

GOD SENDS PLAGUES ON EGYPT

Old Testament Lesson #184

The people of Israel had been slaves in the land of Egypt for hundreds of years. Their life of slavery was very hard and included great suffering at the hands of the Egyptians. Because of the suffering, the children of Israel cried out to God for help. "God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them" (Exodus 2:24-25).

God chose Moses to be a deliverer to free the Israelites from their slavery. However, Pharaoh, who was the king of Egypt, had no plans to let all his slaves leave the country. God told Moses "I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go" (Exodus 3:19-20).

These wonders God performed were a series of 10 plagues poured on the Egyptians. One by one the plagues unfolded on the Egyptians, building to a dramatic point when God took the lives of all the firstborn of both people and animals throughout Egypt. After which Pharaoh finally gave in and allowed the Israelites to go.

Water into blood (Exodus 7:14-25):

The first plague turned the water of the Nile River into blood. The Nile River was worshiped as a god by the Egyptians. Its waters were said to be sweet, refreshing and healthy. The river was the lifeline of Egypt's farming and food production. Under the direction of God, Aaron struck the water of the Nile with his staff, and it changed to blood. "The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt" (Exodus 7:21).

This condition continued for seven days, but Pharaoh was unwilling to let the Israelites go.

Frogs (Exodus 8:1-15):

After seven days, Moses came back to Pharaoh with a message from God. "I will plague your whole country with frogs" (Exodus 8:2). And that is just what happened. Aaron stretched out his staff over the waters of Egypt according to God's instruction, "and the frogs came up and covered the land" (8:6).

Frogs were everywhere! Pharaoh asked Moses to pray to take away the frogs from Egypt. Moses invited

Pharaoh to pick the time when they should be removed, to which Pharaoh said, "Tomorrow." So Moses prayed to God, and the Lord did what Moses asked, and all the frogs died. They were gathered up into huge piles, and the whole land stank because of them. "When Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron" (8:15).

Gnats (Exodus 8:16-19):

Because Pharaoh would not let the people go, God told Moses to have Aaron strike the dust of the ground with his staff. The dust turned into gnats, and, "All the dust throughout the land of Egypt became gnats."

Up until now, Pharaoh's magicians had been able to imitate some of the effects of the initial plagues using their "secret arts," which helped convince Pharaoh not to do anything. But they could do nothing like the gnats. They told Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." However, Pharaoh would still not listen and let the Israelites go!

Flies (Exodus 8:20-24):

Moses then confronts Pharaoh again, telling him to let the Israelites go. If he did not, God was going to send swarms of flies upon the land of Egypt. However, God arranged intentionally for the flies to go only where the Egyptians were and not to affect the Israelites. This was further proof that Israel was special to God.

"Dense swarms of flies poured into Pharaoh's palace and into the houses of his officials, and throughout Egypt the land was ruined by the flies" (Exodus 8:24). Pharaoh called to Moses and said they could go if they didn't go too far. Moses prayed to stop the plague and God removed the flies. However, when the flies were gone, Pharaoh changed his mind and would not let the people go.

Plague on livestock (Exodus 9:1-7):

God told Moses to tell Pharaoh that tomorrow He was going to send a "terrible plague on your livestock in the field — on your horses and donkeys and camels and on your cattle and sheep and goats" (Exodus 9:3). However, God wasn't going to allow any of the animals that belonged to Israel to die. The next day, "All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one animal belonging to the Israelites died" (9:6). Pharaoh saw this happen as Moses said it would. "Yet his heart was unyielding and he would not let the people go" (9:7).

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Boils (Exodus 9:8-12):

God responded quickly to Pharaoh's rejection. He told Moses and Aaron to take handfuls of soot from a furnace and to toss it into the air in front of Pharaoh. This fine dust would go throughout Egypt, "and festering boils will break out on men and animals throughout the land" (Exodus 9:9). Moses did this and the boils appeared on everyone. The magicians had so many on their bodies that they could not stand before Moses. But God wasn't finished with his plagues, so He "hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron" (9:12).

Hail (Exodus 9:18-26):

God's next plague was a hailstorm. He had Moses tell Pharaoh that "at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now" (Exodus 9:18). Yet, God showed mercy for the sake of the Egyptian people. He warned them in advance so they could find shelter inside during this time.

The next day Moses stretched out his arm, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. "Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields — both men and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree" (9:25). Pharaoh called for Moses and again asked him to pray to stop the hail and thunder. He told Moses, "I will let you go; you don't have to stay any longer" (9:28). Moses went outside the city and prayed to God, and the thunder and hail stopped. However, once again when Pharaoh saw that it stopped, he sinned and decided not to let the people go!

Locusts (Exodus 10:1-20):

Moses then warned Pharaoh God would send a plague of locusts upon Egypt in the morning if they did not let him go. Some of the other leaders in Egypt tried to persuade Pharaoh to let them go. Pharaoh said they could, but he put limitations on it. This was not acceptable, so the next day God sent the plague of locusts upon the Egyptians. They had never seen such a plague of locusts before. "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" (Exodus 10:15). However, no locusts entered into the area where the Israelites lived.

