

Lessons from The Plagues Upon Egypt

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We know as we approach this Spring Holy day season, that the Exodus miracles and the whole gigantic event of Israel coming out of Egypt with all the miracles and the plagues, are viewed by the world, as mere myth and fairy tales. The world just poo-poo's it. The Christian world in many cases, tries to explain the plagues in Egypt as natural phenomenon. I've read accounts where they explain turning the water into blood as an infusion of red plankton, which all of a sudden makes the water become red. Or the plague of total blackness was just a bad sand storm in the Middle East. They explain it away and they explore every option, except giving our Father the credit for performing a miracle.

As we know, the miracles of the plagues are an integral part of the Exodus and what actually happened. The fact is that God Almighty took Egypt down so completely—absolutely completely—that Egypt could not bother Israel during the forty years in the wilderness. They could not regroup and rearm and come back after them. He decimated Egypt so completely by these plagues. The question we need to think about is, what do these plagues have to do with us today, thousands of years later?

The title of the sermon is:

Lessons From the Plagues Upon Egypt

What we are going to do is look at three areas. We are going to briefly look at the background at the time of the Exodus and that will give us a little bit of perspective when we get to the second area. That is when we will look at and examine the ten plagues in detail. In the third area we are going to look to see what lessons we can draw from the account of the ten plagues.

1. The background at the time of the Exodus—three brief points.

1A. Egypt did not know Who the Almighty God was.

They did not have a clue. In Exodus 5 and verses 1 and 2 we see that. Egypt didn't know Who the Almighty was.

Exodus 5:1 *And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, thus saith the LORD God of Israel, let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.*

2) And Pharaoh said, who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go. (KJV)

From the Pharaoh on down to the basest of the Egyptians in their cultural hierarchy, none of them had a clue Who the God of Israel was. Did not have a clue about the Power and the Might of Yehovah.

That is the first point in the background.

1B. God was not fully understood by Israel.

The Almighty was not understood by Israel. In Chapter 10 and verse 1, Yehovah had to re-identify Himself to the Israelites.

Exodus 10:1 *And the LORD said unto Moses, go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him:*

2) And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; [here's the reason why] that ye may know how that I am the LORD. (KJV)

That you may know Me and understand Me and what I am going to do is a demonstration of that. It is obvious, that after several centuries of slavery, Israel had lost the identity of the true God. Over that time, they had lost it. So Yehovah was actually reintroducing Himself to Israel who had lost that identity.

1C. Through the miracles, Yehovah would identify Himself not just to Israel, but to Egypt also and to the nations all around, once the story of what actually happened became noised abroad.

In Chapter 7:5 Yehovah is speaking at this point. Notice what God Almighty says.

Exodus 7:5 *And the Egyptians shall know [and of course Israel also because they were there] that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. (KJV)*

Both nations are going to see in a very, very dramatic fashion Who the true God is and they will be witnesses to His supreme Power. We will see, as we go through this, that Yehovah made a miraculous distinction between Egypt and Israel in the last seven plagues.

With that background:

2. Let's look at the ten plagues one by one.

If you research the population of Egypt at that time, it is estimated that Egypt's population was about 20 million. Today that would be equal to the population of Florida or New York State, which is a sizeable number of people. This was not some myth about some "backroad clan" or something like that. This was a major nation and there

were a lot of people in that land. Here is a little from Clark's commentary about the Egyptian culture at that time.

Perhaps a few people were more superstitious than the Egyptians. Almost every production of nature was an object of their worship. The sun, the moon, the planets, the stars, the river Nile, animals of all sorts, from the human being to the monkey, the dog, the cat and even the onions and leeks which grew from their gardens. Jupiter was adorned by them under the form of a ram, Apollo under the form of a crow. Bacchus under that of a goat and Juno under that of a heifer.

The Egyptians worshipped this whole pantheon of gods from invisible ones to animals, to people. Of course, Pharaoh was viewed as a god also. We are going to see that the Almighty God destroyed the gods of Egypt before their very eyes. They would then know Who Yehovah was and Who the most powerful Being who has ever existed was. They would see that in dramatic fashion.

