

SESSION EIGHT

THE BONDAGE OF EGYPT

Exodus 1—11

I. ORIENTATION TO EXODUS

The book of Exodus is far more than the reaction of a God of justice to the affliction and persecution of one society (or social unit) by another. God is not simply pitying their plight. Unfortunately, many liberation theologians approach the book in such a manner. However, Exodus is not dealing with just any "oppressed society." This is Israel, the unique elected people of God who have been singled out to carry out the divine program (Gen 12). Merrill adds,

The exodus is the most significant historical and theological event of the Old Testament because it marks God's mightiest act in behalf of his people, an act which brought them from slavery to freedom, from fragmentation to solidarity, from a people of promise—the Hebrews—to a nation of fulfillment—Israel.¹

One cannot understand Exodus without understanding Genesis, for Exodus is a step forward in carrying out the divine promises to Abraham. God's plan is to bring blessing to the world through Abraham's seed, and this involves the establishment of a nation which is uniquely related to YHWH. The program of building a nation includes: (1) a people, (2) a constitution, and (3) a land. Genesis culminated with the family of Jacob (the inheritor of the Abrahamic blessing) being brought to Egypt that they might be preserved and multiply. As Joseph died in Egypt, from his lips came the anticipation that God would fulfill His promises to Abraham. Consequently, Exodus takes up this theme of the Abrahamic covenant and advances the drama by detailing the national covenant relationship constituted between YHWH and Israel. In short, Exodus centers on the formation of Israel as a nation under YHWH's rule.

Exodus is composed of four main divisions (cf. *Suppl. 8.1*):

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Bondage	Redemption	Covenant	Tabernacle
Ch 1—11	Ch 12—18	Ch 19—24	Ch 25—40

In the forming of Israel into a nation, they must first be delivered from the bondage and sovereignty of Egypt. Hence, YHWH reveals Himself through the display of His mighty acts of power and judgment over the power of evil (e.g., 9:16). In freeing His people from evil oppression, YHWH reveals

¹Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 57.

Himself as the God of salvation-deliverance. Redeemed by YHWH, the Israelites are led to Sinai to enter into a constitution with YHWH (this constitution takes the form of the familiar Near Eastern suzerainty treaty). Here, the people are constituted a nation by covenantal agreement between the vassal Israel and the suzerain YHWH (the establishment of a theocracy). The book concludes with the construction of the tabernacle (ch 25—40) by which YHWH could dwell in their midst, i.e., be enthroned in the midst of the nation. The following could serve as a synthesis statement for the book of Exodus:

In His faithfulness to the Abrahamic covenant, YHWH delivers the chosen people out of Egypt that He might constitute them a worshipping nation under His kingship in preparation for taking the land of promise.

The first major section (ch 1—11) concerns the bondage in Egypt, documenting what Israel is redeemed from. Chapter one focuses on the state of oppression that Israel is in, chapters 2—4 detail how Moses is raised up to deliver the Hebrews, and chapters 5—11 establish YHWH's sovereignty over Egypt as a prelude to delivering Israel.

II. THE OPPRESSION OF THE HEBREWS (1:1-22)

Following the conclusion of Genesis, there is a period of some 400 years in which the Israelites remained in Egypt. Although they were treated favorably during Joseph's lifetime, they eventually were enslaved. But even then, God's purposes were being accomplished in that they multiplied and became a numerous people. This is the stress of chapter one as reflected in vv 7, 12, and 20. Cassuto comments, "At the termination of each paragraph the main thought is reiterated, namely, that despite all the efforts of Israel's enemies, the blessing bestowed upon them by the Almighty receives corroborative fulfillment in them, and causes them to grow increasingly in numbers and in strength."² Though enslaved, at least they had remained distinct and become numerous. They were now ready to be constituted into a nation!

The whole scene in chapters 1—11 turns on the issue of the Abrahamic covenant (note esp. 2:24-25). The first chapter serves to set the stage from which God will honor the Abrahamic covenant (in addition to fulfilling Gen 15:13-15).

We should also note the stress in ch 1 regarding "labor" and "rigor" (1:13-14). The concept of bondage is predominant. This is noteworthy because several basic biblical motifs are being formulated in Exodus (particularly bondage to sin, redemption, and covenant).

