

SESSION 10

GOD SENT TEN DISASTERS TO EGYPT

We will start reading God's story again in the Book of Exodus. Jacob's family had been living in the foreign land of Egypt for a few generations. By this time, the family had grown very large. There were hundreds of thousands of Jacob's descendants. As a group, they were rich and powerful. They all spoke the same Hebrew language. They worshiped the one true Creator God.



EXODUS 1:6-22

⁶ In time, Joseph and all of his brothers died, ending that entire generation. ⁷ But their descendants, the Israelites, had many children and grandchildren. In fact, they multiplied so greatly that they became extremely powerful and filled the land.

⁸ Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph or what he had done. ⁹ He said to his people, "Look, the people of Israel now outnumber us and are stronger than we are. ¹⁰ We must make a plan to keep them from growing even more. If we don't, and if war breaks out, they will join our enemies and fight against us. Then they will escape from the country."

¹¹ So the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves. They appointed brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down with crushing labor. They forced them to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses as supply centers for the king. ¹² But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more the Israelites multiplied and spread, and the more alarmed the Egyptians became. ¹³ So the Egyptians worked the people of Israel without mercy. ¹⁴ They made their lives bitter, forcing them to mix mortar and make bricks and do all the work in the fields. They were ruthless in all their demands.

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

¹⁵ Then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, gave this order to the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah: ¹⁶ “When you help the Hebrew women as they give birth, watch as they deliver. If the baby is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live.” ¹⁷ But because the midwives feared God, they refused to obey the king’s orders. They allowed the boys to live, too.

¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called for the midwives. “Why have you done this?” he demanded. “Why have you allowed the boys to live?”

¹⁹ “The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women,” the midwives replied. “They are more vigorous and have their babies so quickly that we cannot get there in time.”

²⁰ So God was good to the midwives, and the Israelites continued to multiply, growing more and more powerful.

²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

²² Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River. But you may let the girls live.”

The Pharaoh, or King, of Egypt at this time was afraid of the Israelites. He thought that they could help an enemy nation to fight against Egypt. But he also needed them to do building and farming work in Egypt. So Pharaoh decided to make the Israelites slaves and to treat them very badly. He did not want them to turn against Egypt so he tried to make them weak. God’s story says that their lives were *made bitter*.⁹¹ But God was taking care of the Israelites. More babies were born and the number of Israelites grew. So Pharaoh decided that all newborn Hebrew boys must be drowned in the Nile River.

God’s enemy, Satan, was guiding Pharaoh. He was trying to destroy God’s people. Satan did not want Jacob’s family - the nation of Israel - to live. God had said that a man would come from this nation to destroy Satan and to take away his power over the earth and over people. We can be sure that Satan wanted to stop God’s plan.

God knew what Satan was trying to do and he knew everything that would happen to the Children of Israel. Many years before, God had told Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in a foreign land. God loves people and does not want them to suffer⁹². He loves to show mercy and to be kind. He reaches out and rescues people who accept that they need him. God would not let Satan stop his plan to rescue people. So God had a plan to save the Israelites.



EXODUS 2:1-10

¹ About this time, a man and woman from the tribe of Levi got married. ² The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She saw that he was a special baby and kept him hidden for three months. ³ But when she could no longer hide him, she got a basket made of papyrus reeds and waterproofed it with tar and pitch. She put the baby in the basket and laid it among the reeds along the bank

91. **bitter** - very difficult and unhappy

92. **suffer** - to have something bad or painful or harmful happen to you

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of the Nile River. ⁴ The baby's sister then stood at a distance, watching to see what would happen to him.

⁵ Soon Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe in the river, and her attendants walked along the riverbank. When the princess saw the basket among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it for her. ⁶ When the princess opened it, she saw the baby. The little boy was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This must be one of the Hebrew children," she said.

⁷ Then the baby's sister approached the princess. "Should I go and find one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" she asked.

⁸ "Yes, do!" the princess replied. So the girl went and called the baby's mother.

