

Jesus: The Way, the Way maker, and the Waypoint

An Easter Devotional and Guide to the Seder Plate

Opening Thought

Easter is the story of God making a way. The same God who passed over His people in Egypt has passed over our sins through the blood of His Son. The way from slavery to freedom, from death to life, and from despair to hope - all leads to Jesus.

“Christ did not come to make good people better. He came to make dead people alive.”

Tim Keller

Scripture Reading

John 14:6 *“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”*

In this verse, Jesus does not just show us a way; He *is* the way. He clears the path (the Way maker) and becomes the destination (the Waypoint).

Reflection

As your family gathers around, remember: the first Easter was rooted in Passover - the great story of God rescuing His people from slavery. Jesus and His disciples shared the Passover meal before He gave Himself as the final Passover Lamb. Everything on the seder plate whispers His name.

“The deeper the shadow, the brighter the light when it comes.” C.S. Lewis

Just as Israel looked back to God’s deliverance from Egypt, we look to Christ’s deliverance from sin. The Exodus pointed forward; the Cross brings it to completion.

The Elements of the Seder Plate and Their Fulfillment in Christ

1. **Maror (Bitter Herbs)** - Symbolizing the bitterness of slavery in Egypt.
 - *Fulfilled in Jesus:* He drank the full cup of suffering and took on the bitterness of sin on our behalf.
2. **Charoset (Apple-Nut Mixture)** - A sweet reminder of the mortar used by slaves, yet made pleasant with fruit and honey.

Easter Devotional 2026

- *Fulfilled in Jesus:* Even in suffering, there was a plan for redemption. The cross was bitter, but its outcome, our salvation, is sweet.
- 3. **Karpas (Parsley or Greens)** - Dipped in salt water to represent tears.
 - *Fulfilled in Jesus:* Our Savior wept over Jerusalem and for our lost condition. Yet His tears turned to triumph in resurrection joy.
- 4. **Zeroa (Lamb Shank Bone)** - Representing the Passover lamb offered in sacrifice.
 - *Fulfilled in Jesus:* “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). No other lamb will ever need to die again.
- 5. **Beitzah (Roasted Egg)** - A sign of new life and the unbroken sacrifices once offered at the Temple.
 - *Fulfilled in Jesus:* His resurrection is the dawn of everlasting life - the true and final offering that never ends.
- 6. **Matzah (Unleavened Bread)** - Symbol of purity and haste in leaving Egypt.
 - *Fulfilled in Jesus:* He called Himself the bread of life, broken for us. With no sin (no leaven), His body became our nourishment forever.

“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.” John Piper

In the Passover, every taste and texture told of deliverance. In Christ, every symbol is fulfilled in living color.

Theme Verse

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” John 14:6

Each element of the Passover Seder whispers the name of Jesus. Through these symbols, once shadows under the Mosaic covenant, we discover how the Passover meal was completed in Christ, our true Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Day 1 – The Bitter Cup: Remembering Slavery and Sin

Seder Element: *Maror* – Bitter Herbs

Read:

- **Exodus 1:8–14** – Israel’s oppression in Egypt begins under a new Pharaoh who fears their numbers.
- **Exodus 12:8** – The Passover meal includes bitter herbs—a taste of slavery remembered even in freedom.
- **Romans 6:6–7** – Through Christ’s crucifixion, our old selves were crucified so that sin’s slavery would no longer rule over us.

Optional Deep Reading: Psalm 51; John 8:31–36; Mark 14:32–36.

Reflection

As Israel tasted the *maror*, they re-lived the sting of bondage—a tangible memory of how bitter life became under cruel masters. These herbs speak across the centuries, reminding us that sin, too, enslaves. What begins with fleeting pleasure often sours into bitterness, numbing the soul and hardening the heart.

Slavery under Pharaoh mirrors humanity’s spiritual captivity under sin. Just as Israel’s cries rose up to God, our own groanings reveal a deep desire for deliverance. Yet rescue required both judgment and redemption—God would confront Egypt’s power and cover His people beneath the blood of the lamb.

At Gethsemane, Jesus faced a far greater bitterness. In fellowship with the Father, He prayed, “*Take this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what You will*” (Mark 14:36). This “cup” symbolized divine wrath - the judgment of sin poured out in full strength. By drinking it to the end, Jesus transformed the taste of our lives. The cup of wrath became for us the cup of salvation (Psalm 116:13). Through His obedience, every bitter root of bondage can be pulled up and replaced with the sweetness of grace and new life.

