

Exodus 7:1 – 11:10

^{7:1} Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. ² You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land. ³ But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. ⁴ When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. ⁵ 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.’ ⁶ So Moses and Aaron did it; as the LORD commanded them, thus they did. ⁷ Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three, when they spoke to Pharaoh. ⁸ Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ⁹ ‘When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Work a miracle,’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.’’ ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus they did just as the LORD had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. ¹¹ Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. ¹² For each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. ¹³ Yet Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said. ¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Pharaoh’s heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he is going out to the water, and station yourself to meet him on the bank of the Nile; and you shall take in your hand the staff that was turned into a serpent. ¹⁶ You shall say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness. But behold, you have not listened until now.’’ 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. ¹⁸ The fish that are in the Nile will die, and the Nile will become foul, and the Egyptians will find difficulty in drinking water from the Nile.’’ ¹⁹ Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools, and over all their reservoirs of water, that they may become blood; and there will be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.’’ ²⁰ So Moses and Aaron did even as the LORD had commanded. And he lifted up the staff and struck the water that was in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile was turned to blood. ²¹ The fish that were in the Nile died, and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt. 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. ²³ Then Pharaoh turned and went into his house with no concern even for this. ²⁴ So all the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the Nile. ²⁵ Seven days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile.

^{8:1} Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ² But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite your whole territory with frogs. ³ The Nile will swarm with frogs, which will come up and go into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed, and into the houses of your servants and on your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls. ⁴ So the frogs will come up on you and your people and all your servants.’’ ⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the streams and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.’’ ⁶ So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. ⁷ The magicians did the same with their secret arts, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt. ⁸ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, ‘Entreat the LORD that He remove the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD.’ ⁹ Moses said to Pharaoh, ‘The honor is yours to tell me: when shall I entreat for you and your servants and your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses, that they may be left only in the Nile?’ ¹⁰ Then he said, ‘Tomorrow.’ So he said, ‘May it be according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. ¹¹ The frogs will depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people; they will be left only in the Nile.’ ¹² Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had inflicted upon Pharaoh. ¹³ The LORD did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, the courts, and the fields. ¹⁴ So they piled them in heaps, and the land became foul. ¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the LORD had said. ¹⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become gnats through all the land of Egypt.’’ ¹⁷ They did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats through all the land of Egypt. ¹⁸ The

magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats on man and beast. 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. ²⁰ Now the LORD said to Moses, 'Rise early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh, as he comes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ²¹ For if you do not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and on your servants and on your people and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians will be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they dwell. ²² But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of flies will be there, in order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land. ²³ I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign will occur.''' ²⁴ Then the LORD did so. And there came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and the houses of his servants and the land was laid waste because of the swarms of flies in all the land of Egypt. ²⁵ Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, 'Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.' ²⁶ But Moses said, 'It is not right to do so, for we will sacrifice to the LORD our God what is an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice what is an abomination to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not then stone us? ²⁷ We must go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He commands us.' ²⁸ Pharaoh said, 'I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Make supplication for me.' ²⁹ Then Moses said, 'Behold, I am going out from you, and I shall make supplication to the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people tomorrow; only do not let Pharaoh deal deceitfully again in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.' ³⁰ So Moses went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the LORD. ³¹ The LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people; not one remained. ³² But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.

^{9:1} Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ² For if you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them, ³ behold, the hand of the LORD will come with a very severe pestilence on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks. ⁴ But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing will die of all that belongs to the sons of Israel.''' ⁵ The LORD set a definite time, saying, 'Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land.' ⁶ So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the sons of Israel, not one died. 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. ⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 'Take for yourselves handfuls of soot from a kiln, and let Moses throw it toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh. ⁹ It will become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and will become boils breaking out with sores on man and beast through all the land of Egypt.' ¹⁰ So they took soot from a kiln, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses threw it toward the sky, and it became boils breaking out with sores on man and beast. ¹¹ The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians. ¹² And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses. ¹³ Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ¹⁴ For this time I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth. ¹⁵ For if by now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth. ¹⁶ But, indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth. ¹⁷ Still you exalt yourself against My people by not letting them go. ¹⁸ Behold, about this time tomorrow, I will send a very heavy hail, such as has not been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. ¹⁹ Now therefore send, bring your livestock and whatever you have in the field to safety. Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail comes down on them, will die.''' ²⁰ The one among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses; ²¹ but he who paid no regard to the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field. ²² Now the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that hail may fall on all the land of Egypt, on man and on beast and on every plant of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.' ²³ Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. ²⁴ So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵ The hail struck all that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant of the field and shattered every tree of the field. ²⁶ Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel were, there was no hail. ²⁷ Then

Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, 'I have sinned this time; the LORD is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones. ²⁸ Make supplication to the LORD, for there has been enough of God's thunder and hail; and I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.' ²⁹ Moses said to him, 'As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease and there will be hail no longer, that you may know that the earth is the LORD'S. ³⁰ But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God.' ³¹ (Now the flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. ³² But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they ripen late.) ³³ So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread out his hands to the LORD; and the thunder and the hail ceased, and rain no longer poured on the earth. 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. ³⁵ Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not let the sons of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

^{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, 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.' 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. ⁴ For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. 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. 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. 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?' 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?' 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.' 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. 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. 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.' 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. 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. 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. ¹⁶ Then Pharaoh hurriedly called for Moses and Aaron, and he said, 'I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. 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.' ¹⁸ He went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the LORD. 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. ²⁰ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go. 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.' ²² So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. 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. 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.' ²⁵ But Moses said, 'You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice them to the LORD our God. 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.' ²⁷ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to let them go. 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!' ²⁹ Moses said, 'You are right; I shall never see your face again!'

^{11:1} Now the LORD said to Moses, 'One more plague I will bring on Pharaoh and on Egypt; after that he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out from here completely. ² 'Speak now in the hearing

of the people that each man ask from his neighbor and each woman from her neighbor for articles of silver and articles of gold.’³ The LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Furthermore, the man Moses himself was greatly esteemed in the land of Egypt, both in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants and in the sight of the people.⁴ Moses said, ‘Thus says the LORD, ‘About midnight I am going out into the midst of Egypt,⁵ and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of the Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the millstones; all the firstborn of the cattle as well.’⁶ Moreover, there shall be a great cry in all the land of Egypt, such as there has not been before and such as shall never be again.’⁷ But against any of the sons of Israel a dog will not even bark, whether against man or beast, that you may understand how the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.’⁸ All these your servants will come down to me and bow themselves before me, saying, ‘Go 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.⁹ Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Pharaoh will not listen to you, so that My wonders will be multiplied in the land of Egypt.’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.

Historical and Cultural Background¹

- *Prelude – the Serpent:* Pharaoh’s crown had a cobra design on it. And a Hebrew who had been raised on the stories from Genesis would have heard an allusion to the enemy serpent from the garden (Gen.3:1 – 7).
- *First Plague – the Nile:* The gods of the Nile were Khnum, the guardian of the Nile, and Hapi, the spirit of the Nile. Recall that the Nile was used to kill Hebrew (and other) boys (Ex.1:22).
- *Second Plague – Frogs:* Heqet, the goddess of childbirth, was depicted in Egyptian art with the head of a frog.
- *Fifth Plague – Livestock:* Hathor, the mother and sky goddess, was depicted as a cow. Apis was the bull of god Ptah. Mnevis was the sacred bull of the city of Heliopolis.
- *Sixth Plague – Boils:* Moses took soot from a kiln and tossed it into the air, and it caused boils on the skin. The kilns were used by Israelite slaves to make bricks, so this is a reversal. In general, skin diseases meant religious ritual impurity for the Egyptians.
- *Seventh Plague – Hail:* The gods of the sky were Seth, protector of crops. Isis and Min were the gods connected with the crop cycle.
- *Eighth Plague – Locusts:* The gods of the crops were Seth, Isis, and Min.
- *Ninth Plague – Darkness:* Re, god of the sun, was the greatest Egyptian god. Pharaoh was referred to as the son of Re.
- *Ten Plague – Firstborn:* The Pharaoh of 80 years ago, when Moses was born, had ordered the execution of the sons of Israel (Ex.1:16) and then of all families in Egypt (Ex.1:22), probably except his own.

Summary Table: The Plagues on Egypt²

Plague	Exodus Text	Type	Warning?	Time of Warning	Instruction Formula	Who Speaks?	Who Hardens Pharaoh’s Heart?
1	7:14 – 24	Blood	Yes	In morning	Station yourself	Aaron	Pharaoh
2	7:15 – 8:11			None	Go to Pharaoh	Aaron	Pharaoh
3	8:12 – 15			None	None	Aaron	Pharaoh
4	8:16 – 28					God	
5	9:1 – 7						
6	9:8 – 12						
7	9:13 – 35						
8	10:1 – 20						
9	10:21 – 23						
10	11:4 – 7 & 12:29 – 30						

¹ Information compiled by Peter Enns, *Exodus (The New International Version Application Commentary)*, and John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*

² Sources: Nahum Sarna, *Exploring Exodus* (New York: Schocken, 1996), p.76; cf. Umberto Cassuto, *Exodus* (Chicago: Publisher’s Row, 2005), p.92 – 93; James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.144 – 155

