

The Ten Plagues

God sends ten devastating plagues upon Egypt—blood, frogs, gnats, flies, livestock death, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and death of firstborn.

Exodus 7:14-25 • Exodus 8:1-32 • Exodus 9:1-35 • Exodus 10:1-29 • Exodus 11:1-10

CHARACTERS: Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh, God

THEMES: God's power, Judgment on false gods, Pharaoh's hardened heart

MOSES AND AARON went to Pharaoh: 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Let my people go.' Pharaoh's answer: 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey him? I do not know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go.'

So began the contest between the God of Israel and the gods of Egypt. Each plague struck at a specific Egyptian deity, proving the Lord's supremacy.

The first plague turned the Nile to blood—an attack on Hapi, the god of the Nile. Fish died, the river stank, and Egyptians could not drink. Pharaoh's magicians copied the sign, and Pharaoh hardened his heart.

Frogs covered the land—a mockery of Heqet, the frog goddess of fertility. They were in beds, ovens, everywhere. Pharaoh begged Moses to pray, promising to let Israel go. But when the frogs died, he hardened his heart again.

Gnats came without warning—something the magicians could not replicate. 'This is the finger of God,' they said. But Pharaoh's heart remained hard.

Swarms of flies filled Egypt, but not Goshen where Israel lived. God was making a distinction between His people and Egypt.

The livestock died—a blow to Apis, the bull god, and Hathor, the cow goddess. Yet Pharaoh would not relent.

Boils broke out on man and beast. The magicians could not even stand before Moses.

Hail destroyed crops and killed anyone caught outside. Some Egyptians heeded Moses' warning; others did not.

Locusts devoured everything the hail had left. 'I have sinned!' Pharaoh cried, but his repentance was false.

Darkness covered Egypt for three days—so thick it could be felt. Ra, the sun god, was powerless. But the Israelites had light.

Still Pharaoh refused. One final plague remained—the most terrible of all.