The first plague was the plague of water to blood.

Exodus 7:17 *Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD [He is identifying Himself both to Egypt and to Israel]: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.*

18) And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink [this gigantic river]; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river.

19) And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. (KJV)

Even the water within their homes.

20) And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote 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.

21) And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. (KJV)

From their river Nile, it went all the way to pots and pans containing water in their homes. Here's the point: The patron deity of Egypt was the Nile. The Nile was Egypt. It was necessary and worshipped for water and for agriculture. The Nile Delta flooded annually and, in that flood, it took this very rich top soil and coated over the area of the flood. It was a gentle flood and every year the soil was renewed and then the Nile provided water for the growing of crops. Therefore, it provided top soil and water for

crops. The miracle of this plague made the river that they worshipped as a god, worthless. When the blood dried in the hot sun, it caked and it stank. So right before their eyes, Yehovah destroyed Egypt's image of this god that they worshipped, the river Nile.

This was the first plague and He took out their form of agriculture and their form of getting water. So, this was the first one. You talk about getting their attention; the Almighty did it in dramatic fashion.

The second plague was the plague of the frogs.

Exodus 8:1 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, thus saith the LORD, [notice what He says] Let my people go, that they may serve me. (KJV)*

That's what our Father wants from all of us. He wants us to come out of the world, as Gordon mentioned in the Sermonette and to serve Him. Not serve the world or ourselves.

*2) And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs:
3) And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading troughs: (KJV)*

These frogs were everywhere. You couldn't get away from them. You try to bake something or cook something, they are there. You try to get away from them, they are there. You just cannot escape from these frogs. They were hopping all over the place.

4) And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants. (KJV)

These frogs were also coming up in the land of Goshen where Israel was. So, they had a taste of this.

5) And the LORD spake unto Moses, say unto Aaron, stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt.

6) And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. (KJV)

Notice verse 7.

7) And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt. (KJV)

Yes, who knows how they did it; Satan could have been involved or it could have been some “magic” trick that you see on shows on television or something like that. But their frogs certainly didn’t cover the entire land of Egypt. This was something small that they did.

8) Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD ... (KJV)

This is interesting because Pharaoh is calling the Almighty by His name. So now instead of saying I don’t know who this guy is, I don’t know your God, He is now referring to God Almighty, our Father, by His name Yehovah.

8 continued) ... that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD.

9) And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses [notice that, it’s another detail], that they may remain in the river only? (KJV)

That’s a miracle within a miracle.

10) And he said, Tomorrow. And he said, be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God. (KJV)

That lesson keeps being pounded home, miracle after miracle, plague after plague, so that you will know that I am the Almighty God, I am Yehovah.

11) And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. (KJV)

So, a miracle within a miracle.

12) And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh.

13) And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, [the frogs didn’t die in the houses; that’s a bit of mercy from Yehovah, they didn’t have to have stinking frogs in their homes] out of the villages, and out of the fields.

14) And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank. (KJV)

Can you imagine the size of heaps of frogs that they had to gather together—these huge mounds of them—then they started stinking and then the flies came and we can imagine the rest. The fact is, the frog is part of the Egyptian god family. The frog god is represented as a reptile with a frog’s head. The god’s name is Ptha; it has a frog’s head and a reptile’s body. So what God Almighty was doing was demoralizing the people to see their frog god being sent as plagues against them and then the frog god dying by

the millions or billions. Their frog god, not only dying, but stinking the place up. So, before their very eyes, God destroyed one of the gods that they worshipped.

The third plague was the plague of lice.

As we know in all cases Pharaoh hardened his heart and reneged and wouldn't let the people go.

Exodus 8:16 And the LORD said unto Moses, say unto Aaron, stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

17) And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. (KJV)

Stop and think about that. Today, in south central Washington, the wind is blowing and there is dust going everywhere—we came through clouds of dust coming here today. I grew up in West Texas and I know exactly what giant dust storms are like. Think about that—every speck of dust became lice. Think of that. We just blow right past it. In West Texas, sandstorms hurt. It's not little, fine dust, these are pieces of sand that sting when they hit you. Just think of every little speck of dust or piece of sand, turning into lice. There could be trillions of them for all we know.

