

II. The Plagues

First Encounter with Pharaoh---a type of Satan

Exodus 5:1-22, “Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD GOD of Israel: ‘Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.’” And Pharaoh said, ‘Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.’ So they said, The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days’ journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with sword.’ Then the king of Egypt said to them, ‘Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get *back* to your labor.’ And Pharaoh said, ‘Look, the people of the land *are* many now, and you make them rest from their labor!’ So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, ‘You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, ‘Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.’ Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words.’ And the taskmasters of the people and their officers went out and spoke to the people, saying, ‘Thus says Pharaoh: ‘I will not give you straw. Go get yourselves straw where you can find it; yet none of your work will be reduced.’’ So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. And the taskmasters forced *them* to hurry, saying, ‘Fulfill your work, *your* daily quota, as when there was straw.’ Also the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten *and* were asked, ‘Why have you not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as before?’ Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, ‘Why are you dealing thus with your servants? There is no straw given to your servants, and they say to us, ‘Make brick!’ And indeed your servants are beaten, but the fault *is* in your *own* people.’ But he said, ‘You *are* idle! Idle! Therefore you say, ‘Let us go *and* sacrifice to the LORD.’ Therefore go now *and* work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks.’ And the officers of the children of Israel saw *that* they *were* in trouble after it was said, ‘You shall not reduce *any* bricks from your quota.’ Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them. ‘Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us.’ So Moses returned to the LORD and said, ‘LORD, why have You

brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all.” Now Egypt in the Bible has always been a type for sin and this evil world. When God is about to draw a person or a people to himself, to be his children, his servants, ‘the prince of the power of the air’, Satan, always resists and tries to hold that person or people in his grasp. There is always a struggle to come free of the world, it’s evil systems and come out from under Satan’s grasp. Pharaoh Amenhotep II here is being used in the Bible as a type for Satan, who owns the world. In Matthew 4:8, when Satan offered the kingdoms of the world to Jesus if Jesus would bow down to him, notice Jesus never told Satan that the kingdoms of the world were not his to give. He corrected Satan only where he was wrong, where Satan offered the kingdoms of the world **if Jesus would bow down and worship him.** This world, its governments, its peoples today are firmly in the hands and under the influence of Satan. Just a simple study of the history of mankind, filled with countless brutal wars, between evil dictators and the innocent, where most of the time the evil wins out. And even the good in this world falls way short of being righteous. **The children of Israel are a type for the believers God the Father has drawn to Jesus over the centuries. In that process of drawing us to Jesus by the Holy Spirit there is always a titanic struggle between the god of this world, Satan, to retain ownership over that individual, and God to succeed in drawing that person to Jesus.** Satan, just as Pharaoh, does not want to lose one single person under his deceptive sway. But as we’ll see as we read on, it is God, Yahweh, who freed these Hebrew slaves, and in like manner it is Jesus who frees those who would come to him from this world and the god of this world. Right now these Israelites are not free to go and worship God, Yahweh, they are still in slavery. The titanic struggle is just beginning. This is a story of redemption, Yahweh redeeming his people from the world and the god of this world, represented by Pharaoh Amenhotep II. As you will see, though, the struggle is a bit one-sided. As powerful as Amenhotep II was, he was no match for the LORD God. [Comment: By the way, when “LORD” is spelled with all capital letters in the King James and New King James, it is from the Hebrew YHVH, traditionally *Jehovah*, and it means Yahweh. Jesus name in Hebrew is Yeshua, a contraction of Yahweh-shua, meaning “God saves”. The very one who was about to deliver the children of Israel from this Pharaoh was none other than the pre-incarnate Yeshua ha Meshiach, Jesus the Messiah.] Other places in the New Testament show that Satan is the god of this world. When Jesus had cast out a demon, in Matthew 9:34 the Pharisees accused him of doing so by the power of the prince of the devils. Again in Matthew 12:24 the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons “but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” Jesus remarked just before his death, in John 12:31, “Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” Satan, by Jesus’ own words was called **“the prince of this world”**. In John 14:30, just before his betrayal by Judas while on the Mount of Olives, Jesus said, “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for **the prince of this world** cometh, and hath nothing in me.” Paul, telling the Ephesians how they have been set free from this world, said, “And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to **the prince of the power of the**

