

Against All The Gods Of Egypt



“For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.” (Exodus 12:12)

David Padfield

Against All The Gods Of Egypt

© 2002, 2015 by David Padfield

All rights reserved

First edition 2002

Second edition 2015

All photographs by David Padfield

www.padfield.com

Published by the Zion Church Of Christ, Zion, Illinois, USA

Scripture taken from the New King James Version.

Copyright ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Gene Taylor, my good friend and fellow-laborer in the gospel. I met Gene in 1979 at a special class Homer Hailey was teaching at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky. He is a man of integrity and is uncompromising in his stand for the truth.

Gene has helped me in every public debate I've had and was able to accompany me on my first five trips to the lands of the Bible (Israel, Turkey, Greece, Italy, and Egypt). While it has been a while since we have travelled together, we still frequently talk about our experiences in those places.

“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (Proverbs 27:17)

Preface

This book contains a series of lessons presented at the Church of Christ in Zion, Illinois in the fall of 2015. For over twenty years the brethren in Zion have encouraged me to travel the lands of the Bible and produce printed material to help people understand Bible history and geography.

Some preachers desire to work with large congregations where, unfortunately, they usually end up spending a lot of their time in things other than doing “the work of an evangelist.” The brethren in Zion have allowed me to devote my time to studying the Scriptures and preparing material that is used by Christians throughout the world—and for this I am truly thankful.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalms 133:1)

Table Of Contents

“Let My People Go”	I
Jacob’s Descendents In Egypt	I
The Birth Of Their Deliverer	4
Egyptian Polytheism	5
Who Is Jehovah?	6
Against The Gods Of The Water	10
First Plague: Water Changed To Blood	10
Second Plague: Frogs	14
Third Plague: Lice	15
Against The Gods Of The Land	18
Fourth Plague: Swarms	18
Fifth Plague: Livestock Diseased	20
Sixth Plague: Boils	24
Against The Gods Of The Sky	27
Seventh Plague: Hail	27
Eight Plague: Locusts	29
Ninth Plague: Darkness	31
“Against All The Gods Of Egypt”	35
Tenth Plague: Death Of The Firstborn	35
The Gods Of Egypt Were Silent	36
When Was The Exodus?	40
Biblical Testimony	41
The Stones Cry Out	42
Egyptian Deities	48
Index Of Photographs	49
Bibliography	50

“Let My People Go!”

Introduction

- I. The first mention of Egypt in the Bible is when Abraham and Sarah journeyed there during a famine in Canaan (Gen 12:10).
 - A. Because Egypt depended on the Nile River for water instead of rainfall they were in a better position to provide food during the famine that hit Canaan.
 - B. It was not uncommon for traders to travel between Canaan and Egypt.
 - C. There is a drawing at Beni Hasan, Egypt (an Ancient Egyptian cemetery site) in from the tomb of Khnumhotep (c. 1880 B.C.) that shows a group of Asiatics traveling in Egypt to trade cosmetics.
- II. The descendants of the patriarch Abraham moved to the land of Goshen in Egypt during the time of Joseph (Gen 46:8–27).
 - A. Some seventy souls went down to Egypt and while there they became a nation within a nation (Gen 46:27; Exod 1:5; Acts 7:15–16).
 - B. God promised that while in Egypt they would become a “great nation” (Gen 46:3–4).
 - C. The book of Exodus opens by showing that this promise was fulfilled (Exod 1:7).
 - D. For over three centuries the descendants of Jacob lived in peace and prosperity, but in the process of time, “there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph” or the people of Israel (Exod 1:8).
 - E. Fearful of such a large body of foreigners in their midst, Pharaoh decided to enslave the people (Exod 1:9–14).
 - F. From the midst of their oppression the people cried out to the God of their forefathers, and God heard their prayers (Exod 2:23–25; cf. Acts 7:17–19).
 - G. God raised up Moses to deliver His people from bondage (Exod 3:1–10; Acts 7:20–36; Heb 11:23–29).
- III. Through a series of ten plagues God would harden Pharaoh’s stubborn heart and reveal Himself as the creator and sustainer of all (cf. Exod 7:3, 14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32).

Discussion

I. Jacob’s Descendants In Egypt

- A. The descendants of Jacob settled in the northeastern Nile Delta in an area called “the land of Goshen” (Gen 47:5–6, 11, 27).
 1. During the days of Joseph this area was called “the land of Rameses” (Gen 47:11).
 2. Goshen is fairly small, covering an area of only some 900 square miles.
 3. For comparison, the state of Rhode Island covers 1,213 square miles.
 4. However, Goshen was best area of Egypt in which to live because of its fertile soil and the extensive use of irrigation.
 5. It was an ideal area for raising crops and herds (Gen 46:34; 47:1, 4, 6, 27; 50:7–8).
 6. The census taken immediately *after* the exodus reveals that the descendants of Jacob had grown to number about two million people (Num 1:1–46; Exod 38:26).
- B. Many years after the death of Joseph, “there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph” (Exod 1:8).
 1. The children of Israel were forced to serve as slaves to the Egyptians, building the supply cities of Pithom and Raamses (Exod 1:8–12).
 2. Flavius Josephus claims that the children of Israel also dug canals for Pharaoh.

3. "...they enjoined them to cut a great number of channels for the river, and to build walls for their cities and ramparts, that they might restrain the river, and hinder its waters from stagnating, upon its running over its own banks..." (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 2:204)
- C. Bricks made of Nile mud and mixed with straw were used for the walls and storerooms surrounding ancient Egyptian temples.
1. After the first meeting between Moses and Pharaoh, the Israelites were commanded to gather their own straw, but keep the same "quota of bricks which they made before" (Exod 5:6-8).
 2. "Rather than attack Moses directly, the pharaoh increased the burden on the Hebrews so that they would have less time to listen to Moses and would blame him for their added labor. The Egyptians stopped supplying the straw used in making the required mud bricks. Straw is not essential to brick-making and even today some bricks are made in Goshen without it, but straw acts as a binder and prevents the bricks from breaking as they dry. Under their increased burden, the Hebrews either had to expend some of their labor force to forage for binder while meeting their same quota or else had to produce enough additional bricks to compensate for those that would not survive the drying process." (Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, 162)
 3. "Scientific experiments have shown that the use of chopped straw in mud brick increases its breaking strength over three times. This is partly due to the binding character of the straw, and partly to the action of such products of decaying vegetable matter as humic acid upon the clay, which increases its strength and plasticity. Thus if the mixture of straw and mud is allowed to stand some time before use, it becomes easier to handle and makes a stronger brick." (Wells, *Exodus*, n.p.)
 4. There is a wallpainting in the tomb of Rekhmere, vizier under Pharaohs Thutmose III and Amenophis II, that shows laborers making bricks.
 5. Bricks were often stamped with the name of the Pharaoh responsible for the construction of the building.
 6. "Ancient bricks were generally square instead of oblong and were much larger than ours, about 13 x 13 x 3.5 inches (33 x 33 x 9 cm). Before being baked they were often stamped with the name of the monarch (e.g., Sargon or Nebuchadnezzar). Much ancient brickwork was comprised of bricks merely baked in the sun, especially in Egypt, but in Babylon the bricks were thoroughly burned." (Walton, *Archaeological Study Bible*, n.p.)
 7. A mud brick displayed in the British Museum is stamped with a cartouche containing the name of Ramesses II (1279-1213 B.C.), and was taken from a building in Thebes, near the Valley of the Kings.

8. “Many records document the use of forced labor in the building of government projects. Labor camps at such sites as Rameses and Pithom comprised both prisoners of war and indigenous workers. Even as early as the Old and Middle Kingdoms, quotas for brick making were often established, though rarely reached. The Louvre Leather Roll (1275–1274 B.C.E., during the reign of Ramesses II) documents one such shortfall, and Papyrus Anastasi IV (end of the thirteenth century) reports the complaint of one official that the surrounding area was lacking in both men to make bricks and straw for them. Finally, unlike the experience of the Hebrews, it was a common practice for some workers occasionally to be given time off for religious holidays to make sacrifices and offer prayers to their gods.” (Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures of the Bible*, 54)



A mud brick made with straw and brick mold from the time of Thutmose III (c. 1479–1428 B.C.)

II. The Birth Of Their Deliverer

- A. Having heard the cries of His people in bondage, God raised up Moses to set them free (Heb 11:23–27).
- B. Three months after his birth, Moses was hidden by his parents in one of the tributaries of Nile in an “ark of bulrushes,” i.e., a papyrus basket (Exod 2:3).
 1. The daughter of Pharaoh saw the ark as she went to bathe (Exod 2:5–6).
 2. “Whether the princess was the renowned Hatshepsut is a matter of speculation. There is no doubt, however, that the chronology suggested here would fit nicely with her, and that she was a most unusual person for her times, possessing a strong personality and unusual gift of leadership, which she eventually used to claim the throne for herself. But since she was not a male, her claim on the throne could only be legitimized by her marriage to a son of the Pharaoh ruling at that time—a son born to Thutmose I from a lesser wife. Thutmose I took the legal title of Thutmose II, but he was weak in body and personality, leaving Hatshepsut free, for all intents and purposes, to rule as she saw fit for most of his reign.” (Kaiser, *A History of Israel: from the Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars*, 88)
 3. If you accept the date given in the Bible for the exodus (1445 B.C., based on 1 Kgs 6:1), then Moses would have been born around 1525 B.C., since he was 80 years old at the beginning of the exodus (Exod 7:7).
 4. As a child, Moses was trained “in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds” (Acts 7:22; Exod 2:10).
- C. At the age of forty Moses fled from Egypt (Exod 2:11–15; Acts 7:23–29; Heb 11:24–27).
 1. “While the intentions of Moses may have been good, the specific act was ill-advised at this time since his own people had not been assured of his leadership (cf. v. 14). Word of this deed reached the ears of Pharaoh who immediately took steps to slay Moses (v. 15). This Pharaoh, in all probability, is to be identified with Pharaoh of the oppression (v. 23); that is, Thutmose III (1483–1450 B.C.).” (Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, 65)
 2. For the next forty years Moses dwelt in Midian (Exod 2:16–22).
 3. Meanwhile, God’s people were suffering under oppression (Exod 2:23).
 4. God spoke to Moses from the burning bush at Horeb (Exod 3:1–10; Acts 7:30–34).
 5. God told Moses that He would “strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst,” then Pharaoh would let the Israelites go (Exod 3:19–20).
 6. After forty years of absence, at the age of eighty, Moses returned to Egypt.

III. Egyptian Polytheism

- A. Egypt was a polytheistic society—they worshipped a great multitude of gods.
1. “The number of deities worshipped by the ancient Egyptians was indeed staggering, and almost 1,500 gods and goddesses are known by name, though fewer are known in detail.” (Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 6)
 2. “For beneath and above everything in Egypt was religion. We find it there in every stage and form from totemism to theology; we see its influence in literature, in government, in art, in everything except morality. And it is not only varied, it is tropically abundant; only in Rome and India shall we find so plentiful a pantheon. We cannot understand the Egyptian—or man—until we study his gods.” (Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*, 197)
 3. “The Egyptians considered sacred the lion, the ox, the ram, the wolf, the dog, the cat, the ibis, the vulture, the falcon, the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the cobra, the dolphin, different varieties of fish, trees, and small animals including the frog, scarab, locust and other insects. In addition to these there were anthropomorphic gods; that is, men in the prime of life such as Amun, Atum, or Osiris.” (Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, 95)
 4. “As to rituals, they show us the gods in their temples. The presence of priests, often in large numbers, might lead one to suppose that temples offered men a privileged place for communicating with their gods. But the reliefs which sought to portray the actual content of religious rites demonstrate that this is a mistaken assumption. Carved in stone, meant to last, they consistently represent the king acting alone on behalf of the gods or else making them offerings without assistance. Men—that is, priests—maintained only an ephemeral physical presence in the sacred buildings, leaving virtually no traces there. When they *are* represented, it is above all as bearers of liturgical objects, not as active participants in the rite. The texts explicitly state that they are simply delegated by the king, who, since he cannot be everywhere in person, maintains a constant presence throughout the land by way of the temple reliefs.” (Meeks and Meeks, *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods*, 8)
 5. “Even Pharaoh was a god, always the son of Amon-Ra, ruling not merely by divine right but by divine birth, as a deity transiently tolerating the earth as his home. On his head was the falcon, symbol of Horus and totem of the tribe; from his forehead rose the *uræus* or serpent, symbol of wisdom and life, and communicating magic virtues to the crown. The king was chief-priest of the faith, and led the great processions and ceremonies that celebrated the festivals of the gods. It was through this assumption of divine lineage and powers that he was able to rule so long with so little force.” (Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*, 201)

- B. While it is not possible for us to discuss every Egyptian god in this study, we will attempt to note those gods who would have been impacted by the plagues.
1. Amun, the king of the gods, whose temple at Karnak was used for over 2,000 years by Pharaohs who claimed Amun was their father.
 2. Ra (Re), the creator sun-god of Heliopolis.
 3. Osiris, the ruler of the Underworld and judge of the dead.
 4. Isis, the symbolic mother of the king.
 - a) She married her brother Osiris and had a son, Horus.
 - b) She was invoked by women when their children were sick or bitten by poisonous animals.
 - c) She is often pictured with a crown of cow-horns and the sun disk.
 5. Horus, the falcon-god, was “lord of the sky.”
 - a) His name first appears on Egyptian monuments 5,000 years ago.
 - b) Pharaohs were seen as a living manifestation of Horus.
 - c) The best-preserved temple in Egypt is at Edfu—it was dedicated to Horus.
 6. Hathor, one of the most important goddesses, often appears as a cow carrying between her horns the disk of her father, the sun-god Re.
 7. Ptah, the creator god of Memphis, the capital city of Egypt founded by the first pharaoh around 3,000 B.C.
 8. The Apis bull is the sacred creature of Ptah, and worshipped as his “living image.”
 9. Sobek, the crocodile-god, was worshipped at Kom-Ombo in Upper Egypt, where there was an extensive cemetery for mummified crocodiles.
 10. Taweret (Taurt, Taueret) had a hippopotamus head, the body of a pregnant woman, the arms and legs of a lion and a crocodile tail—her fierceness was meant to ward off any threats to women during childbirth.
 11. Khepri, the sun-god in the form of a scarab beetle.
 - a) The scarab beetle rolls balls of dung across the ground and the Egyptians saw this as a symbol of the forces that move the sun across the sky.
 - b) The image of the scarab is frequently associated with Ancient Egypt.

