**BCM Bible Study: Sept. 30/October 1, 2020**

**Exodus 7:8-10:29: The Plagues**

Cycle 1: **Read Exodus 7:8-8:19**

* What are your observations for this section?
* Is it surprising to you that the magicians can reproduce some of the plagues? What does this tell you about the nature of the battle between God and Pharaoh?
* The Nile was personified and worshipped as an Egyptian god. Why was this a fitting place for God to perform the first two plagues?
	+ **Read Ephesians 6:12.** Do you think often about supernatural powers at work in our world? How might these dark powers express themselves?
	+ “Counterfeit power, although real power, is not lasting power.” (Peter Enns) What “counterfeit powers” are discouraging to you? How does the story of the plagues give us hope in the face of these powers?
* The third plague (and all of the rest) couldn’t be reproduced by the magicians. What is different about the third plague?
	+ “Their magic and secret arts are empowered by the Nile, but with the third plague, the magicians are out of their element.” (Peter Enns) What is God communicating about himself by performing this plague outside of the Egyptians’ realm of spiritual power?
* In all of the plagues, we should notice a significant theme – creation reversal. Where do you see this happening in the first three plagues?

Cycle 2: **Read Exodus 8:20-9:12**

* What are your observations for this section?
* In all of these plagues (and all the remaining except the locusts), a distinction is made between Israelites (who lived in Goshen) and Egyptians. Why is this significant?
* Every plague so far has mentioned Pharaoh’s hard heart, but the statement in plague 6 is different – how is it different? For now, simply note this. We will return to this theme.
* What are the creation reversals in this section? How to the plagues seem to be increasing in intensity? (plague 5 includes death, plague 6 directly impacts people)

Cycle 3: **Read Exodus 9:13-10:29**

* What are your observations for this section?
* The theme we noted in the sixth plague comes into full focus in these sections. Where do you see the tension between God hardening Pharaoh’s heart and Pharaoh hardening his own heart?
	+ Look again at 9:15-17 and 10:1-3. How do you see the tension at play in these verses? Why does God say he is doing these things through Pharaoh?
	+ In what way do these events serve as a reminder for us as they did for Israel?
* What are the creation reversals in this section?
	+ In what way does plague 9 bring us back to the very beginning of creation?

God of Creation

* One of our major themes for Exodus is that God is revealing his name to Israel and the world. That is, he is showing everyone who he is and what he is like. What message do you think God is trying to convey through the events in this section?
* Why is creation a fitting means for God to convey this message?
* Creation reversals accompanied the cross. **Read Matthew 27:45-54**. What connections to do see to Exodus?
	+ **Read Romans 8:11** and **2 Cor. 5:17.** How do these passages connect salvation and creation? How does the resurrection connect to this theme?
	+ The God who controls the elements is the God who can change our hearts. He is the creator and Lord of all. How does reading God’s actions during the plagues give you hope in places where you feel stuck?

Challenge

It is tempting to pick apart the plague passage to find points of application. But at the end of the day, the best response may simply be awe and wonder at God’s might and how he uses it for our benefit. Take some time to praise God this week. Here are some suggestions:

1. Write your testimony with a focus on how God has intervened in your life, rescued you, and given you good things. Share this with someone.
2. Praise God for the wonders of creation. It is helpful to do this outside and I suggest writing this down or praying out loud to help your focus.
3. Praise God for the blessings in your life. Make a list. If people are on the list, reach out to them to express your gratitude for their influence on your life.