

Exodus Chapter Ten

Read **Exodus 10:1-6** – God Promises Locusts

v.1 “AND THE **LORD** SAID UNTO MOSES, GO IN UNTO PHARAOH: FOR I HAVE HARDENED HIS HEART, AND THE HEART OF HIS SERVANTS, THAT I MIGHT SHEW THESE MY SIGNS BEFORE HIM:”

This scripture very plainly says that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart and the only commentator that mentions it at all says that “God suffered his natural obstinacy to prevail”. This is Adam Clarke and he still holds that God took advantage of Pharaoh’s natural tendencies rather than Pharaoh’s heart being hardened by God directly.

God does give Moses a reason for this prolonging of the plagues and his allowing Pharaoh to continue to refuse to let Israel go. This shows God’s power over nature, his control over all living creatures and his authority to use them to accomplish his purpose. It also shows God’s power over the kingdom of Satan, which is what we’re choosing to call the worship of idols and those things that God created. Egypt, the world in general then; and the world in general today suffers from the spiritual illness that Paul describes in the first chapter of Romans:

Romans 1:24-25 “WHEREFORE GOD ALSO GAVE THEM UP TO UNCLEANNESSTHROUGH THE LUSTS OF THEIR OWN HEARTS, TO DISHONOUR THEIR OWN BODIES BETWEEN THEMSELVES: WHO CHANGED THE TRUTH OF GOD INTO A LIE, AND WORSHIPPED AND SERVED THE CREATURE MORE THAN THE CREATOR, WHO IS BLESSED FOR EVER. AMEN.”

v.2 “AND THAT THOU MAYEST TELL IN THE EARS OF THY SON, AND OF THY SON’S SON, WHAT THINGS I HAVE WROUGHT IN EGYPT, AND MY SIGNS WHICH I HAVE DONE AMONG THEM; THAT YE MAY KNOW HOW THAT I *am* THE **LORD**.”

So part of God’s reason for doing what he did was to impress upon mankind, Israel especially and all men generally, that he is the sovereign ruler of the universe. It was His intention that these things be recorded, as Moses himself did, that all men who heard, read about or otherwise knew about these signs would know that God is Jehovah Elohim , Lord God indeed.

v.3 “AND MOSES AND AARON CAME IN UNTO PHARAOH, AND SAID UNTO HIM, THUS SAITH THE **LORD** GOD OF THE HEBREWS, HOW LONG WILT THOU REFUSE TO HUMBLE THYSELF BEFORE ME? LET MY PEOPLE GO, THAT THEY MAY SERVE ME.”

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This verse directly supports the comments of Adam Clarke about verse one. If God was controlling Pharaoh's reactions to the plagues and demands concerning Israel He would not have posed this question. Men frequently stand in defiance of the Laws of God, proud, resisting, refusing to consider that there is Someone who is greater than they. Naaman, Belshazzar, but especially Nebuchadnezzar are examples that come to mind. God even took Nebuchadnezzar's mind and kingdom from him for a time to teach him humility as the prophet records in Daniel chapter four.

v.4 "ELSE, IF THOU REFUSE TO LET MY PEOPLE GO, BEHOLD, TO MORROW WILL I BRING THE LOCUSTS INTO THY COAST:"

Are the locusts that God promises here anything like what might experience in this country? No. These locusts were not that common in Egypt but were also not totally unknown. One writer describes them as "giving preference to their fields of millet, ravages them in an instant. Their approach darkens the horizon, and so enormous is their multitude it hides the light of the sun. They alight on the fields and form a bed six or seven inches thick." A Dr. Shaw, who saw them in the 1700's, records that "they were much larger than our grasshoppers, and had brown-spotted wings, with legs and bodies of a bright yellow."

v.5 "AND THEY SHALL COVER THE FACE OF THE EARTH, THAT ONE CANNOT BE ABLE TO SEE THE EARTH: AND THEY SHALL EAT THE RESIDUE OF THAT WHICH IS ESCAPED, WHICH REMAINETH UNTO YOU FROM THE HAIL, AND SHALL EAT EVERY TREE WHICH GROWETH FOR YOU OUT OF THE FIELD:"

