

Part III)

As discussed in the first lesson, we recognized that:

- 1) Man was made to worship.
- 2) Man desires the qualities of Jehovah.
- 3) Man will worship something or someone to secure the qualities in lieu of Jehovah.

The first six plagues were all attacks on the “god system” that Israel had grown to love. We in the Bible-reading world tend to look at the events of Exodus chapters 7-11 as a collection of incredible events. It is even more powerful when we view them through the eyes of the one true God, Jehovah. To Him, this was a war against all the false gods that the Egyptians and even His own Israelites had put before Him. *Josh 24:14 “...put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.”* For over four-hundred years the Israelites were desensitized to the Egyptian gods and Jehovah was going to have to break this routine if they would ever have a chance to break the behavior.

- *Exod 12:12 “...against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments-- I am the LORD.”*
- *Num 33:4 “...The LORD had also executed judgments on their gods.”*

Plague One: Nile to blood (Ex 7:20), Plague Two: Frogs (Ex 8:6), Plague Three: Lice (Ex 8:16), Plague Four: Insects (Ex 8:24), Plague Five: Livestock Disease (Ex 9:1-7) and Plague Six: Boils. With that in mind, let us continue with the last four plagues of Egypt and watch the Creator of the universe destroy the god-system of Egypt.

7) Plague of Hail

- Exod 9:23-26 And Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the hail struck all that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant of the field and shattered every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel {were,} there was no hail.

Pharaoh continued to deny that God was the One True God, not allowing the Israelites to leave Egypt. God then told Moses and Aaron to meet Pharaoh again. This time they were to tell him that God would bring hail upon all the land of Egypt except for where the Israelites lived. God also said that the next plagues would really strike at the heart of Pharaoh and would truly persuade him that there is only One True God. The LORD wanted Pharaoh to know that he only ruled and lived because God allowed him to do so. He could easily take Pharaoh's life if he wanted to do so (Exodus 9:13-35).

It is of interest in this passage to note a few of the many patterns of the plagues. Take for example the following:

Pattern one

Plagues 1, 4 and 7 were announced to Pharaoh by morning.

Plagues 2, 5 and 8 were announced to Pharaoh by day.

Plagues 3, 6 and 9 were unannounced to Pharaoh at all.

Pattern two

Plagues 1-2 were judgments water-orientated.

Plagues 3-4 were judgments earth-orientated

Plagues 5-6 were judgments health-orientated.

Plagues 7-8 were judgments plant-orientated.

Plagues 9-10 were judgments heaven-orientated

Pattern three

Plagues 1-3 were for both the Jews and the Egyptians.

Plagues 4-6 were for just the Egyptians.

Plagues 7-9 were just for the ignorant Egyptians.

Plague 10 was just for the defiantly-ignorant, either Jew or Egyptian.

It is in this third pattern that we learn that God gave the Egyptians a way to escape if they would be willing to listen to God and take refuge. *Exod 9:19 "Now therefore send, bring your livestock and whatever you have in the field to safety. Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail comes down on them, will die."*

Patience is one of the greatest qualities of God, yet Pharaoh did still did not understand this and was trying the patience of Jehovah.

With a wave of the staff the hail from the sky began to fall in a way that was never before seen in Egypt. This would have been a terrifying storm, being accompanied by large amounts of rain, thundering and lightning.

Nut: the sky goddess

The Egyptians worshipped Nut the sky goddess.

- She was sometimes represented as a woman without clothes, stretched across the skies. Her fingers touched one horizon and her toes touched the other. At other times she was represented as a cow standing tall above the sky.
- She was considered the mother of all gods. According to the Egyptians, during the day, the heavenly bodies—such as the sun and moon—would make their way across her body. Then, at dusk, they would pass into her mouth and be swallowed, traverse the inside of her belly throughout the night, and be reborn out of her uterus at dawn.
- In a later myth Nut becomes a daughter of Shu, god of the air, and Tefnut, goddess of moistness. She was paired with Geb, the Earth, with whom she had five children: Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys, and Horus the Elder. Ancient paintings usually portray the people as looking up to her for care and protection from the elements.

