

ISRAEL SPARED, OR PASSED OVER

– **AUGUST 10. – EXODUS 12:21-31. –**

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a Ransom for many." – Matthew 20:28.

CHRISTIAN people speak of the Jewish Passover as an institution, as a relic of the past, in which they have no special interest. This is because the meaning of the Passover is not generally grasped. Really the Christian is more deeply interested in the Passover than is the Jew. But there is one sense in which the entire world is interested in it, as we shall see in today's Study.

The tenth plague, sent upon the Egyptians as a chastisement for their persistent injustice toward the Hebrews, was the death of their first-borns. In every home of Egypt there was death, and that of the flower of their families, the first-born – son or daughter. The terror of such a night can better be imagined than expressed.

Death is always represented in the Scriptures as being the enemy of man – the penalty of sin. The death sentence came upon our first parents because of sin; and through them by the laws of heredity it has passed to all their children – the human family. We are all dying; and the Bible tells that the only hope of a recovery from death lies in the fact that God wills it, and that He has made preparation for the satisfaction of His Justice through the death of Jesus, "the Just for the unjust." It tells also that the great remedy for both sin and death is to be applied to mankind shortly. During Messiah's Reign, the death sentence shall be abolished, the curse shall be removed, there shall be no more sighing, crying or dying.

On the contrary, the rolling away of the curse, death, will mean the bringing in of the blessing of life through the glorified Redeemer. Then He will become the Life-giver to all of those who,

when fully enlightened, will accept the Divine favor at His hands. The resurrection process will begin for the full recovery of all the willing and obedient of humanity to the glorious perfection of Father Adam and to the privilege of life everlasting.

What God brought upon the Egyptians in that night was, therefore, merely the same penalty that has been against all mankind for six thousand years. The penalty was not so much in the death as in the suddenness of it. The first-borns, retiring in good health, were corpses before morning, the death sentence coming upon them more suddenly than it otherwise would have done. They fell asleep.

This plague did not touch the homes of the Israelites. Their first-borns were passed over, spared, protected, by the Almighty; hence the name Passover. By Divine command the Israelites made the anniversary of this event historical. Every Israelite shows his faith in God and his confidence in this record of the Divine deliverance of his forefathers, when he celebrates the Passover – or else he commits a fraud; for it has no other significance.

THE PASSOVER'S REAL MEANING

The experiences of Israel in being passed over were allegorical. As a type, they represented the experiences of God's Elect – Spiritual Israel. And be it noticed that Spiritual Israel is a company of saintly people of God, gathered from all nations and all denominations – Jews, Romans, French, British – "every nation, kindred, people and tongue." The chief members of Spiritual Israel came from Natural Israel, but no nation can lay exclusive claims. It is an elect class, chosen not along national lines, nor any preferential lines except those of character. **[R5273 : page 205]**

This company of Spiritual Israelites was represented in the first-borns of Israel, the fleshly Israel who were passed over in that night. The next morning, all the hosts of Israel went forth under the leadership of the first-borns, who subsequently were represented in

the priestly tribe, typifying the Royal Priesthood, whose Royal High Priest is the glorified Messiah. Soon He and His "Church of the First-borns" (Hebrews 12:23), glorified by participation in His resurrection, the First, or Chief Resurrection, will be installed in the glory and power of the Messianic Kingdom, for the blessing of all desirous of coming back into harmony with God.

In the past, Bible students have been slow in understanding God's Word. Gradually, in the light of present privileges, they are coming to appreciate the fact that it presents lengths and breadths, heights and depths of **[R5273 : page 206]** Divine Love, Wisdom and Power, such as they never dreamed of before. Now they are seeing that when the Lord speaks of the Church of the First-borns, He implies that He intends to have other sons, and that these are merely the first. Just as the first-borns of Israel, passed over, were not the only ones saved from Egyptian bondage, so the Church of the First-borns will not be the only ones saved from the bondage of sin and death, symbolized by that Egyptian bondage. On the contrary, the preserving of the First-borns implies the deliverance of the remainder.

