

# PEACEMEAL HAGGADAH

## The Feast of Freedom

- a Passover liturgy with a Christian focus -

### INTRODUCTION

- **Jesus and the Passover**

Let us say these introductory words together:

*“Jesus said, ‘I am the bread of life;  
the person who comes to me shall not hunger,  
and the person who believes in me shall never thirst.’  
‘I am the living bread which came down from heaven;  
if anyone eats of this bread  
they will live for ever;  
and the bread which I give for the life  
of the world is my flesh.”*  
(Jn 6:35,51)

*“Jesus stood up and proclaimed,  
‘If anyone thirst,  
let them come to me and drink.  
The person who believes in me,  
as the scripture has said,  
‘Out of their heart  
shall flow rivers of living water’”*  
(Jn 7:37-38)

*“And when the hour came,  
Jesus sat at table, and the apostles with him.  
And he said to them,  
“I have earnestly desired to eat  
this passover with you before I suffer;  
for I tell you I shall never eat it again  
until it is fulfilled  
in the kingdom of God”*  
(Lk 22:14-16)

The Jewish Passover meal is central to discovering the significance of ‘Peacemeal’. It is:

- Remembering the concepts of ‘redemption’ and ‘salvation’,
- Identifying Jesus as both ‘Passover lamb’ and ‘Messiah’,
- Symbolising all that Jesus was bringing into being,
- Signifying to the world that Messianic people are among them,
- Promising that the freedom of Jesus will one day embrace all things.

- **The ‘Last Supper’**

We are going to try and focus on what the Passover (Pasach) meal would have been like in Jesus’ day. It would have been much simpler than the traditional Jewish Passover meal today, though the central elements remain the same. The traditional Passover meal today is strongly shaped by the aftermath of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE (Jesus predated this) and before the establishing of the State of Israel in 1948 CE.

As we go through this 'Peacemeal Haggadah' we shall note the things that happen in a traditional Passover meal, which would not have happened in Jesus' time, and simply connect with them as appropriate. We shall also identify points in the meal where it is likely key moments in the Gospel story about the 'upper room' happened.

- There are questions over whether this was actually a Passover meal; however the Synoptics (Matt, Mk, Lk) all refer to it as a 'Passover' and the format of the meal fits exactly the pattern of what we are told happened.
- There are questions over when the meal was held (Thursday or Friday). We know there were disputes over the exact dates between groups like the Saducees and Pharisees, this possibly accounts for John's comment that Jesus died on the 'Day of Preparation', at the time the Passover lambs were being killed in the Temple (Jn 19:14). However, majority agreement is that the 'Last Supper' took place on the Thursday night.
- Peter and John were told to prepare the meal (Mk 14:12-16). The venue was found by following a man carrying a water jug (very unusual) to a home of a wealthy follower of Jesus (someone like Nicodemus) - some suggest John Mark's family home.
- They are given a 'large room up stairs', probably a guest room.
- The room would almost certainly have been set out in the Roman style of a *tricinium* (Lat: 'three benches'), three very low tables placed in a 'u' shape (so all guests could see each other and food served from the centre). Everyone reclined on cushions, leaning on one arm (left) and eating with the other. This seating arrangement helps us make most sense of the dynamics of the evening.

## PREPARATIONS

- **Feast with many facets**

An eight-day feast (outside Israel) with a number of different strands woven into its fabric:

- *A historical festival*: remembering God's rescue of Israelites from Egyptian slavery
- *A mysterious festival*: combining the ancient 7-day 'feast of unleavened bread'
- *A spring festival*: a new season with the promise of renewal, fertility and life itself
- *A harvest festival*: a time of thanksgiving at the beginning of the barley harvest
- *A solemn festival*: grateful remembrance of the 'redemption of the first-born' in each Hebrew household by the blood of the lamb; this is symbolic of Israel being redeemed as God's 'first born'. (Many Hebrew 'first-born' children fast all day before the Passover meal to remind them of God's kindness.)

