

TASK OF MOSES

Lesson Aim: Be faithful to complete the task that the LORD gives to you.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson and insert the following questions where they fit the lesson for class discussion.

Introduction: The LORD gave Moses the task of bringing ten plagues on Pharaoh and Egypt to show His power and to make him willing to let the Israelites go out of Egypt to worship Him. Eight plagues will be discussed in this lesson. Moses' task was negative (repent or be punished), but he was faithful to his task. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor 4:2).

What effect did miracles have on Moses' ministry for the LORD? Ex 10:2; cf 3:13-14

Miracles gave credibility to Moses as he ministered before Pharaoh. Pharaoh reluctantly had to admit that the LORD was more powerful than his gods. At first his magicians could replicate Moses' miracles, but with less power. When Moses had Aaron throw down his rod, it became a snake; the magicians threw down their rods and they became snakes, but Aaron's rod ate the magicians' snakes. When Moses had Aaron turn the Nile River and other streams into blood so that the fish in the river died, the magicians also turned some water into blood, so Moses' ministry for the LORD was not yet made credible to Pharaoh. The magicians also replicated the frogs in the next plague, but they could not remove the frogs. Pharaoh was forced to ask Moses to remove this plague. The magicians were unable to replicate any more of the plagues. Pharaoh was beginning to see that Moses' ministry for the LORD was more powerful than the ministry of his magicians for him. However, it would take all ten miraculous plagues to break his will and yield to Moses' demand to let the Israelites leave Egypt. These miracles proved to Pharaoh that the God of Moses was more powerful than all of his gods. But that was not the only purpose of these plagues. The ultimate purpose of these miracles was to show the Israelites that He was able to keep His covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by bringing His people back to Canaan to give them this land as their inheritance. He was "the LORD" would continue to provide Moses with miracles to prove He had chosen him to be their leader (10:2). Moses was given ten miracles to bring the Israelites to Canaan. We have been given the miracle of reconciling sinners to God to bring them to Heaven. A reconciled sinner becomes a new person; he hates sin and loves to do right (2 Cor 5:17-21). This miracle will validate our testimony for Christ.

What progress can be seen in the revelation of the ten plagues?

As the series of plagues unfolds, it is interesting to note the progress of revelation in these miracles: (1) there is an increase in severity as well as intensity with the final three (hail, locusts, and darkness) depriving men of elements necessary to live; (2) the Egyptian magicians are able to duplicate the first two (blood and frogs), but bow out at the next with an acknowledgement of God's presence; (3) Pharaoh offered compromises with growing urgency (compare 8:8; 8:25, 28; 9:27-28; 10:16, 17, 24). The nine plagues build with intensity and finally culminate in the tenth one, the slaying of the firstborn in Egypt (12:29). God also deals with us in our sin with increased intensity. He first reminds us of our sin so we will confess it and then He will forgive it (1 Jn 1:9). If we try to hide our sin from Him, He will remove His blessings from us and we will not prosper in our spiritual life (Prov 28:13). If that does not get our attention, then He will discipline us, usually in some physical manner (Heb 12:6-12). He does this because He loves us and wants us to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29).

Why did the LORD harden Pharaoh's heart? Ex 10:1; 8:15, 32; 9:34; cf 4:21; Rom 9:14-24

Pharaoh had unjustly made the Israelites his slaves and now the LORD demanded that he let them go. The LORD foreknew that Pharaoh would harden his heart against His rightful demand, so He told Moses that He would harden Pharaoh's heart (Ex 4:21), which He did after Pharaoh hardened his heart three times. We must acknowledge the foreknowledge of the LORD to properly interpret the Scriptures. It explains why He raised up Pharaoh and hardened his heart. He knew Pharaoh's decisions when He made the heavens and earth and predestined it to happen (cf Rom 8:29-30). His foreknowledge of Pharaoh made it possible for God to show His judgment on him and His mercy to Israel (Rom 9:14-24). When we understand the foreknowledge of God correctly, it will help us to understand His sovereignty. He made a sovereign decree to let us make a decision to believe His word or disbelieve it. If we believe His promises, we receive His mercy; if we disbelieve them, we will fit ourselves for destruction, be hardened in our hearts and suffer His wrath. God would like to show His mercy to all (Rom 11:32), but He will only do it to those who repent of their sins and receive His gift of salvation through Jesus Christ (Rom 6:23).