III. MOSES THE DELIVERER IS RAISED UP (2:1—4:31)

God's next phase to bring the people out of bondage involves the raising up of a deliverer, namely Moses [ca. 1526-1406 BC].

A. The Background of Moses (2:1-22)

Moses was a man who was trained for 80 years and who ministered for 40 (Acts 7:23; Ex 7:7). His training included 40 years in Pharaoh's court: "*and Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians*" (Acts 7:22). Eventually, he had to face the choice of identity. In 2:10, we are told that "*he became her son,*" i.e., that Pharaoh's daughter was prepared to give Moses the rights and privileges of inheritance. This appointment as heir would have meant certain responsibilities at the royal court, which in turn would have involved him in many worldly and

²Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. by Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), 15.

ungodly religious practices. Moses had the choice to be a worldly administrator or a theocratic administrator. Moses rejected the former as Hebrews 11:24-25 clarifies: "*By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of the Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.*"

There are some interesting parallels between the savior Moses and the "New Moses" found in Jesus Christ. Both are sovereignly preserved by God from an evil king who attempts to kill them (and even in a similar manner of trying to kill off all male infants). From ordinary and humble parentage, God raises up a redeemer! Both have to be hid: Moses by his mother in Egypt and Jesus by His parents in Egypt.

When Moses has a son by Zipporah, he names him Gershom ("a stranger there") saying, "*I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.*" Moses recognized the right to the land that had been promised to Abraham and that the covenant needed to be fulfilled. With the naming of his son, he is ready to be tapped on the shoulder by God.

B. The Call to Moses (2:23—4:17)

The mention of the death of the king in 2:23 has little to do with the bondage and crying of the Israelites, but it makes the point that with the king dead who sought to slay Moses, there was nothing to prevent Moses returning to Egypt.

Just as Moses recognized the proper residence of the Israelites was to be in the land of promise, so God was ready to fulfill the covenant promise (2:23-25). The Israelites do not go unnoticed by God. Indeed, He takes notice of them because of the Abrahamic covenant! They are the people through whom He intends to work out His divine program. Though hundreds of years had passed with this people in the land of Egypt, it in no way abrogated the covenant. This interruption had merely contributed to the divine program.

The opening words of ch 3 are certainly meaningful: "*Now Moses was pasturing the flock . . .*" Perhaps he did not realize just how significant this ordinary task would be to his future role as a shepherd of God's people.

When the LORD appears to Moses in the burning bush, He identifies Himself on the basis of the Abrahamic covenant with the desire to give His people the land. By the appearance of the burning bush, God was providing a revelation of the *Shekinah* (a word used to describe the divine presence of God in the world). This was to indicate what kind of God He was (3:5 - "*do not come near here*") . . . a God of glory. The bush was simply a temporary dwelling as the tabernacle would later become, but Moses could not come any closer because a way of approach to God had not yet been provided. The rest of Exodus, Numbers and Joshua are the outworking of what is promised in 3:8.

The purpose of this revelation by way of the burning bush becomes clear with vs 6, for we see that it is God's way of carrying through on His remembrance of the covenant (2:24-25).

The Divine Name: Yahweh

The idea to deliver the Israelites must have been wonderful news to Moses, but that Moses should be the instigator was reluctantly received. Thus God promises to be with him and reveals Himself as "I AM WHO I AM" which is the basis of the name YHWH (i.e., both are formed from the verb הָיָה [*hāyāh*], meaning "to be").³ This emphasizes His sovereign

³According to the Jewish Mishnah, there is no resurrection for the One who "utters the Divine name according to its letters" (*Sanhedrin* 9:10).

independence and covenantal relationship. The name is an exposition of His character. In this character, He will effectively control history consistent with His covenant with Abraham.

