

GOD SENDS PLAGUES AGAINST EGYPT

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: EXODUS 7:14-11:10



The Word of the Lord is able to save.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

God means what He says – In Exodus 6:1 God told Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh.” God did not simply levy plagues against Pharaoh. Pharaoh is given opportunity to allow all God’s people to go. In Exodus 7:13 we learn that even after the transformation of Aaron’s staff into a snake, Pharaoh “would not listen to them.” Clearly the confrontation on the Nile River was Moses rebuking Pharaoh for his disobedience (7:16). Before each plague Pharaoh is given an opportunity to obey, yet he refused to obey Moses as the voice of the Lord, a prophet of God. Pharaoh will learn that God means what He says.

Pharaoh hardens his heart – In Exodus 8:15 and 8:32 we read that Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go. It is interesting though in Exodus 9:12, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27, and 11:10 we read that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Clearly Pharaoh was responsible for his own willing disobedience to God; and none of us deserve anything more from God than what Pharaoh received. Without grace none of us would obey God’s commands.

When God makes a promise, God keeps His promise – The warnings to Pharaoh were not empty words.. When God said through Moses that He would bring frogs (8:2), He brought frogs. When He said he would bring darkness, He brought darkness (10:22). The same is true for all the plagues. When the Bible tells us “A man reaps what he sows, we need to listen. The Bible also tells us that “the one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction and that God will not be mocked.” (Galatians 6:7-8). It is also true that when God says that He is going to save or deliver, He will save and deliver. Just as God was able to deliver Israel from the hand of the Egyptian slave masters, so is He able to deliver us from the slavery of sin. It was by His Son’s death on the cross that He both kept His promise to punish sin and bring salvation. God’s Word is true.

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WHERE IS JESUS?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

God's purpose to proclaim his name in all the earth involved hardening the heart of Pharaoh. Moses comes to Pharaoh and asks him to allow God's people to worship and hold a festival to God. Pharaoh refuses even after nine plagues and many miraculous signs. Similarly, in spite of the many miraculous signs Jesus performed, the Jewish rulers did not believe and were used of God in his plan to deliver His Son up for death.

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." (Romans 9:17)

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

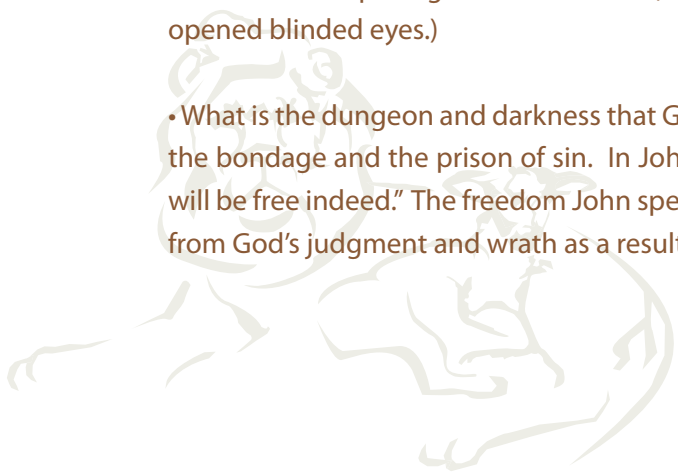
Bible Passage: Isaiah 42:6-7

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Jesus is the light for the Gentiles and the one who gives sight to the blind. Matthew 11:5 records Jesus saying that the blind receive sight.

Questions for reflection:

- How does this passage relate to Jesus? (Jesus brought the Gospel to the Gentiles. Jesus is the one who opened blinded eyes.)
- What is the dungeon and darkness that God releases us from? (When God saves us He releases us from the bondage and the prison of sin. In John 8:36, the Bible says it like this: "If the Son sets you free you will be free indeed." The freedom John speaks of is the freedom from the power of sin. We are also freed from God's judgment and wrath as a result of our sin.)



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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

HARD AND SOFT HEART

Supplies

- a variety of hard and soft objects, for example: rock, piece of iron, hard plastic object like a resin casting or plastic wheel
- soft modeling clay
- thin bendable wire
- soft plastic bag

The object is to provide both a tactile experience and also demonstrate that similar objects can be either soft or hardened.

