



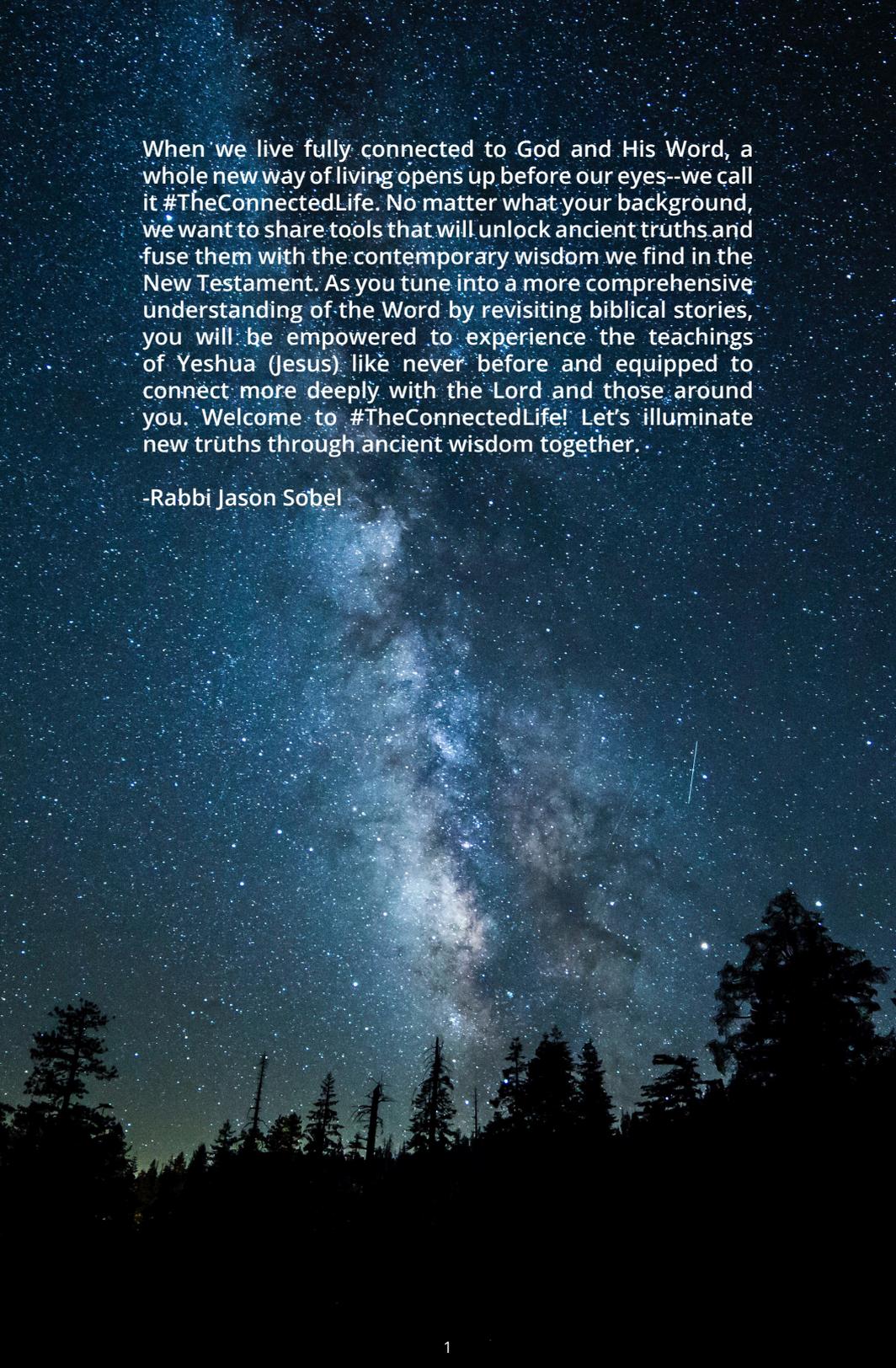
A Daring Rescue:

THE ORIGINS OF PASSOVER

FUSION
WITH RABBI JASON



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When we live fully connected to God and His Word, a whole new way of living opens up before our eyes--we call it #TheConnectedLife. No matter what your background, we want to share tools that will unlock ancient truths and fuse them with the contemporary wisdom we find in the New Testament. As you tune into a more comprehensive understanding of the Word by revisiting biblical stories, you will be empowered to experience the teachings of Yeshua (Jesus) like never before and equipped to connect more deeply with the Lord and those around you. Welcome to #TheConnectedLife! Let's illuminate new truths through ancient wisdom together.

-Rabbi Jason Sobel



Introduction to Passover

Every year on the fifteenth day of the biblical month of Nissan (mid-spring), Jewish people around the world begin to celebrate the biblical holiday of Passover for a seven day period. Passover, or Pesach in Hebrew, literally means to “skip over,” referring to the angel of death who skipped or passed over the Jewish households. During the first two nights of Passover, a symbolic dinner called a Seder is held in every Jewish household. Passover commemorates the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt through God’s miraculous intervention.

Passover should be important for every follower of Yeshua (Jesus). Every major milestone in Yeshua’s life, including his death, occurred on a chag; a biblical holiday. Yeshua died during Passover, which is why He is called the Passover Lamb. Before His death, He dined with His disciples in what is known as “the Last Supper” --- but the Last Supper was actually the last Seder. Journey with me as we delve into the story behind this celebration of God’s protection and provision for His people.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

It's 1446 B.C., and the Jews are trapped. They've been enslaved to the Egyptians for the last 400 years. God has heard the cries of their hearts, and the time has come to restore the freedom of His people. A uniquely prepared man named Moses is the leader He will use to set them free.

The Egyptians are led by a ruthless and stubborn king, identified in the Torah simply as "Pharaoh." Pharaoh ignores Moses' warnings and refuses to let the Israelites leave Egypt. So God plagues the Egyptians in ten different ways, each one more terrible than the one before. The tenth and final plague is the death of the firstborn son in every Egyptian household. Only then does Pharaoh relent and agree to let the children of Israel go free. The Israelites prepare to leave the country in a hurry.