Outside Israel the meal is traditionally celebrated two nights running to make certain it is held on exactly the correct night on at least one of the occasions (originally when calculations were thought to be less accurate in isolated communities and the Sanhedrin's instructions were harder to communicate across the Jewish diaspora).

- **Searching for the leaven (Heb: *bedigath chemetz*)**

The Bible commands that not only must unleavened bread alone be eaten during Passover, but also that all 'leaven' (*chemetz*) must be removed from the home. This leads to elaborate preparations prior to the feast:

- There is a thorough 'spring cleaning' of the house
- The usual household crockery is washed and put away, and for Passover a specially reserved set of crockery is brought out
- The night before Passover the head of the house does a formal search for leaven by candle light to find any stray crumbs; (some of which will be deliberately left to be found); these will be swept into a little box with a feather to be burnt the next morning;
- This ceremony is sealed with the prayer:

*"May all leaven in my possession, whether I have seen it or not, whether I have removed it or not, be annulled and considered as the dust of the earth."*

- **Hospitality and Festivity**

'Hospitality' is a watchword of Passover:

- A family meal - every family member tries to be there, even if it means travelling a long distance
- Unexpected guests are always welcome and room is made for them
- One chair is left empty and a place set in the hope that this year the prophet Elijah might be a guest and so herald the coming of the Messiah

'Festivity' is aparent everywhere:

- At the first Passover in Egypt the Hebrews ate standing, dressed ready to travel
- Today they sit and recline, "We are not slaves anymore". Only slaves stand at the table
- Everyone dresses in 'festival garments' (party clothes); the host will often dress in a long white gown called a 'kittel'
- The meal, central to the celebrations, is a banquet with a party atmosphere; at the first Passover in Egypt each family ate a whole lamb (quite a meal!). A traditonal Passover meal will usually last for 2-3 hours (quite a party!). Note that since 70 CE no roast meat of any kind is eaten at the Passover meal out of respect for the destruction of the Temple and the sacrifices which can no longer be made.

- **The Seder Meal**

The Passover meal is called the *Seder* (Hebrew meaning 'order'). It is a meal with a set 'pattern' or 'programme' to it. It is carefully structured to *teach* children and *remind* adults of the story using memorable 'object lessons' and 'activities'.

Our 'Peacemeal Passover' will unfold in four stages:

- Beginnings
- Passover Story
- Passover Meal
- Conclusions

There are some fifteen different elements of the Passover meal, which can become confusing. So structuring the meal around the four glasses of wine gives more coherence; they become like pillars which provide focus.

Each of the four glasses of wine has a name and each has a theme, which can be boldly declared as a toast as they are drunk:

- First Cup      The 'Kiddush' cup      'To Life!'
- Second Cup    The 'Haggadah' cup      'To Freedom!'
- Third Cup      The 'Blessing' cup      'To Peace!'
- Fourth Cup    The 'Jerusalem' cup      'To Jerusalem!'

Notice how Luke's account (22.14-20) of the last supper shows that Jesus and the disciples drank more than one cup:

*"When the hour came ... he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves, for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes'. Then he took a loaf of bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'"*

The first cup mentioned is the initial 'Kiddush cup' and the second cup mentioned is the third 'Blessing cup'.

- **The Seder Table**

The Seder table is spread for a banquet.

Traditionally at the centre there is the Seder Plate (*K'arah*); a large plate containing a number of important objects in smaller containers:

