

=BASIC BIBLE STORIES=

Lesson 4

The Plagues of Egypt

AIM: to teach my pupils the fact that Jehovah is the true God and that there is no other God besides, as shown in the story of the plagues of Egypt

POINT OF CONTACT: Just for the sake of curiosity, ask the class to list the plagues of Egypt. In smaller classes, you may give them each a blank sheet of paper, and they could write down the ones they think of. You might give a small prize to the one who lists the most. If none of the plagues are mentioned by the pupils, you could get their imaginations started by asking such questions: “How would you feel if this room were filled with hundreds of flies?” “Would you sit still if we had many, many frogs jumping around?” “Wouldn’t it be awful to turn on a water faucet and see a stream of blood pouring forth instead of clear, cool water?” With such a scene pictured in the minds of the pupils, you can go right into the lesson.

INTRODUCTION: The plagues of Egypt are also called the “miracles of Egypt.” Notice Exodus 7:9b, “Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.” There are ten of these miracles. The word “miracle” signifies “an effect produced in nature which is opposed to its laws, or such as its powers are inadequate to produce.” In other words, a miracle is something that is contrary to the laws of nature; or in excess of nature’s ability to produce. Such were these plagues of Egypt. Each was against nature, each was a miracle, and each was directed at one or more of the false gods of Egypt, trying to show that Jehovah is the only true God. Let us notice the plagues.

- I. GOD FIRST WANTED TO SHOW THE POWER OF THE INSTRUMENT THAT MOSES AND AARON WERE USING. That was the rod. This rod, as mentioned in Exodus 7:9, whether a common staff or a shepherd’s crook or some other type rod, nevertheless was consecrated for the purpose of working miracles. It was called “the rod of God,” “the rod of Moses” and “the rod of Aaron.” You will recall God allowed Pharaoh’s wise men and sorcerers to cast their rods down and become serpents. God allowed Aaron’s rod to become a serpent, and in verse 12 we find that Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods. This was picturing that God was greater than their gods and that victory was going to come.
- II. GOD NOW BEGINS HIS PLAGUES BY TURNING THE WATERS TO BLOOD. Notice Exodus 7:20. The main water of Egypt was the Nile River. The Egyptians worshipped the Nile. Their babies were oftentimes thrown into the Nile. For God to turn the water into blood was a definite attack on one of their greatest gods.
- III. THE PLAGUE OF THE FROGS CAME NEXT. Read Exodus 8:1-6. The frogs came, of course, from the Nile River; and as was said before, the Nile River was an object of their adoration and worship. Now it becomes the object of God’s punishment. Frogs were everywhere. Especially look at verse 3. Frogs were in their houses, in their bedchambers, on their beds, in the houses of their servants, upon the people, and even in the ovens. (As you teach children, you can certainly elaborate here and even imagine, by acting out the story, what happened.)

When it says, “into thine ovens,” in Exodus 8:3, this is the description of their ovens. In various parts of the East, instead of having what we would call ovens, they would dig a hole in the ground in which they would insert a kind of an earthen pot which would be heated. They would put their cakes in it. When baked, the cakes were removed and others were put in the ovens. To find such places full of frogs must have been disgusting and distressing. They could not even cook their meals. (Lady teachers can certainly understand this problem.)

- IV. THE FROGS WERE GATHERED INTO HEAPS AND BEGAN TO STINK. See Exodus 8:13, 14. The frog was worshipped by the Egyptians. They looked upon it as the god of the resurrection. This is not difficult to understand as the jumping of the frog reminded the Egyptians of the resurrection. Again, God had attacked one of their objects of worship.

