TALKING POINTS

Exodus

Quarter 3, Lesson 4
"The Plagues"

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MEMORY VERSE: "So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the Lord had spoken by Moses." Exodus 9:35, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week's study focuses on Exodus 7-10 as we examine the nature and purpose of the plagues the Lord poured out on Egypt.

1. All of God's warfare is spiritual (Sun)

- The Great Controversy is not a fist fight (Rev. 12:7-9; Eze. 28:17; Eph. 6:12; Dan. 10:12, 13).
- God was not fighting Egypt or Pharoah, but against their "gods" (Ex. 12:12; Num. 33:4).
    - "The Lord did not fight against the Egyptians, or even Egypt per se, but against their deities (the Egyptians venerated more than 1,500 gods and goddesses)." Qtly, Sun, par 1

> The Egyptians… derided their expectations and scornfully denied the power of their God. They pointed to their situation as a nation of slaves, and tauntingly said, 'If your God is just and merciful, and possesses power above that of the Egyptian gods, why does He not make you a free people?' They called attention to their own condition. They worshiped deities termed by the Israelites false gods, yet they were a rich and powerful nation. They declared that their gods had blessed them with prosperity, and had given them the Israelites as servants, and they gloried in their power to oppress and destroy the worshipers of Jehovah. Pharaoh himself boasted that the God of the Hebrews could not deliver them from his hand. PP 259

2. God respects and reveals our choices (Mon)

- The hardening of Pharaoh's heart is mentioned eighteen times during the plagues. Clearly this was a critical issue!
    - Nine times this hardening is attributed to God, while the other nine times are attributed to Pharaoh himself.
        - "It is significant that in the Exodus story of the ten plagues, in each of the first five plagues, Pharaoh alone was the agent of his heart hardening. Thus, he initiated the hardening of his own heart. From the sixth plague on, however, the biblical text states that it was God who hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exod. 9:12).

- What all this means is that God strengthened or deepened Pharaoh's own choice, his willful action, as God had told Moses He would do (Exod. 4:21)." Qtly, Mon, par 2

> There was no exercise of supernatural power to harden the heart of the king. God gave to Pharaoh the most striking evidence of divine power, but the monarch stubbornly refused to heed the light. Every display of infinite power rejected by him, rendered him the more determined in his rebellion. The seeds of rebellion that he sowed when he rejected the first miracle, produced their harvest. PP 268 (Qtly, Fri, par 1)

- The condition of the heart is always the determining factor of whether God's Word will be received or rejected (Lk. 8:11-15; Ac. 2:36-41 vs. Ac. 7:54-57).

3. God works systematically to accomplish His will (Tue-Thu)

- The plagues were poured out in a careful, step-by-step process to increase the faith of the Israelites and, if possible, undo the idolatry of the Egyptians (see Qtly, Tue, Wed, and Thu).

> Before the infliction of each plague, Moses was to describe its nature and effects, that the king might save himself from it if he chose. Every punishment rejected would be followed by one more severe, until his proud heart would be humbled, and he would acknowledge the Maker of heaven and earth as the true and living God. PP 263

CONCLUSION

> Though the Egyptians had so long rejected the knowledge of God, the Lord still gave them opportunity for repentance. In the days of Joseph, Egypt had been an asylum for Israel; God had been honored in the kindness shown His people; and now the long-suffering One, slow to anger, and full of compassion, gave each judgment time to do its work; the Egyptians, cursed through the very objects they had worshiped, had evidence of the power of Jehovah, and all who would, might submit to God and escape His judgments. The bigotry and stubbornness of the king resulted in spreading the knowledge of God, and bringing many of the Egyptians to give themselves to His service. PP 333