

A Story From Egypt¹

This is a story from Egypt. Can you find Egypt in your atlas?

Howard Carter was an arc-hae-o-lo-gist. Archaeologists dig in the ground. They look for things that have been left behind from days gone by. They find out about how people lived in the past in this way. In 1922, Howard Carter was digging in Egypt. The place where he was digging was called the Valley of the Kings. Here the Egyptians long, long ago had buried their pharaohs in big tombs carved out of the rock. Do you remember the name “pharaoh” from the Bible? It means “king”. The old Egyptians buried all sorts of things with their pharaohs. They buried, idols, furniture and even food. They thought these things would help the dead pharaoh. How sad! If we trust the Lord Jesus while we are alive we will go to be with Him when we die. If we do not trust Him, nothing can help us. But the Egyptians did not believe this. Helping Howard Carter to dig was Lord Caernarvon. He provided the money needed to do the digging. They also had Egyptian workmen to help them dig.

For ten years Howard Carter and Lord Caernarvon had been digging. They found very little. The things that the old Egyptians buried with their pharaohs were often made of gold and precious stones. They had been buried thousands of years ago. Since that time robbers had come looking for these treasures. They broke into the rock tombs and took away almost everything.

Then on November 4th, 1922 Howard Carter's workmen uncovered the top of a stairway. It led to an entrance covered with plaster. Carter made a hole in the plaster and peeped through. The passage beyond was full of rubble from top to bottom. No robbers had got in that way; it was blocked. He was excited. He had worked for so long. Was he going to discover a treasure at last?

He had discovered the tomb of the young pharaoh, Tu-tank-ha-men. The treasures that lay behind the blocked passage were beyond his wildest hopes.

Behind the rubble was another sealed doorway. Again Howard Carter made a hole in the corner. He peered into the room beyond, holding a candle for light.

¹ Adapted from Owen, Evan, *What Happened Today?* Book 3 available on the *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com/>

“As my eyes grew used to the light”, he wrote later, “details of the room grew slowly clear, strange animals, statues, and gold – everywhere the glint of gold.”

But this was only an entrance room, like the hallway of a house. There was yet another sealed doorway on the other side of it. On either side of the doorway were life-size statues of Tu-tank-ha-men. Before he could go through it, Howard Carter had to carefully take away all the valuable treasures. Many of them very fragile after lying there for thousands of years. The smallest touch caused them to fall to pieces. This work took a long time. Eventually the day came. Howard Carter could open the seal door. What would he find?

The room was almost filled by a great golden shrine. Inside there was another shrine, then another, four in all. Then last of all was a decorated sar-co-pha-gus. Under the stone lid of the sarcophagus there lay a gilded coffin. It was in human shape, painted and decorated to look like Tutankhamen. When the coffin was opened it revealed another gilded coffin. Inside this was the last coffin, made of solid gold set with beautiful stones. Inside was the mummy of Tutankhamun.

An Egyptian mummy is not someone's mother! The Egyptians did not know that one day Jesus will come back. They did not know that on that day everyone will rise again. They did not know that those who trust in Jesus will have new bodies then. So they thought that they had to preserve the bodies of their dead pharaohs themselves. They used special chemicals to do this. They wrapped the bodies up in cloths and soaked them with chemicals. These preserved bodies are called mummies. If you read the last verse of Genesis you will see that this was done to Joseph's body.



Most of the treasures found in Tutankhamun's tomb were put on display. They are in the Egyptian museum in Cairo. The gold mask in the picture is in the museum. Later, Tutankhamun's mummy was put on display in his underground tomb. Tourists flocked to see it. This made the tomb warm and slightly damp. The mummy began to be damaged by this. It would only stay mummified if it was kept in a cool, dry place. The linen-wrapped mummy had to be taken out of golden sarcophagus and put in a special glass box. In the box the conditions are kept cool and dry.