

# Exodus 10 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

**CLICK VERSE**  
To go directly to that verse

- [Exodus 10:1](#)
- [Exodus 10:2](#)
- [Exodus 10:3](#)
- [Exodus 10:4](#)
- [Exodus 10:5](#)
- [Exodus 10:6](#)
- [Exodus 10:7](#)
- [Exodus 10:8](#)
- [Exodus 10:9](#)
- [Exodus 10:10](#)
- [Exodus 10:11](#)
- [Exodus 10:12](#)
- [Exodus 10:13](#)
- [Exodus 10:14](#)
- [Exodus 10:15](#)
- [Exodus 10:16](#)
- [Exodus 10:17](#)
- [Exodus 10:18](#)
- [Exodus 10:19](#)
- [Exodus 10:20](#)
- [Exodus 10:21](#)
- [Exodus 10:22](#)
- [Exodus 10:23](#)
- [Exodus 10:24](#)
- [Exodus 10:25](#)
- [Exodus 10:26](#)
- [Exodus 10:27](#)
- [Exodus 10:28](#)
- [Exodus 10:29](#)

Irving Jensen ([Online](#)) - Used by Permission  
 Click to Enlarge  
 View Chuck Swindoll's chart of Exodus.

Summary Chart of The Book of Exodus									
<b>DELIVERANCE FROM OPPRESSION</b>					<b>PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP</b>				
Redemption from Egypt Ex 1:1-18:27					Revelation from God Ex 19:1-40:38				
Getting Israel Out of Egypt					Getting Egypt Out of Israel!				
<b>Narration</b>					<b>Legislation</b>				
Birth of Moses Ex 1-2	Call of Moses Ex 3-6	Conflict with Pharaoh Ex 7-10	Exodus from Egypt Ex 11-12	Red Sea Crossed Ex 13-15	Journey To Sinai Ex 16-18	Law Given Ex 19-24	Tent Plan Ex 25-31	Idol Worship Ex 32-34	Tent Built Ex 35-40

Subjection		Redemption		Instruction	
Suffering and Liberation of People of God		Guidance of God		Worship of God	
Moses and Burdens of Israel	Pharaoh and Plagues Upon Egypt	Red Sea Deliverance	Wilderness Provision	Sinai Instructions	
Bondage and Oppression		Deliverance and Provision		Law Pattern and Construction	
Israel in Egypt Ex 1:1-13:16		Israel to Sinai Ex 13:17-18:27		Israel at Sinai Ex 19:1-40:38	
God's People Enduring Bondage		God's Grace Revealed in Redemption		God's Glory Manifested in Worship	
Egypt 430 Years (15% of Exodus)		Wilderness 2 Months (30% of Exodus)		Mt Sinai 10 Months (55% of Exodus)	
From Groaning					To Glory!

[Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament](#) - online

[Click to Enlarge](#)

[Click for Excellent Map of Route of the Exodus](#)

[Click another Exodus from Egypt](#)

[Click for Events during the Sojourn at Kadesh-Barnea](#)

GENESIS	EXODUS
human effort and failure	divine power and triumph
word of promise	work of fulfillment
a people chosen	a people called
God's electing mercy	God's electing manner
revelation of nationality	realization of nationality

SUMMARY OF THE PENTATEUCH  
(from Believer's Study Bible)

**Exodus 10:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them,**

- **I have hardened** - Ex 4:21 7:13,14 9:27,34,35 Ps 7:11
- **that I** - Ex 3:20 7:4 9:16 14:17,18 15:14,15 Jos 2:9,10 4:23,24 1Sa 4:8 Ro 9:17

**Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants** - See summary below - this represents the second time that God specifically states He would be the Agent of hardening Pharaoh's heart (cf first Ex 9:12, then four more times Ex 10:20, 27, 11:10, 14:8).

**Hardened** his heart is [kabad](#) which has the basic meaning of to be heavy (like "heavy with sin.") When used of **Pharaoh's heart** it means be morally stubborn regarding a change of action or attitude. **Driver** adds that [kabad](#) stresses the will as being slow to move, unimpressionable, slow to be affected (Ex 8:15; Ex 8:32; Ex 9:7; Ex 9:34; Ex 10:1; Ex 14:4; Ex 14:17) Note it is somewhat ironic that the verb [kabad](#) is used here for hardening but is used later for honoring (first God, then parents in Ex 14:18; Ex 20:12)! [kabad](#) translated with

the Greek verb [skleruno](#) (to make hard) meaning that Jehovah made his heart "thick" so that he would stubbornly refuse to change his mind or attitude toward Israel. BDAG says skleruno means to "cause to be unyielding in resisting information."

**Go to Pharaoh** - 5x - Exod. 3:11; Exod. 7:15; Exod. 8:1; Exod. 9:1; Exod. 10:1

**Guzik** - In hardening Pharaoh's heart, God allowed him to have what he sinfully desired—a hard heart against the LORD and His people.

**That I may perform these signs of Mine among them** - In other words, hardening of Pharaoh would result in more miraculous signs, more plagues, specifically 3 more plagues - Locusts (Ex 10:13), Darkness (Ex 10:22) and Death of firstborn (Ex 12:29).

There are 3 purposes of God hardening Pharaoh's heart

- (1) God could carry out more miraculous signs
- (2) And the signs in turn would be things "you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandsons" (Ex 10:2)
- (3) The signs would help them to know that God is the LORD. (Ex 10:2)

**NET Note** - The Egyptians dreaded **locusts** like every other ancient civilization. They had particular gods to whom they looked for help in such catastrophes. The **locust-scaring deities of Greece and Asia were probably looked to in Egypt as well** (especially in view of the origins in Egypt of so many of those religious ideas). The announcement of the plague falls into the now-familiar pattern. God tells Moses to go and speak to Pharaoh but reminds Moses that he has hardened his heart. Yahweh explains that he has done this so that he might show **his power**, so that in turn they might declare **his name** from generation to generation. This point is stressed so often that it must not be minimized. God was laying the foundation of the faith for Israel – the sovereignty of Yahweh.

The Ten Plagues on Egypt		
THE PLAGUE	EGYPTIAN DEITY	THE EFFECT ON PHARAOH
1 <b>BLOOD</b> (Ex 7:20+)	<a href="#">Hapi</a>	Pharaoh hardened (Ex 7:22+)
2 <b>FROGS</b> (Ex 8:6+)	<a href="#">Heqt</a>	Pharaoh begs relief, makes promise (Ex 8:8+) then is hardened (Ex 8:15+)
3 <b>GNATS</b> (Ex 8:17+)	<a href="#">Hathor, Nut</a>	Pharaoh hardened (Ex 8:19+)
4 <b>FLIES</b> (Ex 8:24+)	<a href="#">Shu, Isis</a>	Pharaoh bargains (Ex 8:28+) but is hardened (Ex 8:32+)
5 <b>PESTILENCE</b> (Ex 9:6+)	<a href="#">Apis</a>	Pharaoh hardened (Ex 9:7+)
6 <b>BOILS</b> (Ex 9:10+)	<a href="#">Sekhmet</a>	Pharaoh hardened (Ex 9:12+)
7 <b>HAIL</b> (Ex 9:23+)	<a href="#">Geb</a>	Pharaoh begs relief (Ex 9:27+), makes promise (Ex 9:28+) then is hardened (Ex 9:35+)
8 <b>LOCUSTS</b> (Ex 10:13+)	<a href="#">Serapis</a>	Pharaoh bargains (Ex 10:11+), begs relief (Ex 10:17+), but is hardened (Ex 10:20+)
9 <b>DARKNESS</b> (Ex 10:22+)	<a href="#">Ra</a>	Pharaoh bargains (Ex 10:24+), but is hardened (Ex 10:27+)
10 <b>FIRSTBORN KILLED</b> (Ex 12:29+)		Pharaoh beg Israel to leave (Ex 12:31-33+)

## HARDENING THE HEART OF PHARAOH

**Hardened** - Study all 18 instances in Exodus which mention the hardening of the heart of Pharaoh. Notice which are prophecy, which are ambiguous as to the hardening agent, which are caused by Jehovah and which reflect the choice of Pharaoh's self-will. I think you will find this an interesting exercise as you wrestle with this subject of God hardening a person's heart.

