

The desperate Egyptians were in sorrow and fright. Their sky-goddess Nut could not protect them from hail from the sky. (She is often pictured as a lanky nude female arching from horizon to horizon across the sky, touching the ground with finger tips and toes.) The goddess Isis and the god Seth also were thought to have care over agricultural production. But the gods were silent.

28. *Did Pharaoh keep his promise to let Israel go? (9:34-35)*

No. He hardened his heart, and his Egyptian servants did also. Observe that Pharaoh hardened *his own* heart. God had hardened his heart after the plague of boils (9:12). This time God let Pharaoh make the decision, and Pharaoh proved himself to be a hard-hearted liar. He also revealed (unintentionally!) that God's treatment of him was completely just. (See notes on 4:21 concerning the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.) In refusing to let Israel go, Pharaoh sinned "yet more." (See 9:27.)

The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

10 And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Go in unto Pha-raoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servant, that I may show these my signs in the midst of them, (2) and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought upon Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know that I am Je-ho-vah. (3) And Mo-ses and Aar-on went in unto Pha-raoh, and said unto him, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, the God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me. (4) Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to-morrow will I bring locusts into thy border: (5) and they shall cover the face of the earth, so that one shall not 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: (6) and thy houses shall be filled, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the E-gyp-tians; as neither thy fathers nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned, and went out from Pha-raoh. (7) And Pha-raoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve Je-ho-vah their God: knowest thou not yet that E-gypt is destroyed? (8) And Mo-ses and Aar-on were brought again unto Pha-raoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve Je-ho-vah your God; but who are they that shall go? (9) And Mo-ses 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 Je-ho-vah. (10) And he said unto them, So be Je-ho-vah with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. (11) Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve Je-ho-vah; for that is what ye desire. And they were driven out from Pha-raoh's presence.

(12) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Stretch out thy hand over the land of E-gypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of E-gypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. (13) And Mo-ses stretched forth his rod over the land of E-gypt, and Je-ho-vah brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all the night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. (14) And the locusts went up over all the land of E-gypt, and rested in all the borders of E-gypt; very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. (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, either tree or herb of the field, through all the land of E-gypt. (16) Then Pha-raoh called for Mo-ses and Aar-on in haste; and he said, I have sinned against Je-ho-vah your God, and against you. (17) Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat Je-ho-vah your God, that he may take away from me this death only. (18) And he went out

from Pha-raoh, and entreated Je-ho-vah. (19) And Je-ho-vah turned an exceeding strong west wind, which took up the locusts, and drove them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the border of E-gypt. (20) But Je-ho-vah hardened Pha-raoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Is-ra-el go.

(21) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Stretch out thy hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of E-gypt, even darkness which may be felt. (22) And Mo-ses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of E-gypt three days; (23) they saw not one another, neither rose any one from his place for three days: but all the children of Is-ra-el had light in their dwellings. (24) And Pha-raoh called unto Mo-ses, and said, Go ye, serve Je-ho-vah; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. (25) And Mo-ses said, Thou must also give into our hand sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto Je-ho-vah our God. (26) Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve Je-ho-vah our God; and we know not with what we must serve Je-ho-vah, until we come thither. (27) But Je-ho-vah hardened Pha-raoh's heart, and he would not let them go. (28) And Pha-raoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thy-self, see my face no more; for in the day thou seest my face thou shalt die. (29) And Mo-ses said, Thou has spoken well; I will see thy face again no more.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER TEN
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After reading the entire chapter, propose a brief theme or title for the entire chapter.
2. Why had God hardened Pharaoh's heart? (10:1) (Give the Biblical answer.)
3. Who was to be told of God's deeds in Egypt? (10:2)
4. What were the people to come to know because of the signs