18) And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: [they did for the first two plagues but not this plague] so there were lice upon man, and upon beast.

19) Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, this is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, [he was probably ticked that his magicians couldn't do it so he became stubborn and rebellious more than usual] and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. (KJV)

Some scholars, if you do research about what these lice actually were, say or speculate—it's all speculation—that they were gnats or mosquitos. Others say they were blood sucking, biting, burrowing insects. Kind of like ticks or if you grew up in East Texas and in the south, like chiggers. I got my introduction to chiggers when I went to college in East Texas. In the middle of the summer, I sat down on the grass and started itching a couple hours later and found out what chiggers do. They reside in the grass and you sit there and they crawl up into your shoes and socks and into your pant legs and they start biting; you can't see them. Wherever they bite they leave a blister and it itches like fire. You suffer for the next two or three days. We don't know exactly what these were, but they were most likely very, very uncomfortable.

On top of this the Egyptian culture had a fetish about cleanliness. Most of the Egyptians shaved the hair off their bodies. So, from the neck down, they were clean shaven—men and women. Because of this fetish about cleanliness, they washed often, they were very careful about that. Therefore, this was all the more nauseating for them to have these

animals—tiny little animals—chewing on them. These unclean bugs. So that obviously disturbed the average Egyptian.

The fourth plague was the plague of the flies

Pharaoh again said “no” again.

Exodus 8:20 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, thus saith the LORD, let my people go, that they may serve me. (KJV)*

That’s what God wants.

21) Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are. (KJV)

Meaning the numbers of flies are going to be so great, you can’t even see the ground. Notice a miracle within a miracle, verse 22.

22) And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou [Pharaoh] mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. (KJV)

This tells us that apparently the first three plagues were shared by Israel so they would get a taste of God’s power and a taste of His might. Yet now, there is a distinction being made between Yehovah’s people and the Egyptians. This would be clearly visible to the Egyptians.

23) And I will put a division between my people and thy people: tomorrow shall this sign be. (KJV)

Israel knew this proclamation; the Egyptians knew this proclamation. Yehovah was going to prove to Israel Who was the true God and who were His people versus who were not His people.

24) And the LORD did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies. (KJV)

Yet the land of Goshen was spared. So, there is a miracle—you walk from Egyptian territory into the Israelite territory and all of a sudden, the flies stop? How does that work? They don’t fly over where Israel lived? How do you do that? It shows the Power of God Almighty. The fact is, the Egyptian’s worshipped both flies and beetles. Some scholars say the plague was of a species called *blatta orientalis*. That is a beetle which

gnaws on clothes, furniture, plants, animals and man—they just eat up everything. The Egyptians particularly worshipped the scarab beetle. I think we've all heard of it. The scarab is a dung beetle. The reason it's called a dung beetle is because the scarab will find feces of other animals and roll it up into balls. Then they lay their eggs inside, what we would say, the ball of "caca" (this word is used in many languages as a slang term for "excrement"). The eggs would go in there and mature and then hatch. Then the scarab beetle will actually consume that ball in feeding their young. The Egyptians were aware of this cycle and it represented to them, the cycle of rebirth. All of a sudden, out of these dung balls came new life. So, they worshipped that. The scarab became a symbol of immortality and of resurrection and the scarab was used in funerary art. You can see images of scarabs on the sides of coffins or in the walls of their burial places. It was a symbol of rebirth or as we would say, a resurrection.

What Almighty God was doing was taking their symbol of immortality and have it chew on them. Think about that—this thing they worshipped is now eating them and causing them pain and suffering.

The fifth plague was a plague on the cattle.

Pharaoh was hardened and still would not relent.

Exodus 9:1 *Then the LORD said unto Moses, go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, let my people go, that they may serve me.*

2) For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still,

3) Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain. [The Hebrew means a "severe pestilence"]

4) And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel. (KJV)

Again, a miracle within a miracle.

