

# The Plagues

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Source: Various

So Moses goes back to Egypt and he demands that Pharaoh free the Hebrews from bondage. But Pharaoh refuses! And so God sends a plague upon Egypt, turning all the rivers and streams to blood. All the fish die and the Egyptians can find no clean water to drink. Pharaoh, in desperation, agrees to free the slaves. But as soon as the waters become clear again, he changes his mind.

And so God sends a second plague. Now hordes of frogs descend upon Egypt, jumping into the houses, onto the beds, onto the tables and into the Egyptians' food. Helpless to control the frogs, Pharaoh agrees to free the slaves. But as soon as all the frogs die off, he changes his mind.

And so God sends a third plague. This time, God sets loose swarms of gnats and lice, to infest the homes, the bedding and clothes of the Egyptians and cause them to every inch of every person to itch. In misery, Pharaoh promises to let the Hebrews go free. But as soon as the lice and gnats disappear, Pharaoh changes his mind.

And so God sends a fourth plague, and biting flies began to swarm everywhere. There are so many of them that when they land on the houses, and animals and tables and beds, it appears as if a black blanket has been thrown down. The Egyptians are miserable. Pharaoh swears that he will free the Hebrews. But as soon as the flies vanish, Pharaoh changes his mind.

Now God put a blight upon Egypt, and all the livestock in the land—the cows, lambs and goats—sicken and die. The Egyptians have no meat to eat and Pharaoh, worried, agrees to free the slaves. But once the animals become well, he changes his mind.

God creates an epidemic and all the Egyptian people are suddenly covered with hundreds of painful sores. Pharaoh begs God to heal his people in return for freeing the slaves. God relents but Pharaoh does not keep his promise.

God then unleashes a seventh plague, stirring up a monstrous storm that pelts Egypt with hail, battering and killing the crops. Pharaoh tells God he will free the slaves if God will relent and end the storm. But once the storm passes, Pharaoh does nothing.

Next, God unleashes grasshopper-like insects called locusts, which devour all the remaining crops. Facing starvation for his people, Pharaoh promises to let the Hebrews go if God will relent. But Pharaoh breaks his promise an eighth time.

And now, darkness descends over Egypt as God blots out the sun, and the Egyptians can no longer tell when day has come. Overcome with fear, Pharaoh promises to free the Hebrews. God allows the sun to reemerge and Pharaoh does nothing.

And so God declares the tenth and last plague. It is a fearsome plague. God declares that every firstborn child of every Egyptian family must die.

## **BAD THINGS WILL COME TO EGYPT—song**

(To the tune of "She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain")

Bad things will come to Egypt, don't you know?

Bad things will come to Egypt, don't you know?

Bad things will come to Egypt, Bad things will come to Egypt,

Bad things will come to Egypt, till we go

God will give you this last chance to let us go;

God will give you this last chance to let us go;

As midnight passes by –y, All your firstborn sons will die –ie

And your people will rise up if we can't go.

Before God sends down the tenth plague, the Hebrew slaves are warned to mark their front-door posts with lamb's blood, so that the Angel of Death will know which houses to pass over when it strikes down the firstborn. And this is where the Jewish holiday of Passover gets its name. And it came to pass that all the firstborn Egyptians were slain. And the horrified Pharaoh finally says to the slaves: Go

Pharaoh changed his mind again—of course, he did!—but the Hebrews were already headed out of Egypt. Pharaoh sent his men on horseback to chase after the Jews, who had made it as far as the Red Sea but were stuck, with no way to cross the water. As Pharaoh's army was about to descend upon the freed slaves, God commanded Moses to lift up his staff. Moses did as he was told and the waters parted, allowing the Jews to cross, with Pharaoh's men close behind. But when the Jews reached the opposite shore, the waters came together again, and the Egyptian army was swallowed by the sea. The Jewish people were finally free.

LEADER: And now, I will recite each of the Ten Plagues as I put a drop of wine on our plates. A full cup of wine is a symbol of joy, with which we recognize the triumph of an oppressed people in achieving freedom. But our happiness cannot be complete since other lives were lost. Therefore, by diminishing the amount of wine I have in my glasse, we recognize the loss that each plague exacted and the losses that are often regrettably incurred in a struggle for a just cause.

Blood - Dam ... Frogs - Tzefardeah ... Lice - Kinim ... Flies - Arov ... Blight - Dver ... Boils - Sh'himHail - Barad ...  
Locusts - Arbeh . . . Darkness - Hoshekh ... Death of the Firstborn - Macat B'khorot