The expressions *night* and *morning* have a significance in the antitype also. The Bible represents that the six thousand years in which Sin and Death have held sway and enslaved many who desired to be right with God are a night time. During this night God's people have been more and more oppressed by Satan and his servants, typified by Pharaoh and the Egyptians. It has been a long night of six thousand years, respecting which the Prophet declares, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." – Psalm 30:5.

The morning referred to will be the dawning of the great antitypical Sabbath, the Seventh Thousand-Year Day. Then Messiah and His Church of the First-born, passed over from death to life by Divine Power, will be installed in Kingdom glory, and the great

work of blessing all those who desire to come into harmony with God will begin.

That New Dispensation will be so different from the present one that it is figuratively called Day in contrast with the darkness of the present time, represented as night. In that Day of Messiah's Kingdom, He will be the great King – the Prince of Light. Then the Prince of Darkness will be bound. During that glorious Epoch of a thousand years, the hosts of mankind who desire to come into harmony with God will all become Israelites, and gradually be led by the antitypical Moses to the perfection of Paradise restored. Only the unwilling and the disobedient will fail to attain the full recovery of all that was lost by Adam in the disobedience in Eden, and redeemed by Jesus' death at Calvary.

"ISRAEL MY FIRST-BORN"

Since any blessing, any deliverance from the power of Sin and Death, was of God's grace, and not an obligation of Justice, He had a perfect right to determine long in advance that the blessings He intended to send should reach mankind through Abraham's Seed, or children. This He plainly declared, but in an indirect way. Unnoticed by the Jews, the Lord indicated that Abraham would have two different seeds, the one a Heavenly, the other an earthly. Thus He said: "Thy seed shall be (1) as the stars of heaven, and (2) as the sand of the seashore."

God did not explain this to Abraham, but now we see the meaning of this feature of the Promise. The stars represent the Heavenly Seed of Abraham – Messiah and His Church, symbolically called His Bride. The sand of the seashore – multitudinous – represents the vast multitude who ultimately will be saved from sin and death and recovered to Divine favor and everlasting life, in the Messianic Kingdom of the Spiritual Seed, the "Church of the First-borns." Nor did God forget or turn aside from His favor to the natural seed of Abraham in the selection of the

Spiritual Seed, for to them came the first privilege, or opportunity, and from them were gathered the first members of this Spiritual Israel – the Spiritual Seed of Abraham. Of them St. Paul says: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the Promise" – the Promise made to Abraham that in this, his Spiritual Seed, all mankind would receive the Divine blessing – the rolling away of the curse of sin and death. – Galatians 3:29; Revelation 21:4,5; 22:3.

Moreover, the Scriptures indicate that after the Spiritual Israel will have been completed by the change from earthly nature to Heavenly nature, God's blessings will begin to come once more to the natural seed of Abraham. Thus God's providences were to the Jew first in respect to the spiritual privileges, and will be to the Jew first as respects the earthly privileges – Restitution to human perfection. – Romans 11:25-33; Acts 3:19-21.

FIRST-BORNS BLOOD-PROTECTED

Let us not fail to note that the Divine favor toward the first-born of Israel was not without blood. Indeed, as St. Paul points out, the whole lesson of the Old Testament Scriptures is that "Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins." By Divine command, the Israelites indicated their faith in the Lord by taking a lamb of the first year without spot, killing it and sprinkling the blood upon the door posts and lintels of their houses and eating the flesh within.

As the Passover was typical, so also were the lamb and the sprinkled blood. The lamb represented Jesus, the Lamb of God – spotless, pure, holy, harmless, undefiled. His death was not for His own sins, but for the sins of humanity. It is equally important to notice that Christ died not merely for the Church, but, as the Scriptures declare, for the sins of the whole world. The Church constituted only a small portion of the world; namely, the First-born portion. As St. James declares (1:18), we are a kind of *first-*

fruits unto God of His creatures. The Church is passed over in the night, especially saved in advance of others; but none are spared except through the merit of the Blood. That the Blood covers more than the First-borns is shown by the fact that in the type it was sprinkled not merely upon the first-borns, but upon the house, as indicating the Household of Faith.