- (plagues)? (10:2)
5. What question did God ask of Pharaoh through Moses and Aaron? (10:3) Was this a fair question, seeing that God had hardened his heart? (10:1; Compare 9:33.)
 6. What plague was to follow the hail? (10:4) When would it arrive?
 7. How extensive would this plague be? (10:5-6)
 8. Had Egypt ever experienced a plague like the one threatened? (10:6)
 9. Who urged Pharaoh to let the men of Israel go? (10:7) Why did they urge this?
 10. What (or who) caused Moses and Aaron to come back unto Pharaoh? (10:8)
 11. Had Pharaoh softened up a little? (10:8; Compare 9:25, 28)
 12. Who all were to depart from Egypt? (10:9)
 13. Does 10:10 sound sincere or sarcastic? Compare 10:11.
 14. What did Pharaoh think were the motives of Moses and Aaron? (10:10)
 15. Why did Moses and Aaron leave Pharaoh's presence? (10:11)
 16. What did Moses stretch forth to bring in locusts? (10:12, 13)
 17. From which direction did the wind blow in locusts? (10:13)
 18. How did the locusts compare to locusts of other times? (10:14)
 19. What did the locusts eat? (10:15)
 20. What confession did Pharaoh make? (10:16)
 21. What two requests did Pharaoh make during the locust plague? (10:17)
 22. By what term did Pharaoh describe the locust plague? (10:17)
 23. What did Moses do to get the locust plague removed? (10:18)
 24. What removed the locusts? Where did they end up? (10:19)
 25. What happened to Pharaoh's heart after the locusts were removed? (10:20)
 26. What did Moses stretch forth to bring on the darkness in Egypt? (10:21-22)
 27. How heavy and dense was the darkness? (10:21)
 28. How long did the darkness last? (10:22-23)
 29. How did the darkness affect the dwellings of the Israelites? (10:23)

30. What compromise offer did Pharaoh make to Moses? (10:24)
 31. Could Israel have survived in the wilderness without their livestock? (10:24)
 32. Could Israel have offered sacrifices without taking livestock? (10:25)
 33. What additional demand did Moses make to Pharaoh besides that he let them take out all their own livestock? (10:25)
 34. Did Israel know what God would ask them to sacrifice? (10:26)
 35. Did Pharaoh agree to Moses' request? Why or why not? (10:27)
 36. What command and what threat did Pharaoh make to Moses? (10:28)
 37. Did Moses agree to accept Pharaoh's order? (10:29)
 38. Did Moses see Pharaoh's face again? (10:29; 12:30-31)
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EXODUS TEN: LOCUSTS AND DARKNESS (WORDS OF TERROR!)

I. LOCUSTS; 10:1-20

1. Advance warning; 10:1-6.
2. Fear; 10:7.
3. Defiance of Pharaoh; 10:8-11.
4. The disaster; 10:12-15.
5. The supplication; 10:16-18.
6. The deliverance; 10:19.
7. The hardening; 10:20.

II. DARKNESS; 10:21-23.

1. Stopped activity; 10:21-23.
2. Subdued Pharaoh; 10:24.
3. Strengthened Moses; 10:25-26.
4. Sharpened the conflict; 10:27-29.

EXODUS TEN: FOOD AND FAITH FORFEITED
(FOOD AND FAITH ARE MAN'S DEAREST POSSESSIONS.)

- I. FOOD FORFEITED to locusts; 10:1-20.
- II. FAITH FORFEITED through darkness; 10:21-29.
(Egypt's chief gods were sun-gods. The faith of the Egyptians in these gods was forfeited.)

FROM IGNORANCE TO HARDENING (Ex. 10:1; Eph. 4:18)

- I. Man's deliberate ignorance.
 1. Ignoring God's mercies; Ex. 8:13, 31; 9:33; 10:19.
 2. Ignoring God's power; Ex. 7:12; 8:18-19; 9:6-7.
 3. Ignoring God's past punishments; Ex. 9:12, 24-26; 10:3.
- II. God's dreadful hardening; Ex. 10:1, 20, 27.

GOD'S MESSAGE TO FUTURE GENERATIONS (Ex. 10:2)

1. God controls nature.
2. God condemns sinners.
3. God is the LORD.

THE LOCUSTS: GOD'S ARMY (Joel 2:11; Ex. 10:14)

1. Covered everything; Ex. 10:4, 14.
2. Consumed everything; Ex. 10:5, 15.
3. Conquered the king; Ex. 10:16-17.
4. Controlled by God; Ex. 10:19.

LOCUSTS AND DARKNESS,
TYPES OF FINAL PUNISHMENTS

1. Locusts; Ex. 10:4-5; Rev. 9:3.
2. Darkness; Ex. 10:21-23; Matt. 8:12; Jude 13.

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER TEN

1. *What were God's purposes in sending Moses back to Pharaoh after the plague of the hail? (10:1-2)*

God's purposes were (1) that He might show further signs (miracles and plagues) in the midst of Pharaoh and his servants; and (2) that Moses might tell to his children and grandchildren how God had made sport of the Egyptians, and the great signs God had done among them.

