

## Lesson 5 – 27 February 2011

### Egyptian Plagues—the Finger of God

**Lesson Scope:** [Exodus 7:14-10:29](#)

#### Lesson Focus

God called Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt. With the promise of Aaron's assistance, Moses finally consented to go before Pharaoh. God warned Moses that it would be difficult to work with Pharaoh, as he would not hearken. Pharaoh's heart hardened because he rejected the mounting evidence that Israel's God was indeed the Lord of the earth. Each time he resisted the Word of the Lord through Moses, he became more adamant. Finally the Lord confirmed Pharaoh in his chosen course (Exodus 10:20).

In Exodus 7:3-5 God gives several reasons for hardening Pharaoh's heart and multiplying His signs and wonders in Egypt: "That I may lay my hand Upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord."

Men may defy God, but "God is not mocked." He will execute just judgment on all who refuse to worship and obey Him

This lesson shows the fate of those who defy God. We need to realise the choice that each person must make. God gives each person opportunity to accept or reject Him. As a person continues to reject God, his heart is hardened. Finally the judgments of God fall upon him.

Notice how directly many of the plagues targeted the Egyptian gods. God was clearly showing His superiority over the gods of Egypt.

"O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?" (2 Chronicles 20:6)

**Lesson Aim:** To learn lessons from God's judgments on Egypt and her gods.

**Theme Verse:** [Psalm 9:16](#). "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands."

## Lesson Text.

### Blood and Frogs

#### Exodus 7:14-17

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart *is* hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. <sup>15</sup>Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. <sup>16</sup>And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear. <sup>17</sup>Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that *is* in mine hand upon the waters which *are* in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.”

#### Exodus 8:6-10

“And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. <sup>7</sup>And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

<sup>8</sup>Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD. <sup>9</sup>And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, *that* they may remain in the river only? <sup>10</sup>And he said, Tomorrow. And he said, *Be it* according to thy word: that thou mayest know that *there is* none like unto the LORD our God.”

### Lice and Flies

#### Exodus 8:17-19

“And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. <sup>18</sup>And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. <sup>19</sup>Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This *is* the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”

#### Exodus 8:24-28

“And the LORD did so; and there came a grievous swarm *of flies* into the house of Pharaoh, and *into* his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm *of flies*.

<sup>25</sup>And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. <sup>26</sup>And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? <sup>27</sup>We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us. <sup>28</sup>And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: intreat for me.”

### **Hail and Locusts**

#### [Exodus 9:23](#)

“And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt.”

#### [Exodus 9:27-28](#)

“And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD *is* righteous, and I and my people *are* wicked. <sup>28</sup>Intreat the LORD (for *it is* enough) that there be no *more* mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.”

#### [Exodus 10:12](#)

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, *even* all that the hail hath left.”

#### [Exodus 10:16](#)

“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you.”

### **Darkness**

#### [Exodus 10:21](#)

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness *which* may be felt.”

#### [Exodus 10:24](#)

“And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you.”

#### [Exodus 10:28-29](#)

“And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in *that* day thou seest my face thou shalt die. <sup>29</sup>And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.”

## **Questions for Study**

### **Blood and Frogs**

1. What is significant about the first two plagues originating from the water?
2. Why did Pharaoh defer the removal of the frogs until tomorrow?
3. In what areas may we be tempted to procrastinate?

### **Lice and Flies**

4. Why did the magicians' testimony not convince Pharaoh?
5. How do men attempt to bargain with God today?

### **Hail and Locusts**

6. In what ways was Pharaoh's statement "I have sinned" inadequate?

### **Darkness**

7. Did Pharaoh see himself as the cause of Egypt's judgement? Explain.
8. Where might we respond with partial obedience?

## **Analyzing the Passage**

In Exodus 8:9 Moses tells Pharaoh, "Glory over me." He may have been telling Pharaoh, "Have this honor over me. I give you the privilege to choose when." Having the frogs removed at the time Pharaoh requested was further clear evidence that "there is none like unto the LORD our God."

Pharaoh's request to "intreat for me" (Exodus 8:28) means to "pray or supplicate."