Pharaoh quickly called Moses and asked for forgiveness of his sin and for God to remove the locusts. God responded and removed the locusts from the land of Egypt. However, once again, Pharaoh, when the locusts were gone, said he would not let the Israelites go!

Darkness (Exodus 10:21-29):

God then had Moses initiate the ninth plague. Moses raised his staff to the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. The Egyptians worshiped the sun, and saw it as a key god in their religion, but now it was hidden from them for three days. The darkness was so thick it was something that could be felt physically. No one was able to see anyone else or leave their homes for three days. However, the Israelites had light in the places they lived.

Pharaoh calls for Moses and says the people can leave, but they must leave all their livestock behind. Moses said that wasn't acceptable. Pharaoh then rejected the request and would not let them go. Pharaoh said to Moses, "Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my face you will die" (Exodus 10:28).

The plagues had reached their climax. The time for the most important and dramatic plague had come!

Firstborn (Exodus 11 & 12):

The final plague from God took the life of the firstborn son of every living being throughout all Egypt. After this, Pharaoh would let them go.

God linked a special process to this last plague. He arranged a way some could avoid having the firstborn die. A family was to select out a special lamb and this lamb was to be killed. The blood from the animal was to be spread upon the door posts and across the top of the door. The meat from the lamb was then to be prepared as a special meal they ate all that night. At midnight, God was going to send His angels throughout Egypt to kill the firstborn. Any house they came to, if there was blood upon the door frame, then they would "pass over" that house and no one would die.

God followed through and carried out this final plague. "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" (Exodus 12:29).

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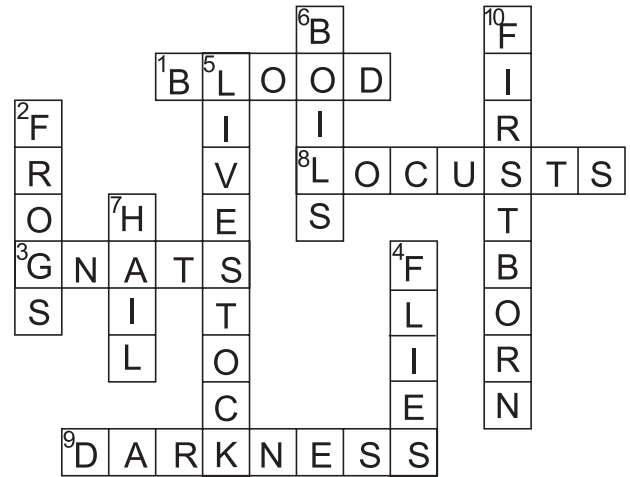
As a result of this final plague, Pharaoh finally agreed to let the Israelites leave. There were no conditions this time. In fact, the Egyptians supplied the Israelites with articles of silver and gold and clothing. "The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians" (Exodus 12:36).

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- It is highly significant that every plague, in some way, concerned the religion of Egypt. Many of them directly affected their gods. With the use of these plagues, God demonstrated how inferior and worthless they were compared to His own might and power.
- It was important that God use all 10 plagues. He wanted not only all of Israel and Egypt to know He was the true and living God, but that His name would come to be known throughout the world. In fact, God specifically had allowed Pharaoh to come to power so that he could be used by God to demonstrate to the world His power. God said concerning Pharaoh: "I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (Exodus 9:16).
- The final plague gave rise to the Passover celebration. It was a special feast the Israelites were to celebrate each year. It was to be a reminder for them of the great deliverance that God had accomplished by freeing them from bondage from the most powerful nation in the world at the time. God's power was truly great, and His love for His people was very deep!
- John the Baptist said that Jesus was "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Jesus was the Lamb of God, because he served the same role as the Passover lamb. Jesus became the ultimate Passover sacrifice when he was offered as a sacrifice for sin. His sacrifice provides God's deliverance from the bondage of sin for those who believe in what God has promised and what was accomplished in the sacrifice of His son. A believer can be freed from the bondage of sin, just as Israel was freed from the bondage of slavery in Egypt!

ANSWER KEY:

blood, frogs, gnats, flies, livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, firstborn



