

Quarter Three: Exodus: Journey to the Promised Land

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Lesson 4—The Plagues

Sunday: God vs. gods

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- **Last Week: “Rough Start”**
 - Exodus 5 & 6 & 7:1 – 7
 - Moses’ request of Pharaoh, to let the Israelites go
 - Pharaoh’s response to punish the people more
 - Israelites discouragement; God’s encouragement
 - Moses 2nd request of Pharaoh - & willingness to walk in obedience
- **This Week: “The Plagues” (9 of the plagues)**
 - Exodus 7:8 – 10:29 (end of chap 10)
 - *Lesson story: Farmer trying to get his donkey to move
 - Spoke to the donkey – no response
 - Hit the donkey with a thick branch – donkey started moving
 - Someone asked, why it worked: “First, you have to get its attention”
 - God worked through the plagues to get Pharaoh’s attention
 - Ex 5:1 – Cry of God: “Let My people go!”
 - Let My people go from Egyptian bondage & slavery
 - Let My people go from their addiction & sin
 - Let My people go from their pride & selfishness
 - Let My people go from their fear & failure
 - From their shame & condemnation
 - From their envy & jealousy
 - From their passion & lust
 - Let My people go
 - Pharaoh didn’t want to let God’s people go
 - Economic pressure (free labor / slave labor)
 - Departure of 2 - 3M people / slave labor (Ex 12:37 - 600k able-bodied men)
 - Economic collapse
 - American slavery: 4 million slaves in the south were freed at end of Civil War
 - Why didn’t Pharaoh want to let God’s people go?
 - Economic pressure?
 - Pride & stubbornness of heart?
 - Whatever the reason, God got Pharaoh’s attention
 - *Friend’s statement: “God uses the gentlest means possible to get our attention”
 - Increasing severity of the plagues – arrest attention of Pharaoh/Egyptians

- This week, we look at first 9 means God employed to get Pharaoh's attention

Memory Text: "So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses" (Ex 9:35, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** God vs. gods (Jill)
 - Ex 7:8 – 15 – battles between living God & Egyptian "gods" (not between Moses & Pharaoh); battle of the staffs / snakes
- 2. **Monday:** Who Hardened Pharaoh's Heart? (SQ)
 - Multiple Scriptures in Exodus – God strengthened or deepened Pharaoh's own choice, his wilful actions; God sent the plagues to help Pharaoh repent (but he had a choice)
- 3. **Tuesday:** The First Three Plagues (Ryan J)
 - Ex 7:14 – 8:19 – Nile to blood; frogs; lice
- 4. **Wednesday:** Flies, Livestock, & Boils (John L)
 - Ex 8:20 – 9:12 – plagues 4 – 6 – Hebrews protected from plague #4 forward
- 5. **Thursday:** Hail, Locusts, & Darkness (James)
 - Ex 9:13 – 10:29 – plagues 7 – 9 -

Sunday: God vs. gods

Exodus 7:8 – 15; Ex 12:12;

- Eph 6:12 – "For we do not wrestle against flesh & blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."
 - *Disagreement – is not between me & others
 - Ultimately because Satan is involved, bringing up jealousy, strife, bitterness
 - If both parties let "self" die, it wouldn't be an issue
 - Showdown in Egypt not - Not a battle of people & personalities
 - Moses vs Pharaoh
 - Not between people groups – Not an ethnic or racial battle
 - Israelites vs Egyptians
- Battle was between Christ & Satan
 - As exemplified by Yahweh, the living God & many "gods"
 - At the time of the Exodus, Egyptians
 - Believed in over 1,500 gods & goddesses
 - Pharaoh considered himself one of those "gods"
 - Ex 12:12 – "For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man & beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD."
 - Lord = Yahweh
 - Num 33:4, NIV – "who were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had struck down among them; for the LORD had brought judgment on their gods."
 - The conflict between the Lord & Pharaoh was a divine conflict
 - Each plague affected an important Egyptian deity

- **Battle between Yahweh & the Egyptian gods**
 - #1: Blood
 - Khnum (ha-noom') – guardian of the Nile
 - Hapi (happy) – god or spirit of the Nile
 - #2: Frogs
 - Hekhet (hay'-ket) – goddess with frog head; goddess of resurrection; wife of the creator god Khnum (ha-noom')
 - #3: Lice
 - Geb (keb) = god of the earth
 - #4: Flies / insects
 - Khepri (kep'-ree) – god of creation & rebirth & resurrection whose symbol was the head of a fly (head of a scarab beetle)
 - #5: Pestilence on livestock
 - Hathor (Ha'-thor) – mother goddess of love, whose symbol was the head of a cow
 - Apis (A'-pis) – a bull god, fertility symbol
 - #6: Boils
 - Sekhmet (Sek'-meh) – goddess with lion head, goddess of war & epidemics
 - #7: Hail
 - Osiris (Oh-sigh'-ris) – god of crops & fertility
 - Nut (Newt) – goddess of sky & heavens
 - Isis (I'-sis) – goddess of life; goddess of medicine, magic & wisdom
 - Seth (Sech) – god of chaos, storm, deserts, violence & foreigners
 - #8: Locusts
 - Senehem (cin-e-men) – protector god against plagues
 - #9: Darkness
 - Thoth (th-oath) – moon god
 - Ra – foremost god, the sun god
 - Atum (eh'-toom) – creator god & solar deity
 - #10: Death of firstborn
 - Osiris (Oh-sigh'-ris) – god of life
 - Pharaoh himself
- We think, God was trying to get Pharaoh's attention
 - God was putting pressure on Pharaoh to release His people
 - God was actually showing who He is – in contrast to their gods
 - *Mt Carmel
- Staffs & snakes
 - Egyptian goddess = Wadjet (waaa'-jet) – was personified by a cobra & represented sovereign power over Lower Egypt
 - Symbol of a cobra appeared in Pharaoh's crown

- Sign of his power, deity, royalty & divine authority
- When Aaron's staff became a serpent, it literally said Moses & Aaron held the power of the ruler of Egypt in their hands (because of God)
- Ex 7:8, 9 – “Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, (9) ‘When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, “Show a miracle for yourselves,” then you shall say to Aaron, “Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent.”’”
 - **Takeaway #1: Listen when God speaks**
 - “the Lord spoke to Moses & Aaron”
- Ex 7:10 – “So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the Lord commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a **serpent**.”
 - Serpent is not the same as the serpent in Gen 3:1
 - That means serpent / snake & also means deceiving or crafty
 - Serpent here = *tan-neen* = “dragon, serpent, sea monster, whale”
 - It is the symbol of chaos
 - **Takeaway #2: Walk in obedience to God's call**
 - “...and they did so, just as the Lord commanded.”
- Ex 7:11, 12 – “But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. (12) For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.”
 - **Takeaway #3: Satan may appear strong, but God is ALWAYS victorious**
 - PP, p. 264 – the magicians did not actually make their rods into serpents – Satan just made it appear that way
 - Satan cannot create
 - And God was stronger – as Aaron's serpent swallowed up theirs
- Ex 7:13 – “And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the Lord had said.”
 - **Takeaway #4: Every decision has consequences**
 - Either choose God & surrender – or choose Satan & harden our hearts

Lesson #5: “Passover”