

Exodus 9-10-11 | Why the Plagues?

April 12, 2026

Good morning. My name is Dan Rawlins. I am one of the Elders here at Wayside. We are a church that believes in receiving the whole counsel of Scripture, so we teach in an expository fashion, verse-by-verse, through the Bible.

Our Senior Pastor, Paul Wallace and his wife, Mariko are on vacation. He has been teaching through the Gospel of Mark, and we will return to the Gospel of Mark when Pastor Paul returns. When it is my turn to fill the pulpit, I've been preaching through the Book of Exodus. It's been about a year since we were last in Exodus, and we left off in Chapter 8 with the plague of flies. This morning, I hope, by God's grace, we will get through the rest of the first nine plagues and set the stage for the final plague and the great event known as the Passover. Today, we will primarily study Exodus Chapters 9, 10 and 11, but I'd like to start with a passage from the New Testament to give our study this morning some context. This is about the Children of Israel in the wilderness, and it is also about us:

In honor of God's Word, let's stand as we read 1 Corinthians 10: 1-13.

Slide 01
I Cor 10:1-13

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. **Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction**, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Why are we studying the Book of Exodus? As the apostle Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth about the stories of the Exodus: ***Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction.*** The story of Exodus is **our** story. Paul says we are to learn and grow in our walk of faith by learning about the time of Moses. The Book of Exodus is about Redemption, Salvation and the Revelation of how to live as a child of God after we have been saved. My prayer for us this morning is that we each will find application for how we should be trusting and living our walk with Jesus.

Now, as we turn to the book of Exodus, we recall that the people of Israel, God's chosen people are slaves in Egypt. God has appointed Moses to be His instrument of their salvation. He prepared Moses for 80 years. 40 growing up in Egypt and 40 in the Wilderness. Then God called Moses to return to

Egypt and bring his people out of captivity. Moses did as God instructed. He went before Pharaoh and they had this exchange:

Slide 02
Exodus 5:1-2

Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” But Pharaoh said, “**Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.**”

At the time of the Exodus, Egypt was a pantheistic society that worshipped many gods while they held the Israelites captive in slavery. Pharaoh himself was considered a deity, so he asks this question: **Who is the LORD that I should obey his voice?** And we’ve been finding through our study of Exodus so far, that God is quite happy to introduce himself to Pharaoh through the first four of ten attention-getting plagues. And through the judgement of all ten plagues, Pharaoh will **come to know** who God is. Pharaoh, and all the Egyptians will come to realize that the one true God is far greater and far more powerful than any of the Egyptian *wanna-be* gods. Let’s put the plagues in context.

Now, Critics note that the miracles and plagues identified in Exodus occur naturally in the Nile delta, even today. They say scripture is describing natural phenomena that is common in the region and therefore, is really nothing special at all. There is some truth to that observation. All the plagues describe phenomena that do occur naturally in the region. But the comparison stops there.

It must be noted that the Egyptian system of religion is both pagan and pantheistic. Egypt had many, many gods. Each Egyptian deity superintended some aspect of the natural environment of region. When the ancient Egyptians observed some naturally occurring event in their region, the annual flooding of the Nile, for instance. They concluded, there must be a “god” in charge of the Nile, and they invented “Osiris”, “Hapi”, “Isis” and “Khnum” – all gods who had dominion over the Nile. We discussed them in Chapter 7 when we looked at the first of the plagues, the Nile being turned to blood. So, the naturally occurring phenomena associated with each of the plagues are also associated with the Egyptian gods that were imagined to supervise these recurring events.

God intends that each of the plagues is directed at demonstrating that the one true God of the Bible is greater than any and all of the Egyptian Gods. With each of the plagues, God brings the part of creation over which an Egyptian god supposedly has dominion and supernaturally elevates it to a level that demonstrates to Pharaoh and all the Egyptians that the one true God of the Bible is greater than each particular puny Egyptian god. One after another. As we’ve already seen in the first four plagues: 1) *The Nile turning into blood*, 2) *Frogs*, 3) *Gnats and 4) Flies* - that God is getting Pharaoh’s attention. God is being very gracious toward Pharaoh, giving plenty of warning, and hoping, each time that Pharaoh will repent, and turn to the one true God. Each time, Pharaoh witnesses God’s power is greater than the Egyptian god the plague attacks. Each time, Pharaoh hardens his heart and does not obey God.

So, now we come to today’s passage as we encounter the 5th plague

Slide 03
Exodus 9:1-2

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me.”’

The first thing we need to note here is the heart of God revealed in what He tells Moses to say to Pharaoh. He commands Moses to tell Pharaoh to “Let **my** people go”. Not just let the Hebrews go. *Let my people go. My people.* Very personal. Also very clear to whom these people belong. They belong to God. They do not belong to Pharaoh.

