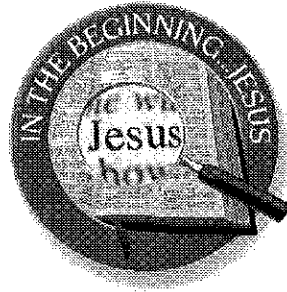


In the Beginning...Jesus



Lesson 15

The Plagues and the Passover

Themes:

- God is almighty—no one can oppose Him and succeed.
- God is right to judge sinners.
- God was merciful to His people Israel.
- God is sovereign over all things—even the hearts of men.
- God instituted the Passover to point His people to the future Passover Lamb.

Scripture:

Portions of Exodus 3-12

Memory Verse:

Isaiah 53:10b (and review verses 3-10a)

Visuals for Lesson:

- Bible.
- *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster.
- Resource Packet:
 - JESUS IS THE KEY visual (previous lessons).
 - MYSTERY PERSON (from Lesson 14).
 - GOD'S WONDERS+PHARAOH'S HARD HEART.
 - PLAGUE 1-10—Place all but the DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN (Plague 10) into an envelope.
 - GOD'S MERCY/GOD'S JUDGMENT (from previous lessons).
 - NO A-D—Cut out and tape end to end so they form a vertical column.
 - THE ISRAELITES' PASSOVER LAMB.
 - GO.
 - PASSOVER DOORWAY.
 - Bible Clue Card #18.
 - GOD'S SIGNS AND WONDERS Activity Sheet—Make copies for each child.
- Magnifying glass (for use in reading the clue card).
- A rock.
- Whiteboard or large piece of paper and markers—Write out the three questions as stated in the beginning of the lesson.

- Optional: portion of steel chain.
- Tape.

Pre-Lesson Activity:

Give each child a copy of the **GOD'S SIGNS AND WONDERS Activity Sheet** and a pencil. Have them follow the directions on the page.

Lesson

Direct the children's attention to the whiteboard or large piece of paper on which the following has been written:

Israel's problem: _____

What's going to happen next?
Who's going to do it?
How will it be done?

Tell the children you have a clue to what the problem is. **Display** the steel chain and ask the children what problem this chain hints at. [God's people were slaves in Egypt.] On the blank line after "Israel's problem" write, "Slavery in Egypt." The answers to the next three questions can be found in Exodus as we continue the story of the Bible from where we left off in the previous lesson. Have the children prepare for the lesson by turning to **Exodus 3**.

Ask: Did God want His people to continue to be slaves in Egypt? Was that the plan and promise God, the LORD (God's name), had made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Israel? [No.] So something needs to happen, which leads us to the next question: What's going to happen next?

Note: An explanation of how "I AM" (presented in Lesson 14) became "LORD" is found in the Application section and workbook page of that lesson.

Choose a child to read **Exodus 3:8a**:

And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites.

What is going to happen to the Israelite slaves? (Hint: Look for a word that begins with the letter "d" in the verse.) [They are going to be delivered.]. To deliver someone is to rescue them.

After the question, "What's going to happen?" write, "Deliverance." Next, ask the

children, "Who's going to deliver Israel?" [God.] Write "God—the LORD" after "Who's going to do it?" *How will God deliver His people?*

Choose a child to read **Exodus 3:20**:

So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.

The LORD says that He is going to stretch out His hand and do what in Egypt? [Wonders.] What "wonders" do you think God is referring to? [The plagues.]

After the question, "How will it be done?" write, "By wonders from God."

Display MYSTERY PERSON. Point out that in the previous lesson we learned God had chosen a man to be His prophet—a man who would communicate God's plan of deliverance for His people Israel. Who was this man? [Moses.] Was Moses excited about being chosen to do this? Was Pharaoh going to like this plan?

Illustration: Point to one of the children in class and say the following: *Suppose I chose [child's name] to go to a big, strong, mean, teenage neighborhood bully and tell him to stop picking on the neighborhood children. Do you think he would be excited about being chosen for this job? Why not?*

Can you imagine what Moses must have felt like? Pharaoh was a powerful king! Besides, Moses had a more immediate concern—something else he was afraid of even before thinking about Pharaoh. What was it?

Read **Exodus 4:1**, emphasizing the words "me" and "my" as you speak:

Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The LORD did not appear to you.'"