5) And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, Tomorrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land.

6) And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one.

7) And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, [so he sent his people out to Goshen where Israel was] there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go. (KJV)

Now he was really ticked that his people were suffering, he was suffering and the Israelites were getting a pass. The fact is, Egypt worshipped cattle, especially the bull. The bull was originally their god of fertility. Over time it became associated with the god we talked about earlier—Ptha—and it became a herald of Ptha. If you look at the

extended history of Egypt up to the time of the Exodus, the bull was considered the god Ptha incarnate—meaning representing that god, as a rebirth of that god. This plague, most scholars think was something like anthrax which brought ulcers on the body or in the lungs of the animals. So as a result of this, the Egyptians were seeing their gods that they worshipped suffering and dying before their very eyes, due to a Power that is a Power greater than their god's. They are learning over and over and again that there is a Power greater than the gods they worshipped. The whole world is going to see that at some point in the future.

The sixth plague was the plague of boils.

Now it starts to come home to the individual Egyptians.

Exodus 9:8 *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. (NKJV)*

Meaning right in front of Pharaoh's presence. So, the ashes had to come from somewhere nearby in Pharaoh's presence—that will be important in just a second.

9) 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 all the land of Egypt.”

10) Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh [so this is a furnace right in the presence of Pharaoh], and Moses scattered them toward heaven. And they caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast. (NKJV)

Stop here and analyze the situation. Egypt had sacrificial furnaces where they offered sacrifices. But they offered human sacrifices. These human sacrifices were offered to bless the land. They would have a series of sacrifices in the spring time at the beginning of the crop season and they would take the ashes from these human sacrifices and scatter them around and ask the gods of fertility, the gods of the Nile to bless their efforts and to bless the coming crop. These ashes were also used by their priests—Egyptian priests and magicians—along with other religious rites also. Some were animal ashes, but also some were human ashes. These were sacred ashes to the Egyptians.

We see now that these sacred ashes were causing them pain. Wherever these ashes turned into fine particles and landed on individual Egyptians—all the Egyptians—they caused them pain. I had chickenpox when I was in my thirty's and I thought I was going to die. Within a few days of high fever and all that, I came down with these little poxes all over my body; in between my toes, fingers, back, face, eyelids—everywhere. They itched like crazy and it was misery for a week. You just couldn't get any relief from it at all. Something like that was happening to the Egyptians. The very ashes they used to worship their gods with were causing them great pain. God Almighty was turning their gods and their ceremonies back on themselves to cause pain.

The seventh plague was the plague of hail.

This was now becoming deadly serious. Before it was pain and suffering. The plague of hail now caused death. God was ramping up the level of agony and the level of pain.

Exodus 9:13 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, let my people go, that they may serve me.*

14) For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. (KJV)

This is the truth; this is the lesson I want you to learn.

Continuing in verse 18.

18) Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.

19) Send therefore now [He is giving them warning], and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. (KJV)

Yehovah is giving them a merciful warning. He said, "I am telling you in advance that death is going to come to man and beast".

20) He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses:

21) And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field. (KJV)

We see here an early example of the blessings and cursings. If you obey Yehovah, you are going to be spared, you are going to be blessed. If you do not heed the Word of Yehovah, you will suffer the consequences. The Egyptians are going to learn this first hand.

22) And the LORD said unto Moses, stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.

23) And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground [sheets of fire on the ground]; (KJV)

People could say “Hail, that’s a natural phenomenon, thunder is a natural phenomenon.” But not sheets of fire running across the ground.

23 continued) ... and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt.

24) So, there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

25) And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and broke every tree of the field.

26) Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. (KJV)

Climatologically, it rained occasionally in Egypt between January and March—that was their rainy season, their wet season. But it was extremely rare for hail and thunder to occur in Egypt. We here in central Washington occasionally get hail or thunder. But when we lived in the panhandle of Texas, in the summer time tornadoes, hail and thunder and the like were an everyday occurrence almost. It was very rare in Egypt. Now people were being killed.