IV. Who Is Jehovah?

- A. God was going to *reveal* Himself to Egypt, and to His own people, through the plagues (Exod 6:7; 7:4-5; 10:2; 12:12; 18:11).
- B. This revelation of Jehovah to Pharaoh and the Egyptians began when Moses confronted the magicians in Pharaoh’s court (Exod 7:8-13).
 1. According to Jewish tradition, Jannes and Jambres were the two magicians who opposed Moses (2 Tim 3:8).
 2. “While the names do not appear in the Old Testament text, Paul refers to them as commonly accepted figures with which many people were acquainted. For instance, we read this in the ‘Damascus Document’ from Qumran: ‘For in ancient times there arose Moses and Aaron, by the hand of the prince of lights and Belial, with his cunning, raised up Jannes and his brother during the first deliverance of Israel’ (CD 5.17-19). Even Pliny the Elder mentions Moses and Jannes in the same breath as well-known magicians from an earlier day.” (Baugh, S. M., *2 Timothy*)

3. “Among the most graphic narratives in the exodus account is the contest between Moses and the pharaoh and his magicians. The first round, a ‘preliminary bout,’ was with the latter (Exod. 7:8–12), where both sides showed ability to turn their rods or staffs into snakes. Tricks of this kind with snakes (including the cobra) are known in Egypt down to modern times. If charmed and deftly pressured at its neck muscles, the Egyptian cobra can be rendered immobile (cataleptic), becoming a ‘rod’ — and, of course, be released.” (Kitchen, *On The Reliability of the Old Testament*, 249)
 4. “The majority of scholars believe that the Egyptians used mere trickery on this occasion. Throughout the ancient world pagan priests regularly deceived gullible people (e.g., a priest would hide in a large, hollowed-out idol and speak for the god). So the Egyptians could have used sleight of hand (analogous to modern stage magicians performing tricks with animals). Evidence also reveals that Egyptians regularly practiced a method of snake charming that allowed them to put snakes into a kind of catalepsy, whereby they would remain as stiff as a rod until awakened. This trick is still practiced in Egypt today. It is helpful to recognize that the purpose of this Biblical text was not to debunk Egyptian magic but to show that the power of Israel’s God was greater than any power Egypt possessed. When Moses’ snake swallowed the Egyptians’ snakes, the event predicted disaster for the pharaoh. A representative snake from Israel’s God had defeated one of Egypt’s national symbols—the serpent—an animal considered sacred in Lower Egypt where Moses’ confrontation with the pharaoh was taking place.” (Walton, *Archaeological Study Bible*, n.p.)
- C. Jehovah would be glorified by Pharaoh.
1. While Pharaoh would never *confess* the true God of heaven, he would *glorify* the Lord (Exod 14:2–4).
 2. “Because neither Pharaoh nor the Egyptians would willingly glorify God, Yahweh would muster glory for himself by what he would do to them at the Reed (Red) Sea. Up to this point, he had not been given appropriate honor from Pharaoh. Now he would receive his just due by magnifying himself by destroying the Egyptian army.” (Johnston, *The Bible Knowledge Word Study*, n.p.)
 3. “One area of Egyptian backgrounds that has not sufficiently been explored is how the plagues affected the pharaoh and his office. In Near Eastern parlance, the ‘hand of god X’ is an idiom for a plague, and it has been suggested that the expression ‘hand of Yahweh’ in Exod 9:3 and 15 should be understood in this manner (Stieglitz 1987: 47). Consequently, plagues were considered to be divine in origin. This observation certainly fits the scenario of the epic struggle between God and pharaoh. It has also been observed that the expressions about the hand or arm of God in the exodus narratives take on a special meaning when it is realized that similar expressions are found in Egyptian literature that symbolize the conquering and controlling power of pharaoh...” (Hoffmeier, “Plagues In Egypt.” *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, Vol 2, 376)

- D. The ten plagues were not just against Pharaoh and his people, but “*against all the gods of Egypt*” (Exod 12:12; Num 33:3–4).
1. It is my understanding that each of the ten plagues served as a direct insult to one or more of the gods of Egypt.
 2. While some of the plagues are more difficult to assign an impacted god to than others, I will offer some suggestions that might provide grounds for further research on your part.
 3. “Exodus records the instructions and events of the plagues for the purpose of showing how the Lord revealed both his person and his power through delivering Israel from Egypt. The plagues fall on areas of life supposedly protected by Egypt’s gods, thus demonstrating the Lord’s power over the gods of the world’s mightiest nation.” (Dennis and Grudem, *ESV Study Bible*, n.p.)
 4. “Looking through archaeological lenses at the religion of Egypt we can understand the plagues as a divine polemic (attack) against the manifold gods of the Egyptians (the tomb of Seti I pictured at least 74). Associations between the individual plagues and specific gods whose control of the elements were disrupted or destroyed by the plagues can be made based on our information about these deities from the archaeological records.” (Price, *The Stones Cry Out*, 126)

Conclusion

- I. The first nine plagues were *similar* to plagues and natural disasters that have stricken the land of Egypt from her earliest days.
 - A. It seems that Jehovah intensified these plagues and brought them to pass at the time of His choosing.
 - B. However, these plagues were not just natural disasters—they were miracles in every sense of the word.
 - C. Some try to pass the plagues off as nothing more than natural phenomenon, however, even the magicians in Egypt said, “This is the finger of God” (Exod 8:19).
 - D. “The biblical description of the events associated with the ten plagues allows for the possibility that God used natural processes to bring judgments on Egypt’s gods (Ex 12:12) and set His people free from Egyptian captivity. Some have suggested that bacteria turned the waters red, and the poisoned waters killed the fish and forced the frogs to seek cool, moist places away from the Nile. When the frogs died their corpses were a breeding ground for two types of small insects. These, in turn, spread communicable diseases among both animals and humans, resulting in death to the livestock and boils upon the people. A well-timed locust plague followed by a spring hailstorm devastated Egypt’s crops. Shortly thereafter a desert sandstorm or dust cloud darkened most of Egypt. Finally a devastating plague, perhaps one caused by the insects, killed both humans and beasts among the non-Israelites. God was at work in the entire sequence of events, making them occur in the appropriate location, at the designated time, and at the prescribed intensity level.” (Cabal, *The Apologetics Study Bible*, n.p.)

- E. “The plagues were *miraculous*—yet not so much in themselves as in the time, the manner, and the measure in which they came upon Egypt. None of them was wholly unknown in Egypt, but had visited the land at some time or other, and in some measure. As so often, the Lord here employed ordinary natural events. The supernaturalness of the plagues consisted in their severity, their successive occurrence, their coming and going at the word of Moses, their partial extent, and the unusual seasons and manner in which they appeared.” (Edersheim, *The Bible History: Old Testament*, n.p.)
- II. “The first three plagues were related to the Nile and its associated pools and streams, the next three were concerned with flies and the diseases they carry, and the final three described phenomena that produced increasing degrees of darkness.” (Youngblood, *Exodus*, 51)
- III. “The first three concern the waters and their denizens (fish, frogs, mosquitoes breeding); the second three affect people, field cattle, then people and cattle (including indoors); the third three were airborne: hail, locusts, thick darkness. The tenth affected only a narrow spectrum (people and animals, firstborn).” (Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 249)

Against The Gods Of The Water

Introduction

- I. When God told Moses that He would use him to deliver His people, God said He would “strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst,” then Pharaoh would let the Israelites go (Exod 3:19–20).
- II. The ten plagues were not just against Pharaoh and his people, but “against all the gods of Egypt” (Exod 12:12; Num 33:3–4).
- III. The first three plagues were directed against the gods of the water.

Discussion

I. First Plague: Water Changed To Blood (Exod 7:14–25)

- A. What happened in this plague?
 1. The Nile was the heartbeat of Egypt—all trade, commerce, and crops depended upon the Nile.
 2. The Nile reaches flood stage in June as a result of the heavy summer rains in the Ethiopian highlands.

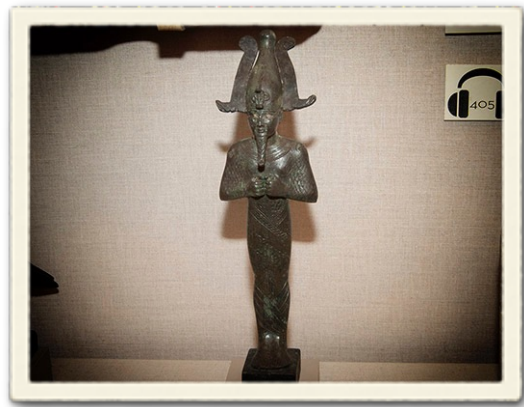


The Nile River Near Kom Ombo, Egypt

3. The first signs of the annual inundation are seen in Upper Egypt at Aswan by the end of June, and the flooding reached its fullest at Memphis in Lower Egypt by September.
4. “The word ‘blood’ can be understood either as literal blood or metaphorically as ‘blood red’ (that is, the color of blood). In either case the fish in the Nile would die.” (Youngblood, *Exodus*, 53)
5. Note that in Exodus 7:24 the Egyptians dug around the banks of the Nile in the hope of finding water that had been filtered by the sand along the shore; sand will not filter human blood.
6. “Either the red clay washed down from Ethiopia (which causes the annual phenomenon still called the ‘red Nile’ by the Arabs) or the multiplication of red plankton (as at times off the Queensland coast) would seem to be the best explanation.” (Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary*, 97)
7. “The blood-red coloring has been attributed to an excess of both red earth and the bright red algae and its bacteria, both of which accompany a heavier than usual flooding. Rather than the abundant life usually brought by the river, this brought death to the fish and detriment to the soil. Such an occurrence is paralleled in an observation in the *Admonitions of Ipuwer* (a few centuries before Moses) that the Nile had turned to blood and was undrinkable. The biblical comment about the Egyptians digging down (v. 24) would be explained as an attempt to reach water that had been filtered through the soil.” (Walton, Matthews & Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, 82–83)
8. “Some scholars attempt to explain the Nile turning blood-red in the light of natural phenomena that occur periodically in the Nile valley: unusually heavy rainfall washed an unusual amount of red sediment into the Nile, giving the water a red hue. To view this in light of natural phenomenon does not diminish divine involvement in the plagues. From a theological perspective, this would be a matter of God harnessing the forces of nature to accomplish his purpose. This was an act of poetic justice: the Egyptians killed Hebrew infants by casting them into the Nile, so Yahweh would figuratively strike the Nile in return, turning it blood-red as a ominous object lesson of coming judgment.” (Johnston, *The Bible Knowledge Word Study: Genesis–Deuteronomy*, 180)
9. Not only was the Nile *red*, but other waters as well, even the water that was drawn for use in houses in stone or wooden jars.
10. “The brother of Moses, by the divine command, smote with his rod upon the river, and immediately, throughout its whole course, from Ethiopia down to the sea, it is changed into blood and simultaneously with its change, all the lakes, and ditches, and fountains, and wells, and spring, and every particle of water in all Egypt, was changed into blood, so that, for want of drink, they digged round about the banks of the river, but the streams that came up were like veins of the body in a hemorrhage, and spurted up channels of blood like springs, no transparent water being seen anywhere.” (Philo, *Moses* 1:99)

- B. This plague was an affront to many of the greatest gods of Egypt.
- i. *Hapy* (Hep, Hap, Hapi), the god of the annual Nile inundation, was the “spirit of the Nile” and its “dynamic essence.”
 - a) Epithets describe him as being the “lord of the fishes and birds and marshes.”
 - b) “This deity was especially connected with the great river whence Egypt drew her sustenance, and as such was a god of very considerable importance in the Egyptian pantheon... The entire country looked to the Nile as the source of all wealth and provender, so that the deity which presided over it rapidly rose in public estimation. Thus Hapi quickly became identified with the greater and more outstanding figures in early Egyptian mythology. He thus became a partner with the great original gods who had created the world, and finally came to be regarded as the maker and moulder of everything within the universe. We find him credited with the attributes of Nu, the primeval water-mass, and this in effect made him a father of Ra, who had emerged from that element. Hapi, indeed, stood in more immediate relationship to the Egyptians than almost any other god in their pantheon. Without the sun Egypt would have been plunged into darkness, but without the Nile every living creature within its borders would assuredly have perished.” (Spence, *Ancient Egyptian Myths and Legends*, 169–170)
 - c) “Although Osiris ordained the annual inundation, the god most associated with the river itself was Hapi, depicted as a human figure with a large belly and pendulous breasts. This corpulence represented the bounties of the Nile, whose waters flowed to nurture Egypt. Hymns addressed to the Nile spoke of its bounty, expressing joy at its coming, and sorrow at the plight of Egypt when the Nile floods failed. The inundation was ritually greeted with thanks and jubilation in honor of Hapi, its patron divinity.” (Silverman, *Ancient Egypt*, 19)
 - d) “The Nile was the lifeblood of Egypt. Agriculture and ultimately survival were dependent on the periodic flooding that deposited fertile soils along the river’s 4,132 miles. The obese Hapi, one of the children of Horus, was technically not the god of the Nile but the personification of the inundation of the Nile. The blood-red coloring has been attributed to an excess of both red earth and the bright red algae and its bacteria, both of which accompany a heavier than usual flooding. Rather than the abundant life usually brought by the river, this brought death to the fish and detriment to the soil.” (Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, 82)
 2. *Khnum* was the guardian of the Nile and creator of water and life.
 - a) Khnum is represented as a human being with a ram’s head.
 - b) “As the fount of Egypt’s fertility, the (supposed) source of the Nile was linked to the ramheaded creator god Khnum, who was believed to have fashioned humankind from Nile mud on a potter’s wheel.” (Silverman, *Ancient Egypt*, 19)