air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conduct in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” This Pharaoh is just a type of the real ruler of this world, Satan, who holds the world captive under his evil influence, holding the world from God and the knowledge of God (cf. Rev. 12:9). The pre-incarnate Yeshua, Jesus is just about to set the Israelites free from this Pharaoh, just as he will someday set the world free from Satan, as seen in Revelation 20:1-3, “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.” So, just as Pharaoh made it real tough on the Israelite slaves because ‘they were asking through Moses and Aaron’ to be set free, Satan often makes it real tough, through suddenly appearing adverse circumstances, for the new believer to follow through and fully come out of the world to serve God. These Israelites were hurting, due to the increased work-load this slave-driving Pharaoh was loading onto them. But soon the tables would turn in favor of them, and not Pharaoh.

God delivers a promise of deliverance to the Israelites

“Exodus 6:1-9, “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.’ And God spoke to Moses and said to him: ‘I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name LORD [Hebrew *YHVH*, or I AM] I was not known to them. I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. Therefore say to the children of Israel: I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.’ So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of the anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.” “Anguish of spirit” via hard circumstances in our lives can often make us deaf to God at times as well. God here is reconfirming his covenant to the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, given to them back in Canaan

about 430 years ago, dating from the time of Abraham in Genesis 15. But when Moses repeated the Lord's word to the Israelites they didn't want to hear anymore. They had been under very real slavery since Pharaoh Ahmose I in 1576BC until now in 1446BC, exactly 130 years of abject slavery. Any ally of the Hyksos pharaohs would have gone into bondage immediately under the pharaoh that drove the Hyksos out of Egypt. Under Thutmose I the drowning of all the Hebrew male babies took place, around 1525BC when Moses was born. So these folks didn't want to hear mere words, they wanted action, or else they're going back to work and not making any waves to make things worse for themselves under this nasty pharaoh. Often when a person comes to the Lord, asks Jesus into their lives, makes that commitment, things get tough, relatives start giving you trouble, friends give you trouble, sometimes abandon you. I remember being drawn to the Lord and coming into a Sabbatarian Church of God, having to tell the boss I couldn't work on the Lord's Day, the Sabbath. I lost my job, they let me go right away. I was going through all kinds of rejection from friends and relatives alike. Satan didn't want to let go of one who had been under his "administration". These folks were in fear for their lives, and they lived in fear day and night. So far this guy Moses hadn't done anything to free them. This God who said he would free them hadn't done anything but talk, at this point, talking through Moses. And this got them into more hot water with Pharaoh Amenhotep II. Remember what Amenhotep II had done to those seven Mitanni princes, hung their bodies on the prow of his ship upside down. The Israelites must have witnessed that ship going up the Nile to Thebes when this happened. This occurred just recently, just before Moses returned. It was his first military campaign. So the Israelites had ample proof of what this new Pharaoh was like. Just like when a new C.E.O. takes over a company. I worked for a large semi-conductor manufacturer. One time a new C.E.O. took over and soon we learned that whenever the end of the quarter rolled around, by whatever amount of money the company fell short by in their projected profits for that quarter, the number of employees whose combined pay made up for that short-fall would be laid off, fired. Rulership by fear is what it amounted to, so I know how these Israelites felt. Then a new C.E.O took over that viewed all employees as valuable resources. During these bad economic times and recession he has not laid off a single employee! He did say everybody had to take ten days off between now and June without pay, to help get them through these tough times. When he visits he drives up in his own car, doesn't arrive in a limo or some corporate jet, and this is a large international semi-conductor manufacturer. We used to refer to the other C.E.O. as Darth Vader under our breathes. God often allows us to go through some discomfort from the world, and our friends and relatives, employers, as he's drawing us to Jesus, just as Pharaoh increased their work-load and multiplied persecution against them. The Israelites had to tough it out and be patient, just as we do now when God is drawing us to belief in Jesus. But our situations are often not as bad as theirs was, although under some of the government administrations in this world we live in, it can be quite deadly to come to Jesus, like in the Muslim countries or over in Hindu India. The Lord must work modern-day miracles for those folks, as he did for the Israelites.