- The Egyptians believed that Nut lived in trees. This plague destroyed many of the trees of the land of Egypt. This plague of hail demonstrated that Nut had no power before the One True God. God controls the elements because He created them.
- Ps 78:47 He destroyed their vines with hailstones, and their sycamore trees with frost.
- Ps 105:33 He struck down their vines also and their fig trees, and shattered the trees of their territory. Nut's home was destroyed. She had no place to live.

The Egyptians literally and figuratively looked up to Nut for protection, but for them there would be none. It is God that runs the sky, not Nut. It is Jehovah that is the protector of men, not some false image named Nut. It is God that causes the rain to fall, not Nut.

Jehovah is greater than “Nut”

- Matt 5:45 “...He causes His sun to rise on {the} evil and {the} good, and sends rain on {the} righteous and {the} unrighteous.”
- Ps 19:1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.
- Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- Isa 34:4 And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, or as {one} withers from the fig tree.

8) Plague of Locusts

- Exod 10:4-6 'For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. 5 'And they shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one shall be able to see the land. They shall also eat the rest of what has escaped-- what is left to you from the hail-- and they shall eat every tree which sprouts for you out of the field. 6 'Then your houses shall be filled, and the houses of all your servants and the houses of all the Egyptians, {something} which neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day that they came upon the earth until this day.'" And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

Moses and Aaron again go to Pharaoh to tell him to let the Israelites leave. They warn him that if he does not let them go that God will bring locusts into Egypt. According to the text, this will be the worst locust invasion since Egypt had come into existence (Exodus 10:1-20). Pharaoh's servants beg him to allow the Israelites to leave, for they are leaning toward the True God, but Pharaoh still refuses. So Moses stretches out his hand holding his rod and a strong east wind begins to blow for nearly a full day and night. The next morning the locusts arrive in devastating fashion.

Locusts can only fly for very long time and distance if there is a strong wind. It has been shown that locusts can travel up to 15 miles per hour with a strong wind. These locusts must have come from a long distance for it to have taken 24 hours for them to travel to Egypt. This alone demonstrated to the Egyptians that God was over the world, not just

over Egypt. These locusts eat everything that survived the devastation the hail. They ate every green plant, all the fruit off of the plants and even the leaves and bark of the trees. Some locusts have been known to even eat the wood. There are so many locusts that the ground could not be seen, except where the Israelites were in Goshen.

Nepri: the Grain god

The Egyptians worshipped a god called Neper (also spelt Neptra or Nepri).

- This god was an androgynous deification of grain, a valuable commodity in ancient Egypt. They felt without proper worship and reverence for this god there could be great starvation.
- He was often referred to as the “god of Corn”. He was also associated with the other most used types of grain, including barley and wheat. His name simply means “lord of the mouth”, because he was the one that brought the grain out of the ground and into their mouths.
- Pictured as a human, Neper's body was dotted to represent grains of corn. The hieroglyphs that write his name similarly include the symbols of grain.
- Naturally following the downfall of Nut the sky goddess, the farmers would have been seriously reaching out this god.
- Below are some of the ancient songs they sang to praise Nepri:



Hymn of Hapi

*I was grain-maker, beloved of Nepri,
Hapi honored me on every field.
None hungered in my years,
None thirsted in them.*

Yet another hymn

*Nepri gives all his herbs,
Field's Bounty brings satiety,
And gives it to all lands.
Everybody jubilates,
Hearts are glad, breasts rejoice,
Everyone exults...*



It appears that Nepri is worthless at such a time as this, therefore Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh declares that he has sinned and begs them to persuade God to remove the locusts from the land. Moses does and God causes a strong wind from the west to blow them into the Red Sea and kills all of them. Not one locust was left alive. But Pharaoh will not let the Israelites leave.

It is not Nepri that causes the plants to grow and bear fruit, but Jehovah. He is the one that made the ground and the plants and the sun and the water so therefore He is the One in control, not Nepri.