The first part of Moses' demand to Pharaoh is about redemption. *"Let my people go."* Let my people leave the bondage of slavery. Now look at the second part of the command: *"That they may serve me."* It's not just "Let my people go." God is not just setting Israel free simply because they are slaves and he wants them free – kind of a social justice contract. He is redeeming them **so that** they may serve Him.

We, too, like the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, ...before we were saved...were in our own kind of bondage. Jesus takes the chains that bind us, Chains of bitterness. Chains of anger. Chains of resentment. Chains of anxiety. Chains of guilt; and Jesus sets us free. We were in bondage to sin, and slaves to whatever particular sin ensnared us. But God brought us out of that slavery not just to save us, but as Moses said to Pharaoh, to bring us out of slavery that we might serve Him. He redeems us **from** something, so that he can take us **to** something better. From → To. That is the story of the Christian faith. We read about both parts of redemption in the 2nd chapter of Ephesians:

Slide 04
Ephesians 2:8-10

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

God redeems a people to serve Him. The Israelites must be redeemed and brought out of Egypt, but Egypt also has to be brought out of the Israelites. They had not worshipped God correctly in hundreds of years while living as slaves. They did not know how to worship God rightly. Most of what they understood about worship and serving God was wrong, because they were surrounded by the pantheistic pagan society of Egypt. So, as God is delivering them and setting them apart, he is showing the Hebrews very clearly, with each successive plague, that the Egyptian deities are not gods. That God, and God alone is the one true God.

In this 5th Plague, God attacks at the heart of Egypt's wealth and worship. The death of the livestock. Let's continue with God's instruction to Moses about what to say to Pharaoh. Here's what follows *"let my people go."*

Slide 05
Exodus 9: 2-4

For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, behold, the hand of the LORD will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock that are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that belongs to the people of Israel shall die."

There were four provinces in Egypt where a god was declared over the land that took the form of some kind of livestock. One was Aphis – the Bull God. The second largest temple excavated in ancient Egypt was dedicated to Aphis, the sacred Bull. The story was that Aphis, the bull god was birthed by a moonbeam from the heaven, and a new Aphis was born every time the old Aphis died. When the old Aphis died, a new one was born. The old Aphis was embalmed and entombed in Memphis Egypt. In Memphis Egypt, they have discovered a necropolis, which is a large burial ground. Archaeologists have discovered numerous sarcophagus's (mummies) of bulls. Once an Aphis died, it was passed into the afterlife and joined with Osiris, who is god of the afterlife, and became known as Osiris-Aphis. There is a second cow goddess that was prominent in ancient Egypt. Her name was Hathor. She was the goddess of love, fertility, beauty and joy. She is depicted in Egyptian hieroglyphics with the body of a woman and the head of a cow. Some of the depictions show the Pharaoh of the day nursing at the breast of Hathor. In 1906, archaeologists found a stone statue of Hathor the goddess and Pharaoh Ammon Hotep II in such a session. The Pharaoh was depicted as being completely dependent on this

<p>cow goddess. There were several other gods depicted as livestock. So, when the plague comes to the livestock, it is a direct attack on Egyptian gods of the time.</p>	
<p>Slide 6 Exodus 9:5-7</p>	<p>And the LORD set a time, saying, “Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land.” And the next day the LORD did this thing. All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one of the livestock of the people of Israel died. And Pharaoh sent, and behold, not one of the livestock of Israel was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.</p>
<p>We see the sovereignty and providence of God. God says when the plague will come. And it comes exactly as He said it would. He says where the plague will happen and where it will not happen. It occurs exactly as he said it would. He judges the Egyptians while simultaneously protecting Israel. Did that convince Pharaoh? No. Look at verse 6. God said what would happen, but Pharaoh “<i>sent</i>”. That means he had his officials go to Goshen and see if the livestock of the Hebrews still lived. Even if God said it, he still needed proof. Well, maybe that would convince him of God’s power. Nope. Look at verse 7 - <i>But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.</i></p> <p>You know, no matter how many times I read that, I just want to go, “<i>Really?</i>” Pharaoh, what is going to take to convince you that God is God? Even though we know what is coming, it still makes absolutely no sense...unless you understand the condition of fallen man. A fallen man will not change his own heart. Only the sovereign grace of God can change a human heart. But sometimes, that does not happen.</p> <p>God is making a statement with every plague. Livestock was wealth in Egypt. This plague attacks the gods that provide wealth for Egypt. We have an example in scripture from the time Joseph was ruling over Egypt’s economy during the great famine that occurred 400 years earlier than the time of Moses:</p>	
<p>Slide 07 Genesis 47:15-17</p>	<p>And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, “Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone.” And Joseph answered, “Give your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock, if your money is gone.” So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the herds, and the donkeys. He supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year.</p>
<p>Money is not wealth. Money represents wealth, but it is not wealth in and of itself. Tangible assets are wealth. In ancient Egypt, livestock was wealth. This plague attacks the great wealth of Egypt. It also attacks a major form of Egyptian worship. This is a serious plague. Both worship of money and graven images are forms of idolatry. God hates Idolatry. He does not want Pharaoh, the Egyptians or his chosen people to serve idols. You know, sometime in the next few years we are going to come to Exodus chapter 32. In that passage, Moses goes up into Mt. Horeb to hear from God. The people are left on the plain below the mountain, and they say “Moses has been gone for quite some time, and he’s probably not coming back. We need a God to worship.” Do you remember what it is they make? ...A golden calf....a cow. Some livestock. Coming out of Egypt, the Hebrews were familiar with idols as representatives of the pantheon of gods that were worshipped there, and fell into false worship. Holy cow. Let’s look at Plague No. 6 - Boils</p>	
<p>Slide 08 Exodus 9: 8-9</p>	<p>And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from the kiln, and let Moses throw them in the air in the sight of Pharaoh. It shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.”</p>
<p>So this is something that affects Egypt environmentally. An airborne plague. Note that the previous plagues included warnings to Pharaoh before they happened. That does not occur this time. Pharaoh</p>	