3. One of the greatest gods of Egypt was *Osiris*, the god of the underworld (he held the same position that *Re* did in the land of the living).
 - a) The Egyptians believed the Nile was his bloodstream.
 - b) “The exodus of the Hebrews was a nose-thumbing directed not just at the power of the pharaoh and his court, but at the power of the Egyptian gods themselves. The plagues were designed to ram home the impotence of the Egyptian pantheon. The Nile, the bloodstream of Osiris and lifeblood of Egypt, was turned to blood and became foul and poisonous; frogs, sacred to Osiris, appeared in numbers so great they were transformed into a pestilence; the sun-disk was blotted out by darkness, Ra and Aten both made helpless.” (Bauer, *The History of the Ancient World*, 236)
 - c) “According to allusions in early religious texts, and later literary and artistic references, Osiris taught the people how to take advantage of the Nile by giving them the arts of cultivation...” (Silverman, *Ancient Egypt*, 19)
4. *Sothis* (Sopdet) was the goddess who was heralded as the bringer of the annual inundation of the Nile River and of the New Year—she was associated with the prosperity that came from the fertile soil left by the receding Nile.
5. “It was appropriate that the first of the plagues should be directed against the Nile River itself, the very lifeline of Egypt and the center of many of its religious ideas. The Nile was considered sacred by the Egyptians. Many of their gods were associated either directly or indirectly with this river and its productivity. For example, the great Khnum was considered the guardian of the Nile sources. Hapi was believed to be the ‘spirit of the Nile’ and its ‘dynamic essence.’ One of the greatest gods revered in Egypt was the god Osiris who was the god of the underworld. The Egyptians believed that the river Nile was his bloodstream. In the light of this latter expression, it is appropriate indeed that the Lord should turn the Nile to blood! It is not only said that the fish in the river died but that the ‘river stank,’ and the Egyptians were not able to use the water of that river ... imagine the horror and frustration of the people of Egypt as they looked upon that which was formerly beautiful only to find dead fish lining the shores and an ugly red characterizing what had before provided life and attraction. Crocodiles were forced to leave the Nile. One wonders what worshipers would have thought of Hapi the god of the Nile who was sometimes manifest in the crocodile.” (Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, 102)



Osiris

II. Second Plague: Frogs (Exod 8:1–15)

- A. What happened in this plague?
1. One week after “the Lord struck the Nile” (Exod 7:25), Moses went back to Pharaoh to demand the release of God’s people.
 2. The presence of the frogs would not have been unusual, for the receding Nile left ponds which would have been a natural breeding ground for them.
 3. In normal years an abundance of frogs would have been considered a blessing since they helped to control the insect population.
 4. This plague goes beyond the Nile and into the houses, bedrooms and kitchens of the people (as the frogs were abandoning the polluted waterways).
 5. The number of frogs was beyond all logical explanation—they not merely left the Nile, but they “covered the land of Egypt” (Exod 8:6).
 6. “What was actually threatened was the ugliness of having slimy, unsanitary, unpleasant to the touch amphibians everywhere and the constant annoyance of having to listen to them croak and peep throughout all parts of people’s houses. Implied is the disgust that would occur when people stepped on the frogs (as far as we know, Egyptians did not wear shoes indoors), when they rolled over on them in bed (again, people slept on mats on the floor, not in elevated beds as Westerners think of ‘beds’), and when they were surprised by them in various places thought otherwise to be clean...” (Stuart, *Exodus*, 206)
 7. “In various parts of the East, instead of what we call ovens they dig a hole in the ground, in which they insert a kind of earthen pot, which having sufficiently heated, they stick their cakes to the inside, and when baked remove them and supply their places with others, and so on. To find such places full of frogs when they came to heat them, in order to make their bread, must be both disgusting and distressing in the extreme.” (Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*, 101)
 8. Pharaoh’s magicians could not remove the plague—they only added to the number of frogs that were invading the land (Exod 8:7).
 9. Moses allowed Pharaoh to determine *when* the frogs would be removed—thus proving that their removal was not by chance or some other natural process (Exod 8:9, NIV).
- B. The gods of Egypt affected by this plague.
1. The frog was considered the theophany of the goddess *Heket* (Hekt, Heqt, Heqat, Heqet), the wife of the creator of the world and the goddess of childbirth.
 - a) Heket was always shown with the head of a frog.
 - b) Amulets and scarabs worn by women to protect them during childbirth would often bear the image of Heket for protection.
 - c) Heket was believed to assist women in childbirth—consider the irony in the statement that the frogs invaded pharaoh’s bedroom and even jumped on his bed (Exod 8:3).
 - d) “Since the frog was seen in great numbers a day or two before the rise of the Nile, it was regarded as a symbol of new life and prolific generation. A frog amulet—sometimes a frog at the end of a phallus—was carried by Egyptians to guarantee fertility. Variant spellings of Heket are Heqet, Heqtit, and Heqt.” (Mercatante, *Who’s Who In Egyptian Mythology*, 55)

- e) The main cultic center of Heket was at Herwer, and the remains of a temple of the goddess have been found at Qus.
 - f) The people of the land had to gather the decaying bodies of the frogs, and put them into heaps.
 - g) “Frogs were the symbol of abundance (hence, of prosperity; personified as Heqat, but here again they brought death.” (Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 253)
2. The fact that Pharaoh entreated Moses to interceded with Jehovah to take away the frogs was a sign the he recognized the God of Israel as being the author of the plague.

III. Third Plague: Lice (Exod 8:16–19)

- A. What happened in this plague?
- 1. We are now in late autumn and the fields in Goshen are still flooded by the receding waters of the Nile.
 - 2. This plague was inflicted with any warning given to Pharaoh.
 - 3. The word *lice* (Hb. *kinnim*) in the New King James Version is translated as “sand flies” or “fleas” or “mosquitoes” in other translations.
 - 4. The Hebrew word *kinnim* comes from a root word meaning “to dig”; it is probable that the insect in question would dig under the skin.
 - 5. “The type of insect (NIV: ‘gnats’) involved in this plague is not clear, since the Hebrew word is used only in this context. Most studies have favored either the mosquito or the tick as the likeliest identification.” (Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, n.p.)
 - 6. “The identity of the insect (*kinnim*) involved in the third plague has been disputed by scholars. ‘Gnats’ is a common translation (RSV, NAS, NIV), while ‘lice’ is also suggested (KJV). A number of commentators have understood ‘gnats’ to mean a type of mosquito, an interpretation accepted by the Jerusalem Bible and Hort. The flood season in Egypt always brought with it mosquitoes that could quickly reproduce in the pools and puddles left by the retreating Nile.” (Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 146)
 - 7. “The inundation of the Nile provides breeding places for mosquitoes. The mosquitoes were abundant. According to Herodotus, the fishermen protected themselves: ‘Gnats are abundant; this is how the Egyptians protect themselves against them; those who dwell higher up than the marshy country are well served by the towers whether they ascend to sleep, for the winds prevent the gnats from flying aloft; those living about the marshes have a different device, instead of the towers. Every man of them has a net with which he catches fish by day, and for the night he sets it round the bed where he rests, then creeps under it and so sleeps. If he sleeps wrapped in a garment or cloth, the gnats bite through it; but through the net they do not even try at all to bite.’” (Ebeid, *Egyptian Medicine in the Days of the Pharaohs*, 351–352)

8. “And that little animal, even though it is very small, is exceedingly annoying; for not only does it spoil the appearance, creating unseemly and injurious itchings, but it also penetrates into the inmost parts, entering in at the nostrils and ears? And it flies into the eyes and injures the pupils, unless one takes great care; and what care could be taken against so extensive a plague, especially when it was God who was inflicting the punishment?” (Philo, *Moses* 1:108)
 9. In my opinion, the *mosquito* makes the most sense in this passage because their major enemy, frogs, had largely been destroyed in the prior plague.
- B. The gods of Egypt affected by this plague.
1. This would have been an embarrassment to *Geb*, the great god of the earth and head of the divine tribunal on the kingship.
 - a) Egyptians gave offerings to Geb for the bounty of the soil.
 - b) “He was also the source of fresh waters and ultimately all that the earth produced so that Geb was directly associated with the fertility of both the earth and livestock...” (Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 105)
 2. This plague would have been especially dreadful to the priests of Egypt, for they were required to shave their hair off every day, and wear a single tunic, that no lice would be permitted on their bodies.
 - a) The daily ritual of the priest was not possible because of physical impurity.
 - b) “Though priests often performed important secular tasks, as illustrated by the architectural feats of Imhotep, their sacred duties set them apart from the rest of the population, and they bore marks of exclusivity. Throughout the land, circumcised priests shaved off all body hair, including eyebrows and lashes, and they conducted their rites cloaked in white garments and animal skins.” (Flaherty, *The Age Of God-Kings*, 72)
 - c) “The priests shave their bodies all over every other day to guard against the presence of lice, or anything else equally unpleasant, while they are about their religious duties; the priests, too, wear linen only, and shoes made from the papyrus plant—these materials, for dress and shoes, being the only ones allowed them. They bathe in cold water twice a day and twice every night—and observe innumerable other ceremonies besides.” (Herodotus, *The Histories*, 99)



Basa, a priest of Hathor

- d) “The duties of the priesthood were arduous. A most stringent and exacting code had to be followed so far as cleanliness and discipline were concerned. Constant purifications and lustrations succeeded each other, and the garb of the religious must be fresh and unspotted. It consisted entirely of the purest and whitest linen, the wearing of woollen and other fabrics being strictly forbidden, and even abhorred. The head was closely shaven, and no head-dress was worn. The priest’s day was thoroughly mapped out for him.” (Spence, *Ancient Egyptian Myths and Legends*, 53)
- e) “For priests in active service strict standards of purity were maintained. These stipulations varied in different cults, but by New Kingdom and later times they usually required priests to shave their heads and bodies, pare their nails, perform multiple daily washings and lustrations (according to Herodotus, twice each day and twice each night), to sexual intercourse rendered them unclean until purified. The eating of any ritually proscribed foods during the period of service was shunned, as was any other behavior which might be taboo in the service of a specific deity.” (Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, 90–91)

Conclusion

- I. By the end of the third plague the magicians in Pharaoh’s court had been forced to admit that they could not compete with Moses and his God.
- II. Through three terrible plagues the gods of Egypt had remained silent—and the worst was yet to come!

Against The Gods Of The Land

Introduction

- I. The first three plagues affected the entire land of Egypt, but beginning with the fourth plague God made a distinction between His people and the native Egyptians.
- II. “And now in the second series of plagues commenced the distinction between the Egyptians and Israel, the latter being exempted from ‘the strokes,’ to show that it was not ‘the finger of Elohim merely,’ but that he was ‘Jehovah in the midst of the land’ of Egypt (8:22). For the same reason, Moses and Aaron were not used as instruments in the fourth and fifth plagues. They were simply announced to Pharaoh by the messengers of Jehovah, but inflicted by God Himself, to show that they came directly from His hand.” (Edersheim, *The Bible History: Old Testament*, n.p.)

Discussion

I. Fourth Plague: Swarms (Exod 8:20–32)

- A. What happened in this plague?
 1. As the waters of the Nile had started to recede they left behind pools of stagnant water and piles of dead frogs (from the third plague).
 2. Moses does not use the word *flies* in this passage—he used the word *swarms* with no accompanying noun to tell us what the swarms consisted of!
 - a) The phrase “of flies” was added by the translators in most English translations used today (Exod 8:21, KJV, NKJV, HCSB, ESV, ASV, NIV).
 - b) If *flies* is the intent of the text, then they would have had a lot to feed on since there were piles of dead frogs everywhere (Exod 8:13–14).
 - c) The translation published by the Jewish Publication Society uses the phrase, “swarms of insects” (Exod 8:21, JPS).
 - d) *Young’s Literal Translation* reads, “if thou art not sending My people away, lo, I am sending against thee, and against thy servants, and against thy people, and against thy houses, the beetle, and the houses of the Egyptians have been full of the beetle, and also the ground on which they are” (Exod 8:21, YLT).
 3. Most scholars believe this *swarm* was the blood-sucking dog-fly which was responsible for a lot of blindness in the land.
 - a) “The LXX translates the word by *kynomuia*, literally ‘dog-fly’. This, to judge from the description, corresponds to the modern gadfly or Marchfly, with a painful bite.” (Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary*, 100)
 - b) Keil and Delitzsch also believe this was the dog-fly (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, comments on Exod 8:20–32).

- c) “The first is that which was inflicted by means of that animal which is the boldest in all nature, namely, the dog-fly (*kynomua*) which those person who invent names have named with great propriety (for they were wise men); combining the name of the appellation of the most impudent of all animals, a fly and a dog, the one being the boldest of all terrestrial, and the other the boldest of all flying, animals. For they approach and run up fearlessly, and if any one drives them away, they still resist and renew their attack, so as never to yield until they are sated with blood and flesh. And so the dog-fly, having derived boldness from both these animals, is a biting and treacherous creature; for it shoots in from a distance with a whizzing sound like an arrow; and when it has reached its mark it sticks very closely with great force.” (Philo, *Moses* 1:130–131)
- d) “This would be the stable fly, or *Stomoxys calcitrans*, a vicious, bloodsucking insect that can multiply prodigiously in tropical and subtropical regions, given the proper environmental conditions. It is known to transmit anthrax and other animal diseases.” (Sarna, *Exodus*, 42)
- e) “This fly multiplies rapidly in tropical or subtropical regions (hence the delta with its Mediterranean climate would be exempt) in the fall by laying its six hundred to eight hundred eggs in dung or rotting plant debris. When it is full grown, the fly prefers to infest houses and stables, and it bites both men and animals, usually in the lower extremities. Thus it becomes the principal transmitter of skin anthrax (see plague six), which it contracts by crawling over the carcasses of animals that have died of internal anthrax.” (Kaiser, *Exodus*, n.p.)
4. “They are clearly regarded as a miracle of Yahweh, both by the suddenness of their arrival and by their endless number, and also by the equal suddenness and completeness of their departure (vv 26–27 [30–31]). So similarly, their absence from the land of Goshen, where Yahweh’s people are, is regarded as miraculous.” (Durham, *Exodus*, 114)
- B. The gods of Egypt affected by this plague.
1. The Egyptian god(s) impacted by this plague are more difficult to identify than in the other plagues, but I would suggest two possibilities: Khepri and Re (in addition to the gods of healing that we will discuss in the sixth plague).
 2. *Khepri* (Khepera, Khepny, Kheper, Kheperer, Khepra, Chepri).
 - a) Khepri was usually depicted as a scarab or dung beetle—and often pushing a solar disk.
 - b) Khepri did not have a cult of its own, but was honored in many Egyptian temples.
 - c) There is a well preserved statue of Khepri near the sacred lake at the temple of Amun at Karnak.
 - d) Deification of the scarab beetle is still seen in Egypt today.



