

Week #:	35	Text:	Exodus 7:6 – 10:29	Title:	Egypt: Miraculous Signs (Plagues #1-9)
Songs:	Open Up the Heavens – Meredith Andrews (3:53)				
	That's Why We Praise Him – Lisa Bevill (4:23)				
	You Are Holy (Prince of Peace) (4:18)				
Videos:	Jesus – Eddie James				

Out of Egypt: Miraculous Signs – Plagues #1-9

One of the Bible's most dramatic scenes plays out in a showdown between God and an Egyptian Pharaoh, resulting in 10 nightmarish plagues, or, as is so often referred even in the non-believing world – plagues of Biblical proportions.

The Hebrew nation that God formed to worship and represent Him was enslaved in Egypt, and he was demanding their release through his servant, Moses. As Pharaoh continues to resist Moses, God inflicts upon Egypt a series of plagues. As the standoff drags on, the plagues become more severe, eventually escalating to the death of all of Egypt's firstborn sons.

Why did God choose the plagues he did? The conflict between God and the human rebellion is in full view in the Exodus story. Moses spoke God's Word, and Pharaoh resisted and defied the will of Yahweh. The Creator responded with cosmological terrors, one after another, until He accomplished His purposes.

The Egyptians created supermen – a mix of half human and half sacred animal to be their gods. They took everyday things and elevated them to the rank of deity. Each major aspect of Egyptian life was tied to a specific god. So when Adonai delivered each of the plagues, it demonstrated His superiority over their gods. One by one, God unveils their false authority to ultimately show His superiority as the True God that reigns over all the earth.

Plague 1 – Nile River turned to Blood – God vs Hapi

Exodus 7:14-24 says:

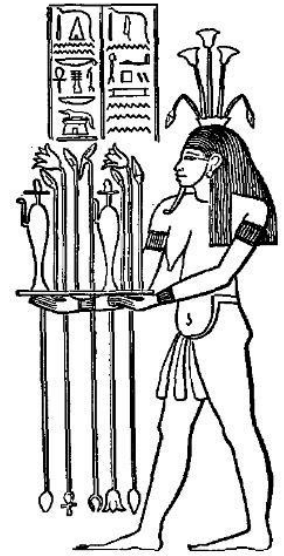
¹⁴ *ADONAI* said to Moshe [Moses], "Pharaoh is stubborn. He refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning when he goes out to the water. Stand on the riverbank to confront him, take in your hand the staff which was turned into a snake, ¹⁶ and say to him, '*ADONAI*, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you to say: "Let my people go, so that they can worship me in the desert." But until now you haven't listened; ¹⁷ so *ADONAI* says, "This will let you know that I am *ADONAI*": I will take the staff in my hand and strike the water in the river, and it will be turned into blood. ¹⁸ The fish in the river will die, the river will stink and the Egyptians won't want to drink water from the river.'"

¹⁹ *ADONAI* said to Moshe [Moses], "Say to Aharon [Aaron], 'Take your staff, reach out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, canals, ponds and all their reservoirs, so that they can turn into blood. There will be blood throughout the whole land of Egypt, even in the wooden buckets and stone jars.'"

²⁰ Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron] did exactly what *ADONAI* had ordered. He raised the staff and, in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, struck the water in the river; and all the water in the river was turned into blood. ²¹ The fish in the river died, and the river stank so badly that the Egyptians couldn't drink its water. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

²² But the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts, so that Pharaoh was made hardhearted and didn't listen to them, as *ADONAI* had said would happen. ²³ Pharaoh just turned and went back to his palace, without taking any of this to heart. ²⁴ All the Egyptians dug around the river for water to drink, because they couldn't drink the river water.

We see God take on Hapi (also called Apis), the god of the Nile River. Egypt existed only because the Nile existed. It is said that there is no other country in the ancient or modern times that has been so dependent on its waterways. Egypt was smack-dab in the middle of the desert. The Nile was literally its life-source. They used it for ship port development, agriculture, irrigation, hunting (wild game all lived around the Nile) and fishing.



The annual flooding of the Nile occasionally was said to be the *Arrival of Hapi*. Since this flooding provided fertile soil in an area that was otherwise desert, Hapi, as its patron, symbolized fertility. He had large female breasts because he was said to bring a rich and nourishing harvest. Due to his fertile nature he was sometimes considered the "**father of the gods**", and was *considered to be a caring father who helped to maintain the balance of the cosmos, the world or universe regarded as an orderly, harmonious system*. The flood deposited rich silt (fertile soil) on the river's banks, allowing the Egyptians to grow crops. He was thought to live within a cavern at the supposed source of the Nile near Aswan. The cult of Hapi priests were involved in rituals to ensure the steady levels of flow required from the annual flood. Hapi was not regarded as the god of the Nile itself, but of the annual flooding of the Nile.

