

The Plague of a Hard Heart

Exodus 7-10

Why were the plagues necessary?

- God predicted the plagues (Exodus 3:19-20)
- Pharaoh's nature required the plagues (Exodus 5:2)
- The plagues were judgments on the gods of the Egyptians (Exodus 12:12)
- The plagues affected all the Egyptians
- The plagues were designed to redeem Israel from slavery so that they could serve and worship God (7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3, 7-8, 11, 24, 26)
- The plagues were designed to convince both Israel and the Egyptians of God's presence (Exodus 6:10-12; 7:4-5; 10:2)
- God's grace is evident in the plagues

The plagues may have occurred over a period of about nine months. The 1st occurred when the Nile rises (July – August). The 7th (9:31) was in January, when barley ripens and flax blossoms. The prevailing east winds in March or April in the 8th plague (10:13) would have brought in locusts. And the 10th plague (chaps. 11-12) occurred in April, the Passover month.

God demonstrates his power so that people might know him and worship him.

Plague	Scripture	Instrument	Warning	Egyptian God	Pharaoh's response
<i>First cycle</i>					
1 Nile turned to blood	7:14-25	Staff of Aaron	“Go to Pharaoh in the morning” (7:15)	Hapi (Apis), god of the Nile Isis, goddess of the Nile Khnum, guardian of the Nile	Remained hard hearted, would not listen (7:22)
2 Frogs	8:1-15	Staff of Aaron	“Go in to Pharaoh” (8:1)	Heqet, goddess of birth	Begs relief and promises freedom (8:8); hardens his heart, would not listen (8:15)
3 Gnats	8:16-19	Staff of Aaron	No warning	Set, god of the desert	Magicians – “This is the finger of God” (8:19) Pharaoh's heart was hardened, would not listen (8:19)
<i>Second cycle</i>					
4 Flies	8:20-32		“. . . in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh” (8:20)	Ra, a sun god Uatchit, represented by a fly	Bargains (8:28), but hardens his heart (8:32)
5 Death of livestock	9:1-7		“Go in to Pharaoh” (9:1)	Hathor, goddess with a cow head Apis, the bull god, symbol of fertility	Heart was hardened (9:7)
6 Boils	9:8-12		No warning	Sekhmet, goddess with power over disease Sunu, the pestilence god Isis, goddess of healing	God hardens his heart, Pharaoh would not listen (9:8)
<i>Third cycle</i>					
7 Hail	9:13-35	Staff of Moses	“. . . in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh” (9:13)	Nut, the sky goddess Osiris, god of crops and fertility Set, god of storms	Begs relief (9:27), promises freedom (9:28), but his heart was hardened (9:35)
8 Locusts	10:1-20	Staff of Moses	“Go in to Pharaoh” (10:1)	Nut, the sky goddess Osiris, god of crops and fertility	Bargains (10:11), begs relief (10:17), God hardens his heart (10:20)
9 Darkness	10:21-29	Hand of Moses	No warning	Ra, the sun god Nut, a sky goddess Hathor, a sky goddess	Bargains (10:24), God hardens his heart (10:27)
<i>Final plague</i>					
10 Death of the firstborn	11:1-12:32		No warning	Pharaoh's firstborn son, a god	Pharaoh and Egyptians beg Israel to leave Egypt (12:31-32)