

LESSON 6: EXODUS 6:28 – 10:29

JULY 6, 2011

OVERVIEW

- . Battle against the god's of Egypt
- . Moses' second appearance before Pharaoh – Exodus 6:28-7:13
- . The first nine plagues in Exodus – Exodus 7:14-10:29
- . Pharaoh's hardened heart

BATTLE AGAINST THE GOD'S OF EGYPT

- . Secular historians interpret the Exodus as the exploit of a great man (Moses) leading a mass movement (the Israelites) to their freedom from bondage
- . The biblical perspective looks at the Exodus quite differently
 - . The biblical perspective, which looks at the Exodus as part of a larger biblical narrative, focuses on the battle between Yahweh, the true God representing truth and light, and the forces of darkness which manifest themselves in the arrogance and ignorance of man, represented here by Pharaoh, and the false gods of Egypt
 - . This battle, waged with fierce intensity, results in a total and uncompromising victory for Yahweh
 - . Through this victory, the power of Egypt was broken, the people of Israel set free, the gods of Egypt discredited and the God of Israel shown to be the only true God
 - . This perspective is reinforced several times in the Bible
 - . “Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the other gods “ Exodus 18:11
 - . “For the Lord brought judgment on their gods “ Numbers 33:4
 - . Implies that the real battle is between God and the gods of Egypt
- . In order to understand this battle, it's important to understand ancient Egyptian religion
 - . Egyptians were polytheistic, worshipping over eighty gods
 - . The “roots” of polytheism
 - . Many students of religion view polytheism as part of a natural development of human intellect
 - . Animistic – Polytheistic – Monotheistic
 - . The Bible views Polytheism as a degenerate religion
 - . The Bible, beginning with Genesis 1:1 talks of natural world being created by one true God

- . Anything that goes counter to that is a result of the degenerate condition of man which has strayed from the one true God, and begins to worship false god(s)
- . Paul talks about this degenerate condition in Romans 1:20-23
- . The Polytheism of Egypt is a clear example of religious darkness and depravity
 - . In the Exodus, God is attacking the dark forces behind these false gods
 - . “I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt – I am the Lord”
Exodus 12:12
- . This struggle in the Exodus; “Is not between flesh and blood, but against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” – Ephesians 6:12

Rom 1:18-25

MOSES' SECOND APPEARANCE BEFORE PHARAOH – EXODUS 6:28-7:13

- . The Lord calls Moses and Moses questions his ability to get the job done – Exodus 6:30
- . The Lord makes Moses like God and Aaron like Moses' prophet
 - . Said another way, the Lord will speak directly to Moses, who will carry the Lord's thoughts to Aaron who will communicate them to Pharaoh
 - . So who has the tougher job, Moses or Aaron?
- . The Egyptian magicians match Aaron in round one, miracle for miracle
 - . Aaron, based on Moses' command, throws his staff on the ground and it becomes a snake
 - . Pharaoh summons his magicians and orders them to do the same, which they do, without breaking a sweat
 - . However, Aaron's snake proceeds to devour the other snakes
 - . Regardless, the Pharaoh is not impressed and his heart is hardened
 - . What does it mean to harden a heart?

THE NINE PLAGUES – EXODUS 7:14 – 10:29

- . Eighty major gods and goddesses of Egypt clustered around the three great natural forces of Egyptian life – the Nile River, the land and the sky and its sun
 - . The plagues God sent against Egypt follow this three-fold pattern
 - . The first two plagues were against the gods of the Nile
 - . The next four plagues were against the land gods
 - . the next three were against the gods of the sky
- . The first two plagues were against the gods of the Nile
 - . The Nile turned to blood – Exodus 7:14-24
 - . This act made the water undrinkable, created an unbelievable smell and killed the fish