Pharaoh had declared a war against God – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It says in Exodus 5:2

But Pharaoh replied, “Who is Adonai, that I should obey when he says to let Isra’el go? I don’t know Adonai, and I also won’t let Isra’el go.”

First Pharaoh challenged God the Father’s existence:

Who is Adonai?

Second Pharaoh challenged whether God concerns Himself with the world – or God the Son:

Why should I obey?

Third Pharaoh challenged God’s ability to stop him – or God the Holy Spirit:

Why should I let Israel go?

God showed up in a mighty way proving His existence in this first set of three plagues, beginning with taking on the *father of the gods*. He was proving that **HE ALONE** was a caring father and **HE ALONE** held the cosmos in His hands and kept everything in order. Colossians 1:15-17 says:

He [Jesus] is the visible image of the invisible God. He is supreme over all creation, because in connection with Him were created all things — in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, lordships, rulers or authorities — they have all been created through him and for him. He existed before all things, and he holds everything together.

God wanted Pharaoh to know that He was the one in charge.

Plague 2 – Frogs – God vs Heket/Heqet

Exodus 7:25-8:11

²⁵ Seven days after *ADONAI* had struck the river, ²⁶ *ADONAI* said to Moshe [Moses], “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Here is what *ADONAI* says: “Let my people go, so that they can worship me. ²⁷ If you refuse to let

them go, I will strike all your territory with frogs.²⁸ The river will swarm with frogs. They will go up, enter your palace and go into your bedroom, onto your bed. They will enter the houses of your servants and your people and go into your ovens and kneading bowls.²⁹ The frogs will climb all over you, your people and your servants.””””

^{8:1}ADONAI said to Moshe [Moses], “Say to Aharon [Aaron], ‘Reach out your hand with your staff over the rivers, canals and ponds; and cause frogs to come up onto the land of Egypt.’”² Aharon [Aaron] put out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.³ But the magicians did the same with their secret arts and brought up frogs onto the land of Egypt.

⁴ Then Pharaoh summoned Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron] and said, “Intercede with ADONAI to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let the people go and sacrifice to ADONAI.”⁵ Moshe [Moses] said to Pharaoh, “Not only that, but you can have the honor of naming the time when I will pray for you, your servants and your people to be rid of the frogs, both yourselves and your homes, and that they stay only in the river.”⁶ He answered, “Tomorrow.” Moshe [Moses] said, “It will be as you have said, and from this you will learn that ADONAI our God has no equal.⁷ The frogs will leave you and your homes, also your servants and your people; they will stay in the river only.”⁸ Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron] left Pharaoh’s presence, and Moshe [Moses] cried to ADONAI about the frogs he had brought on Pharaoh.⁹ ADONAI did as Moshe [Moses] had asked — the frogs died in the houses, courtyards and fields;¹⁰ they gathered them in heaps till the land stank.¹¹ But when Pharaoh saw that he had been given some relief, he made himself hardhearted and would not listen to them, just as ADONAI had said would happen.

We see God take on Heket/Heqet, the frog headed goddess of fertility, water and renewal. She is often depicted as a body with a frog head and sitting on a lotus. In December, the Nile River receded from its flooding stage leaving behind lots of ponds and marshes. The sound of frogs would fill the air as they claimed the waters again. To the farmer, this sound indicated that Hapi, who controlled the Nile, was active and made the land fertile with soil deposits, fertilizing the land and guaranteeing harvest was coming. Frogs represented fruitfulness and blessing.



But when God brought in these frogs from the Nile He quickly turned what was pleasant and desirable into loathsome and overwhelming! Frogs where everywhere - in your house, in your food, in your hair, in your bed! God showed power over Heket/Heqet as the frog was one of the numerous animals that must not be intentionally killed. It was punishable by death! So not only would the plague be seen as the gods being against them, but the people were forced to kill the embodiment of Heket/Heqet because the sheer number that would have been underfoot.

Plague 3 – Dust was turned into Lice/Gnats – God vs Geb

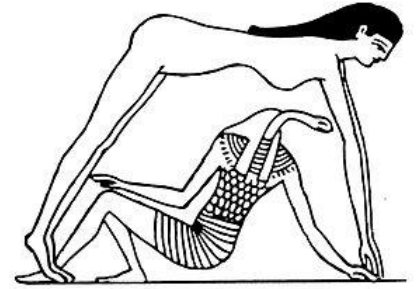
Exodus 8:12-28 says:

¹² ADONAI said to Moshe [Moses], “Say to Aharon [Aaron]: ‘Reach out with your staff and strike the dust on the ground; it will become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.’”¹³ They did it — Aharon [Aaron] reached out his hand with his staff and struck the dust on the ground, and there were lice on people and animals; all the dust on the ground became lice throughout the whole land of Egypt.¹⁴ The magicians tried with their secret arts to produce lice, but they couldn’t. There were lice on people and animals.¹⁵ Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh was made hardhearted, so that he didn’t listen to them, just as ADONAI had said would happen.