⁹ "Take this baby and nurse him for me," the princess told the baby's mother. "I will pay you for your help." So the woman took her baby home and nursed him.

¹⁰ Later, when the boy was older, his mother brought him back to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him as her own son. The princess named him Moses, for she explained, "I lifted him out of the water."

A man and his wife from the Israelite tribe of Levi had a son. If he were found, the Egyptians would have drowned him in the Nile River. So, for three months, his mother hid him. Then, she put him in a basket in the reeds at the edge of the river. She made the basket so that water could not get in.

Pharaoh's daughter went to the river to wash herself. She found the baby in the basket and decided that he should live. She named him "Moses" and later adopted⁹³ him as her own child. Moses grew up and had a very good education⁹⁴ in Egypt.

God was preparing⁹⁵ Moses. He wanted Moses to help carry out his plan to rescue the Israelites. God gives important work for people to do. He equips⁹⁶ them for the work he wants them to do. He wants people to be part of his plan to rescue other people. He had important work for Moses to do and he made sure that Moses was ready to do it.



EXODUS 2:11-14, 23

¹¹ Many years later, when Moses had grown up, he went out to visit his own people, the Hebrews, and he saw how hard they were forced to work. During his visit, he saw an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews. ¹² After looking in all directions to make sure no one was watching, Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand.

¹³ The next day, when Moses went out to visit his people again, he saw two Hebrew men fighting. "Why are you beating up your friend?" Moses said to the one who had started the fight.

¹⁴ The man replied, "Who appointed you to be our prince and judge? Are you going to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?"...

93. **adopted** - to take another person's child and bring it up as your own

94. **education** - going to school and learning

95. **preparing** - getting someone ready for something they have to do

96. **equips** - prepares someone for a task or for work they have to do

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

... ²³ Years passed, and the king of Egypt died. But the Israelites continued to groan under their burden of slavery. They cried out for help, and their cry rose up to God.

Moses wanted to help his people. He visited the places where they lived and worked. One day, he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew so he killed the Egyptian and buried his body. Pharaoh heard about what Moses had done and so Moses had to run away. Moses went to Midian, which was somewhere to the northeast of Egypt. Moses married and settled in the area. He lived there for many years away from his own people and away from the Egyptians. Later, the Pharaoh of Egypt died and another Pharaoh took his place. But the Israelites still had terrible lives and they called out to God and asked him to help them.



EXODUS 2:24,25

²⁴ God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ²⁵ He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act.

God says that he *heard their groaning*. He heard them when they called out to him. He remembered his promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God is loving and merciful⁹⁷ and he wants to help people who know that they need his help. And God never forgets the things that he has said he will do; he always does them.

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. They had no way to escape and they had no hope. God was the only one who could rescue them. God had a plan to use Moses to rescue the Israelites.



EXODUS 3:1-15,
4:1, 4:10-17

¹ One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up. ³ "This is amazing," Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it."

⁴ When the Lord saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

"Here I am!" Moses replied.

⁵ "Do not come any closer," the Lord warned. "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. ⁶ I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the Lord told him, "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from

97. **merciful** - showing forgiveness to someone who you have the power and the right to punish or harm

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the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live. 9 Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them. ¹⁰ Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt.”

¹¹ But Moses protested to God, “Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?”

¹² God answered, “I will be with you. And this is your sign that I am the one who has sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this very mountain.”

¹³ But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

¹⁴ God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.” ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.

This is my eternal name,
my name to remember for all generations...

... ^{4:1} But Moses protested again, “What if they won’t believe me or listen to me? What if they say, ‘The Lord never appeared to you?’”...

... ¹⁰ But Moses pleaded with the Lord, “O Lord, I’m not very good with words. I never have been, and I’m not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled.”

¹¹ Then the Lord asked Moses, “Who makes a person’s mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the Lord? ¹² Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say.”

¹³ But Moses again pleaded, “Lord, please! Send anyone else.”