Circulate the materials for the children to feel and examine. Then ask the class the following questions:

- What does the Bible mean when it uses the description "hardened heart?" (A hardened heart means a stubborn, unrepentant heart that refuses to obey God's commands.)
- How do these objects demonstrate hardness of heart? (Just like our hearts, they show us that something that is soft can become hard. Clay, if left to dry, turns into rock; metal in the form of wire can be molded but in a block is solid and unmovable; and finally, thin plastic is movable yet hard plastic can be as rigid as steel. When we have soft hearts they can bend and move to obey the commands of the Lord, but hard hearts only do what they want.)
- What are some ways that children your age can demonstrate a hard or soft heart? (Listen to their responses and help them to see that this passage speaks to their lives.)



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TEN QUESTIONS

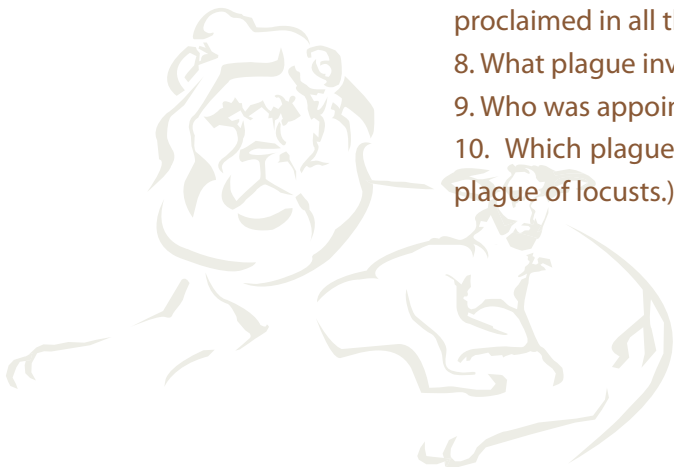
Supplies

- a set of trivia cards to use as a plague trivia game
- two tables

Make up a team of three boys and three girls and sit them in front of the class at two tables. Tell the teams you are going to read a question and if they know the answer they should raise their hand. If they are the first to raise their hand they must provide the answer to the question.

If they answer correctly they receive one point. Wrong answers have a point taken away. At the end of ten questions, call the team with the most points the winner. Have one adult act as a judge to determine who raised their hands first. Once a contestant is acknowledged, they have 20 seconds to answer. They may discuss their answer among the team. In the case of a tie, use the tie breaker question below.

1. What did Aaron's staff do to the staffs of the wise men? (Aaron's staff transformed into a snake that swallowed up the wise men's staffs, which had also changed into snakes.) Exodus 7:12
2. What did God do to Pharaoh's heart? (God hardened Pharaoh's heart.) Exodus 9:12
3. What was the first plague? (The first plague turned the water of the Nile River into blood.) Exodus 7:17
4. Which of the following was not a plague that God brought to Egypt: plague of flies, plague of gnats, or plague of wasps? (Plague of wasps is incorrect.)
5. Which plague could the magicians not reproduce by their trickery? (The magicians could not produce gnats by their secret arts.) Exodus 8:18
6. What happened to the livestock of the Israelites during the plague of the livestock? (God made a distinction between the livestock of Egypt and the livestock of Israel. The livestock of Israel did not die during this plague.) Exodus 9:4
7. What was God's purpose in raising up Pharaoh and hardening his heart? (God raised Pharaoh up to his position as ruler of Egypt so that God's name would be proclaimed in all the earth.) Exodus 9:16
8. What plague involved disease? (The plague of boils.) Exodus 9:9
9. Who was appointed to help Moses communicate? (Aaron)
10. Which plague came after the hail and finished off the Egyptian's crops? (The plague of locusts.) Exodus 10:5



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Tiebreaker: After the plague of darkness who did the Pharaoh say could leave and who had to remain? (All of the people could go but the livestock needed to be left behind.) Exodus 10:24

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What was the Lord accomplishing through the plagues? (God was judging the Egyptians for their harsh treatment of His people. God was demonstrating His wonders in front of His people. God was delivering His people from the bondage of slavery. And, God was pointing forward to the salvation that would later come in Christ.)
- What plague points most to Christ and how? (The last plague, the angel of death at the Passover, most points to Christ. The shed blood of the lamb placed on the door posts is a foreshadowing of God's sacrifice on the cross.)

DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEART

Supplies

Bibles

Have the children look up Hebrews 3:15 and 4:7 and explain the message that they teach us in light of learning about Pharaoh's hardened heart.

