

"The Passover"

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As the time drew near for the Children of Israel to leave Egypt, it seemed less and less likely that Pharaoh would ever let them go. He ordered Moses and Aaron to go out of his sight, and never to come back.

Then God told Moses that He would do one more wonder in Egypt, and after that Pharaoh should let the people go. He said that the Israelites were all to be ready to leave Egypt at midnight; they were to have their loins girded, their shoes on, and their staves in their hands. They were to ask from the Egyptians jewels of gold and silver, so that they should not go out empty-handed.

For many years the Israelites had been working for their Egyptian oppressors without any pay, so all that they asked for was really owing to them for their work. God gave them favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they gave them whatever they asked for.

God told Moses that each family of His people were to kill a lamb and eat its flesh with bitter herbs, and sprinkle its blood with a bunch of hyssop on the side posts and the upper door post of their houses. "For," He said, "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt. . . . and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you."

All who believed the word that the Lord sent them through Moses, did as the Lord had told them, and sprinkled the blood upon, their door posts. No doubt the Egyptians wondered what they were doing, and asked them questions about it. In our picture you see some who are scornfully mocking them; but if any of the Egyptians believed, they could put the same token upon their own houses, and so save their own first-born from the destroyer. No doubt some of them did so, and were among the "mixed multitude" that followed Israel out of Egypt, because they were learning to trust in Israel's God.

Why did God's people have to put this sign upon their houses? Do you think it was because God did not know where they lived? Oh, no; for "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." It was because He wanted to teach them the way of salvation, through "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Who is this Lamb of God, and what did the blood upon the door posts mean? It was "looking upon Jesus, as He walked," that John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" And "the blood is the life," God's Word tells us. It is the blood sent from the heart all through our bodies, that carries life to every part of them. So the lesson

that God was teaching the Israelites was that they could be saved only by the life of Jesus.

"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." Jesus has died, His blood has been shed, His life is given for all. He is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." If it were not for this, neither the Egyptians nor the Israelites could ever have had any life at all. Because Jesus has died for all, God gives His life freely to all.

But unless we believe in Jesus, and take hold by faith upon Him who is our life, the time will come when that life will be taken away from us. "The good fight of faith" is to "lay hold on eternal life." This was the great lesson of the Passover.

In slaying the lamb, the people were taught that their sins had slain the Lamb of God. In eating its flesh they were taught that they were to feed upon Him by faith, so that they might receive the life that He had given for them.

The sprinkled blood upon the door posts, which protected them from all evil (for God said that not even a dog should move its tongue against them so long as it was there), showed how the blood—the life of Jesus—blots out the sins that would destroy us, and keeps us from all harm. In the judgment God will "pass over" every one who has taken the life of Jesus to cleanse him from all sin. He does not cover up our sins, for He says that He will "by no means clear the guilty." But the life-blood of Jesus washes away the sin, and makes us pure and spotless like Himself.

The Israelites were told to keep the Passover every year,—to eat the slain lamb with their loins girded, their shoes on, and their staves in their hands as though just ready to start on a journey. And when their little children should ask them, "What mean ye by this service?" they were to tell them the story of their deliverance from Egypt, and how the Lord passed by the houses of His people, when He slew all the first-born of the Egyptians.

The last true Passover service was the one that Jesus kept with His disciples the night of His betrayal, just before He suffered on the cross. At that time He appointed what we call "the Lord's supper," to take its place. In this service we learn just the same lessons about the Lamb of God that the Passover taught the Children of Israel, and we will talk more of this at another time.

The Jews who do not believe in Jesus still keep the Passover, with a great deal of ceremony. They still read to their children the wonderful story of the deliverance, and of the sprinkled blood upon the door posts, but there is no life in their service, because they know nothing of Christ, the true "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."