While we might have problems imagining these big bugs being six or seven inches deep in the fields, the scripture says that they will be so thick that "ONE CANNOT BE ABLE TO SEE THE EARTH". What little plant life the hail would have not destroyed is now going to be stripped from the face of the earth by these locusts.

v.6 "AND THEY SHALL FILL THY HOUSES, AND THE HOUSES OF ALL THY SERVANTS, AND THE HOUSES OF ALL THE EGYPTIANS; WHICH NEITHER THY FATHERS, NOR THY FATHERS' FATHERS HAVE SEEN, SINCE THE DAY THAT THEY WERE UPON THE EARTH UNTO THIS DAY. AND HE TURNED HIMSELF, AND WENT OUT FROM PHARAOH."

This plague of locusts would not be restricted to the fields and green vegetation but would literally fill their houses much as the frogs and flies did in previous plagues.

We see here another change in the demeanor of Moses and his relationship with Pharaoh. We noted in an earlier chapter that Moses went from approaching Pharaoh with God's words as a request to an approach as a demand. Now we see Moses and Aaron going in to Pharaoh, presenting God's demand, then turning and leaving in a manner that would indicate some degree of contempt for the power of this king.

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Read **Exodus 10:7-11** – Another Confrontation

v.7 “AND PHARAOH'S SERVANTS SAID UNTO HIM, HOW LONG SHALL THIS MAN BE A SNARE UNTO US? LET THE MEN GO, THAT THEY MAY SERVE THE LORD THEIR GOD: KNOWEST THOU NOT YET THAT EGYPT IS DESTROYED?”

Previously the council of advisors, magicians, seers and other who surrounded and advised the king of Egypt had been just as hard hearted as he was. Now we see that they are starting to see the light. They ask “HOW LONG” are we going to allow this man and his God to literally destroy the land of Egypt? They suggest letting the men of Israel go and worship as they have demanded.

v.8 “AND MOSES AND AARON WERE BROUGHT AGAIN UNTO PHARAOH: AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, GO, SERVE THE **LORD** YOUR GOD: *but* WHO *are* THEY THAT SHALL GO?”

Now Pharaoh is ready to listen to his advisors, he is ready to make some concessions to Israel but he's being cautious. He wants to know “WHO ARE THEY THAT SHALL GO” when he allows Israel to go conduct their worship.

v.9 “AND MOSES SAID, WE WILL GO WITH OUR YOUNG AND WITH OUR OLD, WITH OUR SONS AND WITH OUR DAUGHTERS, WITH OUR FLOCKS AND WITH OUR HERDS WILL WE GO; FOR WE *must hold* A FEAST UNTO THE **LORD**.”

Pharaoh already knew the answer to his question. It was Egyptian custom that all members of families attended the feasts that were conducted as worship to their gods. So Moses answer was, everybody, men, women and children. Not only that, they were to take their flocks and herds with them for they were needed to conduct a feast “UNTO THE LORD”.

The same was true in Jesus day:

Luke 2:41-42 “NOW HIS PARENTS WENT TO JERUSALEM EVERY YEAR AT THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER. AND WHEN HE WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD, THEY WENT UP TO JERUSALEM AFTER THE CUSTOM OF THE FEAST.”

And people should follow the same pattern today; taking their children to Bible school and worship.

v.10 “AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, LET THE **LORD** BE SO WITH YOU, AS I WILL LET YOU GO, AND YOUR LITTLE ONES: LOOK *to it*; FOR EVIL *is* BEFORE YOU.”

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v.10 “THEN HE SAID TO THEM, “THE LORD HAD BETTER BE WITH YOU WHEN I LET YOU AND YOUR LITTLE ONES GO! BEWARE, FOR EVIL IS AHEAD OF YOU.” (NKJV)

As is made clearer by the newer translation Pharaoh is doing two things in this verse. He is accusing Moses and Aaron of deceit, for he knows that if they take their women, children, flocks and herds into the wilderness to worship God they won't come back. Secondly he is telling them that if they take their women and children with them to beware; your god had better be with you to protect you. He is threatening them.

v.11 NOT SO: GO NOW YE *that are* MEN, AND SERVE THE LORD; FOR THAT YE DID DESIRE. AND THEY WERE DRIVEN OUT FROM PHARAOH'S PRESENCE.”