Khepri

3. *Re*, the creator, king of the gods and supreme god of the Egyptian pantheon, was often depicted with the head of a beetle.
 - a) *Re* is the ancient Egyptian word for the sun.
 - b) “Ra, the Sole Creator was visible to the people of Egypt as the disc of the sun, but they knew him in many other forms. He could appear as a crowned man, a falcon or a man with a falcon’s head and, as the scarab beetle pushes a round ball of dung in front of it, the Egyptians pictured Ra as a scarab pushing the sun across the sky.” (Harris, *Gods & Pharaohs from Egyptian Mythology*, 24)
 - c) The scarab was actually a dung beetle—an insect which feeds on the dung in the fields.
 - d) It is also *possible* that is plague was swarms of scarabs—with mandibles that could saw through wood, was destructive and worse than termites!
- C. For the first time, God made a distinction between His people and the Egyptians—the swarms stayed away from Goshen where His people lived (Exod 8:22–23).
 1. God made “a difference” (*distinction*, HCSB, NIV) between His people and the Egyptians (Exod 8:23).
 2. This distinction was “in order that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the land” (Exod 8:22).
 3. “Here God’s distinction between his own and those who do not belong to him is shown by his control of nature: although flies and other swarming insects cannot naturally discriminate by nationality or political boundaries in deciding on whom they will land and whose skin they will bite, nationality/political boundary was exactly the basis for the plaguing or nonplaguing by the swarming insects. Here, then, is brought overtly to the reader’s attention the fact that the plagues, far from being natural phenomena naturally produced, were nature turned on its head: nature ordered by its Creator to act in abnormal ways that were ominously frightening for the Egyptians, wonderfully reassuring for the Israelites, and clearly evidential (in this plague, even to Pharaoh) of a divine mighty act in service of a divine demand.” (Stuart, *The New American Commentary*, Vol 2, 215)
 4. The preferential treatment shown to Israel demonstrates that the plague was *against* Egypt itself.

II. Fifth Plague: Livestock Diseased (Exod 9:1–7)

- A. What happened in this plague?
 1. The first four plagues afflicted the *people*—they were uncomfortable, but those plagues did not impact their *property* in any major way—but this plague was going to hurt them “in the billfold” for years to come!
 2. This plague was against *domestic animals* in the land of Egypt, which would include: cattle, horses, donkeys, camels, oxen and sheep.
 3. The impact on the economy of the nation would be catastrophic!
 4. It appears that the plagues are getting progressively worse, for Moses calls this “a very severe pestilence” (Exod 9:3)
 5. “One of the words used for the ‘plagues’ is Hebrew *nega*^c (see comments on 11:1). The term here is *deber*. Rather than meaning general calamity or affliction as *nega*^c seems to, *deber* can mean ‘plague’ in the medieval sense: a disease of epidemic proportions that is sure to bring death.” (Wells, *Exodus*, n.p.)

6. Many scholars suggest this plague was a form of *anthrax* produced by the bacteria in the Nile which was infected by dead frogs, fish and flies.
 7. “The flies would have also become carriers of the highly infectious and usually fatal *Bacillus anthracis* that had already killed the fish and frogs, and livestock (brought back into the fields as the flood-waters subsided) would have succumbed to the anthrax bacteria (fifth plague).” (Youngblood, *Exodus*, 53)
 8. Unlike the other plagues, this one did not have a set time for its removal—it probably just “wore itself out.”
 9. If *all* the cattle died, how were any left to be killed by the hail (Exod 9:19–21)?
 - a) In Exodus 9:6 the word for “all” (Heb. *kol*), can mean “all sorts of ” or “from all over” or “all over the place” (cf. Gen 24:10; 40:17).
 - b) In addition, Moses had already specified that this plague was only against the livestock “which are in the field” (Exod 9:3), not those that were sheltered.
 - c) “If all the Egyptians’ livestock were killed in the plague, where did the livestock come from that later died in the hailstorm (vv. 19–25)? The Bible doesn’t explain this; however, two possibilities exist. The first assumption is that the word ‘all’ should be taken literally. In that case the livestock later killed in the hailstorm were imported from farther up the Nile river, perhaps from Cush; or that in the interval between the plagues the Egyptians had acquired some of the Israelites’ flocks. Alternatively, the word ‘all’ in v. 6 might be used here in a restrictive sense to mean ‘all that were in a particular area,’ or ‘all who were afflicted,’ or perhaps simply ‘the great majority.’” (Cabal, *The Apologetics Study Bible*, n.p.)
 - d) “Normally the Egyptian cattle were stabled from May to December inclusive, during the flood and the drying-off periods when the pastures were waterlogged. Thus some of the cattle were already being turned out to pasture down south; so it must have been sometime in the month of January. These cattle were then affected when they came into contact with the heaps of dead frogs left from the second plague and died of *bacillus anthracis* the hoof and mouth disease.” (Kaiser, *Exodus*, n.p.)
- B. The gods of Egypt affected by this plague.
1. The Egyptians worshiped many animals, and many animal-headed deities.
 2. The ancient author Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636) said, “In the fifth place, Egypt is struck with the slaughter of animals or cattle. Frenzy is demonstrated here, and the stupidity of men who, like irrational animals, gave worship and the name of god to figures carved in wood or stone—figures not only of men but of animals, too. They worshiped Jupiter Ammon in a ram, Anubis in a dog, and Apis in a bull, and others, too, which Egypt admired as symbols of its gods. They believed that the divine splendor was present in these forms and offered pathetic acts of worship to them.” (Lienhard, Rombs, and Oden, eds., *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, 50)
 3. “All Egyptians use bulls and bull-calves for sacrifice, if they have passed the test for ‘cleanness’; but they are forbidden to sacrifice heifers, on the ground that they are sacred to Isis.” (Herodotus, *The Histories*, 101)

4. The *Apis bull*, a bull-deity worshipped in Egypt since around 3,000 B.C., was the sacred creature of Ptah and worshipped as his “living image.”
- a) The funerary cult devoted to him left many important remains.
 - b) Egyptian priests had to find a special black bull—one that had a white triangle on its forehead, with the hair of its tail divided into two separate strands.
 - c) He was also associated with *Re*, from whom he borrowed the disk he wore between his horns.
 - d) When the Apis bull died, priests would travel through every pasture in Egypt looking for his replacement.
 - e) The Apis bull supposedly had the power of prophecy.
 - f) When the Apis bull died the land of Egypt mourned for him as they would for the loss of the monarch himself.
 - g) After death his body would be embalmed, and after the funeral rites were performed the body would be placed in a granite sarcophagus (discovered in 1851 Egyptologist Meriet Pasha).
 - h) Since “all the livestock of Egypt died” (Exod 9:6), if an Apis bull would have been alive at the time it would have died in this plague.
 - i) “During the period when the cult of Apis was maintained in Memphis (from ca. 1400 B.C. through the late period), only one special bull was associated with Apis, received special treatment, and was mummified and buried at Saqqara.” (Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 150)
 - j) “The bull was sacred in many places, and his worship underlay that of the human gods, who were said to be incarnated in him. The idea is that of the fighting power, as when the king is figured as a bull trampling on his enemies, and the reproductive power, as in the title of the self-renewing gods, ‘bull of his mother.’ The most renowned was the *Hapi* or Apis bull of Memphis, in whom Ptah was said to be incarnate, and who was Osirified and became the Osir-hapi... Another bull of a more massive breed was the *Ur-mer* or Mnevis of Heliopolis, in whom Ra was incarnate. A third bull was *Bakh* or Bakis of Hermonthis the incarnation of Mentu. And a fourth bull, *Ka-nub* or Kanobos, was worshipped at the city of that name. The cow was identified with Hathor, who appears with cow’s ears and horns, and who is probably the cow-goddess Ashtaroth or Istar of Asia. Isis, as identified with Hathor, is also joined in this connection.” (Petrie, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, 22–23)



The Apis Bull

5. *Hathor* was considered the mother the Pharaoh and also the sky goddess—she took the form of a cow (with a circle between the horns to represent the sun).

a) Hathor was one of the most important deities in the history of Ancient Egypt and was worshipped in many other countries as well

b) “The cow was the living symbol of Isis–Hathor, represented sometimes as a cow, at others as a woman with a cow’s head, at others as a horned woman.” (How and Wells, *Commentary on Herodotus*, 185)

c) “The original form under which Hathor was worshipped was that of a cow. Later she is represented as a woman with the head of a cow, and finally with a human head, the face broad, kindly, placid, and decidedly bovine, sometimes retaining the ears or horns of the animal she represents. She is also shown with a head-dress resembling a pair of horns with the moon-disk between them.” (Spence, *Ancient Egyptian Myths and Legends*, 163)

d) “There was clearly a veneration of cow-goddesses in Predynastic Egypt but without hieroglyphs it is impossible to be certain if a cult belongs to Hathor or perhaps to *Bat*, the most likely candidate for the cow-heads on the Narmer Palette (about 3000 B.C.). By the beginning of the Old Kingdom there is indisputable archaeological and textual proof of the worship of Hathor. The valley temple of King Khafre (Dynasty IV) at Giza was placed in its southern sector under the protection of Hathor. Her temples are mentioned on the Old Kingdom annals on the Palermo Stone and royal ladies from the early Pyramid Age onwards take the title ‘priestess of Hathor.’” (Hart, *Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 77)

e) She was the symbolic mother of Pharaoh, and the king of Egypt was referred to as “the son of Hathor.”

6. *Montu*, the protector of kings during times of war, took the symbol of an ox and was sometimes pictured as a human being with the head of an ox.

7. *Khnum* was represented as a human being with a ram’s head.

a) He supposedly created the universe on his potter’s wheel—he also shaped the other gods, human beings and animals.

b) On Elephantine Island (at Aswan) there was a temple to Khnum.

C. For the second time, God made a distinction between His people and the Egyptians—the livestock belonging to the Israelites were not affected (Exod 9:4).

1. “Pharaoh sent messengers” to see if the Israelites were affected (Exod 9:7).

2. Since the Israelites were pastoral people, if their cattle died it would have financially ruined them.

3. This distinction between how the Egyptians and Israelites were impacted hardened Pharaoh’s heart even more.



Sobek (left) and Hathor (right)

III. Sixth Plague: Boils (Exod 9:8–12)

- A. What happened in this plague?
1. This plague was unannounced and it hit the Egyptians with a vengeance.
 2. There is no logical link between the ash being thrown towards the heavens and the falling dust that brings infection.
 3. In all likelihood Moses and Aaron had carried a bucket (or other container) of the soot with them when they “stood before Pharaoh” (Exod 9:10).
 4. These “boils that break out in sores” are later described as a disease that is accompanied “with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch” (Deut 28:27).
 5. This was probably *skin anthrax*, a black abscess that develops into a pustule, that was introduced by the bites from the flies (who had been feeding on the dead frogs and cattle).
 6. At this time there were painful boils which affected the knees, legs, and soles of the feet (cf. Deut 28:27, 35).
 7. This helps us to understand why Pharaoh’s “magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians” (Exod 9:11).
 8. This is the last time the magicians of Pharaoh are mentioned in Exodus.
 9. If the magicians and physicians could not cure themselves, then what good would they be to Pharaoh?
- B. The gods of Egypt affected by this plague.
1. An affront to *Imhotep*, the god of medicine—this alone must have led to great despair in the land since he was worshipped all over the country.
 - a) Imhotep was vizier to the 3rd Dynasty Pharaoh Zoser (c. 2600 B.C.)—he later became a demigod, then finally evolved into a full Egyptian deity.
 - (1) His name means, “the one who comes in peace.”
 - (2) It is very likely that he was the architect who planned Egypt’s first large-scale stone monument, the Step Pyramid at Saqqara.
 - (3) Imhotep was later worshipped as a god of medicine—but magic and medicine were hard to distinguish in ancient Egypt.
 - b) “The first real person in known history is not a conqueror or a king but an artist and a scientist—Imhotep, physician, architect and chief adviser of King Zoser (ca. 3150 B.C.). He did so much for Egyptian medicine that later generations worshiped him as a god of knowledge, author of their sciences and their arts; and at the same time he appears to have founded the school of architecture which provided the next dynasty with the first great builders in history.” (Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*, 147)
 - c) “Imhotep was worshipped as a god at Saqqara, Thebes and in the temple of Isis on the island of Philae. He acquired a reputation as a god of healing, and early Greek visitors to Egypt identified him with their own god of medicine, Asklepios.” (Hart, *Ancient Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 47)
 - d) “The Edwin Smith Papyrus was so admirable in content that its editor (J. H. Breasted) attributed it to Imhotep himself and described it as the oldest treatise on surgery in the world.” (Ebeid, *Egyptian Medicine in the Days of the Pharaohs*, 138)

2. Also an affront to *Thoth* (Thot, Djehuty), the ibis-headed god of intelligence and medical learning.

a) Thoth was symbolized to the ancient Egyptians symbolized by the ibis and at other times by the baboon.

b) He was also very important in the Underworld, where in the court of justice he recorded the weight of the heart on the justice scale.

c) “He was the great scribe, and was the god to whom the scribes prayed. He had revealed to man the art of writing. He was the god of figures of calculations and reckoning of time.

He was patron of physicians and

magicians. He was inventor of hieroglyphic writing, and he was the lord of wisdom and magic.” (Ebeid, *Egyptian Medicine in the Days of the Pharaohs*, 368)

d) “Thoth represented to the Egyptians the embodiment of all scientific and literary attainments, being in command of all ‘the sacred books in the house of life.’ The ‘house of life’ (or ‘per ankh’) was a revered resource centre accessible only to scribes, containing a wealth of knowledge on papyri—all under the protection of Thoth—e. g., medical manuals, mathematical problems and instructional documents on social etiquette.” (Hart, *Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 216)

3. *Isis*, the goddess of love, magic, medicine.

a) She was the most popular goddess in ancient Egypt.

b) “The pharaoh identifies with Horus, so Isis is symbolically his divine mother. Isis had to use magic to protect Horus against dangers when he was a child, so she was invoked by Egyptian women when their own children were sick with fevers or bitten by poisonous animals.” (Hart, *Ancient Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 25)

c) The largest temple of Isis was at Philae Island.



Thoth and a worshipper

4. *Sekhmet* (Sakhmet, Sechmet, Sekhait, Sekhem), the lioness-headed god of epidemics and healing.
- a) “The goddess also had power to ward off pestilence and she could function as a healing deity, even being called ‘Sekhmet, mistress of life.’” (Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 181)
 - b) “Because Sekhmet was so fierce, the Egyptians thought that she might be able to fight off plagues and cure diseases for which doctors had no remedies.” (Hart, *Ancient Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 15)
 - c) Her priests are repeatedly mentioned in Egyptian writings as healers along with magicians and physicians.
 - d) The main center of Sekhmet worship was at Memphis.



Sekhmet

Conclusion

- I. The first six plagues followed a natural progression of events in connection with the inundation of the Nile and receding waters a few weeks later.
- II. We have gone from the Egyptians being inconvenienced to them and their livestock severely afflicted.