Jehovah is greater Nepri.

- Gen 1:11 Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, {and} fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth"; and it was so.
- Hosea 2:9 "Therefore, I will take back My grain at harvest time and My new wine in its season. I will also take away My wool and My flax {given} to cover her nakedness.
- Ps 78:46 He gave also their crops to the grasshopper, and the product of their labor to the locust.

9) Plague of Darkness

- Exod 10:22-23 So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. 23 They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings.

God told Moses to stretch his hand toward heaven and this would bring a great darkness on the land of Egypt. This darkness would be so severe that it could even be felt. The word "felt" means "to grope." This generates two possibilities about this plague.

1. It could mean that the darkness was so intense that a person would have to feel their way around their house. Have you ever been in a room when the light went out? You could not see anything and would have to feel your way along the wall or the floor to move around the room. There was no light of any kind to help you see. It is possible this is what the Egyptians were dealing with. They did not leave their homes for three days due to the thick darkness (Exodus 10:21-29). There was no light from the sun or the moon or the stars.
2. The other possible explanation of this groping or feeling is that this darkness was from a very, very bad sandstorm. Khamsin, "Winds of the Desert", is not unusual in Egypt. These can come up suddenly and may last for up to three days. However Khamsin do not cover the entire country and they never block out all of the light. With the Khamsin, sand is blown into everything, including homes. People have to stay in the inner parts of the house to get away from the sand. If God did use a khamsin, it was the worst that the world has ever known. It could be felt and it completely blocked out any light from the sun, moon and stars.

Whatever the cause of the blackness, Pharaoh knew it was from the One True God. This would have been quite terrifying to not see the sun for a period of three days. The Egyptians would be approaching the end of their rope with all these plagues.

Ra: the sun god



One of the top gods in the Egyptian god system was Ra, the sun god.

- He was often looked upon as the #3 god, coming in behind the river god Hapi and the #1 god Pharaoh. Some archeologists have put Ra at #2. One in particular, E.A Wallis Budge, stated that Ra was the first god of a monotheistic system in the beginning of

Egypt, making him #1 overall. Whatever the perspective, the Egyptians reverently worshipped him. Ra was seen as having part in the creation of man. The Egyptians called themselves "the cattle of Ra."

- In artwork Ra primarily is depicted as a man having a wadjet sun disk above his head. Sometimes he had the head of a hawk, symbolizing that he was master over the sky. Often times he would be wearing the headdress of Pharaoh.
- The Egyptians believed that Ra made the journey across the sky each day. In later myths about Ra, the sun is portrayed differently according to the position of the sun in the sky. This was an early theme in Egyptian myths, with different names assigned to the sun depending upon its position in the sky. At sunrise he was the young boy Khepri, at noon the falcon-headed man Harakhty, and at sunset the elder Atum.
- For the Egyptians, the sun represented light, warmth, and growth. This made Ra very important to Egyptians, and it is no coincidence that the sun came to be the ruler of all. In his myths, the sun in the sky was either seen as the body or eye of Ra.

As all these other gods are dropping like flies before the Egyptians over the months, it would have been natural to start making appeals to a powerful god such as this to intercede and bring stability to the nation. God did not allow them to do this for He was much more powerful than Ra. For three whole days their "all-powerful god" was useless to help them in their time of need.

Pharaoh tried to get Moses to depart Egypt, but to leave the animals behind in Egypt. Moses could not do this because he needed animals to sacrifice to God. Pharaoh obviously was still not ready to let the Israelites leave. So he became angry at Moses and told him to leave his court, never wanting to see his face anymore. Moses tells him that he is correct, for he will never see his face to face again.



