

## Monday Week 13 **Plagues on Egypt**

Q49 What did Pharaoh say when Moses gave God's message to let His people go?

A Pharaoh said he would not let God's people go.

Bible Reading: Ex. 4:29-5:2

A teen-aged boy had been going with a bad crowd. He was doing some wrong things like taking drugs. One day he went to the park. Some people were singing about Jesus. He stayed to listen. He heard a message from the Bible that told him he could be saved if he gave his heart to Jesus. He wanted to do that, so he asked for prayer. Later, he went home and told his parents. They were not happy. "We do not want you to be a fanatic." It seemed like they would rather have their son be wild and take drugs than follow Jesus.

Pharaoh didn't want the Israelites to worship God. He liked it just fine to have them as slaves. Some people have hard hearts against God. They don't want others to worship God. They are like Pharaoh, who wouldn't let the people go.

### Thinking Deeper

Some atheists are more strident in their hatred of God than others. Sam Harris, for example, said that if he were given the choice to get rid of either rape or religion, he would get rid of religion. Does that mean he would applaud all churches for changing into training grounds for violent predators of women? It is not clear whether or not he cheered on the Catholic priests who were preying on young boys. After all, they were acting more in keeping with rape than with religion.

Not all atheists go that far. Sir Julian Huxley said that even though he didn't believe in God, he noticed that people acted better who were religious than those who weren't. He was somewhat of a pragmatist in that regard. Even though he believed religion was a lie, he wanted others to follow it because it made them act better.

Much has been made over Barna's research that showed the divorce rate among evangelicals being higher than among the general population and even among atheists. Those statistics failed to consider an important fact. Fifty percent of atheists don't bother to get married. They live as though the institution of marriage doesn't exist, so their break-ups aren't reported. When that is factored in, the divorce rate among atheists is twice as high as that of evangelicals. As much of a compromise that evangelicals have made regarding divorce, they still act a whole lot better in the marriage issue than atheists.

Christians should not allow themselves to fall prey to the intimidation of atheists when it comes to behavior. In this issue, when atheists cite statistics to prove they do better with marriage, they are flat out wrong.

## Tuesday Week 13 **Plagues on Egypt**

Q50 What did God do to Egypt when Pharaoh refused to let the people go?

A God sent plagues on Egypt because Pharaoh would not let the people go.

Bible Reading: Ex. 9:13-16

“Make sure you wash your hands after you’ve been to a public place,” Mother said to Stevie. “If you don’t, you could get a disease. You don’t know what kind of germs might be there.” Stevie washed his hands. It seemed hard to remember to wash every time, but he didn’t want to get germs. Stevie learned that germs are so tiny you can’t see them, but if the wrong kinds of germs get into your body you could get really sick. He didn’t want to get sick, so he washed his hands. By keeping clean, Stevie kept himself healthy.

God wanted to protect the Children of Israel from the plagues of Egypt. As long as they kept from the sins of Egypt, God kept them safe. God want to us to keep from sin, too, so we can keep from the troubles that come from an evil life.

### Thinking Deeper

One of the movements in Christian Education in the last several decades has been the rise of homeschooling as an alternative for education. This has created questions in the minds of people who think almost exclusively that education is the responsibility of government. Consequently, homeschoolers have almost universally been questioned about the proper “socialization” of their children. The issue came up for one homeschooling father when he was defending his educational choice in court. Part of his defense went something like this:

“In our school, we have had no student on student violence. We have had no school shootings. We have zero drug and alcohol problems. None of our students have contracted venereal disease. We have no expectation that any of these social ills will be problems in our school. We feel the social environment in the school is quite healthy.”

There is a principle from the life of Israel that applies to Christians today. “Learn not the way of the heathen.” God’s word directs us to look to Him for instructions for life. The way of the heathen eventually leads to trouble, disease and destruction. God has a better plan for His people. God promised the Children of Israel that if they walked in His ways, He would keep them from the diseases that befell Egypt. God said, “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the LORD that healeth thee.” (Ex. 15:26)

Despite the high sounding arguments promoting secular ways, it is wisdom for the Christian to avoid them like the plague. The results of following God’s ways are much healthier than the way of the heathen.

## Wednesday Week 13 **Plagues on Egypt**

Q51 What was the last plague on Egypt?

A The last plague on the people of Egypt was the death of the firstborn in every household. (Ex. 11:4-7)

After a big rainstorm, Buffalo Run Creek was so high and running so fast that Betsy just had to see it. She went to a little foot bridge that crossed the creek. The water was so fascinating that she bent over to look closer. Suddenly, she lost her balance and fell into the rushing water. She was gone! Her brother tried to find her but couldn't. He called the neighbors for help. They looked and looked. Sometime later they found the poor little girl. But she had drowned. Everyone in the valley was sad. The children who rode the bus with her were sad for days. They really missed Betsy.

Can you imagine what it must have been like in Egypt when every household lost a child? The people all over the land mourned. The plague even got to the household of Pharaoh. All the people were very sad. It was this plague that finally caused Pharaoh to let the Children of Israel go to worship God.