Again, there was a division between Israel and Egypt. What would it take to have hail and then take five paces to the land of Goshen and there was no hail? Fire running across the land and you take five paces and there was no fire running across the land. Talk about miracles and talk about demonstrations of God’s Power; Pharaoh obviously had to see that and so did the Egyptians and so did the Israelites.

The eighth plague was the plague of locusts.

Exodus 10:3 *And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews [He is now reinforcing the fact that He is their God, not their god and He is more powerful than their gods so you better pay attention to Him], How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? (KJV)*

Isn’t that what God wants from all of us? Doesn’t He say to us,

“Would you please just submit willingly to Me and My will and not put yourself first? And not put your gods first? Would you please do that?”

3 continued) ... let my people go, that they may serve me.

4) Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast:

5) And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: (KJV)

So, this is not just a few locusts flying by and landing on a few plants or shrubs or trees. What Yehovah is saying is that there is going to be so many of them you cannot see the

ground. So that means they are several inches thick as they go across the ground. It could have been a foot, a yard—we don't know. But you couldn't see the ground.

5 continued) ... and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field:

6) And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh. (KJV)

In verse 13:

13) And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. (KJV)

So, when that wind was blowing and they heard Moses' proclamation, you better believe they knew something bad was coming.

14) And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. (KJV)

Were these locusts that God had created for this purpose? Or did He gather existing locusts and multiply them—we don't know.

15) For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt. (KJV)

Nothing to eat as far as vegetation—fruits or vegetables. Various sources speculate what would it take for this to happen or what type of locusts would they be. The consensus is that they were probably double winged locusts about three inches long. Some day we will find out. These locusts destroyed all the vegetation remaining from the other plagues.

Passover—about thirty years ago—we had a widow who came into the church and I baptized her. Her name was Lorraine O'Neal—she's dead now. But she grew up in Eastern Montana in the early 1900's. We were talking one day and she said,

“I've experienced a plague of locusts. I can't remember the year, but it was 1910 or 1905, somewhere in there, in eastern Montana. We had this horrendous plague of locusts strike eastern Montana and the sky darkened—they were everywhere—and they consumed everything. They even ate the wooden clothes pins on the clothes line.”

Can you imagine? She said they just ate them all—they came through, there were the wooden clothes pins.”

They didn't have the plastic ones we have now. (Of course, nobody uses a clothes line anymore.) But the fact is, they consumed the bark on the trees, they consumed the twigs, they consumed wooden clothes pins. She said when they came through there wasn't much left and it took them years to recover from that.

What we are reading about happening in Egypt was far worse than that. The result was that Egypt's food source was mostly gone. If you do the research, the people of Egypt at that time were mostly vegetarian. They would eat some meat but not much. Certainly, the wealthy families and all of Pharaoh's family would eat more meat than the average Egyptian who was working out in the fields and paying attention to the crops—they were mostly vegetarian. The result of this was that their vegetable source of food was now gone—fruits and vegetables. As I mentioned in the commentary, they worshipped some of these fruits and vegetables. What this forced the Egyptians to do, as these were mostly vegetarian Egyptians, was to eat the remaining animals or starve to death. The fact is, they worshipped these animals, they worshipped the cattle and the sheep and the oxen. Now they had to eat their gods in order to survive. So, God Almighty is showing them who the true God is, over and over again. What He was doing was destroying their gods right before their eyes and in this case, they had to eat their gods in order to live.

The ninth plague was the plague of darkness.

***Exodus 10:21** And the LORD said unto Moses, stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, [notice this] even darkness which may be felt. (KJV)*

This was not just like at night with the sun down and it's dark, this was a different dark.

22) And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:

23) They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. (KJV)

So, some people would stumble into Israelite territory and all of a sudden there is light. How does that work? How can you just divide light within a fairly short distance? The fact is, the sun god was the chief Egyptian god. The sun god was responsible for light for the crops to grow and without the sun, there were no crops. So, they worshipped the sun, as many cultures do around the world. This was not an ordinary darkness. This wasn't just the absence of the sun. This was like a black cloud of doom that could be felt. Josephus in his antiquities of the Jews said it made it difficult to breathe. That's a Jewish tradition; it could be true, it could be not true, but it seems like it could be true.

