

## PLAGUE NUMBER 1: Water to Blood

By Cindy Colley

In the language art that we call literature, personification make a tree a giving entity, a house a living worker, or a pen an informant. Perhaps the Nile River is one of the most personified entities in all of ancient literature. Heroditus called Egypt the "gift of the Nile". Egypt was indeed quickened and sustained by the fertility provided by the Nile. One can best see this by flying over the region even today. The building and bustle all happens with a few miles from the shorelines on either side of the Nile and lies in deep contrast to the lifeless desert regions that seem to go on forever as the Nile's "gift" is usable and self-perpetuating only in the immediate area of her banks. It was the Nile that produced the seven years of plenty and, of course, it was the same Nile that made the famine. It was God, though, Who was ultimately in charge of the flood or famine and It was God Who gave the word to Joseph...the word that exalted Him as God's tool to the second seat of the throne.

No wonder it was the Nile that God chose to color crimson and poison with blood in the first blockbuster plague on the Pharaoh and Egypt in the days of "the let-my-people-go" campaign of Moses at the hand of Jehovah. The source of food—dates, bread, wine, figs, melons, beer, and water for beasts—was suddenly and humanly irrevocably turned to blood. I wonder what DNA was in that blood, what disease, what stench....I wonder what child was bathing in the water, whose cows were drinking it and who was watching an irrigation ditch when it suddenly went crimson. I wonder who was on a boat rowing to ancient Rhoda, when the rowing oar came up bloody. I wonder who caught the first fish covered with blood. Imagine the screams and imagine the attempts to bathe those crying children to get rid of the stench on their small bodies. Imagine the thirst as stored water began to be consumed. Just imagine!

The Egyptians measured their lives by the movement of the sun and the flow of the Nile. Their god, Re, symbolized the Nile's cycle and was pictured as being transported across the sky in a boat and through the underworld in a barque. While Osiris was also closely associated with the Nile, it is Hapi who is most associated today as having been the supreme God of the Nile. Hapi is a fat god, representing the abundance of the Nile. His symbol is the papyrus plant, a hugely important plant in ancient times, having been used as a writing instrument and, of course, as the material on which the written word was passed along.

Do you think God had a plan in mind when he attacked the Nile? This river was known as the life's blood of Egypt. But God made sure they knew that it could, at His mere whim, through the rod of Moses, be the death's blood!

## PLAGUE NUMBER 2: CROAK, CROAK

By Deirdra Miller

Women of the Bible, in fact, women of all ages have valued fertility. To be unable to bear a child goes to the core of being a woman. Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and others all struggled with the frustrating problem of infertility, as did I. Apparently this issue was also among the Egyptian women, but not with the Israelites as they dwelled in the land of Goshen. (Exodus 1:7, 12, 19, 20)

Oftentimes women experiencing infertility will try anything and the Egyptian people went as far as to have a goddess of fertility. Egyptian hieroglyphs of the tadpole stood for 100,000, so the appearance of the amphibian came to symbolize fruitfulness, abundance and coming life. Heqet (Heket) was a female deity with the head of a frog showing her connection with water and particularly with the later stages of labor. I find this interesting that this goddess was often associated with midwives, but the midwives who obeyed God (Ex. 1:15-21) were blessed and mentioned by name in the Bible! The Egyptians loved frogs! They had a law against killing them and frogs were sacred to them, so perhaps the threat of a plague of frogs wasn't something that Pharaoh was too concerned about.

For me personally, I like knowing that I have a frog living in my flower garden, I enjoy hearing the spring frogs croaking by the streams, but I cannot imagine living even one hour with what the Egyptian people had to deal with. Can you picture waking up in the morning, and seeing frogs coming out of the river in abundance? Can you visualize going to bake your morning bread and finding frogs in your kneading bowl and oven? I am sure as these frogs continued to come up from the river, there surely had to be a bit of hysteria among the people. Exodus 8:3-4 states "the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants." You see, these frogs were not a respecter of persons, they were found everywhere from the servants to the palace. There was nowhere anyone could go to get away from these frogs! The noise of croaking would have to have been deafening. I don't know about you, but if we have an unexpected field mouse or spider come into our home, my first impulse is to kill it, and kill it quick. Imagine the conundrum these Egyptians were facing. They were being overrun by this once revered frog, a symbol of fertility and Heqet. The one true God was making the Egyptians sick of their own god! So much could be said, and has been said about Pharaoh's reaction and subsequent dawdling attitude towards the removal of this pestilence. I have heard several sermons entitled "One More Night with the Frogs" based upon Pharaoh's decision found in Exodus 8:9-10. Whatever caused Pharaoh to say "tomorrow," we may never know. But finally, when tomorrow came for the Egyptians, and the frogs began to die from

their houses, yards and fields, clean-up also had to begin. Coming in contact with something dead such as this had to be not only unpleasant, but perhaps even against their polytheistic beliefs. The frogs were gathered together in heaps, and Ex. 8:14 tells us what we can only imagine, that the land stank! Surely such a great number of frogs kept that stench around for quite a while – how disgusting!

