

Journey to the Promised Land K-6th Grade: Teaching for Day 1

Lesson 1 (K-6th grade): The Curse of Sin and the Promise Given to Abraham

Memory Verse:

Hebrews 11:8 (NIV)

By Faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

Introduction

Welcome to Journey to the Promised Land.

Today, we will look at how everything began when God created the world.

Things started out great, but because of Adam and Eve's sin against God, sin came into the world.

But God already knew that would happen and He already had a Rescue Plan prepared.

We'll see how God started that Rescue Plan when he chose one man – Abraham.

But God ultimately completed that Rescue Plan by sending His own Son – Jesus – to break the curse of sin.

Creation

Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1 and 2 tell us that God created everything in the beginning.

God spoke everything into existence.

And out of all the wonderful things God created, His ultimate and most valuable creation was us - people.

Genesis 1:26 (NIV)

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

We are created in the image of God.

That doesn't mean we look like God, but we have some of God's characteristics:

- God is Relational – He wants to have a relationship with us – And we are relational.
- God is Personal – He is a personal being with personality – And we are personal beings too with a mind and soul.
- God is Creative – When we look around us, we can see how intricate and detailed His creation is – And we are creative as well: artists, engineers, musicians, writers, etc.

Sin

When God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden, they were free to eat anything they wanted, except from one tree:

Genesis 2:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

Genesis 3 says Satan approached the woman and tempted her to distrust God's command and motive.

Genesis 3:4-5 (NIV)

⁴ “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Satan wanted her to believe God was being selfish and was trying to hold back something good from her.

Genesis 3:6-7 (NIV)

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Broken Relationship

Immediately after disobeying God's command, Adam and Eve's "eyes were opened" meaning they saw themselves for what they were – sinners who had disobeyed God's command.

Genesis 3:8 (NIV)

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Sin always causes shame and fear of being caught. Adam and Eve tried to hide from God, they tried to blame others for their sin, and they tried to make excuses for their sin.

Curse and Death

God knew what Adam and Eve had done, so He told them what would happen because they had disobeyed.

Genesis 3:16-19 (NIV)

¹⁶ To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." ¹⁷ To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Because Adam and Eve sinned, and because they represented all of mankind who would be born from them, every human being ever born has a sin nature and automatically disobeys God.

Romans 3:23 (NIV)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Separation

Because we all sin and disobey God, the punishment we deserve is death – separation from God forever.

Romans 6:23a (NIV)

²³ For the wages of sin is death,

Adam and Eve were separated from God too.

Genesis 3:23-24 (NIV)

²³ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

God's Rescue Plan – Why We Need a Deliverer

But even though God punished Adam and Eve and sent them out of the Garden of Eden, He promised them that one day He would make things right again.

He told Satan:

Genesis 3:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

God would ultimately destroy what Satan had done and would restore things to the perfect state God had intended.

Sin Gets Worse - Cain and Abel

But the Book of Genesis shows how sin continued to grow and get worse.

The next big sin that is revealed in Genesis 4 is when Adam and Eve's oldest son Cain killed his younger brother Abel because he was jealous.

Both Cain and Abel brought sacrifices to God, but God accepted only Abel's sacrifice. He did not accept Cain's sacrifice.

This made Cain so angry that he killed his own brother.

Sin Gets Really Bad – Noah and the Flood

Sin continued to get worse and worse, to the point that God decided to destroy all that He had created on the earth.

Genesis 6:5-8 (NIV)

⁵ The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. ⁶ The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. ⁷ So the LORD said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.”

So, God intended to destroy all the wicked people, but He chose one man and his family – Noah – to rescue and to start all over again.

The Call of Abram – The Start of God’s Rescue Plan

Many years later, the human population had grown again, and God chose another man – Abram – to start His Rescue Plan.

Genesis 12:1-3 (NIV)

¹ The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. ² “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Notice the things God promised to Abram:

1. He would have his own Land
2. He would be the father of a great Nation
3. All the world would be Blessed through Abram

But there was a Problem:

1. Abram had no children.
2. He was 75 years old (Genesis 12:4)

But God was serious about this promise.

God repeats the Promise in Genesis 13:14-17 and again in Genesis 15.

Genesis 15:1-6 (NIV)

¹ After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” ² But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my

heir.” ⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” ⁵ He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” ⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

God repeats the Promise again in Genesis 17.

God even changed Abram’s name to Abraham because he would be the Father of many nations.

At the age of 99, God reaffirmed His promise and said Abraham’s wife Sarah who was 90 would have a child.

God’s promise seemed impossible. But what is impossible with man is possible with God (Luke 18:27).

Promise Through Isaac

Abraham couldn’t understand how God’s promise would work. So, he and his wife decided to try and have a son by another woman named Hagar. They did and his name was Ishmael. So Abraham asked God to bless Ishmael.

