

Open Bible Stories

The Ten Plagues

Introduction

Key Idea

The story of the Ten Plagues teaches us of God's judgment against his enemies.

Creedal Verse

"And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise." Galatians 3:29

Metanarrative Summary

The eternal God created all things in six days. He made a good and perfect world. He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation. But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation. God set to restore his world through his promise. God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham. God kept his promises across the generations. God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac. God gave Isaac a wife and she bore twins, Jacob and Esau. God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation. God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family. God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves. But, God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from their slavery. God sent judgment the Egyptians with harsh plagues.

Open Bible Story: The Ten Plagues

10-01

[[image112.jpeg]]

God warned Moses and Aaron that Pharaoh would be stubborn. When they went to Pharaoh, they said, "This is what the God of Israel says, 'Let my people

go!’” But Pharaoh did not listen to them. Instead of letting the Israelites go free, he forced them to work even harder!

10-02

[[image113.jpeg]]

Pharaoh kept refusing to let the people go, so God sent ten terrible plagues on Egypt. Through these plagues, God showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt’s gods.

10-03

[[image114.jpeg]]

God turned the Nile River into blood, but Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites go.

10-04

[[image115.jpeg]]

God sent frogs all over Egypt. Pharaoh begged Moses to take away the frogs. But after all the frogs died, Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the Israelites leave Egypt.

10-05

[[image116.jpeg]]

So God sent a plague of gnats. Then he sent a plague of flies. Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and told them that if they stopped the plague, the Israelites could leave Egypt. When Moses prayed, God removed all the flies from Egypt. But Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go free.

10-06

[[image117.jpeg]]

Next, God caused all the farm animals that belonged to the Egyptians to get sick and die. But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not let the Israelites go.

10-07

[[image118.jpeg]]

Then God told Moses to throw ashes into the air in front of Pharaoh. When he did, painful skin sores appeared on the Egyptians, but not on the Israelites. God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go free.

10-08

[[image119.jpeg]]

After that, God sent hail that destroyed most of the crops in Egypt and killed anybody who went outside. Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and told them, “I have sinned. You may go.” So Moses prayed, and the hail stopped falling from the sky.

10-09

[[image120.jpeg]]

But Pharaoh sinned again and hardened his heart. He would not let the Israelites go free.

10-10

[[image121.jpeg]]

So God caused swarms of locusts to come over Egypt. These locusts ate all the crops that the hail had not destroyed.

10-11

[[image122.jpeg]]

Then God sent darkness that lasted for three days. It was so dark that the Egyptians could not leave their houses. But there was light where the Israelites lived.

10-12

[[image123.jpeg]]

Even after these nine plagues, Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites go free. Since Pharaoh would not listen, God planned to send one last plague. This would change Pharaoh’s mind.

A Bible story from: Exodus 5-10

Biblical Interpretation: Observing the Details of the Story

After reading the crafted biblical story, answer the following questions to familiarize yourself with the details of the story.

Observation Questions

Answer the following observation questions to gain a basic understanding of the the story. Read the story as a community and answer these questions as a group.

10-01

How did God say that Pharaoh would respond?

God cared Moses and Aaron that Pharaoh would be stubborn.

What was God's message that Moses and Aaron gave to Pharaoh?

God's message to Pharaoh was, "Let my people go!" What did Pharaoh do when he heard this command?

Pharaoh did not listen to them. He forced the Israelites to work even harder.

10-02

What did God do when Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go?

He sent ten terrible plagues on Egypt.

What did God show Pharaoh through these plagues?

He showed that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's gods.

10-03

What was the first plague? What did God do to the water in the Nile River?

God turned water in the Nile River into blood.

10-04

What happened in the second plague?

God sent frogs all over Egypt.

What did Pharaoh do after this plague?

Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the Israelites go free.

10-05

What happened in the third and fourth plague?

God sent gnats. Then God sent flies

What did Pharaoh tell Moses and Aaron to do?

Pharaoh told Moses and Aaron that if the plagues stopped he would let the Israelites go free.

What did Moses and Aaron do?

Moses and Aaron prayed to God. God removed all the flies from Egypt.

What did Pharaoh do after this plague?

Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the Israelites go free.

10-06

What happened in the fifth plague?

God caused the farm animals that belonged to the Egyptians to get sick and die.

What did Pharaoh do after this plague?
Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the Israelites go free.

10-07

What happened in the sixth plague?
God caused painful skin sores to appear on the Egyptians.

Who was affected by the plague of the painful skin sores?
The sores appeared on the Egyptians, but not on the Israelites.