Shortly after granting their release, Pharaoh changes his mind. He sends an army of horses and chariots to chase down the Israelites as they flee. With the Red Sea on one side of

them and the army of Pharaoh on the other, the Israelites have no way out. All seems lost.

But God steps in and gives His people a new escape route. He parts the mighty waters of the Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to walk through on dry land to the other side. Pharaoh's army tries to follow them, but the walls of water come crashing down and they are drowned. Passover celebrates this series of events, reminding us that God protects His chosen people in stunning, supernatural ways.

Connection Point

We all have our own personal "Egypt" -- a part of our lives in which we feel we are helpless or held captive. In what area of your life do you need freedom? Passover is not just about past redemption, but also redemption in the present. What God did for Israel, He can do for you!





Seder: A SACRED SUPPER

Central to the celebration of Passover is the Seder meal, which is usually eaten at home with friends and family. *Seder* in Hebrew means “order,” and refers to the order of Passover service. The service hinges on a symbolic retelling of the story of the exodus from Egypt. Each food present at the meal, including the matzah, bitter herbs, and four cups of grape juice or wine, holds a powerful significance.

At one time, a key aspect of Passover was the offering of the Passover Lamb. Since the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 A.D., the Passover offering has ceased. The biblical source for the primary elements for the Passover are found in Exodus 12:8-18.



Spring Cleaning

In my home, we still prepare for Passover the traditional way: by cleaning *everything*, from top to bottom, getting rid of any evidence of leaven. We vacuum every corner of the house, and we scrub every cabinet. Our young sons, Avi and Judah, are responsible to help us purify our home during this elaborate process. My wife loves this time of year --- it's the only time I join in for deep cleaning!

It is traditional to even set aside special Passover dishes that never come into contact with leaven. If we use our everyday metal utensils to eat during Passover, we boil them in water first. We pour hot water over our counters, and we put tinfoil or plastic over surfaces we can't clean that way. We go through our cars to make sure that there is not one bit of leaven left. There can't even be crumbs in the corners of the pockets of our clothing.

Yeshua entered the Temple to expose the leaven --- the impurities and the injustices happening within the

temple walls. Instead of vacuuming, He overturned the tables of the moneychangers in the court of the Gentiles. Like any good Son, He was responsible for cleaning out His Father's house.

The Apostle Paul actually uses the custom of searching for the leaven on the evening before the start of Passover to convey an important spiritual truth in his first letter to the Corinthians:

"Your boasting is no good. Don't you know that a little hametz [yeast] leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old hametz, so you may be a new batch, just as you are unleavened—for Messiah, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast not with old hametz, the hametz of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened bread—the matzah of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:6-7 TLV).

Yeshua exhorts us in a similar fashion:

“Therefore if you are presenting your offering upon the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering” (Matthew 5:23-24 TLV).

This passage is talking about leaven within our spiritual temple. When we have grudges, unforgiveness, bitterness, or disputes with others, that is “leaven” that can grow into sin. Yeshua is telling us to get rid of it, clean it out, and come to the altar with unleavened hearts to offer our gifts. In preparation for Passover we need to remove the spiritual leaven from every compartment of our hearts, and the literal leaven from every part of our home.

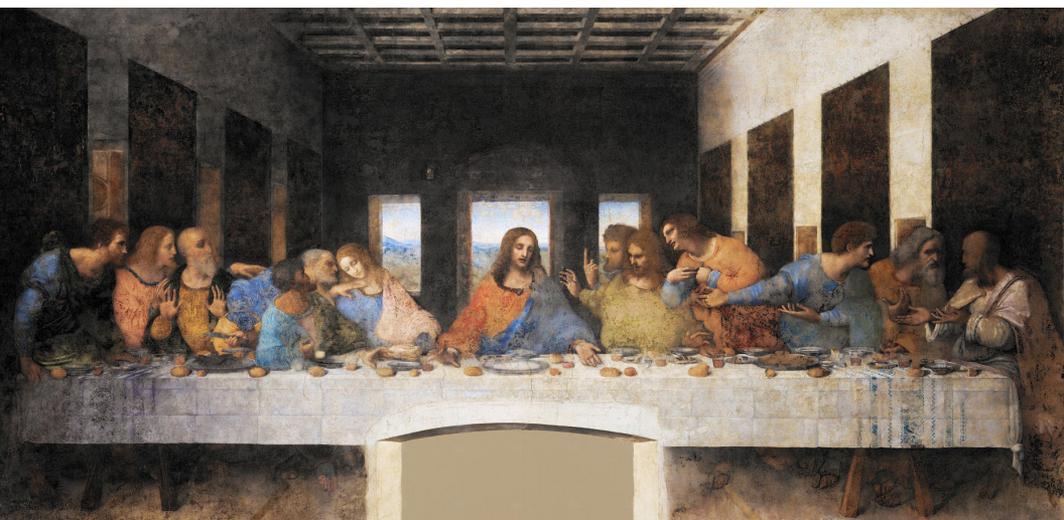
Connection Point

When we partake of the Passover meal, we are to have purified our inner dwelling place as much as we have purified our homes. In what ways would failing to do this inner cleansing affect our ability to hear and connect with what God wants us to see in the story of Passover? Ask God to reveal any “leaven” in your life that needs to be removed.

“FOR SEVEN DAYS YOU ARE TO EAT
MATZOT WITH IT, THE BREAD OF
AFFLICTION—FOR YOU CAME OUT FROM
THE LAND OF EGYPT IN HASTE. DO THIS
SO THAT ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE
YOU WILL REMEMBER THE DAY WHEN YOU
CAME OUT FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT”

DEUTERONOMY 16:3





ONE LAST SEDER

Every major milestone in Yeshua's life, including his death, occurred on a chag; a biblical holiday. Yeshua died during Passover, which is why He is called the Passover Lamb. Before His death, He dined with His disciples in what is known as "the Last Supper" --- but the Last Supper was actually the last Seder.

The most famous icon of the Last Supper is the painting of the same name by Leonardo da Vinci. Yeshua and His very western European-looking disciples are depicted gathered around a table with glasses of wine, loaves of fluffy white bread, and fish. Since Passover is a Jewish holiday also known as the "Feast of Unleavened Bread," da Vinci was way off in his depiction; there is no way leavened loaves and fish sat on Yeshua's table! He and His disciples would have been eating the large, flat, cracker-like bread called *matzah*.