God begins to act, Aaron's rod turns to a serpent

This was just the beginning, the opening act, which is going to lead to the temporary destruction of Egypt. By whatever means of net-working Moses used to gain an audience with the king, Pharaoh conceded to meet with these two old men, probably amused and curious as to what they were going to say.[Amenhotep II was 24 years old in 1446BC] He of coarse would ask for some miraculous proof that the God of the Israelites was real, hoping to embarrass these two in front of his court, and at the same time provide some amusement for his court as they watched. At first, they must have watched in amusement. They, of course, were in for a surprise, and they got it. **Exodus 7:8-13**, “**Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Show me a miracle for yourselves,’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent.’** So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the **LORD commanded**. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments [secret arts]. For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the **LORD had said.**”

The First Plague: Waters Become Blood

Now first, realize that Egypt was a wealthy agrarian society because of the Nile river, which once a year like clockwork would flood way beyond its banks, covering all the land with a rich silt that would fertilize the land. Massive artificial embankments on the floodplain would be created, so when the Nile flooded, these would become artificial lakes when the Nile receded back to it's banks. From these massive holding lakes would come water to feed a massive irrigation system all along the farmland that existed within the floodplain. When a nation can support itself sufficiently with foodstuff, labor can be diverted for other things. Grain can be sold to foreign lands, and the nation becomes rich and powerful. Such was the nation of Egypt. But their main source of power was from the Nile river. **Exodus 7:14-25**, “**So the LORD 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,**

‘The LORD 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 the LORD: ‘By this you shall know that I *am* the LORD. 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 the LORD spoke to Moses, ‘Say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their pools of water, [remember those irrigation lakes I mentioned? This is direct reference to them.] that they become blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.*’ And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD 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. 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. Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh’s heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. 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 the LORD struck the river.” I don’t know if any of you have been to Egypt, but tourists are told that they must drink from one to two cups of water an hour when they’re out in the sun, or else they will end up in the hospital suffering from severe dehydration. It is hot down there. Egypt is only three parallels from the equator. All farming would have stopped for these seven days as well, more than likely. No one without water to drink would be out in the fields laboring. Egypt spent seven days without drinking water, water of any kind. This is only the beginning. But Pharaoh’s magicians, coming along with vats of clean water through their magic arts turned them to blood. A smug look must have come over Pharaoh, and he probably remarked that everything Moses and Aaron did his magicians were also able to do. ‘But since you already turned the Nile to blood, obviously my magicians can’t use that trick.’ But looking out over the vast Nile, he must have had some disturbing thoughts in the back of his mind about who he was up against. Obviously these doubts weren’t loud enough yet in his mind. I don’t know if you have ever noticed this, but these plagues are a direct counterpart of the plagues described in the Book of Revelation, where God begins to judge the nations of this world (represented here by Egypt) with similar plagues, intended to bring Egypt, and then the world at a later date, to their knees, this present evil world ruled by Satan, the counterpart of this Egyptian Pharaoh. Pharaoh is a very real type of Satan, as Egypt is of this evil world. One thing this plague would have done, since it lasted for seven days, is that all livestock would have to have been brought in out of the sun, and kept still in order to survive without water for seven days. Some of the livestock must have perished. Farming and all construction work must have ceased, without water. All of Egypt and Pharaoh himself must have celebrated when they saw the Nile flowing clear and clean again when they woke up on the morning of the eighth day. Perhaps Pharaoh

started to reason he could win out against the God of Israel with patience, by waiting out these plagues. If so, that reasoning would prove to be a costly mistake.

The Second Plague: Frogs

Exodus 8:1-12, “**And the LORD spoke to Moses, ‘Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: ‘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 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, and on your people, and on all your servants.’ Then the LORD 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. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, ‘Entreat the LORD 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 the LORD.’ 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 the LORD 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 the LORD concerning the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. So the LORD did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields. They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said.”** God is starting to get Pharaoh’s attention, enough so that he temporarily relents. Ooh, frogs, I used to love them when I was a young teenager. One thing I learned about frogs, they’re like cats, they seem to have nine lives, they’re very hardy. But given time in the hot sun, they will die, and then they will stink with a smell quite similar to rotting fish. Can you imagine, Pharaoh suddenly awakened by a blood-curdling scream from one of the servant women, maybe a cook, added to that the screams of other servant-women, and then the sounds of a real commotion going on outside his bedroom chambers? Then after a very short while, angrily this Pharaoh would have sat up to cry out for silence. But as he did he must have felt something cold and slippery move under his sheets, and as he pushed with his hands

