

Exodus 3:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

Analysis

And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go (שְׁלַחְתִּי אֶת-יְדִי)—God's strategy: overwhelming demonstrations of power. **Stretch out my hand** (שְׁלַחְתִּי אֶת-יְדִי)—anthropomorphic language for divine intervention. **Smite Egypt with all my wonders** (נִפְלָאֹת, נִפְלָאָת) are the ten plagues, miraculous demonstrations of YHWH's supremacy over Egyptian gods. **In the midst thereof** (בְּקָרְבָּן) —the plagues will occur in Egypt's heartland, not peripheral regions. **After that he will let you go**—eventually Pharaoh surrenders, though reluctantly and temporarily (14:5-9). The plagues serve multiple purposes: judgment on Egypt, deliverance for Israel, revelation of YHWH's character.

Historical Context

The ten plagues systematically demonstrated YHWH's supremacy over Egypt's pantheon: Nile (Hapi), frogs (Heqet), sun (Ra), Pharaoh himself (considered divine). Each plague targeted specific Egyptian deities, showing their impotence. The escalation—from nuisance to economic devastation to death—gave Pharaoh repeated opportunities to relent. His hardening after each plague (Exodus 7-11) fulfilled this prophecy exactly.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do the promised 'wonders' demonstrate that God's judgments serve both punitive and revelatory purposes?
2. What does the phrase 'after that he will let you go' teach about God's patience in giving oppressors opportunities to repent before final judgment?

Interlinear Text

וְשַׁלֵּחַ	אֶת	יָדִי	וְהִפִּתֵּת	אֶת	מִצְבֵּה	בְּכָל
And I will stretch out	H853	my hand	and smite	H853	Egypt	H3605
H7971	H3027	H5221	H4714			
וְנִפְלַאֲתָה	רַא	אֲשֶׁר	הַבְּקָרָב	וְ	וְאַחֲרֵי	כִּי
with all my wonders	H834	which I will do	in the midst	thereof and after	H3651	
H6381	H6213	H7130	H310			
וְשַׁלֵּחַ	אֶתְכֶם					
And I will stretch out	H853					
H7971						

Additional Cross-References

Acts 7:36 (References Egypt): He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

Nehemiah 9:10 (Parallel theme): And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day.

Exodus 9:15 (Parallel theme): For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.

Deuteronomy 6:22 (References Egypt): And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes:

Exodus 6:6 (References Egypt): Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:

Psalms 105:27 (Parallel theme): They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.

Exodus 12:39 (References Egypt): And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

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