

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

Kindergarten

Sunday Morning

Study 16

Moses before Pharaoh

Moses before Pharaoh

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To continue the story of the Old Testament, and to show that God is stronger and more powerful than everything else.

Key Verses

Exodus 5:1-14; 7:1-25—Main Teaching Passage

Memory Verse - Proverbs 29:25 (December Memory Verse)

"The fear of man brings a snare,
But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe."

Hook

Ask the students: "Is anyone here afraid of spiders? What about snakes, or the dark?" Now ask, "Do you think there is anything that God is afraid of? Why not?"

Let the students know that is bigger and more powerful than anything that they could ever be afraid of. He isn't scared of those things, and because He is in control we shouldn't be afraid either.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In Exodus 5-11 we see the same theme repeated; God is more powerful than everything else. In our study for this week, we see the beginnings of that. Moses had been tasked by God to stand before the most powerful king of the most powerful country in the known world. However, Moses knew that God is bigger and stronger than Pharaoh. Moses showed God's power by throwing his staff to the ground, where it turned into a snake. Pharaoh's sorcerers replicated the feat, yet God showed that He is more powerful than them, as His snake ate the snakes of the sorcerers.

When Pharaoh refused to release the Hebrews, God began to demonstrate his power over nature and over the Egyptian gods by turning the Nile river into blood. Throughout this whole section, God proves Himself true and mighty and shows that all other things, even things that we might think are powerful, are nothing compared to Him.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

When Moses went and stood before Pharaoh and demanded that the Hebrews be released, he was doing something very, very scary. Pharaoh was the king. He was the most powerful king in the whole world. Pharaoh didn't take orders from anyone, and yet here came Moses, who demanded that all of Pharaoh's best workers, his Hebrew slaves, be released. Pharaoh could very easily have ordered Moses' death right there on the spot, but Moses was not afraid, because Moses knew that God was with him.

When Moses stood in front of Pharaoh and said "Let my people go!", He was really saying, "My God is more powerful than you, so you better do what He says!" To prove that the Lord is more powerful than Pharaoh, Moses threw his staff down on the ground and the Lord turned it into a snake. When Pharaoh called his wise men and sorcerers forward, they were able to do the same thing. Pharaoh laughed at Moses and told him that he would not let the people go, but what Pharaoh failed to see was that Moses snake went and ate all of the sorcerers' snakes. Moses didn't have to be afraid of Pharaoh, and he didn't have to be afraid of his wise men.

LOOK (Continued)

Pharaoh had disrespected God. He had made fun of God and mocked God. Maybe Pharaoh believed that the Egyptian gods were more powerful than the Lord. Do you remember from last week that one of the things that the Egyptians worshipped as a god was the Nile river? Well, the Lord was going to show Pharaoh that He was more powerful than any of the false Egyptian gods. Moses went before Pharaoh and took his staff and struck the water of the Nile River. God cursed the water of the Nile and turned it all into blood. In fact, He touched all of the water in all of Egypt, and turned all of it to blood too.

Moses wasn't afraid of Pharaoh because he knew that God was bigger and stronger than him. Moses wasn't afraid of the sorcerers because he knew that God was more powerful than them. Moses knew that God was even more powerful than the mighty River Nile. He wasn't afraid of anything, and we don't have to be afraid either.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the class how Moses showed that God was more powerful than Pharaoh's gods.

Pray: Thank the Lord for His incredible love for us. Praise Him for being sovereign over all things. Thank Him for promising to protect and watch over us.

Parent Question: How did God show that He is more powerful than Pharaoh?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary Exodus 5 and 7 by David Guzik

Exodus 5 - Moses Meets Pharaoh; Israel's Burdens Are Increased

A. Pharaoh receives Moses and Aaron and responds with a command.

1. (1-3) Moses asks Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go to the wilderness to worship.

Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" And Pharaoh said, "Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go." So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

a. **Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh:** This confrontation took tremendous courage, and **Moses and Aaron** should be commended for their obedience to God in doing it.

i. Pharaoh was nothing like a public servant; the entire public lived to serve the Pharaoh. His power and authority were supreme and there was no constitution or law or legislature higher or even remotely equal to him.

ii. The Pharaohs were said to be the children of the sun; they were friends to the greatest gods of Egypt and sat with them in their own temples to receive worship alongside them.

iii. An inscription by a Pharaoh on an ancient Egyptian temple gives the idea: "I am that which was, and is, and shall be, and no man has lifted my veil." (Meyer) The Pharaoh was more than a man; he considered himself a god, and the Egyptians agreed.

iv. Having grown up in the royal courts of Egypt, Moses knew this well; but he also knew that *Pharaoh was just a man*. With the authority of the living God, Moses confronted Pharaoh.

b. **Let My people go:** The fundamental demand of God to Pharaoh (through His messengers Moses and Aaron) was *freedom* for *His people*. God asserted that Israel belonged to *Him*, not Pharaoh; and therefore, that they should be free. Those who belong to God should be free, not bound.

c. **Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go:** Pharaoh knew of many gods, but did not recognize the LORD or His ownership of Israel. Therefore he refused the request.

i. **Who is the LORD?** Pharaoh did not have the right heart, but he did ask the right question. Moses asked *Who am I?* (Exodus 3:11) The relevant questions were not about the identity of Moses or Pharaoh, but **who is the LORD?** If Pharaoh really knew who the LORD was, he would have gladly released Israel.

d. **Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God:** Moses relayed the demand God first gave him back at Exodus 3:18. God presented the smaller request to Pharaoh first

so that the request would be as appealing and as easy to accept as possible. He did this so Pharaoh would have no excuse at all for refusing God and hardening his heart.