The expression "what things I have wrought" literally refers to actions which bring shame, disgrace, or mockery upon its objects.

By this time Pharaoh had gone so far in disobedience that there was no opportunity for him to turn and change his ways. Moses was sent to him primarily to provide an opportunity for God to work further signs upon Pharaoh. Moses' going to Pharaoh and warning him of the next plague would cause Pharaoh to know that the next plague was no accident, but was linked to Jehovah and Moses.

Moses himself certainly told the next generation about the miracles and signs in Egypt (Deut. 7:8, 18-19). But Moses was not the only one that was to tell of these wonders. He was only the representative of all the people. The Israelites have always related to their children God's wonders in Egypt. Psalms 78 and 105 are examples of the way the plague stories were told in song and story. We ourselves still also exult in God's triumphs in Egypt.

God repeated again His desire that Israel would know that He was Jehovah! (Compare 6:7.) Israel needed to learn this as much as the Egyptians did. The Israelites had worshipped idols in Egypt (Josh. 24:14; Ezek. 20:6-8), and they continued to do so even after their exodus.

2. *Why would God send locusts, and when? (10:3-4)*

God would send locusts because Pharaoh would not humble himself before the LORD. He had confessed after the last plague (hail) that he had sinned, and that Jehovah was righteous (9:27). But he hardened his heart afterwards (9:35).

God did not demand that Pharaoh humble himself so that He might, as it were, place his foot upon the neck of a defeated victim (Josh. 10:24). But rather God sought to humble Pharaoh that Pharaoh might be blessed, for God exalts the humble (James 4:10).

The locusts would be brought in *tomorrow*. Likewise the plagues of hail, murrain, and flies were announced one day in advance.

3. *What would the locusts do? (10:5-6)*

They would blanket the land because they were so numerous. They would eat up every sprig of green vegetation left by the hail. They would get into the houses of the Egyptians and fill them in a manner such as no one had ever seen before. They would even eat the wood of the trees. This would grieve the Egyptians because they were fond of trees. Their land did not have a great many trees because they were so close to the desert.

Joel 2:9-10 refers to a later locust plague: "They leap upon the city; they run upon the wall; they climb up into the houses; they enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth quaketh before them; the sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining." Compare also Psalm 105:34-35; 78:46.

See notes on 10:14-15 for more about the effects of the locusts.

4. *Why did Pharaoh's servants urge Pharaoh to let the Israelites go? (10:7)*

They had already suffered much in the previous plagues - the frogs, boils, hail, etc. They had probably been out in the land and had seen that Egypt was destroyed. They believed that Moses' threats were to be taken very seriously.

They asked Pharaoh, "How long will this man (Moses) be a snare (a trap, or noose) unto us. Send the men (of Israel) away, and let them serve Jehovah their God! Don't you know yet that Egypt has perished?" Note their use of the full title "Jehovah their God."

5. *Did Pharaoh make a sincere offer to let Israel go?* (10:8)

Not really. He did tell Moses and Aaron to go and serve Jehovah their God (and note that he also used God's full title). But almost before he finished uttering the offer, he was hedging. He demanded, "Who and who (else) will be going?" (Thus his question reads in Hebrew.)

6. *What feelings did Moses express about who would leave Egypt?* (10:9)

Total confidence! Total freedom! Total certainty! He declared, "With our young, and with our senior citizens, WE SHALL GO!" He did not request permission; he stated their intentions with force. (In the Hebrew Moses' reply to Pharaoh begins with the words "With our young, and with our old, . . ." Moses unhesitatingly threw back into the teeth of Pharaoh's demanding question the full list of who would be leaving Egypt.)

Moses made again the demand that Pharaoh let them go and *sacrifice*, the demand that he made at the very first meeting with Pharaoh (5:1).

7. *Did Pharaoh agree to let ALL Israelites go?* (10:10-11)

Defiantly not! His reply was contemptuous and sarcastic toward Moses and Aaron, and also toward Jehovah. The Hebrew may be translated, "May Jehovah be with you in like manner to that by which I am sending you out, (you) and your little ones! Watch out! Because (I know) evil is in your minds!" (literally, "before your faces").

Pharaoh knew he was not going to send them out; and he did not think Jehovah *could* deliver them any more than he *would* deliver them. He practically dared Jehovah to do anything. It is easy to imagine Pharaoh was smirking as he fired off his choice sarcastic saying. It is the kind of "put-down" that cruel people enjoy.