What did Pharaoh do after this plague?
God hardened Pharaoh's heart and would not let the Israelites go free.

10-08

What happened in the seventh plague?
God sent hail that destroyed most of the Egyptian crops and killed people who went outside.

What did Pharaoh do after this plague?
Pharaoh said he sinned. He told the Israelites they could go free and the hail stopped falling from the sky.

10-09

How did Pharaoh change his mind about letting the Israelites go free?
Pharaoh sinned, hardened his heart, and would not let the Israelites go free.

10-10

What happened in the eighth plague?
God sent locusts to come over Egypt.

What did the locusts destroy?
The locusts destroyed the Egyptian crops that the hail did not destroy.

10-11

What happened in the ninth plague?
God sent darkness that lasted for three days. It was so dark the Egyptians could not leave their houses.

Did the plague of darkness affect everyone equally?
No, it was dark where the Egyptians lived, but there was light where the Israelites lived.

10-12

How did Pharaoh respond to each of the first nine plagues?
He refused to let the people go free.

What did God do after Pharaoh did not respond to the first nine plagues?
God planned to send one last plague.

What would this last plague do that the first nine had not done?
It would change Pharaoh's mind.

Translation Questions

Use the following translation questions to understand specific details of the passage. Discuss how you might translate these specific elements of the story.

10-01

stubborn Pharaoh refused to obey God. What words in your language mean **stubborn** as in to refuse to change or listen/obey someone?

the God of Israel This phrase refers to the God whom the Israelites worship. It refers God as the one who chose and rules the Israelites and the God whom the Israelites serve. How would you express **the God of Israel** to mean the God whom the Israelites serve and worship?

Let my people go! God commands Pharaoh to allow his people to go free. This command tells/orders Pharaoh to free God's people to leave Egypt. How would you express **Let my people go!** as a command in which God is telling Pharaoh to let his people to go free and leave Egypt?

listen to This means to heed or obey. What words in your language mean **listen to** as in to heed or obey?

But Pharaoh did not listen The word But contrasts what Moses and Aaron told Pharaoh and how Pharaoh responded. Moses and Aaron told Pharaoh that God ordered him to let the Israelites go free. The opposite happened. Pharaoh refused to listen to God's command. How would you express **But Pharaoh did not listen** to mean Pharaoh responded opposite/different from what Moses and Aaron told him?

he forced them to work even harder! Pharaoh not only did not free the Israelites, he made their lives even harder. This statement shows strong emotion that things go more difficult for the Israelites. How would you express **he forced them to work even harder!** as a strong statement of emphasis to show that things became even more difficult for the Israelites?

10-02

so God sent The word so tells the result (or what happened because) of Pharaoh making the Israelites work harder instead of letting them go. The result was God sent ten terrible plagues on Egypt. How would you express **so God sent** to mean the result of Pharaoh making the Israelites work harder instead of letting them go was God sent ten terrible plagues on Egypt?

terrible plagues A plague is something very bad or terrible that happens to someone or something. A plague usually refers to something that affects many people or happens over a large geographic area. Another word for plague would be ‘disaster.’ How would you express **terrible plagues** to mean a really bad thing that brings death or disaster to many people in a large geographic area?

all of Egypt’s gods These are all the gods that the Egyptian people worshiped. The people of Egypt worshiped many different false gods. Some of these false gods did not exist. Other false gods that they worshiped were actually demons. Demons are not as powerful as the God of Israel. How would you express **all of Egypt’s gods** to mean the false gods that the Egyptian people worshiped?

10-03

turned the Nile River into blood God turned the water in the Nile River into blood. There was blood in the river instead of water, so the fish died and the people had no water to drink. How would you express **turned the Nile River into blood** to mean God caused the water of the Nile River to become blood such that the fish died and the people had no water to drink?

but Pharaoh still The word but contrasts God turning the river to blood with Pharaoh not letting the Israelites go. This is not the first time Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go. How would you express **but Pharaoh still** to mean Pharaoh continued to refuse to let the Israelites go?

10-04

Pharaoh begged Moses Pharaoh pleaded with Moses to take the frogs away. How would you express **Pharaoh begged** Moses to mean Pharaoh earnestly pleaded with Moses to take the frogs away?

hardened his heart Pharaoh became stubborn again and refused to obey God. Pharaoh’s stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his heart were hard. Something that is hard is not easily changed. How would you express **hardened his heart** to mean Pharaoh caused his own heart to be stubborn and he refused to change his heart like something that is hard is difficult to change?

