

God's Power Revealed Through the Plagues of Egypt

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GOD'S POWER REVEALED THROUGH THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT

This presentation explores the ten plagues in Exodus as deliberate confrontations with Egypt's pantheon, demonstrating that nature, power, and history obey Yahweh alone. Each plague targeted key deities or sacred symbols, dismantling Egypt's perceived sources of life, protection, and order. The narrative is not merely liberation from slavery; it is the revelation of the true God over all creation—what Scripture frames as a judgment “against all the gods of Egypt.”

Structure of this deck: We will proceed plague by plague, highlighting the specific Egyptian gods or goddesses challenged, the textual reference in Exodus, and the theological thrust. Between sections, full-image interludes reinforce the drama of nature turned into instruments of judgment and revelation. The culmination is a theological takeaway for reflection: this was a war of worship, and deliverance began when false gods were exposed.

- 1. Water Turned to Blood (Exodus 7:14–25)
- 2. Frogs (Exodus 8:1–15)
- 3. Gnats / Lice (Exodus 8:16–19)
- 4. Flies (Exodus 8:20–32)
- 5. Death of Livestock (Exodus 9:1–7)
- 6. Boils (Exodus 9:8–12)
- 7. Hail with Fire (Exodus 9:13–35)
- 8. Locusts (Exodus 10:1–20)
- 9. Darkness (Exodus 10:21–29)
- 10. Death of the Firstborn (Exodus 11–12)

Key idea to watch: Each plague both dismantles a false security and reveals Yahweh's sovereign rule—over rivers and blood, over fertility and pestilence, over sky and storm, over sun and darkness, and ultimately over life and death. This is not random calamity; it is a carefully sequenced polemic demonstrating that salvation history is also worship reformation.



1. WATER TURNED TO BLOOD

(Exodus 7:14–25)

Egyptian gods challenged:

Hapi – god of the Nile

Khnum – guardian of the Nile's source

The Nile was Egypt's lifeline. God turned their source of life into death. The first plague strikes at Egypt's heart: the sacred river that defined agriculture, trade, ritual purity, and national identity becomes a symbol of judgment. By transforming water into blood, Yahweh asserts dominion over what Egyptians considered divine and indispensable. This act undermines the theological foundation of Egypt's prosperity, exposing that blessing comes from the Lord, not from a river-deity. The stench, the inability to drink, and the spread to canals and reservoirs amplify the message: no boundary can shield what God targets for judgment. Even the magicians' imitation reveals impotence—they can only worsen, not reverse, the calamity.

The people's frantic digging for water along the banks dramatizes human dependence, while seven days of persistence emphasize that this is not an accident but a sustained confrontation. In the biblical storyline, blood often connotes life and its loss; here, the Nile's life-giving reputation is reversed, forecasting the eventual redemption by blood in Israel's Passover.

Theologically, the plague announces that idols consecrate creation but cannot command it; Yahweh alone commands and consecrates.



2. FROGS

(Exodus 8:1–15)

Egyptian god challenged:

Heqet – goddess of fertility and childbirth (frog-headed)

What Egypt worshiped for life became an unbearable curse. Frogs, ordinarily symbols of fecundity and divine favor, invade bedrooms, ovens, and kneading bowls—spaces of intimacy, provision, and daily labor. The ubiquity of frogs transforms blessing into oppression, revealing the irony of idolatry: what we enthrone will enslave us. Heqet's association with midwifery and new life collapses under the weight of infestation, and Pharaoh's plea for relief—timed at Moses' discretion—displays Yahweh's precise control over both onset and cessation. When the frogs die, the land reeks, underscoring that idols cannot steward the gifts they symbolize. The magicians can replicate the problem but cannot remove it; only prayer to Yahweh ends the plague. The episode thus re-teaches dependence and exposes counterfeit power.

This plague addresses the human temptation to absolutize good created things (fertility, productivity) into ultimate things; in God's hands, even those symbols are subordinated to His purposes.



3. GNATS / LICE

(Exodus 8:16–19)

Egyptian god challenged:

Geb – god of the earth

Even the dust obeyed Yahweh, not Egypt's earth god.

Without prior warning, Aaron strikes the dust and it becomes swarming pests upon humans and animals.

What is striking is scale and source: the very dust—ubiquitous, humble, easily ignored—becomes an instrument of divine assertion. The magicians confess,

"This is the finger of God," marking the first explicit admission of defeat by Egypt's spiritual experts. Ritual purity becomes impossible, priestly service is disrupted, and daily life is invaded at the granular level. The plague communicates that creation's smallest particles answer to the Creator, not to cosmic intermediaries. Theologically, the "finger of God" anticipates later biblical moments where God writes law, casts out demons, and fashions destiny.

The plague warns against trusting in "groundedness" apart from God—our foundations must be more than dust.



4. FLIES

(Exodus 8:20–32)

Egyptian gods challenged:

Khepri – god of creation (fly/scarab associated)

God shows He alone controls creation and boundaries. This plague introduces a distinction: Goshen, where Israel dwells, is spared. Theologically, this separation demonstrates that divine judgment can be targeted and mercifully restrained. Khepri, symbolized by the scarab, represented daily rebirth as the sun “rolled” across the sky. Yet swarms defile homes and land, corrupting order and rhythm. Pharaoh offers half-measures—worship in the land, temporary permissions—and then hardens his heart after relief. The cycle reveals that crisis repentance without heart transformation is short-lived. The precision of the plague’s boundaries anticipates Passover’s marked doors and teaches that salvation is not random fortune but covenantal favor.



