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The Ten Plagues of Egypt

7:14 to 12:36



Although there were ten plagues in all, the tenth was climactic and is therefore described at greater length from **11:1** to **12:30**. The narrative of the tenth plague is interwoven with the account of the institution of the Passover in **12:1-28**. The plagues continued for many months, so there was time in between each plague for **Pharaoh** to reflect on **his** decisions.

The story of the plagues is summarized in **Psalms 78:22-51**, where six of them are mentioned specifically (though not in chronological order): **the blood, the flies, the frogs, the locusts, the hail, and the death of the firstborn**. The story is also summarized in **Psalms 105:28-36**, where this time eight plagues are mentioned (again, not in chronological order): **the darkness, the blood, the frogs, the flies, the gnats, the hail, the locusts and the death of the firstborn**. In both **psalms**, the plague of **the firstborn** is mentioned last to stress its climactic importance. In **Psalms 135:8** and **136:10**, it is the only plague referred to at all, apparently because its story in **Exodus** made a much greater impression on later generations than the accounts of the other plagues. The tenth plague can therefore stand for all the plagues because it was the most astounding and destructive of them all.¹⁰⁷

The *progressive nature* of these plagues is easily seen. There is a steady advance in the *severity* of the divine judgments. **The first three merely interfered with the comfort of the Egyptians**. First, **they** were deprived of **water** to drink and wash in. In the second, **their** homes were invaded with **frogs**. Thirdly, **they** were attacked with **gnats**. **In the second three, the LORD's hand was laid upon their possessions**. First, **flies** corrupted their land. Secondly, **their livestock** was destroyed. Thirdly, **boils** broke out on **the**

Egyptians and their animals. The last set of three plagues brought desolation and death. First, **hail** destroyed both **the livestock** and **every growing thing in the fields**. Secondly, **the locusts** devoured even what **the hail** had left behind. **Nothing green** remained on any **tree** or **plant** in all of **Egypt**. Thirdly, **darkness** that could be felt foreshadowed the tenth plague, **the death of the** firstborn sons in all of **Egypt**.

The ten plagues had five purposes. First, the plagues were a judgment against **Egypt** and were specifically directed against **their gods (7:4, 10:2, 12:12, and 18:11)**. Secondly, the plagues were used by **God** to compel **Pharaoh** to free **the Israelites (7:4 and 18:10)**. Thirdly, they proved that **ADONAI** was sovereign and idolatry is foolishness (**7:5, 9:14-15, 10:2, and 18:11**). Fourthly, **the land of Goshen** was not affected by the plagues, thus showing that **the Israelites** were **the LORD's chosen people** and were protected by **Him (8:22-23, 11:7, 12:27)**. And lastly, the plagues demonstrated **Ha'Shem's** supreme power and proclaimed **His** holiness (**9:16**).