had 24 hours to think about the previous livestock plague before it began. He was told, *“Tomorrow this is going to happen”*. But this time, no warning. Moses and Aaron were simply instructed to go over to the kiln, grab some ashes, throw them into the air and trust God would do the rest. And God does the rest.

It is interesting to note that one of the things that Egyptian priests would do is take soot and dust and throw it into the air as an act of worship to the sky goddess, Neit (or Nut).

It is likely that the kilns where Moses and Aaron obtained the soot were the very same brick kilns used by Hebrew to bake the bricks used for building in their work as slaves. That furnace, then, was emblematic of suffering for the Israelites. It was now to become the emblem of suffering for Egypt. God turns the tables as he judges Egypt.

Slide 09
Exodus 9:10-11

So they took soot from the kiln and stood before Pharaoh. And Moses threw it in the air, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils came upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians.

Now, if you recall from previous plagues, the Pharaoh’s magicians would replicate the earlier miracles. Aaron stretched out his staff to call forth frogs, so the magicians called forth more frogs. They couldn’t stop the plague of frogs, so they imitated it. Not only do the magicians not do that here, but they are totally unable to stand before Pharaoh and Moses because the boils have affected them so severely. So what do you suppose the Egyptians might have done when this plague came upon them? Neit (Nut) the sky goddess had failed them. She did not intervene to stop the boils. So, it is likely the Egyptians turned to two other gods for healing: One is “Serapas” and the other is “Imhotep.” If you ever saw the movie, *The Mummy*, it had a depiction of Imhotep. Imhotep was an early physician of the Egyptians who was declared a deity. Another thing; it was an Egyptian regulation that to serve in any of the temples that dotted the landscape that priests had to be clean from any skin disease. They wore clean linens, and if they had any sore or blister on their skin, they were prohibited from serving in the temples. So, all the temples in Egypt must have had *“Sorry, closed due to illness”* signs on them. God shuts down the entire false worship system of Egypt with this plague.

Slide 10
Exodus 9: 12

But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

This is the first time that we read that the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart. God had prophesied in Chapter 4 that he **would** harden the heart of Pharaoh, but up until now, scripture always stated that Pharaoh hardened his own heart in reaction to the first five plagues. There is a lesson for us here. When people ignore the repeated promptings of the Lord, time after time after time, God will confirm the decision made in their hearts. When we studied this concept earlier in Exodus, we said that scripture uses two words for hardening of the heart. When Pharaoh hardened his own heart, it was a decision that **he** made. He dug his heels in. Then God comes along here and confirms the decision Pharaoh has already made. The word for harden used here means more like “strengthen” a previous decision. Confirm it. When people repeatedly deny the repeated promptings of God, time after time, God will eventually confirm the decision they made, and **gives them over** to a reprobate mind, where it becomes impossible for that individual to trust

Slide 11
Romans 1:22-25

*Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God **gave them up** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*