For those of us who live in Central Washington it would be kind of like our experience when Mount Saint Helens blew in May of 1980. In Yakima where we live, we were the first big town directly downwind from the explosion of Mount Saint Helens. We were seventy miles as the crow flies, directly down wind. I remember looking out from our kitchen window to the west, it was a Sunday morning and there was a dark cloud that was unusual, off to the west. It reminded me of a typical west Texas thunderstorm approaching, so I didn't give it much thought. You go about your business in the house and all of a sudden, it's getting darker and darker and darker. You walk outside and look around and you see the neighbors gathering up and down the street and they are looking around. Then all of a sudden, the street lights start coming on. Somebody ran up and said the mountain has blown. I thought, come on—this is just a thunderstorm. Really quick after that you hear this pitter patter from the volcano ash falling on the leaves. Then it was, "Uh-oh, we have a problem here". Everybody ran to their houses and taped up the windows and did all the stuff you do to prepare for something like this. It rained ash all that Sunday and all that Sunday night. I can remember looking out the window during the afternoon—the sun was out but it wasn't out where we were—and the street lights were on. We were three or four houses down from the corner street light and you could barely see the street light. With the sun down you can see a street light and the lights of the city, but this was different. It was like this ash just absorbed the light. So, something similar happened to the Egyptians. We don't know what it was, but whatever God sent absorbed the light. For us here in Central Washington, when the ash fell it was like getting three or four inches of snow that never melted, so you had to do something with it. It changed our lives for months afterward. This miracle—this plague—changed the Egyptians life forever. Yehovah was demonstrating His Power over their sun god.

The tenth and final plague—the plague upon the firstborn.

Exodus 11:1 *And the LORD said unto Moses, yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. (KJV)*

Verse 4.

4) And Moses said, thus saith the LORD, about midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt:

5) And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts.

6) And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more.

7) But against any of the children of Israel [notice: it's comforting to know this is how the Father looks on His children] shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. (KJV)

What an encouragement to the Israelites and to us today as His people.

Exodus 12:29 *And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.*

30) And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. (KJV)

Yehovah made sure of that, that they would experience death in their household.

Continuing in verse 51.....

51) And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies. (KJV)

The fact is, after this miracle, Egypt was now completely decimated except for their army. That was the only thing that was left. They were decimated, but later Pharaoh would pursue with his army and they would be completely decimated when the river came back over them—the Red Sea came back over them. They were brought to nothing in Exodus 14.

What we have seen up to this point are ten incredible miracles demonstrating the supreme Power of the God we serve. So now we come to the third section.

3. What lessons can we learn from the plagues upon Egypt.

The first lesson.

3A. The Bible identifies Egypt as a type of sin.

We know that, but let's cover two scriptures that identify that for reinforcement. Hebrews 11:24. This identifies Egypt as a type of sin.

Hebrews 11:24 *By faith Moses, when he became of age, [this is a conscious decision by Moses] refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25) choosing [emphasis on the word "choosing" because he made a choice] rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin ... (NKJV)*

Egypt represented all possible manner of sin. Idolatry, false worship, evil practices—everything that mankind can do contrary to God, Egypt did. It became a poster child, so to speak, for sin.

26) esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. (NKJV)

There in that, is a lesson for us today.

27) By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. [Yehovah, God Almighty] (NKJV)

Now go to Revelation 11:3 and see another example of where Egypt is synonymous with sin—it is a type of sin. It is talking about the two witnesses.

Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. (KJV)

Continuing in verse 8....

8) And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. (KJV)

Historically we understand that Egypt and Sodom were places of incomparable sin. Our Father's Word uses them—Sodom and Egypt—to symbolize sin. So that is the first point, the Bible identifies Egypt as a type of sin.

The second lesson.

3B. Only the power of Yehovah can bring us out of sin.