Ex 4:21+ The LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but **I will harden his heart** so that he will not let the people go.

Ex 7:3+ But **I will harden Pharaoh's heart** that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.

Ex 7:13+ Yet **Pharaoh's heart was hardened**, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Ex 7:22+ But the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and **Pharaoh's heart was hardened**, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Ex 8:15+ But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, **he hardened his heart** and did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Ex 8:19+ Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But **Pharaoh's heart was hardened**, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Ex 8:32+ But **Pharaoh hardened his heart** this time also, and he did not let the people go.

Ex 9:7+ Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not even one of the livestock of Israel dead. But **the heart of Pharaoh was hardened**, and he did not let the people go.

Ex 9:12+ And **the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

Ex 9:34+ But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and **hardened his heart**, he and his servants.

Ex 9:35+ **Pharaoh's heart was hardened**, and he did not let the sons of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

Ex 10:1+ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for **I have hardened his heart** and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them,

Ex 10:20+ But **the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.

Ex 10:27+ But **the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, and he was not willing to let them go.

Ex 11:10+ Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh; yet **the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, and he did not let the sons of Israel go out of his land.

Ex 14:4+ "Thus **I will harden Pharaoh's heart**, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." And they did so.

Ex 14:8+ **The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh**, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly.

Ex 14:17+ "As for Me, behold, **I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians** so that they will go in after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen.

### Summary -

- 6x Jehovah definitely hardened Pharaoh's heart.
- 4x Jehovah gave a prophecy (I will).
- 5x the agent hardening is not stated.
- 3x Pharaoh hardened his own heart.
- The first definite mention of one hardening Pharaoh's heart is Pharaoh (Ex 8:15).

### Related Resources:

- [Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart?](#)
- [Why was Pharaoh so resistant to Moses' pleas to "let my people go"?](#)
- [What are the causes and solutions for a hardened heart?](#)

**Exodus 10:2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed My signs among them, that you may know that I am the LORD."**

- **And that** - Ex 13:8,9,14 De 4:9 6:20-22 Ps 44:1 71:18 78:5,6 Joe 1:3 Eph 6:4
- **that you** - Ex 7:17 Ps 58:11 Eze 20:26,28

## **GOD'S DESIRE OF THE SIGNS**

**and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson-** Literally "so that thou recountest in the ears." Here God gives an additional reason for hardening Pharaoh's heart, namely that the coming generations of Israelites would tell their children of God's great and mighty power manifests in the signs (the miraculous plagues).

**NET** - The clause (**tell in the hearing of your son**) explains an additional reason for God's hardening the heart of Pharaoh, namely, so that the Israelites can tell their children of God's great wonders. The expression is highly poetic and intense—like Ps 44:1, which says, "we have heard with our ears." The emphasis would be on the clear teaching, orally, from one generation to another.

**THOUGHT** - God desires we each leave a legacy, passing down something we have received. If we have received Christ as Savior, this is the ultimate legacy we should pass on to the generations that follow us! Play and ponder Steve Green's [Find Us Faithful!](#)

**Guzik** - God does mighty works among us so that we can encourage generations to come.

**How I made a mockery of the Egyptians** - NET = "how I made fools of the Egyptians" To mock means to treat with ridicule, contempt or derision. The Hebrew word for **mockery (alal)** is translated here with the verb [empaizo](#) which means to make fun of, to mock, or to subject to ridicule.

**NET** - The verb הִתְעַלְלָתִי (hit'allalti) is a bold anthropomorphism. The word means to occupy oneself at another's expense, to toy with someone, which may be paraphrased with "mock." The whole point is that God is shaming and disgracing Egypt, making them look foolish in their arrogance and stubbornness

**Mockery (05953)(alal)** cannot be consistently translated with any one word so the context must determine the nuance of meaning. "This word speaks of relationships. It is used to indicate the exercise of power over another person, generally in a bad sense, hence meaning "to maltreat." It signifies some great achievement, generally malevolent. The negative and strong thrust of this verb can be seen in Lamentations. In Lament. 3:51 the speaker (a man, Lament. 3:1, not the personified city) complains that his eyes have caused him grief, i.e. that which he has seen—destruction, disease, famine—has brought intense pain to him. The personified city implores God to consider his severe treatment of her, necessitating cannibalism (Lament. 2:20). She questions passers-by generally in a bad sense, hence whether they have ever witnessed such malevolent treatment (Lament. 1:12) and intreats God to treat her enemies even as he has dealt with her (Lament. 1:22). In this appeal for retribution there is a recognition that God is just and that vengeance belongs to him. This word is used to depict the exploitation of one person by another. The concubine of the Levite was sexually abused by the men of Gibeah (Judges 19:25). Saul requested that he be slain rather than to be taken by the Philistines who would make sport of him (1 Samuel 31:4 = 1 Chron. 10:4). Zedekiah was fearful that the Jews who had defected to the Chaldeans would abuse him (Jeremiah 38:19). In Numbers 22:29 Balaam accuses his ass of mocking him. The crucial passages in this area are Exodus 10:2 and 1 Samuel 6:6 where the Lord is the subject of this verb and the Egyptians are the object. Is it proper to suggest that the Lord makes sport of anyone? Did he deal ruthlessly with Egypt? The ASV has chosen in these two instances to give a neutral rendering "wrought" and "wrought wonderfully" while allowing in the margin for the translation "mocked." While the thought of mocking is startling, both the contextual and the etymological situation demand a negative type of treatment. God treated the Egyptians severely because, as the Philistines noted, they hardened their hearts. It is clearly within God's power and prerogative to punish and discipline but he never acts in jest; hence the RSV translation "made sport of" can be misleading. Finally the use of this word in Psalm 141:4 is set in a prayer for an upright heart. There is a recognition here that wicked external practices originate in the heart and issue forth from the mouth and lips (cf. Mark 7:15-23)." (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

**Alal** - 12v - abuse(2), abused(1), bring pain(1), deal(1), dealt(2), made a mockery(2), make sport(1), practice deeds(1), severely dealt(2). - Exod. 10:2; Num. 22:29; Jdg. 19:25; 1 Sam. 6:6; 1 Sam. 31:4; 1 Chr. 10:4; Ps. 141:4; Jer. 38:19; Lam. 1:12; Lam. 1:22; Lam. 2:20; Lam. 3:51

**And how I performed My signs among them - Among them** means among the sons of Israel. Israel saw the devastation and destruction and also experienced Jehovah's protection.

