

## THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

**DATE:** October 26, 2014

**SUBJECT: THE TRAVELS OF THE CHOSEN CHILDREN OF ISRAEL: Plagues Upon Egypt (1)**

**SCRIPTURE:** Exodus 5:1-23; 6:1-13, 26-30; 7:1-25; 8:1-19

**AIM:** We should not be stubborn persons with hard hearts; we should desire to have a soft heart and be those who listen to the Lord and His representatives.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** Heb. 4:7b ("Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."); Prov. 8:33 ("Hear instruction, and be wise; And do not neglect it."); Rom. 13:1a ("Let every person be subject to the authorities over him, for there is no authority except from God..."); Rom. 12:10 ("Love one another warmly in brotherly love; take the lead in showing honor one to another.")

**SUGGESTED SONGS:** #6708 (BSS- Moses 1 - The Burning Bush); #2201 (BSS Moses 1 - Educated in Egyptian ways); #5223 (BSS Moses 1 – Our God Doesn't Give Up); #4607 (Moses and God); #2807 (Go Down Moses -Sing to the Lord #100); #1314 (Brave Moses -Shining Star, Issue 29); #25 (I believe God); #1614 (Cooperation); #3418 (I wanna be good ground);

**APPROACH:** In today's story, someone's heart is described as being hard. What is better, a hard heart (show the children a rock) or a soft heart (show a play dough)? Let the children answer, then demonstrate how you can easily push something in to a play dough. Maybe write words – suggestions, corrections, obey, listen on small pieces of paper and press them in to the play dough) Show them that nothing can get into the hard rock. It cannot be changed or molded. Ask the children to describe what they see.

**BACKGROUND/REVIEW:** When God called Moses from the midst of the burning bush, He made Himself known as the God of his forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. The Lord had heard the cry of the children of Israel and had called Moses to deliver them out of the bondage of the Egyptians and to bring them into the promised good land. The Lord told Moses what to say before the elders of Israel and asked him to go with his brother Aaron, who would speak for him. The children of Israel believed all the words Jehovah had spoken to Moses and they worshipped God.

**CONTENT:** After Moses and Aaron had met with the people and with their leaders, they went to speak to Pharaoh. They told him that Jehovah God had met with them; to let them go on a three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice and to worship Jehovah their God; but Pharaoh was angry and refused to let the children of Israel go and worship God. Instead, he forced them to work even harder; he commanded the taskmasters and their officers not to give the people straw to make bricks as they previously did. Now, the people had to go and gather straw for themselves and were still expected to make the same quota of bricks which they previously made when straw was provided to them. Even the taskmasters made the people hurry to complete their tasks at the same time as if straw had been provided to them; and the officers, whom the taskmasters had set over the children of Israel, were beaten and told, "Why have you not finished, both yesterday and today, the amount of bricks required of you previously?" So the officers of the children of Israel cried out to Pharaoh; but Pharaoh hardened his heart and did not have compassion on the people; he told them that they were idle and that's why they wanted to go *and* worship Jehovah.

The officers blamed Moses and Aaron about how badly they were treated. Moses felt bad and asked Jehovah, "Lord, why have you mistreated this people? Why is it that You have sent me?...You have not delivered Your people at all." Jehovah assured Moses that He had remembered His covenant with the children of Israel. He told him to say to the children of Israel, "I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians...And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob..." Jehovah again told Moses to go and tell Pharaoh to let the people go. This time they performed a wonder, Aaron threw down his staff in front of Pharaoh and it became a serpent. Pharaoh called for his wise men and sorcerers and the magicians did the same; but Aaron's staff swallowed up all of theirs. Pharaoh remained stubborn and refused to let the people go.