- *Maror (bitter herbs)*: These are grated horseradish and pieces of onion; they are symbolic of the 'bitterness' and 'sorrow' of the Hebrew slavery in Egypt; traditionally the *maror* is eaten at two points prior to the main meal.
- *Haroset (sweet paste)*: Made from apple, nuts and cinnamon (grated together finely) and mixed with a little wine, it represents the 'mortar' used by the Hebrew slaves to make bricks in Egypt; eating the *haroset* also softens the bitterness of the *maror*; notice the 'sweet and sour' theme.
- *A Bone*: This is traditionally the 'shank bone of a lamb', in memory of the 'Passover lamb' that was sacrificed in Egypt on the night of the Exodus; this practice ceased after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, only the Samaritans now sacrifice a lamb at Passover. The 'shank' (arm) bone is chosen on the basis of Exodus 6:6 which refers to salvation being by God's 'mighty outstretched arm.'
- *A Baked Egg*: This seems to have a number of meanings. It is symbolic of other Temple sacrifices that used to be made at Passover time. It is symbolic of 'mourning' (for the last temple): the egg is traditional mourner's food in the Middle East - it is an easy gift to carry, easy to eat and digest, very nourishing. The egg is also symbolic of fertility and the regeneration of springtime; remember Passover is a spring festival, celebrating a new beginning.
- *Karpas (Lettuce or celery)*: This is used early in the ceremony; originally as an *hors d'oeuvres* leading into the main meal; some see it as a reminder of the 'hyssop' the Israelites used to smear the blood on the lintel and door posts at the first Passover to protect them from the 'angel of death' which 'passed over.'

Also on the Seder table is:

- *Salt water (or vinegar)*: This represents the tears the Hebrew slaves wept in captivity in Egypt and the water of the Red Sea through which they finally escaped. The *karpas* is dipped into this bowl of salt water before it is eaten.
- *Matzah (Unleavened Bread)*: Scrupulous care is taken to see there is no yeast or fermentation during the making of this bread. There are three 'matzah' given focus on the traditional Passover table. A normal Sabbath meal has two loaves of bread, representing the double portion of 'manna' that God provided in the wilderness each Sabbath. The third central 'matzah' at Passover represents the additional 'bread of affliction'. The 'matzah' are placed in a dish or basket covered by a pretty cloth, often with three pockets to take one 'matzah' apiece.
- *Wine*: Talmud commands that at the Seder meal each Jew must drink at least four glasses of wine; it may be as little as a thimble-full (due to age or ill health) and if poverty demands they must accept money from the poor box to buy wine. The command includes all children present. The wine, which is usually red, does not have to be fermented. We have said the four glasses of wine form the four 'key points' of the Seder ceremony, proclaiming the major themes, and around which everything else finds its place. The number of glasses of wine drunk at the Seder table are traditionally fixed at four on the basis of the four words used for God's act of deliverance in Exodus 6:6-7 ('bring', 'rid', 'redeem' and 'take').
- *The Haggadah*: Each participant at the Seder table has a service book in front of them called the *Haggadah*. Its name comes from the Hebrew 'to tell', 'to recite', 'to proclaim'. The *Haggadah* sets out the liturgy of the Passover meal; with its prayers, stories, questions, answers, psalms and songs. Christians are told that in the 'breaking of bread' they are to 'proclaim' the Lord's death until he comes (1Cor 11:26); the phrase has its roots in the idea of *Haggadah*.

## BEGINNINGS

The Passover meal begins at sunset (or when three stars are visible) as on the weekly Friday night Sabbath meal.

- **Lighting the candles**

The beginning of the meal is marked by the lady of the house lighting the candles on the table, much as she would at the start of every Sabbath meal. She does so with the traditional prayer:

*"Blessed be God who has led us to holiness through his commandments and commanded us to kindle the lights of Sabbath and festival."*

- **Jesus' opening words**

At the beginning of the last supper Jesus expresses his deep desire to share this meal with those closest to him (Lk 22:15-16). There is an intimacy about this meal that we need to hold very sensitively:

*"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, for I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."*

**FOCUS: First Cup      The ‘Kiddush’ cup      “To Life!”**

The glasses are filled for the first cup of wine.

- **The Kiddush**

The Hebrew word *kiddush* means ‘sanctification’ or ‘to make holy’ or ‘unique’. It is the prayer prayed at the beginning of each Sabbath meal in gratitude for the gift of life:

*“Blessed is our Lord, God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. Blessed is God who chose us from among all people to seek holiness ... With love, you have given us, O Lord, festivals for joy, the Passover feast, this feast of freedom, a holy gathering to remember the Exodus from Egypt. Thanks be to God who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this moment.”*

We all drink the first cup of wine making the declaration, “To life!”