Matzah: BREAD OF FREEDOM & HEALING

When Pharaoh, overcome with grief over the loss of his firstborn son, finally agreed to release the Israelites from slavery, God instructed them to hit the road in haste. They baked their bread quickly, not allowing it time to rise. This is why unleavened bread, *matzah*, is eaten throughout this holiday.

Matzah bread has a corrugated look. Holes like dotted lines run vertically alongside rows of browned pockets of dough, forming peaks and valleys. The "affliction" that the bread represents is the centuries of slavery in Egypt endured by the Jews. The brown stripes running the length of the bread recall the lashings of the slave drivers upon our enslaved ancestors. It is also known as the bread of "freedom and healing," recalling how God redeemed them from Egypt with an "...outstretched arm"(Exodus 6:6 TLV).

We can also see Yeshua represented in the matzah:

"Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered Him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions,...the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4 TLV).

Yeshua's "bread of affliction" was the weight of our sins. The matzah holes stand for His piercings, and the brown stripes represent the stripes from His beatings, through which we are healed and set free from bondage to sin. We are also set free from our own personal "Egypt"; personal prisons that confine and limit us from being who God wants us to be and doing what He has destined for us.

During the Last Seder, matzah was the bread Jesus lifted, broke, and gave to the disciples to eat, saying, "Take, eat; this is My body" (Matthew 26:26). In fact, communion is looked upon as a mini-Passover whenever we partake.

Did you ever think there was such deep meaning in so thin a cracker?

Connection Point

The Jewish tradition is rich with parallels to the spiritual and physical worlds. Why do you think God places such significance on symbols, like the matzah and leaven?



Four Cups

Nothing is random in the Bible, especially not the numbers. The number 7 stands for perfection and completion: seven days in which God created the earth. The number 3 stands for the Godhead: three-in-one. Yeshua's ministry lasted on earth three-and-a-half years, and His time in the tomb was three days. His lifetime was a multiple of three; He was thirty-three years old at the time of His death.

Biblically, the number 4 is the number that epitomizes exile and redemption. From the *four* corners of the earth, from every direction, God is going to redeem His people. There are *four* cups of catastrophe that the nations will have to drink and four cups of

consolation that will be given to Israel at the final redemption (Isaiah 11:12).

The Passover Seder is centered around four cups of wine that we drink throughout the Seder meal. These four cups function as a sort of time-keeping device for the evening; the Seder officially starts at the first cup, and closes shortly after the fourth cup. The four cups symbolize the four distinct promises God made to the Jewish people:

"Therefore say to Bnei-Yisrael: I am Adonai, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will



take you to Myself as a people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am Adonai your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (Exodus 6:6-7 TLV)

These promises represent the four stages of redemption.

The first cup, known as the "Cup of Sanctification," corresponds to the phrase *"I will bring you out."* We respond to this promise by saying, *"God, make us holy. Set us apart for your plans and holy purposes for our lives."*

The second cup is the "Cup of Deliverance": *"I will free you."* This is also known as the "Cup of Plagues" -- we remember that God did not just redeem us, but He redeemed us with great signs and great wonders. We

remember that God, through Moses, turned water into blood, and that the Messiah's first miracle turned water into wine.

The third cup is the "Cup of Redemption": *"I will redeem you."* We are reminded of the blood of the Passover lamb that was put upon the doorposts of the houses. This cup also points to the final great redemption. It was the third cup of the Seder that Yeshua raised after supper, declaring that it also represents His own blood, which was about to be spilled. When we drink the third cup we remember Yeshua is the ultimate Passover Lamb.

The fourth cup is the "Cup of Acceptance" or thanksgiving. It correlates to the promise *"I will take you as my own people,"* which we say

over the psalms of praise known as *Hallel* (Psalm 113-118). This cup looks to the future, to the coming of the Kingdom. It was over the fourth cup that Yeshua said, "I will not drink it again until I drink it with you anew in my Father's kingdom." We acknowledge and give thanks for our acceptance as children of the King, knowing our position, power, and authority in the Messiah. We should drink this cup with great expectation and hope that this will be the year we drink this cup anew with Yeshua at the banquet supper in the Messianic Kingdom!

There were four decrees that Pharaoh made against the Jewish people:

1. *"They embittered their lives with hard labor."*
2. *"If it is a boy, you must kill it."*
3. *"Every boy who was born must be cast into the Nile."*
4. *"You shall not continue to give straw to the people to make bricks."*

The four cups counteract Pharaoh's four decrees!

The name of God is comprised of four Hebrew letters – Yud, Hey, Vav, and Hey – which we pronounce as *Adonai*. The four cups correspond to the four letters in God's name to signify that ALL of God was involved in the process of redemption. God did not send an intermediary; God Himself came and redeemed us from 400 years of enslavement. God alone parted the sea and led us across onto dry land.

The four cups also point to the reality that Israel was going to experience four exiles: Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman. The results of

exile were not only physical. Yeshua, as the Passover lamb, came to undo all four aspects of exile. The below is a brief explanation of each kind of exile. You can find out more about the four exiles in our Hanukkah eBooklet, *Miracles and Wonders*.

The first aspect He came to deal with is spiritual exile. We were spiritually exiled from God when we sinned in the garden. Yeshua has taken this separation onto Himself when we behold Him on the tree saying, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27:26 TLV).

We are also exiled from one another. On the cross, Yeshua delivers us from this interpersonal exile when He says, *"Forgive them for they know not what they do. Today you will be with me in paradise"* (Luke 23:43 TLV).

We are intra-personally exiled, emotionally and psychologically, from our true selves and our destinies as sons and daughters of God. Yeshua reversed this exile as well, as reflected in the gospel of John: *"But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God"* (John 1:12 TLV). Because of what Yeshua has done for us as both the Passover Lamb and Greater than Moses, spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical transformation and healing is made possible for those who call upon His name!

The fourth exile is the physical exile. The ground and all creation was cursed as a result of the fall. The thorns piercing Yeshua's head represent Him taking this physical curse upon Himself on the cross to redeem what was lost by Adam and Eve.

