



## BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A1606 ~ The Passover Feast.**

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*Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.*

In the years following the return of Mary and Joseph to Nazareth, the boy Jesus grew up normally and sisters and brothers were added to the family. When Jesus was 12 years old, his parents took Him to Jerusalem for the annual celebration of the Feast of Passover. This was a trip on foot of about three days. For company and protection along the way, groups of people travelled together. At times, the people sang some of the Psalms to prepare themselves for the solemn services ahead.

The Feast of Passover holds great importance among the religious feasts of the world. Passover is the oldest continually observed feast in existence today and started around 3,500 years ago. It came about from the following records in the Bible.

A great famine in the lands east of the Mediterranean Sea caused Abraham's grandson Jacob to take his whole family of 70 people to live in Egypt. God had provided a warning of this severe drought by giving the Pharaoh of Egypt at the time a strange dream. The Pharaoh couldn't understand the dream and neither could his advisors. Pharaoh's chief butler then remembered that while he'd been in prison two years before, another prisoner named Joseph had given the correct meaning of a dream that the butler had had: he would be restored to his job serving Pharaoh. This dream is recorded in Genesis, chapters 40 and 41.

Joseph was summoned before Pharaoh to explain the meaning of his dream. Joseph, who was the son of Jacob, was put in charge of storing all the crops from seven years of good harvest so that all the people could eat during the following seven years of famine.

Hundreds of years passed after this event and the children of Israel (or descendants of Jacob) grew in number to such an extent that the Egyptian people started to fear them. A new Pharaoh from a new dynasty came to the throne. He didn't know of the good work of Joseph and set about controlling the Israelites by making them Egyptian slaves. The people cried out to God to save them from this hard work and their cruel Egyptian taskmasters.

God heard the people's cries. After living more than 400 years in Egypt, God sent Moses and Aaron to bring out all the children of Israel so they could worship God in a new country. By then, the people had grown to number between 1 to 2 million.

But Pharaoh wasn't about to let all those slave workers leave his massive building projects. He refused to let them go, despite warnings from Moses and Aaron. But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he wouldn't listen. God then sent 10 plagues on the Egyptian people and their gods. The last plague became the foundation of the Passover Feast.

Moses instructed all the Israelite people to select a perfect male lamb from the flock for each family. They were to keep it in the family for four days. By the end of this time, it was a family pet and meant something personally to them.

On the afternoon of the fourth day, the people were to come together and kill their lamb. To them, this was upsetting and showed a costly nature of sacrifice. The people were to paint the lamb's blood on the door posts of their houses as a public sign of their faith in the Lord. Their lamb's blood had become their substitute, making it possible for the Lord's angel of judgment to "pass over" them while the angel came that night. The angel of the Lord passed over the nation of Egypt, killing all the first-born male children and animals of the Egyptians. But in the homes of the Israelites, no one died because the angel of the Lord saw the blood of the lamb. The Egyptians were terribly upset and sent the Israelites away from Egypt that very night.

One year later after the children of Israel had left Egypt they celebrated the angel's Passover night in the Sinai Wilderness to remind them of the sacrifice of the lamb which saved them from God's hand of death. At the present time, more Jewish people keep Passover than any of the other Jewish holy days.

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Jesus was probably 12 and a half years old when He went to Jerusalem for His first Passover. These days when a Jewish boy has his 13th birthday, he is considered an adult in the Jewish community. This means that he is seen as responsible for his own behaviour and can read from the sacred Scriptures and lead the congregation in prayer during services. Under Jewish Law, children are not obligated to observe the commandments. However, they are encouraged to do so as much as possible to learn the obligations that they will have as adults. At the age of 13 for boys and 12 for girls, Jewish young people become obligated to observe the Scriptural commandments.

No ceremony is needed to confer these rights and obligations. However, in the last century, this coming of age status has often been celebrated with a lavish ceremony.

