

LEAD SHEET

EXODUS: BEFORE THE SEA WAS PARTED - WK 4 CONFRONTATION WITH PHARAOH

JULY 31, 2016

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL:

PERSONALIZE SCRIPTURE

If you want to know God better, memorize and apply His Word!

GETTING STARTED

General Discussion:

- Which plague would be worse: frogs or gnats?
- Which plague would be worse: boils all over your body or sitting in complete darkness for three days?
- Which plague would be worse: hail-damaged crops or locust-eaten crops?

The people of Egypt didn't get to choose, they got all ten!
We've got a lot to cover today, let's get started!

DIGGING IN

Read Exodus 5:1-5

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the request of Moses & Aaron?
(*For Pharaoh to let Israel go.*)
2. What is Pharaoh's response? (*He will not do it.*)

3. Why wouldn't Pharaoh let them go?
(The Israelites are slave laborers, and they are many. It would be a huge loss for him economically.)

4. What's another reason according to verse 2?
(He does not know the God of Israel.)

This exchange happens again—nine more times. Each time, when Pharaoh refuses, God levies a plague on Egypt. These plagues are found in chapters 7-11. We don't have time to cover all five chapters in depth, so we're just going to read where God calls for each plague. Later, we'll take a look at Pharaoh's response.

Read Exodus 7:19-21

Discussion Questions:

1. What is this plague? *(All the water in Egypt will be turned to blood.)*
2. How extensive would this be? *(Every stream, canal, pond, and reservoir turned to blood.)*
3. What was the impact? *(Fish die off, putrid smell, no water.)*

Interestingly, the first plague was an affront to Egypt's source of life—the Nile River. Notably, the Nile was said to be the bloodstream of one of their gods—Osiris. As we continue, we'll see that each plague is an offense to a particular Egyptian god.

Seven days after the water turned to blood, God tells Moses to go to Pharaoh again.

Read Exodus 8:2-4

Discussion Questions:

1. What plague is this? *(The plague of frogs.)*
2. Where were frogs found? *(In the palace, bedrooms, houses, ovens, everywhere.)*

3. How destructive do you think this would've been?

(Allow for discussion.)

The Egyptians actually had a frog goddess named Hapi. Pharaoh agrees to let Israel go if Moses prays and has God rid the land of frogs (Exodus 8:8-9). All the frogs die and are thrown into big piles. However, once the frogs die Pharaoh changes his mind. That means a third plague is coming.

Read Exodus 8:16-18

Discussion Questions:

1. What plague does God issue next? (*Gnats—some translations may say “lice.”*)
2. Where do the gnats come from? (*The dust of the earth.*)
3. Egyptian magicians tried to duplicate this trick. Were they successful? (*No.*)

The earth god of Egypt was named Seb. God demonstrates that He has power over Seb. Even though the magicians cannot duplicate this feat, they were able to duplicate the first two. While the magicians recognize this to be the “finger of God” (verse 19), Pharaoh’s heart is too hard to listen. Israel remains in captivity.

Read Exodus 8:20-24

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the next plague? (*Flies.*)
2. What is covered in flies? (*Houses, even the ground.*)
3. Where were there no flies according to verse 22? (*in Goshen, where the Israelites lived.*)

Pharaoh gives temporary permission for Moses and Israel to go and sacrifice “in this land” (verse 25). However, Moses refuses, as his instructions are to get Israel out of

there, not to get permission for them to worship. And, you guessed it, Egypt had a fly god.

Read Exodus 9:2-6

Discussion Questions:

1. What does God do next? (*He makes all the Egyptian livestock die.*)
2. Do any of the livestock of Israel die? (No.)

Egypt has multiple gods of livestock. Still, despite the huge economic impact and Pharaoh's probably decreasing favor with his people, he stubbornly refuses to allow Israel to leave. God isn't finished.

Read Exodus 9:8-10

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the next plague? (*The plague of boils.*)
2. Who is affected? (*Egyptian people and animals.*)
3. Where did the boils come from? (Moses took soot from a furnace and threw it into the air.)