Connection Point

Exile is about distance. This distance causes us to be disconnected from God, ourselves, others, and creation. Take a moment to consider the depth and quality of your spiritual and relational connections to God and others. You don't have to stay stuck! The Lord wants to draw you near through Messiah Yeshua. #TheConnectedLife is a blessed one. What areas of your life would you like to see God help you find deeper and more intimate connections?





The Bitter Made Sweet:

SEATED NEXT TO THE KING

The “bitter herbs” that are part of the Seder meal represent the bitterness of slavery. There is *maror*, *charoset*, and *karpas*.

The *maror* is usually raw horseradish that stands for the harshness of the Egyptian oppression of the Jews. The *maror* is dipped in *charoset*, which is a sweet-tasting mixture of apples, nuts, cinnamon, and wine, which symbolizes the mortar used by the Jews during their slavery. The *charoset* exemplifies how God can turn what is bitter into something sweet, as Romans 8:28 reminds us: “*God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*”

The *karpas* is parsley, meant to recall the hyssop that was used to apply the blood to the doorposts of the houses in the Passover story. We dip the parsley in saltwater to remember the tears of our ancestors and the sweat of our brow in Egypt. Some say the

salty water represents the Red Sea, which God parted for us by the staff of Moses.

The parsley is also meant to remind us of our royalty. Parsley was used in the multi-course meals of royalty. It cleansed the palette between the servings of the different dishes. Though once we wept as slaves, we are now children of the King!

A man once came to a rabbi and asked, “What is the worst sin in the world?” The rabbi said, “If you forget you are a child of the King.” The man then asked, “What is the second worst sin?” The rabbi said, “To know that you are a child of the King and not live like one.”

We were created in the image of the living God, the King of the universe. Yeshua, the King of Kings, regained our royal inheritance for us. “*And He raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Messiah Yeshua*” (Ephesians 2:6 TLV).



**"YOU ARE TO TELL YOUR SON ON THAT DAY
SAYING, 'IT IS BECAUSE OF WHAT ADONAI DID
FOR ME WHEN I CAME OUT OF EGYPT.'"**

EXODUS 13:8 TLV



FIFTEEN STEPS, ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES: THE HAGGADAH

The Passover Seder is based on the *haggadah*, a book of instructions, prayers, blessings, and stories that lays out the proper order for the ritual. *Haggadah* means “the telling,” referring to the recitation of the Exodus story.

The basic text of the traditional haggadah is almost identical to that used in the eleventh century. In the 1960s and 1970s, many different versions began to appear, and now there are hundreds of *haggadot* (plural of haggadah) available, each outlining the same basic ritual with a different spin.

Every Seder needs a leader who will conduct the proceedings and read key parts of the haggadah. In traditional

homes, the leader may wear a white *kittel* (robe), which is worn only during certain rituals (the Passover Seder, Yom Kippur [Day of Atonement prayer services], one’s wedding, and one’s burial) to create the awareness that this is a sacred time. The Seder then proceeds through 15 steps.

The Seder has relatively clear rules and a specific order, but what makes the evening special are the extra flourishes and unique touches that the participants add along the way. You have plenty of room to be creative and add to the Seder — additional songs, prayers, poems, stories, and commentary. If you aren’t having fun, you aren’t doing it right.

CELEBRATE PASSOVER: HOST YOUR OWN SEDER

At the Seder, everyone is welcome. Some people think that Gentiles should not be welcomed at the Passover Seder. But the text doesn’t say, “If you are Jewish, come and eat.” It says to everyone, “If you are hungry, come and eat.”

Step 1: **KADESH**



This first cup of the Passover Seder is called the Cup of Sanctification, or Kiddush in Hebrew. As we sit around the Seder Table, we recite the Kiddush, a special Hebrew blessing, over the first cup (Kos rishon) of Passover wine or grape juice.

When we raise this cup and bless it, we remember that God not only separated us from the Egyptians, but sanctified us to Himself as a people. When we recite this blessing, we are crying out to God to make us and this night Holy.

“LORD, SANCTIFY ME. MAKE ME KADOSH LECHA—HOLY UNTO YOU!”

Tradition says to fill the cup to the brim, because God does not want us live out of the lack but out of the overflow! According to Jewish custom, each adult should drink a minimum of 1.7 ounces of grape juice or wine for the first cup, which is not very much.

Every time we drink one of the four cups of the Passover, we do so while reclining and leaning to the left. In ancient times, it was the custom of the wealthy nobility to eat while reclining. It is also a custom in our house to never refill your own cup. Why? On Passover, we celebrate freedom. **We are no longer slaves, we are royalty, and we eat and drink as such.** The Seder is a divine drama that is meant to help us embody and fully understand this spiritual truth. To celebrate our freedom and position as children of the King, we recline.

Practically, leaning to the left can be accomplished by putting a small pillow on the back of one's seat or by leaning on the back rest of the chair next to you.



Step 2: U'RCHATZ

The second step is a ritual washing — a symbolic spiritual cleansing. Usually we only wash our hands before we eat bread.

Why do we wash at this point? It is to raise the awareness of the children, to get them to ask the question: “Why is this night different from all other nights?” In fact, much of the Seder is designed to engage the kids.

The water should be warm to make the washing pleasant. A pitcher of water is traditionally used to pour water over the right and then over

the left hand. Afterward, you can dry your hands on a towel. In some homes or in a large congregation, the leader often acts as proxy, performing the u'rchatz for the attendants.

Ordinarily, a blessing is spoken over the ritual washing of our hands, but not this time. As you wash your hands, meditate on the words of Psalm 24:3-4 TLV: “Who may go up on the mountain of *Adonai*? Who may stand in His holy place? One with clean hands and a pure heart.”

Step 3: **KARPAS**

The first bite of food eaten during a Seder is the *karpas*, a green vegetable symbolizing spring and renewal. Parsley is often used for this step. It represents the hyssop that was used to apply the blood of the Passover lamb to the doorposts and lintel of the house.

Other than its ritual symbolism, the *karpas* serves as an *hors d'oeuvres* before the meal. Wealthy people have multiple courses in their meal. The *karpas* serves as an appetizer that cleanses the palate, preparing for the other food that follows.