Look at the Might and Power of God Almighty in these miracles. He brought the ten plagues upon Egypt and then differentiated Israel from Egypt with the last seven plagues. Then after that He brought them out of the land through miracle after miracle after miracle. There is a lesson for us today because, through that same Power, we can overcome sin—which is our Egypt. That same Power is available to us individually to overcome sin. The same Power that performed all of the miracles that we have just covered. We have access to the greatest Power ever. Notice in 1 John 4:4 this is what we have to count on when we come out of the sin that besets us and when we are faced with sin before us.

1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (KJV)

Who is he who is in the world? Satan. Who is behind Pharaoh? Satan. Who is behind the persecution and slavery of the Israelites? Satan. The plagues against Egypt permanently demonstrate that Power. We have access to that Power every minute of every day of our lives. This is a huge lesson to learn.

The third lesson.

3C. The Almighty will destroy anyone who does not put Him first.

Yehovah destroyed all the gods of Egypt. The Egyptians saw their gods in pain, or dying, or bringing pain upon them. As with Egypt, the Almighty will destroy our gods; whatever we put in front of Him, the Almighty will destroy. He will take away whatever we put in front of Him.

When I first came into the church and was being called, my god was that I wanted to be a military pilot. I had wanted to do that since I was a little boy and that was my god. I was in the Air Force when I was being called and I had a choice. At that time, I wanted to be the pilot; that's just all what I wanted to do. Within a matter of months my eyesight went from 20/20 to 20/50. God just took it away—simple thing, He just took it away.

At the same time, I was studying martial arts and I thought if I can't be a pilot then I want to study martial arts and be an instructor of martial arts. I really got into it and started practising more and more after I found out about the eyesight deal. I got to thinking,

“What if studying martial arts is not compatible with what I'm reading in the Bible?”

Low and behold within a couple of months, I hurt my back and I could hardly walk, much less practise martial arts and I had to give that up. Finally, you just say,

“Ok God, whatever You want, I will do it.”

What God is doing with all of us is destroying whatever we decide to put in front of Him.

Even today, after decades of conversion, our Father will test us from time to time to see if we will put anything in front of Him. He will bring something to pass where we have a choice—circumstances—to test us. Am I going to do this or put God first? Am I going to do what I want to do or am I going to do what God's Word tells me I should be doing? Look at Matthew 10:37. This is something that we need to keep in mind, especially in these days where we are so blessed and have so many comforts—we have churches, we have congregations, we have the perks like camps and Feasts and all of that—stuff for our kids. This scripture is deadly serious.

Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (KJV)

Yet today we still have brethren—quite a few actually—putting their desires before their Father's desires. It's a test we all face from time to time. Our Father wants to know, are we going to love Him before all else, or not? As with Pharaoh, we often put the self first. The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life—1 John 2:16 tells us about that. As we've seen with Pharaoh, what was one of his problems? Pride and

stubbornness. In Pharaoh's case, not only was his pride and stubbornness destroyed but Pharaoh himself was destroyed.

You remember what Samuel said to Saul in 1 Samuel 15:23? Saul did not wait for Samuel and went ahead with sacrifices taking something to himself that he should not have done. Remember Samuel said,

“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”

Our Father's Word equates “rebellion” stubbornness” to idolatry because we are putting ourselves first, rather than God Almighty.

In our case, our Father reveals to us, over time, our stubbornness and our pride. Sometimes it takes the 2x4 between the eyes or it takes instance after instance for our Father to reveal to us that....

“Yes indeed, I can be stubborn and yes indeed, I can be prideful.”

He gives us the opportunity over time to overcome. He brings these circumstances so that we will see it and then He waits to see what we are going to do. Are we going to continue in our pride and stubbornness or are we going to humble ourselves, fall down on our knees and say?

“Father I am nothing—show me what you want me to do.”?

Yehovah brought Egypt to nothing. Over time He gives us time. He gave them a fairly short period of time but He gives us, sometimes decades—to see that we are nothing compared to the Almighty. My guess is Pharaoh, as he was drowning, likely learned that his gods were nothing and they were nothing compared to Israel's God—Yehovah. Maybe he finally learned that, as he was sucking water into his lungs; some day we will find out.