This plague was directed towards the false god Geb – known as the *great god of the earth*. The Egyptians gave offerings to Geb for the bounty of soil, yet it was from the soil that this plague originated. Moses struck the dust of

the earth and it became like gnats on man and beast. I envision the staff literally hitting the ground, creating a dust that blew up and that dust became a never ending sheet of gnats. It was said that this species of gnats were so small it was hardly visible to the human eye but had a sting that would cause the most painful irritation of the skin. They'd even creep into the eyes and nose – does not sound pleasant at all.

This plague also struck the heart of Egyptian worship. The Egyptian priests were extremely careful about hygiene and ritual cleansing. The gnats infesting their body made them unable to worship before their gods or enter the temples to pray for deliverance. The plague was also upon every animal thus leaving them defiled and stopping their sacrificial system before the gods.



Finally, the magicians of Pharaoh are humiliated, being unable to compete with this power that was so much greater than themselves and the powers that they had from their Egyptian gods and goddesses, and they profess, "this is the finger of God." This was the last plague that required Aaron's involvement, as the next set of three plagues are issued by the word of Moses himself.

Plague 4 – Swarm of Flies – God vs Shu

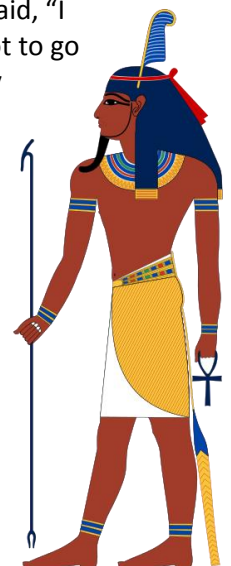
Exodus 8:16-28 says:

¹⁶ *ADONAI* said to Moshe [Moses], "Get up early in the morning, stand before Pharaoh when he goes out to the water and say to him, 'Here is what *ADONAI* says: "Let my people go, so that they can worship me.

¹⁷ Otherwise, if you won't let my people go, I will send swarms of insects on you, your servants and your people, and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of swarms of insects, and likewise the ground they stand on. ¹⁸ But I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people live — no swarms of insects will be there — so that you can realize that I am *ADONAI*, right here in the land. ¹⁹ Yes, I will distinguish between my people and your people, and this sign will happen by tomorrow.'"" ²⁰ *ADONAI* did it: terrible swarms of insects went into Pharaoh's palace and into all his servants' houses — the insects ruined the entire land of Egypt.

²¹ Pharaoh summoned Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron] and said, "Go, and sacrifice to your God here in the land." ²² But Moshe [Moses] replied, "It would be inappropriate for us to do that, because the animal we sacrifice to *ADONAI* our God is an abomination to the Egyptians. Won't the Egyptians stone us to death if before their very eyes we sacrifice what they consider an abomination? ²³ No, we will go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to *ADONAI* our God, as he has ordered us to do." ²⁴ Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, so that you can sacrifice to *ADONAI* your God in the desert. Only you are not to go very far away. Intercede on my behalf." ²⁵ Moshe [Moses] said, "All right, I am going away from you, and I will intercede with *ADONAI*; so that tomorrow, the swarms of insects will leave Pharaoh, his servants and his people. Just make sure that Pharaoh stops playing games with the people by preventing them from going and sacrificing to *ADONAI*."

²⁶ Moshe [Moses] left Pharaoh and interceded with *ADONAI*, ²⁷ and *ADONAI* did what Moshe [Moses] had asked: he removed the swarms of insects from Pharaoh, his servants and his people — not one remained. ²⁸ But this time, too, Pharaoh made himself stubborn and didn't let the people go.



These next three plagues prove God's providence in the earth. Pharaoh had questioned whether God cared about or even concerned Himself with the world. God proved that He does. His love for this world is, of course, represented in God the Son – Jesus.

After the disastrous plague of dust turning to lice/gnats, the Egyptians were ready for some relief. So, when the lice went away, naturally they turned to their god of cooling and calming winds, Shu. Cool, dry air is thought to symbolize truth, order, justice, and balance in their culture. Shu is often depicted wearing an ostrich feather, a symbol of lightness and emptiness. Fog and clouds were Shu's elements and they were often called his bones. Because of his position between the sky and earth, he was also known as the *god of wind*. Pharaoh does not repent though, so God now sends swarms of insects/flies to swarm in like the winds.