“NOT SO:” Pharaoh is saying that he is not going to let Israel go to worship God taking all of their families with them. But he does tell them to take those who are men and to and worship their God as they had demanded. And then Moses and Aaron are driven from the presence of Pharaoh.

Read **Exodus 10:12-20** – The Plague of Locusts

v.12 “AND THE **LORD** SAID UNTO MOSES, STRETCH OUT THINE HAND OVER THE LAND OF EGYPT FOR THE LOCUSTS, THAT THEY MAY COME UP UPON THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND EAT EVERY HERB OF THE LAND, *even* ALL THAT THE HAIL HATH LEFT.”

Moses and Aaron have been driven from the presence of Pharaoh, no further discussion is possible, so God unleashes the next plague just as He had promised.

v.13 “AND MOSES STRETCHED FORTH HIS ROD OVER THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND THE **LORD** BROUGHT AN EAST WIND UPON THE LAND ALL THAT DAY, AND ALL *that* NIGHT; AND WHEN IT WAS MORNING, THE EAST WIND BROUGHT THE LOCUSTS.”

The prophet Joel warns Judah that their sin would bring the wrath of God:

“AND THE **LORD** SHALL UTTER HIS VOICE BEFORE HIS ARMY: FOR HIS CAMP IS VERY GREAT: FOR *he is* STRONG THAT EXECUTETH HIS WORD: FOR THE DAY OF THE LORD *is* GREAT AND VERY TERRIBLE; AND WHO CAN ABIDE IT?” **Joel 2:11**

God's army in Egypt, God's army in Joel does not necessarily have to be an army of men but God can call armies from his creation such as we see in the plagues of frogs, flies, lice and locusts.

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So as we can see from this record of the plagues brought upon Egypt that God controls the universe that he created and can use that creation to punish those who defy him. First we see the locusts themselves. Though they are common in many places in the Middle East they were not common in Egypt because the climate did not favor them. So they had to be brought to the land by God.

Secondly we see that he used an east wind. This would both gather the locusts up from areas where they were normally found and transport them to Egypt. One writer calculates that a 25 mph wind could carry them as far as 600 miles in a 24 hour period.

The Psalms record this event as one of those representing God's care and concern for his people.

Psalm 78:46 "HE GAVE ALSO THEIR INCREASE UNTO THE CATERPILLER, AND THEIR LABOUR UNTO THE LOCUST." (see also **Psalm 105:34**)

v.14 "AND THE LOCUST WENT UP OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND RESTED IN ALL THE COASTS OF EGYPT: VERY GRIEVOUS WERE THEY; BEFORE THEM THERE WERE NO SUCH LOCUSTS AS THEY, NEITHER AFTER THEM SHALL BE SUCH."

The numbers of locusts exceeded anything ever seen by man before or since. This in spite of the fact that history records swarms of locusts that stretched for many miles and hid the sun when they flew.

v.15 "FOR THEY COVERED THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH, SO THAT THE LAND WAS DARKENED; AND THEY DID EAT EVERY HERB OF THE LAND, AND ALL THE FRUIT OF THE TREES WHICH THE HAIL HAD LEFT: AND THERE REMAINED NOT ANY GREEN THING IN THE TREES, OR IN THE HERBS OF THE FIELD, THROUGH ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT."

The land of Egypt is literally stripped bare of any vegetation of any kind. The hail was bad enough but now even what it left is now gone.

When we see what God has wrought here in Egypt and know that it was recorded as part of the history of Israel. When we know that it was to be taught diligently to all their generations that followed. Then we can better understand the warnings that God gave them through the prophets. For example God warns Judah in:

Joel 1:4 "THAT WHICH THE PALMERWORM HATH LEFT HATH THE LOCUST EATEN; AND THAT WHICH THE LOCUST HATH LEFT HATH THE CANKERWORM EATEN; AND THAT WHICH THE CANKERWORM HATH LEFT HATH THE CATERPILLER EATEN."

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As a parallel it makes it even harder for me to understand how it can be that people today, even people who claim to be people of the Book would ignore God and his warnings and promises. There is a heaven that is more wonderful than man's words can describe; there is a hell that all mankind should work to avoid at all costs. Yet the vast majority of the population of this world comprehends neither the power of God or the importance of his revelation.

v.16 "THEN PHARAOH CALLED FOR MOSES AND AARON IN HASTE; AND HE SAID, I HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE **LORD** YOUR GOD, AND AGAINST YOU."