to sit upright, he pushed down on one of these green frogs. As the light of dawn came into the room he could see these greenish frogs leaping through the open windows and across the floor of his bedchamber. They got into everything in his palace as well as into all the homes of every single Egyptian. They got into pots, pans, kneading bowls with bread dough in them, stoves and ovens. They covered the streets, and the farmer's fields were covered with them as well. The holding lakes and ponds for irrigation were a mass of floating, swimming frogs, completely covering the water's surface, as well as the irrigation canals. They were coming out of all these water sources like army ants coming out of their nests, an army of green frogs. The whole habitable land of Egypt that was on the floodplain of the Nile was covered in green, crawling, jumping frogs. Many of the frogs, as the day wore on, in the heat of the baking Egyptian sun, would have begun dying and starting to rot in that hot Egyptian sun. Also many others were being killed by the Egyptians, desperately trying to rid themselves and their homes of these waterborne pesky little fellows that kids love so much. As the day wore on, the smell would have been increasing by the minute until it grew intolerable, the whole land starting to smell like rotting fish, the way a rotting dead frog smells. But for every frog that died others showed up to take their place. No one could walk without feeling the slippery crunch of squishing frog as its bones broke under foot, letting out a load croak as it died. And it didn't die right away, even after being stepped on, frogs are very indestructible in that way, as every child within range of a pond knows. The situation must have seemed hilarious to the Israelites, who likewise were suffering, but gleeful to see their tormentors suffering so much, and in such a funny way. Also they were joyful to see just how powerful their God was in beginning to bring about their delivery from Egypt. So they quietly put up with this plague as they shut up their houses, like the Egyptians were doing. I'm willing to bet you could hear loud laughter coming from the Israelite homes. We know from these passages that God did not spare them from these opening plagues. Apparently God, Yahweh, felt it necessary to demonstrate to them as well just how real he really was. We know Pharaoh didn't wait long to summon Moses and Aaron and plead with them to take away the frogs. He even promised to let the Israelites go if Moses would get God to lift this frog-plague from the land of Egypt. **"Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, 'Entreat the LORD 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 the LORD'** (verse 8). He might have started to worry about his own people starting to flee from the land of Egypt if this plague didn't stop soon. He would become the Pharaoh ruling over a nation of frogs if he didn't act soon. This would have made him the laughingstock of all the neighboring countries around Egypt. **"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 the LORD 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 the LORD concerning the frogs which He

had brought against Pharaoh. So the LORD did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields. They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank” (verses 9-14). It says the land stank. It must have stunk before, but now the smell must have been overpowering. One of those situations where you cover your face with wet cloths and start seriously praying for wind to come out of the desert and blow towards the Nile. I’ve smelled the smell of my submarine’s sanitary tank, but for the Bible to say “the land stank”, it must have rivaled that smell, and I can’t think of a worse smell than a submarine’s sanitary tank. **“But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said”** (verse 15). But when this Pharaoh saw that the plague was lifted, he quickly changed his mind, and said that the Israelites couldn’t go free. It’s like the old saying, “A person convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.” Pharaoh didn’t want to believe there was anyone stronger or more powerful than he was, not even God. He had grand designs for Egypt, and all his building projects would collapse without a numerous slave-base to fuel his grand design for Egypt. He was on a power-trip, like most powerful dictators are, with no thought to the cost or consequences. Next plague, coming up.