Genesis 17:15-21 (NIV)

¹⁵ God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.” ¹⁷ Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!” ¹⁹ Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. ²⁰ And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. ²¹ But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.”

So God did promise to bless Ishmael, but the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham would come through another son to be born through Sarah.

Birth of Isaac

Genesis 21:1-3 (NIV)

¹ Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. ³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him.

After many years of waiting, Abraham and Sarah finally had this promised son. God's promise was fulfilled.

God Tests Abraham

After a few years, God tested Abraham to see how much he trusted God.

Genesis 22:1-2 (NIV)

¹ Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ² Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

Can you imagine how confused Abraham must have been?

First, in his mind, killing his son would be a sin.

Second, Isaac was the son God said all His promises would come through. If Abraham killed Isaac, how would God's promises come true?

Genesis 22:9-12 (NIV)

⁹ When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ¹² "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

Abraham passed the test! Even though he didn't understand everything, he trusted that God was even able to raise his son from the dead if needed. Abraham had learned to trust God no matter what and to obey what God told him to do.

The Blessing for the World (JESUS)

Remember part of God's promise to Abraham was that all the earth would be blessed through one of his descendants.

Genesis 22:17-18 (NIV)

¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.

The Bible shows us who Abraham's descendants were, and guess who ultimately came through the line of Abraham – JESUS!

God's own Son Jesus was born as a descendant of Abraham.

The Bible teaches that there is only one God, but He exists in three separate yet equal Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is the earthly name given to the Second Person of the Trinity – God's Son.

Jesus, although He was God, became an actual human being and came to this earth to live among us, to show us what God is really like, and ultimately to take the punishment we deserve for our sins by dying on the cross for us.

But because Jesus was God, when He died, He did not remain dead.

Three days later He arose from the grave.

Jesus broke the curse that was given to Adam in the garden.

The Bible says, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Abraham was saved through his faith (belief in God).

Genesis 15:6 (NIV)

⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

We are also saved by God's grace through faith, not by anything we can do to earn it.

Titus 3:4-7 (NIV)

⁴ But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God —⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

Anyone who believes in Jesus will be saved from eternal punishment.

Through Jesus we have access to the “Promised Land” of heaven.

As we saw before, we are all sinners and have disobeyed God.

But God forgives us of all our sins and make us His very own children when we trust in what Jesus did for us on the cross, when we confess to God that Jesus is our Lord and Savior.

Then, God’s Holy Spirit comes to live within us and He gives us the strength to live for God and to do what is right.

We don’t become perfect immediately, but God helps us day by day to live in a way that pleases Him.

And He promises that one day we will live with Him forever in His Promised Land!

Close in prayer.

Journey to the Promised Land K-6th Grade: Teaching for Day 2

Lesson 2: Moses and the Exodus

Memory Verse

Hebrews 11:24-25 (NIV)

By Faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.

This lesson will examine the 10 plagues in Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea. We will examine the Passover and its relation to Jesus Christ as our Passover lamb.

Visuals: For this lesson it may be helpful to provide pictures or visuals of the following: Pharaoh, Baby Moses, Adult Moses, a river, frogs, gnats, flies, livestock, boils, hailstorm, a swarm of locusts, darkness, death such as a picture of a coffin, a lamb, a large rock or bolder to illustrate Pharaoh's hard heart, and a cross to represent Jesus' sacrifice.

It's great to see everyone again today.

Today we are going to learn how God rescued the Israelites from evil Pharaoh in Egypt (*show picture of Pharaoh*).

The nation of Israel was in trouble. They were slaves in Egypt and were treated very badly by Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt. So, God raised up a man named Moses. Through Moses, God would save the nation of Israel from their slavery and bring them to the Promised land (*show a picture of Moses*).

Moses was also an Israelite. When Moses was a baby (*show a picture of baby Moses*), God saved him from Pharaoh who was trying to kill all the Israelite boys. Moses was then raised by Pharaoh's daughter. But as a younger man, Moses defended an Israelite slave and killed an Egyptian. Evil Pharaoh found out and Moses had to flee Egypt.

Years passed. When Moses was an old man, God appeared to him through a burning bush and told him to go back to Egypt. He was told to confront Pharaoh and lead God's people out of Egypt.

Let's pick up this story in Exodus Chapter 5:

Exodus 5:1-2 (NIV)

¹ Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.’”

² Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go.”

So, there was a big problem. God commanded Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. But Pharaoh told God, No. Pharaoh admitted he didn't know the Lord. He would not obey the God of the Hebrews.

Moses and Aaron asked Pharaoh again.

Exodus 5:4-5 (NIV)

⁴ But the king of Egypt said, “Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their labor? Get back to your work!” ⁵ Then Pharaoh said, “Look, the people of the land are now numerous, and you are stopping them from working.”

