

The First Nine Plagues

KEY VERSE

Exodus 6:6



Lesson Overview (TEACHER)

TRANSITION Lesson 16 showed Israel's growth and subsequent enslavement, but God called Moses to lead their deliverance. Lesson 17 demonstrates God's power by sending plagues to push Pharaoh to release the Israelites. God used Moses and Aaron as His spokesman before Pharaoh.

CENTRAL TRUTH God's power triumphs over stubborn rebellion.

KEY TEXTS Exodus 6:1–10:29

SPOTLIGHT ON THE GOSPEL God demonstrates His power through the plagues He brings upon Egypt. God's ultimate power over death is demonstrated in the salvation offered through Jesus' death on the cross. Repent of your sins and believe in Christ to be saved!

Family Devotional (PARENT)

This section explains what the Family Devotional covers for parents to use with their children each day of the week. Each devotional reinforces the lesson taught in Sunday School.

- DAILY DEVOTIONS**
- Day 1 **The First Nine Plagues** (Sunday School review)
Exodus 6:1–10:29
 - Day 2 **God Reassures the Nation**
Exodus 6:1–30
 - Day 3 **Moses Confronts Pharaoh Again**
Exodus 7:1–13
 - Day 4 **Water Turns to Blood and Frogs Cover the Land**
Exodus 7:14–8:15
 - Day 5 **Insects Swarm and Cattle Die**
Exodus 8:16–9:7
 - Day 6 **Boils and Hail**
Exodus 9:8–35
 - Day 7 **Locusts and Darkness in the Land**
Exodus 10:1–29



LAST WEEK



NEXT WEEK



The First Nine Plagues

THE LORD REASSURED MOSES AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

NOTE: Do not read this commentary aloud to the children. The commentary is designed to help educate and prepare the teacher for the lesson. The teacher's goal in studying the commentary is to better understand the lesson.

The first meeting of Moses and Aaron with Pharaoh (see Exod 5:1–19) had not gone well. Pharaoh did not let the people go, but he did make their work harder and their lives harsher. The response of the people of Israel was to make a complaint to Moses and Aaron (vv20–21); and Moses' response to the complaint of the people was a complaint of his own to the LORD (vv22–23). In short, after this setback, they were all very discouraged. But the LORD spoke to Moses and gave him several reasons why they should not be discouraged.

First, the LORD reassured Moses (and the people) by saying, “you shall see what I will do” (6:1a). He was telling them that He had a plan that would result in the people of Israel leaving Egypt—in fact, Pharaoh himself will “send them out...he will drive them out of his land” (v1b). Next, the LORD reminded them that He was the LORD. Five times in these verses (vv2,6,7,8,29) He identified Himself—“I am the LORD.” This recalled the name God revealed to Moses—I AM THAT I AM (see 3:14); this is the name *Yahweh* (“I AM”). The expression “I AM the LORD” would have reminded them that He is the self-existent and eternal God. This name—here and in the rest of the Old Testament—emphasized the certainty of the promises (“covenant,” 6:4) made by I AM; the name identified the eternal “Being” (the I-AM-ness) and existence of God, and as such was a reassurance that He would always be there to fulfill His plan and keep His promises. The LORD further reminded Moses that those covenant promises that had been given to the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see vv3,8)—had specifically mentioned the “land of Canaan” (v4)—“the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob” (v8). This would have reminded them that—just as the patriarchs had—they must live by faith in the future fulfillment of those promises (see Heb 11:9).

Then the LORD made several direct and specific reassurances to the people of Israel. *In a series of “I will” statements, He promised to release them from their burdens, deliver them from slavery, and redeem them by His power (“outstretched arm”) (Exod 6:6–7).* He promised to take them “to be my people” and be their God in a very special way (v7); again, He promised to give the promised land to them (v8). These statements expressed the LORD's personal care and interest in the people in their troubled circumstances; in effect, He was urging and inspiring them to trust in Him. Moses related all these assurances to the people, but they were still discouraged “because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery” (v9).

THE LORD RECOMMISSIONED MOSES AND AARON

The LORD then recommissioned Moses and sent him and Aaron to Pharaoh again (vv26–27, a summary of this recommissioning). Their task was straightforward: they were to speak to Pharaoh and bring the people of Israel out of Egypt.

When the LORD told Moses to go tell Pharaoh to “let the people of Israel go” (v10), Moses was hesitant. He claimed that neither the people nor Pharaoh would listen to him because he was “of uncircumcised lips” (v12); this was the same objection he had made earlier when he claimed he was “not eloquent” (see 4:10). The LORD reminded Moses that “I am the LORD” (6:28–29). A second time, Moses mentioned his lack of eloquence (v30) and asked, “How will Pharaoh listen to me?” (v30). As before (see 4:14), the LORD gave Aaron to be Moses' “prophet” (7:1–2a), that is, Aaron spoke on Moses' behalf. Their message to Pharaoh was “let the people of Israel go” (v2b).

