

Monday - Week Ten

Lesson twenty-seven: Moses before Pharaoh

Read: Exodus 5:1-7:7

Summary: Any hopes of a quick escape from Egypt faded quickly when the Pharaoh rejected Moses. In fact, life got tougher for the Israelites!

Background and Comments

- God and Moses certainly were direct with the Pharaoh in 5:1-2. They told him that the God of Israel demanded that Pharaoh allow them to go out into the desert to make sacrifices. The fact that the Pharaoh denied even this reasonable request shows that the Pharaoh considered the Israelites his private property, not the people who belonged to God.
- The Bible says that Pharaoh hardened his heart and that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (interestingly enough each one is mentioned 10 times. Ten is the number of completeness in the Bible - Pharaoh's heart was completely hardened). Which is true – did Pharaoh harden his heart or did God harden it? Both. Pharaoh hardened his own heart against God. God said, "OK, Pharaoh, have it your way. Your heart is now hard for all time. It is impossible for you to repent". In effect, Pharaoh was condemned to hell before he died!

Lessons for Today

- Everything seemed to go wrong for Moses after he talked to the Pharaoh. Not only did the Pharaoh ignore him, the Israelites saw their work load increased. Pharaoh was a smart ruler; he saw that the best way to get rid of Moses would be to make the Israelites turn on him and blame him for the work increase. Sometimes God allows our good deeds to seemingly backfire and cause nothing but problems. This provides us with a good opportunity to remember why we do good things in the first place. We don't do them only so that good things result from our actions - we do them because they are God-pleasing ... whether their results are good or bad. Keep this truth in mind today.
- If someone is worried that God has hardened their heart you can tell them that the answer is no. If God hardens someone's heart they won't ever worry about it because they simply won't care

Read: Psalm 46; Mark 2.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, keep me from discouragement when things seem to get worse even though I'm doing what You want me to do.. Amen.

Tuesday - Week Ten

Lesson Twenty-eight: The Plagues

Read: Genesis 7:8-11:10

Summary: God used the ten plagues to decimate Egypt. Through the first nine plagues Pharaoh was unbending. His heart was hard.

Background and Comments

- The Pharaoh's magicians were able to duplicate some of the first miracles Moses performed. There are two explanations. These magicians could have used slight of hand to create the appearance of a miracle. It's more likely that they were operating with the power of the devil.
- God chose plagues that directly attacked the things that the Egyptians held sacred. The Egyptians worshiped the Nile river; God turned it to blood. The Egyptians thought frogs were holy (and even had a frog god); God sent them more frogs than they could imagine. The Egyptians also worshiped their wonderfully fertile soil; God turned this dust into gnats. And so it continued.
- Not only did these plagues attack Egypt's religion it also attacked the well-being of the country. Vast numbers of the Egyptian's animals and crops were destroyed. These plagues must have crippled this country for years in the future.

Lessons for Today

- Does the devil still have the power to perform "counterfeit" miracles (miracles that are supernatural but not from God)? Certainly. Some of our missionaries report events that seems to be miracles performed by the devil's power. In mainstream America the devil usually chooses to do his work through more normal avenues (the media, materialism, etc.). It's important for us to remember that God's power is always greater than the devil's power.
- Pharaoh certainly was stubborn. Unbelievers are still that stubborn today. They ignore clear signs that their teaching (or actions) are wrong - yet they continue to remain in their sin and error.

Read: Psalm 47; Mark 3.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, You used Your incredible power to put down evil. I pray that You would do the same today. In Jesus' name I pray; Amen.

Wednesday - Week Ten

Catechism Review

Read Questions 41-52

1. Why will we never want to use God's name in a sinful way? (Think about what God's name is and why He gave it to us)

2. Do you know what the difference is between cursing and swearing?

3. Can you name some churches that "lie in God's name"; that is, they use the Bible to teach false doctrine?

4. How do you use God's name (His Word) when you pray? How could you use it? [Note: God loves to hear His Word when we pray. It's almost as if we are saying, "Lord, this is what You have promised me. I ask You to keep Your promises"]

5. Praising God means to tell God He is doing a good job. Have you done that lately? How can you do it in the future? (Be creative)

Read: Psalm 48; Mark 4.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me Your Word. Help me to understand Your Word so that I can use it often and well in my life. Whenever people misuse Your name give me the courage to show them how You want Your name to be used. In Jesus' name; Amen.

Thursday - Week Ten

Lesson twenty-nine: The Passover

Read: Exodus 12:1-28

Summary: The Lord instituted the Passover meal as a way for the Israelites to remember the great miracles that liberated them from Egypt.

Background and Comments

- There were several items used in the Passover meal:
 1. The animal. The Israelites were to use a young male lamb or a young goat. The animal had to be unblemished. This pointed forward to the sinless Messiah.
 2. Unleavened bread (bread made without yeast). This was a symbol of sincerity and truth (yeast symbolized sin and guilt).
 3. Bitter herbs. These symbolized the many years of bitterness the Israelites suffered in Egypt.
- The blood of the sacrifice was to be painted on the Israelites' doorways as a sign to the angel of death that a believer lived in that home. As Christians we understand that this blood symbolized the blood of the perfect sacrifice: Jesus Christ.
- It's easy to remember when the Passover was celebrated: it's just before Easter. How fitting that is!

Lessons for Today

- The Passover meal was to be a sacred festival celebrated until the Messiah came to fulfill it. Whenever the Passover was celebrated the account of the first Passover was told. Our celebrations of Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter can work much the same way. Do you use these opportunities to teach spiritual truths?
- The Israelites were to eat this meal with their traveling clothes on and their walking staffs in their hand. They were about to take a huge trip! Do you live your life remembering that you will soon be taking a huge trip? (You will be traveling to heaven!)

Read: Psalm 49; Mark 5.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, guide me to remember the spiritual significance of the holidays I celebrate. Help me to tie Your Word to my celebration. I ask this in Jesus' name; Amen.

Friday - Week Ten

Life Questions

Topic/Question: Why don't women vote in our churches? What does the Bible mean when it says that women are to be submissive?

Bible References and Considerations

- God teaches us that men and women are 100% equal (Galatians 3:26-28). God also teaches us that He has given different jobs (roles) to men and women. God says that He has given the responsibility for leadership to men (1 Corinthians 11:2-12; 1 Timothy 2:11-12; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7). Paul uses the order of creation as a basis for this teaching.
- It is noteworthy that the Bible shows us how to apply these principles in the area of marriage and the church but not in the area of society. Do the principles apply in society? Certainly (our lives as Christians are not compartmentalized); yet how they apply is a bit tricky. Many aspects of applying these principles in society depend on a person's conscience because God has not given us clear direction here. This subject calls for mature Christian study. Encourage your pastor to explore these areas with you in a Bible class.

Practically Speaking

- Some people say that none of this applies because times and customs have changed. God's principles never change. The specific applications we make with these principles will certainly change over time (in the 20'th century a woman wearing short hair is completely different than a woman wearing short hair in the first century - then it was a sign of rebellion.).
- The word "submission" is a dirty word these days. For us Christians it needs to become a beautiful word again. We want to submit our lives to the Savior who loved us enough to die for us. Even Jesus submitted His will to His Heavenly Father (cf. His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane). We will be quick to ask, "Lord, how do you want me to live?"
- Obviously it's critical that men provide loving, Godly leadership in all areas of their lives. Their wives need to be able to say, "My husband loves me so much! I find it a joy to respect him as the authority in our home."

Read: Psalm 50; Mark 6.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, give me wisdom in this difficult area. Help me to keep my eyes on Jesus at all times. In His name I pray; Amen.