3rd Plague, the Plague of Lice (or Gnats)

Exodus 8:16-19, “So the LORD 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 struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 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 the LORD had said.” Now we see a slight change here. God didn’t even tell Moses to warn Pharaoh about the next plague. Pharaoh had promised God through Moses he would do something and he didn’t do it. You don’t mess with God like that. So the next plague comes without any warning to Pharaoh or his servants, or to his people. While still burying the heaps of dead frogs, suddenly the Egyptians found themselves engulfed in the middle of billions of biting, blood-sucking insects. It was hard to breathe without inhaling them. Again, like the frogs, they invaded the royal palace and all the houses of the Egyptians. But unlike the frogs, the gnats could get in through the best prepared barriers that had been set up to resist them. A house would have to have been built as air-tight as a submarine to stop these little guys, and back then, of course, they weren’t constructed that way. So frog clean-up detail as well as all farming and construction ground to a halt again. Life yet again had reached a pure survival-mode existence for all of Egypt. It appears the Israelites went through this

plague as well, as nothing is mentioned of their protection from this one. Within hours of the start of this plague people and animals were groaning in agony---there was no escape. Not even Pharaoh could escape, in spite of the best efforts of his servants. But as seen from his lack of response to call Moses and Aaron, he obviously had decided to stubbornly wait this one out too. The first definition used in Strong's for the word translated "lice" in the King James is "gnat" in the Hebrew. It is really gnats that struck Egypt, apparently. Small black-flies, called buffalo gnats. There are over 1,800 species of black flies (11 are extinct). They all gain nourishment by sucking blood from other animals. The Egyptians themselves must have started to become aware of "this strange God-source" that was creating all these plagues, in spite of what Pharaoh may have been telling them. When the magicians were called to duplicate this plague they couldn't do it. They told Pharaoh "This is the finger of God." Apparently this plague of gnats lasted only a day, as we read on.

4th Plague: Flies

Exodus 8:20-32, "And the LORD 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 the LORD: '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 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 the LORD in the midst of the land. I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.' And the LORD 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. 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 the LORD 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 the LORD our God as He will command us. So Pharaoh said, 'I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD 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 the LORD, 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 the LORD.' So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. And the LORD 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 time Moses was told by the LORD to go and confront Pharaoh early in the morning, about letting the Israelites go again. ‘If you don’t’ he tells Pharaoh, ‘your land, and all the houses of Egypt will be filled with swarms of flies. We’re not sure what type of flies they are, because “flies” isn’t even in the King James, just “swarms”. So they must be some sort of swarm of flying insects, that by the context of these verses, the King James translators made an educated guess that they were “flies.”’ God then doesn’t wait for a response from Pharaoh, but goes about covering Egypt with swarms of flies of some type. But this time ‘Moses tells Pharaoh that the land of Goshen where the Israelites live, will be spared from here on out, that the Israelites would be supernaturally spared from having to go through any more plagues that God may bring upon Egypt.’ Moses told Pharaoh this plague would start the next day. These deadly biting insects soon filled the royal palace and all the houses in Egypt (except in Goshen), as well as covering the land. It says, “the land was ruined by the flies.” That would mean crops were damaged and helpless animals and humans caught outside may have perished, as some individuals have in the Yukon and northern Canadian territories during the spring fly and mosquito season. Again, Pharaoh relents and agrees to let the Israelites go, but not too far. And then he begs Moses and Aaron to have the plague of flies lifted. This had to be a different and more harmful fly than the common house-fly, as it destroyed crops and wounded and sickened what must have been thousands. And plants as well must have had their leaves gnawed away, so they withered and died. But yet again, this proud and stubborn warrior-pharaoh went back on his word the minute the plague was lifted. Moses and Aaron must have been disappointed. God did not tell them exactly how long this was going to take, he just kept giving them instructions on a daily basis, little by little. It was only when they were safely out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, when they could all look back on these events and get the BIG PICTURE of what God had done to redeem them from Pharaoh and abject slavery in Egypt. That is often the way God deals with new-believer Christian and Messianic believers, little by little, here a little, there a little in his revelations to us in our daily lives, as he draws us out of our slavery to sin and this evil world. Don’t feel bad, new believers. It is also often the way the LORD deals with us old-timer believers too, in his revelations to us. God is the same yesterday, today and forever, as it says in one passage of Scripture. The patterns of God’s handiwork in our lives are best viewed looking back over an expanse of time. But now things are going to get deadly for the poor Egyptians and their livestock. Before, these were annoyance plagues for the most part, although some may have died. Now things are going to get worse.