When C. S. Lewis wrote, “*The deeper the shadow, the brighter the light when it comes,*” he captured this redemptive rhythm perfectly. Our remembrance of sin’s bitterness gives sharper joy to the sweetness of Christ’s victory.



Respond

- **Pray:** Ask God to awaken your heart to the real cost of freedom—Jesus' suffering in your place.
- **Reflect:** Where has a pattern of sin hardened your heart or stolen your joy? Bring it honestly before Him.
- **Reorient:** Consider a practical step of obedience this week (forgiveness, confession, generosity, service) that can “sweeten” a bitter place in your life.

Further Study & Resources

- **Passage to Explore:** Deuteronomy 26:5–9 — Israel's confession of God's deliverance from slavery.
- **Thematic Connection:** Bitter herbs in the Passover meal (see Exodus 12:8; Numbers 9:11) served as a mnemonic of sorrow turned to salvation.
- **Cross References:** Romans 8:1–4; Galatians 5:1; Hebrews 2:14–15.
- **Commentary Insight:**
 - *Matthew Henry's Commentary* on Exodus 1 notes, “Afflictions make us feel our need of redemption and value the blessings of liberty.”
 - *N. T. Wright, Paul for Everyone: Romans, Part One* (Romans 6:6–7 discussion) explores how baptism symbolizes dying to sin's enslaving power.
- **Prayer Resource:** *The Valley of Vision* (“The Broken Heart” prayer).
- **Song Suggestion:** “Man of Sorrows” by Hillsong Worship (reflective listening; focus on themes, not lyrics)



Day 2 – Mortar and Mercy: The Sweet Work of Redemption

Seder Element: *Charoset – Apple-nut mixture*

Read:

- **Exodus 5:6–14** — Pharaoh’s cruel edict makes Israel’s bondage harsher, compelling them to gather straw and make bricks without relief.
- **Genesis 50:20** — Joseph assures his brothers that their evil intent became God’s good plan—to preserve many lives.
- **Romans 8:28** — Paul declares that “in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose.”

Optional Deep Reading: Psalm 34:18–22; 2 Corinthians 4:7–10; James 1:2–4.

Reflection

Few symbols capture paradox like *charoset*. Its sweetness recalls a bitter season—the backbreaking toil of making bricks under Pharaoh’s lash. The mixture of apples, nuts, and spices resembles the mortar the Hebrews shaped day after day, yet its taste is pleasant, even joyful. Israel’s table thus mingles memory and mercy—sorrow transformed by God’s redeeming power.

Suffering was never the final word in Israel’s story. The same God who watched their labor was already fashioning deliverance, turning mortar into memorial. Redemption always works this way: God enters the very substance of human struggle and reshapes it until fragrance replaces fatigue.

Joseph understood this mystery long before Moses. Betrayed, enslaved, and forgotten, he could still say to his brothers, “*You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.*” That confession becomes the lens for reading all of Scripture—and especially the cross. What could be more unjust than the death of the sinless Son of God? Yet that unparalleled evil became the very channel of salvation.

Through Jesus, the sweat and sorrow of our bondage are redeemed into witness. Grace takes the clay of our oppression and molds it into testimony. What once felt wasted now carries eternal weight. Charles Spurgeon captured the faith that such transformation requires: “*When you cannot see His hand, trust His heart.*” The Redeemer never wastes a single tear or ounce of toil; He turns all things toward glory.



Respond

- **Remember:** Recall a time of personal affliction—a season when life felt heavy and exhausting.
- **Reflect:** How has God since shown sweetness through that struggle? In what ways did He transform hardship into growth or witness?
- **Rejoice:** Offer that story as worship, giving thanks for the Redeemer who shapes even the mortar of labor into mercy's fragrance.

Further Study & Resources

- **Cross References:** Exodus 6:6; Isaiah 61:1-3; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.
- **Thematic Connection:** *Charoset* connects the memory of slavery's burden with joy in deliverance - sweetness born from sorrow.
- **Commentary Insight:**
 - *Matthew Henry* on Genesis 50:20: "The same event is the object of man's malice and of God's mercy."
 - *John Stott, The Cross of Christ:* "The cross is God's magnificent example of how He brings good out of evil, victory out of defeat."
- **Study Resource:** *Elisabeth Elliot, A Path Through Suffering* - explores how Christ transforms pain into purpose.
- **Spiritual Practice:** Mix a small batch of *charoset* and taste it prayerfully, thanking God for a time He brought sweetness out of struggle.
- **Song Suggestion:** "Beauty from Pain" by Superchick (reflective focus on redemption through suffering).



