

# The Home Study Quarterly

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## THE PASSOVER AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The Passover was observed in the time of our Lord in the following fashion. The company having taken their places, two or three flat cakes or thin biscuits of unleavened bread (Ex. 12: 18), and four cups of red wine mixed with water, being on the table before the master of the feast, (1) He took one of the cups, called the *cup of consecration*, and "gave thanks," tasted the cup, and passed it round. (2) Water was then brought in, and first the president and then the other washed. (3) The table was then set with the bitter herbs (lettuce, endive, beet, succory and horehound), the sauce called *charoseth* (made of dates, raisins, figs, vinegar, etc., pounded and mixed together), and the paschal lamb. (4) After thanksgiving the president took a portion of the bitter herbs, about "the size of an olive," and dipping it in the sauce, ate it, as did the others. (5) The second cup of wine was filled, and then followed the *haggadah* or *shewing forth* (1 Cor. 11: 26). A child or proselyte present asked, *what mean ye by this service* (Ex. 12: 26)? and the president answered in prescribed fashion at great length. The first part of the *Hallel* (Ps. 113-114) was sung, and the second cup was solemnly drunk. (6) The president again washed his hands, and taking two of the cakes of unleavened bread, broke them, gave thanks, and distributed them to the company, each of whom took a portion, dipped it in the sauce and ate it. Some authorities maintain that if any *stranger* was present, he was presented with a portion, but had no other share in the meal, a custom which sheds light on Jesus giving the sop to Judas. (7) The paschal lamb was then eaten. (8) After thanksgiving, the third cup or *cup of blessing* (1 Cor. 10: 16) was handed round. (9) Thanks were given for the food received, the fourth cup, the cup of joy was drunk, the second part of the *Hallel* (Ps. 115-118) was sung and the company separated.

Comparing this with the narrative of the Last Supper as given in the gospels, the order of events must have been as follows:—(1) Jesus took the cup of consecration, and having given thanks, tasted it and passed it round, saying that he had *desired* to eat this passover (Luke 22: 15-18). (2) The water was brought in, and as there had been some strife among them who should do the service and wait upon the others, our Lord read them a lesson of humility by washing their feet soiled with the dust of the Bethany road (John 13: 2-12 R. V.), and thereafter discoursed on humility (Luke 22: 25-30; John 13: 12-20). (3) The table was then set. (4) The bitter herbs were eaten. *Judas dipping his hand into the common dish of charoseth* (Matt. 26: 23). (5) When the time for the *haggadah* or *shewing forth* came, our Lord seems to have turned from the usual talk about the Exodus to describe his own departure, and to say plainly that one of the twelve who had been dipping his hand in the dish with him should betray him. The disciples anxiously asked, Is it I? John, at a sign from Peter, whispered an enquiry to Jesus, and was told that a *sop*, a piece of the bread wrapped in the herbs, and dipped in the sauce, would be given to the traitor (John 13: 23-26). (6) The unleavened bread was then broken and distributed, and Jesus took a piece, and, wrapping it in a portion of the bitter herbs, dipped it in the sauce, and gave it to Judas as to a stranger, saying, *that thou doest do quickly*. Judas left and our Lord, no longer oppressed with the presence of the traitor, broke forth into a triumphant strain (John 13: 31). (7) The paschal lamb was then eaten, and immediately afterwards the order was interrupted. Our Lord (a) *again took up the unleavened bread, and giving thanks, brake and distributed it*, and then (b) *took up the "cup of blessing," gave thanks and distributed it to them*. Then followed the long discourse, the singing of the hymn, the second part of the *Hallel*, and the departure to Gethsemane.

Of the nine separate actions in the passover (1), (2), (4), (5), (6) are distinctly mentioned by one or the other of the evangelists. The Jewish feast passed over into the Christian when, after the seventh action, the eating the paschal lamb, our Lord again took bread, which was not done at the Passover feast, and gave a new meaning to the third cup or "cup of blessing." It should be noticed that the Lord's Supper, with the bread and wine, represented in our time the universal sacrificial rites, whether pagan or Jewish, with the sacrificial victim omitted. It was the framework of a sacrifice, and the victim was to be the crucified risen Saviour, not brought down on any earthly altar, but exalted to the right hand of God; and thus the seen and the unseen, the disciple company and the Master, who was at once the sacrifice and the risen King, are brought into near and abiding fellowship. (Lindsay, "St. Mark's Gospel.")