Before eating the *karpas*, dip it in salt water, which stands for the tears of slavery and the sweat of hard labor. Be also reminded of the saltiness of the Red Sea, which the Israelites passed through on their journey to freedom. Use it the *karpas* to cleanse the palate before moving on to the next step.





Step 4: YACHATZ

Yachatz ("divide") is the fourth step of the Seder. Before the Seder begins, three pieces of matzah are placed in a three-tiered pouch (called a *matzah tosh*). The Seder leader takes the middle piece of matzah and breaks it into two uneven pieces. The smaller piece is placed back in the matzah tosh. The larger piece is wrapped up in white linen cloth and is hidden from the children as they cover their eyes. This middle piece of hidden matzah is known as the *afikoman* (dessert). The kids will search for it after the meal and whoever finds it will get a reward.

The broken matzah is then lifted for all to see, and head of the household recites:

"This is the lechem oni—the bread of affliction—that our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt."

Why three pieces of matzah? Three is one of the most foundational numbers in Jewish thought. There are

three patriarchs of Israel: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The people of Israel are divided into three groups: the Priests, the Levites, and the rest of the people.

Why is the middle piece broken into two parts? The middle piece relates to Isaac, the second patriarch, who was bound upon the altar at Moriah where the Temple would ultimately be built (Genesis 22).

The sacrifice of Isaac was meant to foreshadow and point to the death of another son – God's son, the Messiah. The two parts refer to the two aspects of the Messiah: Son of Joseph (the suffering Son and Lamb of God) and Son of David (the victorious Son and Lion of Judah). The two parts also refer to the two redemptions by the Messiah – He redeems Israel and the nations.

In Jewish thought, time is also divided into two parts: *Olam Hazeih* (this world)



and *Olam Haba* (the world to come). The smaller piece of matzah, which is eaten for the main meal, represents "*Olam Hazeah, this world we live in.*" The larger piece, which is wrapped in a white linen cloth, hidden by the children, and eaten after dinner, represents "*Olam Haba, the world to come.*" We understand that to mean the return of Yeshua and the Messianic Age.

It makes sense, then, that one piece is smaller and the other is bigger. This temporal world is a blip on the radar screen in comparison to the endlessness of the eternal world. The first, smaller piece is the bread of affliction. The impoverished slave mentality is no longer ours in the eternal world, nor the temporal world when we have the renewed mind of the Messiah. The larger piece of matzah reminds us that ultimately Passover is about the physical, mental, and emotional liberation from slavery that will not

be fully realized until Messiah Yeshua established His kingdom in the World to Come! In the World to Come, God will turn our mourning into dancing and wipe every tear from our eyes.

Yes, there is suffering in this life; yes, there is hardship; yes, there is pain, but it is small in comparison to the world to come. These momentary, light afflictions are nothing in comparison to the eternal light of glory that is being produced in us. It puts things into perspective. Let's make sure that we don't put our focus on or live for the smaller piece of matzah, which represents this world, but on the larger piece of matzah, which reminds that the greater blessings are stored up for us in the world to come.

Step 5: MAGGID

The Maggid is the re-telling of the Exodus narrative. We begin the retelling of the Passover story with the following declaration:

"This is the lechem oni, the bread of affliction, that our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry—let them come and eat. All who are needy—let them come and celebrate the Passover with us."

Someone (usually the youngest child present at the Seder) will then ask "the four questions" — every *haggadah* lists them. Any person can read the questions, or everyone can read them together. The four questions all revolve around one basic question: "Why is this night different than all other nights?" (*Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot?*)

The rest of the Maggid answers this question with the story of the Hebrews' exodus from Egypt, some Torah study, and a discussion of the description of the four types of children: the wise child, the wicked child, the simple child, and the child who doesn't know enough to ask a question.

The Maggid fully displays the power of testimony. It is also focused on the power of words. While reading the book of Exodus, one might wonder at the swift descent of the Jewish nation; from being the privileged family of the viceroy, Joseph, to becoming downtrodden and abused slaves.

Xenophobia, the fear of foreigners, is



a common historical phenomenon. But one would think that transforming a nation into slaves would take generations, or result in a violent uprising. The sages explain in the Midrash (an ancient scriptural commentary that seeks to add details, provide life applications, and address questions that are left unanswered by the biblical text) that the Egyptians were cunning, and enslaved the Jews through artifice.

Proverbs 18:21 tells us that *"the tongue has the power of life and death."* Language is a powerful tool, and Pharaoh understood this. Even the word "Pharaoh" can be broken up to mean *peh ra* (evil speech), or can be understood to relate to *peh rach* (soft speech).

According to the Rabbis, when he



decided to enslave the Jews, Pharaoh declared a national week of labor during which all good citizens of the realm were to come and help in the building of the great cities of Pithom and Ramses. Pharaoh himself was to take the lead in the project.

The Jews, wanting to show their great loyalty to their host country, joined in enthusiastically. But when the Jews arrived at the building sites the following day, the Egyptians did not return. Shortly thereafter, the Jews found themselves surrounded by taskmasters who demanded that they perform the same amount of work that they had done by their own volition the day before! It was through soft and cunning words that Pharaoh lured the Jewish nation into slavery.

Midrashic insights like those above are meant to teach spiritual and moral

lessons, and are not necessarily meant to be taken as literal or historical fact. Not only is this particular Midrashic insight itself interesting, but it is reflective of the importance that Jewish thought *and* Jewish law place on the use of words. So crucial are the impact of words to the Jews that Jewish law even forbids the use of words to manipulate another person into paying for lunch (let alone to enslave them).

At the end of this retelling, the second cup of wine is poured. Before drinking, we dip a finger into the wine and transfer ten drops of wine to the plate, one for each of the ten plagues in Egypt. After singing songs praising God and pointing out the various items on the Seder table yet again, we recite the blessing over the wine and drink from the second cup.

Step 6: RACHTZAH

It's time to wash our hands again, but this time we do say the blessing. It's customary not to speak at all between washing our hands and saying the blessings over the matzah. We use this time to reflect on the sanctification and purification that we are undergoing. In the Temple, the priests had to serve and eat in a state of spiritual purity.

Spirituality and food go hand-in-hand. Observant Jews wash their hands before eating bread, just as the priests did. Eating is a holy act. Sin came to Adam and Eve through food.

