

## God Judges Egypt

**Lesson Scope:** [Exodus 7:14-11:10](#)

*References in brackets refer to Lesson Scope unless noted otherwise*

### Lesson Focus

God prepared Israel to leave Egypt by raising up a pharaoh who did not know Joseph to oppress them. God had been preparing Moses in the wilderness to lead Israel out of Egypt. In the next several chapters, we see that God prepared Egypt to let them go. The ten plagues were aimed at the gods of Egypt and showed the power of God over their gods. Moses understood the conflict and was comparing the gods of Egypt to God Almighty when he sang, "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exodus 15:11).

Each of the plagues destroyed and tormented the Egyptians. God spared the land of Goshen, where Israel lived, from the destruction. The Judgment of the Lord sets Him apart both in its thoroughness and fairness.

God told Moses, "I have made thee a god to Pharaoh," and as such he became a rival in Pharaoh's mind.

This lesson covers a large scope, and it is impossible to elaborate on everything. Study the scope of this lesson thoroughly, and try to keep it practical and inspirational. Two spiritual forces are at war in this lesson: the one is represented in Pharaoh and Egypt, the other in Moses and Israel. These same two spiritual forces are vying for the souls of men in our day. We are reminded that Pharaoh did not need to be destroyed, but because he chose to defy God, rather than surrender, he was condemned with the wicked.

God at times raises up hardhearted men to fulfill His purposes of judgment. By His foreknowledge, God can use such individuals and yet hold them accountable for their defiance of Him.

**Lesson Aim:** To show the outcome of those who choose to defy God.

**Theme Verses:** [Psalm 9:19-20](#) Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.

## **Lesson Text**

### **"This Is the Finger of God"**

[Exodus 7:19-22](#) And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.'" <sup>20</sup> Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. <sup>21</sup> And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. <sup>22</sup> But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

[Exodus 8:16-19](#) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt.'" <sup>17</sup> And they did so. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. <sup>18</sup> The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. <sup>19</sup> 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.

### **"Ye Shall Not Go Very Far"**

[Exodus 8:20-32](#) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let my people go, that they may serve me." <sup>21</sup> Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with

swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. <sup>22</sup> But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. <sup>23</sup> Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.”” <sup>24</sup> And the LORD did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants’ houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies. <sup>25</sup> Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.” <sup>26</sup> But Moses said, “It would not be right to do so, for the offerings we shall sacrifice to the LORD our God are an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us? <sup>27</sup> We must go three days’ journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as he tells us.” <sup>28</sup> So Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away. Plead for me.” <sup>29</sup> Then Moses said, “Behold, I am going out from you and I will plead with the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.” <sup>30</sup> So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. <sup>31</sup> And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained. <sup>32</sup> But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.

**Exodus 9:17-20** You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go. <sup>18</sup> Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. <sup>19</sup> Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them.”” <sup>20</sup> Then whoever feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses,

### **"The Firstborn ... Shall Die"**

**Exodus 10:21-24** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.” <sup>22</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven,

and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. <sup>23</sup> They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived. <sup>24</sup> Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, “Go, serve the LORD; your little ones also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind.”

**Exodus 11:4-8** So Moses said, “Thus says the LORD: ‘About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, <sup>5</sup> and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. <sup>6</sup> There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again. <sup>7</sup> But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.’ <sup>8</sup> And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get out, you and all the people who follow you.’ And after that I will go out.” And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger.

## **Questions for Study**

### **"This Is the Finger of God"**

1. Why did God bring the plagues upon Egypt?
2. What were some things that made it hard for Pharaoh to acknowledge God and let Israel go?
3. What are some things that make it hard for men today to surrender to God?

### **"Ye Shall Not Go Very Far"**

4. Why did Pharaoh's confession not spare him further destruction (9:27)?
5. What was Pharaoh trying to gain by the compromises he offered?
6. What happens to man when he attempts to bargain with God?
7. What is the result of God's people accepting a compromise that the world offers?

### **"The Firstborn ... Shall Die"**

8. How was God glorified by the destruction of Egypt?
9. How does refusing to hear the message of God affect the results of God's judgment?

## **Analyzing the Passage**

In 7:14 Pharaoh's "heart is hardened" refers to being difficult and severe. This resistance to the demands of God got increasingly stronger the longer he resisted. The wise man believes God, but those who resist God are foolish.

The sacrifice of animals (8:26) was considered an abomination because the Egyptians honored them as gods.

In 8:9 when Moses said, "Glory over me," Moses was saying, "You can choose when you want the frogs to go away." It is interesting that Pharaoh chose to have the frogs removed "tomorrow." Why wait until tomorrow; why not today?

In 8:28 Pharaoh told Moses, "Intreat for me." Pharaoh was convinced that Moses and his God were in control. He did not want to grant Moses his request, but he wanted relief from the consequences of his decision. Jannes and Jambres mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:8 are thought to have been the magicians of Pharaoh.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **"This Is the Finger of God"**

1. The man who defies God sets himself on a collision course with judgment from the Almighty (7•19-20). Pharaoh's refusal to honor God did not thwart God's plan for Israel; he only spurned his own opportunity for God's mercy.

God has established unchanging principles of right and wrong. Today society justifies what God has called sin. Disregarding God's laws will bring judgment. All who defy God "shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8).