<p>God is giving Pharaoh chance after chance after chance. <i>“Let my people go, or else”</i>...and he replies, <i>“NO”</i> ...plague after plague, and then by the 6th plague, God says, <i>“OK, have it your way.”</i> God confirms the choice Pharaoh has already made. This ties into what we studied a few weeks ago in Mark 3:28 where Jesus refers to the <i>“blasphemy of the Holy Spirit”</i> often referred to as the <i>“unforgivable sin.”</i> The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is tied into what people do in response to Christ. One role of the Holy Spirit is to convince people of their sinfulness and need for a Savior. When people repeatedly reject the call of Christ (over and over and over again), then God will eventually confirm their choice and they eventually come to a place where all is lost.</p>	
<p>Slide 12 Exodus 9:13-17</p>	<p>Then the LORD said to Moses, <i>“Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, ‘Let my people go, that they may serve me. For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go.</i></p>
<p>God is saying to Pharaoh, I am going to direct these next plagues directly to you Pharaoh, directly to your person, to your heart. I am going to do it for two reasons: 1) I will send these plagues so that you will know there is none like me. [v.14] There is only one God, and that’s me. All the rest are false Gods - and 2) So that the rest of the world would know this truth as well. Look at verse 16 : To show you my power so that my name will be proclaimed in all the earth. Paul uses this verse in Romans 9 to explain God’s sovereignty. So this next judgement will be focused on the goddess of the air, <i>“Niet”</i> (Nut)</p>	
<p>Slide 13 Exodus 9:18</p>	<p><i>Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now.</i></p>
<p>Clearly, something stupendous and supernatural is about to happen. Something that has never been seen before.</p>	
<p>Slide 14 Exodus 9:19-21</p>	<p><i>Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them. Then whoever feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the LORD left his slaves and his livestock in the field.</i></p>
<p>Did you catch that part in the middle of these verses? Apparently, by now, there are some Egyptians who believe the prophetic word of God and get themselves and their livestock to shelter. Pharaoh wasn’t doing that, but some people are heeding God’s warning. Their hearts are starting to fear the Lord, and a heart that fears the Lord and obeys is the Biblical definition of a soft heart. These believing Egyptians may become some of those described as the <i>“mixed multitude”</i> that leaves Egypt with the Children of Israel in a few chapters from now. That’s good & bad. We will see later.</p>	
<p>Slide 15 Exodus 9:22-25</p>	<p><i>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man and beast and every plant of the field, in the land of Egypt.” Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the</i></p>

	earth. And the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field.
How do you believe the followers of “Neit”[Nut] responded to this. Their sky “god” was responsible for sunshine and warm breezes. Where was she now? It is her domain from which this judgement comes. Then there were two other gods, Isis and Seth. They are responsible for the crops that are now being destroyed. None of these gods are helping. They were powerless.	
Slide 16 Exodus 9:26	Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail.
And once again, the plague does not affect the parts of the land where the people of Israel live. God spares them.	
Slide 17 Exodus 9:27-28	Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, “This time I have sinned; the LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Plead with the LORD, for there has been enough of God’s thunder and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.”
<p>Well, this sounds good. It sounds like he is repenting. This sounds promising. I mean we have come a long way from Exodus Chapter 8, verse 25, where Pharaoh said, “<i>Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.</i>” Go and sacrifice, but stay in the land. Then Pharaoh said, “<i>Go, but don’t go very far.</i>” [Exodus 8:28]. Now Pharaoh says, “Go! Just get outta here...”. But listen to his language. First, he say “I have sinned....this time.” What about all the other times? Pharaoh has selective amnesia. Well, forget the “this time”, he admits that he sinned. He admits that the LORD is righteous (right). He admits that he is wicked and that his people are wicked.</p> <p>Think what would happen in the Christian community today if a prominent figure, a world leader was to say, “<i>I have sinned and the LORD is righteous,</i>” We have him go on tour. We’d have him write a book and make it the best-selling Christian publication of 2026. Everyone would be saying, “<i>Look what Pharaoh says! This guy is a believer!</i>”</p> <p>But you know what, sometimes there is a thing called “fake repentance”. The Bible calls it “having a knowledge of God, but denying the power thereof.” A form of “Godliness” Paul writes to Timothy, but denying the power thereof.”</p> <p>This isn’t true repentance. Pharaoh doesn’t really mean it. Perhaps a better New Testament scripture to apply to Pharaoh is in Titus 1:16</p>	
Slide 18 Titus 1:16	They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.
So don’t get fooled by just the confession of the mouth. Actions speak louder than words.	
Slide 19 Exodus 9:29-30	Moses said to him, “As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the LORD. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the LORD’S. But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God.”
Moses is in essence saying, “ <i>Hey, Pharaoh...loved your little speech back there. Really impressed with those words about God being righteous and you being a sinner, but I’m not buying what you’re</i>	

