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What's Passover?

Every year, Jewish people around the world celebrate one of their most important Old Testament festivals called Passover. It commemorates the escape of their Israelite ancestors, led by Moses, from slavery in Egypt more than three thousand years ago (see Exodus 3–15). The Passover celebration lasts for one week every spring, usually on or about the same time Christians celebrate Easter.

"Passover" refers especially to one event that contributed to the Israelites leaving Egypt. When the Egyptian king, Pharaoh, refused Moses' request to set the Israelites free, God punished the Egyptians with a series of terrible calamities. The most devastating was the night when the firstborn male (human and animal) of every Egyptian died (see Exodus 12).

The Lord had commanded the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb and spread its blood over their door posts. When the Lord saw the blood, He "passed over" those homes, sparing their males from death.

Should We Celebrate Passover?

Christians certainly consider the events of Moses' life important. Jesus and the early Christians, most being Jewish, observed Passover. However, we believe a more significant event occurred many years after Moses when Jesus was crucified on the cross. The New Testament teaches that Jesus is our Passover Lamb whose blood spares us from the judgment of sin.

When Jesus came to him to be baptized, John the Baptist exclaimed, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). The apostle Paul also compared Jesus to the sacrificed lamb, "For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Most Jewish kids, like Abbey, know very little about Jesus' death and resurrection. Yet hearing her talk about Passover reminded her Christian friends not to "Passover" the real meaning of Easter, which is so much more than decorating and hunting for eggs.