In this verse, Moses was not talking about Pharaoh, but Israel. He was afraid of not being listened to by God's own people! Why might Moses be afraid of his own people? [Allow the children to give a few responses.] This is what Moses might have been thinking:

On the whiteboard or large piece of paper write the following underneath the four questions: MOSES vs. ISRAEL + PHARAOH.

Is this really true? How did God respond to this?

Read **Exodus 4:5** for God's response to Moses emphasizing the words "the LORD" and "God" as you speak:

God turned Moses' staff into a serpent and then back again so ***"that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."***

What was God proving to Moses by turning his staff into a serpent? What did God say Israel would do when they saw this miracle? [Israel would believe God had sent Moses.] (Cross out the ISRAEL that was written down so that only MOSES vs. PHARAOH appears.) Do you think this would give Moses more confidence in God? Why? But here is what Moses said to God:

Read **Exodus 4:10** emphasizing the words "I am" as you are speaking:

But Moses said to the LORD, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since You have spoken to Your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue."

What was Moses worried about now? Here is God's response to Moses' worries:

Read **Exodus 4:11-13** emphasizing the words "who" and "I, the LORD" and "I will" as you are speaking:

Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak."

But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else."

What was Moses' problem? Why does he keep doubting God's plan? What didn't he understand?

Point to the words: MOSES vs. PHARAOH. Explain that Moses was still thinking this "showdown" was between himself—weak and tongue-tied Moses—and the mighty king of Egypt. But was this the case? Point to the question: "Who's going to do it? God—the LORD." Cross out the word, Moses, and replace it with the words, THE LORD, in very large and bold letters so that it now reads:

THE LORD vs. PHARAOH

Explain that even though God was angry at Moses' unbelief, He had mercy on Moses and even gave Moses a helper, his brother Aaron, to go with him and speak the words and commands God had given to Moses to the people of Israel and to Pharaoh.

So now it's showdown time—The one, true God, the LORD, versus the mighty Egyptian king, Pharaoh. And here is what happened next:

Choose two children to read **Exodus 5:1-2**:

Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go."

Does this first encounter with Pharaoh look very promising? Were Moses and Aaron surprised by this response? Was God surprised? Can God change Pharaoh's mind? Does God have a way to make Pharaoh obey?

Read **Exodus 7:2-4a**:

You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you.

What does it mean that God will "harden" Pharaoh's heart? [Allow the children to give some responses.] Why would God want to harden Pharaoh's heart if He wants Pharaoh to set His people free?

Display GOD'S WONDERS+PHARAOH'S HARD HEART. Point out that God wanted to multiply His signs and wonders (make more of them), so He chose to harden Pharaoh's heart. What were these signs and wonders?

Display the envelope with **PLAGUE 1-9** and choose two or three children to come up to the front. Tell the children that inside the envelope are nine pictures depicting what happened next in the story—God's signs and wonders that were pictured on today's Activity Sheets. You will hand the children the pictures and then, as quickly as possible, they must place the pictures in the order in which they occurred from first to last. (The class can help them by giving oral directions as to the correct order.) Be ready with tape to assist the children. After they are finished, the pictures should be placed from top to bottom on the paper or board as follows:

THE LORD vs. PHARAOH
Water to Blood
Frogs
Gnats
Flies
Livestock Die

**Boils
Hail
Locusts
Darkness**

Point out that the “wonders” God said He would do to Egypt were plagues. God sent these wonders one at a time, and each time Pharaoh responded in the same way. **Display** the rock. Remind the children that God had said He would harden Pharaoh’s heart. What response would show a hard and rebellious heart? **Display** the series of nine **NO** visuals. Tape each **NO** underneath the word “PHARAOH.”

Nine mighty plagues by the LORD and still God’s people are slaves in Egypt. Was Pharaoh too strong for the LORD? Something is missing from the list of wonders. What is it? What picture should come next?

Display Bible Clue Card #18. Choose a child to come and insert the card behind the red paper on the **JESUS IS THE KEY** visual to reveal:

*Scripture: Exodus 12:12-13
Clue under Window #8*

Have the children turn to **Exodus 12:12-13**:

For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

Who is speaking here? [God.] God is speaking about two separate groups of people in these verses. Who are they? [The Egyptians and the Israelites.] When the LORD says that He will “strike” the firstborn of Egypt, what does He mean by that? [He will kill them.] But before He does that, He has a “sign” for the Israelites to put on their houses. What is it? [Blood.] What does the LORD promise to do when He sees this blood? [Pass over the houses of the Israelites so they won’t be killed.] Where will this blood come from?