After speaking with Moses, Pharaoh made the Israelite slaves work even harder. Instead of letting the people go, he gave them extra work. Pharaoh (*show a picture of Pharaoh*) would not listen to God.

We will learn that Pharaoh had a hard heart towards God. We can illustrate Pharaoh's hard heart with this rock (*show a picture of a large rock*). Rocks are hard. They are difficult to penetrate. Pharaoh's heart was hard like this rock. He would not listen to God or let God's words enter His heart.

So, in response to Pharaoh's hard heart, God sent plagues and disasters upon Egypt in order to free His people. Through these plagues the whole world would hear about the power of God and the deliverance of God's people from Egypt.

Today we are going to examine each of these plagues. We are going to see who is more powerful: God, the creator of the universe, or Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

Let's examine Exodus chapter 7, which tells us about the first plague.

(First Plague)

Exodus 7:14-18 (NIV)

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh's heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he goes out to the river... ¹⁶ Then say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you: Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness. But until now you have not listened. ¹⁷ This is what the LORD says: By this you will know that I am the LORD: With the staff that is in my hand I will

strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into blood. ¹⁸The fish in the Nile will die, and the river will stink; the Egyptians will not be able to drink its water.”

So, God did an amazing thing in Egypt. He turned the entire Nile river into blood. The fish died and the river stank, just as God said it would. Blood was everywhere. The Nile, being over 4,000 miles long, is the longest river in the world. Imagine the entire river turning into blood (*show a picture of a river*).

What was Pharaoh’s response? His heart became harder. He would not listen to God (*show a picture of large rock*).

Let’s read about the second plague in Exodus chapter 8.

(Second Plague)

Exodus 8:1-4 (NIV)

¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. ² If you refuse to let them go, I will send a plague of frogs on your whole country. ³ The Nile will teem with frogs. They will come up into your palace and your bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses of your officials and on your people, and into your ovens and kneading troughs. ⁴ The frogs will come up on you and your people and all your officials.”

So, God told Pharaoh, if he didn’t obey, frogs would be sent throughout Egypt, into their houses and into their beds. Frogs would be in their kitchens and where they make their food (*show a picture of frogs*). Imagine having frogs in your breakfast. Yuck!

Do you think Pharaoh obeyed this time? (*Answer, No*). (*Show a picture of a large rock*)

Pharaoh hardened his heart again and frogs invaded the land.

(Third Plague)

Exodus 8:16, 18b-19 (NIV)

¹⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the ground,’ and throughout the land of Egypt the dust will become gnats.” ^{18b} Since the gnats were on people and animals everywhere, ¹⁹ the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.”

So, God sent trillions of gnats, swarms of tiny flying bugs, into Egypt (*show picture of gnats*).

Even Pharaoh’s magicians admitted that God caused this. But Pharaoh did not listen (*show a picture of a large rock*).

(Fourth Plague)

Exodus 8:20-21 (NIV)

²⁰ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning and confront Pharaoh as he goes to the river and say to him, ‘This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. ²¹ If you do not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies on you and your officials, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies; even the ground will be covered with them.

Exodus 8:32 (NIV)

³² But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go (*show a picture of flies*).

(Fifth Plague)

Exodus 9:1-4 (NIV)

¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: “Let my people go, so that they may worship me.” ² If you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them back, ³ the hand of the LORD will bring a terrible plague on your livestock in the field—on your horses, donkeys and camels and on your cattle, sheep and goats. ⁴ But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will die.”

So, God killed the livestock of Egypt. Egypt’s supply of meat and milk for food was destroyed (*show a picture of livestock*). Even after this the Bible says Pharaoh’s heart was unyielding. He was stubborn. He would not let the people go (*show a picture of a large rock*).

But we also see that God protected His people. None of the Israelites lost livestock. God is a good God who protects His people.

(Sixth Plague)

Exodus 9:8-9 (NIV)

⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and have Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. ⁹ It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils will break out on people and animals throughout the land.”

So, God then caused painful infections called boils to break out on the people (*show a picture of boils*). The Egyptians were infected so badly that the magicians couldn’t even stand before Moses.

Exodus 9:12 (NIV)

¹² But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said to Moses.

Prior to this, Pharaoh had hardened his own heart. Now we see the Lord hardening Pharaoh's heart. Let's hope none of us here are ever that stubborn and disobedient, that the Lord hardens our hearts (*show a picture of a large rock*).

(Seventh Plague)

Next, God sent a hailstorm on Egypt. It was the worst hailstorm that had ever fallen on Egypt. Large hail destroyed food crops and killed animals and people (*show a picture of hail*).

Do you think Pharaoh listened?

Exodus 9:34-35 (NIV)

³⁴When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. ³⁵So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

Pharaoh would not listen to God. He had a hard heart. He sinned against God (*show a picture of a large rock*). All of Pharaoh's officials also hardened their hearts.

