

What is the Passover?

The Passover became a festival for Jewish people to celebrate the time when God passed over the Israelites while in slavery in Egypt, killed the firstborn Egyptians and liberated the people from slavery in Egypt. In Hebrew, it is known as Pesach and is one of the most widely celebrated festivals in the Jewish calendar to this day.

Exodus 12.14-17: "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD - a lasting ordinance. For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat—that is all you may do. Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come."

What we'll find, is that the Passover is a picture of the coming Messiah, Jesus, who would die on the cross to bring freedom. We'll learn how we can relate the Old Testament experiences to our lives today.

A Rugrats Passover

The Rugrats did a Passover episode. You can watch at:

DailyMotion – <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6i4wi4>

Short version on YouTube – <https://youtu.be/Wfl3u7SXKMU>

Another place to watch (archive.org) –
<https://archive.org/details/ARugratsPassover>
(links all checked, April 2019)

True Story

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maximilian_Kolbe)

Father Kolbe was a Polish Catholic Priest in Auschwitz Concentration Camp in World War 2. To try and stop people escaping, there was a rule that if anyone escaped, 10 others would be killed. In July 1941 a man from Kolbe's bunker escaped.

'The fugitive has not been found!' the commandant Karl Fritsch screamed. 'You will all pay for this. Ten of you will be locked in the starvation bunker without food or water until they die.' The prisoners trembled in terror. A few days in this bunker without food and water, and they would die.

The ten were selected, including Franciszek Gajowniczek. He couldn't help a cry of anguish. 'My poor wife!' he sobbed. 'My poor children! What will they do?' When he uttered this cry of dismay, Maximilian stepped silently forward, took off his cap, and stood before the commandant and said, 'I am a Catholic priest. Let me take his place. I am old. He has a wife and children.'

Observers believed in horror that the commandant would be angered and would refuse the request, or would order the death of both men. The commandant remained silent for a moment. What his thoughts were on being confronted by this brave priest we have no idea. Amazingly, the Nazi Commandant agreed to the request. Franciszek Gajowniczek was returned to the ranks, and the priest took his place. It is reported that Kolbe led the other 9 men in singing as they gradually starved to death. Kolbe was the last of the men to die.

But what happened to Gajowniczek - the man Father Kolbe saved? Every year on August 14 he went back to Auschwitz. He spent the next five decades paying homage to Father Kolbe across the world, telling of what Kolbe had done, honouring the man who died on his behalf. He said, "'so long as he ... has breath in his lungs, he would consider it his duty to tell people about the heroic act of love by Maximilian Kolbe."

Father Kolbe's incredible deed is an inspiration and a true act of sacrifice. He stood in the place of another man and died. But Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice for all of humanity, so that we could be made right with God. In John 15.13, Jesus said, "*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*" And we know from Romans 6.8 that, "*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*"

The Passover - Forgiving Sin - Exodus 12.1-14

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbour, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without

yeast. Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire—head, legs and inner parts. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover. On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

In Leviticus 4:32-35, the Israelites were given God's orders for dealing with sin. A lamb had to be taken, blood sprinkled and this was then offered to God by the priest as a sacrifice to make payment for people's sins.

In Exodus, each family had to take a lamb without any defect. The lamb then had to be slaughtered. Finally, the blood had to be applied to the houses of the people. All the lamb was to be eaten or destroyed. They had to eat it wearing their clothes and prepared. Does anyone notice anything similar here..?!

Firstly, Jesus was a lamb without defect. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he said, *"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* In 1 Peter 1:18-19, we read, *"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."* So we know that Jesus is described as a lamb (or as Derek Prince used to say, 'a ram') and without defect. Hebrews 4:15 says, *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."* The physical perfection of the lamb in Exodus represents Jesus with his spiritual and moral perfection. 1 Peter 2:22 says, *"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."*

Secondly, Jesus was slaughtered on the cross for us. In Acts 8:32 we read, *"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth."* As the spotless Lamb, Jesus was the only one who could rightfully pay for the sins of the world. Colossians 1:19-20 says, *"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."*

Third, the blood had to be applied. 1 Corinthians 5:7 tells us, *"Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."* We then learn in Hebrews 13:12 that, *"..Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy*

through his own blood." Hebrews 9.22 says, "...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." 1 John 1.7 shows us, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." Finally, Ephesians 2.13, says, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ."