Psalms 78:45 says:

He sent swarms of flies, which devoured them,

The swarm of flies that were sent by God were more than likely a swarm of various biting insects that would feast upon the Egyptians bodies, biting and tormenting them. This plague had the same effect on the land as the gnats did; it disrupted the worship of the gods amidst their uncleanness.

Plague 5 – Death of Livestock – God vs Apis/Hapis

Exodus 9:1-7

Then *ADONAI* said to Moshe [Moses], “Go to Pharaoh, and tell him, ‘Here is what *ADONAI*, the God of the Hebrews, says: “Let my people go, so that they can worship me.”² If you refuse to let them go and persist in holding on to them,³ the hand of *ADONAI* is on your livestock in the field — on the horses, donkeys, camels, cattle and flocks — and will make them suffer a devastating illness.⁴ But *ADONAI* will distinguish between Egypt’s and Isra’el’s livestock — nothing belonging to the people of Isra’el will die.”⁵ *ADONAI* determined the exact time by saying, “Tomorrow *ADONAI* will do this in the land.”⁶ The following day, *ADONAI* did it — all the livestock of Egypt died; but not one of the animals belonging to the people of Isra’el died.⁷ Pharaoh investigated and found that not even one of the animals of the people of Isra’el had died. Nevertheless, Pharaoh’s heart remained stubborn, and he didn’t let the people go.

In ancient Egyptian religion, **Apis** or **Hapis**, alternatively spelled **Hapi-ankh**, was a sacred bull worshiped in the Memphis region, identified as the son of Hathor, a primary deity in the pantheon of Ancient Egypt. Initially, he was assigned a significant role in her worship, *being sacrificed and reborn*. Apis is also said to serve as an intermediary between humans and other powerful deities.

Doesn’t this sound very familiar? Jesus was sacrificed and reborn, and He is the intermediary between us and God.

I Timothy 2:5-6 says:

For God is one; and there is but one Mediator between God and humanity, Yeshua the Messiah, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom on behalf of all, thus providing testimony to God’s purpose at just the right time.

Moses again stood before Pharaoh and declares if he did not let his people go all the animals in the field would die – horses, donkeys, camels, sheep, goats, and cows. These animals helped in their everyday lives, they were their food, transportation and even their sacrifices before the gods. There was one animal that stood out for the Egyptians and that was the cow/bull. They saw the cow as sacred and a manifestation of the goddess Hathor. Hathor was a mother goddess in form of a cow who represented love, protection and fertility.



The god Apis was represented as a bull and was an important sacred animal to the ancient Egyptians. As with the other sacred beasts, Apis' importance increased over the centuries. During colonization of the conquered Egypt,

Greek and Roman authors had much to say about Apis, the markings by which the black calf was recognized, the manner of his conception by a ray from heaven, his house at Memphis (with a court for his department), the mode of prognostication from his actions, his death, the mourning at his death, his costly burial, and the rejoicings throughout the country when a new Apis was found.

In this plague God not only took what made their lives easier, He took what they would sacrifice to false gods. Pharaoh was refusing to let the Israelites go to sacrifice to God, so it seems a fitting plague to place on the Egyptians.

Plague 6 – Boils – God vs Heka

Exodus 9:8-12 says:

⁸ *ADONAI* said to Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron], “Take handfuls of ashes from a kiln, and let Moshe [Moses] throw them in the air before Pharaoh’s eyes. ⁹ They will turn into fine dust over all the land of Egypt and become infected sores on men and animals throughout Egypt.” ¹⁰ So they took ashes from a kiln, stood in front of Pharaoh and threw them in the air; and they became infected sores on men and animals. ¹¹ The magicians couldn’t even stand in Moshe [Moses]’s presence because of the sores, which were on them as well as on the other Egyptians. ¹² But *ADONAI* made Pharaoh hardhearted, so that he didn’t listen to them — just as *ADONAI* had said to Moshe [Moses].

The Hebrew word for boil means *to burn*. The ashes from the furnace became a boil that would swell and become pus-filled abscess and extremely painful.

Heka was the deification of magic and medicine in ancient Egypt. The name is the Egyptian word for magic. According to Egyptian literature, Heka existed before duality had yet come into being. The term ḥk3 was also used to refer to the practice of magical rituals.

This was a direct attack against the magicians. In making them unclean they couldn't even stand before Pharaoh or perform rituals.