**THOUGHT** - God told Moses that his miraculous experiences with Pharaoh should be retold to his descendants. What stories Moses had to tell! Living out one of the greatest dramas in biblical history, he witnessed events few people would ever see. **It is important to tell our children about God's work in our past and to help them see what he is doing right now.** What are the turning points in your life where God intervened? What is God doing for you now? Your stories will form the foundations of your children's belief in God. (Life Application Study Bible)

**That you may know that I am the LORD** - Who is you? He is speaking to Moses. He is still growing Moses in faith proving true what Paul said in Romans 10:17<sup>±</sup> that "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (KJV = "of God")." This is God's supreme purpose, that His people know He is **the LORD**. This was His stated purpose even before the very first plague in Ex 7:17 "Thus says the LORD, **"By this you shall know that I am the LORD:** behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to blood." Jehovah had also declared that not only would these signs make Him known to Israel, the Egyptians would also know Him, as He declared "The **Egyptians shall know** that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst." (Ex 7:5)

**NET** - The form is the perfect tense with vav consecutive, וַיִּדְעוּ (vida'tem, "and that you might know"). **This provides another purpose for God's dealings with Egypt in the way that he was doing.**

**Exodus 10:3 Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me.**

- **How long** - Ex 9:17 16:28 Nu 14:27 1Ki 18:21 Pr 1:22,24 Jer 13:10 Eze 5:6 Heb 12:25
- **humble** - 1Ki 21:29 2Ch 7:14 33:12,19 34:27 Job 42:6 Pr 18:12 Isa 1:5 Isa 2:11 Jer 13:18 Ro 2:4 Jas 4:10 1Pe 5:6

## **GOD WARNS PHARAOH TO HUMBLE HIMSELF**

The heart of Pharaoh's problem was the problem of his heart which was PRIDE! (What letter is in the "middle" of "pride"? It is the "big I!")

**Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? - How long would you be unwilling.**

**NET on how long** - The verb is מֵאֲנָה (me'anta), a Piel perfect. After "how long," the form may be classified as present perfect ("how long have you refused), for it describes actions begun previously but with the effects continuing.

Other uses of "how long" -

- Ex. 10:3, 7; Nu. 14:27 = **How long** shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me?;
- 1 Ki. 18:21 = "Elijah came near to all the people and said, **'How long** will you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people did not answer him a word.";
- Hos. 8:5 = "He has rejected your calf, O Samaria, saying, "My anger burns against them!" How long will they be incapable of innocence?" Ps 6:3 = "And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You, O LORD—**how long?**";
- Ps 74:10 = "**How long**, O God, will the adversary revile, And the enemy spurn Your name forever?";
- Ps 80:4 = "O LORD God of hosts, **How long** will You be angry with the prayer of Your people?";
- Ps 90:13 = "Do return, O LORD; **how long** will it be? And be sorry for Your servants. "
- Ps 94:3 = "**How long** shall the wicked, O LORD, **How long** shall the wicked exult?"
- Jer 4:14 = "Wash your heart from evil, O Jerusalem, That you may be saved. **How long** will your wicked thoughts lodge within you? "

**THOUGHT** - This is an important question that God asks of all of us. How long? "What does it take to humble

us to the place that we know that God is God, the Lord of all, over all? Whatever it takes, Beloved, if He brings you to that place of whole-hearted submission ... you can be sure it is worth it." (K Arthur)

**Humble** (06031) ('**anah**) means to be afflicted, be bowed down, be humbled, be meek. '**Anah** frequently expresses the idea God sends affliction to discipline (Dt 8:2-3, see context Dt 8:5, 1Ki 11:39; Ps 90:15 Luke 3:5). It often speaks of harsh and painful treatment (Isa 53:4, Ge16:6).

**God of the Hebrews** - This distinguishes Jehovah from the many gods of the polytheistic Egyptians - Used 6 times - Ex 3:18; Ex 5:3; Ex 7:16; Ex 9:1; Ex 9:13; Ex 10:3

**Let My people go, that they may serve Me** - This command is repeated some 9 times (Ex 5:1+; Ex 7:16+; Ex 8:1+; Ex 8:20+; Ex 8:21+; Ex 9:1+; Ex 9:13+; Ex 10:3+; Ex 10:4+) Play Louis Armstrong - [Go Down Moses - Let My People Go](#) or another version [Moses Go Down \(Let My People Go\)](#)

**Exodus 10:4 'For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory.**

- **tomorrow** - Ex 8:10,23 9:5,18 11:4,5
- **locusts** - Pr 30:27 Joe 1:4-7 2:2-11,25 Rev 9:3

THE DREAD LOCUST

## PLAGUE #8 LOCUSTS

**For** - God forewarns Pharaoh of this plague.

**If you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory** (Literally - "within your border") - **Behold** (**hinneh**) is added to make sure Pharaoh is paying attention! Jehovah gives the specific time so it will be understood as from the hand of Jehovah and not a natural phenomenon such as a random swarm of locusts. It is interesting that a locust plague, real or imagined, was used figuratively to describe the coming devastation of the **Day of the Lord** (Joel 1:4+; Joel 2:25+). **I will bring** indicates this will be a "special delivery" from Jehovah! And it won't be delivered late!

**THOUGHT** - God tells us to obey. If we continually refuse, should we be surprised if He sends a "swarm of locust" to get our attention?

**Hamilton** - Four times in these plagues (Ex 8:23; Ex 9:5, 18; Ex 10:4), in the announcement part of the plague, God tells Pharaoh what he is going to do "**tomorrow.**" (EEC)

**NET on locusts** - One of the words for "locusts" in the Bible is אַרְבֵּה ('arbeh), which comes from רָבַח (ravah, "to be much, many"). It was used for locusts because of their immense numbers.

**Exodus 10:5 'They shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the land. They will also eat the rest of what has escaped--what is left to you from the hail--and they will eat every tree which sprouts for you out of the field.**

- **They shall cover the surface of the land** - Ex 10:15
- **They will also eat the rest of what has escaped** - Ex 9:32 Joel 1:4 2:25

**They shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the land** - Picture this -- locusts so numerous one could not even see the ground and could not step without crushing locusts! "The verbs describing the locusts are singular because it is a swarm or plague of locusts." (NET)

**Cover** (conceal) (03680) (**kacah/kasah**) means to literally cover up as when the waters of the Red Sea **covered** the Egyptians (Ex. 15:5; Ex 24:15 or the cloud of God's glory **covered** Mount Sinai or the Tabernacle (Ex 24:15). All uses in Exodus - Ex 8:6; Exod. 10:5; Exod. 10:15; Exod. 14:28; Exod. 15:5; Exod. 15:10; Exod. 16:13 = "So it came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp."; Exod. 21:33; Exod. 24:15; Exod. 24:16; Exod. 26:13; Exod. 28:42; Exod. 29:13; Exod. 29:22; Exod. 40:34 = "Then the cloud **covered** the tent of meeting, and the glory of the

LORD filled the tabernacle."

**They will also eat the rest of what has escaped--what is left to you from the hail--and they will eat every tree which sprouts for you out of the field** - In Ex 9:4 "the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they ripen late," but they would be a feast for the locusts. In short, Egypt's food supplies would be devastated!