Pharaoh had repented after the plague of hail, now he is ready to repent; again. He calls Moses and Aaron "IN HASTE", he reacts in a hurry and declares his sin. But does he recognize Jehovah as God of all the universe? No. He still calls him "YOUR GOD", speaking as though He was but a god of the nation of Israel, powerful, but not all powerful.

v.17 "NOW THEREFORE FORGIVE, I PRAY THEE, MY SIN ONLY THIS ONCE, AND INTREAT THE **LORD** YOUR GOD, THAT HE MAY TAKE AWAY FROM ME THIS DEATH ONLY."

Pharaoh wants forgiveness for his sin, not sins, but sin, understanding the he has defied the God of Israel by not really humbling himself to the extent that he eventually will. He asks Moses to pray for him, "INTREAT THE **LORD** YOUR GOD".

v.18-19 "AND HE WENT OUT FROM PHARAOH, AND INTREATED THE **LORD**. AND THE **LORD** TURNED A MIGHTY STRONG WEST WIND, WHICH TOOK AWAY THE LOCUSTS, AND CAST THEM INTO THE RED SEA; THERE REMAINED NOT ONE LOCUST IN ALL THE COASTS OF EGYPT."

God removed the locusts in the same manner that he brought them. A wind from the east brought them so a God causes a west wind to carry them in to the Red Sea where they are drowned. Again God uses what we call the forces of nature to accomplish his purpose. A wind from the west-northwest off the Mediterranean Sea is the common wind pattern in Egypt.

v.20 "BUT THE **LORD** HARDENED PHARAOH'S HEART, SO THAT HE WOULD NOT LET THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL GO."

Again, when the heat is off, when God's punishment is removed; Pharaoh turns back from his repentance and refuses to honor God demand for Israel.

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Read **Exodus 10:21-29** – The Plague of Darkness

v.21 “AND THE **LORD** SAID UNTO MOSES, STRETCH OUT THINE HAND TOWARD HEAVEN, THAT THERE MAY BE DARKNESS OVER THE LAND OF EGYPT, EVEN DARKNESS WHICH MAY BE FELT.”

Now God is going to bring upon the land darkness that is so heavy, so deep and so dark that it “MAY BE FELT”. Missouri is a land of caves. There are a great many of them in the stratified limestone that occurs in the geological makeup of much of the southern half of the state. One of those that you can tour is Meramec Caverns, some may have done so. On the tour at the very near the end, in the deepest part of the cavern they will turn the lights off. It is so dark that the only way I could explain it is like being wrapped in black velvet from head to toe. It is a darkness that can almost be felt. That experience is very near what the Egyptian are going to experience under this plague.

Moses includes this occurrence in his final sermon to Israel, warning them that this is the kind of punishment that God will bring upon those that are unfaithful to the covenant that God has made with them.

Deuteronomy 28:29 “AND THOU SHALT GROPE AT NOONDAY, AS THE BLIND GROPE IN DARKNESS, AND THOU SHALT NOT PROSPER IN THY WAYS: AND THOU SHALT BE ONLY OPPRESSED AND SPOILED EVERMORE, AND NO MAN SHALL SAVE *thee*.”

This also the kind of darkness that is being described when Jesus spoke of the unprofitable servant in:

Matthew 25:29-30 “FOR UNTO EVERY ONE THAT HATH SHALL BE GIVEN, AND HE SHALL HAVE ABUNDANCE: BUT FROM HIM THAT HATH NOT SHALL BE TAKEN AWAY EVEN THAT WHICH HE HATH. AND CAST YE THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANT INTO OUTER DARKNESS: THERE SHALL BE WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH.”