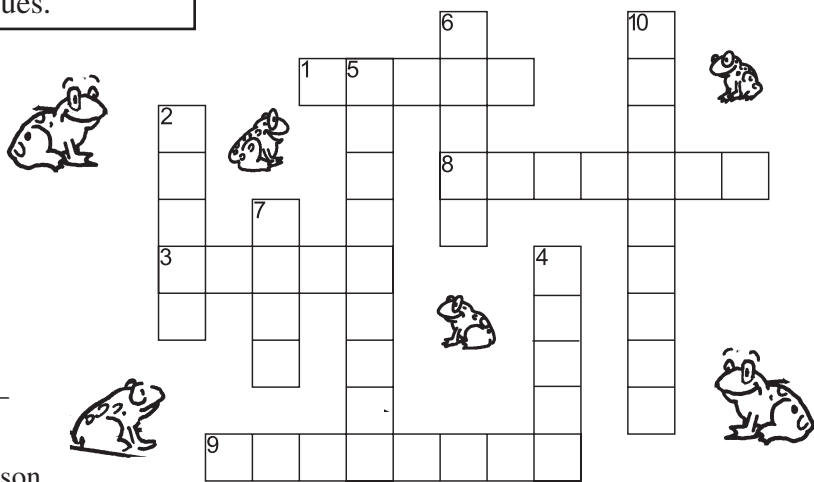
livestock

plague, Moses, staff, Pharaoh, Egypt, Aaron, Goshen

Moses told Pharaoh to let the people go, but Pharaoh's heart was hard. God sent 10 plagues on Egypt so that the Pharaoh would release the Hebrews.

Fill in the crossword with the 10 plagues.

- 1) water turned to _____
- 2) the land teemed with _____
- 3) dust became _____
- 4) dense swarms of _____
- 5) death of Egyptians' _____
- 6) soot became festering _____
- 7) lightning, thunder, rain and _____
- 8) east wind brought devouring _____
- 9) 3 days of deep _____
- 10) death of every family's _____ son



Disease and death came upon all the Egyptians' domestic animals. Fill in one letter to complete the name of an animal. All the vertical letters will spell a word that means "domestic animals."

C	A	M	E	___	S			
			K	I	D	S		
	C	A	L	___	E	S		
		S	H	___	E	P		
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God did not let His punishment fall on the land where the Israelite people lived. What was the name of that land? Answer each question, then put the circled letters in the blanks.

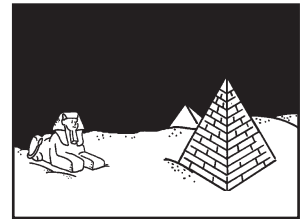
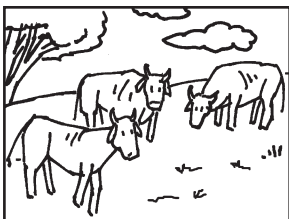
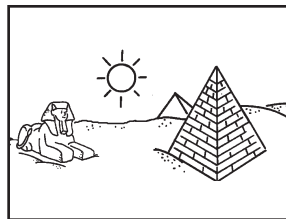
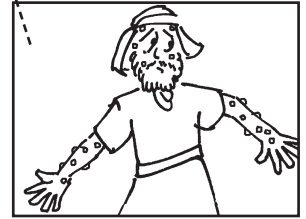
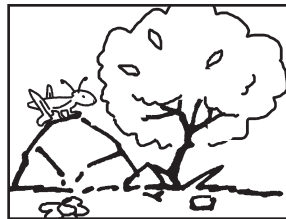
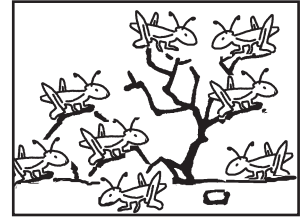
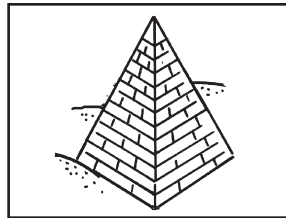
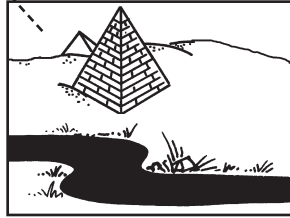
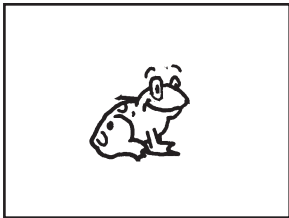
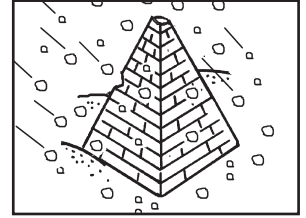
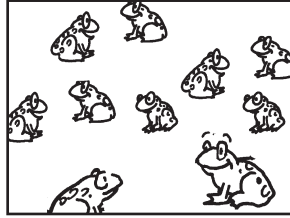
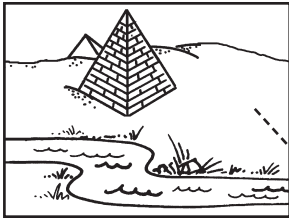
- ___ ___ **(O)** ___ another word for a calamity or evil affliction
- ___ **(O)** ___ leader appointed by God to lead Israelites the out of bondage
- (O)** ___ what Moses stretched over the Nile.
- ___ ___ ___ **(O)** the hardhearted ruler who would not let the Israelites go
- (O)** ___ the land where the Israelites had been in slavery
- ___ ___ ___ **(O)** the brother, companion and helper of Moses

The land where the Israelite people lived ___ ___ ___ ___

Name _____

God sent 10 plagues on Egypt so that the Pharaoh would release the Hebrews.

Match the before and after pictures of the 10 plagues.



Name _____