**THOUGHT** - Discipline can be devastating. Trust and obey, there's no better way to be happy in Jesus, then to Trust and Obey!

**Exodus 10:6 Then your houses shall be filled and the houses of all your servants and the houses of all the Egyptians, something which neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day that they came upon the earth until this day.' " And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.**

- **Then your houses shall be filled** - Ex 8:3,21
- **which neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen** - Ex 10:14,15 9:24 11:6 Joe 2:2
- **And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.** - Ex 10:11 11:8 Heb 11:27

### UNPRECEDENTED PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

**Then your houses shall be filled and the houses of all your servants and the houses of all the Egyptians-** This fact serves to emphasize the supernatural aspect of this sign. It was not an aberration of a nature, but God's sovereign hand controlling the very nature He created.

**THOUGHT** - The proverb gives us the antithesis of this "filling" of Egypt with locusts - Pr 3:9-10 "Honor the LORD from your wealth And from the first of all your produce; So your **barns will be filled with plenty** And your vats will overflow with new wine. "

**Something which neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day that they came upon the earth until this day** - Literally "which your fathers have not seen, nor your fathers' fathers." Moses is saving even the oldest people among the Egyptians would recall anything like this locust plague. They had seen locusts before, but this plague was unprecedented. In short it was a miracle. It was a sign from God.

**And he turned and went out from Pharaoh** - Who is **he**? Presumably Moses is speaking for in Ex 10:1 we read "then the LORD said to **Moses**." Aaron however was present (Ex 10:3) so it is possible he did the speaking. Moses turns and exits without waiting for a reply. And remember he has just asked the most powerful man in the world "How long will you refuse to humble yourself before" God? I would call this courage/boldness! Not the Moses we met at the Burning Bush!

**THOUGHT** - This is no longer the man who said "Who am I?" "Who are you?" "I can't speak" "Send someone else!" What's changed? While Pharaoh's heart was hardening, Moses' heart was softening, made pliable by his ready reception of God's Word and his willing obedience to the Word. In John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and **will disclose Myself to him.**" (Read also John 7:17) James adds that "one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty (MOSES WAS ENGAGING THE LAW GIVER HIMSELF), and abides by it (HE WAS OBEYING - NO LONGER ANY HESITATION. NO LONGER ANY EXCUSES), not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does." (James 1:25+)

**Exodus 10:7 Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?"**

- **How long will this man be a snare to us** - Ex 10:3
- **snare** - Ex 23:33 Jos 23:13 1Sa 18:21 Pr 29:6 Ec 7:26 1Co 7:35
- **that Egypt** - Ps 107:34 Isa 14:20 51:9 Jer 48:4 51:8 Zep 1:18

**Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us?"** - Notice they blame it on Moses - **this man**. They have not grasped it is the God behind the Man! Ironically the servants echo Jehovah's question (Ex 10:3) "**How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?**"

**NET** - The question of Pharaoh's servants echoes the question of Moses—"How long?" Now the servants of Pharaoh are demanding what Moses demanded—"Release the people." They know that the land is destroyed, and they speak of it as Moses' doing. That way they avoid acknowledging Yahweh or blaming Pharaoh.

**Guzik** - These men, known as Pharaoh's servants hardened their hearts before (Exodus 9:34). Yet even they relented in light of the destruction that came upon Egypt; but Pharaoh's heart was harder still!

**Snare** (4170)(**moqesh** from **yaqosh**) is a masculine noun meaning a snare, a trap, bait for catching birds and here a figure for the cause of Egypt's destruction. The picture is of the lure or bait being placed in the hunter's trap, which gives rise to moqesh referring to the snare itself. A snare metaphorically is something that allures one from his real purpose and then destroys him. Traps were used to capture birds or beasts (Amos 3:5). **Moqesh** can be anything that lures one to ruin and disaster, certainly what the servants were trying to get Pharaoh to grasp. (Jdg. 2:3; Pr 29:6). The Septuagint translated it here with the noun **skolon** which means thorn or prickle, a stumbling block or hindrance.

**Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God**- Serve - Hebrew - **abad**; Lxx - **latreuo** = serve in sense of worship. Logic had begun to rule in the minds of the servants. Here they acknowledge the deity of the Hebrews as Jehovah.

**Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?** - The servants were trying to reason with a man who seemed bent on destroying himself and his entire nation!

**Is destroyed** (ruined) (06)(**abad**) is a verb meaning to perish, to be destroyed, to be ruined, to be lost, to in a state of ruin and destruction pertaining to an object, including the death (**Ex 10:7**). **Abad** can mean literally to die, or, in the case of things, reputation, etc., to pass away. In a causative sense, **abad** means to destroy, to reduce to some degree of disorder. The **Septuagint (LXX)** translates **abad** here with the Greek verb **apollumi** which speaks of destruction but not annihilation. **Apollumi** basically has to do with that which is ruined and is no longer usable for its intended purpose.

**Exodus 10:8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God! Who are the ones that are going?"**

- **Moses and Aaron were brought back** - Ex 10:16,24 12:31

## PHARAOH BARGAINS

**So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh** - Pharaoh seems to listen to the logic of his servants.

**And he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God! Who are the ones that are going-** Pharaoh's answer to Moses includes this rude question, which was intended to say that Pharaoh would control who went. Even as he seems to give in, it is clear he has not capitulated unconditionally! The nature of his question indicates he still desires to exert some degree of control over he went and who stayed.

**Exodus 10:9 Moses said, "We shall go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we shall go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD."**

- **We will go** - Ge 50:8 De 31:12,13 Jos 24:15 Ps 148:12,13 Ec 12:1 Eph 6:4
- **our flocks** - Pr 3:9
- **a feast** - Ex 3:18 5:1,3 8:25-28 13:6 Nu 29:12 1Co 5:7,8

## MOSES ANSWERS EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING GOES

**Moses said, "We shall go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we shall go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD** - "Pharaoh offered a compromise in Exodus 8:25–26, suggesting that they could have a day to sacrifice to the LORD while still in Egypt. Moses rejected that compromise, and would reject this one also. God would

not make this bargain, because He didn't need to. This time, and every time, God holds all the negotiating leverage." (Guzik)

**Exodus 10:10 Then he said to them, "Thus may the LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Take heed, for evil is in your mind.**

- **may the LORD be with you** - Ex 12:30,31 13:21
- look to it - 2Ch 32:15 La 3:37

### **A PSEUDO-BLESSING FROM PHARAOH**

**Then he said to them, "Thus may the LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go!** - NLT paraphrases what in NAS sounds at first like a blessing - "Pharaoh retorted, "**The LORD will certainly need to be with you if I let you take your little ones! I can see through your evil plan.**"

**NET Note** - Pharaoh is by no means offering a blessing on them in the name of Yahweh. The meaning of his "wish" is connected to the next clause – as he is releasing them, may God help them. S. R. Driver says that in Pharaoh's scornful challenge Yahweh is as likely to protect them as Pharaoh is likely to let them go – not at all (Exodus, 80). He is planning to keep the women and children as hostages to force the men to return. U. Cassuto (Exodus, 125) paraphrases it this way: "May the help of your God be as far from you as I am from giving you permission to go forth with your little ones." The real irony, Cassuto observes, is that in the final analysis he will let them go, and Yahweh will be with them.