Again, part of the punishment that God will bring against those who ignore or are unfaithful to His covenant with mankind.

v.22 “AND MOSES STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND TOWARD HEAVEN; AND THERE WAS A THICK DARKNESS IN ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT THREE DAYS:”

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This darkness is also a sign of God's power over the gods of Egypt. Ra, the sun god, was the primary god of Egypt and the Pharaoh's were declared to be his sons. One of the things that I noted during this study is that the commentators, especially Adam Clarke and F. C. Cook seem to relate several of the plagues to some natural phenomena. When they acknowledge that they were brought by the power of God it seems that they weaken the power of the scripture allowing men to consider them as but an act of nature. However, the plague of darkness is one of which they cannot find a parallel in nature. It was brought only upon Egypt. It was as though the lights that God placed in the heavens were turned off.

v.23 "THEY SAW NOT ONE ANOTHER, NEITHER ROSE ANY FROM HIS PLACE FOR THREE DAYS; BUT ALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL HAD LIGHT IN THEIR DWELLINGS."

They suffered for three days in total darkness so thick that they couldn't even see each other. They couldn't even burn a candle or light a fire. They stayed in their place, probably abed but the children of Israel had light in their homes. They were effected by the darkness in that apparently there was no light outside. This again is God impressing upon Israel His power and might as well as the Egyptians that they might remember when they are freed from Egypt.

v.24 "AND PHARAOH CALLED UNTO MOSES, AND SAID, GO YE, SERVE THE **LORD**; ONLY LET YOUR FLOCKS AND YOUR HERDS BE STAYED: LET YOUR LITTLE ONES ALSO GO WITH YOU."

Pharaoh now calls Moses into his presence and makes one more concession. He will allow Israel to go and worship God in the wilderness. They can take their children with them but they must leave their material possessions, their flocks and herds behind.

v.25-26 "AND MOSES SAID, THOU MUST GIVE US ALSO SACRIFICES AND BURNT OFFERINGS, THAT WE MAY SACRIFICE UNTO THE **LORD** OUR GOD. OUR CATTLE ALSO SHALL GO WITH US; THERE SHALL NOT AN HOOF BE LEFT BEHIND; FOR THEREOF MUST WE TAKE TO SERVE THE **LORD** OUR GOD; AND WE KNOW NOT WITH WHAT WE MUST SERVE THE **LORD**, UNTIL WE COME THITHER."

Moses tells Pharaoh that his plan won't work. Israel must have their flocks and herds with them in order to worship God as God has commanded. We are not told directly what God commanded the patriarchs to provide in their worship but we know how they worshiped from the beginning. Abel is our example:

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Genesis 4:4 “AND ABEL, HE ALSO BROUGHT OF THE FIRSTLINGS OF HIS FLOCK AND OF THE FAT THEREOF. AND THE **LORD** HAD RESPECT UNTO ABEL AND TO HIS OFFERING:”

We know that Abel worshipped as God had commanded because we are also told that:

“BY FAITH ABEL OFFERED UNTO GOD A MORE EXCELLENT SACRIFICE THAN CAIN, BY WHICH HE OBTAINED WITNESS THAT HE WAS RIGHTEOUS, GOD TESTIFYING OF HIS GIFTS: AND BY IT HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH.”

Hebrews 11:4

Abel worshipped “BY FAITH” because he heard and believed the word of God.

v.27 “BUT THE **LORD** HARDENED PHARAOH'S HEART, AND HE WOULD NOT LET THEM GO.”

God has one final plague to bring upon Egypt to seal the end of their rule over Israel; so one more time Pharaoh is allowed to stand against God.

v.28 “AND PHARAOH SAID UNTO HIM, GET THEE FROM ME, TAKE HEED TO THYSELF, SEE MY FACE NO MORE; FOR IN THAT DAY THOU SEEST MY FACE THOU SHALT DIE.”

Pharaoh has had enough of Moses and Aaron. He drives them from his presence and threatens them with death if they see his face or try to appear before him again.

v.29 “AND MOSES SAID, THOU HAST SPOKEN WELL, I WILL SEE THY FACE AGAIN NO MORE.”

Moses is also more than ready to bring all of this to an end. He confirms that Pharaoh will not see him again. God has one more plague to bring upon Egypt after which He will lead his people from their bondage. The Hebrew writer refers to Moses this way:

Hebrews 11:27 “BY FAITH HE FORSOOK EGYPT, NOT FEARING THE WRATH OF THE KING: FOR HE ENDURED, AS SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE.”

Mankind would do well today by realizing that even though God is invisible, we can't see him. We have his revelation and we can see the many proofs surrounding us daily that verify that God is.