God changed the frog, the sign of life and fertility, into an image of death and decay. God once again showed His control over nature. How blessed we are to be children of a God whose works are evident and eternal. Psalm 113:9 “He grants the barren woman a home, like a joyful mother of children. Praise the LORD!”

<http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/heqet.html#.Uijd38asiSo>  
<http://www.apologeticspress.org/DiscoveryPubPage.aspx?pub=2&issue=814&>

## PLAGUE NUMBER 3: Lice

By Kristina Odom

"I have lice" is something that I wouldn't shout from the roof tops. We have gotten the letters from school when the kids were younger that someone in their class had lice and that we were to keep an eye out for it. On the days we received those letters, my kids got their hair washed twice that evening. I didn't want lice in my house. According to the CDC, "Lice are parasitic insects that can be found on people's heads, and bodies, including the pubic area. Human lice survive by feeding on human blood. Lice found on each area of the body are different from each other." (If you would like more information about lice and even see a picture you can look here -

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/>). Just looking at the pictures makes me itch all over.

Could you imagine being an Egyptian during the time that Moses lived? You are under the rule of Pharaoh and he just won't let those Israelites go. You have already experienced your beloved Nile River turn to blood (Exodus 7:14-25). You couldn't get a refreshing drink nor bathe. Then the frogs came. It's not one cute little family of frogs, but so many frogs that they are in your bed and in your ovens (Exodus 8:1-15). But that wasn't enough for Pharaoh to believe in the one true God and let the Israelite nation go. In Exodus 8:16-19 this is where we have lice. God had Aaron smite the dust and lice came forth. Now Aaron didn't smite the dust on his end table. This dust was the ground that they walked on. And in verse 17 it says "all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt". Could you just imagine how many of this little parasite there were? They covered man and beast. Everything had lice!

The Egyptians' had god and goddess for just about everything. In fact, they had well over 2000 (1), from a god over death to a god over wisdom (2). Their god that was responsible for taking care of the soil and earth was Geb (3). The Egyptians were reliant on their soil. It was a means of food supply and industry (4). As much as they needed the Nile River; they needed rich, healthy soil too. Geb was a very important god to the Egyptians (5). All though he was important, he couldn't stand up to the one true God. The God who created the earth has the ultimate control over it. He wanted lice and He got lice, lots of it. The magicians tried to imitate what God had done, but they couldn't produce lice like they had previously done with the blood and the frogs. They even exclaimed that this was the finger of God (Exodus 8:19). And that finger is a mighty finger indeed!

1. <http://egypt.mrdonn.org/gods.html>

2. <http://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk/interactives/history/egypt/egyptiangod/>

3. <http://www.apologeticspress.org/DiscoveryPubPage.aspx?pub=2&issue=814&article=1534>

4. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient\\_Egyptian\\_agriculture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Egyptian_agriculture)

5. <http://www.toureygypt.net/godsofegypt/geb.htm>

## PLAGUE NUMBER 4: Flies

By Lisa Brandon

I have been digging on the 4th plague of flies found in Ex. 8:21-31. According to wikipedia there are 2 gods that might have been targeted by God. The first is Heka the god of support, protection, and healing. The second is Serket the goddess of stings and bites (healer). Flies are diptera - 2 winged insects. This could be a number of different types of insects. I looked up fly/flyes in Smith's Bible Dictionary to see what I could find. The root word is Arob meaning "swarms of flies" or "divers sorts of flies". Psalm 78:45 adds a tidbit more info. on the state of things, "He sent among them swarms of flies which devoured them." Three types of flies stood out in my mind as I read from Smith's B.Dictionary. 1. The common house fly- still known as a "plague" by Egyptians to this day it is known to spread a disease called ophthalmia. It incubates for 5-12 days before pink-eye like symptoms appear. It is a contagious disease easily passed from one to another. Eventually the eyelashes can be turned under the lid causing them to roughen the underside of the lid. This, over time, can lead to blindness. 2. The Dog-fly has a sharp painful bite (worse than a mosquito). It causes swelling of the eyelids. A quote from the dictionary from states, "Known to come in immense swarms covering all objects in black and loathsome masses, and attack every exposed part of a traveller's person with incredible pertinacity." -Cook 3. Mosquitoes which cause painful bites and cause diseases such as Malaria. Any of the three would be beyond a nuisance, and if the "divers" part pertains to this plague, it might have been a combination of diff. types of flies. My skin was crawling just reading about this. Lots more runs through my mind as to the situation the Egyptians were in. If they were that thick, they may have been crawling into their noses, ears, and mouths....yuck! It could have been so bad that many suffocated? As people fell all around, the flies, well you get the picture. You don't mess with our God! Hope this helps.

