



The Inscrutable Question: The Gospel in the Jewish Seder; Solving the Mystery of *Aphikomen*: Messiah Has Already Come

C. The Gospel in the Jewish Passover Seder:

1. In Matthew 26:26, Jesus identified the unleavened bread as representative of His body which was the impeccable sacrifice to which our sins were to be imputed and judged the very next day.
2. The Jews adopted the use of the unleavened bread as representative of the absent lamb, a tradition that later became incorporated into the *Talmud* and finally into the *Shulchan Arukh*. They still miss the impact of John the Baptist's proclamation in John 1:29, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
3. The three matzos in the *matzo tash* are believed by the Jews to represent the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But the original inference was to the three Persons of the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The matzos are one inside the linen bag but when removed they are three individual pieces of unleavened bread.
4. The middle matzo, or *aphikomen*, is broken at the end of the first quarter but its major significance for the Jews is to peek the interest of children by making a game out of finding it and the reward that follows.
5. But the Christian application emphasizes the punishment inflicted on the Lord during the three hours of judgment on the cross.
6. Matthew, Mark, and Luke each describe the Lord breaking the bread at the institution of the Eucharist, a way of demonstrating the "suffering" He spoke of in Luke 22:15.
7. The Jews wrap one half of the *aphikomen* in a linen napkin and hide it. Later the children are challenged to find it and bring it back to the table. Again this is simply a part of keeping children involved in the Seder.
8. But the hidden meaning they miss is that the Lord was wrapped in death cloths of fine linen and buried in a tomb.

John 19:38 - Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore and took away His body.

v. 39 - And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to Him by night; bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

v. 40 - And so they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

v. 41 - Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid.

v. 42 - Therefore on account of the Jewish day of preparation, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

9. Wrapping the *aphikomen* in the linen napkin is a picture of the Lord's burial. Linen is also used figuratively in the Bible for righteousness. (Revelation 19:8)
10. Following discovery of the *aphikomen* by the children, the host passes it around the table and all break off a piece and eat it.
11. This is the final act of the Seder meal and comes in association with the third cup, a picture of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day.

Matthew 12:40 - "Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."



Matthew 28:5 - And the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified.

v. 6 - "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said."

12. Thus within the Passover Seder is found the complete story of the Gospel. They look on the *aphikomen* as a representation of the absent Pascal lamb. But even the word itself is a testimony to the real meaning of the middle matzo.

D. Solving the Mystery of *Aphikomen*:

1. In all literature on Judaism that addresses the elements of the Seder table, very little explanation is given for the meaning of the word **ἀφικόμην / *aphikomen* /**.
2. The consensus is that it means "dessert" since it is eaten after the meal. Interestingly, this is not a Hebrew word but rather a Greek word.
3. Koine Greek was the common language of the Roman Empire from the first century until the fall of SPQR in the fifth century.
4. So how did a Greek word not only find its way into the Jewish Passover Seder but also become one of its most important elements?
5. The simple explanation is that it was among those things borrowed by the Jews from the Agape Feast and Eucharist of the Christian community in the development of their own lambless Seder.
6. This word was used by the Christians for a very good reason: **ἀφικόμην / *aphikomen* /** is the aorist form of the Greek verb:

ἵκνέομαι / *hikneomai* / - "to come to"

7. Thus the word **ἀφικόμην / *aphikomen* /** was the name given by the early Christians to the unleavened bread of their Eucharist. It means, "He came to us."
8. It is disingenuous for the Rabbis to hide the meaning of this word behind a contrived translation of "dessert." Its correct translation betrays the absurdity of continuing to observe the annual Passover.
9. As our Jewish friends eat the *aphikomen* in recognition of the absent Pascal lamb they call it dessert instead of realizing its true meaning as the flesh of the Lamb of God Who "came to us."
10. This piece of unleavened bread silently evangelizes the Jews who observe the Passover every year. Annually they gather in the hope that it will be the year they will see the coming of Messiah in His First Advent while the *aphikomen*, hidden inside the *matzo tash*, remains the unspoken testimony to the fact that He already came.