Thus the name is closely related to His promises and His faithfulness. Cassuto notes, "There is also implicit in this interpretation the thought of implementing the promises: I am who I am always, ever alike, and consequently I am true to My word and fulfill it . . ." ⁴ Thus His name reminds us of God's faithfulness and unswerving allegiance to His promises, his people, and His covenants! That is all He will tell His people about Himself: "I AM." But as they dare to act in response to His commands and instruction, they will find that indeed He is the faithful helping One who is ever true to His Word . . . who can be counted on! Perhaps the certain amount of indefiniteness is meant to conjure up in the mind that He is everything that He has revealed Himself to be in history past, especially to the Patriarchs. He is not saying that He does not want to be known more intimately; only that at this point He has revealed about Himself what He has desired. This is in accord with progressive revelation . . . more will be given in due time. [cf. comments on 6:3]

As Moses approaches the Hebrews, he is to remind them that YHWH is acting in regard to the Abrahamic covenant (see 3:16). He is to first alert them to the fact of the theophany itself and then to the good news "*I have surely remembered you.*" "The underlying intention of the phrasing in our passage is to awaken in the hearts of the enslaved people in Egypt the consciousness that the time of redemption has arrived." ⁵

In 4:1-17, Moses resists God's call, offering three objections:

1. Lack of Confidence that the People Will Accept Him (4:1-9)

The older generation identified him still with Pharaoh's court, while the younger generation who did not know him would be unwilling to follow a shepherd from the wilderness. In response, God gave him "sign miracles" (first exposure to signs in Scripture) to authenticate the messenger and his message (note in 4:29-31 how the sign is subordinate to the word that was delivered). When signs are given in Scripture, they usually initiate a new program. The rod is significant because it shows "that he is not only not inferior to the Egyptian enchanter who knows how to charm snakes and to make them as completely motionless as a rod, and afterwards to change them back to the normal vitality, but that he is also able to perform the opposite processes, which are even more amazing." ⁶ The leprous hand was also significant:

This sign, too, is in keeping with the Egyptian environment, for leprosy was widespread in Egypt. Since it was accounted an incurable disease, its removal from Moses' hand was a miraculous feat calculated to leave a deep impression on the minds of all who witnessed it. ⁷

Regarding the Nile sign, Cassuto states,

The Nile, the source of life and fertility in the land of Egypt, is regarded by the Egyptians as a deity, and if you show your brethren that He who sent you rules

⁴Cassuto, 38.

⁵Ibid., 41.

⁶Ibid., 46.

⁷Ibid., 47.

even over the Nile, they will see therein clear proof that He is able to overcome all the forces that exist for the benefit of Egypt, not excluding those that are held to be divine powers, and they will no longer doubt your mission.⁸

2. Moses' Claim to Not be Able to Speak and Communicate (4:10-12)

Notice that the promise in vs 12 is a *message*, indicating that the difficulty was not really of speech but of the lack of a message.

3. The Third Objection: Unwillingness (4:13-17)

The third objection is the most serious of all: he really does not want to go. This even drew God's anger. As a result, God gave him the aid of Aaron (a decision Moses would eventually come to regret). The role "*you shall be as God to him*" (vs 16) established the channel of divine message (God → Moses → Aaron).

C. The Return to Egypt (4:18-31)

On the way, the LORD nearly kills Moses. The context involves the circumcision of his son, and Moses was apparently following the wishes of his wife rather than the LORD's command (see Gen 17:14). This was Moses' responsibility, and to omit it would have been a sign of unfaithfulness and unbelief towards the covenant. The point is that Moses had obligations to the covenant, and not even he was exempt!

IV. YHWH'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER EGYPT (5:1—11:10)

These chapters are lessons in theology about God, explaining who He is and why Pharaoh should submit to Him. Pharaoh begins by asking "Who is the LORD?" and he is taught the meaning of God's name, i.e., His character (7:5,17; 8:22; 10:2; 14:4,18; 16:12; 29:46; 31:13).

A. God's Plan to Reveal Himself as YHWH (5:1—7:7)

This section begins with Moses' initial encounter with Pharaoh which only results in increased hardship for the Hebrews, thereby incurring the resentment of the Hebrews. We are made aware that Pharaoh was unacquainted with the name YHWH. Only the term "God of the Hebrews" was recognizable to him. He did not know this divinity who demanded this of him. "In his arrogance, he applies the expression *lying words* to what the previous section termed *the words which the LORD had spoken*."⁹

The resentment of his oppressed brethren provides the setting and significance for the revelation about to be made known. "Moses, too, is disillusioned and reproachful, not because Pharaoh had refused to concede his request, for he was prepared for that from the outset, but because he had learnt that his initial action had brought fresh calamity upon the heads of his oppressed brethren."¹⁰

Perplexed, Moses turns to the LORD for an answer. God's counsel to Moses (5:22—6:13) centers on the Abrahamic covenant! Apart from the Abrahamic covenant, there is no reason for God to move in and deliver the Hebrews.

