

Exodus 7 – 10, The Plagues

What God is saying is that the plagues that are about to fall on Egypt are acts of revelation. God is revealing himself. There is a purpose to what God is doing. We should consider this because there are ten plagues. Why doesn't God just start with the tenth plague if the goal is merely to let the people of Israel out of Egyptian slavery? Why not just go right to the death of the firstborn and get this liberation started? Why have five chapters before getting to the plague that God declares will cause Pharaoh to let the people go (11:1)? The answer is that God is revealing himself. We must not memorize the plagues and think that is all we need to know. These plagues have a purpose. God is declaring himself. God is revealing himself. So what is God teaching from these plagues?

God is communicating through the ten plagues is that people need to recognize that God is the Lord. We just saw this in reading Exodus 7:5. Notice that God keeps saying this throughout the plagues. In 7:17 God says, "By this you shall know that I am the Lord." God says it again in 8:22 and 10:2. People are to see the power of God and know that he is the Lord. This is the very point the apostle Paul makes in Romans 1.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Romans 1:18–20 ESV)

What are people in the world to see? They are to see the eternal power and divine nature of God. Interestingly, by the time we get only to the third plague, gnats, the magicians are already confessing that this the work of God. Look at Exodus 8:19.

Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. (Exodus 8:19 ESV)

When we get to seventh plague we see that some of the Egyptians are becoming believers in the message of God. Moses declares that the next plague is going to be hail and everything not brought in the home is going to die. Look at Exodus 9:20-21.

Then whoever feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the Lord left his slaves and his livestock in the field. (Exodus 9:20–21 ESV)

This is the goal: to get people to know the Lord and believe in him.