5. DEATH OF LIVESTOCK

(Exodus 9:1-7)

Egyptian gods challenged:

Hathor – goddess of love and protection (cow-headed)

Apis – sacred bull deity

Egypt's sacred animals could not protect themselves. Cattle, donkeys, camels, herds, and flocks—economic engines and ritual symbols—fall under a severe pestilence, while Israel's livestock is preserved. The blow is economic, religious, and psychological: wealth diminishes, cultic imagery collapses, and national pride falters. Pharaoh verifies the distinction yet persists in hardness. The plague unmasks how easily cultures sacralize prosperity and strength; in a moment, God exposes fragility. This presses us to ask: What herds do we trust—markets, status, productivity—with quasi-divine confidence? In Scripture's logic, stewardship is a gift, not a god.



6. BOILS

(Exodus 9:8–12)

Egyptian gods challenged:

Sekhmet – goddess of healing and disease

Imhotep – god of medicine

Egypt's healers could not heal—even the priests were struck. Soot thrown heavenward becomes fine dust causing festering boils. The priesthood—custodians of ritual purity—cannot stand before Moses, dramatizing a collapse of religious mediation. If health deities governed wellness, their shrines should have been sanctuaries; instead, pain saturates Egypt. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart—this time explicitly attributed to the Lord—signals that judgment includes the unveiling of moral blindness. Insight: human technique, however advanced, cannot secure ultimate wholeness; only the Lord can reconcile body and soul.



7. HAIL WITH FIRE

(Exodus 9:13–35)

Egyptian gods challenged:

Nut – goddess of the sky

Shu – god of the atmosphere

Set – god of storms

Yahweh controls heaven and earth, not Egypt's sky gods.

The most devastating storm in Egypt's memory shatters plants, livestock in the open, and human security. Fire mingled with hail exhibits paradox—elements in concert at God's command. Warned in advance, those who feared the word of the Lord sheltered their servants and animals, revealing that faith expresses itself in concrete obedience. Goshen is spared again. Pharaoh confesses sin but retracts after relief—penitence without perseverance. The storm's timing and target remind hearers that providence is both majestic and moral: the Creator's weather carries ethical summons.



8. LOCUSTS

(Exodus 10:1-20)

Egyptian gods challenged:

Osiris – god of crops and fertility

Seth – protector against chaos

Total devastation shows Egypt's gods couldn't preserve abundance. Locusts finish what hail began, devouring every green thing. The plague is pedagogical: "that you may tell your sons and grandsons" what the Lord did—salvation history is meant to be remembered and retold.

Court officials urge Pharaoh to relent—"Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?"—but partial negotiation continues. A strong east wind brings the locusts; a strong west wind, at Moses' prayer, removes them. Sovereignty is seen in the winds themselves, instruments of both judgment and mercy. The land that once boasted of Nile-fed plenty now bears witness that bread is a gift, not a guarantee.



9. DARKNESS

(Exodus 10:21–29)

Egyptian gods challenged:

Ra – supreme sun god

Amon-Ra – king of the gods

Three days of darkness = a direct assault on Egypt's highest deity. This is a palpable darkness, one that can be "felt," suspending normal life, work, and worship.

Meanwhile, Israel has light—a profound counter-liturgy proclaiming that illumination is covenantal. Ra's daily triumph over night is silenced; the cosmic clock stops at God's command. Pharaoh's final ultimatum—banishing Moses and threatening death—prefigures the climactic judgment to come. The plague of darkness prepares the stage for Passover by dramatizing moral and spiritual darkness that only God's redeeming word can overcome.

In biblical theology, darkness and light are not equal forces; light is victorious because God speaks,

AND IT IS SO!



10. DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN

(Exodus 11–12)

Egyptian gods challenged:

Pharaoh himself – considered a living god

Isis – protector of children

Osiris – god of the afterlife

God strikes Egypt at its throne and its future. At midnight, the firstborn across Egypt die, from Pharaoh's heir to captive and cattle, while homes marked by lamb's blood are passed over. This judgment targets divinized kingship and the cult of afterlife, announcing that sovereignty over life and death belongs to Yahweh alone. The Passover becomes Israel's foundational memory of redemption: a substitute dies so a people can live; redeemed life is organized around remembrance, consecration, and haste toward freedom. The cry that rises in Egypt contrasts with Israel's protected peace, and Pharaoh finally releases Israel—only to pursue them to the sea, where the story will climax in new-creation deliverance.

THEOLOGICAL TAKEAWAY

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Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

Exodus 12:12

This wasn't just about freedom from slavery. It was a war of worship.

Egypt's gods couldn't save

Pharaoh couldn't rule

Nature itself answered to Yahweh

Deliverance always begins when false gods are exposed.

The plagues are God's polemic in history: dethroning idols, liberating a people, and reconstituting worship around His word. In preaching and discipleship, the pattern endures—God confronts our counterfeit trusts (security, success, self-rule), reveals their impotence, and calls us under the shelter of the Lamb. The church remembers not to gloat over Egypt but to glorify the Redeemer: in judgment, mercy shines; in darkness, light dawns; in death, deliverance is purchased. The proper response is reverent obedience, courageous proclamation, and hopeful remembrance—keeping the feast with sincerity and truth.