2. (4-9) Pharaoh increases the burden of the Israelites.

Then the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get *back* to your labor." And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land *are* many now, and you make them rest from their labor!" So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, "You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.' Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words."

a. **Why do you take the people from their work?** Pharaoh not only rejected the idea of giving the Israelites three days off, he saw the request itself as a waste of good working time.

b. **The people of the land are many now:** Pharaoh knew that the previous attempts to cut the population of Israel had failed. They continued to multiply. This was good for Israel, but bad for Pharaoh.

c. **For they are idle; therefore they cry out:** To punish Israel for the request and to give them more work ("You seem to have enough time to make these crazy requests - then you must have enough time to work more!"), Pharaoh commanded that the Israelites must gather their own materials (specifically, straw) for making bricks.

i. Straw has an acidic content that makes the bricks stronger. The use of straw in making bricks in Egypt during this period is confirmed by archaeology. "Bricks of all sorts have been found in Egypt, some with regularly chopped straw, some with rough roots and oddments, some without straw at all." (Cole)

ii. "Chopped straw was mixed in with the clay to make the bricks more pliable and stronger by first binding the clay together and then by decaying and releasing a humic acid." (Kaiser)

iii. **"The eastern bricks are often made of *clay* and *straw* kneaded together, and then not burned, but thoroughly dried in the sun. This is expressly mentioned by Philo... 'because straw is the bond by which the brick is held together.'"** (Clarke)

Exodus 7:14-25

3. (14-18) God sends Moses to warn Pharaoh about the coming of the first plague.

So the LORD said to Moses: "Pharaoh's heart *is* hard; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. And you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness"; but indeed, until now you would not hear! Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I *am* the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which *are* in the river with the rod that *is* in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that *are* in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river.'" "

a. **Pharaoh's heart is hard; he refuses to let the people go:** The first plague - as all the plagues - came because Pharaoh hardened his heart against God and His people. In mercy, God warned Pharaoh, but Pharaoh

disregarded the warning.

b. **By this you shall know that I am the LORD:** If Pharaoh really recognized and honored the God of Israel, he would have freed the children of Israel. Pharaoh sinned against Israel because he sinned against the LORD.

4. (19-21) The first plague comes upon Egypt: The Nile turns to blood.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.*'" And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that *were* in the river were turned to blood. The fish that *were* in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

a. **That they may become blood:** This is the first of the plagues. There are nine in total (the tenth is the slaying of the firstborn, which is in a class by itself), and they are grouped together in threes. In this structure of threes, the first two plagues only come after warning and a call to repentance; the third plague in each set comes without warning.

b. **All the waters that were in the river were turned to blood:** Some say the plagues each have a naturalistic explanation. In the case of this first plague, some point out that when the Nile reaches an extremely high flood stage, it collects finely powdered red earth, and this red earth carries organisms that color the water and kill fish. But if this were the cause, it is hard to explain how Pharaoh could possibly be impressed.

i. God may or may not have used natural mechanisms to accomplish these plagues; even if He did, the timing and character of the plagues come from God's hand alone.

ii. It is important to understand that these plagues were all literal; there was nothing symbolic about them. Each plague pointed to a greater meaning than the event itself, *but they really happened.* This guides our understanding about the plagues in the Book of Revelation; there is no reason to see them as merely symbolic either.

iii. The plagues God brought against Egypt had a definite strategy and purpose. Each of them confronts and attacks a prized Egyptian deity. Not only did they bring punishment against Egypt, the plagues also answered Pharaoh's original question: *Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?* (Exodus 5:2) The plagues show the LORD God to be greater than any of the deities of Egypt.

c. **So there was blood throughout the land of Egypt:** Specifically, this first plague was directed against the numerous Egyptian river deities. The Nile itself was virtually worshipped as a god by the Egyptians, and the LORD God shows that *He* has complete power over the Nile, not some river god.

i. "The 'plagues' are described by cognate Hebrew words, all meaning 'blow' or 'stroke'." (Cole) Each plague was as if God were to strike or beat a deity worshipped by the Egyptians.

ii. The Egyptian god *Khnum* was said to be the guardian of the Nile, and this showed he was unable to protect his territory. The god *Hapi* was said to be the spirit of the Nile, and was brought low by this plague. The great god *Osiris* was thought to have the Nile as his bloodstream; in this plague he truly bled. The Nile itself was worshipped as a god, and there are papyri recording hymns sung in praise of the river.

iii. There is a significant mention of something like this in a papyrus from this general period known as the Ipuwer Papyrus. It actually says (Ipuwer 2.10) that the Nile was blood and undrinkable. The same papyrus

repeatedly mentions that servants left their masters.

5. (22-25) The magicians of Egypt copy the miracle.

Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. And seven days passed after the LORD had struck the river.

a. **The magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments:** Digging in wells, the magicians of Egypt found fresh water to replicate the LORD's plague upon the Nile. The magicians turned fresh *well water* into blood.

b. **The magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments:** Bible scholars warmly debate if this was a magician's trick or if these **enchantments** were miracles from Satan's hand. The evidence seems to lean in favor of them being miracles from Satan's hand.

i. If the magicians of Egypt really wanted to do a miracle, they should have turned the bloody river clean again. They didn't because it seems that Satan cannot perform a constructive, cleansing miracle. He can bring supernatural destruction, but not goodness. All they did was make more bloody water!

ii. "Alleviation of human suffering is no part of the programme of the devil or his agents. That can only come from Jehovah, through the believing cry of his servants." (Meyer)

c. **Pharaoh's heart grew hard...Neither was his heart moved by this:** One way or another, the result in the heart of Pharaoh was the same. Pharaoh took another opportunity to reject and dishonor the LORD God.