The washing of our hands does not involve soap because it is also symbolic and spiritual in nature, indicating sanctification and purification. The blessing is called *Netilat Yadaayim*, which means not to wash, but to lift up.

The word "*rachtzah*" is derived from the Aramaic word "*rachitz*," "trust." After experiencing God's liberating power, we need to rely upon and trust the Lord alone to "fill our mouths" by giving us our daily bread.

These are the steps to *rachtzah*:

1. Hold the handles of cup with a towel
2. Wash the right hand 3 times, then the left three times
3. Leave some water in the left hand; rub hands together
4. Say the blessing
5. Along with everyone else in the room, break off a piece of matzah and eat it

It is significant that this step of the Seder includes both the washing and the raising of one's hands. The washing is a symbol of spiritual purification and renewal. The raising of our hands connects to the verse "*I am Adonai your God, who elevated you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it*" (Psalm 81:11 TLV). By washing our hands we are calling out to God to purify, refresh, and elevate us from our own personal Egypts!





Step 7: **MOTZI**

During this step, the first of two blessings are recited over the matzah. The name of this first blessing is the “*ha-motzi*,” and it is the traditional blessing that is recited whenever any type of bread is eaten. The name of this very ancient blessing comes directly from the Bible and connects back to our redemption from Egypt: “*You will know that I am Adonai your God, who brought you (ha-motzi) out from under the burdens of the Egyptians*” (Exodus 6:7 TLV).

The traditional blessing in Hebrew is “*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, Hamotzi lechem min haaretz.*” This translates to “Blessed are you, Lord our God, who brings forth bread from the earth.” The wording of this blessing is interesting since what

comes forth from the earth is not exactly bread. People take wheat, which comes from the earth, and turn it into bread. This teaches us that redemption, like making bread, requires us to make use of the raw materials, including the gifts that God has graciously given us, to partner with Him to transform it into life and blessing.

God worked through Moses like He did through Yeshua to bring salvation and freedom. In the same way, God has chosen to partner with us to bring the message of redemption to the world in order to see people be set free and come to the knowledge of Him!



Step 8: MATZAH

It's time to recite the second blessing over the matzah and then partake of it. The previous blessing is the general blessing for bread, but this second blessing is specifically designed to remind us that this is not ordinary bread. It is the bread of redemption that our ancestors ate when they left Egypt.

Matzah is cooked for exactly 18 minutes. Why 18 minutes? Spiritually, 18 is the number of life. The Hebrew word for "life," which is "*chai*" has the numerical value of 18. It reminds us that redemption brings life abundant. It ultimately points to Messiah Yeshua, who was born in Bethlehem (*Beit Lechem*, or "House of Bread"). He was the Bread of Life, the *Lechem Ha-Hayyim* ("Hayyim" being the plural of "*chai*"/18). When we say the blessing over the bread and eat, we remember the eternal life we have through the Messiah, whose body was broken like the bread for us.

The matzah blessing goes like this:

"Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam, asher Kidd-shanu be-mitzvo-tav, ve-tzi-vanu, al achi-lat matzah."

It translates to "Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who sanctifies us with his commandments, and who instructs us, concerning the eating of the matzah."



Step 9: MAROR

Whether you eat a fresh slice of horseradish (known as Jewish Dristan) or a leaf of romaine lettuce (which is pretty wimpy), you should be thinking of the bitterness of slavery during *maror*. Traditionally, we dip the maror in the charoset (the apple-nut-wine-cinnamon mixture that represents the mortar used for the bricks) to taste a small amount of sweetness along with the bitter flavor.

In addition to the bitterness of slavery, this step represents the

bitterness of separation from Yeshua as exemplified by Judas. On the night Yeshua was betrayed, John 13:25-27 shows how He revealed His betrayer. "Then he who leaned on Yeshua's chest says to Him, 'Master, who is it?' Yeshua answers, 'It's the one I will give this bit of matzah to, after I dip it.' After dipping the matzah, He takes it and gives it to Judah from Kriot, the son of Simon. And with that bit, satan entered into him. Then Yeshua tells him, 'What you're about to do, do quickly!'"



Step 10: KORECH

While the English Earl of Sandwich is generally given credit for inventing the sandwich, a Jewish religious leader named Hillel may have originated it circa 110 B.C. By combining matzah, a slice of paschal lamb, and a bitter herb, the “Hillel sandwich” is what

we eat in the Seder’s tenth step. Jews no longer sacrifice and eat the lamb, so the Passover sandwich we eat today is only matzah, charoset, and maror (many people use the chazeret instead of horseradish).

Step 11: SHULCHAN ORECH

Once the korech is eaten, it's time for the real meal. Usually this begins with a hard-boiled egg dipped in salt water, then progresses to traditional, leaven-free dishes such as gefilte fish with horseradish, matzah-ball soup, and chopped liver. Although we drink four *ceremonial* glasses of wine or grape juice during Passover, this

doesn't preclude anyone from having some more during dinner.

This feast also symbolizes the wedding banquet of the Messianic Age the Apostle John speaks of in Revelation 19:9: *"Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!"*



Step 12: TZAFUN

Whether or not there is room for dessert after dinner, the last food that is officially eaten at the Seder is a piece of the *afikomen* matzah (see Step 4), which symbolizes the Passover sacrifice. If the afikomen is hidden or stolen by the children, it must be returned or redeemed by the children and given to the leader by the Seder's end. The Seder must end before midnight, according to tradition, and can't be concluded without the afikomen.

Eating the afikomen is one of the most spiritually important parts of the evening. This broken middle piece of matzah is seen as the bread of faith and healing. The afikomen also represents the part of the self that is lost or given up in enslavement. The Seder symbolizes the journey from enslavement to freedom, and at *Tzafun* (which is Hebrew for "hidden") people reclaim the pieces of self that were missing. Again, it's traditional to ingest the representation in order to symbolize the internalization of this transformative truth. Adam and Eve and were changed forever and separated from God by their decision to ingest the forbidden fruit. When we eat the piece of matzah that ultimately was meant to represent the Messiah, we too can be transformed— but in the opposite way, being brought closer to God!

Afikomen is one of only two Greek words used to describe a key element of the Passover Seder. Everything else is in Hebrew. Since Greek was the common language of Yeshua's

day, this is especially remarkable. The translation is astounding. The word can either mean "that which comes after" or "I have come".