⁸Ibid., 48.

⁹Cassuto, 68.

¹⁰Ibid., 73.

As El Shaddai, He had the power to deliver them. As YHWH, He was obligated and faithful to deliver them. The point of 6:3 where God says, "*by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them*" is that the special significance of YHWH had not been manifested to them as He was now about to make it manifest (not that it had not been introduced before). [See notes on 3:13ff.]. He had showed Himself in the character of El Shaddai but not in the character of YHWH (cf. vv 3,7), particularly in the area of His redemptive power.

One of the foundational pillars of the "documentary hypothesis" (see notes on Source Analysis - Session 12) is drawn from Ex 6, because of its supposed relation to "sources" that are identified by the variant uses of the names of God. The point is not that His name YHWH was not known to the Israelites of old, but rather that the manifestation of His character that this name YHWH implies was not yet evident.¹¹

We should be careful to notice the word "redeem" in vs 6. God will bring them out from under bondage, He will deliver them, and He will "redeem" them. This is the first reference in the Bible to God redeeming His people. This act of redeeming them in Exodus forms the background for our NT conception of redemption.

The amazing thing is that after this marvelous new encounter with YHWH and the crescendoing great promises, we read in 6:9 that the sons of Israel would not listen to Moses. Cassuto writes,

Again Moses' path is obstructed. Such is the usual fate of every one who engages in an enterprise of vast importance, which is, at the same time, beset with difficulties: he experiences moments of triumph and also of reverse but his true greatness is seen when he does not permit the hour of defeat to divert him from his path or cause him to despair of ultimate success.¹²

The insertion of the genealogy (6:14-27) anticipates the Levitical priesthood to come and emphasizes the inclusion of Moses and Aaron in this significant line. Their part in YHWH's revelation of Himself and His redemptive nature through the hardening of Pharaoh was a priestly function.

The section 6:28—7:7 reveals the divine plan to harden Pharaoh's heart for the purpose of multiplying YHWH's signs and wonders in Egypt, thus magnifying the greatness of His redemptive act.

Before the previous appearance to Pharaoh, God had told Moses that Pharaoh would not consent. So God forewarns again. The emphasis on their obedience in 7:6 reflects their comprehension of 7:3. Pharaoh's reluctance will further God's intentions (comp. 6:12,13 with

¹¹The name El Shaddai is not only connected with the idea of "power" but also "fertility." Regarding the name El Shaddai, Cassuto notes, "The Israelites were wont to associate the idea of the Divinity who rules over nature and bestows upon mankind fertility, as we can see from every verse in the Pentateuch, in which this name occurs" (78). Cf. Gen 17:1-2; 28:3 and 35:11. Cassuto concludes,

"This enables us to understand the text before us clearly: I revealed Myself (God declares) to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in My aspect that finds expression in the name Shaddai, and I made them fruitful and multiplied them and gave them children and children's children, but by the name YHWH . . . in My character as expressed by this designation, I was not known to them, that is, it was not given to them to recognize Me as One that fulfills His promises, because the assurance with regard to the possession of the Land, which I had given them, I had not yet fulfilled" (79).

¹²Cassuto, 82.

7:6). Apparently, they were beginning to grasp YHWH's plan and the fact that Pharaoh's reluctance was a necessary part of this plan.

B. The Pouring Out of the Ten Plagues (7:8—11:10)

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart is necessary for YHWH's revelation of Himself to both Egypt and Israel. Now God will show His supremacy by initiating ten plagues. These plagues are not simply for the discomfort of the Egyptians. More so, they are a judgment and commentary on the polytheistic worship and evil supernatural involvement of the Egyptians. Considerable time should be spent on understanding these plagues in the light of Egypt's religious worship.