¹⁴ Then the Lord became angry with Moses. “All right,” he said. “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he speaks well. And look! He is on his way to meet you now. He will be delighted to see you. ¹⁵ Talk to him, and put the words in his mouth. I will be with both of you as you speak, and I will instruct you both in what to do. ¹⁶ Aaron will be your spokesman to the people. He will be your mouthpiece, and you will stand in the place of God for him, telling him what to say.

¹⁷ And take your shepherd’s staff with you, and use it to perform the miraculous signs I have shown you.”

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

God listened to his people when they called out to him. He moved ahead with his plan to rescue them. One day, Moses took his flock of sheep into the wilderness⁹⁸ on a mountain called Sinai. This mountain is sometimes called Horeb. There, Moses saw something amazing. He saw a bush that was on fire, but it was not being burned up. Moses moved closer to look at it. He heard his name being called from the burning bush. God was the one speaking. He said he was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God told Moses that he saw the terrible lives of his people and that he had heard their cries for help. He said he would rescue them and lead them out of Egypt and back to the land of Canaan.

The Lord said that Moses would lead the people out of Egypt. But Moses did not think the Israelites would follow him or listen to him. He asked God who he should say had sent him. God said, “*I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.*” God said this name was to be remembered for all generations. This name - I AM - that God gave to himself is a very, very important name. God was saying that he always was, always is, and always will be. He does not live in time like we do; he is able to live without help from anyone, and everything else gets life from him.

Moses still thought that the Israelites would not listen to him. He said that he was not able to do what God wanted him to do. God told Moses that he would be with him and would help him by showing signs of his power. Later, you can read about these signs in Exodus Chapters 3 and 4 in your Bible. And the Lord said that he would also give another sign that he was with Moses. God said that later, Moses would lead the Israelites back to the mountain at Sinai to worship God there.

Moses still did not think he would be able to do what God had asked him to do. He asked God to send someone else. After Moses said that, God was angry with him. Moses was part of God’s plan but Moses did not trust God to help him. But God listened to Moses and said that Moses’ brother Aaron could go with him. Aaron would be the one to speak.



EXODUS 4:29-31

²⁹ Then Moses and Aaron returned to Egypt and called all the elders of Israel together. ³⁰ Aaron told them everything the Lord had told Moses, and Moses performed the miraculous signs as they watched. ³¹ Then the people of Israel were convinced that the Lord had sent Moses and Aaron. When they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.

Moses and Aaron told the Israelites what God had said. They told the Israelites that God said he would rescue them. When the Israelites heard that the Lord cared about them and that he saw their terrible lives, they bowed down to worship him.

After they spoke to the Israelites, Moses and Aaron went to speak to Pharaoh.

98. wilderness - an area where there are no people living and no farming

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EXODUS 5:1-9

¹ After this presentation to Israel's leaders, Moses and Aaron went and spoke to Pharaoh. They told him, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go so they may hold a festival in my honor in the wilderness."

² "Is that so?" retorted Pharaoh. "And who is the Lord? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go."

³ But Aaron and Moses persisted. "The God of the Hebrews has met with us," they declared. "So let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness so we can offer sacrifices to the Lord our God. If we don't, he will kill us with a plague or with the sword."

⁴ Pharaoh replied, "Moses and Aaron, why are you distracting the people from their tasks? Get back to work!" ⁵ Look, there are many of your people in the land, and you are stopping them from their work."

⁶ That same day Pharaoh sent this order to the Egyptian slave drivers and the Israelite foremen: ⁷ "Do not supply any more straw for making bricks. Make the people get it themselves!"

⁸ But still require them to make the same number of bricks as before. Don't reduce the quota. They are lazy. That's why they are crying out, 'Let us go and offer sacrifices to our God.'

⁹ Load them down with more work. Make them sweat! That will teach them to listen to lies!"

Pharaoh did not listen to Moses and Aaron. He said that he did not know the Lord. Pharaoh decided to make life even harder for the Israelites. He said that now they would not only have the same amount of work to do, but they would also have to find their own straw to make bricks for building.