5th Plague: Plague on Livestock

Exodus 9:1-7, “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, ‘Thus says the LORD 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 the LORD 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. And the LORD 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 the LORD appointed a time, saying, ‘Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land.’ So the LORD 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. 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.” Within a few hours a lot of Egypt’s livestock died. In spite of losing a good deal of livestock from this plague, Pharaoh didn’t give in this time, either. So God lines up another one. One thing to notice, God was dealing a death-blow to most of the Egyptian gods too, as these plagues progress. They worshipped the Nile, it was turned to blood. They worshipped cattle---the apis bull. Now most of the cattle had died. What’s next?

6th Plague: Boils on man and beast

Exodus 9:8-12, “So the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ‘Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout the land of Egypt. Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered *them* toward heaven. And *they* caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.” How appropriate, the Israelites had been forced to labor making bricks. Moses was instructed to take some ashes from one of the brick-kilns and throw them into the wind, which probably had sprung up just for the occasion. Moses and Aaron did this as Pharaoh stood by watching them. ‘We were instructed by the LORD our God to bring these ashes and throw them into the air before you’ they told Pharaoh. ‘These have been taken out of the brick-kilns where you have had so many of our people slaving away.’ Then Moses and Aaron took handfuls of ashes and threw them into the air, scattering them into the wind that had sprung up. The magicians standing near Moses and Aaron couldn’t stand there for very long, because of the painful boils that were breaking out all over their own bodies, wherever the ash particles touched their skin. Soon all the Egyptians were covered with these painful boils as well. But yet

again, Pharaoh toughed this one out as well, not relenting to God's demands for Israelite freedom. Pharaoh's grand design for Egyptian Grandeur in the eyes of all the nations weren't about to be derailed by a few painful boils. Again the Israelites were spared of this plague too, as well as all the ones to follow.

7th Plague: The Plague of Hail and Lightning

Exodus 9:13-33, “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me, for at this time I will send all my plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that *there is* none like Me in all the earth. Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. But indeed for this *purpose* I have raised you up, that I may show My power *in* you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go. Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now. Therefore send now *and* gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is not brought home; and they shall die.’ He who feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. But he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field. Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt---on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, there was no hail. And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, ‘I have sinned this time. The LORD is righteous, and my people and I *are* wicked. Entreat the LORD, that there may be no *more* mighty thunders and hail, for *it is* enough. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.’ So Moses said to him, ‘As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth *is* the LORD’S. But as for you and your servants, I know that you will not yet fear the LORD God.’ Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley *was* in the head and the flax *was* in bud. But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they *are* late crops. So Moses went

out of the city from Pharaoh and spread out his hands to the LORD; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken to Moses.” Hail and lightning in Egypt are quite uncommon, so Pharaoh and many of his servants must have dismissed Moses’ warning. Moses probably felt his warning was in vain. But there was a growing number of Pharaoh’s servants and common Egyptian folk who were developing a real serious respect for the God of Israel. It was those who were wise enough to bring their servants and livestock under shelter. The word must have rapidly spread around Egypt to those who were beginning to heed the warnings. What followed was a deadly combination of lightning and huge hail-stones which came crashing down to the ground, killing whatever they struck, both animal and human. Every animal and human caught out in the open died. Imagine huge bolts of lightning crackling everywhere you looked, flashing and striking with an ever-increasing frequency as this “plague” got going. And the same went for the hail, lightning striking, thunder booming, hail-stones the size of soft-balls and larger crashing down everywhere. Nano-seconds after the lightning bolts stuck giant booms louder than cannons or large artillery pieces went off. This went on for hours. Seeing his people and their remaining livestock (and his) being so devastated made Pharaoh weaken again, as he finally sent for Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh again admitted God was in the right and he and his people were in the wrong. But again, when this plague was lifted, in spite of all the carnage it had caused, he changed his mind yet another time and would not let the Israelites go as he had promised.