It is not enough to have blood, we have to apply the blood. For us, this means we have to accept that Jesus, the Son of God died on the cross for us to pay for our sins - and then accept Jesus as our personal friend / Saviour. We cannot expect the blood to do anything for us, unless we accept and say 'yes' to Jesus. That is the only way to make the blood of Jesus relevant to us, so that the 'angel of death passes' by. What does that mean? It means what Jesus says it does - first that Jesus has come to give us life in abundance (John 10.10) and second, that we have eternal life through Jesus (see Matthew 25.46 for example).

A free deal worth taking!

Romans 3.21-26 gives us lots of help to show how we have to 'apply' the blood of Jesus today. *"But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished - he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus."*

So, we are now made right with Jesus through faith in Jesus Christ (alone). All of us have sinned, done wrong, messed up - and fallen short of God's standards. We can be made right with Jesus freely because of his amazing and kind act that he did on the cross (and his perfect life). Jesus was the sacrifice that made things right between man and God, because his blood was shed on the cross. God did this because he is just, a God of justice. Because we have done wrong, we have to be made right. The only way to be made right is through Jesus - and having faith in him.

Just as Kolbe took the place of Gajowniczek, so in a much bigger way, Jesus took our place on the cross. It should have been us that deserved to die, but instead Jesus made a way. But we have to accept Jesus personally (saying yes to his life and him being in charge of our life). Otherwise, it doesn't work!

Movie Clip - Valiant

Chapter 16 (56.25mins - 58.51mins)

Valiant goes and breaks his friend out of his cage. He then flies out of the building and eventually away to freedom!

The Passover - out of slavery into freedom

Exodus 12.31-36: *"During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, 'Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me.' The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. 'For otherwise,' they said, 'we will all die!' So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing. The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. The LORD had made the Egyptians favourably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians."*

God delivered the people from Egypt. He heard their cries, and acted on their behalf, through Moses, Aaron and supernatural events that would glorify God alone.

The Bible tells us that, "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." So, the rightful thing for people who sin (all of us) is death. But the gift that God freely gives if we accept Jesus, is eternal life. What a deal!! The truth is, that if we do not know God, we are living in slavery. People don't realise this, but life without God is like being a slave. The Bible tells us that this world is effectively under temporary control of the evil one in some ways, so a life that is not under the control of the Holy Spirit of God, is a life that is under the control of satan. Jesus says in Luke 11.23 that, *"He who is not with me is against me."* There is no middle ground. But, the result of accepting Jesus is abundant life. 2 Corinthians 9.8 says something incredible, *"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."* What an awesome plan and gift!!

The flip side of not accepting Jesus is destruction. God is a God of justice and sin cannot go unpunished. You cannot commit a murder, or commit a crime and expect to get away with it. There has to be justice. In the same way, God has made a way for us to confess our sins and be made right through Jesus. If we reject this, we reject God and justice dictates that we will be punished (by our own free choice). The amazing thing is that so many people reject God and choose a life of destruction. In Exodus 12.29, we learn that, *"At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt."*

In Deuteronomy 30:19, God says, *"This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."*

Be wise and choose God - today!

A prayer

Lord Jesus, I am sorry that I have gone my own way and rejected you. I am sorry for this and I turn away from my selfish life of living for me. I want to change and live for you. Please forgive me for all the wrong things I have ever done in my life. I am sorry for them and turn away from them all. Instead, fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me become a new person. I put you first, say yes to you today, Jesus. Come into my life, fill me and breathe your new and abundant life into me. I believe that on the cross you died for all my sins. I believe that you rose from the dead and have overcome death. I put my old life to death and now I want to live completely for you. Amen.