Against The Gods Of The Sky

Introduction

- I. The first six plagues against the land of Egypt followed a natural progression connected with the annual summer inundation of the Nile and its subsequent receding.
- II. In our last lesson we noticed that beginning with the fourth plague God made a distinction between His people and the Egyptians.
- III. The plagues are getting progressively worse—they went from being a mere inconvenience to diseases that afflicted the body.
- IV. This next series of plagues would not only affect the livelihood of the Egyptians, but their very ability to sustain themselves in the land.
- V. “The first six plagues form a natural sequence of interdependent events resulting from a high Nile infected by flagellates, whereas plagues seven through ten were not connected to the first six. Hail, thunder, and lightning, the seventh plague (Exod. 9:23) not only caused damage to crops (Exod. 9:25, 31–32), but was a source of terror to the Egyptians since hail is uncommon in Egypt. Violent rainstorms do strike Egypt from time to time, with several devastating examples occurring in recent years.” (Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 147)

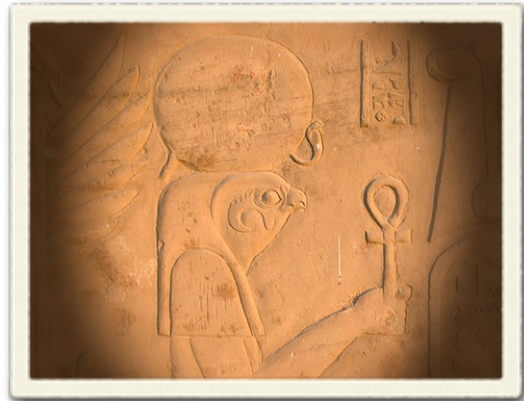
Discussion

I. Seventh Plague: Hail (Exod 9:13–35)

- A. What happened in this plague?
 1. This plague is described in more detail than any of the other first nine plagues—and it is the only time where the Lord explains to Pharaoh the *purpose* of the plagues (Exod 9:14–17).
 2. Pharaoh need to learn about the uniqueness of Jehovah (cf. Rom 9:17).
 3. The region around Cairo normally receives two inches of rain per year, but sudden destructive storms can sometimes hit the land.
 4. In this plague, God sent the worst hailstorm in Egyptian history!
 5. This plague is also the first time that God offers the Egyptians a way to escape the consequences of the plague, i.e., listen to Him and bring their animals into a safe shelter.
 6. Barley and flax are among the first crops planted and harvested after the annual inundation of the Nile.
 - a) The flax and barley crops were destroyed (Exod 9:31), which means this must have taken place in January or early February.
 - b) Flax was very importance to the Egyptians, for they used it to make linen.
 - c) Wheat was a crop that not only fed the people, but was used for export.
 7. Although this plague caused widespread devastation, a few trees remained for the locusts of the next plague to devour.

B. The gods of Egypt affected by this plague.

1. The plague originated from the sky, the realm of *Nut*, the sky goddess.
 - a) “Her most general appearance, however, is that of a woman resting on hands and feet, her body forming an arch, thus representing the sky. Her limbs typified the four pillars on which the sky was supposed to rest. She was supposed originally to be reclining on Geb, the earth, when Shu raised her from this position.” (Spence, *Ancient Egyptian Myths and Legends*, 173)
 - b) Nut was the mother of five gods: *Osiris*, *Hathor*, *Set*, *Isis*, and *Nephthys*.
2. Where was *Shu*, the god of sunlight and air?
3. Where was *Horus*, the falcon-headed sky god of Upper Egypt and symbol of divine kingship?
 - a) Horus first appears in Egyptian hieroglyphs in around 3,000 B.C.
 - b) He was believed to be the child of Isis.
4. Where was *Tefnut* (Tefenet, Tefnet), the primeval goddess of water, rain, dew and moisture?
5. Where was *Renenetet* (Renenet, Ernutet, Termuthis, Terenuthis), the cobra-goddess of grain and the harvest, and guardian of Pharaoh?
 - a) “She was the goddess of harvest, and the mother *Nbry* the god of the wheat and the crops. She was worshipped at Fayoum. She was pictured in the form of a snake or a woman with the head of a snake. She was usually combined with the goddess *Renenet*, that was normal since the crops represented man’s fortune and good destiny life.” (Hussein, *The Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 121)
 - b) “While amulets depicting the goddess show she may have functioned as a protective deity, it was as a goddess of fecundity that Renenetet was most widely venerated, and the goddess was popular among agricultural workers especially. The festivals of Renenetet were celebrated in the last month of the season when crops were sown, and in the following month, the first month of the summer season when they began to ripen.” (Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 226)
 - c) She was often represented as a woman (or a female with a cobra head) suckling a child.



Horus

6. Where was *Min*, one of Egypt's most ancient gods, the god of reproduction and the creator of all things?
 - a) His major festival, "the coming forth of Min," was celebrated at the beginning of the harvest season.
 - b) This festival was among the most important religious and agricultural festivals in Egypt.
 - c) "The seventh and eighth plagues (hail and locusts) were opposed to Seth, who manifested himself in wind and storms, or against Isis, goddess of life, or even against Min, who was worshiped as a god of fertility. Min is an especially good candidate for these two plagues, for he was widely revered in a 'coming-out-of-Min' celebration at the beginning of harvest." (Kaiser, *A History of Israel*, 99)
- C. As in the fourth and fifth plagues, the Israelites in the land of Goshen were exempt from this plague (Exod 9:26).
 1. "If the thunderstorm was moving up the funnel of the narrow Nile valley, with hot desert and hills on either side, it is understandable that an area to the east escaped damage, where the air currents would be completely different. If so, Israel rightly saw in this, not a geographical peculiarity, but the very hand of God delivering his people." (Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary*, 105)
 2. Pharaoh still stubbornly refused to allow the Israelites to leave!

II. Eighth Plague: Locusts (Exod 10:1–20)

- A. What happened in this plague?
 1. In the ancient Near East times locusts could destroy an entire village's food supply in a matter of minutes.
 2. These locusts were going to finish off any vegetation that remained after the plague of hail.
 3. Locusts were described as an army by Joel (Joel 1:6–7; 2:25).
 4. In the Old Testament age locusts were often seen as a symbol of Divine judgment (Joel 1:4–7; 2:1–11; Amos 7:1–3).
 5. "The Lord brought an east wind, a usual carrier of locusts that rely on such winds if they are to travel very far. With the wind came swarms of devouring locusts that settled in all regions of the country in vast numbers. The locusts (Heb. *'arbeh*) were two inches or more in length and had four wings. Although they had six legs, they walked on four, using the back legs for springing." (Martin, *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, 46)

6. “Locusts were all too common in the ancient Near East and were notorious for the devastation and havoc they brought. The locusts breed in the region of the Sudan and would have been more plentiful than usual in the wet climate that initiated the entire sequence. Their migration would strike in February or March and would follow the prevailing winds to either Egypt or Palestine. The east wind (v. 13) would bring them into Egypt. A locust will consume its own weight each day. Locust swarms have been known to cover as many as four hundred square miles, and even one square mile could teem with over one hundred million insects. Certainly anything that had survived the hail was now destroyed, and if they laid their eggs before being blown out to sea, the problem would recur in cycles.” (Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, 83–84)
7. “No one who has ever seen the locust at work accuses the Bible account of hyperbole. In 1926 and 1927, small swarms of the African migratory locusts were spotted in an area 50 by 120 miles on the plains of the river Niger near Timbuktu. The next year swarms invaded Senegal and Sierra Leone. By 1930 the whole of west Africa was flailing away at the pests with everything moveable. But the locusts didn’t seem to notice; swarms reached Khartoum, more than 2,000 miles to the east of Timbuktu, then turned south, spreading across Ethiopia, Kenya, the Belgian Congo, and in 1932, striking into the lush farm land of Angola and Rhodesia. Before the plague finally sputtered out fourteen years after it began, it affected five-million miles of Africa, an area nearly double the size of the United States.” (Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, 128–129)
8. “About our houses they became so thick that one could not help crushing them with every step. They even fell into one’s shirt collar from the walls above and crawled up onto one’s person. Women were especially troubled with them, and on one occasion a lady, after being away from home for half a day, returned with 110 of them concealed within the skirts. Whenever touched, or especially when finding themselves caught within one’s clothes, they exuded from their mouth a dark fluid, an irritant to the skin and soiling the garments in a most disgusting manner. Imagine the feeling (we speak from experience) with a dozen or two such creatures over an inch long, with sawlike legs and rough bodies, making a race-course of your back!” (Whiting, “Jerusalem’s Locust Plague,” *National Geographic Magazine*, 533)
9. The servants in Pharaoh’s house were dreadfully afraid (Exod 10:7).
10. Pharaoh finally asked Moses to “take away from me this death only” (Exod 10:17).

- B. The gods of Egypt affected by this plague.
1. The gods of Egypt were again silent and the destroyed trees and crops left famine and unrest in the land.
 2. Where was *Neper* (Nepri), the god of grain?
 - a) “The god Neper was a grain deity whose agricultural origin was an early one and who may well have predated that aspect of Osiris... The hieroglyphic writing of Neper’s name includes the symbol for grain; and in a procession of deities carved in the reign of the 5th-dynasty king Sahure the body of the god is dotted to symbolize the grain which Neper represented. Because the harvest was so dependent upon the yearly flooding of the Nile, the inundation deity Hapy was said to be ‘lord of Neper’, but the god was honoured in his own right as an important deity of the harvest and prosperity. Neper was often associated with the cobra goddess Renenutet who also was a patron of the harvest.” (Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 117)
 - b) Because Neper was dependent on the flooding of the Nile to bring silt to the crops, he is a subordinate of Hapy, who described as being the “lord of Neper.”
 3. Again, where was *Reenenutet*, the cobra-goddess of grain?
 4. Again, *Isis* is silent.
 5. Again, *Seth* (Set), the god of crops, was also silent.

III. Ninth Plague: Darkness (Exod 10:21–29)

- A. What happened in this plague?
1. The ninth plague came without warning and had immediate consequences—it immobilized the land of Egypt for three days!
 2. “The final plague in the third series, three days of darkness (Exod. 10:21–23), has long been associated with the desert sandstorms, *khamsins* common to Egypt in March. The minute particles of sand transported by the *khamsins*, coupled with the extreme heat, make these desert storms most uncomfortable. I can attest to the discomfort of this phenomenon: in 1967 I traveled by train from Minya to Cairo (about 275 kilometers or 170 miles) and throughout this trip, the Nile Valley was blanketed by a brownish cloud that literally could be felt, a point noted in Exodus 10:2. In the mid-afternoon hours, cars drove with lights on. Again in March of 1995, a *khamsin* covered Egypt from South of Luxor to north of Cairo throughout the day, grounding planes. Finally at 11:00 P.M. our plane could depart Luxor for Cairo. *Khamsins* can last up to two or three days.” (Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 148)

3. “The comment that it was darkness that could be felt (v. 21) suggests that the darkness was caused by something airborne, namely, the *kbamsin* dust storms known in the region. There would be excessive dust from all of the red earth that had been brought down and deposited by the Nile, as well as from the barren earth left behind in the wake of the hail and locusts. The three-day duration is typical for this type of storm, which is most likely to occur between March and May. The fact that the text emphasizes the darkness rather than the dust storm may indicate that the sun god, Amon-Re, the national god of Egypt, the divine father of Pharaoh, is being specifically targeted.” (Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, 84)
4. “Since the darkness ‘can be touched’ (v. 21), it may reflect a ‘hamsin,’ the hot southerly wind from the Sahara desert, carrying unusually dense concentrations of sand and dust that block out sunlight.” (Berlin, Brettler, and Fishbane, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible*, n.p.)
5. It seems to me that after the damage caused by the hail and locusts the that ground would have been left bare, and thus more sand and soil than usual would have been picked up by the storm.
6. “It was literally, as Scripture has it, a ‘darkness which might be felt’—the darkness of a great sand-storm, such as the *Chamsin* or south-west wind sometimes brings in early spring, only far more severe, intense, and long. Let us try to realize the scene. Suddenly and without warning would the *Chamsin* rise. The air, charged with electricity, draws up the fine dust and the coarser particles of sand till the light of the sun is hid, the heavens are covered as with a thick veil, and darkness deepens into such night that even artificial light is of no avail. And the floating dust and sand enter every apartment, pervade every pore, find their way even through closed windows and doors. Men and beasts make for any kind of shelter, seek refuge in cellars and out-of-the-way places from the terrible plague. And so, in utter darkness and suffering, three weary nights and long days pass, no one venturing to stir from his hiding.” (Edersheim, *The Bible History: Old Testament*, n.p.)
7. “But when Moses said that what he desired was unjust, since they were obliged to offer sacrifices to God of those cattle; and the time being prolonged on this account, a thick darkness, without the least light, spread itself over the Egyptians, whereby their sight being obstructed, and their breathing hindered by the thickness of the air, they died miserably, and under a terror lest they should be swallowed up by the dark cloud.” (Josephus, *Antiq.* 2:308)

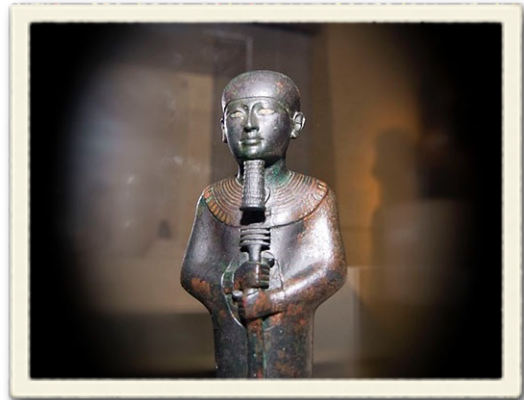
B. The gods of Egypt affected by this plague.

