

What a Taste!

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It's Maundy Thursday evening. Passover.

A few international Christians have gathered at Pastor Patrick Dickson's home.

The table is set for us, with three small loaves of unleavened bread, a bowl with herbs and another one with salt. In addition, there's a cup of wine, or red juice, to be precise.

We read Bible verses from both the Old and New Testament. We sing a few hymns, and pray together.

Then Patrick breaks the bread, and passes it around. Each of us dips a piece of it in the bowl of herbs, and adds a pinch of salt.

I take a bite. The taste takes me back a few thousand years, to the times of Moses, when the Jewish people in Egypt experienced Passover. And back to the day when they first tasted bitter herbs and bread made without yeast (Exodus 12).

It's a strange sensation, not very pleasant... I take another bite, just to get the taste, to sense all the flavours of bitterness.

And suddenly I can make "sense" of the Jewish people's sufferings, that is, the many years of their enslavement in the land of the Pharaohs.

There is silence in the room. The others are still chewing on their pieces of bread.

After a while the cup of wine makes its round.

It feels good to taste the sweetness of the red juice.

Another kind of taste. Yeah!

And now I'm able to understand why Passover marked the beginning of a new era for the Jewish people: Freedom from slavery. Oh, what a taste!

Passover – the night when God passed through Egypt and struck down every firstborn Egyptian, thereby sparing the Jewish babies, as their fathers had slaughtered lambs and put their blood on the doorframes of their homes.

Passover – the time when the Jews set out to leave Egypt for Israel, the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

But there's more to Passover, when we celebrate it as Christians, as believers in Jesus:

Passover – the night when Jesus gathered His disciples to commemorate the ancient liberation of the Jewish people from Egyptian slavery, just as God had commanded them to do through Moses (Luke 22).

Passover – the time when Christ revealed to His followers – in the breaking of the unleavened bread, and by sharing the cup of wine – that soon He would die as the "Lamb of God", and thus mark mankind's freedom from the slavery of sin.