<p><i>selling.</i> Why is Moses skeptical? Well, you see this is where the written word doesn't give complete information to us the same way Moses could have had by being there. So much of communication comes through tone of voice, body language and other signals we send in addition to the words we speak or write. Maybe it was a look in the eye that he had seen before in Pharaoh, and he saw that look again, and Moses thought, <i>"I hear what you are saying, but I'm not convinced you are sincere."</i> <i>"You really don't mean this."</i> So Moses said, <i>"I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God"</i></p>	
<p>Slide 20 Exodus 9:31-32</p>	<p><i>(The flax and the barley were struck down, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. But the wheat and the emmer were not struck down, for they are late in coming up.)</i></p>
<p>These verses give us some insight about the chronology of the plagues. The barley blossoms normally occur in Egypt in January, and they are being harvested (struck), then this plague is happening in January or February. The first plague, the Nile turning to blood, scripture tell us, happened when the Nile was in seasonal flood stage. That normally occurs in Egypt in July and August. So, these first plagues happened over a period of seven months. They are described back-to-back in scripture, so it seems quicker. But these we have seen so far are stretched out over a seven-month period. In fact, the tenth plague, the Passover, occurs in April, so the whole experience of the confrontations with Pharaoh and the plagues takes place over at least a 9-month period of judgement. We are seeing the birth of the nation of Israel, so 9 months seems appropriate.</p>	
<p>Slide 21 Exodus 9: 33-35</p>	<p><i>So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and stretched out his hands to the LORD, and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured upon the earth. But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.</i></p>
<p>Man oh Man! Proof after proof after proof that YHWH is greater than the false gods of Egypt. And yet one more time, Pharaoh hardens his heart. Just as God predicted he would. Don't be like Pharaoh. If God is calling you to true repentance and faith this morning, heed the gentle call of the Holy Spirit. Trust in the One who keeps you trusting.</p> <p>As we move into Chapter 10, we see a significant shift in these interactions between Moses and Pharaoh. God has been patient with Pharaoh. God is giving Pharaoh the opportunity to repent and believe. "Longsuffering" is the word used in scripture. God is longsuffering when it comes to our sin and disobedience. He puts up with a lot, in order to give us a chance to come to him in repentance. He is not willing that anybody should perish....up to a point.</p>	
<p>Slide 22 Exodus 10:1-2</p>	<p><i>Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD."</i></p>
<p>Did you know that God wants every generation...your son, your son's son...to know God's story. And to know your story of your walk with God. That is why it is so important that those of us given the responsibility to be parents use the time we have with our children to build the truth of scripture into them. Every generation is to pass on the story of the Bible to the next generation. That's God's plan. Psalm 127:3 says, <i>"Children are a heritage from the Lord."</i> We must build the truth of the Gospel into that heritage. So here is God saying to Moses - go into Pharaoh and say specific things, but also to tell the next generation and the generation after that. Pass these stories on, so all may know that He is</p>	

the LORD. Verse 3 of Chapter 10 begins the eighth plague that God sends on Egypt. It is a plague of Locusts.	
Slide 23 Exodus 10:3	So Moses and Aaron went in 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.
Notice the question, “How Long?” We are going to see it again. Just make a mental note of it for now. “Let my people go.” This is the 8 th time Moses has said these words to this Pharaoh. Now, wouldn’t you agree it takes some “Hutzpah” to stand before a world ruler, and tell him in so many words, “You are a prideful dude....How long are you going to endure these plagues upon your land and refuse to honor and obey the one true God?” Moses is getting in Pharaoh’s face. He is emboldened by God’s grace to speak this way to Pharaoh. He tells Pharaoh to <i>let my people go or else</i> .	
Slide 24 Exodus 10:4-5	For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land.
In other words, Moses says to Pharaoh, “If you think I’ve been bugging you -these locusts are really going to bug you.” Now Pharaoh was used to locusts. They were not uncommon in Egypt. We’ll unpack that thought in a bit. There have been seven plagues where God has acted decisively, and yet been patient with Pharaoh, to get his attention.	
Slide 25 Exodus 10:5-6	And they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat every tree of yours that grows in the field, and they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.” Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh.
So Moses and Aaron leave the courts of Pharaoh, now watch what happens next:	
Slide 26 Exodus 10:7	Then Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “ How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?”
There’s that question again, “How long?” First time God tells Moses to ask “How long?” This time, it is the entire Egyptian court. Pharaoh’s servants ask “How long are you going to keep doing this?” Pharaoh’s magicians, and court officials ask the same question of Pharaoh that God has asked. Go back in your mind, and think of Joseph. Joseph was able to bring the entire country of Egypt out of starvation in the face of a world-wide famine by his policies. Here comes Moses. Through the plagues, Moses brings the whole country. The same country... to the brink of starvation. The two outcomes are directly proportional to how the Egyptians have treated the Jewish people. This Pharaoh, we are told in Exodus Chapter 1 forgot Joseph. He knew not Joseph. It was his policy toward the Hebrews that is ruining Egypt, and the people who work for him know this. That is why they say, “How long?” Now locusts were a menace. They still are a menace. They are not unknown, either in the modern world, or back in Moses’ time. Most scholars believe the locust mentioned in this passage is called the “short-horned locust.” It is about 2 inches long. The wingspan is about 4-5 inches wide. They travel in clouds. They travel in columns that can be 100 ft. tall. So image a cloud of flying locusts that is about 100 feet high, and 4-5 miles long. You can see it on the horizon as this dark cloud moves through the sky, and then settles on the crops, or other places where there is vegetation to feed on. These locusts can reproduce in the arid desert and migrate long distances. When they settle on	