The Egyptian people thought that Pharaoh was a god. Pharaoh and the Egyptian people had turned away from God a long time ago. They had made up many stories that they believed about how the world began and about life and death. They had many false gods that they worshiped. Pharaoh did not believe in the God of the Hebrew people and he did not want to follow what he said. Because God knows everything, he knew that Pharaoh would not listen to Moses and Aaron.



EXODUS 6:1-8

¹ Then the Lord told Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. When he feels the force of my strong hand, he will let the people go. In fact, he will force them to leave his land!"

² And God said to Moses, "I am Yahweh—'the Lord.'"

³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El-Shaddai—'God Almighty'—but I did not reveal my name, Yahweh, to them.

⁴ And I reaffirmed my covenant with them. Under its terms, I promised to give them the land of Canaan, where they were living as foreigners. ⁵ You can be sure that I have heard the groans of the people of Israel, who are now slaves to the Egyptians. And I am well aware of my covenant with them.

⁶ "Therefore, say to the people of Israel: 'I am the Lord. I will free you from your

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

oppression and will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment. ⁷ I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt.

⁸ I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your very own possession. I am the Lord!”

God told Moses that he would show Pharaoh his great power. And after that, Pharaoh would let the people go. God said that when Pharaoh saw how strong he was, Pharaoh would *force them to leave his land*. Pharaoh would make the Israelites leave Egypt.

God said he would show his power to the Israelites. They would see that he was their God. He had chosen them as his own people. He wanted them to know him and to see him rescue them. He wanted to show them who he truly is by freeing them from slavery. He was their God and he would take care of them.

God’s story now tells us about nine disasters or plagues⁹⁹ that God brought to the Egyptian people and their animals. It was a very terrible time for Egypt. You can read later in your Bible about the nine disasters in Exodus Chapters 7 to 10. The Nile River turned to blood, then a huge number of frogs came, then a huge number of gnats¹⁰⁰ and biting flies. Next, a sickness killed Egyptian animals in great numbers. After this, all the Egyptian animals and people got terrible boils,¹⁰¹ then a huge hail¹⁰² storm came, followed by a plague of locusts,¹⁰³ and finally three days of total darkness.

God was showing his great power. He wanted the Egyptians to know that he was the God of the Israelites, the One True Creator. The false gods that the Egyptians believed in could not save them. God clearly showed that it was he who had brought the disasters to Egypt. The Israelites and their animals did not suffer at all from the plagues. God showed his love and mercy¹⁰⁴ to them so that they knew that they were his chosen people.

As each new plague arrived, Pharaoh said he would let the Israelites go. But when each plague stopped, Pharaoh changed his mind and did not let them go. Finally, after the last plague of darkness, Pharaoh said he would kill Moses if he came again to ask him to let the Israelites go.

The Lord then told Moses that he would send one more disaster to Egypt. After that, Pharaoh would want the Israelites to leave Egypt. God said that the firstborn son of every Egyptian family would die. You can read later in your Bible exactly what God said to Moses in Exodus Chapter 11.

99. **plagues** - things that happen to cause damage or sickness to many people

100. **gnats** - small flies like mosquitoes

101. **boils** - inflamed pus-filled swellings on the skin

102. **hail** - pieces of ice that fall like rain

103. **locusts** - large flying grasshoppers that eat plants

104. **mercy** - love or forgiveness shown to someone when you could harm them

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God told the Israelites that they must do something important before this last disaster came. He told them to carefully listen to what he said to do. If they did what he said, their firstborn sons would be saved.



EXODUS 12:3-7

³ Announce to the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each family must choose a lamb or a young goat for a sacrifice, one animal for each household. ⁴ If a family is too small to eat a whole animal, let them share with another family in the neighborhood. Divide the animal according to the size of each family and how much they can eat. ⁵ The animal you select must be a one-year-old male, either a sheep or a goat, with no defects.