Note that to Pharaoh it was *evil* for Moses to consider taking the Israelites away from his slave service.

Pharaoh's restriction of permission to depart to the men only was pure tyranny, without reason or mercy. Even the

Egyptians, according to Herodotus,¹ held religious festivals at which women were in the habit of going with men. He tells of men and women sailing together to the assemblies, vast numbers in each boat, and that the number of men and women sometimes amounted to seven hundred thousand!

Oppressors often permit *adults* to exercise religious observances, while they seek to control the *children* and educate them away from the faith of their fathers. Proud persecutors yield a little to God, but yet refuse to obey His basic terms. They threaten the people of God. But their threats return upon the threateners.

Pharaoh's lack of genuine sincerity was demonstrated by his driving Moses and Aaron from his presence.

8. *What brought locusts into Egypt?* (10:12-13)

Moses stretched forth his hand and rod. (Compare 9:22-23) Then the LORD caused a wind to blow from the east for twenty-four hours, all day and all night, and the next morning the cloud of locusts appeared, and then settled all over Egypt.

Sometimes locust swarms first appear as a dark band on the horizon, heavy enough to block the light of the rising sun. Egypt has occasional invasions by locusts, so that this sight must have terrorized the people.

Usually locusts come into Egypt from the SOUTH² or southwest (from Ethiopia and Libya). But sometimes they do come into Egypt from the east, from Arabia.³ The fact that the wind blew so long suggests that the locusts were blown in from a great distance. The power of the LORD reached far beyond the borders of Egypt, and ruled over every land.

9. *What effects did the locusts have upon Egypt?* (10:14-15)

They utterly covered the land, so that the land was

¹Herodotus, *Histories*, II, 58, 60. Translated by George Rawlinson (London: Dent, 1964), Vol. II, pp. 143-144.

²The Greek O.T. translates 10:13, "The Lord brought a *south* wind upon the land." We feel that this is probably incorrect.

³Keil and Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 496.

darkened. They ate every herb and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. Nothing green remained in all the land of Egypt.

The locusts in this plague were a variety more destructive and numerous than ever seen before. Compare Joel 2:2-3; Psalm 105:34-35; 78:46.

Locusts that develop to the migratory stage resemble the grasshopper, but are larger, being nearly three inches long. They are yellowish-tan in color, with dark roundish spots on their wings. A locust can eat its own weight daily. In a severe plague a square mile of land will have from one hundred to two hundred million locusts. They are hardy creatures. They can fly up to twenty hours continuously at ten to twelve miles an hour. Locusts have been tracked as far as 900 miles in fourteen days.⁴ In one day they can eat the growing food grains that took a year to grow; and the price of bread will soar beyond the reach of the poor (who then may be reduced to eating the locusts!). Palm trees bending with fruit may be reduced to bare spars, golden grainfields to stubble, and even wild marsh reeds disappear. While locust hordes are often a mile or less in width, clouds of locusts have been known to extend over 500 miles and to be so thick as to hide the sun completely as they fly over.

10. *What did the locusts cause Pharaoh to do? (10:16-18)*

He summoned Moses and Aaron in haste, and confessed that he had sinned, and begged them to forgive him, and pray for the LORD to take away this DEATH (the locusts).

Pharaoh sought forgiveness of his sin "this once." He did not ask for a purification of his moral nature. He had once before confessed to sin (9:27), but that conviction left him quickly when the hail stopped.

Pharaoh asked Moses to pray for him, rather than humbling himself before God and praying for himself. (See 9:28.)

Moses complied with Pharaoh's request, and went out

⁴Part of this information is taken from a vivid article, "Reports From the Locust Wars," *National Geographic* mag., April 1953, pp. 545-562.

from him and entreated Jehovah. See notes on 8:12.

11. *How were the locusts removed?* (10:19)

The LORD changed the direction of the wind, and a very strong wind from the (Mediterranean) sea blew the locusts into the Red Sea, and there remained not one locust in the land of Egypt.

Only God could remove such a scourge. Swarms of fully mature locusts are almost impossible to discourage once they have settled to feed. And they are hard to hurt with any quantity of poison not also deadly to other creatures.

This is the first mention of the Red Sea (Heb., *Yam Suph*). We feel that this is the same sea we now refer to as the Red Sea. (See Introductory Section VII.)