The initial encounter with the serpent-rod is a clue that the plagues are not simply a display of supernatural fireworks. Even the magicians of Egypt can do the supernatural. In the midst of the supernatural, how is Pharaoh to discern the hand of God? That is the issue as Brevard Childs points out:

How can Pharaoh be made to discern the hand of God? The so-called "supernatural" element was in itself not enough. The divine sign is made to look like a cheap, juggler's trick which a whole row of Egyptian magicians can duplicate with apparent ease.¹³

What is involved here is a genuine conflict of power, and God must show not just the supernatural, but His sovereignty over the supernatural world. YHWH will not only do the supernatural, He will do what they cannot do, and He will strike a crushing blow to the gods they worshipped.

The religious world of Egypt was composed of countless deities, at least 80 substantial ones. The Nile and the sun were among the more prominent. The sun god was Re (or Ra) and during the New Kingdom Period of Egypt came to dominate the national religion as the state-god, Amon-Re.¹⁴ But the Nile was also significant:

The gods who personified the vegetative powers of nature were fused into a deity called Osiris, who was also the god of the Nile. Throughout Egyptian history these two great powers who ruled the universe, Re and Osiris, vied with each other for supremacy.¹⁵

To turn the Nile to blood and darken the sky was not only a triumph for YHWH but an insult of the greatest magnitude upon this pagan society.

The plagues upon Egypt did more than accomplish the willingness of Pharaoh to release the Hebrews. They also discredited the gods of Egypt and made Pharaoh recognize YHWH as sovereign. There were lessons for Israel as well, particularly regarding the worthlessness of idolatrous forms of worship. John Davis adds, "They were used by God to demonstrate His awesome power not only in the redemption of His people from the land of Egypt, but His capability in caring for them and providing for their future needs."¹⁶

B. Further Notes on the Plagues

¹³Brevard Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 152.

¹⁴Cambridge Ancient History, vol. II, Part 1, 323.

¹⁵Edward M. Burns, *Western Civilizations*, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1973), 1:33.

¹⁶John Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt; Studies in the Book of Exodus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1971), 90.

Introduction: The passages dealing with the plagues reflect a very harmonious construction. The first nine plagues are divisible into three cycles consisting of three units each. "In each cycle, the first and second plagues come after Moses has warned Pharaoh; the third comes without warning. . . . before the first plague of each cycle Moses is commanded to stand in the morning before Pharaoh in the open, whereas before the second he is told to come before Pharaoh, that is, to appear before him in his palace" (Cassuto, 92-3). Cassuto concludes, ". . . it is manifest that we have here before us an organically homogeneous composition, not the chance result of an involved process whereby various fragments from different sources were juxtaposed . . ." (93).

Prologue (7:8-13). The Torah is opposed to all forms of magic, because it seeks to compel the forces of nature and the demons, and even the gods to carry out the will of man apart from God. Though the Egyptians can do magic, the point is that Israel's God is superior! This would also be an important lesson for Israel for their future in Canaan.

1. Plague One (7:14-25)

The first plague focuses on the Nile, the most significant factor to Egypt's welfare. Even today, over 90% of the population live within close proximity to the Nile . . . it is Egypt's lifeblood!

The Nile, which gives to the land of Egypt its fertility, is regarded by the Egyptians as a god; nevertheless you will see, Pharaoh, that at the command of my God, who is truly God and has dominion over all things, I shall smite this 'divine' creature, after which its nature will degenerate and its waters will cease to be a source of blessing to Egypt as usual (Cassuto, 97).

2. Plague Two (8:1-15)

The use of frogs was also significant to Egyptian culture. Cassuto (101) notes,

The Egyptians attributed to the frogs, which swarmed in the waters in countless numbers, a divine power, and regarded them as a symbol of fertility. One of the goddesses of the Egyptian pantheon, Heket, the spouse of the god Khnum, who is depicted in the form of a woman with a frog's head, was held to blow the breath of life into the nostrils of the bodies that her husband fashioned on the potter's wheel from the dust of the earth. . . . The Pentateuchal narrative intends to convey that Israel's God alone rules the world, and that He only bestows on His creatures, according to His will, the power of fertility, and that these frogs, which were considered by the Egyptians a symbol of fecundity, can be transformed, if He so desires . . . from a token of blessing to one of blight.