Open Window #8 on the poster to reveal: **THE PASSOVER SACRIFICE.**

Explain that before God sent the 10th plague on Egypt, He instructed the people of Israel to take a spotless lamb and kill it. They were then to take a brush, dip it into the blood, and paint the blood on their two doorposts and above the door of their homes. (**Display PASSOVER DOORWAY.**) God said that this was to be called, “The LORD’s Passover,” since He would see the blood and pass over the home of the Israelites and

not kill their firstborn. The lamb that was killed was the Passover lamb. **Display THE ISRAELITES' PASSOVER LAMB** and tape it underneath, but to the left of the plague of darkness. Any Israelite who did not obey this command would be judged along with the Egyptians.

Display PLAGUE 10 and ask: *Could God REALLY do this? Would He really do this? Would He judge Pharaoh and the Egyptians by killing their firstborn? Who would end up winning this showdown?*

Read **Exodus 12:29-32a**:

At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead. Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, "Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone."

Display PLAGUE 10 and tape it underneath **THE ISRAELITES' PASSOVER LAMB**, but centered directly beneath the darkness plague. **Display GO** and tape it across from **PLAGUE 10** and underneath the ninth **NO**.

Who won, the LORD or Pharaoh? God won! No one can succeed against the one true God. No one can ruin His plans. The nation of Israel belonged to God not to Pharaoh. God wanted His people free from slavery. The LORD multiplied His wonders, hardened Pharaoh's heart, and then He broke Pharaoh's hard heart. But the story isn't over yet—God's people still must leave Egypt so they can go to the land God had promised them. God wasn't finished with Pharaoh yet.

Application

- Point out that sometimes when people read the story of Israel's captivity in Egypt, they focus on people such as Moses and Pharaoh or the amazing events—like how weird and spectacular the plagues were. Is this the MAIN point of the story? Review the what, who, and how questions from the beginning of the lesson. Emphasize that this story is about God! All of the people and events served His great plan. Ask the children: *We answered the what, who, and how questions today, but what about the question, why? Why did God deliver His people and why did He use 10 plagues and not just one? Was Pharaoh that strong? Did God need to wear Pharaoh down first?* Read and discuss **Exodus 6:6-8** and **9:15-16**. *Why would God's name be proclaimed in all the earth by these events?*

Can you think of other things God has done that are even now being proclaimed in all the earth? Do you say and do things that draw attention to how great God is?

- ❑ **WORKBOOK**—Have the children turn to Lesson 15 in their workbooks and write today's clue in the notebook space. Show the children the colored clue picture of the Passover Sacrifice. Ask them if this clue is similar to any other clues [e.g., God Will Provide the Lamb; Disobedience—Death, Covering for Sin]. Ask if they know of any reason God would have the Israelites kill a lamb and shed its blood before He sent the 10th plague on Egypt. In killing a Passover lamb, what do you think God was reminding His people of? Did they also deserve God's judgment? Why? What is the only way they could be saved from God's judgment? By trusting in God—depending on His mercy and obeying His command on the Passover.
- ❑ Point out that sometimes people will watch "their" team win something, like a football game, and they will boast by saying, *"We won! We're the best!"* After God had sent the 10th plague on Egypt, could Israel boast by saying, *"We won! We're the best! We're mightier than Pharaoh?"* Read and discuss **Jeremiah 9:23-24**. How can these verses apply to each of us? When you read about the events of today's Bible story, do you want to boast about God and praise Him?
- ❑ Read and discuss the following verses: **Exodus 9:3-4; 18-21; 10:22-23**. Did God treat His people the same way He treated the Egyptians? Was the nation of Israel treated differently because it was stronger, better, or smarter than the nation of Egypt? What did Israel have in common with Egypt? What word do we use to describe God's kindness to undeserving sinners? [Mercy.] Do you need mercy from God to be happy? Why? What do you need to be saved from? If you were to paint blood from a lamb over the door of your house, do you think God would "pass over" your sin? Why don't we do that now? What has changed?
- ❑ Read **Exodus 10:16-17**. Did it seem as if Pharaoh felt sorry for his sin? Did this "sorrow" for his sin last? Did it lead to his being saved from God's judgment? Why not? Do you think your heart is like Pharaoh's heart in any way? How do you sometimes show "hard-heartedness"? Read and talk about personal application of **2 Corinthians 7:10**.
- ❑ Read and discuss **Psalms 115:1-3** and **Proverbs 21:1**.

Send Home

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