(Eighth Plague)

Next, God sent a swarm of locust. The locust ate all the plants in Egypt.

Exodus 10:15 (NIV)

¹⁵"They covered all the ground until it was black. They devoured all that was left after the hail—everything growing in the fields and the fruit on the trees. Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt."

(Show a picture of locusts)

Again, Pharaoh would not listen (*S]show a picture of Pharaoh and then of a large rock*).

(Ninth Plague)

Exodus 10:21-23 (NIV)

²¹"Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness spreads over Egypt—darkness that can be felt." ²²So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. ²³No one could see anyone else or move about for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived."

Imagine complete darkness for three days. For three days the Egyptians couldn't see anything. But God's people had light. Today we know that God's people have the light of life. Jesus said, **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."** (John 8:12 NIV)

(Tenth Plague)

Exodus 11:1 (NIV)

¹ Now the LORD had said to Moses, “I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here, and when he does, he will drive you out completely.”

So, God told each Israelite family to kill a spotless lamb. They were to take some the lamb’s blood and put it on the sides and tops of their door frames. They were instructed to cook and eat the lamb. They were told if they obeyed, the Lord would protect their family from death. But if they did not obey, God would kill the firstborn in their household.

These are the worst consequences yet. Those who obeyed and trusted God would live. Those who disobeyed and did not believe God would face death either for themselves or for their families.

We know from the story, God’s people obeyed. But Pharaoh (*show a picture of Pharaoh*) and the Egyptians did not.

So, let’s read what happens:

Exodus 12:29-30 (NIV)

²⁹ At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. ³⁰ Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.

(Show a picture of death such as a black coffin)

This picture represents what happened to the Egyptians. Someone had died in every house of Egypt. Hundreds of thousands of Egyptians were now dead. Sin and rejection of God always leads to death (*show a picture of a coffin again*). The Bible teaches us **“For the wages of sin is death...”** (Romans 6:23a NIV)

However, none of the Israelites died (*show a picture of a lamb*). The lamb was killed instead of them. The blood of the lamb covered and protected them from certain death.

So, after all this, Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go and the Israelites left Egypt. But it wasn’t long before Pharaoh changed his mind again. When Moses and the Israelites were toward the Red Sea, Pharaoh and all his army pursued them. He was planning to force them to go back to Egypt. However, God had a different plan. As Pharaoh approached, God told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea. Moses did so and the Red Sea split in two and became dry land. The Israelites passed through the Red Sea (*show a picture of the divided Red Sea*).

We read what happened to Pharaoh in Exodus 14.

Exodus 14:23, 26-28 (NIV)

²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." ²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the LORD swept them into the sea. ²⁸ The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

That night Pharaoh and the entire Egyptian Army were destroyed. All this happened because of Pharaoh's hard heart and his unwillingness to listen to God (*show a picture of a large rock*). As we see with Pharaoh, sinful rejection of God always leads to death (*show a picture of a coffin*).

Israel was now freed from Pharaoh, and free to travel to the Promised Land.

This story should cause us to examine our own hearts. Are we more like Pharaoh, who had a hard heart towards God (*show a picture of a large rock*)? Or do we listen to and obey God? Do we know God, like Moses knew God? Or do we reject God and do things our own way?

So, I ask each of you a question. Who are you more like? How is your heart toward God today? The Bible teaches us that all of us are born sinners.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23 NIV). We are all born with a hard heart towards God (*show a picture of a large rock*). When we are born, we are all like evil Pharaoh.

Because we have hard hearts, we all deserve eternal death in a place called hell. Hell is worse than any of the plagues of Egypt.

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23a NIV) (*Show a picture of a coffin*)

However, God did not leave us without hope. God made a way for us to be made right with Him. In our story today, the sacrifice of the lamb (*show a picture of a lamb*) saved the Israelites from death. Well, we also have a Lamb that died for us and saves us from eternal death.

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8 NIV)

In the New testament, when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him, he said, **"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."** (John 1:29 ESV)

Jesus is like the lamb for us. Just as the lamb's blood saved the Israelites from the plague of death in Egypt, the blood of Jesus covers our sin and saves us from the punishment of hell. Forgiveness comes when we believe in Jesus. When we do that, God forgives all of our sins and save us from eternal death.

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...” (Acts 16:31 NIV)

Three days after Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He was raised from the dead. He is alive, ruling and reigning in heaven today. Once we place our trust in Jesus, God does an amazing thing He takes away our hard heart and gives us a new heart that desires to please him. He gives us new life. We can then know God personally.

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 36:26 NIV)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV)

So, if you have never trusted in God to save you from the penalty of your sins, trust in God today. **“Believe in the name of the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.”** (Acts 16:31 NIV)

Close in prayer.