Plague 7 – Hail – God vs Nut

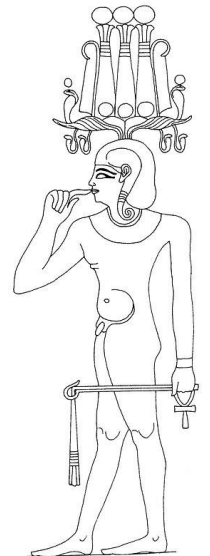
Exodus 9: 13-35 says:

¹³ *ADONAI* said to Moshe [Moses], “Get up early in the morning, stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, ‘Here is what *ADONAI* says: “Let my people go, so that they can worship me. ¹⁴ For this time, I will inflict my plagues on you, yourself, and on your officials and your people; so that you will realize that I am without equal in all the earth. ¹⁵ By now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with such severe plagues that you would have been wiped off the earth. ¹⁶ But it is for this very reason that I have kept you alive — to show you my power, and so that my name may resound throughout the whole earth. ¹⁷ Since you are still setting yourself up against my people and not letting them go, ¹⁸ tomorrow, about this time, I will cause a hailstorm so heavy that Egypt has had nothing like it from the day it was founded until now. ¹⁹ Therefore, send and hurry to bring indoors all your livestock and everything else you have in the field. For hail will fall on every human being and animal left in the field that hasn’t been brought home, and they will die.””

²⁰ Whoever among Pharaoh’s servants feared what *ADONAI* had said had his slaves and livestock escape into the houses; ²¹ but those who had no regard for what *ADONAI* had said left their slaves and livestock in the field.

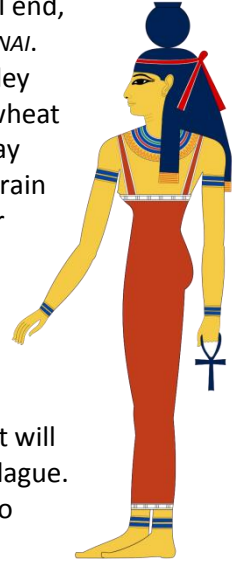
²² *ADONAI* said to Moshe [Moses], “Reach out your hand toward the sky, so that there will be hail in all the land of Egypt, falling on people, animals and everything growing in the field, throughout the land of Egypt.”

²³ Moshe [Moses] reached out with his staff toward the sky, and *ADONAI* sent thunder and hail, and fire ran



down to the earth. *ADONAI* caused it to hail on the land of Egypt — ²⁴ it hailed, and fire flashed up with the hail; it was terrible, worse than any hailstorm in all of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵ Throughout all the land of Egypt, the hail struck everything in the field, people and animals; and the hail struck every plant growing in the field and broke every tree there. ²⁶ But in the land of Goshen, where the people of Isra'el were, there was no hail.

²⁷ Pharaoh summoned Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron] and said to them, “This time I have sinned: *ADONAI* is in the right; I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸ Intercede with *ADONAI* — we can't take any more of this terrible thunder and hail; and I will let you go, you will stay no longer.” ²⁹ Moshe [Moses] said to him, “As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to *ADONAI*; the thunder will end, and there won't be any more hail — so that you can know that the earth belongs to *ADONAI*. ³⁰ But you and your servants, I know you still won't fear *ADONAI*, God.” ³¹ The flax and barley were ruined, because the barley was ripe and the flax in bud. ³² But the wheat and buckwheat were not ruined, because they come up later. ³³ Moshe [Moses] went out of the city, away from Pharaoh, and spread out his hands to *ADONAI*. The thunder and hail ended, and the rain stopped pouring down on the earth. ³⁴ When Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail and thunder had ended, he sinned still more by making himself hardhearted, he and his servants. ³⁵ Pharaoh was made hardhearted, and he didn't let the people of Isra'el go, just as *ADONAI* had said through Moshe [Moses].



This is where we switch to the last of the three sets of plagues. Pharaoh has questioned God's omnipotence. He was challenging God's ability to stop him. This one starts the set of plagues that will prove that God the Holy Spirit was real. So God warns Pharaoh that He's about to send the 7th plague. Hail. And it is going to be one doozy of a storm. But take note of what He says to Moses to say to Pharaoh in 9:14-16:

“Let my people go, so that they can worship me. ¹⁴ For this time, I will inflict my plagues on you, yourself, and on your officials and your people; so that you will realize that I am without equal in all the earth. ¹⁵ By now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with such severe plagues that you would have been wiped off the earth. ¹⁶ But it is for this very reason that I have kept you alive — to show you my power, and so that my name may resound throughout the whole earth.