- . The Nile was the lifeblood of Egypt – this act must have devastated the population
- . This was a direct attack against several Egyptian gods
 - . Osiris – One of the chief gods and primary god of the Nile
 - . Khnum – guardian of the Nile sources
 - . Hapi – “the spirit of the Nile”
 - . Hapimon and Tauret – Upper Egypt Nile gods
- . Despite over 2000 years of praying to these gods, they were not able to do anything to reverse the plague
- . To make matters worse, Pharaoh had his magicians add to the problem
- . Pharaoh’s reaction was to further harden his heart
- . The land overcome by frogs – Exodus 8:1-15
 - . The second plague consisted of frogs coming up from the Nile and over running the land
 - . The Pharaoh had his magicians duplicate the act, adding to problem
 - . This was a direct attack on Hekt, the goddess often portrayed with a frogs head
 - . Frogs were considered sacred so they could not be killed
 - . The magicians and goddess were powerless to do anything, so Pharaoh called on the God of Moses
 - . Pharaoh agreed to let people go if the Lord would get rid of frogs
 - . Moses called on God to intervene, which He did
 - . The Pharaoh then changed his mind, further hardening his heart
- . The next four plagues were against the land gods
 - . Dust turned to gnats – Exodus 8:16-19
 - . This plague was directed at Gab, the god of soil
 - . For the first time the magicians were not able to duplicate the act
 - . This is also the first time the magicians acknowledged this could be the hand of God – Exodus 8:19
 - . The Pharaoh’s reaction was only for his heart to be further hardened
 - . Swarms of flies – Exodus 8:20-32
 - . Egyptians actually had a fly god who was the Ichneuman fly Vatchit
 - . This is the first time we see the Israelites and the land of Goshen spared
 - . Pharaoh agrees to let “the people go” if Moses will pray to God to get rid of flies
 - . Moses does so and all the flies disappear
 - . Despite this Pharaoh turns his back further hardening his heart
 - . Death of domestic animals – Exodus 9:1-7
 - . This was an attack on one of the most popular gods, the bull god Apis
 - . According to Egyptian lore, Apis was begotten by a ray of light that impregnated a cow
 - . A sacred bull was kept at every sacred shrine and worshipped
 - . Closely related to Apis was the goddess Hathor who was the goddess of Fertility

Hekt

51
77
128

- . The death of all these sacred bulls, with the god and goddess powerless to do anything was a real blow to Egyptian morale
- . Result, despite all this, was for Pharaoh's heart to be further hardened
- . Boils – Exodus 9:8-12
 - . This plague was created by throwing soot in the air, which was actually a sacrificial custom in Egypt that was supposed to bring good luck
 - . This was a direct attack on Imhotep, the guardian of healing and Sekhmet, the lion-headed goddess who both created epidemics and brought them to an end
 - . The plague revealed to everyone the impotence of the Egyptian gods and Priests
- . The next three plagues were against the gods of the sky and the sun
 - . Thunder, hail and lightening – Exodus 9:13-35
 - . Rain and hail were very rare in Egypt
 - . Cairo averaged 2 inches of rainfall annually and southern Egypt would often go over a year without any rain
 - . The hail that fell in this plague was so severe it stripped all the vegetation off the trees
 - . The only place it did not hail was Goshen
 - . In this plague, for the first time, many officials started to show their reverence for the power of the Lord and obeying Moses commands
 - . We also see a recognition on the part of Pharaoh that the God of Moses is behind this and that Moses can call on the Lord to stop it
 - . Despite Moses doing all that Pharaoh asked, the Pharaoh's heart was Hardened
 - . Invasion of locusts – Exodus 10:1-20
 - . By now, many of the nobles were scared and could see they were powerless against the God of Moses
 - . They realized Egypt had been ruined – Exodus 10:7
 - . They pleaded with Pharaoh to let the Israelites go
 - . Although the Pharaoh almost consented, at the last minute he said no
 - . This plague was an attack on Nepri, the goddess of grain, Anubis, the guardian of the fields and Min, the deity of harvests
 - . Darkness throughout the land – Exodus 10:21-29
 - . This plague came with no announcement
 - . This plague was one of the most serious because it was a direct attack against one of the most important gods, Ra, the sun god
 - . The Pharaoh was considered to be the incarnation of Ra
 - . This plague went right to the heart of the Egyptian spiritual power source, Ra and Pharaoh
 - . Pharaoh summons Moses and tells him to gather his people and go, but to leave the livestock
 - . Moses says no go, to which the Pharaoh says to leave and never come back or he will be killed

PHARAOH'S HARDENED HEART

- . Did God harden Pharaoh's heart, or did the Pharaoh harden his own heart
 - . In these passages, they're eleven references to Pharaoh hardening his own heart
 - . Yet there are seven references to God hardening Pharaoh's heart
- . This raises a larger question about the sovereignty of God and the free will of man, a question that has been raised by sincere Christians for centuries
 - . In other words, did Pharaoh ever have a chance, or was he used by God as a sacrifice, to make his point
- . Regardless of where you come down on Pharaoh, remember, this is not a story about God waging war on Pharaoh, rather God waging war on the forces of darkness

NEXT LESSON IS WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2011: EXODUS 11:1 – 15:21