

“AGAINST ALL THE GODS OF EGYPT”

INTRODUCTION

- A. **Genesis 15:13-14** *“Then He said to Abram: ‘Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also **the nation whom they serve I will judge**; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.’”*

About 6 centuries before the exodus, even 2 centuries before the Hebrews entered Egypt, Jehovah foretold what would befall Israel in that land and that He would deliver them.

- B. **Exodus 3:7-10** *“Jehovah said: ‘I have surely seen **the oppression of My people who are in Egypt**, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to **deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians**, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.’”*

When God summoned Moses at the burning bush, He acknowledged the suffering of the Israelites and assigned Moses to deliver them.

- C. **Exodus 3:19-20** *“But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go.”*

God knew in advance that Pharaoh would resist and He already knew how He would handle the situation.

- D. **Exodus 4:21-23** *“Jehovah said to Moses, ‘When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I*

will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, "Thus says Jehovah: 'Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.'""

God knew the king's heart would harden and He planned retribution before anything unfolded.

- E.** **Exodus 5:1-2** *"Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, 'Thus says Jehovah God of Israel: "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" And Pharaoh said, 'Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know Jehovah, nor will I let Israel go.'"*

From the outset, Pharaoh's heart was already hard, claiming he did not know Jehovah.

- F.** **Exodus 7:4-5** *"Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, **out of the land of Egypt by great judgments**. And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them."*

Jehovah's judgments on Egypt would cause the Egyptians to know exactly who He is.

- G.** **Exodus 12:12** *"Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Jehovah."*

By the final plague, God declared his judgments were against all of the Egyptian gods.

I. "THE WATERS... TURNED TO BLOOD"

- A.** **Exodus 7:14-20** *"So Jehovah said to Moses: 'Pharaoh's heart is hard; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. And you shall say to him,*

'Jehovah God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness"; but indeed, until now you would not hear! Thus says Jehovah: "By this you shall know that I am Jehovah. Behold, I will strike the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that are in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river."' Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, 'Say to Aaron, "Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.'" And Moses and Aaron did so, just as Jehovah commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood."

By this wonder, the God of heaven defeated at least 3 gods of Egypt:

1. Khnum was the guardian of the source of the Nile, often depicted as a Ram-headed man pouring water from a jar.
2. Hapy, was the deification of the Nile's annual inundation, which irrigated the farmlands, regarded as "Lord of the fishes and birds of the marshes and Lord of the River bringing vegetation", often depicted as a blue skinned man to represent the water. Where was he when the fish died?
3. Osiris, god of the underworld, was thought to have the Nile for his very **blood**stream. How ironic that God literally transformed these waters into blood! He could have dried them up or frozen them, but instead He killed their god of the dead before their very eyes.

B. Exodus 7:21, 24-25 *"The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt."*

...So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. And seven days passed after Jehovah had struck the river."

1. For the seven days this first plague lasted, the Egyptians had no fresh fish to eat, and had to dig for water to drink.
2. The Egyptians used to sing a "Hymn of the Nile" which began with these verses:

"Hail to thee, O Nile!

Who manifests thyself over this land, and comes to give life to Egypt!
Mysterious is thy issuing forth from the darkness, on this day whereon it
is celebrated!

Watering the orchards created by Re, to cause all the cattle to live, you
give the earth to drink, inexhaustible one!

Path that descends from the sky, loving the bread of Seb and the first-
fruits of Nepera,

You cause the workshops of Ptah to prosper!

Lord of the fish, during the inundation, no bird alights on the crops.
You create the grain, you bring forth the barley, assuring perpetuity to
the temples.

If you cease your toil and your work, then all that exists is in anguish.
If the gods suffer in heaven, then the faces of men waste away."

How very true: their gods suffered and their faces showed it.

- C. **Exodus 7:22-23** *"Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as Jehovah had said. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this."*

Notice how helpful the magicians were. Instead of providing water to the desperate people of Egypt, their solution was turning more water to blood! They could do nothing to overturn the wonder God had performed. Even so, the heart of the king was unmoved.

II. “FROGS CAME UP AND COVERED THE LAND OF EGYPT”

A. **Exodus 8:1-6** *“And Jehovah spoke to Moses, ‘Go to Pharaoh and say to him, “Thus says Jehovah: ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me. But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs. So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants.’” Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, ‘Say to Aaron, “Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.”’ So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.”*

1. Heqet was the Egyptian goddess of life and birth, represented as having the head of a frog. She was the patron deity of mid-wives and was thought to breathe the breath of life into the nostrils of newborn babies. How ironic that the symbol of this fertility goddess would make its way into Pharaoh’s own bed!
2. That God would empower His servants Moses and Aaron to summon frogs from the river to overtake the land of Egypt proved that the frog-headed goddess Heqet was unnecessary.
3. Frogs were considered sacred because they would spawn in the puddles and ponds left behind by the annual flooding of the Nile, which in turn irrigated the farmlands of Egypt. An abundance of croaking frogs meant plenty of water, and therefore a bountiful harvest. These creatures were so revered that even the involuntary slaughter of a frog was punishable by death, yet during the plague, when they were literally on the people, they could not have avoided stepping on them, and hiding in their ovens, they would have been accidentally roasted.

- B.** **Exodus 8:7** *"And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt."*

Once again, the magicians were powerless to stop the plague. They could only duplicate what was already a disaster.

- C.** **Exodus 8:8** *"Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, 'Entreat Jehovah that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to Jehovah.'"*

That Pharaoh would beg for the extermination of such a cherished animal proves the effectiveness of the plague.