**THOUGHT**- What Pharaoh wanted is what many of us want in the flesh: a way to "give in" to God, without fully submitting to Him. Sometimes we look for a way to bargain with God as an equal, instead of submitting to Him as Creator and LORD. (Guzik)

**Take heed, for evil is in your mind** - As NLT says "I can see through your evil plan."

**NET** - The "trouble" or "evil" that is before them could refer to the evil that they are devising—the attempt to escape from Egypt. But that does not make much sense in the sentence—why would he tell them to take heed or look out about that? U. Cassuto (Exodus, 126) makes a better suggestion. He argues that Pharaoh is saying, "Don't push me too far." The evil, then, would be what Pharaoh was going to do if these men kept making demands on him. This fits the fact that he had them driven out of his court immediately. There could also be here an allusion to Pharaoh's god Re', the sun-deity and head of the pantheon; he would be saying that the power of his god would confront them.

**Exodus 10:11 Not so! Go now, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desire." So they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.**

NLT Exodus 10:11 Never! Only the men may go and worship the LORD, since that is what you requested." And Pharaoh threw them out of the palace.

NIV Exodus 10:11 No! Have only the men go; and worship the LORD, since that's what you have been asking for." Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh's presence.

- **for that** - Ps 52:3,4 119:69
- **And they** - Ex 10:28 5:4

### **ONLY THE MEN CAN GO!**

**Not so! Go now, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desire."** - The NET says "No! Go, you men **only**, and serve the LORD, for that is what you want." What is Pharaoh doing here? In effect he is holding their wives and their "little ones" as hostages! "Pharaoh appears to be conceding, but he is holding hostages. The word "only" (in NET translation = 'Only the men may go and worship') has been supplied in the translation to indicate this."

**So they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence** - NLT = "Pharaoh threw them out of the palace."

Exodus 10:12 Then the LORD said to Moses, "**Stretch** out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up on the land of Egypt and eat every plant of the land, even all that the hail has left."

- **Stretch** - Ex 7:19
- **eat every** - Ex 10:4,5

## LORD CALLS FOR TOTAL DEFORESTATION

Then the LORD said to Moses, "**Stretch** out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts -Your hand implies what is in his hand, the staff (Ex 10:13)

**That they may come up on the land of Egypt and eat every plant of the land, even all that the hail has left**- All vegetation in the land would be stripped which would leave utter devastation.

**Steven Lawson** - By sending a swarm of locusts to destroy the Egyptians' crops, God showed that He has the right and power to do with the earth's vegetation as He sees fit. Regarding God's control of plant life, Pink writes, "Consider now the vegetable kingdom. Why should roses have thorns, and lilies grow without them? Why should one flower emit a fragrant aroma and another have none? Why should one tree bear fruit which is wholesome and another that which is poisonous? Why should one vegetable be capable of enduring frost and another wither under it? Why should one apple tree be loaded with fruit, and another tree of the same age and in the same orchard be almost barren? Why should one plant flower a dozen times in a year and another bear blossoms but once a century? Truly, 'whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did He in heaven, and in the earth, in the seas, and all deep places' (Ps. 135:6)." (Foundations of Grace - chapter on "Divine Sovereignty")

Exodus 10:13 So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD directed an east wind on the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

NET Exodus 10:13 So Moses extended his staff over the land of Egypt, and then the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day and all night. The morning came, and the east wind had brought up the locusts!

- **east wind** - Ex 14:21 Ge 41:6 Ps 78:26 107:25-28 148:8 Jon 1:4 4:8 Mt 8:27

## GOD OF THE WINDS BRINGS LOCUSTS ON WIND

**So** - Don't miss Moses' immediate obedience to the command of the LORD.

**Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD directed an east wind on the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts** - Note the juxtaposition of man's responsibility and God's sovereign power (**directed an east wind**). The word directed is (nahag) means the locusts were driven (like a herd of sheep), guided or conducted (either willingly or by force). It is elsewhere used for driving sheep (used of Moses when "he **led** the flock to...Horeb" - Ex 3:1), leading armies (of Pharaoh's chariots - Ex 14:25), or leading in processions. This same verb would describe the future of disobedient Israel Moses prophesying "The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD **drives** you." (Dt 4:27, Dt 28:37).

**NET on when it was morning** - It clearly means "when it was morning," but the style chosen gives a more abrupt beginning to the plague, as if the reader is in the experience—and at morning, the locusts are there! The verb **brought** is a past perfect, indicating that the locusts had arrived before the day came

**Staff** (rod)(04294)(**matteh, mattah**) is a masculine noun that means rod, staff, branch ( the non-fruit part of a plant Eze 19:11), tribe. A Staff or rod , walking stick which is a thick stick of wood that the hand can grasp, of a length that the body can use as a support for walking, used for various functions of work or discipline/punishment. All uses in Exodus - Ex 4:2; Ex 4:4; Ex 4:17; Ex 4:20; Ex 7:9; Ex 7:10; Ex 7:12; Ex 7:15; Ex 7:17; Ex 7:19; Ex 7:20; Ex 8:5; Ex 8:16; Ex 8:17; Ex 9:23; Ex 10:13; Ex 14:16; Ex 17:5; Ex 17:9; Ex 31:2; Ex 31:6; Ex 35:30; Ex 35:34; Ex 38:22;

**East wind** will come up again in Ex 14:21 providing an escape for Israel - Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the

LORD swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided.

**Exodus 10:14 The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled in all the territory of Egypt; they were very numerous. There had never been so many locusts, nor would there be so many again.**

NET Exodus 10:14 The locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and settled down in all the territory of Egypt. It was very severe; there had been no locusts like them before, nor will there be such ever again.

- **the locusts** - De 28:42 1Ki 8:37 Ps 78:46 105:34,35 Rev 9:3-7
- **they were very numerous** - Ex 10:5 Joe 1:2-4
- **never been so many locusts**- Ex 10:6 11:6 Joe 2:2

## AN UNPRECEDENTED PLAGUE

**The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled in all the territory of Egypt; they were very numerous. There had never been so many locusts, nor would there be so many again** - This plague would never be seen again. The description prepares for the following statement about the uniqueness of this locust infestation and emphasizes the fact that it was not natural but supernatural from the sovereign LORD!

**Exodus 10:15 For they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt.**

- **For they** - Ex 10:5 Joe 1:6,7 2:1-11,25
- **they ate every plant** - Ps 78:46 105:35

## TOTAL DEVASTATION

**For they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened**- The ground was literally the color of the locusts.

**Covered** (03680) ([kacah/kasah](#)) means to literally cover up as when the waters of the Red Sea **covered** the Egyptians (Ex. 15:5; Ex 24:15 or the cloud of God's glory **covered** Mount Sinai or the Tabernacle (Ex 24:15). All uses in Exodus - Ex 8:6; Exod. 10:5; Exod. 10:15; Exod. 14:28; Exod. 15:5; Exod. 15:10; Exod. 16:13 = "So it came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp."; Exod. 21:33; Exod. 24:15; Exod. 24:16; Exod. 26:13; Exod. 28:42; Exod. 29:13; Exod. 29:22; Exod. 40:34 = "Then the cloud **covered** the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."