10-05

God sent a plague God caused a plague (of gnats) to come over the land of Egypt. How would you express **God sent a plague** to mean God caused there

to be a plague?

gnats These were tiny, biting insects flying in large swarms, annoying and landing on all the people and animals of Egypt. What words in your language mean **gnats** as in tiny, biting insects flying in large swarms?

flies These were much bigger flying insects that were both annoying and destructive. There were so many of these **flies** that they covered everything, even filling the Egyptians' houses. What words in your language mean **flies** as in bigger flying insects that were both annoying and destructive?

God removed all the flies God caused all the flies to go away after Moses prayed. How would you express **God removed all the flies** to mean God took the flies away?

10-06

farm animals This refers to large animals that the Egyptians used to help them in their work, such as horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep, and goats. How would you express **farm animals** as in large animals that help people in their work such as horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep, and goats?

10-07

to throw ashes into the air Ashes are the leftover soot from a fire. God told Moses to throw leftover soot from a fire up into the air. He did this in front of Pharaoh so he could see. This action was a sign or symbol that showed Pharaoh what God was about to do. How would you express **to throw ashes into the air** to mean toss leftover soot from a fire upward into the air?

God hardened Pharaoh's heart God caused Pharaoh to continue to be stubborn. Before this Pharaoh had made his own heart stubborn and refused to change and listen to God. Now, God is making Pharaoh's heart hard and stubborn. How would you express **God hardened Pharaoh's heart** to mean God caused Pharaoh's heart to be stubborn and refuse to listen to God's command?

10-08

After that This refers to after God caused the painful sores to appear on the Egyptians' skin. How would you express **After that** to mean that God sent the plague of hail subsequent to the plague of painful sores?

God sent hail God caused hail to fall from the sky. Hail is like chunks of ice that fall down from the clouds as rain does. These chunks can be very small or very large. The larger ones will hurt or kill whatever they fall on. How would you express **God sent hail** to mean God caused chunks of ice that fall down from the clouds as rain does?

You may go The word You refers to Moses, Aaron, and the Israelites. Pharaoh is giving permission for the Israelites to be free and leave Egypt. How would you express **You may go** to mean Pharaoh is giving permission to Moses, Aaron, and the Israelites to leave Egypt and be free?

10-09

sinned again To sin is to disobey God's commands. This is not the first time Pharaoh disobeyed God's command. How would you express **sinned again** to mean Pharaoh disobeyed God's commands yet another time?

10-10

swarms of locusts Locusts are grasshoppers that fly together in swarms, or large groups, and that can destroy large areas of all kinds of plants and food crops by eating them. How would you express **swarms of locusts** to mean grasshoppers that fly together in swarms, or large groups, and that can destroy large areas of all kinds of plants and food crops by eating them?

10-11

God sent darkness God caused darkness to cover or spread over most of Egypt. In other words, God took away the light from this part of Egypt. This darkness was darker than ordinary nighttime darkness, and it continued to be totally dark for three whole days. How would you express **God sent darkness** to mean God took away the light and caused darkness to cover or spread over the land?

But there was light where the Israelites lived The word but contrasts how the Egyptians and Israelites were affected by the darkness. The place where the Egyptians lived was dark for three days. It was different for the Israelites. There was light in the place where the Israelites lived. How would you express **But there was light where the** Israelites lived to mean the fact that there was light where the Israelites lived was different/opposite to the darkness where the Egyptians lived?

10-12

Since Pharaoh would not listen The word **Since** tells the reason God sent one last plague. The reason God sent one last plague was Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go free. Pharaoh would not do what God was telling him to do. He refused to obey God. How would you express **Since** Pharaoh would not listen to mean God was sending one last plague because Pharaoh would not listen?

This would change Pharaoh's mind This last plague would cause Pharaoh to change how he thought about God and, as a result, he would let the Israelites go free. How would you express **This would change Pharaoh's mind** to mean

this would be this last plague would cause Pharaoh to change how he thought about God and, as a result, he would let the Israelites go free?

Theological Dialogue: Discussing the Meaning of the Story

Take time to explore the meaning of this story together as a community. Use the following discussions as a way to grasp what truth the story teaches.

Discourse Questions

Use the following discourse questions to understand the meaning of the story. Pay attention to how the story itself addresses each question or theme.