The Passover is celebrated as a holy day for Jewish people in March or April each year. This feast was followed immediately by the 7-day feast of Unleavened Bread. In modern times, however, the two feasts have been blended together and are now just called “the Passover.” To remember this miraculous deliverance, the month when it is held becomes the first month of the Jewish religious calendar. The civic New Year starts on the Feast of Trumpets and celebrated from mid September to early October.

In Jesus’ time, for the Passover service and meal, God required three different foods to be served: the lamb which depicted innocence. It was to be roasted with fire portraying the judgment that would befall it instead of the firstborn; the unleavened bread was to be eaten to symbolise the purity of the sacrifice since leaven or yeast with its souring flavour, was often a symbol of sin; and thirdly, bitter herbs were to be eaten as a reminder of the suffering of the lamb.

In recent years, groups of animal activists have been trying to stop the slaughter of animals for religious purposes. The whole world groans under the burden of sin and its consequences and everything and everyone suffers to some extent. We live in a fallen world. The first command God gave Moses was for all people to worship Him and Him alone. We’re not to worship the created sun, moon or earth. Some people place over-emphasis on caring for the environment and animals and forget about the God who made them. This is a serious mistake. God doesn’t want animals to be treated cruelly. But to place animals as more important than God leaves people without the understanding that being acceptable to God is more important than anything else. The Bible says Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb of the world, and by trusting this message, our sins don’t need the shedding of blood through animal sacrifices any longer.

The city of Jerusalem has a long history. Christians and tourists from all over the world go there to see where the different events listed in the Bible took place. The whole region has attracted many archaeological digs to find artefacts from the past civilizations. Some places even claim fame because Jesus did a miracle there.

There was only one Passover when the Lord passed through the land of Egypt in judgment. Ever since then, the Passover is a memorial to commemorate that preparation for leaving Egypt. How the Passover is observed has changed over the years. When the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70 and the people scattered, new ways of remembering Passover were brought in. Without the Temple, there could be no more sacrifices. So the Passover was observed without a lamb.

In modern times in preparation for the Passover, there is a thorough spring clean of each house to rid it of all leavened bread and related products. Everyday dinnerware is replaced by the finest crockery and dishes. The Passover service itself is usually quite lengthy as the Passover story unfolds through many prayers, songs and narrative readings, and the eating of symbolic foods. All this may take until midnight or longer before tired family members can wander off to bed.

Why did God command the Children of Israel to remember the Passover forever, as is listed in Exodus, Chapter 12? Ultimately, Passover foreshadowed the Jewish Messiah as the true Passover Lamb. Isaiah spoke of Messiah as the Passover lamb in Chapter 53.

The Messiah would be like an innocent, pure Lamb upon whom the judgment of God would fall in place of His people. He would be the One who, with great suffering and death, would shed His blood to provide the greater deliverance from sin.

In John's Gospel, Chapter 1, it says: "The next day John (the Baptist) saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" The day after this event, John again testified that Jesus was the Lamb of God. The Apostle Paul in 1st Corinthians, Chapter 5, said: "Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."

What does this mean for Gentiles or non-Jewish people? All people who love the Lord Jesus are united together in worshipping Him as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. On the night before He was crucified, Jesus instituted a new way of remembering Him as the Passover Lamb. He took the symbols of bread and wine, saying they represented His body and blood. Only those who had accepted Jesus as their Saviour from sin were allowed to eat these symbols. This ceremony publicly declares the Lord's death until He returns to this world.

Only one Passover question remains: is the Lord Jesus your Passover Lamb? Have you placed your trust in the Messiah and His sacrifice for you as your only hope of heaven? Jesus' blood guards believers from the anger of God's judgement against sin and further eternal torment in hell. Each person alive needs to decide for him or herself concerning the Lamb of God. There is no deliverance from sin without the Lamb of God – precious Jesus.

May we take to heart Hebrews Chapter 12, verse 2: "Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end."

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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