**and they ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt** - "Yahweh showed Himself greater than the Egyptian god Set, thought to be the protector of crops." (Guzik)

**THOUGHT** - God did for Pharaoh what He will do in our lives—expose and topple every false god. When we trust in these gods it hurts to see them fall, but it is always best to have them exposed. (Guzik)

**Exodus 10:16 Then Pharaoh hurriedly called for Moses and Aaron, and he said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you.**

- **I have sinned** - Ex 9:27 Nu 21:7 22:34 1Sa 15:24,30 26:21 2Sa 19:20 Job 34:31,32 Pr 28:13 Mt 27:4

## PHARAOH CONFESSES

## SIN AGAINST JEHOVAH

**Then Pharaoh hurriedly called for Moses and Aaron - Hurriedly called** is "summoned quickly!" Pharaoh is frantic now and beginning to panic. "The third part of the passage now begins, the confrontation that resulted from the onslaught of the plague. Pharaoh goes a step further here—he confesses he has sinned and adds a request for forgiveness. But his acknowledgment does not go far enough, for this is not genuine confession. Since his heart was not yet submissive, his confession was vain." (NET)

**And he said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you-** He confesses sin and against Jehovah not Elohim. Sounds like he is beginning to come to "know" Jehovah (contrast Ex 5:2). And his theology is spot on for he recognizes that all sin is ultimately against God, a good principle for all of us to remember (cf Ge 39:9). "The severity of the plague prompted Pharaoh to confess his sin against Yahweh and them, now in much stronger terms than before. He also wants forgiveness—but in all probability what he wants is relief from the consequences of his sin. He pretended to convey to Moses that this was it, that he was through sinning, so he asked for forgiveness "only this time."" (NET)

**Cole** - "Once again comes the easy confession of sin, and the shallow repentance that springs only from a desire to avert the consequences."

**Guzik** - Pharaoh did the same thing in Exodus 9:27–28. He said the words of repentance but did not follow through with the actions. His heart was only hardened more after God relented and showed mercy.

**I have sinned** (02398)(**chata'**) means to miss the way, to fail; to err, to swerve from truth, to go wrong. The literal use describes an accurate shot by slingshot Jdg 20:16 - they could "**not miss** (chata')." Pr 19:2 conveys a related meaning of chata' in those versions that translate it as "miss the way." (Pr 19:2NIV) As Vine says "From this basic meaning comes the word's chief usage to indicate moral failure toward both God and men, and certain results of such wrongs." When man sins he has missed the mark, the goal, or the way that God has set as standard.

**Exodus 10:17 Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and make supplication to the LORD your God, that He would only remove this death from me."**

NET Exodus 10:17 So now, forgive my sin this time only, and pray to the LORD your God that he would only take this death away from me."

NLT Exodus 10:17 "Forgive my sin, just this once, and plead with the LORD your God to take away this death from me."

- **forgive** - 1Sa 15:25
- **make supplication** - Ex 8:8 9:28 1Ki 13:6 Isa 26:16 Ro 15:30 Ac 8:24
- **He would only remove this death from me."** - 2Ki 4:40 2Co 1:10

## PHARAOH BEGS FORGIVENESS

**Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and make supplication to the LORD your God-** "Pharaoh's double emphasis on "only" uses two different words and was meant to deceive. He was trying to give Moses the impression that he had finally come to his senses, and that he would let the people go. But he had no intention of letting them out." (NET)

**That He would only remove this death from me - This death** is a **metonymy** which here gives the effect (death), the cause being the locusts! He is saying if the locusts persists everyone will die for there be nothing to eat. Nothing could be grown for the locusts would eat it!

**NET** - Pharaoh's double emphasis on "only" uses two different words and was meant to deceive. He was trying to give Moses the impression that he had finally come to his senses, and that he would let the people go. But he had no intention of letting them out.

**Exodus 10:18 He went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the LORD.**

- **He went out-** Ex 8:30

- **made supplication** - Ex 8:9,28,29 Mt 5:44 Lu 6:28

## MOSES INTERCEDES FOR PHARAOH

**He went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the LORD**- NLT - "So Moses left Pharaoh's court and pleaded with the LORD."

**Exodus 10:19 So the LORD shifted the wind to a very strong west wind which took up the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not one locust was left in all the territory of Egypt.**

- **a very strong west wind**- Ex 10:13
- the Red sea - Ex 13:18 15:4 Joe 2:20 Heb 11:29

## THE LORD ANSWERS AFFIRMATIVELY

**So the LORD shifted the wind to a very strong west wind which took up the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not one locust was left in all the territory of Egypt** - The shift of **wind** and the fact that **not one locust was left** were in themselves as miraculous as their coming on the land.

**NET on Red Sea** - The Hebrew name here is יַם סוּף (Yam Suf), sometimes rendered "Reed Sea" or "Sea of Reeds." The word יָם is a collective noun that may have derived from an Egyptian name for papyrus reeds. Many English versions have used "Red Sea," which translates the name that ancient Greeks used: *eruthra thalassa* (eruthra thalassa). The name Red Sea is currently applied to the sea west of the Arabian Peninsula. The northern fingers of this body of water extend along the west and east sides of the Sinai Peninsula and are presently called the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba or the Gulf of Eilat. In ancient times the name applied to a much larger body of water, including the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf (C. Houtman, Exodus, 1:109–10). See also Num 14:25; 21:4; Deut 1:40; 2:1; Judg 11:16; 1 Kgs 9:26; Jer 49:21. The sea was deep enough to drown the entire Egyptian army later (and thus no shallow swamp land). God drives the locusts to their death in the water. He will have the same power over Egyptian soldiers, for he raised up this powerful empire for a purpose and soon will drown them in the sea. The message for the Israelites is that God will humble all who refuse to submit.

**Exodus 10:20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.**

- Ex 4:21 7:13,14 9:12 11:10 De 2:30 Isa 6:9,10 Joh 12:39,40 Ro 9:18 2Th 2:11,12

## LORD HARDENS PHARAOH'S HEART

**But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go**- **Hardened** is [chazaq](#) and Septuagint is [skleruno](#) (think "sclerosis of the arteries of the heart, but here far more deadly because it is spiritual will can result not just in physical death, but eternal spiritual death!). Just as in Ex 10:1 God was the agent producing the hardening. From this point on (actually beginning in Ex 9:12) the agent usually producing the hardening is Jehovah ([see purple below](#)).

Ex 9:12+ And **the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

Ex 9:34+ But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and **hardened his heart**, he and his servants.

Ex 9:35+ **Pharaoh's heart was hardened**, and he did not let the sons of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

Ex 10:1+ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for **I have hardened his heart** and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them,

Ex 10:20+ But **the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.

Ex 10:27+ But **the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, and he was not willing to let them go.

Ex 11:10+ Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh; yet **the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, and he did not let the sons of Israel go out of his land.

Ex 14:4+ "Thus **I will harden Pharaoh's heart**, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." And they did so.

Ex 14:8+ **The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh**, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly.

**Exodus 10:21 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt."**

- **Stretch** - Ex 9:22
- **darkness** - Ps 35:6 78:49 105:28 Pr 4:19 Ec 2:14 6:4 Isa 8:21,22 Mt 27:45 Mk 15:33 Lu 23:44 2Pe 2:4,17 Jude 1:6,13 Rev 16:10,11

## PLAGUE #9 DARKNESS

**Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt** - This plague comes with no warning whatsoever. See [above for table on Ten Plagues](#).