Questions

1. Here is the completed chart

Plague	Exodus Text	Type	Warning?	Time of Warning	Instruction Formula	Who Speaks?	Who Hardens Pharaoh's Heart?
1	7:14 – 24	Blood	Yes	In morning	Station yourself	Aaron	Pharaoh
2	7:15 – 8:11	Frogs	Yes	None	Go to Pharaoh	Aaron	Pharaoh
3	8:12 – 15	Gnats	None	None	None	Aaron	Pharaoh
4	8:16 – 28	Flies	Yes	In morning	Station yourself	God	Pharaoh
5	9:1 – 7	Pestilence	Yes	None	Go to Pharaoh	God	Pharaoh
6	9:8 – 12	Boils	None	None	None	Moses	God
7	9:13 – 35	Hail	Yes	In morning	Station yourself	Moses	Pharaoh
8	10:1 – 20	Locust	Yes	None	Go to Pharaoh	Moses	God
9	10:21 – 23	Darkness	None	None	None	Moses	God
10	11:4 – 7 & 12:29 – 30	Death of Firstborn	Yes	None	None	God	God

2. Doesn't it seem cumbersome to read about God speaking to Moses who speaks to Aaron?
 - a. Back when God called Moses, Moses hesitated and gave excuses, referring to his lack of eloquence. God got angry with Moses but then said to involve Aaron. 'You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do. Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and *you will be as God to him.*' (Ex.4:15 – 16) This shows a pattern of relationship. God speaks His word to a human person, who repeats it aloud as a prophet (cf. Amos 3:7).
 - b. God cares enough about maintaining this pattern that he uses Moses and Aaron to represent it. This would be important until half way through the plagues. Moses seems to become more courageous at the sixth plague.
3. Would you describe God's actions on Egypt as poetic justice?
 - a. The prelude, with the snakes of Egypt being eaten by the snake of Aaron's staff, is a premonition of Egypt's defeat.
 - b. The Nile River was the place that the baby boys were thrown, on order of Pharaoh. So now the waters turn to blood in the first plague. It's like the blood of Abel cried out from the ground. The blood of the baby boys is crying out from the Nile.
 - c. The plagues get worse as time goes on. The gnats (or lice) were probably really annoying. Flies are really annoying and a health hazard.
 - d. The dust from the kilns became boils and blisters on every Egyptian it touched. That might reflect the blisters that the Israelites suffered as they labored. The Egyptians now share the blisters that they inflicted on the Israelites.
 - e. The hail damages the flax and the barley. The locusts eat the wheat and spelt leftover, along with the fruit on the trees.
 - f. At least some of the livestock had died in the fifth plague, of pestilence. The language of 'all the livestock' might be exaggerated language for victory (kind of like how we say, 'We kicked their butt; we destroyed them; we annihilated them'). And the cattle don't seem to be counted in 'livestock' because in the tenth plague, cattle are still around and their firstborn are taken. This could also be fairly localized. It's hard to imagine locusts descending on all the fruitful land of Egypt. In any case, this was incentive to actually join Israel as they left Egypt. God was giving people an incentive to leave Egypt and head to the new garden land.
 - g. The taking of the firstborn:
 - i. Notice that Pharaoh commanded that *all* the newborn boys of Egypt, not just of the Israelites, be thrown into the Nile (Ex.1:22). This was *after* he commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill the newborn boys of the Israelites (Ex.1:15 – 16), and they disobeyed him. So there is a kind of poetic justice.
 - ii. What did God call Israel in Exodus 4:22? 'My firstborn son.' So this act is also a mirror image reflection that God was holding up to Pharaoh and Egypt. If Egypt destroyed

Israel, they were also destroying the opportunity for Jesus to come and offer his healing and restoration to the whole world. So what Egypt was really doing was destroying itself. It's just like Noah's flood. If people destroyed Noah and his family, who would pass down the faith? If no one was left of faith, there would be no Israel, and no Jesus. So the flood was a mirror image reflection. If people killed Noah and his family, they would really be killing themselves.