### Thinking Deeper

After the attack on America on 9-11, some Christian ministers linked the violence to America's forgetting God and allowing evils like abortion and homosexuality to be common practice in the nation. The swift and vocal outcry from the media mirrored the outrage of a lot of people who didn't want to see any causal relationship between tragedy, man's behavior, and God's judgment. The controversy caused some of the pastors to back down. It may be that some of their words were ill advised and perhaps poorly timed. It may be.

However, it may be that God is watching what we do. It may be that God does allow trouble, or tragedy, or disease to fall on a nation. Some ministers say 9-11 as an indication that perhaps the protecting hand of God was withdrawn from the nation, at least on that occasion. The larger question has to do with God's involvement in the affairs of men. Is He involved? Does He affect what happens? Is there any relationship between men's actions and God's dealings? The popular culture, the press, much of religion says no. They see perhaps God working to bless, and be a generally nice grandfatherly figure in the skies. But they don't want to entertain the idea of God being involved in judgment.

Enter the story of the plagues on Egypt. There was direct relationship between the actions of men in defying God. "I don't know this God," said Pharaoh. And God sent plagues. Is God different today? Does He ignore the evil actions of men? Obviously not. "Thou God seest me." God doesn't always act as directly as he did in Egypt. But He does act. It would behoove us to listen to His word. "*At what* instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy *it*; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And *at what* instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it*; If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them" (Jer. 18:7-10).

## Thursday Week 13 **Plagues on Egypt**

Q52 How did the Israelites escape the plague of death?

A The Israelites put lamb's blood on their doorposts, and when God saw it, He passed over that house and spared the firstborn.

Bible Reading: Ex. 12:3, 5, 7, 12-13

This is an old story: A mother bird was sitting on a nest of newly hatched chicks when a snake spotted the nest and began climbing the tree. That snake wanted to eat the little birds. The father bird saw the snake coming and flew away. Higher and higher came the snake, while the mother bird just sat very still on the nest, covering her little ones. By now the snake was climbing out on the branch where the nest was. It crept very slowly toward the mother bird and her babies. The snake slithered closer, and closer, its tongue flitting in and out of its mouth, and its beady eyes fixed on the nest. Suddenly there was a flutter of wings. The father bird flew right to the nest in front of the snake with a red leaf in his beak. He placed the leaf on the nest, covering the mother and the little baby birds. The snake came right to the edge of the nest and stopped. The red leaf was poisonous to the snake. It quickly turned and crawled back down the tree and away in the grass. The father bird had saved his family with a special red leaf.

God told the Israelites that a plague of death was coming to Egypt at midnight. All the firstborn children would die throughout the land. But God gave them instructions to take the blood of a lamb and put it on the doorposts. God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." He gave them a way of safety during the pledge. The fathers in Israel saved their children from death by covering their house with the blood of the lamb.

### Thinking Deeper

Fathers have a very important responsibility regarding the welfare of their families. In the case of the Passover, the father was responsible for taking a lamb for the house. He was to paint the door posts and lintels. Dads have a great opportunity to provide protection for their families. But an absent dad will open the door to great trouble.

A study done of teens in New Zealand and the United States concluded that girls whose fathers were absent in the home were far more likely to become promiscuous and end up being pregnant without being married. That one factor, an absent father, was the significant predictor of promiscuity. British Justice Secretary Jack Straw linked youth involvement in gangs with absent dads at home. Other social problems like drug abuse, violence and crime have been shown to have a direct link to absent fathers in the home.

Christian fathers, taking the lead in spiritual matters in the home, have a powerful protective influence for good on their families.

## Friday Week 13 **Plagues on Egypt**

### Review the Week's Questions

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### Bible Reading: Heb. 11:24-28

A man and his wife were on vacation in Australia. They went to a creek to go swimming. Suddenly a crocodile grabbed the lady. Her husband knew he had to help. The crocodile was about eight feet long and hurting his wife. He jumped on the crocodile's back. It released the lady, and swam off. She had eight places where the crocodile's teeth broke her skin. The police who investigated the attack said that the husband's actions saved his wife. He was a brave man.

Moses gave the Israelite fathers instructions to save their families. Fathers who loved God and loved their families followed the instructions. They protected their families with blood on the doorposts of their houses. Fathers are supposed to protect their wives and children. There are many enemies of God and families. Fathers must be brave to fight against evil enemies.

### Thinking Deeper

Suppose two men were on the side of a raging river and both saw a boy struggling to keep above water. One man held rope which had a life preserver tied to it. The other man had nothing in his hands. As the boy swept past them to the falls, neither man did anything. Which one was more to blame for not saving the boy?

A man is to provide for his family. "But if any **provide** not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5:8). The word means that he "thinks beforehand of." The primary application of the verse is that if a man doesn't take care of his family's physical needs, he is worse than an unbeliever. But what of a man who doesn't plan beforehand for the spiritual and emotional dangers that could destroy his household?

When an Israelite father was told of the need to paint the blood of a lamb on the doorpost, he had to act before midnight when it would be too late to save his firstborn. That man would be worse than an Egyptian, because the Egyptian had no warning and no escape from the plague. The Egyptian didn't receive the Word from the Lord about protecting his family whereas the Israelite father had the warning and the instructions. If he failed to provide for his home, it is logical to conclude that he was worse than the Egyptian father.

Fathers must think ahead about protecting their families with the truth of God's Word.

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