In the last supper the *Kiddush* cup was probably a single cup shared around the group, as Jesus says, “Take this and divide it among yourselves ...” (Lk 22:17)

- **The Urchatz**

The host alone now washes their hands, without a blessing, prior to the eating of *karpas*; either the lady of the house, or the youngest child holds the basin and towel for them.

This is the most logical point in the evening, ‘during supper’, that Jesus washed his disciples feet (Jn 13:2-11):

*‘And during supper Jesus knowing the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, he got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.’*

He begins with Peter, almost certainly reclining at the furthest end of the *tricunium*.

- **The Karpas**

Everyone takes a piece of the green vegetable, dips it in the salt water (or vinegar) and eats it in the spirit of an *hors d'oeuvres*, after they have said the blessing:

*“Blessed is our Lord, God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the soil.”*

- **The Yachatz**

At a traditional Passover there are three special matzah on the table, covered with a cloth. At every normal meal the bread takes precedence; you bless the bread, break it and share it. At all Sabbaths (remember this Passover is a Sabbath) the wine takes precedence and so the bread is covered (the Rabbi says, “This is so the bread won’t become embarrassed!”).

At this point the middle *matzah* is taken and broken in two. Half is left in view on the table, the other half is replaced under the cloth between the other two unbroken *matzah*. Traditionally (at some point) a child steals the hidden *matzah* to be redeemed by a sweetmeat when required after the main meal. This hidden *matzah* is called the *afikoman*; from the Greek *epikomion* (‘festival procession’) and the Aramaic *fiku man* (‘dessert’).

As the *afikomen matzah* is broken this beautiful invitation and declaration is made:

*“This is the bread of affliction, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry, come and eat. Let all who are in need, come and celebrate the Passover. This year we are here, next year in the land of Israel! This year we are slaves, next year, freedom!”*

It is possible that this is the point at which Jesus took a loaf of bread and said, “This is my body ...” However, we are placing this event later, at the beginning of the actual meal itself.

## PASSOVER STORY

**FOCUS:**    **Second Cup**            **The ‘Haggadah’ cup**            **“To Freedom!”**

The glasses are filled for the second cup of wine.

- **The Four Questions**

Traditionally the youngest child (person) at the table asks four questions to set the scene for telling the Passover story. This is almost certainly a medieval development and would not have happened at the time of Jesus:

*“What makes this night different from all other nights?”*

*“On other nights we can eat bread or matzah. Why tonight only matzah?”*

*“On other nights we can eat any kind of herbs. Why tonight only bitter herbs?”*

*“On other nights we don't dip the herbs we eat into anything. Why tonight do we dip twice?”*

*“On other nights we can eat either sitting upright or reclining. Why tonight do we all recline?”*

- **The Maggid**

The answer begins ...

*“We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but God brought us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. If the Holy One, blessed be he, had not taken us out of Egypt, then we, our children and our children's children would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt ...*

*We went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, just seventy persons but now O Lord you have made us as numerous as the stars of heaven. The Egyptians treated us badly and made us suffer and they put hard work upon us. They set taskmasters over us to make bricks and build great cities. We cried out to the Lord God and the Lord heard our voice. God saw our suffering and our labour and took us out of Egypt. The Lord said, “I will pass through the land of Egypt and smite every first-born in the land and carry out judgements against all the gods of Egypt. With a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, with great manifestation and with signs and wonders; blood, fire and pillars of smoke.*

*These are the ten plagues which the Holy One, brought upon the Egyptians: Blood, Frogs, Lice, Beasts, Pestilence, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, Slaying of the First-born.”*

Spill three drops of wine on to a cracked plate saying:  
*“Blood, fire, pillars of smoke.”*

*How many levels of favours has the Omnipresent One bestowed upon us:*

*If God had brought us out from Egypt, and had not carried out judgments against them, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had carried out judgments against them, and not against their idols, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had destroyed their idols, and had not smitten their first-born, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had smitten their first-born, and had not given us their wealth, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had given us their wealth, and had not split the sea for us, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had split the sea for us, and had not taken us through it on dry land, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had taken us through the sea on dry land, and had not drowned our oppressors in it, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had drowned our oppressors in it, and had not supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and had not fed us the manna, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had fed us the manna, and had not given us the Shabbat, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had given us the Shabbat, and had not brought us before Mount Sinai, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had brought us before Mount Sinai, and had not given us the Torah, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had given us the Torah, and had not brought us into the land of Israel, it would have been enough for us!*