God brings on a hail storm unlike any other. Thunder and lightning were so intense that fire ran alongside the ground. This crazy storm took on the Egyptian god, Nut, the sky goddess. Upper Egypt very rarely received rain — usually only 2" annually — so this storm was truly like any other they had ever seen or could ever even fathom. Can you imagine the devastation it brought to them, their houses, their land and crops? At that time of year (spring) the flax and barley were nearing time for harvest. Both were staples in their diet and were used for clothing — and more importantly, they were used as an offering to the gods. The hail would have also affected their homes and damaged the many monuments they were obsessed with building in honor of their many gods. Fire and hail together would have been, possibly, the most frightening plague so far. They had to have been coming to the conclusion that the God of the Israelites was the one true God.

In this plague God was especially coming against the goddess Nut, the goddess of the sky and all the heavenly bodies. She was pictured as either a cow or as a star-covered nude woman arching over the earth. Among her duties was to envelop and protect Ra, the sun god.

So in God taking over the sky and sending hail and fire down, God was taking the sun out of the sky — he was proving HE is the one in charge of the heavens, not Nut.

Plague 8 – Locusts – God vs Set

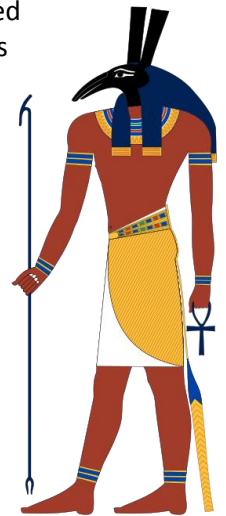
Exodus 10:1-20

ADONAI said to Moshe [Moses], “Go to Pharaoh, for I have made him and his servants hardhearted, so that I can demonstrate these signs of mine among them, ² so that you can tell your son and grandson about what I did to Egypt and about my signs that I demonstrated among them, and so that you will all know that I am *ADONAI*.” ³ Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron] went in to Pharaoh and said to him, “Here is what *ADONAI*, God of the Hebrews, says: ‘How much longer will you refuse to submit to me? Let my people go, so that they can worship me. ⁴ Otherwise, if you refuse to let my people go, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. ⁵ One won’t be able to see the ground, so completely will the locusts cover it. They will eat anything you still have that escaped the hail, including every tree you have growing in the field. ⁶ They will fill your houses and those of your servants and of all the Egyptians. It will be like nothing your fathers or their fathers have ever seen since the day they were born until today.’” Then he turned his back and left.

⁷ Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “How much longer must this fellow be a snare for us? Let the people go and worship *ADONAI* their God. Don’t you understand yet that Egypt is being destroyed?” ⁸ So Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron] were brought to Pharaoh again, and he said to them, “Go, worship *ADONAI* your God. But who exactly is going?” ⁹ Moshe [Moses] answered, “We will go with our young and our old, our sons and our daughters; and we will go with our flocks and herds; for we must celebrate a feast to *ADONAI*.” ¹⁰ Pharaoh said to them, “*ADONAI* certainly will be with you if I ever let you go with your children! It’s clear that you are up to no good. ¹¹ Nothing doing! Just the men among you may go and worship *ADONAI*. That’s what you want, isn’t it?” And they were driven out of Pharaoh’s presence.

¹² *ADONAI* said to Moshe [Moses], “Reach out your hand over the land of Egypt, so that locusts will invade the land and eat every plant that the hail has left.” ¹³ Moshe [Moses] reached out with his staff over the land of Egypt, and *ADONAI* caused an east wind to blow on the land all day and all night; and in the morning the east wind brought the locusts. ¹⁴ The locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and settled throughout Egypt’s territory. It was an invasion more severe than there had ever been before or will ever be again. ¹⁵ They completely covered the ground, so that the ground looked black. They ate every plant growing from the ground and all the fruit of the trees left by the hail. Not one green thing remained, not a tree and not a plant in the field, in all the land of Egypt.

¹⁶ Pharaoh hurried to summon Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron] and said, “I have sinned against *ADONAI* your God and against you. ¹⁷ Now, therefore, please forgive my sin just this once; and intercede with *ADONAI* your God, so that he will at least take away from me this deadly plague!” ¹⁸ He went out from Pharaoh and interceded with *ADONAI*. ¹⁹ *ADONAI* reversed the wind and made it blow very strongly from the west. It took up the locusts and drove them into the Sea of Suf; not one locust remained on Egyptian soil. ²⁰ But *ADONAI* made Pharaoh hardhearted, and he didn’t let the people of Isra’el go.



