

## Words

- **ancient** = old
- **celebrate** = to do something special on an important day
- **change your mind** = to have a different opinion from the one you had first
- **choose, chose** = to decide who you want to have
- **conquer** = to take control of a country by fighting
- **drown** = to die when you are under water for a long time
- **feast** = a time when people do a lot of things they like
- **flour** = a powder that you make by crushing wheat or other another crop; you use it to make bread or cake
- **force** = to make someone do something
- **freedom** = liberty
- **Jew** = a person whose religion is Judaism
- **mark** = to make a sign
- **Pharaoh** = king of ancient Egypt
- **plague** = disease
- **prayer** = words that you say to God
- **Promised Land** = the land that was promised to the Hebrews by God
- **punishment** = penalty, something you have to do if you have done something wrong
- **put up** = build, construct
- **raise** = to lift something or move higher
- **rise** = go up
- **reach** = get to
- **roast** = cook or grill on a fire
- **slave** = a person who is not free and belongs to someone else
- **split** = to break apart
- **staff** = a long walking stick
- **survive** = to live on after a dangerous situation
- **synagogue** = a building where Jewish people meet to pray

Passover is the Jewish **feast of freedom**. It is **celebrated** at about the same time as Easter and lasts for 7 or 8 days. During Passover **Jews** around the world remember their **freedom** from **slavery** in Egypt.

In **ancient** times Egypt was one of the most powerful countries in the worlds. It **conquered** smaller nations and made their people **slaves**. The early **Jews**, or Hebrews as they were called, also became Egyptian **slaves**. The **Pharaoh forced** them to work hard. They had to **put up** buildings and pull heavy stones across the desert. He gave them little food to eat and no **freedom**.

The Bible tells us that God **chose** Moses to lead the **Jews** out of Egypt and to the land of Canaan, which is today's Israel. Moses went to the Pharaoh and asked him to let the Jews free. When the king said no God sent down ten **plagues**, or **punishments** to **force** the king to **change his mind**.

The word Passover comes from the tenth **plague**. The firstborn son of every Egyptian family was killed. God told the Jews to **mark** their door posts with the blood of a **roasted** lamb to show him that they were his children. In this way the firstborn sons of the Jews **survived**.

When the Pharaoh's son died he told Moses to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt. When they **reached** the Red Sea they heard Egyptian armies coming after them. Moses **raised** his **staff** over the water and the sea **split** open so that the Hebrews could go across. Then the sea closed up again and the Pharaoh's army **drowned**. Moses and his people wandered around for forty years before they found the **Promised Land**. Moses, however, died and never **reached** it.

Today, many Jews gather in **synagogues** every year to retell the Passover story. The most important food of this holiday is "matzo", which is bread made of **flour** and water. It is flat because Moses and his followers didn't have time to let the bread **rise**. Many families sing songs and say **prayers** during the holidays.



*Matzo- The symbol of the Passover holiday*