*If God had brought us into the land of Israel, and had not built for us the Chosen House, it would have been enough for us!*

*Thus how much more so should we be grateful to the Omnipresent One for the doubled and redoubled goodness that God has bestowed upon us; for God has brought us out of Egypt, and carried out judgments against them, and against their idols, and smote their first-born, and gave us their wealth, and split the sea for us, and took us through it on dry land, and drowned our oppressors in it, and supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and fed us the manna, and gave us the Shabbat, and brought us before Mount Sinai, and gave us the Torah, and brought us into the land of Israel.*

*To fulfill our obligation on Passover, we must declare the three central words:*

*Pesach – because God passed over our houses during the killing of the first-born;*

*Matzah – because we ate unleaven bread when escaping from Egypt in haste;*

*Maror – because the Egyptians embittered our lives with slavery and hard labour.*

*In every generation, every Jew must feel that they themselves came out of Egypt. God did not only redeem our ancestors but God redeemed us with them.*

- **Blessing the ‘Haggadah’ cup**

*“Blessed be God, King of the Universe, who has redeemed us, as he redeemed our ancestors from Egypt, and has brought us to this night ... Let us pray to God, the God of our Fathers, that he will come to us in peace - joyful in building God’s city, and happy in his service. Let us sing anew songs of thanks to God for our salvation and freedom. Blessings*

*to God who has saved Israel, Blessed is our Lord God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.”*

We all drink the second cup of wine (in a reclining position) making the declaration, “To freedom!”

## **PASSOVER MEAL**

- **The *Rachtzah***

In preparation for eating the main Passover meal everyone at the table washes their hands, with the blessing:

*“Blessed be God, who made each commandment to bring us to holiness and laid upon us the washing of hands before food!”*

### **FOCUS: Breaking Bread**

- **Sharing the matzah**

A Palestinian Jewish meal always began by the host breaking, blessing and sharing a loaf of bread with those around the table (at Passover this is an unbroken *matzah*). Jesus’ disciples would have been expecting to join in the time honoured blessing:

*“Blessed be God who brings bread out of the earth. Blessed be God, who made each instruction to bring us to holiness, and laid upon us the eating of matzah.”*

Imagine their shock when:

*“The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ ” (1Cor 11:23-24)*

- **Eating *maror* and *haroset***

Traditionally at this point everyone takes a scallop of onion and dips it into both the *maror* and the *haroset* (making a combined sweet and sour mouthful). Eat it reciting the blessing:

*“Blessed be God, who made each commandment to bring us to holiness and laid upon us the eating of ‘maror’.”*

- **The *Korech***

Following the instruction, “They shall eat it with *matzor* and *maror*” (Num 4:2), eat a *matzor* ‘sandwich’ with *maror* between two pieces of *matzor*, without a blessing.

At this point in the meal (Jn 13: 21-30) Jesus becomes ‘troubled in spirit’ saying, “Very truly, I tell you one of you will betray me” (v.21). He had previously quoted Psalm 41:9, “The one who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me” – poignant in the light of Jesus having just shared the broken bread with the group.

The disciples become agitated. Peter ‘motions’ (confirming his place as reclining at the furthest end of the *tricinium* away from Jesus) to John (‘the one whom Jesus loved’ – v.23)

to ask Jesus to identify the betrayer. John, 'reclining next to Jesus' is told, "It is the one to whom I give this 'sop' (AV translation), when I have dipped it in the dish."

'He gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot' (v.26). It makes sense that this 'sop' was a form of the *korech* – symbol of pain and bitterness, but it was also an act of love. Jesus would have been able to do this very discreetly with Judas in the place of honoured guest, back to back with Jesus the host. Judas asks, "Is it I?", Jesus replies, "Yes". Judas who carries the common purse then leaves the room. Passover is a time to give money to the poor, Judas would be the one expected to do this, no one would be suspicious .... but 'it was night'!

