

OBSTACLES OF MOSES

Lesson Aim: The LORD'S way usually is not the easiest way to live, but in the end it is the best way.

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: Moses asked Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of Egypt to worship the LORD. Pharaoh refused to let them go, but made their work harder. This caused the Israelites to turn against Moses. These two obstacles would be impossible for Moses to overcome without help from the LORD. It is not easy to live for Christ, but "If we suffer (with Him), we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim 2:12).

What huge obstacles overwhelmed Moses? 5:1-21

There were two obstacles that Moses faced, which could not be removed by human power. Moses met his first obstacle as the Israelite representative before Pharaoh. He asked him to let the Israelites go into the wilderness to worship the Lord, but he vehemently refused Moses' request. Instead of releasing them from their labors to worship the Lord, Pharaoh increased their work assignment so that it was impossible to fulfill. This turn in events caused the elders of Israel to despise Moses as their leader. Their rejection of him was the second obstacle that confronted Moses. He felt that he failed in his mission with Pharaoh and then with his people. How could the LORD use him to lead His people out of Egypt? He could not see any way to remove these obstacles as long as Pharaoh refused to allow the Israelites to worship the LORD in the wilderness and that seemed impossible. Yet the LORD had the plan and the power to overcome Pharaoh and remove both obstacles. We may feel defeated by the world system of evil, but by faith in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ, we can overcome the world and live a life that pleases God (1 John 5:4-5).

Why did Moses have trouble understanding the LORD? 5:22-6:13

Moses tried to do exactly as he was told by the LORD, but it seemed to him that His plan had failed. This caused Moses to ask God, "Why?" (5:22). Why did the LORD allow His people to suffer so much and why did He even send him to Pharaoh if He was not going to use him to deliver His people? Moses needed to learn what we also need to learn: the LORD's thoughts and ways are not our thoughts and ways, but as the heaven is higher than the earth, so are the LORD's thoughts and ways higher than our thoughts and ways (Isa 55:8-9). So, what was the LORD's plan?

The LORD was patient with Moses and explained to him that His plan was still intact; He would deliver Israel from bondage in Egypt. However, The LORD's plan would do more than deliver Israel from Egypt. It would show the nations His justice in destroying Egypt because Pharaoh was stubborn. It also would reveal His power over all the false gods of Egypt. But, finally, it would display His power over Egypt, the world's most powerful nation at that time, so all the nations that were watching would fear the LORD when the Israelites would come to possess their inheritance in Canaan. Yes, He would keep His promises to Israel (6:1-8). Notice how He kept repeating, "I am the LORD" (6:2, 6, 7, 8). This was done to give assurance, first to Moses and through him to Israel. However, the Israelites refused to listen to the LORD's promise to them. This so discouraged Moses that he lost all confidence in God's plan. He felt that he could not effectively talk to Pharaoh since his own people would not listen to him (6:10-12; 28-30).

No doubt there will be times when you will feel that the LORD has deserted you. You will think that the Lord has promised you certain things that He cannot or will not keep. You may get so discouraged that you will cease to serve Him. Remember, His ways are higher than your ways. When your work is completed, you will see that God's plan was best after all.

Why did the first miracles of Moses and Aaron not impress Pharaoh? 7:1-25

The Lord told Moses exactly what he and Aaron should say and do when they met with Pharaoh during their second visit, but He also forewarned them that Pharaoh would not listen to them. He explained that He would have to bring heavy judgments upon Egypt before Pharaoh and Egypt would realize that He was truly God. These facts helped Moses when he and Aaron returned to Pharaoh, but

Pharaoh was not impressed with their first two miracles. Why? Because his magicians could perform the same miracles. When Moses told Aaron to cast down his rod and it became a serpent, Pharaoh's magicians did the same thing. However, God's miracle was superior in that Aaron's serpent ate up the serpents of the magicians. The snake was a god of the Egyptians. Nevertheless, the incident caused Pharaoh's heart to be hardened so that he refused to let Israel go and worship the LORD.

When Moses found Pharaoh at the Nile, an important god of the Egyptians, he asked him for the third time to release God's people. To show Pharaoh the LORD's power, he said he was going to change the Nile into a river of blood so that all of the fish in it would die and the water would be unfit for drinking. When the miracle was done, Pharaoh's magicians also changed water into blood by their enchantments. These magicians, Jannes and Jambres (2 Tim 3:8), were used by Satan to hinder Moses from accomplishing his task for God. Once again Pharaoh hardened his heart and he refused to let God's people go. You, too, may follow God's directions exactly, but it is no guarantee that it will keep Satan from trying to obstruct you in your God-given task. Do not be discouraged, because the LORD is far more powerful than Satan (1 Pet 5:8-10).