**NET** - The ninth plague is that darkness fell on all the land—**except** on Israel. This plague is comparable to the silence in heaven, just prior to the last and terrible plague (Rev 8:1<sup>+</sup>). Here Yahweh is attacking a core Egyptian religious belief as well as portraying what lay before the Egyptians. Throughout the Bible **darkness** is the symbol of evil, chaos, and judgment. Blindness is one of its manifestations (see Deut 28:27–29). But the plague here is not blindness, or even spiritual blindness, but an awesome darkness from outside (see Joel 2:2+; Zeph 1:15). It is particularly significant in that Egypt's high god was the Sun God (see [Ra - Sun God](#)). **Lord Sun was now being shut down by Lord Yahweh**. If Egypt would not let Israel go to worship their God, then Egypt's god would be **darkness**. The structure is familiar: the plague, now unannounced (Ex 10:21–23), and then the confrontation with Pharaoh (Ex 10:24–27).

**NET on may be felt** - The literal rendering would be "so that one may feel darkness." The image portrays an oppressive darkness; it was sufficiently thick to possess the appearance of substance, although it was just air (B. Jacob, Exodus, 286).

**Jehovah** declares

The One forming light and **creating darkness**, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these. (Isa 45:7)

**Exodus 10:22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days.**

- **thick darkness** - Ex 20:21 De 4:11 Dt 5:22 Ps 105:28 Joel 2:2,31 Am 4:13 Rev 16:10

## THICK DARKNESS ENGULFS ALL EGYPT

**Parallel Passage:**

Psalm 105:26-28 - He sent Moses His servant, And Aaron, whom He had chosen. 27 They performed His wondrous acts among them, And miracles in the land of Ham (EGYPT). 28 He sent darkness and made it dark; And they did not rebel against His words.

**So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky** - Again Moses continues to show unhesitating obedience. His faith and trust in Jehovah has surely grown as he has watched his sovereign LORD exercise total control over Egypt and their false gods.

**And there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days** - Sadly some respected writers like S. Driver espouse an anti-supernaturalistic explanation writing "The darkness was no doubt occasioned really by a sand-storm, produced by the hot electrical wind ... which blows in intermittently." S. Driver you are wrong! Read Isaiah 45:7 where Jehovah says He is "The One forming light and **creating darkness.**" If He had desired to bring a sand storm to make it dark, he would have clearly stated that as His objective. As support of this argument we note that Moses had already recorded "that the land was darkened," by locust (Ex 10:15). He could easily have said here the "land was darkened by grains of sand." No, this was darkness and does not appear to be simply darkness as when we turn out a light, but darkness of a qualitative kind that could be "felt!" I do not understand this degree of darkness, but can only imagine it would be absolutely horrifying. And presumably the Egyptians had candles, lamps and torches, but these utilities had in effect been cut off by Jehovah as when electrical utilities are cut off for not paying the bill. Pharaoh has "not paid the bill," so the lights have been cut off!

**NET** - Pharaoh here would have had to have been impressed that this was something very abnormal, and that his god was powerless. Besides, there was light in all the dwellings of the Israelites.

**Life Application Study Bible**- As each gloomy plague descended upon the land, the Egyptian people realized how powerless their own gods were to stop it. Hapi, the god of the Nile River, could not prevent the waters from turning to blood (Ex 7:20). Hathor, the crafty cow-goddess, was helpless as Egyptian livestock died in droves (Ex 9:6). Amon-Re, the sun-god and chief of the Egyptian gods, could not stop an eerie darkness from covering the land for three full days (Ex 10:21, 22). The Egyptian gods were (1) not personal, centering around images like the sun or the river; (2) numerous; (3) not exclusive (any and all could be worshiped). By contrast, the God of the Hebrews was (1) a living personal Being, (2) the only true God, and (3) the only God who should be worshiped. God was proving to both the Hebrews and the Egyptians that he alone is the living and all-powerful God.

---

### We see a parallel with the Fifth Bowl Judgment in Revelation 16:10-11

Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.

**Tony Garland** comments on **Revelation 16:10-11**

#### on the throne of the beast

Like the first bowl, the fifth bowl specifically targets those within the kingdom of the [Beast](#). Unlike the first bowl which affects all men who took his mark, this bowl is designated for the *throne* of the Beast, and his *kingdom* becomes full of darkness. This may imply a focus upon the leadership of his kingdom—the Beast himself and those in the higher echelons of his realm. Or it could mean all those under his mark. His throne was obtained from Satan. See commentary on [Revelation 13:2](#). He is both a ruler, the [little horn](#) (Da. 7:8) and [Eighth Head](#) (Rev. 17:11▶), and a kingdom, the [Terrible Beast](#) (Da. 7:7; Rev. 13:2▶). See [Beasts, Heads, and Horns](#).

"If the literal Babylon is to be rebuilt, it may already have become the place of the throne of Satan by the time that is in view here under the fifth bowl."<sup>23</sup>

"The Beast is a man (Rev. 13:18▶); therefore his throne is in a definite place: rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates, we believe,—Satan's ancient capital, in the 'land of Shinar,' where 'wickedness' is to be set on its base in the end-time (Zec. 5:5-10)."<sup>24</sup>

#### his kingdom became full of darkness

Now the kingdom of the Beast is struck with a **plague reminiscent of that which struck Pharaoh at the hand of Moses**: Ex 10:21-23

"The transition from the fourth to the fifth bowls is most striking. The one had been the fiery, scorching, blinding brightness of the sun; the next is an impenetrable darkness."<sup>25</sup> Although the throne of the Beast is empowered by Lucifer,<sup>26</sup> the *shining one, the son of the dawn* ([הִלֵּל בֶּן־שָׁחַר](#) [hêlêl ben-šāḥar], Isa. 14:12), he is helpless to illumine the God-imposed darkness.

#### they gnawed their tongues because of the pain

*Pain* is [πόνου](#) [ponou] which includes "affliction, anguish."<sup>27</sup> The darkness with which they are afflicted is more than just lack of light as in the Egyptian plague, but also seems to involve other means of affliction which result in intense pain, perhaps similar to that experienced at the hand of the demonic locusts,

although that judgment was broader than upon the Beast's throne and kingdom (Rev. 9:5-6▶).

"They meditate revenge and are unable to effect it; hence their frenzy [Grotius]. Those in anguish, mental and bodily, bite their lips and tongues."<sup>28</sup>

"The people who suffer these plagues bit their tongues, chew them, gnaw them, as their best diversion from their misery. Their tongues have spoken blasphemies, and they themselves thus punish them."<sup>29</sup>

### They blasphemed the God of heaven

Again they fail an opportunity to repent. With the same tongues they gnaw, they continue to blaspheme God. See commentary on [Revelation 16:9](#). Because they are guilty of blasphemy, God will stone them. See commentary on [Revelation 16:21](#).

### their pains and their sores

The pains were inflicted by the fifth bowl (Rev. 16:10▶) and the sores by the first bowl (Rev. 16:2▶).

### did not repent of their deeds

See commentary on [Revelation 9:21](#).

