Jesus suffered was the cutting edge of a radical surgery that God performed on the human race. Y'shua was cut off for us so that we could be made whole. He experienced death in order to bring about Resurrection—first His, then ours. For this He was born (John 12:27).

When we are born again, we share in Y'shua's death as well as His Resurrection. In a sense, like Him, we are (re)born to die. Our new birth means death to our old nature, to our very selves—and most of us

find it is an ongoing and painful death. But it is the way to freedom.

When we are born again our spiritual senses come to life, and new pain receptors make us vulnerable to harsh realities we did not know before. We ache for those headed to a Christless eternity. We suffer to see the body of Christ torn and divided when we know that God desires us to be one. We feel things we didn't feel when we were dead in our sin. We smell the odor of stable refuse in a world that has no room for the baby Jesus, or for those of us who want to follow Him.

And yet . . . in the middle of it all, there is a surpassing joy. Because though we may be crucified in public opinion and though we may be rejected by family and friends for being Jesus' people, there is that certain something beyond the bitterness. Yes, we develop new pain receptors, but we also develop new joy receptors.

So I think that contemplating Jesus' death and Resurrection at Christmastime is not such a bad thing. And maybe it's not such a bad thing for you to contemplate Christmas during the Passover-Resurrection season. This is the season that gives meaning to Jesus' birth. The bittersweet fact of that birth is that it leads to death . . . and the bittersweet fact of that death is that it leads to life.

—Ruth Rosen,
editor

There are interesting comparisons between Passover and Christmas, and in particular, between Moses and Jesus. Below are some points of comparison. You can probably come up with more on your own!

MOSES

JESUS

Pharaoh orders Jewish male babies killed, fearful that the Hebrew slaves will revolt and throw off his authority. (Exodus 1:8-16)

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Pharaoh is powerless to take the life of God's chosen, Moses, who will eventually free his people from Egyptian bondage. (Exodus 1:17)

.....

Moses, the son of oppressed people, grows up as royalty in Egypt. (Exodus 2:1-10)

.....

Moses works as a shepherd before leading the Israelites out of Egypt. (Exodus 3:1)

.....

Moses is called upon to challenge the authority of Pharaoh, who refuses to recognize the power of God despite many miracles. (Exodus 5-11)

.....

God spares the firstborn sons of Israel because of the blood of the lamb painted on their doorposts and lintels. (Exodus 12:12-13)

.....

The death of Egypt's sons causes Pharaoh to release his hold on God's chosen people. (Exodus 12:29-31)

.....

God commands the children of Israel to remember how He redeemed them from slavery by celebrating Passover. (Exodus 12:14-21)

Herod orders Jewish male babies killed, fearful that the Messiah will eventually lead a revolt that will threaten his authority. (Matthew 2:1-16)

.....

Herod is powerless to take the life of God's chosen, Jesus, who will eventually free His people from the bondage of sin. (Matthew 2:19-21)

.....

Jesus, the King of Kings, grows up as the son of oppressed people, spending part of His youth in Egypt. (Matthew, Luke)

.....

Jesus describes Himself as "the good shepherd." (John 10:11,14)

.....

Jesus is called upon to challenge the religious authorities of His day, most of whom refuse to recognize the power of God despite many miracles. (John 10:32)

.....

God does not spare His own Son, but sends Him to shed His blood on a wooden cross. (John 3:16, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 9:12)

.....

Jesus' death causes sin to lose its grip on those who receive His sacrifice as the unique atonement for sin. (Romans 8:2)

.....

As Jesus celebrated Passover with His disciples, He instructed them to use the unleavened bread and the cup as reminders of the redemption He was about to accomplish. (Luke 22:19)

The Son Rises

BY GREG SAVITT, MISSIONARY

I stood on the beach, looking out at the Atlantic Ocean, sensing God’s presence. The waves and the barely visible horizon spoke to me of His majesty and power. It was just before sunrise on Easter morning. The story began about a year earlier with a man named

Lee, a successful television producer and a secular Jew—who for some reason felt a “pull” to read the Tenach (Old Testament). Night after night he found himself reading for two hours or more—despite the fact that he considered himself neither religious nor an avid reader. Still, something kept drawing him. The many detailed prophecies concerning the coming Messiah caught his attention. He began to think this could actually be God’s word . . . and he began wondering about Jesus.