- D.** **Exodus 8:9-13** *"And Moses said to Pharaoh, 'Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, that they may remain in the river only.' So he said, 'Tomorrow.' And he said, 'Let it be according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like Jehovah our God. And the frogs shall depart from you, from your houses, from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only.' Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses cried out to Jehovah concerning the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. So Jehovah did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields."*

Frogs came forth in abundance every year following the inundation of the Nile, so some might conclude this second plague was merely incidental, with Moses claiming a normal, natural occurrence as the power of God. Notice, however, that it came to a conclusion on command! Pharaoh was provided the honor of deciding when the plague would stop and God made it so. Inexplicably, he chose one more night with the frogs!

- E.** **Exodus 8:14** *"They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank."*

Heaps of dead frogs nationwide would have left little confidence in them as gods. Instead of breathing life as the goddess of birth, the symbol of Heqet, the goddess of life, was decaying and filling the land with its stench.

- F. **Exodus 8:15** *“But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as Jehovah had said.”*

Like so many who would turn to God in prayer, begging for relief from some affliction, Pharaoh soon forgot the powerful lesson God had taught him.

III. “ALL THE DUST OF THE LAND BECAME LICE THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT”

- A. **Exodus 8:16-17** *“So Jehovah said to Moses, ‘Say to Aaron, “Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.”’ And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.”*

1. Here God struck Geb, the great god of the earth, who should have protected the dust of the earth from becoming lice.
2. This plague incapacitated the priests of Egypt, whose religious rituals would be delayed by ceremonial impurity because of their inevitable contact with these pests. In order to remain pure, Egyptian priests shaved all their body hair every other day – including eyebrows and lashes, they wore only one tunic, and bathed twice each morning and twice each night. Yet all this would be useless when *“the dust of the earth... became lice on man”*. Thus, the totality of the Egyptian religion was stalled by this plague.

- B. **Exodus 8:18-19** *“Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, ‘This is the finger of God.’ But Pharaoh’s heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as Jehovah had said.”*

1. The magicians still worked their enchantments to reproduce, rather than counteract, this horrible plague. This time, though, they couldn’t even do that!

2. The magicians themselves were convinced this plague was the very “finger of God”. A comment regarding the finger of a god evoked references to Egyptian mythology. They spoke of the “finger of Seth” or the “finger of Thoth” the way we might refer, even on insurance forms, to “an act of God”.
3. Still, Pharaoh’s heart was hard.

IV. “THICK SWARMS... CAME INTO... ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT”

- A. **Exodus 8:20-21, 24** *“And Jehovah said to Moses, ‘Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, “Thus says Jehovah: ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand.’”’ ...And Jehovah did so. Thick swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants’ houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies.”*

The word “flies” is not present in the original text, only “swarms”.

1. It could have been swarms of anything, perhaps even the scarab, the dung beetle deified as Khepri, regarded as the creator and king of the gods.
2. Of course, the word translated “swarms” literally means “mixtures”, or as the KJV puts it “divers sorts”. Thus, a combination of various fly species could have been included, such as dog flies, horse flies, and bird flies. Bird flies were honored in the Egyptian Book of the Dead as supposedly being able to bring a man to heaven.
3. Regardless of what these swarms consisted of, the Egyptians deified nearly everything. There is little doubt that some creature they cherished as a god invaded, then destroyed, their land.

- B. Exodus 8:22-23** *“And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am Jehovah in the midst of the land. I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.”*

Notice that Goshen, the land where Israel dwelt, was untouched. A selective plague like this can hardly be attributed to normal occurrence.

- C. Exodus 8:25-32** *“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, ‘Go, sacrifice to your God in the land.’ And Moses said, ‘It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to Jehovah our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? We will go three days’ journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to Jehovah our God as He will command us.’ So Pharaoh said, ‘I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to Jehovah your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me.’ Then Moses said, ‘Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat Jehovah, that the swarms of flies may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to Jehovah.’ So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated Jehovah. And Jehovah did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.”*

This plague cannot be attributed to natural causes in that when God decreed its end *“not one remained”*.

V. “ALL THE LIVESTOCK OF EGYPT DIED”

- A. Exodus 9:1-3, 5-6** *“Then Jehovah said to Moses, ‘Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, “Thus says Jehovah God of the Hebrews: ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me. For if you refuse to let them go, and still hold them, behold, the hand*

of Jehovah will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep — a very severe pestilence.””

... Then Jehovah appointed a set time, saying, ‘Tomorrow Jehovah will do this thing in the land.’ So Jehovah did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died.”

1. The goddess Hathor was pictured as a cow, giving Pharaoh divine milk to drink. If the cattle perished, Hathor died, too. As the deity of love, joy, and beauty, her downfall meant the end of all of Egypt’s glory, not to mention the end of Pharaoh’s divine sustenance.
2. A live bull, known as the Apis bull, which was cared for just as if it was a god, symbolized Ptah, considered the creator god. The bull was given special food, bathed and brushed daily, and was dressed in special clothes. When one died, it was mummified and buried just like a pharaoh. There is a tomb in Egypt with nothing but the burial chambers of these Apis bulls. When one died, the priests would search the entire land to find a calf that met the qualifications of the Apis bull. With the death of the cattle, there were no replacements available for the Apis, and thus the Egyptian creator god Ptah was overthrown.
3. Livestock were used for religious sacrifice. Diseased animals were not acceptable. Thus, sacrifices could not be offered, further inhibiting service to the gods of Egypt.
4. Livestock were used for calculating wealth. The pestilence must have devastated the Egyptian economy.
5. Livestock were used for transporting heavy loads. Without them, burdens would be carried by man or would not be moved at all.

B. ***Exodus 9:4, 7** “And Jehovah will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel.*

...Then Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go."

Once again, God sent a selective plague, one which ruined Egypt, but left the land of Goshen, the habitation of Israel, untouched.