COMPARISON OF THE PLAGUES OF EXODUS AND REVELATION		
PLAGUE	EGYPT	TRIBULATION
#1 - Water becomes blood.	Ex. 7:20; Ps 105:29	Rev. 8:8-9▶; 11:6▶; 16:3-6▶
#2 - Frogs	Ex 8:6 Ps 105:30	Rev. 16:13▶ (note)
#3 - Lice	Ex. 8:24; Ps. 105:31	Rev. 11:6▶? (note)
#4 - Flies	Ex. 9:6	Rev. 11:6▶? (note)
#5 - Food source (livestock) destroyed	Ex. 9:6	Rev. 8:9▶ (note)
#6 - Boils	Ex. 9:10	Rev. 16:2▶
#7 - Hail	Ex. 9:23; Ps. 105:32	Rev. 8:7▶; 16:21
#8 - Locusts	Ex. 10:13; Ps. 105:34	Rev. 9:3▶
#9 - Darkness	Ex. 10:22; Ps. 105:32	Rev. 8:12▶; Rev 9:2▶; Rev 16:10▶
#10 - Death of Firstborn	Ex. 12:29; Ps. 105:36	

**Exodus 10:23 They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings.**

- **but all** - Ex 8:22 Ex 9:4,26 Ex 14:20 Jos 24:7 Isa 42:16 60:1-3 65:13,14 Mal 3:18 Col 1:13 1Pe 2:9

## TOTAL DARKNESS

**They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days-** As noted above the implication is that even candles and lamps were unable to penetrate this darkness. And it was so dark all they could do was remain motionless. It was as if they were physically blinded, which ultimately depicts the spiritual darkness they were in.

**But all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings-** Presumably candles or lamps which worked in Goshen. Once again this

clear division (cf other divisions - Ex 8:22 Ex 9:4, Ex 9:26) indicates it was a miracle and not a natural phenomenon like an eclipse.

**Exodus 10:24 Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you."**

- **Go, serve** - Ex 10:8,9 8:28 9:28
- **flocks** - Ge 34:23
- **little ones** - Ex 10:10

### **PHARAOH AGREES BUT NEGOTIATES**

**Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, "Go, serve the LORD** - In effect "Go, worship Jehovah." The plagues of darkness appears to open Pharaoh's eyes. He again acknowledges that the God of the Hebrews is Jehovah (cf Ex 5:2+).

**Only let your flocks and your herds be detained**- Pharaoh likes the word "**only**" (cf Ex 8:28+ = "only you shall not go very far away."; Ex 10:17). Pharaoh is negotiating. "Where's the beef?" Pharaoh wants to keep it in his possession!

**Even your little ones may go with you** - This allowance represents a change from his previous decree "if ever I let you and your little ones go" (Ex 10:10)

**NET on little ones** - "The term is often translated "your little ones," but as mentioned before (Ex 10:10), this expression in these passages takes in women and children and other dependents. Pharaoh will now let all the people go, but he intends to detain the cattle to secure their return."

**Exodus 10:25 But Moses said, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice them to the LORD our God.**

- **sacrifice** - Ex 29:1-46 Ex 36:1-40:38 Lev 9:22 Lev 16:9

### **MOSES DOES NOT COMPROMISE**

**But** - Term of contrast. It indicates a change of direction so to speak. Pharaoh had specified "conditions" for their departure. Moses quickly objects. He no longer fears Pharaoh (or his potential malevolent response!) because he fears Jehovah. "The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted." (Pr 29:25).

**Moses said, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice them to the LORD our God**- Moses demands their animals must go so they would have something to sacrifice to their God.

**NET** - The point is that if Pharaoh told them to go and serve Yahweh, they had to have animals to sacrifice. If Pharaoh was holding the animals back, he would have to make some provision.

**Exodus 10:26 Therefore, our livestock too shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we shall take some of them to serve the LORD our God. And until we arrive there, we ourselves do not know with what we shall serve the LORD."**

- **our livestock**- Ex 12:32 Isa 23:18 60:5-10 Ho 5:6 Zec 14:20 Ac 2:44,45 2Co 8:5
- **and we** - Pr 3:9 Heb 11:8

### **MOSES' ANGRY FIRM REPLY**

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion. Based on their need for animals for sacrifices.

**NET** - They were obliged to take the animals if they were going to sacrifice, but more than that, since they were not coming back, they had to take everything.

**Our livestock too shall go with us** - Shall go is "the obligatory imperfect nuance. They were obliged to take the animals if they were going to sacrifice, but more than that, since they were not coming back, they had to take everything." (NET)

**Not a hoof shall be left behind, for we shall take some of them to serve the LORD our God** - Moses stands firm on the animals. Moses "makes it clear that he has no intention of leaving any pledge with Pharaoh. When they leave, they will take everything that belongs to them." (NET)

**And until we arrive there, we ourselves do not know with what we shall serve the LORD** - NET = "Until we arrive there, we do not know what we must use to serve the LORD." "Moses gives an angry but firm reply to Pharaoh's attempt to control Israel; he makes it clear that he has no intention of leaving any pledge with Pharaoh. When they leave, they will take everything that belongs to them."

**Exodus 10:27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to let them go.**

- Ex 10:1,20 4:21 14:4,8 Rev 9:20 16:10,11

## **LORD HARDENS HEART OF PHARAOH**

**But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart** - (See [summary of hardening of Pharaoh's heart](#)) **Hardened** is chazaq and Greek [skleruno](#) (to make hard) meaning that Jehovah made his heart "thick" so that he would stubbornly refuse to change his mind or attitude toward Israel. BDAG says skleruno means to "cause to be unyielding in resisting information." God steps in and sovereignly hardens Pharaoh's heart so he would not be tempted to give in to Moses' demand.

**And he was not willing to let them go** - The result of his hardened heart was that he was absolutely not willing to let Israel go. Why? One reason was that they were "free labor" and responsible for fueling Egypt's mighty financial engine, the greatest in the world at that time.

**Exodus 10:28 Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Beware, do not see my face again, for in the day you see my face you shall die!"**

- **Get away from me** - Ex 10:11
- **for in that** - 2Ch 16:10 25:16 Am 7:13

## **STRONG WARNINGS INCLUDING DEATH THREAT**

**Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! - Depart from me"** meaning from being a trouble or a burden to me." (NET)

**Beware, do not see my face again, for in the day you see my face you shall die** - Clearly Pharaoh is fed up! Shortly before in Ex 10:11 in the NLT we read "Pharaoh threw them out of the palace." His fuse is shortening!

**Exodus 10:29 Moses said, "You are right; I shall never see your face again.**

- **I shall never see your face again.** - Ex 11:4-8 Ex 12:30,31 Heb 11:27

## **NO MORE FACE TIME IN THIS BOOK!**

**Moses said, "You are right I shall never see your face again** - The last plague will come on Egypt with no warning to Pharaoh. Moses' statement is interesting in light of what occurred on the night of the Passover as recorded in Exodus 12 - "Pharaoh arose in

the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead. Then **he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said**, "Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship the LORD, as you have said. Take both your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and go, and bless me also." (Ex 12:30-32) Currid resolves the issue writing that "The Hebrew prophet will not see Pharaoh's face because it is hidden in darkness, and the Hebrews will soon leave Egypt."