1. A plague of darkness was an insult to Egypt's religion and entire culture.
2. "From the perspective of the Egyptians, the absence of sunlight had profound meaning. They believed that the regular circling of the sun god in the sky meant his blessing on Egypt. Any interruption in that cycle spelled disaster. Thus, this text seems to be targeting the sun god, probably the most venerated deity in Egypt. But which Egyptian god does the biblical text have in mind? Throughout Egyptian history, the sun was worshiped as a manifestation of various deities, such as Atum, Re, Amun, and Amun-Re. Pharaoh, too, was associated with the sun. Despite this ambiguity, the narrative of Exodus is once again claiming utter powerlessness for the king and the gods of Egypt. Moreover, darkness frequently turns up in biblical texts as a symbol of judgment (Isa. 8:22; Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15)." (Wells, *Exodus*, 201)
3. "The plague of darkness was almost certainly a challenge against Ra, an Egyptian sun god. This would also have been a direct challenge to Pharaoh, since Egyptian kings were referred to as sons of Ra." (Walton, *Archaeological Study Bible*, n.p.)
4. The sun god *Amun* (Amun-Re) was considered one of the greatest blessings and the most powerful god in all the land of Egypt.
 - a) *Amun* and *Re* were originally two separate deities.
 - b) *Re* was a sun god whose cult was at Heliopolis (On), the main center of solar worship.
 - (i) "According to the cosmogonic ideas developed in Heliopolis and at other sites, the sun god *Re* was the supreme creator who emerged from the primeval waters at the beginning of time to create every aspect of the world." (Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 207)
 - (2) "His main cult centre was at Heliopolis (Greek for 'sun-city'), now all but disappeared through depredations or below the suburbs of modern Cairo. The sun temple area was called 'Yunu' by the Ancient Egyptians ('On' in biblical literature) and was written by a hieroglyph representing a column, clearly the ancient cult image on the site." (Hart, *Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 179)
 - (3) The patriarch Joseph married "Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On" (Gen 41:45).
 - (4) "*Asenath* and *Potiphera* are recognizably Egyptian names, meaning respectively 'She belongs (or, May she belong) to Neith' (a goddess), and 'He whom Re has given'. Re was the sun god, worshipped at *On*, a city which the Greeks later called Heliopolis, city of the sun." (Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, 209)



Amun

- c) Re is represented in art with a man's body and a falcon's head surmounted by a solar disk, and was believed to sail across the sky in a boat each day and under the world at night.
- d) "The moon was a god, perhaps the oldest of all that were worshiped in Egypt; but in the official theology the greatest of the gods was the sun. Sometimes it was worshiped as the supreme deity Ra or Re, the bright father who fertilized Mother Earth with rays of penetrating heat and light; sometimes it was a divine calf, born anew at every dawn, sailing the sky slowly in a celestial boat, and descending into the west, at evening, like an old man tottering to his grave. Or the sun was the god Horus, taking the graceful form of a falcon, flying majestically across the heavens day after day as if in supervision of his realm, and becoming one of the recurrent symbols of Egyptian religion and royalty. Always Ra, or the sun, was the Creator: at his first rising, seeing the earth desert and bare, he had flooded it with his energizing rays, and all living things—vegetable, animal and human—had sprung pell-mell from his eyes, and been scattered over the world." (Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*, 198)
5. Where was *Horus*, was the god of light who personified the life-giving power of the Sun?
- a) He was usually represented as a falcon-headed man wearing a sun disk as a crown.
- b) The reigning kings of Egypt were believed to be incarnations of Horus.
6. Where was *Ptah*, the chief god of Memphis, the one who created the moon, the sun and the earth?
7. Where are *Atum*, the sun-god and creator who was also worshiped at Heliopolis, the major center of sun worship?
8. Where was *Aten*, the solar and creator god of Egypt?
- a) He is often depicted with the solar disc whose rays end in his hands.
- b) During the reign of pharaoh Akhenaten (1352–1336 B.C.), Aten became the supreme god in the Egyptian pantheon.
9. Where was *Shu*, the god of sunlight and air?



Ptah

Conclusion

- I. In the first four plagues the people were inconvenienced, the fourth plague was against their livestock which caused enormous financial losses, and the sixth plague afflicted their bodies severely.
- II. The seventh and eighth plagues not only brought economic loss, but starvation as well.
- III. The ninth plague brought terror as the gods of the sky were brought to nothing.
- IV. However, Pharaoh still refuses to allow the Israelites to leave—so in the final plague “against all the gods of Egypt” Pharaoh would be forced to let God’s people go.

“Against All The Gods Of Egypt”

Introduction

- I. Pharaoh has allowed his people to suffer humiliation, financial loss and diseases upon both man and beast—but he still stubbornly refused to allow the Hebrews to leave.
- II. The first nine plagues followed a logical progression where God used and intensified natural events and delivered them at the time of His choosing, but the tenth plague is in a realm all of its own—there is no rational explanation for it at all.
- III. In the final plague Pharaoh will come to understand that the God of the Hebrews is really the God over all the earth.
- IV. “So far God had demonstrated his full control over the natural creation. He had caused his servant Moses to announce the successive plagues and brought them to pass in invincible sequence and growing severity when the pharaoh ever more persistently refused to acknowledge Israel’s God in face of the clearest credentials of his authority and power. In this final plague came the most explicit sign of God’s precise and full control: the death of the first-born only. Nor did it come without adequate warning (Ex. 4:23); the pharaoh had had every opportunity to acknowledge God and obey his behest, and so had to take the consequences of refusal.” (Wood, *New Bible Dictionary*, 934)

Discussion

I. Tenth Plague: Death Of The Firstborn (Exod 11:1–12:30)

- A. In the ancient Near East, the firstborn child was not only an heir of a double portion of his father’s inheritance, but represented special qualities of life (cf. Gen 49:3).
 1. The law of primogeniture decreed that the major portion of a family estate would be inherited by the firstborn son when the father died (Deut 21:17).
 2. The death of the firstborn son would cripple a family legally and emotionally.
 3. This tenth plague was potentially more devastating than all of the other plagues put together (both economically and emotionally).
- B. This plague was too selective to merely be a childhood epidemic.
 1. It destroyed only the Egyptian *firstborn*, whether human or animal, while the entire population of the Israelites were exempt from this plague.
 2. I wonder how many Egyptians knew what Moses had promised and therefore spent the night watching over their children?
 3. This plague reminds us of how the Egyptians murdered the Hebrew baby boys to prevent their nation from growing (Exod 1:22).
 4. The phrase, “against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue,” suggests that all would be calm in Goshen that night (Exod 11:7).
 5. “Since the Lord had shown clearly in previous plagues that he could distinguish between the people of Egypt and Israel (e.g., 8:22; 9:4), the blood placed on the doorway of the houses of Israel was to function both as the sign that they were a part of the Lord’s people and also as the seal or means to appropriate the Lord’s protection from the plague.” (Dennis and Grudem, *ESV Study Bible*, n.p.)

- C. Even Pharaoh's house was touched (Exod 11:5; 12:29).
 - 1. Several months before, Moses had warned Pharaoh that his firstborn child (and heir to the throne) would die if he refused to listen to God (Exod 4:22–23).
 - 2. This plague also suggests that Ramesses II (Ramses, Rameses) was not the Pharaoh of the exodus since he was the “first born” son of Seti I.
 - 3. “The titles ascribed to the young Ramesses are consistent with the station of a crown prince, i.e. king's eldest son and hereditary prince” (Brand, *The Monuments of Seti I*, 315).
- D. This plague marked the beginning of the Passover celebration.
 - 1. The blood of the lamb would signify that they had listened to God's commands.
 - 2. The unleavened bread would remind them that they were sent out quickly.
 - 3. The bitter herbs would symbolize the bitterness of their bondage in Egypt.
 - 4. In the years to come, every time they celebrated the Passover they would recall their former position as slaves and be reminded that God had redeemed them.
 - 5. “Here we read that God has decided that history determines the calendar, and in particular, the history of God's saving act of the exodus does so. Whatever might theoretically have been their previous thinking about a calendar, God decreed to his Old Covenant people that they would henceforth have a calendar designed to remind them of how they first became a people—it happened by reason of their deliverance by his mighty hand out of the bondage of the oppressor, an act so important that it was also to be memorialized by a special annual feast, the Passover.” (Stuart, *Exodus*, 273)
 - 6. With every Passover celebration they looked forward to the Messiah, the One who would set them free from sin (cf. 1 Cor 5:7; Matt 26:17–20, 26–29).

II. The Gods Of Egypt Were Silent

- A. This final plague was directed against “all of the gods of Egypt” (Exod 12:12).
- B. The death of all of the firstborn would show the total inability of the gods of Egypt to protect them.
- C. Pharaoh himself was considered a “god” among his people.
 - 1. “In Egypt Pharaoh was also considered a deity, and this last plague is directed at him. In the ninth plague his ‘father,’ the sun god, was defeated, and now his son, presumably the heir to the throne, will be slaughtered. This is a blow to Pharaoh's person, his kingship and his divinity.” (Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, 84)
 - 2. “So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead” (Exod 12:30).
 - 3. God's people had “cried out” to Him (Exod 3:7, 9) for deliverance and He heard them; now the Egyptians would “cry” out to Pharaoh and he would not be able to act (Exod 11:6).
 - 4. The people who had at one time bowed before Pharaoh would now bow before Moses (Exod 11:8).

- D. Where was *Osiris*, the judge of the dead and patron deity of Pharaoh?
- E. Where was *Meskhenet*, the goddess who presided at the birth of children?
1. She not only was supposed to ensure the safe delivery of a child, but helped decide their destiny at birth.
 2. Did she determine that all of the firstborn children among the Egyptians should die, but spare the Hebrew children?
 3. “Goddess Meskhenet presided over the birth process. Her symbol was the bicornuate uterus of a cow, and she was depicted as a woman wearing this uterus upon her head. Goddess Meskhenet was the personification of the birth-bricks upon which women squatted when giving birth. Meskhenet became a Goddess of destiny and at the time of birth Thoth would inscribe the number of years, that the infant would live upon the *msbnt* the birth-brick. It was Thoth ‘who fixes the span of life, keeps account of the years and orders every man’s fate on his stone.’” (Ebeid, *Egyptian Medicine in the Days of the Pharaohs*, 165–166)
- F. Where was *Hathor*, one of the seven deities who attended the birth of children?
1. She was linked with female sexuality as well as with motherhood.
 2. Hathor was the cow-goddess and symbolically the mother of the Pharaoh.
 3. It is very significant that the “firstborn of all cattle” would die as well.
- G. Where was *Min*, the god of procreation?
- H. Where was *Isis*, the goddess of fertility?
1. “Her magic power extended to the care of children as well as he talent in being a magician and physician ‘whose counsel is the breath of life, whose sayings drive out sickness and whose word gives life to him whose breath is failing.’” (Ebeid, *Egyptian Medicine in the Days of the Pharaohs*, 370)
 2. “The goddess Isis, the wife and sister of Osiris, supposedly protected children. But this plague showed her to be totally incompetent to do what the Egyptians trusted her for!” (Hannah, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, n.p.)
- I. Where was *Bes*, the dwarf-god?
1. Ancient Egyptians pictured the god Bes as the form of a dwarf wearing the skin of a lion.
 2. Egyptians often decorated their headrests, footboards and mirrors with images of Bes.
 3. “He is a bandy-legged dwarf with some of the features of a lion. He often wears a panther skin and holds a weapon to show he is ready to defend a woman and her newly-born children.” (Hart, *Ancient Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 41)
 4. “He has his most crucial contribution to make to Egyptian life in his role as protector of childbirth in partnership with *Taweret*.” (Hart, *Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 58–59)



Bes

- J. Where was *Serket* (Selket, Selqet, Serqet, Selkis), the scorpion-goddess and guardian of life?
1. She was the symbol of motherhood in the ancient Near East.
 2. She supposedly had a protective role around the throne of the Pharaoh.
 3. In the *Book of the Dead*, she is a protector of the deceased.
- K. Where was *Renenutet*, the cobra-goddess and guardian of Pharaoh?
1. She was the living embodiment of motherhood.
 2. She was often represented as a woman nursing a child.
 3. In fact, her name suggests the idea of “nursing” or “raising” a child.
 4. “Her name means the mammy. She was the goddess who takes care of the child at his birth and protect him, she was also the goddess of the good fate of people.” (Hussein, *The Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 120)
 5. “Renenutet was also identified with the household and family life in her role as provider, nourisher and as a nurse of infants.” (Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 225)
- L. Where was *Taweret*, the hippopotamus-goddess and protectress of women in childbirth?
1. She was one of the most popular deities in Egyptian households.
 2. “The goddess is one of the earliest recognizable apotropaic deities and she is widely represented on amulets from Old Kingdom times onward. She was represented on beds, head-rests and other small items of furniture as well as on cosmetic items such as unguent pots and spoons, and on various items with fertility significance such as the so-called ‘paddle dolls’. Faience vases, similar to the small jars in human form which were made to hold mother’s milk, were made in the shape of the goddess with pouring holes at the nipples, probably to hold milk for magical use.” (Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 186)
- M. “The reason for this commandment is that the constellation of Aries (the Ram) is at the height of its power in the month of Nisan, it being the sign of the zodiac which ascends the heavens. Therefore He commanded us to slaughter the sheep and to eat it in order to inform us that it was not by the power of that constellation that we went out from Egypt, but by decree of the Supreme One. And according to the opinion of our Rabbis that the Egyptians worshipped it as a deity, He has all the more informed us through this that He subdued their gods and their powers at the height of their ascendancy.” (Ramban, *Commentary on the Torah: Exodus*, 118–119)



Taweret

N. “The final plague has no natural explanation, but it too was directed against a god—the next king, the god-to-be. Even if natural phenomena were operative in the first nine plagues, this does not detract from their miraculous nature. Their timing and selectivity requires that they, as well as the final plague, be seen as acts of God...The pharaoh vacillated whether he should allow Moses and his people to leave. When the pharaoh’s eldest son died in the last plague, the king relented long enough for the trek out of Egypt to begin, thus bringing the Egyptian sojourn to a close.” (Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, 164)

Conclusion

- I. The story of the plagues is summarized in Psalms 78:44–51 and Psalms 105:28–36 (but not in chronological order).
 - A. In Psalms 135:8 and 136:10 the death of the firstborn it is the only plague mentioned at all, probably because this plague made a greater impression of future generations.
 - B. The tenth plague therefore can stand for all of the plagues because it was the most memorable (cf. Heb 11:28).
- II. After these plagues, Pharaoh released the children of Israel (Exod 12:31–37).
 - A. The descendants of Abraham had arrived in Egypt with some 70 souls, but now they are leaving with more than 600,000 men (not counting women and children).
 - B. Three months later they arrived at Mt. Sinai, where God gave them the Law to direct their lives (Exod 19–24).
 - C. When Israel believed the report of the ten evil spies and refused to enter Canaan, God caused them to wander in the wilderness for forty years (Num 14).
 - D. After the death of Moses (Deut 34), Joshua led the people into Canaan.

When Was The Exodus?