Lee knew some Jewish people who believed in Jesus from work, and one of them gave him a book titled *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell. Lee read this book along with another titled *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus* by Michael Brown. These books explained and clarified things for Lee intellectually, but emotionally he was not ready to accept Jesus as the Messiah described in the Old Testament.

On Tuesday July 11, 2000 Lee arrived at his office early. As he prepared for the day he was caught off guard by the question that suddenly came to mind: “I wonder what it would be like to go to church?” Later that day, he opened the Yellow Pages, randomly selected a

church and called to inquire about their service times. After giving him the information, Pastor Chris Stultz asked Lee what church he currently attended. Lee replied that he was Jewish and did not attend church. The pastor immediately told Lee that he should come that Sunday as they were having a presentation especially for Jewish people. In disbelief Lee told the pastor, “You’d say anything to get a person to church!” Nevertheless, Lee told his wife about the conversation and she suggested that they check it out. So they did.

As Lee entered the church he saw something oddly familiar—a table set for a Passover seder. Then the pastor introduced their guest speaker—a missionary from Jews for Jesus who was there to explain the significance of Jesus in the Passover. (That was me!) After the Christ in the Passover presentation I met Lee and his wife. Over the next couple of weeks, I had a few Bible studies with Lee concerning how God had sent His Son to redeem us from sin. I could tell the

Holy Spirit was at work as I watched “the lights go on” in Lee’s eyes. Then one day when I called him, Lee informed me that the preceding Sunday he had returned to church and received Y’shua as his personal Savior.

I continued meeting with Lee and his wife over the next few weeks and months. His wife was still interested, yet unsure what to think about Lee’s new faith.

When Lee called to invite our family to his water baptism, it was my privilege to attend. I stood on the beach with my wife and children before the service, worshiping God with Lee and his new church family as the sun rose on the Atlantic Ocean



that Easter morning. Lee’s wife was crying. I hoped and prayed that God was touching her heart.



It was amazing to watch Lee and his pastor (yes, the same one that Lee “found” in the Yellow Pages) wade into the Atlantic Ocean. I thought of how God had drawn Lee to Himself, how much Lee had grown spiritually—and what a blessing it was for me to have a small part in God’s great plan.

I continued to meet with Lee and his wife and one night I received a call telling me that she had come to know Jesus as well! Praise God!

Lee has since launched a web site designed to speak to Jewish people about the Bible and the Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ. He also sends out a daily Scripture reading, which I find very uplifting. What a blessing to see God raise up a Jewish brother in Christ who is also a co-laborer in the field of Jewish evangelism!

A BRIEF WITNESSING



FROM MOISHE ROSEN, FOUNDER

Maybe some of you run into the same problems that our professional missionary-evangelists encounter.

Many people welcome the companionship, the cheer, even the Bible reading and prayer we give on each visit. Yet, sometimes it is difficult to get from ordinary and salutary things to sacred things—to shift the conversation from how we feel to what God wants the person to know.

Chances are, a declaration like, “Let me tell you something that God wants you to know,” will not help bring someone’s thinking along with you. Better to follow Y’shua’s example—He knew how to ask a leading question.

I suggest something like, “You know, you haven’t told me much about yourself and your spiritual life. Do you mind if I ask a personal question?”

And then pause until they say, “Yes” or, “I don’t know.”

As long as they give consent, here is the question: “What do you think God wants from you?”

Even when talking to an atheist, I’ll ask, “If you believed in God, what do you think that He would want from you?”

Some will say something like, “God wants me to be a good person.” At this point I always ask, “What makes good to be good and bad to be bad?” The answer to that should lead them to see that only God can establish what is good or bad.

The value of asking what God wants is to open the question of His expectations and our obligations. Most people who are not redeemed do not think much about their obligation to God. When people begin to realize that such an obligation may exist, they begin to think in terms of an actual relationship. That’s often the first step to understanding the need to be reconciled to God. When people see that need, we then have the opportunity to tell them about Y’shua.

PASSOVER IN A PARALLEL UNIVERSE



MOSES IN MANHATTAN

BITS FROM THE



New York

Karol Joseph reports, “This is partnership at its best! The pastor of Langhorne Presbyterian Church arranged for me to come to the church twice. First, I came last July so the people could get to know me and feel confident bringing their friends for my second visit. Six months later, I returned. Many people had extended invitations to their Jewish friends. Though most did not accept, the invitations themselves opened doors for people to share their faith and that was encouraging. One Jewish woman, Judith, accepted her friend’s invitation and stayed for the lunch hosted at the pastor’s home. She also gave me her card for future contact.”