In this showdown God takes on the Egyptian god Set, who is known as the protector of the crops. God sends locusts – and not just a few locusts. The locusts were so numerous that the sun was blocked out and it was made dark. What few crops and fruit trees left after the disastrous hail storm were now destroyed by these ravenous insects. Crops were a source of life for the Egyptians. Psalms 105:34-35 says:

³⁴ He spoke, and locusts came, also grasshoppers without number; ³⁵ they ate up everything green in their land, devoured the fruit of their ground.

This plague threatened the food supply of the nation. This second wave of destruction following the hail consumed the crops completely, showing Set as powerless.

Plague 9 – Darkness – God vs Ra

Exodus 10:21-29

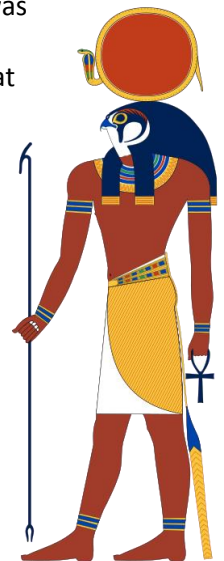
²¹ *ADONAI* said to Moshe [Moses], “Reach out your hand toward the sky, and there will be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness so thick it can be felt!” ²² Moshe [Moses] reached out his hand toward the sky, and there was a thick darkness in the entire land of Egypt for three days. ²³ People couldn’t see each other, and no one went anywhere for three days. But all the people of Isra’el had light in their homes.

²⁴ Pharaoh summoned Moshe [Moses] and said, “Go, worship *ADONAI*; only leave your flocks and herds behind — your children may go with you.” ²⁵ Moshe [Moses] answered, “You must also see to it that we have sacrifices and burnt offerings, so that we can sacrifice to *ADONAI* our God. ²⁶ Our livestock will also go with us — not a hoof will be left behind — because we must choose some of them to worship *ADONAI* our God, and we don’t know which ones we will need to worship *ADONAI* until we get there.” ²⁷ But *ADONAI* made Pharaoh hardhearted, and he would not let them go. ²⁸ Pharaoh said to them, “Get away from me! And you had better not see my face again, because the day you see my face, you will die!” ²⁹ Moshe [Moses] answered, “Well spoken! I will see your face no more.”

Ra was the sun god and the most worshiped god in Egypt other than Pharaoh himself. The sun was what made everything else — every other god — work correctly. When God put out the light from the sun, He was essentially putting out the power of Ra. Verse 21 hints at this darkness being more than just a physical darkness, but one that could be felt on a spiritual level. Some commentators have said that god did not even allow artificial light sources (like candles or oil lamps) to work properly.

Can you imagine the feeling of dread these Egyptians must have felt when day after day the sun did not shine, the lamps did not work, and all they could do is sit in the darkness and listen to the silence all around them? No one was working in the fields. No one was drawing water from the wells and Nile River. No one was out playing or doing the normal everyday things they had usually done. Everyone was forced to sit in darkness and despair and wait on a God they did not even believe in to lift whatever veil He had thrown over them and their land.

I imagine this plague created a lonely, somber, and depressing mood for the Egyptians. It was as if it was a prelude to the future fate of the empire. What was to come would be the greatest outcry of all — and Adonai would show His might to Pharaoh and to all of Egypt. Really, God would show His might to the whole world, as we are now, thousands of years later, talking about the might of God in this story.



How does the story of Egypt relate to us now?

For millennia the church has used “Egypt” as figurative for the bondage and oppression that God’s people experience. In the life of every believer, there will come a time when satan and demonic powers will wreck our comfortable situation.

Genesis ends with the Israelites living in Egypt and prospering. Exodus picks up the story from there. Exodus 1:6-8 says:

Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them. Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.

Our “Egypt” will happen when our life is basically going okay. Our life may not be great, but we are doing all right. In the midst of that, the enemy will create conditions that will wreck our comfortable situation. This may not be very obvious at first—and we may not recognize what is happening for a while. It may not even be very bad at first, but it will get worse.

The plans of Satan and demon powers for us in Egypt are to use burdens to oppress us and to use hardship to make us bitter, but God has other plans for us in our “Egypt.”

One plan of God for us in Egypt is for us to gain new expertise. Exodus 1:11 says:

So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses.”

The Israelites went to Egypt as keepers of flocks and herds; an occupation that the Egyptians considered to be an abomination. Under the oppression of this new Pharaoh who didn’t know Joseph, the Israelites were forced to learn NEW skills – drafting, architecture, carpentry and other associated skills while building the treasure cities.

If you are in financial distress, then you will be forced to learn how to handle your finances God’s way.

If you, or someone you love, are repeatedly sick, or if you are sick with a chronic disease or condition, then you will be forced to learn how to pray for healing.