8th Plague: Locusts

Exodus 10:1-20, “Now the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go in to Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son’s son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.’ So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. They shall fill your houses, and the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians--which neither your fathers nor your fathers’ fathers have seen, since the day

that they were on the earth to this day.' And he turned and went out from Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, 'How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?' So Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, 'Go, serve the LORD your God. Who are the ones that are going?' And Moses said, 'We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD.' Then he said to them, 'The LORD had better be with you when I let you and your little ones go! Beware, for evil is ahead of you. Not so! Go now, you *who are* men, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desired.' And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence. Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land---all that the hail has left.' So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day and all *that* night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. *They were* very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, 'I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that He may take away from me this death only.' So he went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. And the LORD turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go." If Pharaoh rose early that next day he may have looked east at the rising sun (Egyptians worshipped the sun-god]. As he watched he would have noticed the sun turning a dull red, and then it darkened to a pale grey. And then it was blotted out from view, as if from some dark curtain being drawn over it. Sandstorms had come out of the eastern desert before, so he may not have given it the thought he should have. But soon he became aware of a loud buzzing sound. Then some of these large red and black insects landed on his window ledge. Locusts! This plague Moses and Aaron had warned him of was beginning! These large winged grasshopper-like insects flew into all the windows like a huge squadron of bombers. Soon the royal palace was abuzz with millions of these large flying insects, sending palace servants everywhere in a vain attempt to yet again seal off all the windows and entrances to the palace. Actually they might have been getting better at the routine. But they still had to kill and clean up millions that had gotten in before the palace went into a sort of lock-down. Every home in Egypt was doing the same thing. The whole land of Egypt was now covered in a quivering mass of locusts, devouring every bit of plant-life left after the hailstorm. If the inhabitants of Egypt were able to get a glance out

of a window before it was sealed, they would have seen all their fields and trees over all the land covered with this moving blanket of devouring insects. Soon every green-leafed plant and stalk had been stripped bare, leaves and stalks eaten right down to the bare earth. Trees where stripped bare of all leaves, and more than likely the bark was starting to disappear on them as well. Thankfully for the Egyptians the wheat hadn't sprouted up yet and was still underground. All green grass in pasturelands, except in Goshen, was stripped to bare earth. The devastation to all plant-life was near total. Again Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, confessing he had sinned and done evil, asking that the plague be lifted. A strong wind came out of the west blowing eastward. It blew all the locusts into the Red Sea. When the Egyptians were now able to come out of their houses, what they saw before their eyes was the total devastation of their land. The land had been totally stripped bare of all vegetation. As Pharaoh viewed the devastation he must have grown intensely angry. He again changed his mind and told Moses that the Israelites couldn't go free.

9th Plague: intense darkness

Exodus 10:21-29, “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt---darkness that can be felt.’ So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. No one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived. Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, ‘Go, worship the LORD. Even your women and children may go with you; only leave your flocks and herds behind.’ But Moses said, ‘You must allow us to have sacrifices and burnt offerings to present to the LORD our God. Our livestock too must go with us; not a hoof is to be left behind. We have to use some of them in worshipping the LORD our God, and until we get there we will not know what we are to use to worship the LORD.’ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he was not willing to 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.’ ‘Just as you say,’ Moses replied, ‘I will never appear before you again.’ Here we see in this next to last plague, that the God of Israel had just destroyed the Egyptian sun-god, RA or something like that, in the eyes of all Egypt. The God of Israel had the power to blank out the sun before their very eyes, and for three days and three nights, there was no light whatsoever. It was such total darkness that even the stars and moon didn’t shine. I was talking to a man whose father was a coalminer. They can experience total darkness way down in the mine, sometimes half a mile down, when the lights are turned off. He said it was a very eerie experience. **Verse 24**, “ Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, ‘Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back. Let your little

ones also go with you.” As the light started returning to Egypt Pharaoh again offered to let the Israelites go, all of them, except for their rich and numerous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. Moses, aware of the great losses of Egyptian sheep and cattle, knew what Pharaoh was up to. Egypt desperately needed cattle and sheep as replacement animals for the ones they had just lost, and also knew that 2.5 million Israelites going into the wilderness without a source of milk and meat may soon turn around and return to Egypt. Moses stuck to the original demand of God, that all be set free, including all their cattle and sheep. Pharaoh got really angry at Moses reply, whereupon Pharaoh told Moses and Aaron to leave his presence, and that if he ever saw their faces again, he would have them killed. Moses replied, ‘Just as you say, you shall never see my face again.’ But before he left Pharaoh Moses said this to him, **“So Moses said, ‘This is what the LORD says: ‘About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt---worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.’ Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, ‘Go, you and all the people who follow you!’ After that I will leave.’ Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh”** (Exodus 11: 4-8, NIV). After that, God said to Moses, **“Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you---so that My wonders may be multiplied in Egypt.”**

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