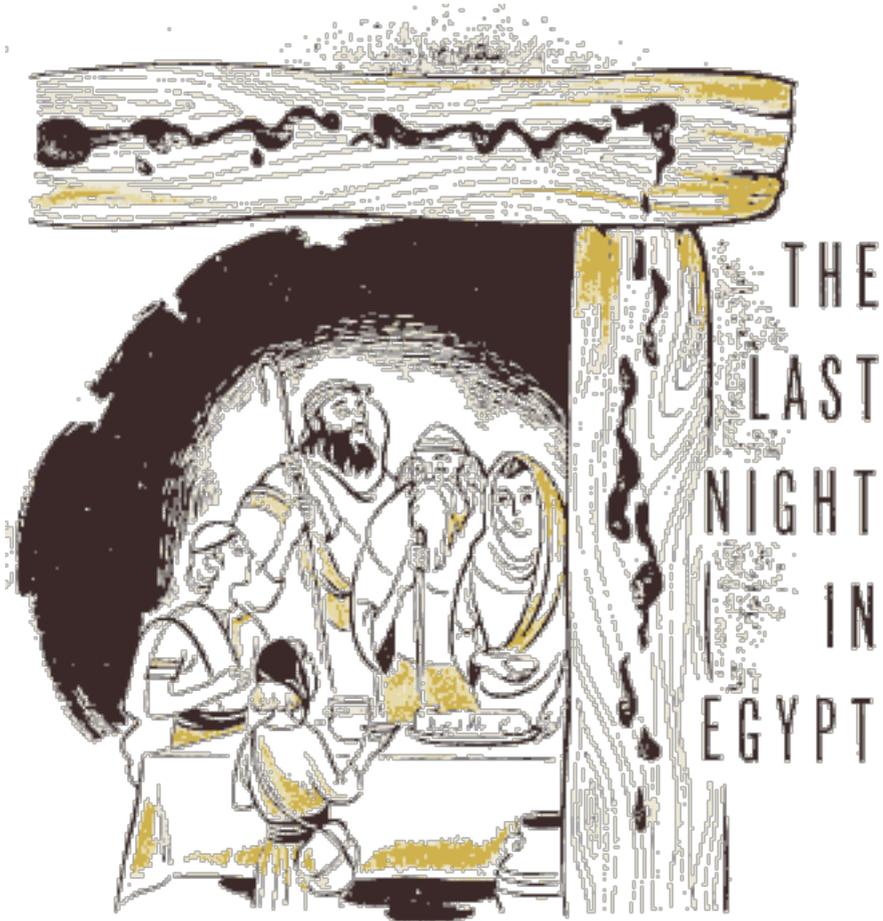


THE LAST NIGHT IN EGYPT



IN OUR last story we learned that Pharaoh, the wicked king of Egypt, was finally glad to have the Hebrews leave his country. That was because his oldest son suddenly died, and because the oldest, or the first born, in every family of Egypt suddenly died. Pharaoh knew that this terrible calamity came upon the Egyptians because he was refusing to let the Hebrews leave the land. But now I want to tell you another part of the story of the firstborn.

Maybe you have been wondering whether the oldest children in the families of the Hebrews also suddenly died that last night they were in Egypt. No, they didn't! The reason they did not makes a very

interesting story indeed. It is a true story, too, because it's in the Bible, and we know that the Bible is true.

It was in the springtime when all of Egypt's firstborn were destroyed. Quite a while before, God told Moses what he intended to do, and also told him what the Hebrews would need to do if they did not want their firstborn destroyed at the same time. God said that they were to consider a certain day as the beginning of the first month of their year. The first month of our year is January, but the first month of the Jewish year is called Nisan, and it is in the springtime.

On the tenth day of that first month every family of the Hebrews was to take a young sheep, or lamb, and keep it until the fourteenth day. Just as the sun was going down on the fourteenth day they were to kill these lambs, and the blood was to be sprinkled on the doorposts of their houses and over the tops of the doors. That night they were to roast the lambs and the families were to eat them during the night.

If a family was small and couldn't eat a whole lamb in one night, then the family next door could be their guests, and in that way one lamb would do for two families.

None of that lamb was to be left until the morning. If they couldn't eat it all, then what was left over was to be burned inside the house. While they were eating the lamb, the Hebrews were to be dressed, all ready to leave Egypt, for God knew that the next morning Pharaoh, the king, would insist they must leave right away.

That night when the power of God destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt, wherever the blood of the lamb was found on the doorposts of the houses, the firstborn child in that house was not destroyed. In that way, you see, all the firstborn of the Hebrews were saved. And besides, those who did as God wanted them to do were ready to march out of Egypt the next morning. Isn't God wise? Yes, he certainly knows how to do everything in the right way! That is the reason we should always do everything just as he says it should be done.

But there was another reason God made these arrangements for the Hebrews. Do you remember how pleased God was that Abel brought a lamb to God for a sacrifice? I hope you have not forgotten that story. The reason God was pleased that Abel brought a lamb for a sacrifice was because the lamb was somewhat like a picture, or illustration, of Jesus.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. People die because there is sin in the world, and when Jesus takes all sin away, people won't die any more. Won't that be a grand time?

Well, God knew that he would send Jesus as his Lamb to do this great work; so at different times he asked his people to sacrifice lambs to illustrate what he planned to do. Do you remember the story of Isaac? God asked Abraham, the father of Isaac, to offer him as a sacrifice, and then God gave Abraham a lamb to sacrifice in the place of Isaac. That is another story you should read over again if you have forgotten it.

God had told Abraham that he planned to bless everybody; but before he can do that, the sins of the people must be taken away. This means that God's Lamb, which was Jesus, would have to die. We will find out a lot more about that when we get to the story of Jesus; but I want you to begin to think about it now.

So that is why God asked the Hebrews to sacrifice lambs and eat them on that night before they left Egypt. We call it the passover lamb, because God passed over all the homes where the blood of the lamb was sprinkled, and did not destroy the firstborn in those homes. You should try to remember that where the blood was sprinkled there was no death; so those who put their trust in Jesus, God's Lamb, will be made alive again and thus be saved from death. Isn't that the grandest thing you ever heard?

QUESTIONS

- What were the Israelites doing during the last night they spent in Egypt, and were their firstborn children destroyed?

- What did the Israelites have to do in order for their firstborn not to be destroyed?
- What was the passover lamb, and why does it remind us of Jesus?

Dawn Bible Students Association