

The Life of Moses

• Lesson Five •

God Is Serious about His Word

1. God hardens Pharaoh after Pharaoh hardened himself
2. God distinguishes between faith and unbelief
3. The Lamb of God brings salvation to God's people

Worship

In Revelation 15, God is about to pour out his wrath on the earth. The saints sing a song of praise, for they will soon witness the Lord's deliverance. The song is the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. Through Moses God delivered Israel, and through Christ God has and will deliver all his saints.

Read Revelation 15:1-8

- L: I [John] saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed. And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb:
- G: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."**
- L: After this I looked and in heaven the temple, that is, the tabernacle of the Testimony, was opened. Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Prayer:

We have a sure prophetic Word (By pow'rs of empire banned and burned,
By inspiration of the Lord, (By pagan pride rejected, spurned,)
And, though assailed on ev'ry hand, (The Word still stands, the Christian's trust,)
Jehovah's Word shall ever stand. (While haughty empires lie in dust.) Amen.
(CW 291:1,2)

Introduction

Tommy ate the meat and the potatoes. Now he's waiting for Mom's banana cream pie. "If you don't eat your peas, you'll have to go to your bedroom and won't get any dessert," Tommy's father announces. Tommy keeps his mouth closed like a stuck zipper. For the next several minutes, Dad uses games and songs

to try to coax Tommy into eating the peas. Tommy purses his lips all the tighter. Dad's voice reaches a higher decibel level as he continues to demand that Tommy eat the peas. But Dad is unwilling to back up his threats. Fifteen minutes later, Tommy has enjoyed his banana cream pie. His peas lie in the kitchen sink waiting to go down the garbage disposal.

Why didn't Tommy eat his peas? Will he eat them the next time Dad says, "You'd better, or else"?

To many the Word of God is like Tommy's peas. They feel they have the option of either believing it or not. But as we will see in our lesson, God is serious about his Word. That became very clear in what happened to unbelieving Pharaoh.

Studying God's Word

God hardens Pharaoh after Pharaoh hardened himself

Read Exodus 7:6-13,22; 8:15,19,32; 9:7,12,34; 10:20,27

1. Why didn't Pharaoh respect Moses' first sign? (7:11,12)
2. How did Pharaoh respond after each of the first five plagues? (7:22; 8:15,19,32; 9:7)
3. What difference do you find after the sixth plague in how Pharaoh's heart became hard? (9:12)

His Word in My Life

Would you use the example of God hardening Pharaoh's heart to rebuke a fellow Christian who is trapped in sin? Discuss why you would or would not.

What can we do to keep from hardening our hearts?

Who gets the blame when a heart remains hardened against God? (Note: Don't confuse this with God's hardening a person's heart, which is God's punishment on a person who continues to reject his grace.)

Whose doing is it when a heart is melted and led to repentance and faith?

How do we mesh these two truths?

Would you feel comfortable saying that God has hardened someone's heart? Discuss why or why not

Pharaoh continued to reject the Lord and hardened his heart against God's Word and God's clear testimony that he was in control. So God took his grace away from Pharaoh so that future commands and signs only led to Pharaoh's receiving more punishment. This message should terrify all who are comfortable in their sin.

God distinguishes between faith and unbelief

Nine plagues have come and gone. God is ready to send his tenth and final plague of death on the Egyptians. Moses announces it to Pharaoh.

Read Exodus 11:4-9

1. Moses told Pharaoh that God would make a distinction between Israel and Egypt in the final plague. How would God do that? (verse 7)

2. What would the tenth plague prove? (verse 7)

3. Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart? (verse 9; see Romans 9:17)

His Word in My Life

The Lord made a distinction between Egypt and Israel. Agree or disagree: God still distinguishes between nations today.

We make a distinction between ourselves and other Christian denominations. Why do we do this when all believers in Christ, the Son of God, will be living with us in heaven where there will be no denominational distinctions?

On what basis do we make a distinction between Christians and unbelievers? Can our judgment ever be wrong?

“The Lord knows those who are his” (2 Timothy 2:19). Israel was God’s people, and God would never desert them. All of God’s gracious acts were done so that his people would be delivered. The same holds true for us today.

The Lamb of God brings salvation to God’s people

The Lord is about to pass through Egypt with the plague of death. He will, however, “pass over” the homes of Israel. Exodus 12 is an outstanding chapter of Scripture. It presented to Israel and to us a “type” of Christ. (A type is a sign or event representing something still to come.)

Read Exodus 12:21-30

1. What instructions did God give to the Israelites? (verses 21-23)
2. What happened in each Egyptian household? (verses 29 and 30)
3. How was the Passover lamb of the Old Testament a picture of Christ in the New Testament?
4. When arguing to Pilate that Jesus should be crucified, the Jewish people gladly accepted responsibility for the act. They shouted, "Let his blood be on us." Israel said the same thing here in Egypt but for a different reason. So do we. How so?

His Word in My Life

Jesus the Lamb of God stands at the forefront of Scripture. How does this influence the way we handle Scripture?

What will happen if the Lamb of God doesn't stand at the forefront as we speak God's Word to others?

Many television evangelists place a greater emphasis on what we are to do for God than on what God has done for us in Christ. Some also spend a vast amount of time pointing out the sins of society. Why do you think people are attracted to these types of preachers?

The promised Messiah, whom we know as Jesus, was at the heart and center of Old Testament Scripture. Israel knew the true God because they trusted in the Messiah. We know the true God because we accept Christ Jesus as his Son.

Summary

Moses had delivered nine ultimatums to Pharaoh. His ministry had been difficult. Five times Pharaoh hardened his heart and threw Moses out of his presence. Then the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart so he would continue to reject God's Word. Finally, the Lord sent a tenth plague so devastating that Pharaoh could do nothing but let Israel go.

The tenth plague directs Israel and us to the heart of Scripture—Christ, the Lamb of God, who would deliver the world from the captivity of death and sin.

Life with God

Fill in the blanks: Our lesson has dealt with the high points of the Bible's account of this portion of Moses' life.

If you did not read Exodus 7:6–12:30 to prepare for this lesson, you might want to do so now. If you wish, read *Exodus* (The People's Bible commentary) on these verses. If you are reading all of Exodus through Deuteronomy, continue by reading Deuteronomy 1–10.

- Day 1: Christ and his atoning work stand at the center of Scripture. Review Luther's explanation to the Second Article. If you have not memorized it, do so.
- Day 2: Christ and his atoning work stand at the center of Scripture. Read his passion history in Matthew 26 and 27.
- Day 3: Christ and his atoning work stand at the center of Scripture. Read the story of Jesus' resurrection in Matthew 28—the proof of God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice as complete.
- Day 4: Christ and his atoning work stand at the center of Scripture. Read about the eternal meaning it has for you in 1 Corinthians 15.
- Day 5: God's final distinction between faith and unbelief will be made on the Last Day. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. This tells about the glory of this day for you and the "dead in Christ."
- Day 6: Do you know someone who is hardened in sin or unbelief? With confidence in the Lord, speak to that person in Christian love.