With their physical bodies in need of healing, some scholars believe this was a direct mockery of the Egyptian gods and goddesses of healing, of whom the Egyptians had at least three. Still, Pharaoh won't let the Israelites go.

Read Exodus 9:18-19

Discussion Questions:

1. What plague does Egypt suffer now? (*Hail.*)
2. What does God warn the Israelites to do? (*Bring their livestock into shelter.*)
3. Why do the animals require shelter? (*They will die from the hail if left out in the open.*)

The one true God of Israel takes control over the sky goddess, two agricultural deities, and the god of the

atmosphere. An enormous hailstorm falls, ruins crops, and kills animals and people. The only place it doesn't fall is in Goshen. Israel is spared.

Read Exodus 10:13-15

Discussion Questions:

1. What plague is this? (*The plague of locusts.*)
2. What happens? (*Locusts invade, settle into Egypt, and consume everything.*)
3. According to verse 15, what no longer remains after this plague? (*Anything green.*)

The Egyptians have a god whose sole purpose was to protect them from locusts. His name was Serapia, but he is no match for the one true God of Israel. Again, Pharaoh repents, but once the locusts are gone, he changes his mind again and will not release Israel.

Read Exodus 10:21-22

Discussion Questions:

1. What plague is this? (*The plague of darkness.*)
2. How long does it last? (*Three days.*)
3. Who had light? (*Israel.*)

Now, the situation in Egypt has reached a fever pitch. God has repeatedly warned Pharaoh to let His people go. Pharaoh has stubbornly refused to release Israel, despite nine plagues. The last of which showed God's superiority over the Egyptian sun and moon gods, the plagues should've caused Pharaoh to relent. Still, he does not. Instead, he forbids Moses from ever appearing before him again, threatening to kill him if he does (Exodus 10:28). Moses agrees, but before he does, he has one more thing to tell Pharaoh.

Read Exodus 11:4-8

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the last plague? (The death of firstborn sons.)
2. Whose sons will perish? (Only the firstborn sons of Egyptians.)
3. Why do you think God chooses this as the last plague? *(It is obviously the most severe, but also it is a judgment of Egypt's long-standing practice of killing the first child born by any Jewish woman; Moses was saved from murder even though he was his mother's first child. [See Exodus 1:16,22.])*

MAKING IT REAL

Read Exodus 4:22-23

Before the ten plagues even began, God warned Pharaoh through Moses. Time after time, God gave Pharaoh chances. The Lord spared the firstborn sons of Egypt nine times. Still, Pharaoh refused to let Israel go. Finally, the tenth plague cemented what the first nine suggested—the God of Israel is the one true God.

In fact, God states this multiple times to Moses, Pharaoh, Israel, and Egypt.

Read Exodus 9:15-16

In the middle of the plagues, God is clear as to what He could do and why He's doing it.

Discussion Questions:

1. Could God simply have wiped Egypt off the map and freed Israel? *(Yes.)*
2. Why didn't He do so? *(He wanted to show them His power and give them a chance to repent.)*
3. Why would God free Israel in this manner? *(So that His Name might be proclaimed.)*

Interestingly, Exodus 12:38 says that “many others” went up with Israel when they left Egypt.

General Discussion:

- Why do you think Pharaoh’s heart was hardened? *(Ego, pride, etc.)*
- If you were a normal Egyptian, what would you have thought of these plagues? *(Terrified, angry, etc.)*
- Which plague would’ve been successful in convincing you that Israel’s God was the only real God? *(Allow students to share.)*
- Do you see these plagues as an act of pure judgment, or do you see mercy in them as well? *(God gave multiple chances for repentance, He warned in advance, He didn’t do the most catastrophic things first, He never completely wiped Egypt out, etc.)*

God’s goal was for His name to be known. He welcomed those who repented into Israel. Word of Israel’s freedom spread, resulting in other believers. These events may seem harsh, but the One True God is both just and merciful. We see that in the plagues.

General Discussion:

- Do you think God is more just or more merciful? Why? *(Allow for discussion.)*
- Knowing what you know from the plagues, is there any doubt in your mind that God is the One True God? *(No way!)*

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray a prayer of worship to the One True God, inviting your students to do the same.