

This week, through Passover Trivia for Kids, we'll be focusing on the story of Passover. Next week, we will focus on the seder and other Passover rituals and customs.

The Passover Story

Chapter 1: Jewish Enslavement

The story of Passover took place in Egypt about 3500 years ago. Our Jewish patriarch Jacob had settled there with his family to be close to his son Joseph, who had been appointed as second in command to King Pharaoh and had, with his wisdom, saved the people of Egypt from dying when a famine struck their country.

Jacob and his family lived in the Egyptian city of Goshen and did very well there—his children had many children, and those children had many children, and their numbers grew and grew. As long as Jacob's sons were alive, the Israelites were treated with honor and respect, but after Jacob's sons died, the old King Pharaoh died, too, and a new Pharaoh rose to power.

This new Pharaoh did not like the Israelites, and he chose to forget all that Joseph had done for Egypt. He decided to take action against the growing numbers of the Jewish people.

He called his advisors together, and they suggested that he enslave the Jews and oppress them before they grew too powerful. Pharaoh listened to his advisors; he took away the freedom of the Jews, put heavy taxes on them, and forced their men to do hard work under the supervision of cruel officers.

The children of Israel had to build cities and roads; they had to work in the field, and make their own bricks and tiles. But the more the Egyptians made them work, the more the Israelites increased and multiplied.

Finally, when King Pharaoh saw that forcing the Hebrews to do hard work did not keep them from having more and more children, he decreed that all Jewish newborn baby boys should be thrown into the Nile River. Only daughters should be allowed to live.

In this way, Pharaoh hoped to end the increase of the Jewish people, and at the same time to remove a danger predicted by his astrologers, that a leader would be born to the Israelites who would take them out of Egypt.

The only group of Jews that escaped enslavement was the tribe of Levi. This tribe had taken over the Torah academy that Jacob had established in Goshen, and they were the ones in charge of teaching the children of Israel about G-d and His commandments.

Because they were busy teaching Torah, they led a very holy life; they did not mix with the Egyptians, while most of the other Israelites did. As time went on, most of the Jews (other than the tribe of Levi) started acting more and more like the Egyptians, forgetting about their Israelite customs and keeping only their language, clothing, and names. It was the Jews who hung out and spent time with the Egyptians who made their Egyptian neighbors angry and nervous.

For this reason, only the children of Levi- who were busy teaching and studying Torah in their Jewish schools- who were saved from the slavery that was imposed on the rest of the Israelites.

Additional resource: Click [here](#) to watch an animated video of the story of Passover.