This part of the Seder has so many Messianic overtones that it is possible the traditional Jewish community received this ritual from the first century Messianic community. The matzah, with its stripes and piercings, is the most Messianic of symbols. The afikomen takes the symbolism one step further as it is wrapped in a white linen cloth and hidden, just as Yeshua's body was pierced and wrapped in linen before being hidden in a tomb. The afikomen being found at the end of the meal demonstrates how Yeshua was found by the women on the morning He arose, and partaking of the afikomen represents us partaking of His resurrection. This reminds us of our freedom from death, as well as the promise of eternal life.

The origin of the afikomen tradition is somewhat mysterious. It could be that the first person in history to perform this custom was Yeshua at the His final Seder with the disciples (Luke 22:19) and that the Jewish community borrowed this tradition from the early Messianic Jewish believers. I believe this to be the case! It is a powerful portrait of Messiah Yeshua's death, burial, and resurrection in fulfillment of Isaiah 53, Zechariah 12:10-13 and Psalm 22:17.





Step 13: BARECH

At this point, the meal may be completed — but the Seder is not. Jewish meals always end with a blessing, and this meal is no exception. The third cup of wine celebrating the meal is poured and drunk after a blessing is recited. Remember, the third cup is a reminder of the blood of the Passover lamb, which was sprinkled three times on the doorposts of the children of Israel in Egypt so that death would not take their firstborn. It was this third cup that Yeshua raised, blessed, and declared to be a representation of Himself, the greater Passover Lamb who would take away the sin of the world.

Then, a seemingly curious tradition occurs. A cup of wine is poured in honor of the prophet Elijah, and a door is opened to allow Elijah to enter. One custom invites each person to pour a little of their own wine to fill Elijah's cup, symbolizing each person's own responsibility and contribution toward bringing about redemption, which is when Elijah returns. According to Malachi 4:5-6, Elijah will return to prepare the way for the Messiah. This reflects the Messianic expectation of the return of Yeshua. These verses are also the last verses of the Old Testament in the Christian Bible.

Step 14: HALLEL

After closing the door, the final Seder ritual includes singing special songs of praise to God before filling, blessing, and drinking the final cup of wine. The songs of praise are from Psalm 113-118.

After we experience the redemption of God, all we can do is thank Him and

praise Him. "God's my strength, He's also my song, and now He's my salvation." (Psalm 118: 14-15 TLV). Psalm 118 is the most quoted Messianic psalm of the New Testament. It declares, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone. It is from Adonai: it is marvelous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:22-23 TLV).



Step 15: NIRTZAH

The prescribed rituals and actions conclude at the 15th step. Nirtzah celebrates this conclusion. The most common prayer at the end is simply "*L'shana haba-a bi-Y'rushalayim,*" meaning "Next year, in Jerusalem!"

These words are a declaration of faith and hope that this is the year that Messiah will come and bring us all up to the New Jerusalem, where we will worship together in the Messianic Kingdom!



FROM MOSES TO YESHUA: A PROMISE FULFILLED

“There has not risen again a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom Adonai knew face to face, with all the signs and wonders Adonai sent him to do in the land of Egypt—to Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land—”
Deuteronomy 34:10-11 TLV

Deuteronomy 34 says two things that made Moses unique. First, God spoke to him face-to-face, and second, he performed unique signs and wonders when he delivered Israel out of Egypt. One of the ways that God spoke to Moses was through the burning bush. Hebrews tells us that it was not an ordinary bush. It was a very specific type of bush in which God revealed Himself: a thorn bush.

Why did God reveal Himself to Moses in a thorn bush? Because thorns represent affliction, suffering, and pain.

God is saying, “I have seen your pain. I have seen your suffering. I have seen what has been happening to you for all of these hundreds of years, and I identify with you. I understand what you have been through, and it breaks my heart.” It was compassion that moved Him to redeem His people, causing Moses to tell Israel that God had remembered their prayers, and He cared for them.

What encircled the head of the King of Kings when He hung on the cross? An intertwining of thorns served as His crown, which also signifies the fall in Genesis 3:18, where the ground “... will grow **thorns** and **thistles** for you.” He took the affliction of the sin of the man, He absorbed all the pain and suffering meant for us, and came to undo the curse of creation. He took

the fall for the fall. He allowed Himself to be put upon a tree (the cross) to restore that which had been taken from the tree.

Moses’ unique relationship with God was also demonstrated by the fact that he could enter into the Holy of Holies in the Temple on a regular basis. Moses was the only exception to the rule that only a High Priest could enter that area, and only once a year on Yom Kippur. When Yeshua, the unique Son of God, died upon the cross, the curtain separating the Holy of Holies was torn in two, allowing all to enter and ending the separation between God and man.

We see another correlation between Moses and Yeshua in the final plagues of Egypt. There were three days of darkness over Egypt during the ninth plague. When Yeshua hung on the cross, there were three hours of darkness between the sixth and ninth hour. The tenth plague was the death of the firstborn son in all the Egyptian households. The angel passed over the houses of the Jews, which were marked by a lamb’s blood. Yeshua is God’s firstborn son, and His blood, the blood of the Lamb, allows us to pass over from death to eternal life! As the true Passover Lamb of God and the second Adam, He took the plagues and judgement that we rightly deserved upon Himself to reverse the curse, restore

the blessing, and free us from exile so that we can experience a connected life full of His goodness!

Moses' first miracle when he was delivering the Jews from Egypt was to turn the water into blood. Yeshua's first public miracle at the start of His ministry of redemption was to turn the water into wine, a wine so fine that the wedding guests commented that the best was saved for last. Yeshua, as the greater Moses, came not to bring death, but

"...I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly!" (John 10:10 TLV).