Jehovah is greater than Ra

- Deut 4:19-20 "And {beware,} lest you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. 20 "But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as today.
- Ps 113:3-4 From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the LORD is to be praised. 4 The LORD is high above all nations; His glory is above the heavens.
- Mal 1:11 "For from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, My name {will be} great among the nations..."
- Jer 31:35 Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the LORD of hosts is His name:

10) Death of firstborn

- Exod 11:4-6 And Moses said, "Thus says the LORD, 'About midnight I am going out into the midst of Egypt, 5 and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of the Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the first-born of the slave girl who is behind the millstones; all the first-born of the cattle as well. 6 'Moreover, there shall be a great cry in all the land of Egypt, such as there has not been {before} and such as shall never be again.

God had been patient with Pharaoh. He had given him nine chances to change his mind. But Pharaoh refused to do what God said. God told Moses how to prepare for the next plague, for after the tenth, Pharaoh would not only ask them to leave, but would throw them out of Egypt completely.

At midnight all of the firstborn in Egypt, who were not protected, would die. The only way to have the plague sent from heaven to pass over the family would be to participate in the Passover feast and have the blood of the lamb smeared on the doorpost of the home.

There would be death for all first-born, from the poorest to the elite, including the royal household. Pharaoh's firstborn son would have to die (Exodus 11:1-12:36). All the homes of Egypt had great sorrow because of all of the dead and the cries could be heard throughout the land of Egypt.

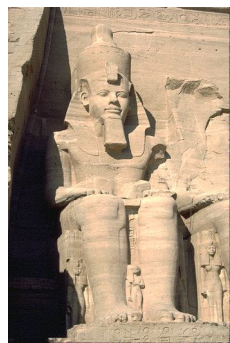
Pharaoh: the number one god

Pharaoh was the number one god in all Egypt.



- This plague of death was God's final way to show that He was more powerful than any Egyptian god.
- The Egyptians used to have a lion idol named Aker that they would place near the threshold of the door. The Sphinx that often stands before the pyramid burial grounds of Pharaoh is a guardian to the tomb from evil spirits. Apparently the old guardians did not do that well to keep the plague of death from God from entering the home of Pharaoh.
- The Pharaoh was thought to be a physical representation of the sun god Ra. The firstborn son was to take his father's place as Ra's representative to the Egyptians. With Pharaoh's son dead, the world of the Egyptians was crushed and the people would be ready to surrender.

Pharaoh's standing in the eyes of the Egyptian people would have been severely shaken. If you remember, Pharaoh's slaves had already begun to believe that Moses represented a



more powerful God. And they were questioning and begging Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave.

Ma'at was the goddess of the physical and moral law of Egypt. She was pictured as sitting or standing with a scepter in one hand and an ostrich feather in her hair. The Egyptians believed that if Pharaoh ever failed to live by and maintain ma'at (or proper balance in judgment according to moral laws), that chaos would return to Egypt and the world as they knew it would be destroyed. It would seem that the Egyptians did believe that all was coming to an end. In Exodus 12:33, the Egyptians are trying to hurry the Israelites out of Egypt because "*we all be dead men.*" They believed if they could get Israel out of Egypt that their world might turn back to normal. Egypt was indeed in chaos. The crops were gone. The animals were mostly dead. Their firstborn were now dead. It is very likely the Egyptian people blamed Pharaoh for not listening to Moses and Aaron, the spokesmen for the One True God. They probably did not recognize God as God. They may have thought that He was connected with Ma'at. This would explain why in Exodus 14:4, God said He would kill Pharaoh and his army to prove to the Egyptians that He was the Lord. It is Jehovah that is God, not Pharaoh!

Jehovah is greater than Pharaoh

- Exod 12:29-30 Now it came about at midnight that the LORD struck all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of cattle. 30 And Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead.
- Exod 14:27-28 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 And the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained.

Did it Work?

One might ask if this all-out attack from Jehovah upon the gods of Egypt began to turn the hearts of the children of Israel back to the one true God. In the new song of celebration that was offered following the defeat and drowning of the Egyptian army, we find the following verse. ***Exod 15:11 "Who is like Thee among the gods, O LORD? Who is like Thee, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?"*** Though they will struggle with their god problem in the future, for at least a moment the Israelites saw Jehovah as the only viable option and the supreme God.