

LESSON 11

The Ten Plagues of Egypt

Exodus 7:14-10:2 & 12:29-36

According to Exodus 12:12 the plagues of Egypt were against all the gods of the Egyptians. God was bringing judgment of the gods and the spirit/demons represented by them. Remember that all the gods of the Egyptians and all idols are demons, not gods. There were over 2,000 gods in Egypt. Some Egyptologist say there were 3,000 gods.

"On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn--both men and animals--and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD." – **Exodus 12:12**

Today our study involves reading chapter 7 through chapter 12, omitting only the Passover passage which we will return to in two weeks. That is a long stretch of Scripture but it is important that we read it as a concurrent narrative of the events of the Ten Plagues of Egypt. These plagues are so important that in chapter 12 He established a lasting ordinance in Israel that every year every Jew is to celebrate the Passover reenacting the events of their deliverance from Egypt.

I would encourage you in a group study to divide the passage up into 10 plagues with different people assigned to read each plague. After reading the individual plague open the dialog about what you observed and your thoughts and questions about the passage.

For those studying alone I would encourage you to read the entire passage out loud. At the end of each plague there ought to be a heart response, if not audible response of "Woah!" or "Wow! These are amazing miracles and should stir us to such exclamations.

Someone will ask if the plagues are not sequential plagues of natural origin, one causing the next. The answer should be clear in each setting. These are tremendous immediate miracles at the hand of Moses and Aaron.

1. Water to blood – cannot be a red tide or algae growth because it happened immediately and was in the Nile and all the ponds, streams, canals and reservoirs, including in stone buckets and jars. Though the magicians could pull off a miracle of water into blood they could not undo it. **God was addressing the Egyptian god HAPI, the god of the Nile.**
2. Frogs – frogs were not a result of the water turning into blood for God said that everything died in the Nile and in any body of water. They came forth immediately with not time to spawn and procreate. The magicians made frog appear also, but they could not make them disappear. **God was addressing the Egyptian god HEKA or HEQT the frog-headed god.**

3. Gnats/Lice/Mosquitoes – the Hebrew word here is often misunderstood. It means “to nip or bite. The context of the event should make it a little clearer. These insects came from the dust or sand. The dust became gnats/lice/mosquitoes. The Egyptian magicians could not duplicate this miracle. **God was addressing the Egyptian god GEB** who was over the dust of the earth. And **SET who was the god of chaos, storms and pestilence**. Whatever the insects were they bit and stung people.
4. Flies/Scarab – Here God begins to set a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites, proving again these could not have been natural phenomenon. They appeared overnight and were gone at Moses command. These were crawling swarms of beetles. The scarab was a sacred beetle. People believed it to represent new birth from death because the beetle would nest in dung and eat from it while producing eggs. The Egyptians believed the scarab to be holy and used it in amulets and good luck charms as bracelets, necklaces and even were often buried with the sacred beetle amulets. There was not god of the insects or flies, but **God was addressing the Egyptian god KHEPRI which had the head of a beetle**.
5. Sick Cattle – cattle were sacred to the Egyptians. They even mummified bulls and put them in tombs. **God was addressing the Egyptian god APIS when he struck the all the cattle of the Egyptians (not the Israelites)**. In addition to this God was perhaps addressing their gods of fertility that were numerous, including Isis whose fame traveled to the Greek and Roman era.
6. Boils – people got suddenly sick from boils from a handful of soot that Moses and Aaron threw into the air. That cannot be any natural phenomenon, plus it affected every man, woman, and beasts, but it did not affect the Israelites! The Egyptian priests were plagued as well which made them contaminated and unable to perform their priestly duties. **God was addressing the Egyptian god HEKA and IMHOTEP who were considered the gods of healing**.
7. Hail – this was the worst storm in Egyptian history. Lightning and hail bombarded everything that was not covered. It happened not as a natural storm but a supernatural phenomenon when Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky. And it ended when Moses prayed. **God was addressing the Egyptians god NUT the god of the sky and here father SHU god, of the wind and air**.
8. Locust – locusts invasions were well known in the middle east, even today the middle east is being plagued by locust swarms. But this was worse than any in recorded Egyptian history. Everything the hail had not destroyed the locust ate. They devoured everything living plant. They left Egypt ruined, except for the land of Goshen where the Israelites were. **God was addressing the Egyptians gods NEPER, NEPRI, and RENENUTET gods and goddesses of the grain and granaries**.

9. Darkness – this was not a natural eclipse of the sun, nor was it a cloud of ash from a volcanic eruption. This was a thick darkness that made it impossible to see your hand in front of your face. It appeared to be a thick black fog, so thick that even light would not penetrate it. But it did not cover the land of Goshen where the Israelites were. **God was addressing one of the major gods of the Egyptians, the god RA, the sun god.**

10. Death of Firstborn – the final plague was the culmination of all the previous ones. God sent a plague of selective death. It chose only the firstborn of every family whether royal or slave and even the firstborn beasts. But it did not touch the people of Israel who had the blood of a lamb on the lintels and doorposts. It was not a disease or a poisonous gas. It was a destroying angel of death. **God was addressing the Egyptian god OSIRIS the god of funerary rights who represented dying and reviving. It also was against Pharaoh who believed himself to be a god.**