Help them to see that when we look back at the story of the plagues we should not associate ourselves with Moses, but rather with Pharaoh and the Israelites. Like Pharaoh, we all are enemies of God and would harden our hearts if it were not for the grace of God. And like Israel, we all need to be saved from a slavery to sin.

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.



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IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw one of the plagues on Egypt.

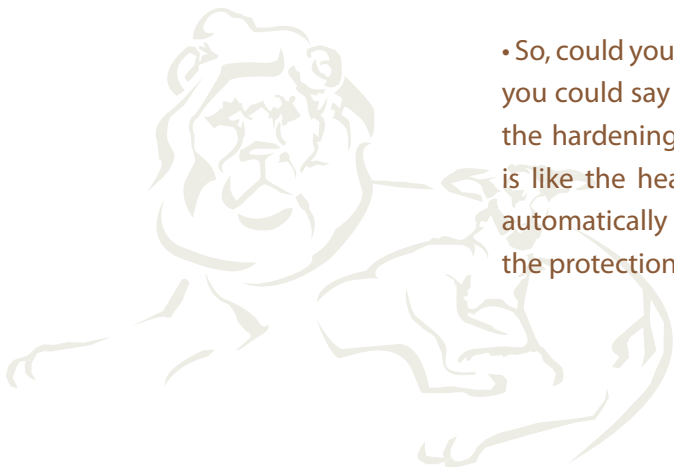
FOR OLDER GRADES

Supplies

- several containers of children's modeling clay
- a box of re-sealable bags

Pass out a small portion of clay to each of the children. Ask them to divide their portion into six individual pieces. Give them each a plastic bag. Explain to them that the modeling dough will harden unless it is protected from exposure to air inside the plastic bag. Give them the option to place one or all of their pieces inside the plastic bag. When they have finished, ask them the following questions:

- Which of the pieces, if not placed in the plastic bag, would harden? (All of the pieces left outside of the bag would harden.)
- What happens to the pieces you chose to protect in the bag? (The pieces protected in the bag will remain soft and moldable.)
- Do you have to do anything additional to make the pieces left outside the bag harden, or is it a part of their make-up to harden? (We do not need to do anything additional to the pieces to make them harden. They will harden naturally without further aid.)
- So, could you say that you hardened the pieces outside the bag just as easily as you could say the pieces themselves hardened? (Yes, either way of describing the hardening is accurate. Explain to the children that the modeling dough is like the heart of Pharaoh. Apart from God's mercy, Pharaoh's heart was automatically hard by nature and would further harden. Only God's mercy, like the protection of the plastic bag, could keep Pharaoh's heart from hardening.)



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• Read Romans 9:17. Ask the children how God demonstrated His power through Pharaoh and how God's name was proclaimed throughout the earth because of Pharaoh. (God's power was demonstrated through the plagues which came to Egypt, and the deliverance of Israel. Later in Exodus 15:14 we learn that the surrounding countries trembled at what they heard God did to the Egyptians.)

Have the children look up the following verses, compare them, and answer the questions below. Exodus 7:22-23; 9:12; 10:1; 11:10; 7:13; 8:15; 8:32.

• What two very different thoughts do we learn from these passages? (We learn that Pharaoh hardened his heart and that God hardened Pharaoh's heart.)

• Who is held responsible for Pharaoh's sin? (Pharaoh is held responsible for his sin. Pharaoh, of his own free choice, rebelled and hardened his heart against God. God did not extend grace for Pharaoh to repent because nowhere does Scripture tell us that Pharaoh placed his faith in God.)

Romans 9:18 tells us that God has mercy on whomever He wills and He hardens whomever He wills. Since the mercy of God is needed for any sinner to repent, without mercy anyone's heart would harden. The Bible clearly demonstrates the sovereign power of God and does not allow us to question God's wisdom, love, or authority (Romans 9:20).

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Judgement – Judgement is the activity of God as judge.

God is a judge and he brings pronouncements of guilt or innocence. God judged the Egyptians with ten plagues, which are called God's great acts of judgement (Exodus 7:4).

The Bible tells us that there will be a final judgment when God will judge all men according to what they have done, good or bad (Romans 2:5-6).

The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus was judged for those who would trust in Him and He took the penalty for their crimes. Now we who trust in Jesus will not be eternally judged, for we have been justified (Romans 5:16-19).