Remember David had a humble attitude. God Almighty told David that he was not going to build the Temple. David had all these provisions ready to go to build the Temple. God Almighty said through Nathan,

“No, you are not going to do that, I'm going to have your son do it.”

So, David had a choice. Did he get in a snit? Did he walk off? Was he mad at God? Did he kick the cat and curse God under his breath? No—you can check it out in 2 Samuel 7—but remember what David said. He went in to a quiet place and said,

“Yehovah, who am I that You brought me to this point.”

Meaning to the point where You have honored me that my son will build You the Temple and that I can contribute to it. He had that humble attitude.

The longer we are converted, the more we should see our smallness compared to Almighty God. If we see our smallness every day then it's really easy for us to put Him first. If we elevate ourselves, it's harder to put Almighty God first.

The fourth and last lesson we need to learn is:

3D. The plagues and the Exodus are the story of our conversion.

There are many parallels between the Exodus and our conversion. Yehovah made Himself known to Egypt and Israel. Once God Almighty throws a switch with us, He makes Himself known to us. We know John 6:44, Christ said,

"No man can come to Me except the Father draws Him."

So, at some point, the Father started that process with us. Our eyes were opened, His Word began to make sense to us and we began a relationship with the Father and His Son. As Israel came out of Egypt, so we started coming out of sin. We began to reject the world. Moses rejected Egypt. We began to reject the world and began to see more clearly the world's sin. In the beginning we began keeping God's laws, the Sabbath, the Holy days and we began tithing. Then we began the process of conversion. From the "old man" to the "new man". From the "old woman" to the "new woman". In Ephesians 4:22-24, Paul is saying that you need to put off the "old man" which is corrupt and evil and put on the "new man" which has a new spirit in you; be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

Of course, when we were baptized, we had the promise of the Holy Spirit coming into us and we made that commitment. We had God's Spirit come into us and thereby we continued in that process of conversion. This time with the Holy Spirit in us, that began a real process of our conversion. But then, as Pharaoh pursued Israel, Satan now pursues us. Remember the parable of the sheepfold? The thief wants to kill, to steal and to destroy? That's what Satan wants to do with us but Yehovah performed the impossible in Egypt. He separated Israel with the last seven plagues through His Power and we can count on that same Power. Because Christ said in Mark 10,

"With God all things are possible."

We have to rely on that and count on that. We are told that in 1 Corinthians 15

"Thanks be to God Who gives us the victory through our Lord, Jesus Christ."

That victory comes through the Power of the Almighty God—the same Power performed the miracles we have just read about.

Let's conclude now. There is a huge difference between ancient Israel and us. The big difference of course is, we have the Almighty God residing in us and ancient Israel did not. Remember what Christ said on the night He was betrayed?

"We will come— [meaning Him and His Father] —and make our abode in you."

We will read that on the night of the Passover.

We followed through by baptism. We were promised—Acts 2:38 and on—that we will receive the gift—the gift of the Holy Spirit, which we have. That is a huge difference between us and ancient Israel. Remember in Deuteronomy 5, God Almighty, Yehovah said,

"Oh, that there such a heart in them."

We have the heart and we have that promise.

So, after baptism we began this cycle of acknowledging our sins, repenting of our sins, changing and then every day repeating that process. We see our sin, we acknowledge it before God, we repent before God and then change. Just little baby steps every day of our lives. Each year, at Passover, we reconfirm the commitments we made at baptism. That is why the Passover service is very solemn and very serious. These commitments are very solemn and very serious because our very lives are at stake. That's why our Passover services—Pacific Passover services—are a serious, solemn occasion.

So, let's learn from the plagues upon Egypt, these miraculous plagues that our Father brought upon a sinful and rebellious Egypt. But let us remember the Glory and the Power and Authority of God Almighty Who brought these plagues upon Egypt. Let us also remember the promise from Christ that if the Spirit of Him, which dwells in you, will also give our mortal bodies a resurrection. Christ promised that, Paul mentioned it in Romans 8:11. There is a promise that we look forward to and that promise is the result of the same Power that brought the plagues against Egypt.