### **DINNER IS NOW SERVED!** (The Seder Plate is removed)

- **The *Shulchan Orech* declaration:** *"Now eat and drink to your hearts delight!"*  
We are to assume that it was while they ate their meal that the deeply moving discourse Jesus gives on love, salvation, the promise of the Spirit, the true vine, persecution (with Peter's impending betrayal) and prayer for their unity (Jn13:31-17:25) took place.

- **The 'Afikoman'**

Traditionally eating the food ends with the sharing of the *afikoman matzah* - the broken half hidden (*tsafun*) at the beginning of the evening. Usually 'stolen' by a young child, it is 'redeemed' with a sweetmeat. Everyone must eat at least a *kezayit* ('the size of an olive'). Today the *afikoman matzah* represents the Passover lamb sacrificed in the Temple.

### **FOCUS: Third Cup      The '*Blessing*' cup      "To Peace!"**

The meal is concluded with a beautiful prayer-blessing (*berach*) with the central theme of *shalom*, followed by the drinking of the third cup of wine. We know this is the cup that Jesus gave a new focus to, because Paul tells us, "In the same way Jesus took the cup also, after supper..." (1 Cor 11:25-26) and again he speaks of, "The cup of blessing that we bless..." (1 Cor 10:16); clearly indicating this is the third Passover cup.

- **The *Berach***

*"Blessed be God who in his goodness, feeds the whole world with his grace, loving kindness and compassion ... Let us thank God that he caused our fathers to inherit a broad and good land; that he brought us out of slavery in Egypt and gave us his instruction and commandments ... Be merciful, O God, to your people of Israel; to your city Jerusalem; to Zion the seat of your glory; to the kingdom of the house of David your anointed; and to the great and holy Temple that is called by your name ... O God, our Father and King, our Creator and Shepherd. He has been, and is, and ever will be good to us. Blessing, salvation and comfort are from him; life, peace and all good things ... May he who makes peace in his high places make peace for us! ... Give thanks to the Lord for he is good and his kindness endures for ever... The Lord will give strength to his people and the Lord will bless his people with peace."*

Then, imagine their shock a second time when Jesus says:

*"This is the new covenant in my blood which is being shed on behalf of many. Truly I say to you that I will not drink of the fruit of this vine, until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."*

We all drink the third cup of wine (in a reclining position) making the declaration, "To peace/shalom!"

## CONCLUSIONS

- **The Hymn**

After sharing the third cup of wine we are told, 'When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives...' (Matt 26:30). The hymn was Psalm 118. Imagine Jesus singing these words in the light of what was just about to happen to him:

*Give thanks to the Lord, because he is good, and his love is eternal.  
Let the people of Israel say, "His love is eternal."  
Let the priests of God say, "His love is eternal."  
Let all who worship him say, "His love is eternal."*

*In my distress I called to the Lord; he answered me and set me free.  
The Lord is with me, I will not be afraid; what can anyone do to me?  
It is the Lord who helps me, and I will see my enemies defeated.  
It is better to trust in the Lord than to depend on people.  
It is better to trust in the Lord than to depend on human leaders.*

*Many enemies were around me; but I destroyed them by the power of the Lord!  
They were around me on every side; but I destroyed them by the power of the Lord!  
They swarmed around me like bees, but they burned out as quickly as a brush fire;  
by the power of the Lord I destroyed them.  
I was fiercely attacked and was being defeated; but the Lord helped me.  
The Lord makes me powerful and strong; he has saved me.*

*Listen to the glad shouts of victory in the tents of God's people:  
"The Lord's mighty power has done it!  
His power has brought us victory - his mighty power in battle!"*

*I will not die; instead, I will live and proclaim what the Lord has done.  
He has punished me severely, but he has not let me die.*

*Open to me the gates of the Temple; I will go in and give thanks to the Lord!  
This is the gate of the Lord; only the righteous can come in.  
I praise you, Lord, because you heard me, because you have given me victory.*