This "fertility" theme will become very predominant once Israel is in the land! The result of the plague is quite ironic, when Pharaoh calls the magicians to take action. They are able to extend the plague, but not end it; this undoubtedly displeased Pharaoh. This is the significant point: that only the true God can bring the desired relief . . . "*that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God.*"

3. Plague Three: Gnats (8:16-19)

There is no warning with the 3rd plague or an appearing before Pharaoh. Significantly, even the magicians are willing to admit their defeat when they exclaim to Pharaoh: "*This is the finger of God*" (8:19). But notice they only say "God" and not "YHWH;" it is only a partial admission!

4. Plague Four: Insects (8:20-32)

One of the notable features about this plague is the stress put on the discrimination between the LORD's people and that of the Egyptians: "*I will put a division between My people and your people.*" Through this, YHWH is magnified . . . throughout the whole earth everything is done according to His will, and His people are distinct in His sight. Pharaoh still does not grasp the LORD's right to absolute rule: although he is beginning to concede rights (having to let them go to sacrifice), he tries to restrict this activity, as though he is still the one who decides!

5. Plague Five: Severe Pest to Kill Cattle (9:1-7)

It is interesting to note that "the hand of the LORD" is threatened upon them (vs 3), whereas before the magicians had taken note of the "finger of God" (8:19). Furthermore, the distinction is extended to Israel's livestock, and Pharaoh is not given the opportunity to choose the time.

6. Plague Six: Boils (9:8-12)

Again, no warning is give for the 3rd plague of this second cycle. A polemic is extended upon the magicians who accompanied Pharaoh: they were not only unable to remove the disease from the land of Egypt, but they were unable to protect themselves. Progression is going on here: they have gone from active participation to silence, and now unable to even stand silently!

7. Plague Seven: Hail (9:13-35)

This is the beginning of the 3rd cycle, which is severer and more decisive than the earlier ones. Not only does Moses appear before Pharaoh again, but he even brings a stinging rebuke from the LORD. YHWH declares His intention to use this whole affair to make a point to the whole earth: there is no other like Him; no other has His power; His name will be proclaimed through all the earth. On the other hand, Pharaoh is rebuked for continuing to exalt himself by not being humble before YHWH (9:17). With the plague, Pharaoh comes to the point of confession (9:27), but even that falls short: "But he still remains arrogant and declines to acknowledge his earlier and primary sins; hence he adds: 'this time,' as though he had no other sin on his conscience except his refusal on this occasion" (Cassuto, 120). Despite his token submission, Moses charges Pharaoh, "*I know that you do not yet fear YHWH God*" (9:30). "Although you are afraid of the severity of the plague, and also generally of the Divine power, nevertheless the Lord God, the God whom we designate by the name YHWH, you have still not recognized and you still do not fear" (Cassuto, 121).

8. Plague Eight: Locusts (10:1-20)

This plague certainly devastated the country economically, and even Pharaoh's servants (vs 7) counselled him to adopt a conciliatory attitude. His consent in vs 8 is once again superficial, attested by the question about who the ones were who were going. It is as if he were saying, "I wish to know precisely who among you will be going, for I shall give permission for this journey only to such as I approve" (Cassuto, 125). He still has not learned that YHWH deserves absolute submission . . . and Pharaoh is nothing! After the plague, his confession is becoming more truthful: he acknowledges his sin against YHWH, and does not make restriction as before.

9. Plague Nine: Darkness (10:21-29)

This plague marks the last encounter between the two leaders (vv 28-29). Being the third plague of the cycle, this one comes without warning. On first reading, this plague seems to be not so severe (a more striking fact since it is the 3rd plague of the 3rd cycle). However, this was a forceful polemic against the Egyptian ungodly worship system, for the sun was worshipped in their culture above all else. Cassuto remarks, "This plague will demonstrate how great is the Lord's power against the gods of Egypt: when the God of Israel wills it, the sun, which is regarded by the Egyptians as the chief deity, will be hidden and unable to shine upon its worshippers" (129). More so than pain, this undermines their whole religion!

10. Plague Ten: Death of the First-born (11:1-8)

The speech is a continuation of 10:29, for it concludes with Moses departing Pharaoh in fierce anger. Though Pharaoh threatened Moses with death (10:28), it would actually be the other way around: the Egyptians, and even Pharaoh's house, would be struck with death. Moses' final departure was not like one who was banished, but as one who went out on his own free volition, as one who no longer wished to stand in Pharaoh's presence!