12. *Why did not Pharaoh release Israel after the locust plague?* (10:20)

Because Jehovah hardened his heart. See notes on 4:21; 9:12.

13. *What was unusual about the darkness in Egypt?* (10:21-23)

It came when Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven. See 9:22-23 and 10:12-13 on Moses' stretching forth his hand.

The darkness was so intense it could be "felt."

The Israelites had light while the Egyptians nearby were in darkness.

14. *Why was the darkness so dreadful?*

Darkness was a direct attack on some of Egypt's main gods: Re (or Ra), the sun-God, was also the creator of gods and men; his emblem was the sun's disk. Pharaoh himself was thought to be the embodiment of that god. Another great god was Amon, and he also was a sun-god. He was the chief deity of Thebes, the capital city during the XVIII dynasty, the time of Moses.

The darkness was so dense it could be "felt." This is to be taken literally. The same word meaning *feel* is used in Judges 16:26 (where Samson *felt* the pillars), and in Psalm 115:7 (where the hands are said to *feel*).

What caused this darkness? Was it a supernatural

darkness, like that which came the day Christ died (Luke 23:44)? The Greek O.T. reads in Ex. 10:22, "There was darkness, very black, even a *storm*, over all the land of Egypt three days." We feel that the darkness could have been caused by a dust storm. The other plagues involved use of natural creatures and things. God miraculously controlled their intensity and exactly when and where they affected. Severe sandstorms occur in Egypt during the spring months (which was the time of year this plague occurred).

The author of this book lived in western Kansas during the "dust bowl" days of the early 1930's. The dust clouds then rolled over the prairies, turning daylight into total blackness, so black that not even the position of windows could be detected by those in houses; so black that one feared to walk across a familiar room. God's darkness in Egypt was more severe than any Kansas "dust bowl" storm; but the mental picture of a darkness so heavy that it could be felt, and that caused no "one to rise from his place for three days" is very real.

What a terrifying prospect lies in store for those in hell, in the "outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12)! If Pharaoh found the darkness of Egypt terrifying, what a fearsome fate awaits those "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever"! (Jude 13)

5. *What final compromise offer did Pharaoh make to Moses?* (10:24)

He would let all the Israelites go, but they must leave flocks and herds behind. Pharaoh seems to be saying that the cattle of the Israelites were to be placed and kept in designated places under the guard of Egyptians, as a pledge of the Israelites' return. Perhaps Pharaoh simply coveted their herds to replace his own destroyed flocks.

Israel could not have survived long in the desert without the milk, meat, skins, and wool of their animals.

We suspect that Pharaoh had difficulty contacting Moses in the pitchy darkness!

16. *How did Moses receive the compromise about leaving their*

livestock behind? (10:25-26)

He insisted that every one of their cattle must go with them. Not a hoof was to be left behind. This was necessary because they did not know what Jehovah would ask them to sacrifice until they arrived at their destination.

In addition to that, Moses demanded that Pharaoh give to *them* "sacrifices and burnt-offerings," that is, additional animals from Pharaoh's herds. This may be a "dig" at Pharaoh, because his herds were extinct, or nearly so (9:6).

By making this extra demand Moses seems to be forcing the issue between him and Pharaoh to a decisive climax. He was not giving one concession to Pharaoh; rather he was upping his demands!

There is no indication that the Israelites received livestock from the Egyptians when they left Egypt, or that they even requested any at that time (12:35-36).

17. *How did Pharaoh try to get Moses away from him permanently?* (10:28)

He told Moses to get away from him, and not to come back, for he would kill him if he returned. Moses accepted the demand without fear. He knew, and told Pharaoh so plainly, that after just one more plague, Pharaoh's servants would come down to him, and bow down, and plead with the Israelites to leave (11:8). Even Pharaoh himself came to Moses and begged for them to leave (12:30-31).

Pharaoh made this final refusal because the LORD hardened his heart. He was no longer in control of his choices of conduct. On "hardening Pharaoh's heart," see 4:21; 14:4, 8.

18. *Did Moses warn Pharaoh of the final plague?* (10:29; 11:4)

Yes. Before leaving Pharaoh's palace, as Pharaoh ordered (10:28), Moses warned him of the final plague of the death of the firstborn. The conversation of 10:28-29 is continued in 11:4-8. 11:1-3 is an interruption in the narrative, inserted to explain how Moses knew about the last plague, and could therefore tell Pharaoh about it.