*The stone that the builders rejected as worthless, turned out to be the most important of all.  
This was done by the Lord; what a wonderful sight it is.  
This is the day of the Lord's victory; let us be happy, let us celebrate!  
Save us, Lord, save us! Give us success, O Lord!*

*May God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
From the Temple of the Lord we bless you.  
The Lord is God; he has been good to us.  
With branches in your hands, start the festival and march around the altar.*

*You are my God, and I give you thanks; I will proclaim your greatness.  
Give thanks to the Lord, because he is good, and his love is eternal.*

Jesus and the disciples leave the upper room, cross the Kidron Valley and enter the garden in Gethsemane.

**FOCUS: Fourth Cup The 'Jerusalem' cup "To Jerusalem!"**

The glasses are filled for the fourth cup of wine; including Elijah's cup (see below). Jerusalem means, 'The dwelling place of peace (*shalom*),' it is the biblical symbol of the accomplishment of God's final purposes. This cup is the cup of hope. Jesus did not drink this cup at the table, but it became the Gethsemene-Golgotha cup, "If it be possible take this cup from me." (cf Matt 26:39) Drinking this cup enabled our hope to become reality.

- **Waiting for Elijah**

Malachi (4:5) says before the Messiah comes Elijah, the great hero and champion of the Hebrew people, will return. (Jesus said that Elijah had already come - John the Baptist (Matt 17:11)). Traditionally someone (usually a child) goes to the door to see if Elijah has come. Elijah is not there.

When the child returns to the table Elijah's cup is empty (drunk quickly by an adult while the child is gone!) Everyone says, "Look, it's empty, you must have missed him!"

- **Judgment on the heathen**

It is as if the opening of the door for Elijah breaks the spell of the happy family gathering, for a moment. The participants at the Seder table are reminded of the fearful world outside. Through the open door, verses from the Hebrew scriptures that call for God's wrath on the heathen, are proclaimed. It is almost as though standing in Elijah's shadow they find renewed courage to face their enemies:

*"Pour out your wrath upon the heathen that have not known you, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon your name" (Ps. 79:6).*

*"Pursue them with wrath and destroy them from under the heavens of the Lord" (Lam. 3:66).*

These words need to be understood in the light of the terrible suffering that the Jews have faced throughout their history; whether the 'pogroms' of the Middle Ages or the Holocaust of our own times.

These words are probably the most recent addition to the *Haggadah* and were probably included by some medieval Rabbi, so angered by the suffering of his people that his frustration spilled over and the words became included in the Seder ritual.

- **The Blessing**

*"Let us adore your name; praise and song, strength and dominion are yours. Blessing and thanks from now until eternity. Blessed are you, great in praise, God of thanksgiving, Lord of wonders, King, God, Eternal. Let us bless God; for the vine and its fruits; for all the produce of the field, and for the delights of the land which is the inheritance of our Fathers to enjoy and love. Have compassion, O God, on your people Israel and build Jerusalem, the Holy City, speedily in our days."*

We all drink the fourth cup of wine (in a reclining position) making the declaration, "To Jerusalem!"

- **A final meditation**

*'All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus' (Mt 28:18). 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to all creation' (Mk 16:15); '..that believing they might have life in his name' (Jn 20:31).*

*'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son' (Mt 22:2). 'And people shall come from east and west, and from north and south and sit at table in the kingdom of God' (Lk 13:29).*

*'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor, the maimed, the blind and the lame ... Go into the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled' (Lk 14:22-23).*

*'Oh the joy of those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb' (Rv 19:9). 'Oh the joy of those who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God' (Lk 14:15).*

*'Why do you spend your money on that which is not bread, and work for that which does not satisfy? ... Listen, come to me; hear and you shall live!' (Isa 55:2-3)*

*'Come, for all is now ready! ...' (Lk 14:17). 'The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!". Let him who hears say, "Come!". Let everyone who wishes to drink of the water of life without price' (Rv 22:17).*

*This 'Jesus Haggadah' was compiled by Noel Moules, but can be freely copied and adapted for use in your personal 'Passover Peacemeal'.*