- iii. Did God just throw the firstborn sons of Egypt into hell?
 - 1. No! He took them to Himself. In the New Testament, Peter says in 1 Peter 3:18 – 20 and 4:6 that God held people who died before Jesus came. He held them somewhere until Jesus came to them and presented himself to them. So they had the same choice everyone else does: choose Jesus or not. But God did not throw them into hell.
 - 2. The idea of Jesus coming to the dead is enshrined in the Apostles' Creed, the earliest Christian creed which developed spontaneously, without centralized authority.
- iv. Also, very importantly, God welcomed a 'mixed multitude' who left with Israel out of Egypt (Ex.12:38). Presumably they also did the Passover ceremony. It was open to anyone who believed. Not just those who were children of Abraham and Sarah in a biological sense. We'll look at that next time.
- 4. How would the Egyptians have interpreted all this?
 - a. As a defeat of their gods, in a sense.
 - b. As if their gods had turned on them. This is probably the deeper picture to reflect on. And isn't that the truth? Don't the gods or idols we worship wind up turning on us? If we worship our own performance, that will turn on us. If we worship other people, they will turn on us.
 - c. As an opportunity to defect from their gods to the God of Israel, since many apparently did leave with Israel (Ex.12:38).
- 5. Why do you think there are ten plagues total?
 - a. To triumph over Egypt and many more of the Egyptian gods
 - b. Here is a deeper pattern:

	Genesis 1:1 – 2:3	Genesis 5:1 – 6:8	Genesis 11:10 – 30	Genesis 2:4 – 50:26	Exodus 7 – 11	Exodus 19 – 20	Matthew 8 – 9
Ten acts leading up to a new work of God	Ten declarations of Creation; God forms all life	Ten generations from Adam to Noah, new creation	Ten generations from Shem to Abram, new humanity	Ten genealogies of Israel; God forms the nation Israel	Ten plagues; God un-creates Egypt to free Israel	Ten commands; God makes the Sinai covenant, forms new nation	Ten word miracles; Jesus heals people and makes a new humanity

- c. There were ten declarations in the Genesis creation narrative (Gen.1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28). The ten plagues and the Ten Commandments from Exodus were *already referring* to God's ten declarations in creation in Genesis 1.
- d. God was making Israel into his new humanity, who lived in a garden land like the original humanity. Ten utterances from God bring forth new life; they inaugurate a covenant; they set free and liberate; they order and declare. They demonstrate God's power to do all these things.
- e. Matthew seems to group ten miracles together in a way that is not strictly chronological. Mark and Luke record these miracles as well, but spread them out in different places in Jesus' ministry, and sometimes in a different order from Matthew. I believe Matthew does this to highlight a parallel between Jesus' ten miracles and other sequences of ten utterances from God. Matthew is clearly aware that there is already a pre-existing pattern around the number ten concerning God's activities in the history of Israel. Thus, when we listen to Jesus' teaching on our hearts, we must receive his word with the understanding that his word contains his power to change us. Jesus brings forth new life in us; he liberates us from our own sinfulness; his word orders and declares a new spiritual reality in human nature. This is possible because Jesus himself is touching corrupted human nature in his own person. His healing of the leper, the paralytic, etc. are external pictures of a singular, deeper, internal reality at work within the person of Jesus. As the Chalcedonian Creed states, Jesus is two natures in one person, with the divine nature healing the human.

- f. Application: God is trying to do something – free His firstborn son, Israel, to give them their inheritance, a new garden land. But Egypt is trying to undo something that God is trying to do. You can also flip it around. God is trying to undo the fall, through Israel and ultimately through Jesus. But Egypt is trying to resist God, and hold onto sin and corruption. Either way, God is trying to restore true humanity and true humanness. When we oppose God, we are trying to undo God's true humanity and true humanness.
- g. Illus: Jesus did an amazing work in Mark Whitacre, the guy in the movie *The Informant!* played by Matt Damon; he exposed corporate corruption at Archer Daniels Midland. Mark is the highest level executive at a Fortune 500 company to be a whistleblower, and it's because his wife Ginger loves Jesus and got him to confess. Ginger is the real hero because she didn't value the money or their lifestyle, because she loved Mark throughout his career and his bipolar disorder and his time in federal prison. Jesus brought about reform in him and in the system. Jesus was bringing about true humanity and true humanness in Ginger and then in Mark, and then in all they touched because the lies of ADM were all around them. There was major resistance, and Jesus had to bring the judgment of truth on the whole system, but Jesus brought them out.
- h. Illus: In the late 1700's, Jesus got a hold of William Wilberforce, a minister in the British Parliament. Wilberforce grew up as a rich, spoiled partier. But Jesus opened his eyes to the poor who worked in English factories, and especially African slaves. He led a Bible study called the Clapham Sect which brought people face to face with Jesus and his heart on these issues, and he campaigned for the abolition of slavery and better care for the poor. He campaigned for forty years, and succeeded just before he died. Jesus brought about true humanity in him, as he fought for the true humanity of others.
- i. Now to someone who is opposed to what Jesus is doing, it seems like a crushing judgment, exposed to the searing light of truth, like what Egypt experienced in the ten plagues. But Jesus is trying to be good to all, free people from enslavement to sin, and gather people to himself.