<p>anything green and growing, they strip it bare. Descriptions from those experiencing a cloud of locusts say that their arrival is like an eclipse of the sun. You can't see anything. It becomes dark. The result is that every green growing plant is decimated and the ground looks like it has been burned with fire. There is an historical account from 1866 in Algiers that describes a destruction that was so total that over 200,000 people died in the famine that followed the locust swarm. Another locust swarm in the middle east occurred in 1951, where locusts devoured every green growing thing down to the ground over 100's of thousands of square miles in the middle east.</p> <p>So Moses has announced the plague of locusts that is coming, then left Pharaoh's court. Pharaoh's administrative staff calls out Pharaoh. "How Long are you going to resist Moses's God?" Let's see what happens next:</p>	
Slide 27 Exodus 10:8	So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. And he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God. But which ones are to go?"
<p>"Go serve the LORD your God". Well, that's a good sign. Then Pharaoh asks "But which ones are to go?" That's not a good sign. Pharaoh has done this before. Kind of a "bait and switch" approach to ruling. "Go, but don't go far..." "Go, but don't leave the land".... He has had a number of compromises. Here is yet another one. So, who is going, exactly?</p>	
Slide 28 Exodus 10:9-10	Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old. We will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the LORD." But he said to them, "The LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind.
<p>What is Pharaoh saying? "Whoa, Moses! You don't want to go out there in the wilderness and bring all your young'uns with you. It's too dangerous! There are lions and tigers and bears..Oh my!" Pharaoh is warning, "If you go out there, it's dangerous!" Now this, to me, is humorous. It's not dangerous for the Children of Israel as slaves in Egypt?</p>	
Slide 29 Exodus 10:11	No! Go, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you are asking." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.
<p>Pharaoh says, It is OK for the men to go on this little soiree' into the wilderness, but leave the wives and kids behind. I need my workforce, and if everybody goes, you will never return. But if only the men go, you will come back...because your families are still here. This same mindset, this compromising ideology is what the world says to you. The world says to you, "Listen, It's OK if you get into this, but don't impose this on your children. Don't drag your family and friends and your children into this. Let them make their own decisions.</p>	
Slide 30 Exodus 10:12-13	Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, so that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left." So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind had brought the locusts.
<p>To this day, the prevailing winds in Egypt come from the south and are gentle, cooling breezes coming up the Nile valley. But occasionally, the wind comes from the East. When it does, it is a dry, hot, stiff wind called a "Sirocco." And it was this kind of wind that brought the locusts. If you are a locust, it is easier to fly with the wind than against it, so they just kind of "hitch-hiked" their way into Egypt.</p>	
Slide 31 Exodus 10:14-15	The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever will be again. They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of

	the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt.
Now, the Egyptians prayed to a god whom they depicted as a locust. There are inscriptions of this locust god in Egyptian temples. Obviously, the locust god was not doing any good here. Then there was another god whom the Egyptians called "Seraphis." Seraphis was the god who protected vegetation from the locusts. Obviously, he is not doing any good, as well. So once again, YHWH, the LORD your God is "showing up" the false gods and goddesses of Egypt. Every one of these plagues was a direct attack on the false worship system of Egypt.	
Slide 32 Exodus 10:16	Then Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you.
OK. Once again, this is good. Confession. Pharaoh is admitting, "I've sinned." That's the first step. The question is, will he take the 2 nd step? Confession is the first step. The second step is repentance. The willingness to turn away from your own sin and follow the LORD's way. It's one thing to admit you are wrong, but you could do that every day. "Yeah, I'm a sinner. Sinner today. Sinner tomorrow." OK, good. Glad you admitted that, and by the way, you're right. And God provided a solution for that, so are you going to take that next step, turn away from sin and let the blood of Christ wash you clean? Are you going to let the Holy Spirit work within you a transformation to a holy life? So Pharaoh made the right step initially, but don't get too excited. Let's read on.	
Slide 33 Exodus 10:17	Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the LORD your God only to remove this death from me."
"Only this once." Oops.	
Slide 34 Exodus 10:17-20	So he went out from Pharaoh and pleaded with the LORD. And the LORD turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea. Not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go.
There are two kinds of human sorrow (or regret):	
Slide 35 2 Cor 7:10	For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.
The best example of this verse in action that I can share with you is Pharaoh. This is not godly regret that produces repentance. This is worldly grief. Self-centered disappointment. Self pity. Self. Self. Self. It's not "I'm sorry I sinned." Rather, it's "I'm sorry I got caught." "I am so sorry that this hurts me so much." I'm not really ready to change my lifestyle, but I've been caught, so I'll say "I'm sorry." I confess my sin...only this once. Repentance is a central theme of the Christian faith. Particularly in the New Testament. The first message John the Baptist ever preached was on repentance. The first message Jesus Christ preached was on repentance. Godly repentance first involves confession. The realization you are headed the wrong way. Headed the away from God in sin. Acknowledging that. Stopping. Turning around and heading toward God. Deliberately, continuously, until you reach sanctification [<i>Flagstaff Phoenix example if time</i>]. Now, let's move on to the 9 th Plague: Darkness	
Slide 36 Exodus 10:21-23	Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt." So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They did not see one another, nor did