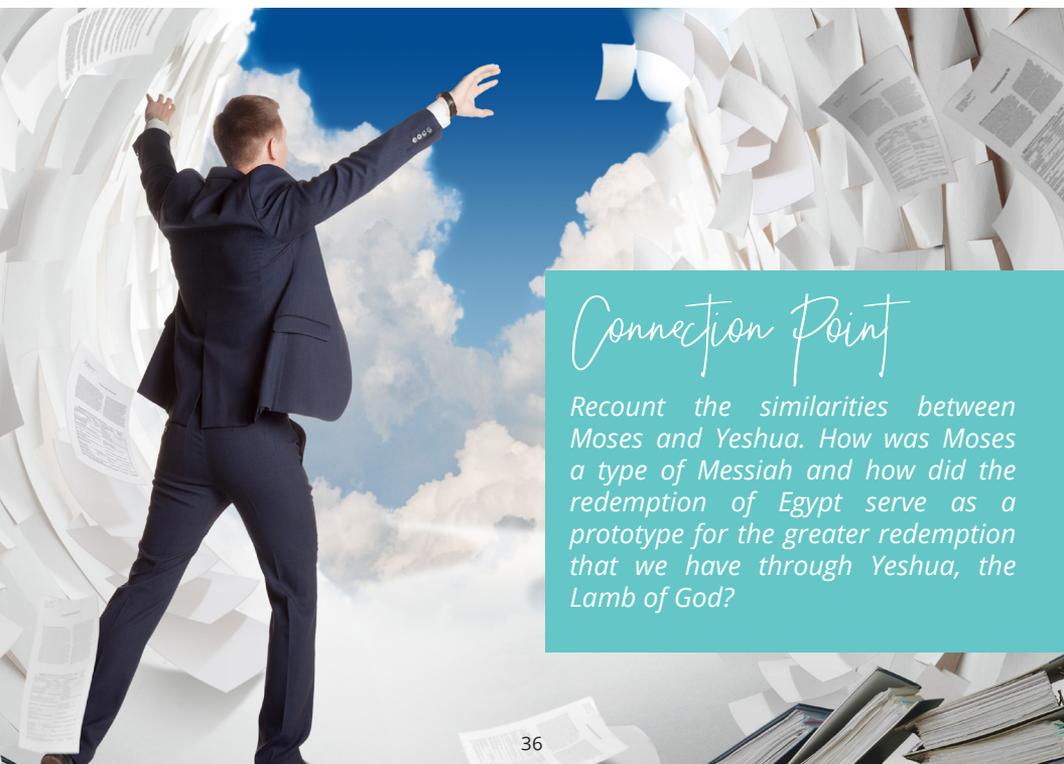
Yeshua, the greater Moses, the Passover Lamb, delivers us into the Promised Land.

With freedom comes responsibility. It is important to note that when God

brought Israel out of Egypt, when He gave them the wealth of Egypt, He also gave them the responsibility to be a blessing to others.

A Facebook user asked this question on our page the other day: "How can we say that God provides for all people, and that God is good and does good to everyone when there are people who do not have anything and are starving?"

The reality is that there is more than enough food in this world to feed everyone on the planet. We are made in the image and likeness of God, and God invites us to be partners with Him to steward His creation. He provides the food, He causes it to grow, but it is our responsibility to make the provision of feeding the needy. We are to help and partner in the work of redemption.



Connection Point

Recount the similarities between Moses and Yeshua. How was Moses a type of Messiah and how did the redemption of Egypt serve as a prototype for the greater redemption that we have through Yeshua, the Lamb of God?



Living in the Light of Passover

Like Israel, all of us must go through the process of coming out of Egypt. "Egypt" literally means a tight space or a place of confinement and restriction that seeks to box us in. The Pharaohs in your life want to see you locked in a box of self-limitation that robs you of your true identity and destiny. Don't let your outer or inner "Pharaohs" win, and don't let your "Egypt" define you!

You were created for freedom and destiny. You have incredible power, purpose, and potential through faith in Jesus, your Passover Lamb, and the might of the Holy Spirit who dwells in all those who believe.

Connection Point

The significance of the Seder meal is twofold. We are to look at the past, celebrating the miracles and wonders that God has done for the Jewish people, and to look to the future, optimistic and unafraid because of who God has shown Himself to be. How can we apply that kind of thinking to our own lives on a daily basis?



ABOUT RABBI JASON SOBEL

Raised in a Jewish home in New Jersey, Rabbi Jason Sobel dedicated much of his life in pursuit of a spiritual connection with God. After years of seeking and studying, he encountered God and found his true destiny as a Jewish follower of Yeshua (Jesus). Suddenly, all the traditions Rabbi Jason grew up with took on new depth and meaning as God connected the ancient wisdom of the Torah with the teachings of the Messiah.

He received his Rabbinic ordination from the UMJC (Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations) in 2005. He also has a Bachelor of Arts in Jewish Studies and a Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies and is currently founder and president of Fusion with Rabbi Jason, a resource offering insightful teachings reconnecting modern faith with its rich roots. He married his best friend and Fusion co-founder, Stephanie, in 1999, and together, they have two sons. They live in Los Angeles, California.

ABOUT FUSION WITH RABBI JASON

"This is what the Lord says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.'" -Jeremiah 6:16

Do you ever have a feeling there's something missing in your life? Have you ever felt bored with the Bible or your faith walk, like you are hearing the same messages over and over again? We have. At Fusion with Rabbi Jason, we want to add definition to your faith as we restore the lost connection to our ancient roots and rediscover our forgotten inheritance.

We believe that in order to move forward in life fully connected to God, His Word, and those around us, we first have to look backward. By expanding our understanding of prayer and scripture to include ancient Hebrew and contemporary wisdom informed by the Spirit, we can enrich our perspective of Yeshua (Jesus), His teachings, and His disciples.

Fusion with Rabbi Jason will show you the world in a way you've never seen it before — illuminated by "a-ha" moments that spark connections between the old and the new, the head and the heart, and the natural and the supernatural. It's all about revolutionizing your life by helping you to live more like Yeshua: rooted, restored, revitalized, revived.

As you journey with Jason through the scriptures and explore Hebrew numbers and words, Jewish holidays, and prophecies fulfilled you'll start seeing God, the Bible, and the world in High Definition. You'll connect the dots linking the old and the new, and your faith, your relationships, and your life will become more vibrant. Join us as we pursue a more connected life together!

If you would like to read, listen to, or watch more of Rabbi Jason's teachings, please visit fusionglobal.org.

Connect with us on social media @rabbijasonsobel.

All scriptures quoted are from the Tree of Life translation.

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