2. Defiance against God furthers the process of spiritual hardening (7:22). Men who in pride choose not to surrender to God lose their ability to make wise decisions. God gives "them over to a reprobate mind [a mind void of judgment], to do those things which are not convenient" (Romans 1:28).

Are we sensitive when God speaks to us through His Word or the church? Do we heed the warnings given, or do we brush them off as little things? The hardening process begins with little steps, but unchecked, it results in a heart that is unresponsive to God.

3. Man's limitations in the face of God's sovereignty may bring grudg-

ing acknowledgment without genuine submission (8:18-19). King Saul responded, "I have sinned: yet honour me now ... before the elders of my people" (I Samuel 15:30). He was more concerned about what people thought than about submitting to God's authority. Unless men repent and amend their life as a result of that acknowledgement, the end is still destruction and eternal loss.

### **"Ye Shall Not Go Very Far"**

4. By defying God, a man severs his link with the blessings and safety found only among God's people (8:22-23). Those who recognize God's laws and respect His people often prosper. Many times God has blessed countries that punished evil and provided a haven for His people.

In the church we find love and understanding. Our brethren care enough to help us in the difficulties we face. When we forsake God and His people, we have no one who really cares for us. Without God there is no purpose in life and no hope for the future!

5. The man who defies God may, attempt to bargain with God (8:25, 28; 9:27-28; 10:24). He has not surrendered. Pharaoh attempted to negotiate a compromise that would satisfy God yet leave himself in control. God never accepts a compromise. Pharaoh's eventual "Go, serve the LORD, as ye have said" (12:31) illustrates the final result of bargaining with God. God will have the last word.

6. Defiance against God blinds a man to God's sovereign power (9:17-18, 20). Pharaoh continued blindly defying God while destruction continued to worsen. Those that fear God respond wisely in obedience to what God reveals to them in His Word. Often the wisdom of God seems like foolishness to those who do not believe God, but their own seemingly wiser way leads to disappointment and eternal death.

### **"The Firstborn ... Shall Die"**

7. The man who chooses to defy God ultimately chooses the way of darkness and death (10:21; 11:4-5, 8). God in mercy reminds men of who He is and of their responsibility to Him, but the day of opportunity will end. Sin ultimately separates from God. Death ends the opportunity to believe God to the saving of the soul and seals our personal destiny, either on God's side, or separated from God eternally.

## **Important Teachings**

1. The man who defies God sets himself on a collision course with

judgment from the Almighty (7:19-20).

2. Defiance against God furthers the process of spiritual hardening (7:22).

3. Man's limitations in the face of God's sovereignty may bring grudging acknowledgment without genuine submission (8:18-19).

4. By defying God, a man severs his link with the blessings and safety found only among God's people (8:22-23).

5. The man who defies God may attempt to bargain with God (8:25, 28; 9:27-28; 10:24).

6. Defiance against God blinds a man to God's sovereign power (9:17-18, 20).

7. The man who chooses to defy God ultimately chooses the way of darkness and death (10:21; 11:4-5, 8).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. Why did God bring the plagues upon Egypt?

God sent the plagues so that the Egyptians would know that He was the Lord (7:5, 17; 8:22), to get honor from Pharaoh (14:4), and to redeem Israel (6:6).

2. What were some things that made it hard for Pharaoh to acknowledge God and let Israel go?

Slave labor had made the Egyptians great by all the things that Israel had done. To let Israel go because they requested it seemed like an affront to Pharaoh's position. Pharaoh's reputation and power were at stake.

3. What are some things that make it hard for men today to surrender to God?

Pride is the reason that men do not surrender to God. It may be expressed as pride of position, pride of reputation, or pride of ability.

4. Why did Pharaoh's confession not spare him further destruction (9:27)?

Pharaoh was not spared further destruction, because his confession did not change the way he lived. He did not surrender to God.

5. What was Pharaoh trying to gain by the compromises he offered?

He was trying to maintain the advantages of having God's people with them but spare himself the consequences of disobeying the God of heaven. He attempted to maintain his control of the situation.

6. What happens to man when he attempts to bargain with God?

God may give him what he wants but also send him leanness of soul. Man's heart is hardened while he attempts to get God to compromise. Man may eventually become deceived into thinking that he has convinced God. Attempting to bargain with God is disobedience.

7. What is the result of God's people accepting a compromise that the world offers?

Those who compromise with the world will be judged with the world. The more a person compromises with the world, the more entangled he becomes in the world's thinking and the more he is influenced away from God.

8. How was God glorified by the destruction of Egypt?

God was glorified in the way He victoriously delivered Israel, but how much more would He have been glorified had the Egyptians turned to Him with all their heart (Joshua 2:11)!

9. How does refusing to hear the message of God affect the results of God's judgment?

When Pharaoh told Moses he did not want to see his face again, he closed the source of God's warnings, but it did not change the judgment he faced. People today can refuse to hear God's message, but they will not escape the condemnation of the wicked.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

"The ungodly are ... like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Psalm 1:4-6).

### **Research Guide**

1. Look up "Egypt—Religion" in a Bible dictionary or a Bible encyclopedia to better understand how the plagues related to their gods.

2. Read Romans 1:16-32 to see the heart-hardening process described.

3. Read Psalm 78:40-53 and Psalm 105:25-38.

4. Look up the different Hebrew words translated harden or hardened, and notice what they mean and how they are translated other places.