How did God bring judgment on the Egyptians? What effects did the plagues have on the Egyptians? (10-02, 10-03, 10-04, 10-05, 10-06, 10-07, 10-08, 10-10, 10-11, 10-12) God sent terrible plagues on Egypt. These plagues brought disaster and death to the Egyptians. (10-02)

God turned the water of the Nile River into blood. God took away the Egyptian source of nourishment. (10-03)

God sent frogs all over Egypt. The frogs were everywhere. This made it really hard to do normal things in life. (10-04)

God sent gnats and flies in the land. The gnats and flies swarmed everywhere. This also made it really hard to live. (10-05)

God caused the farm animals of the Egyptians to get sick and die. God took away the Egyptians work animals and source of food. (10-06)

God caused Egyptians to have painful skin sores. This affected the Egyptians health. (10-07)

God sent hail. This destroyed crops and killed people. God then sent locusts. These locusts ate up the crops of the Egyptians. (10-08, 10-10)

God sent darkness over the land. The Egyptians could not leave their houses. This darkness prevented the Egyptians from experiencing the normal rhythms of day and night. (10-11)

God would send a final plague that would change Pharaoh's mind. (10-12)

How did Pharaoh respond throughout the time God sent the ten plagues? Stubborn: God told Moses and Aaron that Pharaoh's would be stubborn. Pharaoh would do what Pharaoh wanted to do not what God wanted to do. It would be difficult to change Pharaoh's mind. (10-01, 10-12)

Contrary: Pharaoh would not listen to God or obey his commands. (10-01, 10-10)

Oppressive: Instead of obeying God's commands, Pharaoh caused the Israelites to work harder. Pharaoh's stubborn and disobedient heart caused him to be even more defiant of God and oppressive of God's people. (10-01)

Persistent Refusal : Pharaoh continued to be stubborn. He kept refusing to listen to God's commands. He persisted in his disobedience and defiance. (10-02)

Temporary Request: At times, Pharaoh asked Moses and Aaron to take away the plagues. Pharaoh asked Moses to take away the frogs. Moses prayed for the flies to go away, the hail to stop (10-04, 10-05, 10-08)

Unpersuadable: Even though God sent many plagues that caused disaster in Egypt, Pharaoh still did not listen to God's voice. (10-03, 10-04, 10-05, 10-06, 10-07, 10-09, 10-12)

Pharaoh Hardened: Pharaoh hardened his heart. He would not change his mind and grew even more defiant of God. His caused his heart to become like something that is hard and difficult to change. (10-04, 10-05, 10-06, 10-09)

God Hardened: Eventually, God hardened Pharaoh's heart. God caused Pharaoh to continue in his stubborn refusal to listen to God's commands. (10-07)

Changed His Mind: When God sent hail that destroyed crops and killed people, Pharaoh admitted that he sinned. At first, he let the Israelites go free. However, he sinned again, hardened his heart, and refused to let the Israelites go free. (10-08, 10-09)

How was God acting on behalf of his people? (10-01, 10-02, 10-0??)

Freedom: God commanded that Pharaoh let the Israelites go free. God sent Moses and Aaron to bring the Israelites out of slavery. (10-01)

Judgment: God sent disaster upon the Egyptians. They Egyptians forced the Israelites into harsh slave work. God was defending his people by judging the Egyptians. (10-02)

True God: God showed the Egyptians that he was the true God and the false gods were not real gods. The plagues that God sent showed that God was more powerful than the false gods the Egyptians worshiped. (10-02)

Distinction: God made a distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians. We learn that some of the plagues did not affect the Israelites. The Israelites did not get painful skin sores. Darkness came upon the land of Egypt but did not come upon the land where the Israelites were living. God was showing that the Israelites were his people. He would protect them and defend them. (10-07, 10-11)

Theological Questions

Answer the following theology questions as a community. Discuss what truths this story teaches.

1. What are some of the ways sin and disobedience can affect us and others? How do the actions of Pharaoh warn us about the effects of sin and disobedience?
2. How does God bring about judgment on those who do not follow him? What does this story teach us about God's judgment?
3. How does God bring freedom to his people? What does this story teach us about how God rescues and frees his people?

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Personal Reflection: Following the Teaching of the Story

Take a moment to allow this story to evaluate your own life and to consider how God would have you respond. After this reflection, use the quality checking questions to check your translation draft among the translation team.

Journal Reflection

Prayerfully think about the following personal reflection questions. Write/Record your answers and/or discuss them as a group.

1. How does the condition of Pharaoh's heart serve as a warning for you?
2. How do you respond when you hear about God's judgment on the Egyptians?
3. How is your life in need of freedom?
4. What would it look like to trust God to give you freedom?

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[[conclusion]]