

A LITTLE BOY IN AN ARK



DO YOU remember the story of Noah and the big boat on the dry land? Noah built that big boat because God asked him to build it. God knew that Noah would need such a boat, for the time was coming when it would rain and rain and rain until all the land would be covered with water, and all the people and animals would be drowned, except those in Noah's boat. That was really a big boat. It was large enough for Noah and his family, besides many, many animals—some of every kind. It was called an ark.

Well, this story is not about Noah's ark, but another ark. Not another large ark, but a very small one—just big enough to hold one little baby boy. But this little ark was used for the same reason that the big ark was used. The big ark saved Noah and all his family from being drowned, while this little ark saved one dear little baby boy from being drowned. And who do you suppose that baby was?

Really, the baby didn't have any name while he was in the ark. After he was taken out of the ark a very kind Egyptian princess named him Moses. The name Moses means "to draw out," because this Egyptian princess had drawn out, or taken the baby out of the water.

But Moses was not an Egyptian boy. Oh no! He was a little Jewish baby. They were called Hebrews then, which is still one of the names of the Jewish people.

The Hebrews were the children of Jacob, and all the children that have since been born from Jacob's children are called Jacob's descendants. Jacob was the grandson of Abraham. To Abraham and his children God promised to give the land of Canaan, but at the time of this story all the Hebrew people were in Egypt. Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, had become a ruler in Egypt, and the rest of the family went there during the years of famine. I told you all about this in my last story, but I want you to be sure to remember it.

Everything went along fine with the Hebrew children as long as Joseph lived. But, like everybody else, Joseph grew old and died, and so did all his brothers. But of course there were a great many Hebrew children who became men and women, and they had children of their own. As years went by, there were thousands and thousands of Hebrews living in the land of Egypt. The Egyptians grew old and died also. Everybody had to die then, just as everybody dies now, because in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve disobeyed God.

It won't always be that way though, for God loves everybody, and he gave his Son, Jesus, to die for everybody; and by and by Jesus will bring back all the dead people and give them health and strength, and they will then live forever. Won't that be wonderful? That's what the Bible means when it says that Jesus saves the people. He saves them from death just as the big ark saved Noah and his family from the water, and just as the little ark saved Moses from the water.

Well, to get back to my story, that nice, kind Pharaoh, or king of Egypt, who had made Joseph such an important ruler over the people, died. Then there was a Pharaoh in Egypt who had not known Joseph and he was unfriendly to Joseph's relatives. This king saw how the Hebrew children were increasing in number, and he was afraid that some day there would be more Hebrews than Egyptians. So what do you suppose he did? Why, he made slaves of all the Hebrews and put cruel masters over them to make them work very, very hard. Perhaps he thought

this would cause them to die young, and that soon there wouldn't be nearly as many Hebrews.

But God was with the Hebrews.

He had made wonderful promises to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob, and to all of Jacob's sons. These promises belonged to all the Hebrews. They were God's people, and God won't let anybody kill all of his people.

Besides, God will bring back to life all the Hebrews who have died, and everybody else, too, for that matter. You see, God always keeps his promises, and no one can really interfere with what God wants done. That's a very important thing to remember.

Making slaves of the Hebrews didn't stop them from increasing in number, so the king of Egypt ordered that all the boy babies of the Hebrews should be killed as soon as they were born. They were to be thrown into the river Nile and drowned. Wasn't that awful?

Now the mother of the baby boy who was later named Moses dearly loved that little child, just as all of us love babies today, and no matter what the king had said, she made up her mind that she would do all she could to keep him from being drowned.

She kept the baby out of sight in her home for three months, and when she realized that she couldn't keep him hidden much longer she built that little ark of bulrushes and painted it with tar so it wouldn't leak. Then she placed the baby in the ark and hid it among the leaves and grass that grew up at the edge of the water in the river.

After the mother put this small boat with its precious passenger by the edge of the river, she went away. But the baby's sister stood nearby to see what would happen. And what do you think did occur? Why, one of the daughters of the king—the very king who had ordered all the Hebrew baby boys killed—came down to the river to bathe. Several young ladies came with her to give her any help she needed. The king's daughter saw the little boat

snuggled among the reeds and rushes by the water's edge, and she asked her servants to find out what was in it.

When they opened the basket, there was that darling baby! Of course the king's daughter knew that it was a Hebrew baby. She knew, too, that all Hebrew boy babies were supposed to be drowned. But she was tenderhearted and couldn't bear to see such a precious little baby killed; so she decided that she would adopt the baby and call it her own. Wasn't that wonderful?

You see, God had planned that when this particular boy became a man he would give him a great work to do, and this was God's way of saving the boy he wanted to use. God always knows how to do what he wants to do. That's why we should always trust him and believe that his promises will come true.

The king's daughter knew that she didn't understand very much about taking care of babies, so just at the right time the baby's own sister, who had stayed nearby to see what would happen, came to her and offered to get a nurse to take care of the baby. The king's daughter thought this was a very good idea, so the baby's sister went home and brought back their mother.

When she came, Pharaoh's daughter asked her to take the baby and nurse him for her. Now, didn't everything turn out well. That is the way the Lord does things. Then the king's daughter named the baby Moses, and Moses was cared for by his own mother until he grew to be a young man.

QUESTIONS

- Who was Moses, and why was he put in a small ark at the edge of a river when he was a baby?
- Explain how it come about that Moses was cared for and educated in the home of Egypt's ruler.