**The First Plague—Blood (Exo. 7:15-25).** Jehovah then told Moses to meet Pharaoh in the morning by the bank of the River with the staff that had turned into a serpent and to say to Pharaoh, "Jehovah...has sent me to you, saying, Let My people go...But until this very moment you have not listened. Thus says Jehovah, by this you will know that I am Jehovah. I am now going to strike the water which is in the River with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to blood." And Jehovah asked Moses to ask Aaron to stretch his hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their watercourses, and over their pools, and over all their reservoirs of water. And indeed, the water in the River turned to

blood, and the fish that were in the River died, and the River became foul, and the Egyptians could not drink water from the River. Blood was throughout Egypt. The magicians were again able to do the same. Pharaoh's heart hardened. Seven days passed.

**The Second Plague—Frogs (Exo. 8:1-15).** Then Jehovah told Moses to tell Pharaoh, “Thus says Jehovah, Let My people go that they may serve Me. But if you refuse to let *them* go, I will now smite all your territory with frogs. Pharaoh didn’t listen, so Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff over the rivers, the watercourses, and the pools, indeed the land was covered with frogs. There were frogs in their houses, on their bedchambers, on their beds, in their ovens and in their kneading bowls. Once again the magicians were able to do the same. Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and told them to ask Jehovah to take the frogs away from him and his people. Then he would let the people go to sacrifice to Jehovah. Moses agreed, and asked Pharaoh when he wanted this done. “Tomorrow,” he answered. Moses said, “*It will be* according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like Jehovah our God.” So Moses cried out to Jehovah concerning the frogs which He had brought upon Pharaoh. And Jehovah did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died in the houses, in the courts, and in the fields. And they gathered them together, heap after heap, and the land stank. When Pharaoh saw that the frogs were now gone, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, just as Jehovah had said.

**The Third Plague—Lice (Exo. 8:16-19).** Then Jehovah told Moses to ask Aaron to stretch his staff and strike the dust of the earth. When Aaron did so, there were lice on man and on beast; all the dust of the earth became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians also tried to bring forth lice, but they could not do so and told Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh's heart hardened, and he did not listen to them.

(To be continued next week.)

#### **SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:**

- We should **not be stubborn** persons. Pharaoh was so stubborn and obstinate! He refused to give in! Time after time, he would not listen to Jehovah, or to Jehovah’s representative, Moses. When the environment became difficult, he gave in (at least partially), but when things went back to normal, he reverted to his old stubborn self.
  - We should learn to **yield**, to give in to the Lord and to the Lord’s representatives (parents, teachers and serving ones). Instead of negotiating, talking back, arguing, or pretending that we did not hear our parents when they ask us to do something, we should honor and obey our parents without delay.
- We should **not be selfish and proud**. Pharaoh thought he was getting his way but eventually the whole land of Egypt was destroyed because of his pride and stubbornness. If we insist on and get our own way, in the long run it may not turn out well for us and for those around us.
  - When deciding on what game to play with our siblings or friends, rather than insisting that our choice is the only/best choice and arguing so much that everyone gets into trouble, we should learn to **accommodate** others and be considerate of their needs. Perhaps we can let them choose this time and we can choose the next time.
  - When we are asked to apologize for something, rather than refusing to acknowledge that we did anything wrong because we are proud and want to save face, we should be **humble** and apologize right away.
- If you feel in your conscience that the Lord is not happy about what you are doing, you should listen rather than make excuses. For example, maybe you told a lie or are doing something at a friend's house that you are not allowed to do at home, we should feel sorry and stop what we are doing.
- We should have a **soft heart**. Although Jehovah sent so many plagues, Pharaoh’s heart was still hardened. When we hear the Lord’s voice, or our parents’ voices, we should not stubbornly resist and try to see how much we can get away with. We should have a soft heart, willing to listen and obey. “Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb. 4:7b).
- No matter how difficult our situation may be, rather than complain or have pity on ourselves, we should trust that God knows what is best for us and **be thankful** for all that He has provided for us.

Adapted from *Bringing Children from Adam to Christ in God’s Economy*—Vol. 4, *The Travels of the Chosen Children of Israel*, Lesson 2, and from the Church in New York City’s Children’s meeting lessons: 5/8/88; 5/15/88; 10/08/95; 10/12/03; 4/9/06; 10/25/09