Introduction

- I. To appreciate the impact of the ten plagues upon the land of Egypt, it is good to have some idea as to *when* these events took place.
- II. “Whatever the date of the exodus, the question is not necessarily about whether the numbers given in the OT are reliable but rather about trying to understand their function according to the conventions by which an author in the ancient Near Eastern context would have used them. Any attempt to determine the date of the exodus necessarily includes the interpretation of both the references in the OT and the relevant records and artifacts from surrounding nations in the ancient Near East. That is, because the OT was first given in an ancient Near Eastern setting, the interpreter’s first task is to understand, as much as possible, what an ancient Israelite would have thought the text meant. Scholars are not always sure that they can answer this question when it comes to details about dates and numbers; fortunately, the message of Exodus is plain nevertheless.” (Dennis and Grudem, *The ESV Study Bible*, n.p.)
- III. There are two dates that are usually set forth as the date of the exodus.
 - A. Conservative scholars, based upon Biblical testimony, suggest the “early date” of 1446–1441 B.C. for the beginning of the exodus.
 - B. Liberal scholars, based upon a selective use of archaeological evidence, suggest a “late date” during the reign of Rameses II or shortly thereafter (c. 1290–1220 B.C.).
 1. This view can only be held if you are willing to disregard numerous Old Testament passages as “scribal errors” or mistakes in recollection.
 2. This view also forces one to compress the period of the judges into just 170 years.
 3. Even if the reigns of some of the judges overlapped, you would still need a minimum of 350 years for the period of the judges.
 4. There is also no way to harmonize the “late date” with known Egyptian monuments, like the Merenptah Victory Stele, the Soleb Inscription, or the Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief.
 - C. “The one date, espoused predominantly by liberal critical scholars (although not exclusively so), is that the exodus occurred sometime in the early thirteenth century B.C., presumably during the reign of Ramses II. The other alternative, strongly suggested by biblical chronology, is that the oppression of Israel began during the period of the Hyksos and continued into the reign of Thutmose III, who perhaps was Israel’s most severe taskmaster. The exodus, then, would have occurred shortly after his death and during the reign of Amenhotep II. The latter view seems preferable in light of the fact that it is more faithful to Scripture, and provides a credible background for integrating the events of the exodus and conquest with Egyptian history and culture.” (Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, 40)

I. Biblical Testimony

- A. The Bible gives four pieces of evidence to help us arrive at the proper date.
1. King Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in 966 B.C., “in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt” (1 Kgs 6:1).
 - a) The date of 967/966 for Solomon’s fourth year is derived by correlating biblical and Assyrian texts.
 - b) This 480 years would put the date of the exodus at 1446 B.C.
 - c) “The correctness of the number 480, as contrasted with the 440th year of the LXX and the different statements made by Josephus, is now pretty generally admitted; and we have already proved at Judg. 3:7 that it agrees with the duration of the period of the Judges when rightly estimated.” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, n.p.)
 2. Around 1100 B.C., an Israelite judge, Jephthah, told the king of the Ammonites that Israel had lived in the Promised Land “for three hundred years” (Judg 11:26).
 - a) The king of the Ammonites would have known if Jephthah was “making it up” as he went along.
 - b) Jephthah was the eighth judge of Israel, and there were four judges after him.
 - c) Jephthah’s statement is in perfect harmony with 1 Kings 6:1.
 - d) “Jephthah identifies the Israelite possession of the land as having already a three-hundred-year history to it. Although this is undoubtedly a round number, it supports a date for the conquest in the fifteenth rather than the thirteenth century... Jephthah is generally dated to around 1100 B.C. and cannot be placed much later if space is to be left for Samuel, Saul and David. Though the Bible’s integrity would not be jeopardized if Jephthah were misinformed or exaggerating, it is difficult to believe his argument would carry any force if Israel had really been in the land only half that time.” (Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, 263)
 3. The genealogy of Heman, one of the temple singers during the days of David and Solomon (1 Chr 6:33–37), lists 19 generations between the days of Moses and the time of Solomon.
 - a) If you allow only 25 years per generation (475 years total), you would arrive at a date for the exodus that is in harmony with 1 Kings 6:1.
 - b) “This is supported by 1 Chronicles 6:33–37, which names 18 generations from Korah (in the time of Moses) to Heman (in the time of David), which then requires 19 generations from Moses to Solomon. Nineteen generations in 480 years works out to an average of 25.3 years per generation, a reasonable number that gives confirmation to an actual 480 years in 1 Kings 6:1.” (Dennis and Grudem, *The ESV Study Bible*, n.p.)

4. While in Babylonian captivity, Ezekiel gave the precise date for a Jubilee year (Ezek 40:1), and this would have been in April of 573 B.C.
 - a) It is referred to as the “year of liberty” (Ezek 46:17; cf. (Lev 25:8–17).
 - b) “The time of the year is described as the ‘head of the year,’ similar to an Akkadian equivalent. The present vision is thus dated to 10 Nisan in the twenty-fifth year of the exile or April 28, 573 B.C. In the Israelite calendar this was the beginning of Passover activities. The lamb was to be chosen on this day and slaughtered on the fourteenth.” (Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, 114)
 - c) Jewish sources tell us this was the 17th Jubilee since Israel had entered the Promised Land (Young, “Evidence for Inerrancy from a Second Unexpected Source: The Jubilee and Sabbatical Cycles,” *Bible and Spade*, 21.4, 109–122).
 - d) Seventeen Jubilees, with 49 years between each one (for a total of 833 years), would bring us back to 1406 B.C. as the date for when Israel entered the Promised Land.
- B. The date the Bible gives is in harmony with the evidence we have that the cities of Jericho, Ai and Hazor were burned at the end of the 15th century B.C.
 1. “Archaeological data from Jericho, Ai, and Hazor have been claimed to show evidence of destruction in the late fifteenth century B.C., which is consistent with a 1446 exodus and 1406 conquest of Canaan.” (Dennis and Grudem, *The ESV Study Bible*, n.p.)
 2. “The archaeological evidence from the pottery and scarabs at Jericho shows that this city fell about the year 1400 B.C. Among the factors supporting this date, John Garstang, the second excavator of Jericho, pointed out that not one piece of Mycenaean ware was found, suggesting that the walls of Jericho fell before the fourteenth century had begun. Garstang’s claim of an approximate 1400 date for the fall of Jericho seems supported by Kathleen Kenyon’s work there (1952–1958), as recent publication of her excavation reports indicates.” (Free and Vos, *Archaeology and Bible History*, 79–80)
- C. Proponents of the “late date” for the Exodus usually claim that the building of the cities of Ramses and Pithom in Egypt occurred around 1270 B.C.
 1. However, those cities had to have taken place some years *before* the birth of Moses (Exod 1:11), since the Hebrews continued to grow, even under their severe affliction (Exod 1:12).
 2. Moses was 80 years old at the beginning of the exodus (Exod 7:7), so Raamses II could not have been the Pharaoh who ordered the building those cities in Egypt.

II. The Stones Cry Out

- A. The *Merenptah Victory Stele* tells of a military campaign by Pharaoh Merenptah (*Merneptah*) into the land of Canaan in 1209 B.C.
 1. This victory stela was discovered in Thebes in 1897, and is now on display in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.
 2. The stela claims that Merenptah (reigned 1213–1203 B.C.), the son of Rameses II, defeated Israel in this campaign.

3. The victory stela brags, “Carried off is Ashkelon; seized upon is Gezer; Yanoam is made as that which does not exist; Israel is laid waste, his seed is not.”
 4. Yanoam is located somewhere in the region of Galilee.
 5. “Since Israel is mentioned in this text as a people living in Canaan by Merenptah’s fifth year, the date of the inscription, this means that Israel was already settled there by the end of the thirteenth century B.C.” (Shea, “The Date of the Exodus,” *Giving The Sense*, 237)
 6. At a bare minimum, Israel had already endured 40 years in the wilderness, plus spent seven years conquering the land of Canaan, and enjoyed the peace that lasted until after the days of Joshua—and then had grown to the point that Pharaoh Merenptah considered them to be a nation powerful enough to be listed on his victory stela!
 7. The Merenptah Victory Stela destroys the theory that Israel didn’t enter the promised land until the 1260 B.C.
 8. As an aside, the *Merenptah Stela* was considered to be the earliest direct mention of the nation of Israel outside of the Bible text until the Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief was discovered.
- B. The *Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief* (c. 1350 B.C.).
1. This small gray granite block is housed in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin.
 2. Apparently a part of a statue base, this item was acquired in 1913 by Ludwig Borchardt, a German Egyptologist, from an Egyptian merchant.
 3. The relief dates back to at least the time of Pharaoh Rameses II, but might be even older than that.
 4. The relief has three name rings superimposed on Western Asiatic prisoners.
 5. The first name ring mentions “Ashkelon,” the second mentions “Canaan,” and the third (partially preserved) name mentions “Israel.”
 6. “As stated above, we tentatively ascribe the Berlin pedestal relief to the reign of Ramesses II. Although the reference to ‘Israel’ in association with Ashkelon and Canaan recalls the reference from the reign of Merenptah, a Ramesside date is by no means certain. Görg originally ascribed the block to the reign of Amenhotep II due to the archaic renderings of the names ‘Ashkelon’ and ‘Canaan.’ Giveon preferred a date during the reign of Amenhotep III, which was tentatively accepted by Shmuel Ahituv.. If the name refers to *biblical* Israel, and if it was located in Canaan (as seems to be indicated by its association with Ashkelon and Canaan), and if the names had been copied from an earlier source (supported by the archaic orthography of all three names on the slab), this would indeed suggest that Proto-Israelites had migrated to Canaan sometime nearer the middle of the second millennium BCE.” (van der Veen, Theis, and Görg, “Israel in Canaan (Long) Before Pharaoh Merenptah? A Fresh Look at Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief 21687,” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*, 20–21)

- C. The *Amarna Letters* were discovered in 1887, about 150 miles south of Cairo.
1. These 380 clay tablets (ca. 1400–1370 B.C.) were part of the royal archives from Tell el-Amarna.
 2. The tablets show that princes from Syro-Palestine wrote letters to Pharaoh begging for help against the ‘*apiru*’ who were “taking over” the land of Canaan.
 3. “The Apiru may refer to groups of people who were social outcasts, did not own property, often resorted to banditry, and threatened the status quo for settled people. Those viewed as outsiders or foreigners were also often labeled as Apiru. Before forming the nation of Israel, most likely the Hebrews were viewed in this way. A Hebrew could certainly have been called an Apiru, though not every Apiru was a Hebrew. Note that while ‘Hebrew’ is primarily an ethnic designation, ‘Apiru’ is strictly a social one.” (Wells, *Exodus*, n.p.)
 4. This is consistent with early date for the exodus.
- D. The *Soleb Inscription* at the Temple of Amun (Amon-Re) in Soleb, Sudan.
1. In Exodus 5:2 Pharaoh asked Moses, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.”
 - a) It appears that Pharaoh did not know who the LORD was.
 - b) In Exodus 3:13–15 God revealed “His name” to Moses—He was *YHWH* (Yahweh), which is translated as “the LORD” in most English translations.
 - c) Josephus said that when God appeared to Moses at Horeb, “God declared to him his holy name, which had never been discovered to men before; concerning which it is not lawful for me to say any more” (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 2:276).
 - d) Prior to this, the phrase “God Almighty” (*El Shaddai*) was often used in the Old Testament as a term used to describe God (Exod 6:3).
 - (1) “I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but I did not make My name Yahweh known to them” (Exod 6:3 HCSB).
 - (2) “I was seen by Avraham, by Yitzhak, and by Yaakov as God Shaddai, but (by) my name YHWH I was not known to them” (Exod 6:3 Schocken Bible).
 - (3) “I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty’—but I did not reveal my name, Yahweh, to them” (Exod 6:3 New Living Translation, 2nd ed.).
 - e) “YHVH is the same God who, under the name of El Shaddai, made a covenant with Israel’s ancestors (see v. 4 and cf. Gen. 17:1–8; 28:3–4; 35:11–12; 48:3–4), and He now intends to fulfill that covenant. *But I did not make Myself known to them by My name YHVH*. They did not experience the full power that is expressed by the name YHVH, as Israel now will.” (Berlin and Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible*, n.p.)

- f) “This remarkable name bore none of the usual associations anyone expected. It implied that this God (unlike the Egyptian gods) existed. This name comes from the Hebrew verb ‘to be’ and means that God is alive or active. This is something that God had never done before, not even to Abraham: ‘I am the LORD [*Yahweh*]. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty [*El-Shaddai*], but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them’ (Ex. 6:2–3). The remainder of the story in Exodus 6–20 bears this out: the defeat of Pharaoh and the rescue of Israel from Egypt give proof of his existence and activity. The name alone was a judgment on all other gods, particularly any in the Egyptian pantheon.” (Burge, *The Bible and the Land*, 104)
- g) “This passage has occasioned much discussion; and it has been thought by many to intimate that as the name Jehovah was not known to the patriarchs, at least in the full bearing or practical experience of it, the honor of the disclosure was reserved to Moses, who was the first sent with a message in the name of Jehovah, and enabled to attest it by a series of public miracles.” (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, n.p.)
2. Pharaoh Amenhotep III (c. 1390–1352 B.C.) built the Temple of Amun in upper Nubia (now Sudan) to glorify his power over foreign peoples.
- a) This sandstone temple was built on the west bank of the Nile, just south of the third cataract, and was dedicated to Amun-Re.
- b) One inscription on the temple walls mentions “the land of the Shasu, (those of) YHW.”
- c) The word *Shasu* refers to Bedouin peoples of the ancient Near East (in particular, the area now known as Palestine).
- d) YHW is obviously a reference to Yahweh, the God of Israel.
- e) How would Pharaoh Amenhotep III have known about YHW, the God of the Hebrews, since in his day God Himself had not yet revealed that name to *anyone*? It simply proves that the exodus had to occur before the days of Amenhotep III.
- f) “One remarkable inscription at the Soleb temple speaks of ‘the land of the Shasu, (those of) YHW.’ The term *Shasu* refers to Bedouin peoples of the Levant (the region encompassing Syria and the area now known as Palestine). Scholars almost universally acknowledge that *Yhw* refers to Yahweh, the God of Israel... If the Shasu of the inscription were indeed the Israelites, the implication is that the exodus from Egypt to the Levant (Syria/Palestine) occurred prior to the time of Amenhotep III. The traditional date for the exodus is understood to be approximately 1445 B.C., or a little more than half a century prior to the reign of Amenhotep III.” (Walton, *Archaeological Study Bible*, 94)



Pharaoh Amenhotep III

- g) “The localization of the ‘Land of the Shasu’ in the mountainous districts of Se’ir east of the Arabah has an interesting consequence for one name in the mentioned lists from Soleb and Amarah—‘Yhw (in) the land of the Shasu.’ For half a century it has been generally admitted that we have here the tetragrammaton, the name of the Israelite god, ‘Yahweh’; and if this be the case, as it undoubtedly is, the passage constitutes a most precious indication of the whereabouts during the late fifteenth century B.C. of an enclave revering this god.” (Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times*, 272–273)