- V. GOD THEN SENT THE NEXT PLAGUE, WHICH WAS LICE. Read Exodus 8:16, 17. This became a terrible plague. The common louse is very prolific. In the space of 12 days a full-grown female lays 100 eggs from which, in the space of six days, about 50 males and 50 females are produced. In 18 days, these young females are at full growth, each of which may lay 100 eggs which will all be hatched in six more days. Hence, in the course of six weeks the parent female may see 5,000 of its own descendants. It became so bad in Egypt that the people were obliged to shave the hair from every part of their bodies. Imagine this awful, awful plague. It is significant also that the Egyptians worshipped all forms of insects, the lice being among these. God was giving an abundance of gods to the Egyptians. You might say their gods were “getting in their hair!”
- VI. THE NEXT PLAGUE THAT GOD GAVE THE EGYPTIANS WAS THE PLAGUE OF FLIES. Notice Exodus 8:21-24. The fly here is considered by most scholars to be the dog fly, which must have been awfully hard for the Egyptians to accept because they held dogs in the highest veneration and worshipped Anubis in the form of a dog. The Egyptians were well-known to pay veneration to all kinds of animals, but especially was the dog an object of their worship. Again God was attacking their false gods.
- It is difficult here for us to understand how awful the flies were in Egypt. They were so bad that in ancient times different people had gods whose office it was to defend them against flies. In Ekron they had the fly-god Baalzebub. Hercules of the Romans was supposed to be an expeller of flies. Jupiter, the supreme god, had some power to dispel flies and defend his worshippers against them. This is how bad the flies were in the East. Don't you see? God was showing them that not only could their little gods die and not only could He have control over them; but even their big gods, who were supposed to protect them in such catastrophes, were rendered helpless.
- VII. THE NEXT PLAGUE WAS MURRAIN ON THE CATTLE. Read Exodus 9:1-7. The murrain is a very contagious disease among cattle, the symptoms of which are hanging down and swelling of the head, abundance of gum in the eyes, rattling of the throat, difficulty of breathing, palpitation of the heart, much staggering, a hot breath and a shining tongue. Imagine how the Egyptians must have felt when such a disease came to the sacred cow. God once again is showing them that their gods are unable to care for them.
- VIII. THE NEXT PLAGUE WAS THE PLAGUE OF BOILS AND BLAINS. See Exodus 9:8-10. The word “blains” here comes from the word which means to swell, bulge out, etc. Especially does this affect parts of the neck, armpits and groin. Still the Israelites were not allowed to leave.
- IX. THE SEVENTH PLAGUE WAS HAIL FOLLOWED BY THUNDER. Study Exodus 9:22-34. These “mighty thunderings” were loud, repeated peals of thunder. The lightning was not a sudden flash of lightning but a devouring fire walking through every part, destroying both animals and vegetables. These people thought lightning was some kind of god. Of course, they worshipped the heavens. Again their gods were exposed before them.
- X. NEXT WAS THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS. Read Exodus 10:4, 5. The locusts covered the ground six to eight inches deep. They filled the houses, etc. The people worshipped the locust, the grasshopper and the beetle. God once again attacked their false god until as Exodus 10:15 says, “...there remained not any green thing...through all the land of Egypt.”
- XI. THE NEXT PLAGUE WAS COMPLETE DARKNESS. See Exodus 10:21. Notice the words, “darkness which may be felt.” It was a thick, clammy vapor. It prevented lamps from burning and fire from giving light. The Egyptians were shut up in their houses as prisoners of darkness and were there for three days. Here again God was attacking their false gods. They worshipped the sun; now the sun was darkened, and their god was rendered hopeless.

XII. THE LAST AND MOST EFFECTIVE OF THE PLAGUES AND MIRACLES WAS THAT OF THE PASSOVER. God told the Jews to take a male lamb without blemish, and put it up for four days to be sure that he was perfect. At the end of four days, they were to kill him, take his blood and sprinkle it on the doorposts and lintels of the house. The death angel was coming through to take the firstborn in every home where the blood was not applied. The Egyptians did not apply the blood; the Jews did apply the blood. Hence, the Jews were spared, and the Egyptians lost their firstborn. Upon this plague, Pharaoh finally let the people go.

There are several lessons in this plague:

1. The blood is necessary for deliverance from sin.
2. There must be a sacrifice before deliverance can come.
3. No other God can save but Jehovah, and Jehovah will save only through the blood of His substitute.
4. This sacrifice pointed to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, Who is our Passover. So said Paul in writing to the Corinthians.