Ten Plagues Against Egypt

Exodus 7:14 - 12:30

Bible Memory Verse

Exodus 9:16 NIV

But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

Bible Story

Talk about an awesome display of the power of God! The chronicles of the plagues of Egypt brings tingles up one's spine! To actually place oneself in the shoes of an everyday Egyptian during those dreadful days would bring to light the enormity of what took place.

1. Water to blood,
2. countless frogs that enveloped the land,
3. gnats that covered men and animals,
4. swarms of flies that ruined the land,
5. death to all livestock of the Egyptians,
6. festering boils on men and animals,
7. a deadly hail storm that killed all those not under shelter,
8. all-devouring locusts which turned the land black,
9. darkness that was so dark that it could be felt,
10. and the death of all the firstborn who did not have the blood of a lamb on their doorpost to deter the angel of death,

...were the ten plagues of Egypt. Nothing that has ever happened before or has ever happened since, possibly until the end of the world.

Each time a plague would hit, Pharaoh would seemingly repent, feign letting the Israelites go, the plague would cease, and then Pharaoh's heart would harden again and he would not let them go. Each plague struck at the heart of the nation of Egypt. Most people thought in those days that their "gods" were only local "gods" limited to a certain area and

powerless over a region outside their own. An average Egyptian thought that the God of the Hebrews had no power outside of their land (which was far away in the land of Canaan). Yahweh proved himself not a little "g" god, but The God. He was not confined to a certain area, but was sovereign over all the earth. This shook things up considerably during this time. Yahweh displayed signs and wonders to demonstrate to the Egyptians (and all the earth) that he alone was the Lord. Repeated again and again throughout the narrative of the plagues is this statement: "By this you will know that I am the Lord" (Exodus 7:5, 17; 8:10; etc.).

The end of the plagues on Egypt left the land ravaged. They were stripped bare. Their crops were destroyed, their livestock dead, their loved ones killed, their way of life altered, and their dependence on their "gods" diminished. In the story of the Bible, all throughout, it is warned not to go to Egypt. It is symbolized as a bad place; one where God has judged and help does not come from. When the Israelites were about to leave (as they had got permission from Pharaoh), the Egyptians begged them to go and gave them all their stuff. There was literally almost nothing left of the nation of Egypt.

- Was this a result of their hard hearts?
- Why did Pharaoh not repent and let the Israelites go after the first or second or third plague?
- What does God do when He encounters hard hearts?
- What does it mean to repent?
- What does it mean to be selfless?

The last plague, the Passover, was the ultimate display of God's judgment. Not the prettiest, but the most awesome. It has become a picture of what the Lord Jesus has done for us. The households that had the blood of a spotless lamb on their doorpost were passed over by the angel of death. While those who did not have the covering of blood suffered the death of their firstborn child. There was much wailing and crying in the land of Egypt.

> *"At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. Pharaoh and all his officials got up during the night, and there was a loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead" (Exodus 12:29-30).*

The Israelites were to celebrate this day every year to signify the day they were delivered from Egypt.

It is interesting to note that Pharaoh's magicians could only reproduce the first two plagues—river to blood and the frogs. This may sound like a remarkable feat they performed, but what purpose did it accomplish? It only added to the blood and frogs. It could be said, however, that they were trying to prove that they had the power to do these miraculous signs. But then why did he ask Moses to stop the plague if his magicians had the power as well? Why couldn't they stop the plagues?

Life Application

Hard heartedness – Pharaoh was the epitome of rebellion to the Lord. He encapsulated an attitude of defiance and disobedience to the Most High God. Pharaoh's response to the command of God to release His people was nothing but a hard heart. He hardened his attitude and thoughts and everything else and refused to be placed under the submission of the Creator of the universe. This caused him nothing but grief and destruction. When the Lord interacts with our hearts and outright asks us to do something, do we respond with obedience or disobedience? Do we harden our hearts before the Lord and refuse to believe? We have a choice in the matter. What will you choose?

Stubbornness. Related to the issue of hard heartedness, but different is this idea of stubbornness. Having a hard heart means that you disobey to the core of your being, where stubbornness is related more to your refusal to acknowledge what you know to be true. As human beings we want things our way. We pout, whine, complain, and scheme to get things our way. However, when things do not go our way or are not to our liking, we become stubborn and refuse to acknowledge truth. This is also a form of wicked rebellion against the Lord and needs to be dealt with the light of the truth of the Lord.

Repentance. This is not a practice that is modeled in this story, but should be the right and holy action taken by Pharaoh. Repentance means turning away from your sins (wrongdoing) and walking the right direction—180 degrees the right way. According to the dictionary, repentance means, "to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life; to feel regret or contrition, to change one's mind (transitive senses); to cause to feel regret or contrition; to feel sorrow, regret, or contrition for." Our action of repentance brings glory to God and displays His reign in our hearts. It shows that our hearts are not hard, but malleable to the tenderness and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Review Questions

1. What was the first plague? Water to blood.
2. What was the second plague? Frogs.
3. What was the third plague? Gnats.
4. What was the fourth plague? Flies.
5. What was the fifth plague? Livestock.
6. What was the sixth plague? Boils.
7. What was the seventh plague? Hail.
8. What was the eighth plague? Locusts.
9. What was the ninth plague? Darkness.
10. What was the tenth plague? Death of the firstborn.
11. When did Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go? After the tenth plague that killed his firstborn son.

Coloring Sheet

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