⁶ “Take special care of this chosen animal until the evening of the fourteenth day of this first month. Then the whole assembly of the community of Israel must slaughter their lamb or young goat at twilight. ⁷ They are to take some of the blood and smear it on the sides and top of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the animal.

God said that the Children of Israel should choose a lamb or young goat. This animal must be perfect. It should not have even one thing wrong with it. Then, on the day that God told them, they should kill the lamb or goat. The blood of the animal should flow out. God wanted to them to do this to show that they believed certain things. If they did, it would show that they believed that what God said was true. It would show that they knew that they deserved to die just like the Egyptians. It would show that they understood that the only way to escape death themselves was if a lamb or goat died in their place. They would be agreeing with God that they deserved death because of their sin, but that God had given them a way to escape that death. An animal would die in the place of their firstborn sons. God also said that the bones of the animal should not to be broken when they killed and ate it.

God said that the Israelite families should take some of the blood from the lamb or goat and smear it on the sides and top of the doorframes of the houses. This means they should put some blood above and also on both sides of the doors of their houses. Then, after they ate a meal of the meat of the lamb or goat, they should stay inside their houses with the blood on the wood at the sides and top of their doors.



EXODUS 12:12-14

¹² On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of Egypt. I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I am the Lord! ¹³ But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ “This is a day to remember. Each year, from generation to generation, you must celebrate it as a special festival to the Lord. This is a law for all time.

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

God said that he would go through the land of Egypt taking the life of the firstborn sons and animals. He would show that he is the One who is powerful, not the Egyptian false gods. He said that when he saw the blood on the houses where the Israelites were staying he would pass over those houses. The blood would show that death had already come to that house so God would not kill the firstborn there.



EXODUS 12:28-30

²⁸ So the people of Israel did just as the Lord had commanded through Moses and Aaron. ²⁹ And that night at midnight, the Lord struck down all the firstborn sons in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sat on his throne, to the firstborn son of the prisoner in the dungeon. Even the firstborn of their livestock were killed. ³⁰ Pharaoh and all his officials and all the people of Egypt woke up during the night, and loud wailing was heard throughout the land of Egypt. There was not a single house where someone had not died.

The Israelites believed God and did what he said to do. They put the blood on their doorposts and God saw it. He passed over the houses with the blood and did not kill their firstborn sons. God accepted the death of the animals in their place when he saw the blood.

But the Egyptians could not escape. There was no blood on the doors of their houses. There was nothing to show that death had already happened there. And so, at midnight, God killed all the firstborn sons of Egypt and all the firstborn animals as well. Pharaoh's own son was killed, too. That same night, Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron to him.



EXODUS 12:31-33

³¹ Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron during the night. "Get out!" he ordered. "Leave my people—and take the rest of the Israelites with you! Go and worship the Lord as you have requested. ³² Take your flocks and herds, as you said, and be gone. Go, but bless me as you leave." ³³ All the Egyptians urged the people of Israel to get out of the land as quickly as possible, for they thought, "We will all die!"

Pharaoh told Moses and Aaron to take the Israelites and leave his country. The Egyptians wanted them to leave so much that they gave them silver and gold and other valuable¹⁰⁵ things. God did what he said he would do for Moses and his people. And he did what he promised to Abraham hundreds of years before. He told Abraham that his people would come away with great wealth from the nation that had made them slaves. And that is what happened.

105. **valuable** - things that are worth a lot of money

?

1. Why did Satan want to destroy the Children of Israel?
2. How did God take care of Moses and get him ready for the work he had for him to do?
3. God brought the disasters to Egypt. What about himself was he showing to the Egyptians? What about himself was he showing the Israelites?
4. Why did God pass over some of the houses in Egypt and not kill the firstborn in those houses?



This lesson has been adapted from the book *His Story: The Rescue, The Bible message from Genesis to Christ in easy English* (ISBN: 978-0-9944270-4-5)

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