God sent ten plagues upon the land of Egypt. This lesson covers only seven of the plagues. The murrain of beasts (9:1-7) and the plague of boils (Exodus 9:8-12) are omitted. The last plague, the death of the firstborn, is included in the next lesson.

Egypt worshiped many gods. Many of the plagues struck directly at these gods. These many deities were helpless to prevent or remove the judgments of God. The fact that most of the plagues did not strike the land of Goshen demonstrated God's protective care for Israel. Furthermore, the plagues displayed God's almighty power and proclaimed His holy Name to surrounding nations.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Blood and Frogs**

1. Refusing to hear God's Word hardens the heart and makes one ripe for judgment (Exodus 7:14). The Bible refers nineteen times to Pharaoh's hardened heart, implying that he strengthened himself to resist all warning.

He was determined to follow his own course, just as the scribes and Pharisees were in Jesus' time. Such a course brings God's judgment.

Are we sensitive when God speaks to us through His Word or the church? Do we heed the warnings given, or do we brush them off as little things? The hardening process begins with little steps, but unchecked, it results in a heart that is unresponsive to God.

2. God controls and dispenses judgment with purpose (Exodus 7:17). "Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment" (Exodus 12:12). Here God directed that the waters in the river would turn to blood. Egypt depended on the river for life and worshiped it as a god. This was the river in which they had commanded the Hebrew infants to be drowned. Now God made the river bloody. As it says in the judgment scene in Revelation, "Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."

3. Satanic power may work wonders, but it cannot remove divine judgment (Exodus 8:6-8). The magicians duplicated the first two plagues, but they were unable to remove them. God allowed the powers of evil to crucify Jesus, but they were unable to keep Him in the grave. Likewise Satan is able to do great things today, even deceiving some of God's people; but he is unable to alter or stay God's judgments on him.

4. God is glorified through the judgment that He executes (Exodus 8: 10). The plagues revealed God's sovereignty to the Egyptians. Today God manifests His power through storms and earthquakes. Only the One who created all things can direct the forces of nature to perform His will. Truly, "There is none like unto the Lord our God."

5. The hardened heart would rather endure judgment than humble itself in repentance (Exodus 8:9-10). When asked when to remove the frogs, Pharaoh replied, "Tomorrow" Why not immediately? Did he enjoy the frogs that much? Perhaps he hoped they would disappear naturally and that he would not need to acknowledge God. At any rate, he would rather suffer another night of misery than to humble himself.

Why are we tempted to procrastinate when the Spirit speaks? If sin needs to be confessed or an apology made, do it now. Perhaps we are called to witness to someone. Maybe someone needs encouragement and assurance that we are praying for him or her. The opportunity is now. Satan says, "Tomorrow". God says, "Today." "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7).

### **Lice and Flies**

6. Ignoring obvious judgement from God further hardens the unbeliever

(Exodus 8:17-19). The magicians could not duplicate the plague of lice and rightly concluded, "This is the finger of God." Pharaoh, however, chose to ignore their testimony and hardened his heart once more.

Today ungodly men choose to ignore that there is a God in control. Each time they refuse to acknowledge God, they continue to become harder. Finally they get to the point where they no longer notice God speaking.

7. The hard heart attempts to bargain with God to avoid judgment (Exodus 8:25-28). Pharaoh suggested sacrificing to God in the land. He said that he would let them go if they did not go very far. He was attempting to negotiate a compromise that would satisfy God yet leave himself in control. God never accepts a compromise. He alone sets the standard.

#### **Hail and Locusts.**

8. Divine judgement uncovers the sinfulness of a rebellious- heart (Exodus 9:27; 10:16). Twice Pharaoh admitted, "I have sinned." Recognising we have sinned is only the first step in returning to God. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We need to confess our sin and forsake it. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). As Pharaoh did, men today may acknowledge their sin; but they are unwilling to forsake it and turn to God.

#### **Darkness**

9. Willful partial obedience will not prevent divine judgement (Exodus 10:24). Pharaoh was now willing to let all the Israelites go if they would leave their flocks and herds behind. He still was not submitting to God. God is never satisfied with partial obedience.

