They Called It Pesach

“Long before the first Passover, Hebrew families gave lambs as offerings to God…Early Christians saw the lamb as a beautiful symbol of Jesus and began using it in their Easter Celebrations.” In fact, “Early Christians called Easter *Pasach*, which is the Hebrew name for Passover.” The word Pasach eventually led to the phrase Pascal Lamb. (*An Easter Celebration* - *Traditions and Customs from Around the World*, by Pamela Kennedy).

“Why do they call it Good Friday?” a friend asked, “What’s good about it? He was crucified.” I learned from *An Easter Celebration* that Good Friday was originally  “God’s Friday.” Another friend added his insight, “Like Thursday was originally Thor’s Day.” Indeed, language changes over the centuries which is important to keep in mind. This year Good Friday is remembered  on April 15. At sunset Passover begins. Leonardo Da Vinci’s The Last Supper shows Jesus at Passover with his Apostles. The Last Supper, Da Vinci’s famous painting, commemorates the Passover meal with Jesus and his twelve Apostles.

Thanks to a friend, who is a Jewish lawyer, I have gone to her Passover celebrations for over a decade. I am one of the few “goyim,” i.e. non-Jews, who’ve been invited. It’s there that I learned about “The Four Questions” asked by the youngest person at the Passover Seder (dinner). Author Ilana Kurshan wrote, *The Four Questions Around the World*. She, “translates Passover seder’s the *Four Questions* into twenty-three languages and provides capsule histories of the Jews in the countries where the languages are spoken.”

One of the most interesting stories comes from the Chinese language. There are only 1,000 Chinese Jews who live in Shanghai. They are allowed to choose one of seven last names. This information was especially interesting to a friend whose friend prepares Kosher-style Chinese meals. My friend and her husband are guests at her friend’s Passover Seder.

I bought both books, celebrating worldwide cultures, *An Easter Celebration* and *The Four Questions*, at a Friends of the Library sale. Each was only $1.00.  Each book was a bargain and inspiration. That’s another story.

Have you ever heard, as part of the early history of Easter, that they called it Pesach?