Day 3 – Tears in the Salt Sea: The God Who Weeps

Seder Element: *Karpas* – Parsley dipped in salt water

Read:

- **Psalm 56:8** - God counts each tear, storing our pain in His remembrance.
- **Luke 19:41–44** - Jesus weeps over Jerusalem’s blindness to the peace He came to bring.
- **Revelation 21:4** - God promises to wipe away every tear when all things are made new.

Optional Deep Reading: Exodus 14:21–31; John 11:32–36; Isaiah 25:8.

Reflection

At the Passover table, *karpas*, the green spring, symbolizes life and hope. Yet before it touches our lips, it’s dipped into salt water, mingling vitality with sorrow. The salt recalls two streams of tears: the anguished cries of God’s people in bondage and the rushing waters of the Red Sea. Both speak of deliverance bought through pain.

Israel’s tears became the sea through which God’s salvation flowed. The same waters that drowned Pharaoh’s army became the path of freedom for the redeemed. In this paradox lies the pattern of redemption—suffering preceding victory, tears preceding joy.

When Jesus approached Jerusalem, He too was overwhelmed with compassion. Luke paints one of the most tender portraits in Scripture: “*As He approached and saw the city, He wept over it.*” The Son of God weeps—not out of powerlessness, but out of love. His lament echoes the salt of the Passover tears. Jerusalem’s rejection of peace broke His heart, for He knew that sin’s blindness always leads to destruction (Luke 19:43–44).

In our moments of grief or guilt, we are not alone. Christ, who stood before death and wept (John 11:35), gathers our tears as precious treasures (Psalm 56:8). What Israel experienced in Exodus and what Jesus embodied at Jerusalem converge at the cross: divine love entering human pain to redeem it.

One day, all salt will give way to sweetness. The same hand that wiped His own tears in Gethsemane will touch your face in eternity - no more sorrow, no more death. The tears that once symbolized judgment and grief will become memorials of mercy.



Respond

- **Pray:** Tell God what still grieves you - loss, regret, fear, weariness. Let honest lament be your worship.
- **Trust:** Picture Christ beside you, sharing your sorrow. Remember that His compassion is not abstract - it weeps, feels, and restores.
- **Rejoice:** Thank Him that every tear shed in faith waters the soil of resurrection. Sorrow is not your final chapter; joy is.

Further Study & Resources

- **Cross References:** Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 53:3–5; Revelation 7:17.
- **Thematic Connection:** Salt water in the Seder evokes both the Red Sea and the tears of slavery - bitterness turned to blessing (Exodus 14:13–31).
- **Commentary Insight:**
 - *Charles Spurgeon* on Psalm 56:8: “Not one tear of the penitents and sufferers for God is ever lost - He treasures their griefs as costly jewels.”
 - *Darrell Bock, Luke: The NIV Application Commentary*, notes that Jesus’ weeping expresses a prophet’s heart—a divine sorrow for unbelief, not simple emotion.
- **Sermon Resource:** *The God Who Weeps* by N. T. Wright and C. F. Moucarry explores divine compassion in the face of evil.
- **Spiritual Practice:** Use this devotion during prayer to name your own “salt waters,” then thank God for His promise to make all things new (Revelation 21:5).
- **Song Suggestion:** “Jesus Wept” by Sovereign Grace Music (meditative reflection).

Day 4 – The Lamb: A Substitute for the Guilty

Seder Element: *Zeroa* – Roasted shank bone

Read:

- **Exodus 12:3–13** - God instructs Israel to sacrifice a spotless lamb; its blood marks the doorposts as a sign of protection.
- **Isaiah 53:4–7** - The Suffering Servant bears our griefs and carries our sorrows, silent yet submissive to slaughter.
- **John 1:29** - John the Baptist declares Jesus to be “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

Optional Deep Reading: Leviticus 17:11; 1 Peter 1:18–19; Revelation 5:6–13.

Reflection

In the Passover night, *zeroa* - the roasted bone - stood as the memory of sacrifice. The lamb had died so that others might live. Its blood, displayed on doorframes, proclaimed two truths: judgment is real, and mercy is available. The Israelites’ safety did not depend on worthiness, but on faith in what God provided.