San Francisco

Robyn Wilk reports, “When I first began meeting with Monica three years ago, she was angry with God, sometimes claiming she didn’t believe He existed. Still, she continued meeting with me to discuss spiritual matters. Last year, when it looked like she wouldn’t be able to get a job in her desired profession, I began to pray for her and with her. Months later, her situation had completely turned around and she was able to join the police force (which is what she trained for). Monica knew that God had answered my prayer and her heart began to soften. Finally, last week she prayed with me to receive Jesus as her Messiah. Three years ago it seemed impossible—but with God all things are possible.”

Also from San Francisco, David Rothstein reports, “I met Brian while handing out broadsides (tracts) at a downtown BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) station. He’d seen a discarded broadside on the floor, and picked it up because a Christian friend had *just* suggested that he contact an organization called Jews for Jesus! When he ran into me at the top of the escalator, he realized it was more than coincidence. Like many, Brian is very much influenced by Eastern thought, but he’s open to seeing what Scripture teaches. Please pray for Brian as we study the Gospel of John together.”

Los Angeles

Rob Wertheim reports, “A Jewish believer I’ve ministered to for a few years referred me to Vic, a Jewish man who has always been very curious about spiritual things. Vic was open to Jesus, but had never acknowledged his sin to the Lord or received God’s forgiveness through Jesus’ sacrifice. Vic and I had a good visit. We were taking a walk and he was about to ask Jesus into his life when a stranger came over to ask for directions. Vic helped him and then told me, ‘It’s no surprise that we were interrupted at such an important moment.’ Then Vic asked Y’shua into his heart. Please keep him in your prayers.”

Moscow

Igor Barbanel reports, “Mark was a contact from the 2001 Moscow Campaign. He came to our Shabbat

services for some time, and after several visits he repented. Then he stopped coming to our meetings and I was unable to contact him for several months. I remembered him in my prayers and wondered if I would see him again. I was very glad when he called me and asked if we could meet. Mark has been having financial problems and God has not been a priority in his life. Please pray for our ministry to him and that he will grow in his walk with God.”

Mira Gracheva reports, “We were returning from a successful sortie (tract-passing expedition). Eight Jewish people had given us their information for further contact and two Jewish people had even prayed with us to repent and receive Jesus. We were so tired on the subway that we missed our stop. So we got off and as we waited for a train to take us back, I realized I was standing next to a Jewish man. Everything inside of me began to yell, ‘No, enough, I’m tired, the sortie is over.’ But while my flesh was fighting, I had already begun talking to Josef. He wasn’t in a hurry, and seemed very glad to meet us. It was too noisy to have a good conversation so we went up and stood next to a police station. We read the Bible, prayed and talked. The Lord was with us, and Josef prayed the prayer of repentance with tears in his eyes. Please pray for his growth in God.”



The paschal (Easter) mystery is the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Paschal candle is a large, white candle used liturgically in the Western Rites of Christianity (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, etc.). A new Paschal candle is blessed and lit every year at Easter, and is used throughout the Paschal season and then throughout the year on special occasions, such as baptisms and funerals. ...
That particular celebration of the Passover by Jesus then became known as the Last Supper, as it was his last supper before he was crucified. [Read More](#).
Asked in [Saints, Jesus Christ](#).
Passover or Pesach (/ˈpɛsɛɪˈtʃ, ˈpeɪtʃ-/; Hebrew: פֶּסַח‎) is a major Jewish holiday and one of the most widely celebrated Jewish holidays. Together with Shavuot and Sukkot, Passover was one of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals (Shalosh Regalim) during which the entire population of the kingdom of Judah made a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. Samaritans still make this pilgrimage to Mount Gerizim, but only men participate in public worship.
The Paschal Mystery is at the heart of our faith and how we share in Jesus' death, resurrection, and entrance into glory. In *The Fourth Cup*, Dr. Scott Hahn shows the reader how our redemption follows a plan and pattern established from the very beginning of time. With his exceptional skill as both a scholar and a master teacher, he guides us on a pilgrimage along the path of the gradual accomplishment of God's saving action in history. Here Hahn communicates a vivid sense of the presence of the fourth cup today. The completion of Jesus' Passover is the heart of God's covenantal gift, a gift that touches every human being in every age, including today. It is this sense of presence that makes the book a thrill to read.