	<p>anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived.</p>
<p>Now, in this plague, God is striking at the heart, the very foundation of Egyptian theology. As we have been saying, everyone of these plagues is a judgement on one of the gods of the polytheistic Egyptian worship system. The chief god in the pantheistic array of Egyptian deities is know as “RA”, the sun God. He was worshipped daily because of the abundance of sunny days in that region. On top of that, Pharoah was considered to be the physical incarnation of Amon Ra, the Sun God. So this plague is a judgement on RA and a direct assault on the deity of Pharoah. In Egypt, it is suddenly “Lights Out”. The sun is not shining. It is a darkness so deep that it can be felt. Where is RA?</p> <p>Now here is an interesting historical fact: According to the Babylonian Talmud, The massive group of writings by the Jews throughout their history – They believe that God reserves the judgement of darkness upon a nation only for a very severe sin, or wickedness of that nation. Here in Exodus, the darkness stayed for three hours. When Jesus was on the cross, for three hours, what happened? Darkness covered the earth. Why? Because the greatest sin mankind could commit was to put holy, blameless God on a cross and crucify him to get rid of him. Now let’s fast forward and connect another dot. The day of the Lord, the great tribulation, the worst time in human history the Bible tells us. The book of Joel tells us about that day:</p>	
<p>Slide 37 Joel 2:1-2</p>	<p>Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations.</p>
<p>In the Book of Revelation, in both chapters 9 and 16: locusts come, and then darkness comes. God pours them both out on the entire earth during that period of time. In Revelation 16, the 5th bowl judgement is darkness poured out on the kingdom of the antichrist. So we have three dots we connect. This one in Exodus in a preview of Christ’s crucifixion and then a preview of the end of this age, which is yet to come.</p>	
<p>Slide 38 Exodus 10:24</p>	<p>Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, “Go, serve the LORD; your little ones also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind.”</p>
<p>Here goes Pharaoh again. “You can go. You can take your little ones with you...but leave your flocks and herds in Egypt. Pharaoh is unrelenting in wanting to compromise. You can go. You can take your families. Maybe that’s enough of a concession that Moses could say, “we have a deal”. The only problem with that is that God told Moses to leave completely. Pharaoh is essentially saying “<i>You can go worship, but leave your wealth here in Egypt.</i>” The livestock is the only wealth the Israelite slaves owned. And that wealth is giving to the LORD in the form of sacrifice, which is worship.</p>	
<p>Slide 39 Exodus 10:25-28</p>	<p>But Moses said, “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the LORD our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there.” But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let them go. Then Pharaoh said to him, “Get away from me; take care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die.” Moses said, “As you say! I will not see your face again.”</p>