If you are facing adversity, then you will be forced to learn how to do without those things that you thought that you could not live without.

If you are struggling in your marriage, then you will be forced to learn how to love your spouse the way that Christ loves the church.

A second plan of God for us in Egypt is for us to grow. Exodus 1:12 says:

But the more [the Egyptians] afflicted them, the more they [the Israelites] multiplied.

The Hebrew word used here (*rabbah*) can be translated as *become numerous*, but it can also be translated in the basic sense of *grow*. The verb is in the Imperfect tense meaning that they grew and kept on growing.

James 1:2-3 tells us:

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

God plans for Egypt to cause us to grow in fortitude.

- One meaning of the Greek word the NASB translates as *endurance* (hupomonē) is *fortitude*. Fortitude is defined as: mental and emotional strength in facing difficulty, adversity, danger, or temptation courageously. God's purpose for us in Egypt is to cause us to grow in mental and emotional strength when facing adversity.

God plans for Egypt to cause us to grow in steadfastness.

- A second meaning of the Greek word the NASB translates as *endurance* (hupomonē) is *steadfastness*. Steadfastness is defined as: an unwavering resolve. God's purpose for us in Egypt is to cause us to grow in an unwavering resolve to follow Him in the face of hardships.

God plans for Egypt to cause us to grow in perseverance.

- A third meaning of the Greek word the NASB translates as *endurance* (hupomonē) is *perseverance*. Perseverance is defined as: a steady persistence in a course of action, especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement. God's purpose for us in Egypt is to cause us to grow in persistence in obeying His leadings, even when those leadings bring us into difficulties and discouragement.

God plans for Egypt to cause us to grow in faith. II Thessalonians 1:3-4 says:

... your faith is growing more and more ...Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

Rather than undermining our faith, which satan and demonic powers would love to see happen, God plans for Egypt to cause our faith to grow as we cooperate with Him.

God plans for Egypt to cause us to grow in love for one another. II Thessalonians 1:3-4 continues with:

... and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

Rather than bringing us into bitterness and selfishness, which satan would love to see happen, God plans for Egypt to cause our love for one another to grow.

A third plan of God for us in Egypt is for us to get breakthroughs. Exodus 1:12 says:

But the more [the Egyptians] afflicted them, the more ... they spread out ...

The Hebrew word used here for *spread out* (paratz) means *to break out, to break through, and to make a breach*. The verb is in the Imperfect tense meaning that they kept on getting breakthroughs.

God plans for Egypt to lead to breakthroughs in boldly proclaiming the Gospel. Philippians 1:12-14 says:

Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

God's purpose for us in Egypt is to bring us into breakthroughs of greater boldness in serving Him.

God plans for Egypt to lead to breakthroughs of greater power in our ministry.

When Peter and John were first put on trial by the Jewish leaders, then threatened and released (Acts 4:29-31), this is the breakthrough they experienced:

[The church prayed] “Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit

Along with the Holy Spirit comes greater power. It doesn't stop with just being filled with the Spirit – it's like a spiritual work out every time we tap into the Holy Spirit that now lives in us. We are building up strength every time we pray in tongues, or every time we let the Holy Spirit flow through our lives. Our power grows in these situations, and our ministry is expanded.

A fourth plan of God for us in Egypt is for us to cause Satan to fear us. Exodus 1:12 says:

But the more [the Egyptians] afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that [the Egyptians] were in dread of the sons of Israel.

That phrase *came to dread* (qutz) is in the Imperfect tense, referring in this case to an ongoing emotion, and it means *a sickening dread; a terror in the pit of one's stomach*.

The more faithful we are to God in Egypt:

- the more expertise we gain
 - in handling finances God's way
 - in praying for healing
 - in living without those things that we thought that we could not live without
- the more we grow
 - in fortitude
 - in steadfastness
 - in perseverance
 - in faith
 - in love for one another
- the greater our breakthroughs
 - the greater our breakthroughs in boldness
 - the greater the breakthroughs of great power in our ministry
- the more that Satan and demonic powers fear us.

I am sure that Pharaoh and his people could not understand it. How could these Israelites keep growing and even multiplying after all the hard labor they forced on them? Not only could the Egyptians not figure that out, they also became afraid of the Israelites.

The only tactic Satan and demonic powers know is to afflict us in our Egypt, but when that tactic backfires, it is still the only tactic that they know. And all they can do is try to afflict us more in our Egypt, but the less that tactic works, the more terrified of us they become.

The more faithful we are to God in Egypt, the more spiritually powerful we become. The more spiritually powerful we become, the more that Satan and demonic powers fear us because they see us as a great and terrible threat to their agenda.