Conclusion

- I. “The omission of Pharaoh’s name in the exodus story, I suggest, was deliberate. For the Hebrew writer, there was good theological reasons for this silence: the reader learns of the name of God Yahweh and his power as the Exodus story unfolds, whereas his arch-rival, Pharaoh, remains anonymous—a nice piece of irony.” (Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, III-II2)
- II. “If the Exodus occurred in the fifteenth century B.C. as the chronological datum in 1 Kings 6:1 appears to indicate, there are three pharaohs in that century, any one of whom could be the pharaoh of the Exodus. In terms of chronology, one can think of the fifteenth century as a clock face. The pharaoh who died at three o’clock, at the end of the first quarter of that century, was Thutmose II. The pharaoh who died at the halfway mark in that century was Thutmose III. The pharaoh who died at the end of the third quarter of that century was Amenhotep II. Each of these rulers merits consideration in this context.” (Shea, “The Date of the Exodus,” *Giving The Sense*, 239–240)
- III. “The dates most widely accepted for Amenhotep’s reign (1427–1400 B.C.) are too late for an exodus of around 1445 B.C. Some historians suggest that Thutmose III was the pharaoh of the oppression since he is said to have been the first pharaoh to build a store city at the site only later known as Rameses. If so, his son Amenhotep II could still have been the pharaoh of the exodus. Others hypothesize that Amenhotep’s lack of military activity during the latter part of his reign may have resulted from a military catastrophe during the exodus. And some historians speculate that because Amenhotep II’s successor (Thutmose IV) was not his firstborn or heir apparent, his firstborn son may have died during the final plague.” (Walton, *Archaeological Study Bible*, n.p.)
- IV. “One hindrance to accepting the Exodus as an actual event has been scholars’ inability to reconcile the Exodus events to both a biblical *and* archaeological chronology. An early date in the fifteenth century B.C. (1446–1441 B.C.) for the Exodus is in greater harmony with the internal chronology of the Old Testament (see 1 Kings 6:1). The classic chronological study by Edwin Thiele fixed an early date of 1447 B.C. for the Exodus. According to this dating the pharaoh of the Oppression was either Thutmose I or Thutmose III and the pharaoh of the Exodus was Thutmose II or Amenhotep II. The ancient biography of an Egyptian naval officer named Amenemhab, who served under several pharaohs of this period, tells us that Thutmose III died at the time of the Passover in early March of 1447 or 1446 B.C. Thus, his death occurred at exactly the right time to fit the biblical chronology and events of the Exodus.” (Price, *The Stones Cry Out*, 129)

- V. “Following the death of Thutmose III, his son, Amenhotep II, took the throne and ruled for at least twenty-six years. This king, according to the early date of the exodus, would have been the Pharaoh of the exodus and the one who lost his firstborn son in the final judgment of God (Exod. 12). Some have seen a relationship between the death of Amenhotep’s firstborn son and the well-known ‘Dream Stela’ of Thutmose IV, his son and successor to the throne. In this document the god Har-em-akht promised the throne to Thutmose IV on the condition that he restore the exposure of the great sphinx which apparently had been largely covered by drifting sand. It is their view that this Dream Stela represents an attempt at legitimizing his right to the throne, since he was apparently not the firstborn son.” (Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, 43)
- VI. *Suggested Viewing*: There is a marvelous video presentation of the facts surrounding the evidence for the date of the exodus titled, “Patterns of Evidence” (© 2015, Patterns of Evidence LLC) (www.patternsofevidence.com).
- A. This documentary is available on DVD and Blu-Ray discs.
- B. You can also view this movie on Netflix or Amazon Instant Video.



The Colossi of Memnon—two massive stone statues of Pharaoh Amenhotep III

Egyptian Deities

Deity	Purpose	Form or Sacred Animal
Amun-Re	King of the gods	Human—crown symbolizing sky-god
Anubis	Weighing of the Heart	Human with canine head; jackal
Apis	Ensures fertility	Bull
Atum	Sun-god and creator	Human; lion, bull, snake, lizard
Bes	Defender of women and newborns	Dwarf-god (grotesque appearance)
Geb	Earth-god	Human; ram, bull, crocodile
Hapy	Spirit of the Nile	Intersex person, large belly & breasts
Hathor	Goddess of the sky	Cow
Heket	Creator, goddess of childbirth	Frog
Horus	Sky-god of Upper Egypt	Hawk / Falcon
Imhotep	God of medicine (magic)	Human
Isis	Goddess of love, magic, medicine	Human
Khepri	Solar deity	Scarab or dung beetle
Khnum	Creator, Guardian of the Nile	Human with ram's head
Meskhenet	Presides at childbirth	Human—cow's uterus on her head
Min	God of procreation	Human
Montu	Protector of kings	Human with ox's head
Neper	God of grain	Human, child suckled by Renenutet
Nut	Sky-goddess	Human, Sky Cow
Osiris	God of the underworld	Human (green-skinned man)
Ptah	Creator-god	Human
Reenenutet	Guardian of Pharaoh	Cobra
Sekhmet	God of healing, epidemics, plagues	Lioness-headed god
Serket	Guardian of life	Scorpion
Seth	Protector of crops, storms, desert	Set animal (not easily identifiable)
Shu	Wind-god	Human (wearing an ostrich feather)
Taweret	Protector of women in childbirth	Hippopotamus
Thoth	God of medical learning	Human with ibis or baboon head

Index Of Photographs

Mud brick and brick mold	3
The Nile River near Kom Omeo	10
Basa, a priest of Hathor	16
A scarab beetle representing Khepri (at Karnak)	19
Statue of the Apis Bull	22
Sobek and Hathor (at Kom Ombo)	23
Thoth and a worshipper	25
Sekhmet (at Medinet Habu temple)	26
Horus (at Kom Ombo)	28
Amun	33
Ptah	34
Bes	37
Taweret	38
Pharaoh Amenhotep III	45
The Colossi of Memnon	47



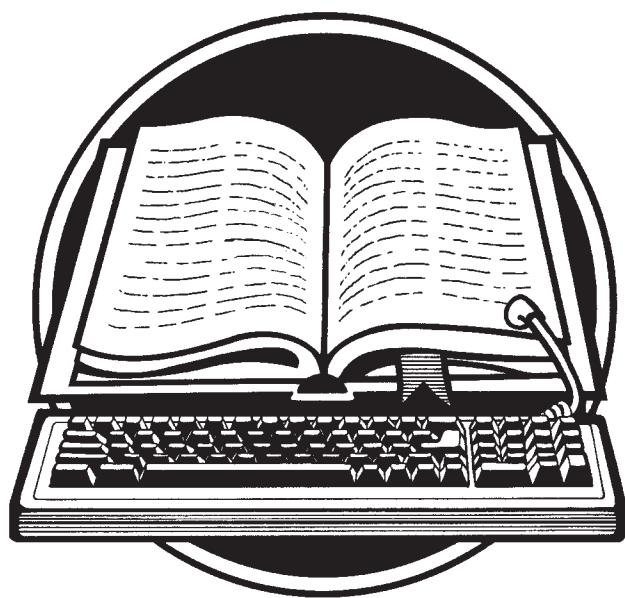
David Padfield next to a statue of Ramses II at Tanis, Egypt (Biblical Zoan)

Bibliography

- Aling, Charles F., and Clyde E. Billington. "Yahweh in Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts," *Bible and Spade*, 28.3, (2015), 74-79.
- Bauer, Susan Wise. *The History of the Ancient World: From the Earliest Accounts to the Fall of Rome*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007.
- Baugh, S. M. "2 Timothy." Pages n.p in Romans to Philemon. Vol. 3 of *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: New Testament*. Edited by Clinton E. Arnold. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.3. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.
- Berlin, Adele, Marc Zvi Brettler, and Michael A. Fishbane, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible*. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.5. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Brand, Peter J. *The Monuments of Seti I: Epigraphic, Historical, & Art Historical Analysis*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2000.
- Burge, Gary M. *The Bible and the Land*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Cabal, Ted, ed., *The Apologetics Study Bible*. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.2. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007.
- Clarke, Adam. *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Accordance electronic edition, version 2.0. 6 vols. Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2004.
- Clarity, Eve. *Pharaohs of the Bible (Mizraim to Shishak): A Unifying High Chronology of Egypt based on a High View of Scripture*. N.c.: CreateSpace Publishing, 2012.
- Cole, R. Alan. *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 2. IVP/ Accordance electronic edition, version 1.7. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973.
- Davis, John J. *Moses and the Gods of Egypt: Studies in Exodus*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971.
- Dennis, Lane T. and Wayne Grudem, eds., *The ESV Study Bible*. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.4. Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008.
- Durant, Will. *Our Oriental Heritage*. The Story Of Civilization. New York: MJF Books, 1935.
- Durham, John I. *Exodus*. Word Biblical Commentary 3. Accordance electronic edition, version 2.0. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Ebeid, Nabil I. *Egyptian Medicine in the Days of the Pharaohs*. Cairo: General Egyptian Book Organization, 1999.
- Edersheim, Alfred. *The Bible History: Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.1. Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2006.
- Fant, Clyde E., and Mitchell G. Reddish. *Lost Treasures of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Flaherty, Thomas, ed. *The Age of God-Kings*. Alexandria: Time-Life Books, 1987.
- Free, Joseph P. and Howard Vos. *Archaeology and Bible History*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992.
- Gardiner, A. H. *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage from a Hieratic Papyrus in Leiden*. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1909 (reprinted 1969).
- Halioua, Bruno, and Bernard Ziskind. *Medicine in the Days of the Pharaohs*. Translated by M. B. DeBevoise. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005.

- Hannah, John D. *Exodus*. The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament. Edited by John F. Wallboard and Roy B. Zuck. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.2. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985.
- Harris, Geraldine. *Gods and Pharaohs from Egyptian Mythology*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1981.
- Hart, George. *A Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*. London: Routledge, 1986.
- Hester, H.I. *The Heart of Hebrew History*. 38th printing. Liberty: Quality Press, 1976.
- Herodotus. *The Histories*. Penguin Classics. 3rd ed. Translated by Aubrey de Selincourt. London: Penguin Group, 1996.
- Hoerth, Alfred J. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.
- Hoffmeier, James K. *Israel in Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- . “Egypt, Plagues In.” Page 377 in vol. 2 of *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. Accordance electronic edition, version 3.7. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- How, W. W., and Wells, J. *Commentary on Herodotus*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Howard, David M. and Michael A. Grisanti., eds. *Giving The Sense*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003.
- Hussein, Amr. *The Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. Egypt: n.p., n.d.
- Jamieson, Robert, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown. *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*. 1871, Accordance electronic edition, version 2.5. Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1996..
- Johnston, Gordon H. *The Bible Knowledge Word Study: Genesis–Deuteronomy*. Edited by Eugene H. Merrill. Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries, 2003.
- Josephus. *The Works of Flavius Josephus, Complete and Unabridged. New Updated Edition*. Translated by William Whiston. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.8. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987.
- Kaiser, Walter C. *A History of Israel: from the Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars*. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.2. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998.
- Kaiser Jr., Walter C. *Exodus*. Expositor’s Bible Commentary 2. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.7. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.
- Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch F. *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, version 2.3. 10 vols. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996.
- Kidner, Derek. *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 1. IVP/Acordance electronic edition, version 1.7. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1967.
- Kitchen, K. A. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Lienhard, Joseph T., Ronnie J. Rombs, and Thomas C. Oden, eds., *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 3. ICCS/Acordance electronic edition, version 2.3. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- Martin, Glen S. *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*. Holman Old Testament Commentary 2. Edited by Max Anders. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.2. Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2002.
- Meeks, Dimitri and Favard-Meeks, Christine. *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Mercatante, Anthony S. *Who’s Who in Egyptian Mythology*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978.
- Petrie, W. M. Flinders. *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*. London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1906.

- Philo. *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*. Translated by Charles Duke Yonge. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.8. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993.
- Price, Randall. *The Stones Cry Out*. Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 1997.
- Ramban, *Commentary on the Torah: Exodus*. Translated by C. Chavel. Brooklyn: Shilo Publishing House, 1973.
- Redford, Donald B. *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Sarna, Nahum M. *Exodus*. The JPS Torah Commentary. Accordance electronic edition, version 2.5. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991.
- Shea, William H. "The Date of the Exodus." Pages 236–255 in *Giving the Sense: Understanding and Using Old Testament Historical Texts*. Edited by David M. Howard, Jr. and Michael A. Grisanti. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003.
- Silverman, David P. *Ancient Egypt*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Spence, Lewis. *Ancient Egyptian Myths and Legends*. New York: Dover Publications, 1990.
- Stuart, Douglas K. *Exodus*. The New American Commentary 2. Edited by E. Ray Clendenen. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.1. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006.
- Tenney, Merrill C. and Steven Barabas, eds. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.4. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976.
- Thomson, Robert. *The Plagues of Egypt, and Their Relation to the Natural Phenomena of the Land*. London, 1897. Repr. n.p.: Adamant Media, 2006.
- van der Veen, Peter, Christoffer Theis, and Manfred Görg. "Israel in Canaan (Long) Before Pharaoh Merenptah? A Fresh Look at Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief 21687," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*, 2:4, (2010), 15–25.
- Walton, John H., ed., *Archaeological Study Bible*. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.4. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.
- Walton, John H., Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, version 2.1. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Wells, Bruce. "Exodus." Pages n.p in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Vol. 1 of *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament*. Edited by John H. Walton. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.6. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Whiting, John D. "Jerusalem's Locust Plague," *National Geographic Magazine*, 28.6, (1915), 511–550.
- Wilkinson, Richard H. *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2000.
- . *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2003.
- Wood, D. R. W., ed. *New Bible Dictionary*. 3d, Accordance electronic edition, version 2.2. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- Young, Edward J. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949.
- Young, Roger. "Evidence for Inerrancy from a Second Unexpected Source: The Jubilee and Sabbatical Cycles," *Bible and Spade*, 21.4, (2008), 109–122.
- Youngblood, Edward. *Exodus*. Everyman's Bible Commentary. Chicago: Moody, 1983.



www.padfield.com

Sermon Outlines
Bible Class Books
Bible Class Curriculum
Presentation Backgrounds
Bible Land Photographs
Church Bulletin Articles

This booklet is protected by Federal Copyright Laws. Individuals and local congregations are allowed to reprint this book. No one is allowed to change the contents. This book may not be placed on any other website, nor is it allowed to be sold.