People today reason that, if they obey God in most areas and take their own way in a few things, surely God will be satisfied. We may reason that separation in attire is not important in our small children. When the church addresses issues relating to practical everyday life, we may think some details do not matter and that no one will know if we violate the standards. We must remember that partial obedience is disobedience, and God will judge disobedience!

10. When people harden their hearts they fail to see themselves as the cause for divine judgment (Exodus 10:28-29). Pharaoh blamed Moses for the judgment Egypt was experiencing. He was blind to the fact that he was responsible. People with hardened hearts tend to blame circumstances or others for their condition. They fail to take personal responsibility for their choices and actions.

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called today- lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:13).

### **Important Teachings**

1. Refusing to hear God's Word hardens the heart and makes one ripe for judgment (Exodus 7:14).
2. God controls and dispenses judgment with purpose. (Exodus 7:17).
3. Satanic power may work wonders, but it cannot remove divine judgment (Exodus 8:6-8).
4. God is glorified through the judgment that He executes (Exodus 8:10).
5. The hardened heart would rather endure judgment than humble itself in repentance (Exodus 8:9-10).
6. Ignoring obvious judgment from God further hardens the unbeliever (Exodus 8:17-19).
7. The hard heart attempts to bargain with God to avoid Judgment (Exodus 8:25-28).
8. Divine judgment uncovers the sinfulness of a rebellious heart (Exodus 9:27; 10:16).
9. Willful, partial obedience will not prevent divine judgment (Exodus 10:24).
10. When people harden their hearts, they fail to see themselves as the cause for divine judgment (Exodus 10:28-29).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. What is significant about the first two plagues originating from the water?

The Nile River was the source of life for Egypt, and they worshiped it as a god. God was targeting their gods to give evidence of His superiority. The river was where the Hebrew baby boys were to be thrown. God turned the river into blood to avenge the blood that had been shed.

2. Why did Pharaoh defer the removal of the frogs until tomorrow?

He was too proud to humble himself before God. Maybe he hoped they would disappear by themselves before then. By saying, "Tomorrow," he showed that he thought he was in control and doing as he pleased.

3. In what areas may we be tempted to procrastinate?

Satan would have us delay becoming a Christian. When sin needs to be confessed, it is easy to wait for a more convenient time. We may find it difficult to witness for Christ now. It may be easy to delay helping someone

in need, encouraging one who is struggling, or doing any other good deed.

4. Why did the magicians' testimony not convince Pharaoh?

Pharaoh had begun the process of hardening his heart. He was not willing to acknowledge the truth. Finally he got to the place where God hardened his heart.

5. How do men attempt to bargain with God today?

They question the authority of the Bible. Does God really mean what He said? They attempt to compromise to please the flesh and, hopefully at the same time, to appease God. They may make serving God conditional on God's blessing and prospering them. They try to serve God on their terms.

6. In what ways was Pharaoh's statement "I have sinned" inadequate?

It did not change his course of life. He did not repent and forsake his sin. He was merely saying, "I was wrong this time." He continued to reject God.

7. Did Pharaoh see himself as the cause of Egypt's judgments? Explain.

No. He saw Moses as the source of Egypt's troubles, so he threatened Moses with death. He would not take personal responsibility, but attempted to shift the blame to others. His eyes were blinded to the truth.

8. Where might we respond with partial obedience?

We might follow the letter of church standards but not the spirit. We may allow a double standard for our children. Outwardly, we may be in compliance, but in private we may be disobedient, thinking no one will know. We might obey only in areas we agree with.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

The plagues of Egypt were a series of judgments sent by God. God was merciful, giving plenty of opportunity to acknowledge Him. As men refuse God, their hearts become harder and the judgments more severe.

May we heed the still, small voice of the Spirit today. As we are alert to God's voice, He can use us in His service. Then we can experience God's blessing now, and someday hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

### **Research Guide**

1. Read the lesson scope, noticing the details and sequence of the plagues.
2. Look up "Plagues of Egypt" in Unger's Bible Dictionary.