Each year, as families gathered to retell the story, the bone reminded them of their substitute. This ritual preparation etched into Israel’s heart the rhythm of redemption: life passes over those covered by the blood of another. The lamb’s silent innocence anticipated a greater Lamb yet to come.

Isaiah’s prophecy stretches beyond ancient Egypt to a Servant who would bear the guilt of many. This Lamb would not simply save one nation from temporal death but humanity from eternal separation. On the cross, Jesus fulfilled every shadow of Exodus 12. His body became the true Passover offering, and His blood—poured not on wooden doorposts but on a wooden cross—marked the boundaries of salvation.

John the Baptist, standing at the Jordan, recognized the culmination of this divine pattern. “Behold, the Lamb of God,” he proclaimed—not a lamb slain in countless households, but *the* Lamb once offered for all. Substitution defines salvation: He took our place so we could take His.

C. S. Lewis wrote, “*He became what He was not, that we might become what we are not.*” In Jesus, the guiltless became guilty, and the guilty are declared righteous. This exchange is the center of the Gospel, the beating heart of grace.



Respond

- **Meditate:** Picture the first Passover night - the trembling faith, the blood applied, the hush of judgment passing over. Now see the cross as the ultimate doorway of mercy.
- **Pray:** Thank Jesus personally for bearing your judgment. Worship Him not only as Rescuer, but as *Your* Lamb.
- **Rejoice:** Rest in the truth that your freedom was purchased once for all. No further sacrifice is needed because Jesus said, “It is finished.”

Further Study & Resources

- **Cross References:** 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 9:11–15; John 19:33–36.
- **Thematic Connection:** The *zeroa* (shank bone) symbolizes both the cost and completion of redemption—the Lamb’s life offered in place of ours (Exodus 12:3–14).
- **Commentary Insight:**
 - *Matthew Henry* on Exodus 12: “Christ is our Passover Lamb; as the blood on the doorposts saved Israel from the destroyer, so His blood secures believers from the wrath to come.”
 - *Alec Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah:* “The Servant’s silence was not weakness but willing substitution—the awe-filled consent of love.”
- **Study Resource:** *John Stott, The Cross of Christ* — a profound exploration of substitutionary atonement.
- **Prayer Practice:** Read Isaiah 53 slowly as a personal confession; after each verse, thank Jesus for what He took in your place.
- **Song Suggestion:** “Worthy Is the Lamb” by Darlene Zschech (praise focus).

Day 5 – The Bread Without Leaven: Purity and Presence

Seder Element: *Matzah – Unleavened bread*

Read:

- **Exodus 12:15–20** – The Lord commands Israel to remove leaven and eat unleavened bread for seven days, a tangible sign of separation from Egypt.
- **1 Corinthians 5:6–8** – Paul teaches that “a little leaven leavens the whole lump,” calling the Church to live as those purified by Christ.
- **John 6:32–35** – Jesus announces Himself as “the bread of life,” promising that whoever feeds on Him will never hunger.

Optional Deep Reading: Deuteronomy 16:3; Matthew 16:6–12; John 13:4–10.

Reflection

In the Passover story, *matzah* represents haste and holiness. Israel’s bread was baked without leaven because liberation came too swiftly for the dough to rise. The unleavened bread became, from that night forward, a memorial of both deliverance and distinction. To eat it was to remember that sin’s corruption must be expelled when God calls His people out of bondage.

Leaven, though small, works invisibly—seeping through the dough until all is affected. In Scripture it often symbolizes the insidious nature of sin or false teaching, spreading quietly until purity is lost. Paul drew from this image when he wrote to the Corinthians: as God’s redeemed, we must “cleanse out the old leaven,” not to earn sanctity but to live in the freedom already purchased by Christ.

Jesus, the true *Bread from heaven*, brings the symbol to its fulfillment. Unlike the bread of Egypt or even the manna in the wilderness, He offers not momentary strength but eternal sustenance. His body, sinless yet broken, became the provision every soul craves. To partake of Him by faith is to feast on divine life itself.

John Piper’s words capture this mystery: “*God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.*” The leaven of sin dulls our appetite for such satisfaction; Christ alone restores it. The more we feed on His presence - through His Word, prayer, and obedience - the more sincere and whole our hearts become.

Like the Israelites who swept out every trace of leaven before Passover, we are invited to a spiritual house-cleaning—replacing hidden compromise with honest devotion. In that cleansing, purity is not mere abstinence but joy restored in the One who truly sustains.

