



Exodus 7:8-8:19

CONFRONTING THE GODS OF EGYPT

[Exodus 7:8-11:10] focuses on one of the great confrontations of history: the reigning human power on earth, Egypt—and particularly its autocratic head, Pharaoh—versus the God who promised to rescue his people from that power... It cannot be accidental that God used ten plagues to teach the Egyptians that he is sovereign and that their gods were of no account. At the time of the exodus, both the Israelites and the Egyptians used a decimal counting system, which meant that the number ten tended to connote a full, complete, sufficient quantity...and provided more than enough demonstration of God’s power over Egypt for anyone to get the message... The plagues were special, divinely produced manifestations of God’s sovereignty over Egypt—its king, its people, its environment, and its gods—accomplished...on a huge and destructive scale by phenomena thought by the Egyptians to be the province of their gods. God turned things believed to be the specialty of “the gods of Egypt” against the Egyptians, and showed himself in control of all events and powers they would have attributed to the objects of their faith. —Douglas K. Stuart

Moses has finally gotten the picture that God is the One who will deal with Pharaoh and redeem the Israelites from Egypt. This is not Moses’ work; this is God’s work. The *ten plagues* serve as clear signs that the gods of Egypt are nothing and that God is sovereign over all.

THE PRELIMINARY SIGN — Aaron’s Staff into Snake (7:8-13)

- God confronts the power of Egypt and _____.
- Pharaoh’s magicians perform a _____ sign.
- God’s power _____ all of Pharaoh’s power.
- Pharaoh’s heart is _____.

This preliminary sign serves as an introduction to the “ten plagues.”

	1st Three Plagues (7:14-8:19)	2nd Three Plagues (8:20-9:12)	3rd Three Plagues (9:13-10:29)	
The Staff Turning into a Snake	Blood <i>Go to Pharaoh in the morning</i>	Flies <i>Go to Pharaoh in the morning</i>	Hail <i>Go to Pharaoh in the morning</i>	The Death of the Firstborn <i>God’s Judgment Is Righteous!</i> (11:1-12:36)
<i>God’s Power Is Greater!</i> (7:8-13)	Frogs <i>Go to Pharaoh</i>	Pestilence <i>Go to Pharaoh</i>	Locusts <i>Go to Pharaoh</i>	
	Gnats No warning	Boils No warning	Darkness No warning	

The entire story of the plagues is about a contest between the will of the Pharaoh and the will of God. Pharaoh was a self-proclaimed god, the object of worship by his subjects. —Nahum M. Sarna

Snakes represent Egyptian power. Pharaoh’s headdress, so famous from such popular images as King Tut’s coffin, looks like a cobra. For Aaron’s staff to turn into a snake is nothing less than a direct challenge to Pharaoh’s power. —Peter Enns

Serpent. Heb., *tannin*, “dragon, serpent, sea monster.” Different word than snake (*nachash*) in 4:3. *Tannin* indicates a “great serpent” or even a dragon (cf. Is. 27:1).

Egyptian serpent-charmers possess an extraordinary power over serpents, drawing them forth, for instance, by noises made with the lips...and by pressure applied to the neck throwing them into such a state of hypnotic rigidity that they can be held as rods by the tip of the tail. —Samuel R. Driver

PLAGUE #1 — Nile River into Blood (7:14-25)

- God confronts the god of the _____.

By this you shall know that I am the Lord (7:17).

- Pharaoh's magicians perform a _____ sign.
- Only God's power gives _____ not the Nile River.
- Pharaoh's heart is _____.

PLAGUE #2 — Frogs into Everything! (8:1-15)

- God confronts the goddess of _____.
- Pharaoh's magicians perform a _____ sign.
- Only God's power controls _____ not the gods.

That you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God (8:10).

- Pharaoh asks Moses to pray for him but then when relief comes, he once again _____ his heart.

PLAGUE #3 — Dust into Gnats (8:16-19)

- God confronts the god of the _____.
- Pharaoh's magicians acknowledge the power of God!
- Only God's power can turn _____ into life.
- Pharaoh's heart is _____.

FOUR PRINCIPLES FROM EXODUS 7:8-8:19

1. I only succeed in life when I learn to align my will to God's will.
2. I must not be deceived by false signs and wonders (2 Thess. 2:9).
3. I must allow God to expose and confront the gods of my heart.
4. I must not let my heart become hardened (Hebrews 3:7-4:16).

*Everything that has come into being is through the Nile's power.
—Hymn to the Nile (~2100 BC)*

*Indeed, the River is blood, yet men drink of it. Men shrink from human beings and thirst after water.
—The Admonitions of Ipuwer (circa. 1570-1069 BC)*

*The text states that the magicians accomplished their imitation "by their secret arts" [7:11,22; 8:7,18] rather than by any sort of supernatural means... They imitated by magical deception what Aaron had done by divine power.
—Douglas K. Stuart*

Smite. Heb., *nakah*. "to strike, hit, beat." The word *plague* is from the Latin, *plaga*, "stroke, wound."

*The frogs suggest a defeat of Hekt, the frog-headed goddess who assisted the god Khnum in bringing men into being. The second mighty act would thus be a frustration of the life-giving process in Egypt.
—John I. Durham*

Gnats. Hebrew, *ken*, "that which fastens to the skin and bites." Used of gnats, lice, mosquitoes.

*Geb was believed to be the deity of earth, and was central to the ancient Egyptian creation myth. The ancient Egyptians referred to Earth as the "House of Geb." The pharaohs believed themselves to be descendants of Geb.
—egyptianmuseum.org*

*Through the plagues the Lord demonstrated that He was the God of creation.
—Ziony Zevit*

*The human heart is a perpetual idol factory.
—John Calvin*