This time, the LORD forewarned them that He would “harden Pharaoh's heart” and “multiply [His] signs and wonders on the land of Egypt” (v3). Furthermore,

He would “lay [His] hand on Egypt” and perform “great acts of judgment” (v4)—he would “stretch out [His] hand against Egypt”—to “bring out the people of Israel” (vv4,5). This would be done so that the Egyptians would “know that I am the LORD” (v5). In other words, they should not expect things to go quickly or smoothly, but they were to put their complete trust in the LORD. After this, Moses and Aaron “did just as the LORD commanded them” (vv6,10).

Moses and Aaron were instructed by the LORD that at the next meeting with Pharaoh, they were to demonstrate His power through them by a miracle (vv8–9); when Aaron threw down his staff, it became a serpent (v10). The magicians of Egypt were able to replicate this feat (vv11–12a), but Aaron’s staff/serpent “swallowed up” the magicians’ staff/serpents (v12b), proving that the LORD’s power was greater than the tricks of the Egyptians. All of this only caused Pharaoh’s heart to be hardened (v14; to have a hardened heart is to be willfully stubborn and sinfully rebellious against the LORD).

THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES

This led to a series of meetings between Pharaoh and Moses that followed a pattern: Moses would go to Pharaoh and demand that he let the people go (see 7:16; 8:1,20; 9:1,13; 10:3). When Pharaoh refused then the LORD would send a plague—a judgment—on Egypt (each one of these plagues was directed against one of the false gods of Egyptian religion).

First, the waters of the Nile were turned to blood (7:17–21). Second, frogs came up from the Nile and covered the land (8:2–6). Third, gnats swarmed over the land (vv16–17). Fourth, flies swarmed over the land (v21), but they did not cover Goshen, where the people of Israel lived (vv22–23). Fifth, the disease killed off all the livestock of Egypt (9:3,6a), but again this plague did not affect the livestock of Israel (vv4,6b,7b). Sixth, painful boils came on all the Egyptians (vv8–11). Seventh, “very heavy hail” (v18) fell on the earth and destroyed everything in the fields (v25); once again, the people of Israel were spared from this devastating hail (v26). Eighth, locusts covered the earth (10:4–6) and ate everything that remained in Egypt. Ninth, the LORD sent “pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days” (v22); yet again, “Israel had light where they lived” (v23).

After each plague—even when Pharaoh seemed to relent a little bit (see 8:8,28; 9:27–28; 10:11, 16–17)—Pharaoh’s heart was hardened (7:22; 8:15,19,32; 9:7,12,34–35; 10:20,27). On three occasions, it was said that Pharaoh “hardened his heart” (8:15,32; 9:34), but in seven instances it was the LORD who hardened Pharaoh’s heart. (Pharaoh’s hardening was God’s plan from start to finish [see 4:21; 7:3; 10:27]; but this was not unfair because Pharaoh himself wanted a hard heart! Pharaoh’s heart was hardened according to God’s sovereign will, but Pharaoh would not have chosen otherwise even if he could have; he desired to have a hard heart!) This was all according to the sovereign purpose of God. In Exodus 9:14, Moses recorded that the LORD explained that He—the LORD—had sent all these plagues on the Egyptians so that they would “know that there is none like [the LORD] in all the earth.” *And the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart (v12) so that He could demonstrate His power against man’s false religion and sinful rebellion against the LORD and all this was accomplished so that the LORD’s “name may be proclaimed in all the earth” (v16; see Rom 9:17).* After all the devastation on Egypt, Pharaoh remained unrepentant and one devastating plague was to come.

LESSON SUMMARY

Exodus 6:1–10:29 recounts God’s reassurance of Moses and affirmation of His covenant promises of deliverance and land for Israel. Despite Moses’ hesitation, God recommissioned him and Aaron and warned them of Pharaoh’s hardened heart. Nine plagues struck Egypt to show God’s supremacy over false gods, but Israel was spared. Pharaoh’s stubborn rebellion persisted, setting the stage for the final plague, as God’s plan to deliver His people unfolded.



Teaching Outline

This section is designed to be used as a clean copy of your notes for teaching the lesson. Follow the teaching outline below as a step-by-step guide during your Sunday School lesson.

- PRAY** with your class that the children would understand the central truth and gospel message, and that you would teach the children effectively.
- REVIEW** last week’s lesson and the central truth to begin your lesson.
- INTRODUCE** this week’s lesson and the central truth using the selected introduction, illustration, or application from our additional resources page.

READ the key texts from Scripture you selected that connect to the central truth.

TEACH your class using your summarized notes and questions from the **LESSON OUTLINE**. The points provided are the main headers from the commentary. Use the visual aid you selected and always connect your lesson back to the central truth.

1. THE LORD REASSURED MOSES AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL (EXODUS 6:1–9)

- What did the LORD promise to the people of Israel?

2. THE LORD RECOMMISSIONED MOSES AND AARON (EXODUS 6:10–13; 6:26–7:14)

- Why was Aaron called with Moses?

3. THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES (EXODUS 7:14–10:29)

- What were the first nine plagues?

CONCLUDE this week’s lesson with the spotlight on the gospel and tie it into the central truth and the lesson you just taught.

PRAY for the children hearing this lesson that they would be saved and follow the LORD.

LESSON OUTLINE