Respond

- **Pray:** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of compromise or apathy—those subtle “yeasts” that have crept in unnoticed.
- **Cleanse:** Commit to one act of obedience or surrender that clears space for Christ’s presence.
- **Feast:** Spend time today reflecting on Jesus as the Bread of Life; read John 6 aloud and receive His sustaining grace.

Further Study & Resources

- **Cross References:** Galatians 5:9; Hebrews 12:1–2; Psalm 119:9–11.
- **Thematic Connection:** The *matzah* embodies separation and speed—leaving Egypt behind without delay, symbolizing purity in the journey toward promise.
- **Commentary Insight:**
 - *Matthew Henry* on 1 Corinthians 5:6: “Sin, if spared, will spread; sincerity and truth must be the unleavened bread of every believer.”
 - *Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John*: “In claiming to be the Bread of Life, Jesus declared that life’s deepest hunger can only be met in communion with Him.”
- **Spiritual Practice:** Before a meal, thank Christ as your true sustenance—body and spirit—and consider fasting from comfort foods for a day as a reminder of your dependence on Him.
- **Study Resource:** *Warren Wiersbe, Be Delivered* (commentary on Exodus 12 and the symbolism of unleavened bread).
- **Song Suggestion:** “Satisfied in You (Psalm 42)” by The Sing Team (devotional reflection).

Day 6 – The Egg and the Empty Tomb: Hope Renewed

Seder Element: *Beitzah* – Roasted or hard-boiled egg

Read:

- **2 Chronicles 30:21–27** – Hezekiah leads Judah in celebrating the Passover, restoring joy and worship after years of loss.
- **John 11:25–26** – Jesus proclaims, “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in Me will live, even though he dies.”
- **1 Peter 1:3–4** – God, “in His great mercy, has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Optional Deep Reading: Isaiah 61:1–3; Romans 6:4–5; Revelation 21:1–5.

Reflection

In the centuries after the temple was destroyed, the *beitzah*—a simple egg—found its place on the Seder plate. Once the Passover sacrifice could no longer be offered, the egg came to symbolize both mourning and expectation. Its prepared shell represented sorrow for a loss remembered, yet also steadfast hope that life would emerge again.

The paradox is striking: mourning and renewal, death and life, sealed together in one fragile symbol. The same God who allowed the temple to fall would not permit His promises to fail. In time, that hope took on flesh and—through the cross—burst forth from the tomb.

At Lazarus’s grave, Jesus spoke words that transformed all grief: “I am the resurrection and the life.” The One who stood in tears before death would soon stand victorious over it. When He rose on the third day, every tear of mourning became the seedbed of new creation. The egg’s unbroken shell whispers this truth—suffering may scorch, but it cannot shatter God’s redemptive design.

Peter later wrote of *new birth into a living hope*. That phrase captures resurrection faith: not wishful thinking, but an inheritance of life that already pulses within us through Christ’s Spirit. Tim Keller summarized it plainly: “*Christ did not come to make good people better. He came to make dead people alive.*” Resurrection is not just our future; it is our present identity.

From the ashes of exile to an empty tomb, God’s story has always been one of restoration. The *beitzah* and the tomb both declare: what looked lost was only waiting to be renewed.



Respond

- **Thank:** Offer a prayer of gratitude for Christ's victory over death—both His and yours.
- **Trust:** Name areas in your life that feel “buried.” Ask God to bring resurrection power and hope into them.
- **Live:** Step into the day with resurrection courage, remembering that new life is already yours in Him.

Further Study & Resources

- **Cross References:** Romans 8:11; Philippians 3:10–11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.
- **Thematic Connection:** The *beitzah* bridges sorrow and celebration, reminding Israel of temple loss while pointing forward to resurrection joy fulfilled in Christ.
- **Commentary Insight:**
 - *Matthew Henry* on 1 Peter 1:3: “The resurrection of Christ is the ground of the believer’s hope and the pledge of his inheritance.”
 - *F. F. Bruce, The Gospel of John*, observes that Jesus’s declaration at Bethany “transfers resurrection from the distant future to the present reality of faith.”
- **Study Resource:** *N. T. Wright, Surprised by Hope* - a thoughtful exploration of resurrection as both theological anchor and daily motivation.
- **Spiritual Practice:** Write down one personal “grave” - a situation that feels hopeless - and pray John 11:25–26 over it this week.
- **Song Suggestion:** “Living Hope” by Phil Wickham (joyful reflection)