<p>The Bible says “Woe to him who strives with his maker.” Pharaoh, you can fight God, but you are only going to hurt yourself. And then there is an exchange between Pharaoh and Moses where each one claims that they never want to see each other’s face again. Moses doesn’t leave Pharaoh’s presence just yet. He does that in Chapter 11, vers 8. But they are done talking to one another. Let’s look at Chapter 11 – just 10 verses to wrap things up this morning.</p>	
<p>Slide 40 Exodus 11:1</p>	<p>The LORD said to Moses, “Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely.</p>
<p>Now it is interesting to note that up until now, Moses did not know how many plagues there were going to be. So God tells him the last plague is coming next. And the Hebrew word for plague used here is different than the word used in the nine previous plagues. It translates more like “final stroke” or “kill shot.” The culminating action. And God tells Moses what to say so all the people can hear:</p>	
<p>Slide 41 Exodus 11:2</p>	<p>Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry.”</p>
<p>Now the “neighbors” mentioned here are the Egyptians. The Children of Israel are asking the Egyptians for their silver and gold. Why? First of all, back wages. 400 years of slavery. Working without pay. Now, what are they going to do in the desert with all the silver and gold they are taking? In future study we will learn that they will use the precious metals to build a tabernacle according to the specifications God will provide beginning in Exodus chapter 25-</p>	
<p>Slide 42 Exodus 11:3</p>	<p>And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants and in the sight of the people.</p>
<p>Now remember the Book of Exodus was written by Moses – and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.</p>	
<p>Slide 43 Exodus 11:4-6</p>	<p>So Moses said, “Thus says the LORD: About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again.</p>
<p>There is a symmetry to this last promised plague. God warned Pharaoh in previous chapters of Exodus. God said, “Israel is my son, my firstborn. If you don’t let him go, I am going to kill your son, your firstborn.” Pharaoh was warned way in advance of this plague actually occurring. Pharaoh wanted to kill all of the male babies of the Jews. God is paying Pharaoh back in a currency that Pharaoh can understand. And we are also reading here a type of a future judgement of all mankind that is yet to come in our current age. We are told of a great white throne judgement of all people in the Book of Revelation.</p>	
<p>Slide 44 Exodus 11:7-8</p>	<p>But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.’ And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get out, you and all the people who follow you.’ And after that I will go out.” And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger.</p>
<p>God is saying to Israel, I am so going to protect you, that even a dog is not going to growl when you leave Egypt. The speech is done, and Moses leaves the presence of Pharaoh for the last time.</p>	
<p>Slide 45 Exodus 11:9-10</p>	<p>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.”</p>

Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

Did you know that it was the job of the Egyptian priests to escort the dead safe passage to the afterlife. They would convey the dead of Egypt to the land of Osiris, the god of the afterlife. So when an Egyptian died, they believed they went to what was called the "Western World" into the presence of Osiris. And it was the job of the sister and wife of Osiris, Isis to protect children. So both the god Osiris and the goddess Isis are being attacked in this last plague.

Now, here is what I want to close with:

There is a lot of "firstborn" talk in Exodus (and in Genesis for that matter). Have you noticed that? "*Israel is my firstborn*", And remember the firstborn instances in Genesis. So often the firstborn child, who should have been the next in line, the heir of the family, did not get the blessing? The blessing skipped the firstborn child and often went to the second. So, instead of it going to Cain, the blessing went to Able. Cain killed Able, so it went to Seth. Also, it was Isaac and not Ismael who was the son of the promise. Also it was to Jacob (2nd born), not Esau (1st born). We see that in Genesis, and we see that here in Exodus, this thing with the firstborn.

I think that is a symbolic way of saying your first birth is not acceptable to God. We are all born with a sinful nature. We need a second birth. We need to be born again. God never recognizes all the hard works of religious duty, the self-motivated effort of "good works" of the natural first-born man. It takes regeneration by the Holy Spirit. It takes a second birth to be acceptable before a Holy God. So the first birth represents humanity's best, yet tainted by sin, which is not acceptable to God in light of his holiness. Jesus said, "*marvel not that ye must be born again.*"

So this morning, consider your own heart. If you have been reborn in Jesus, then rejoice in His grace in your life. But, if you recognize that you have **never** decided to follow Jesus, then you have a decision to make. If you decide for a relationship with Jesus, He will come alongside you to strengthen your decision and confirm your rebirth. Don't be like Pharaoh and harden your heart. Or, like Pharaoh, you may not get another chance.

Benediction

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

Hebrews 3:12-14

Bulletin Questions

1. How should what happened in the Book of Exodus apply to our lives today? (I Corinthians 10:1-13)
2. To what aspect of Egyptian daily life are the plagues targeted?
3. What occurs during the 5th plague? (Exodus 9:1-7)
4. What occurs during the 6th plague? (Exodus 9:8-12)
5. What is unique about Pharaoh's response to the 6th plague?

6. What occurs during the 7th plague? (Exodus 9:13-35)
7. What subtle difference takes place concerning the focus of the 8th and 9th plagues? (Exodus 9:13)
8. What occurs during the 8th plague? (Exodus 10:1-20)
9. What occurs during the 9th plague? (Exodus 10:21-28)
10. What is the promised 10th plague? (Exodus 11)

Description for Website Posting

Moses confronts Pharaoh and proclaims, "Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, 'Let my people go, that they may serve me.'" Each time Moses confronts Pharaoh, he promises a plague from God almighty against the false gods of Egypt. Each time Pharaoh resists and hardens his heart. In this message, we examine plague #5 (Death of the livestock), plague #6 (Skin boils), plague #7 (Firey Hail), plague #8 (Locusts) and plague #9 (Darkness). Finally, we set the stage for the last and final plague, the Death of the Firstborn.