

# God Sends Plagues on Egypt

Exodus 7:8–10:29

There are a number of significant questions raised in this passage.

*How did Pharaoh's magicians duplicate the miracles?* Certainly some of the miracles were copied through trickery, but it's likely that some were performed through occult powers. In Exodus 8:18-19, the magicians were baffled and attributed the plague of gnats to God's power. Apparently they were unable to duplicate that plague through any type of sorcery.

*Why did Pharaoh keep changing his mind and breaking his word?* Pharaoh was not unlike many of us who find ourselves making promises to God when times are hard. Then when we're no longer in a pinch, we rationalize away the promises we made. Pharaoh had a very convenient workforce in the Israelites. When the pressure was off, it became extremely hard for him to release the Israelites. Not only would he lose his slaves, but such an act would be seen by others as a sign of weakness.

*Was it right for God to harden Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 9:12; 10:1, 27)?* God's sovereignty as it relates to our free will is a mystery to which we have no certain answers. But notice that God didn't harden Pharaoh's heart until the sixth plague. Prior to that, Pharaoh had repeatedly hardened his own heart. Perhaps there was a point at which Pharaoh had so set himself against God that God allowed him to live with the consequences of his choices, further hardening Pharaoh's heart because he knew that was Pharaoh's intention and initial choice.

*Why did God allow all of these things to happen?* The answer, though mentioned in several places, is clearly stated in Exodus 7:5: "The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord." The Israelites had been treated poorly by the Egyptians, and when they cried out to God, he responded. He let the Egyptians (and surrounding nations, as well) see that he truly is God. He used his mighty power to rescue his people and to demonstrate to all who would hear about him that he is worthy of worship and obedience.

## Devotion for Leaders

**The One Thing:** Everyone needs God's help and power to survive the difficulties of living on the earth. Jesus empowers his followers and helps his friends!

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** Why does God allow wickedness to flourish? We know that God has the power to stop evil and help the innocent. Are you able to trust God's timing and wait for his power to come? This is difficult for most Christians. Take a moment to pray this prayer: "Thank you, Jesus, for helping me with your power. Grant me courage as I wait for you to act."

## Teaching This Bible Story to Children

You might be surprised to see that this week's session teaches children about the plagues God sent on Egypt. Rest assured that for this age level we have chosen to focus on God's ultimate power. Check out the session—we think you'll find God has a lot to teach children through this important Scripture!