## PLAGUE NUMBER 5: Moo-ve Over, Apis

By Lisa Sipper

The fifth plague was the destruction of Egypt's cattle. God said, "behold, the hand of the Lord will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep—a very severe pestilence" (Exod. 9:3, NKJV). The word 'pestilence' is also translated 'plague' or 'murrain.' Wikipedia notes that murrain can mean an infectious disease, like streptococcus or anthrax. The disease that wiped out all(1) the cattle in the fields of Egypt in a single day didn't spread even to one of the animals on Israelite land, just as God said.

Horses, donkeys, camels, and oxen are burden-bearing creatures. Sheep produce wool and oil products. These animals were important to their economy. Having "much cattle" was a sign of wealth for an individual and for a nation. (Consider Jacob and Laban's cattle from Genesis 30.) So, this fifth plague made a real dent in the affluence of Egypt by decreasing their ability to work and their commodities of food and clothing.

Religiously speaking, the features of these animals of the field were depicted on their gods to better describe a god's characteristics. Cows and bulls were worshiped as symbols of fertility, and bulls were often paired with some of their higher Egyptian gods because they also symbolized strength. Pharaoh, considered a god, was characterized by the strength and virility of the bull, Apis. Apis was considered the bull god of fertility for all the animals, and the god of the kings of Egypt. The living Apis bull was believed to be the earthly form of the god Ptah, the third highest in the Egyptian god hierarchy. He was the god of craftsmanship and destiny. Since a pharaoh's greatness as a leader of the nation was chronicled in terms of his military victories, the pharaoh bowed to Apis to entreat Ptah to know the outcome of a battle. One stele speaks of Merenptah, a king who ruled for ten years in the 1200s BCE, and states he dreamed of Ptah "handing him a sword and saying 'Take thou (it) and banish thou the fearful heart from thee'"(2). Ptah was said to have crafted all things in the universe by speaking. The one true God, Jehovah, who brought all things into being by the word of His holy mouth, cowed Ptah with this plague.

One more interesting thing to note is the wording of the threat to Pharaoh if he didn't let God's people go. God alluded to Pharaoh's power by saying, "...for if you refuse to let them go, and still hold them...(Exod. 9:2 NKJV)" The word for "hold" means to tie fast or bind bonds strongly(3). God could have freed His people from Pharaoh's hold at any point, but He made it clear that it was in Pharaoh's strength either to hold the Israelites or let them go. Since the bull symbolized strength to the Egyptians, then this disease of the cows was a cultural illustration to Pharaoh and his people exactly who had the power to hold whom. Staring over his fields at the diseased and dying cattle, Pharaoh would have gotten the message. Having the strength of the bull was no

strength at all. There is no one like Jehovah God of Israel, who, unlike Ptah, could change the destiny and power of a nation in a day.

1. "Cattle Contradiction?" gives an interesting look at the word 'all' in this passage.

See [www.apologeticspress.org/articles/3526](http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/3526).

2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merneptah> (You can also Google "Merenptah Stele" for more info)

3. Strong's Hebrew Dictionary, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/>

Other References

Exodus 9

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murrain>

Genesis 30

[www.apologeticspress.org/aparticle.aspx?cid=3903](http://www.apologeticspress.org/aparticle.aspx?cid=3903)

<http://www.bible-history.com/archaeology/egypt/apis-the-bull-god.html>

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/aes/b/bronze\\_of\\_the\\_king\\_before\\_bull.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/b/bronze_of_the_king_before_bull.aspx)

<http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/bull.htm>

## PLAGUE NUMBER 6: Boils

By Candice Manning

The sixth and so far most personal plague that God sent was boils. God told Moses, "to take handfuls of soot from the kiln and to throw it in the air, it will become fine dust all over Egypt and become boils breaking out unto the people and beasts throughout Egypt"(Ex 9:8-9). God sent the plagues to Egypt not only to have Pharaoh let the Israelites go but to prove that he is the one true living God.

Boils are defined as inflamed pus-filled swelling on the skin. My family all struggles with staph infections and when you have a really bad one it feels like a hot knife stabbing you deeply over and over. The Hebrew word for 'boil' is to burn. I really haven't felt anything much more painful and they get to be disgusting. The Egyptians had them all over. Imagine their pleas and prayers to their gods!

The Egyptians were said to have thousands of gods and goddesses that they worshiped. By sending the boils upon the Egyptians God showed that their gods of healing were worthless. There were three main gods of healing. Thoth, with the head of an Ibis, was probably the most important, said to be the god of medical learning; Isis who helped heal a god with Thoth; Imhotep, god of medicine; and Sekhmet, a warrior goddess and goddess of healing, shown with the head of a lion and body of a woman. The gods were useless against the boils, even the magicians couldn't stand before Moses and Pharaoh because they were covered in boils. Ironically, Sekhmet was believed to protect Pharaoh in battle and yet the goddess of healing couldn't even protect Pharaoh from boils! Exodus shows us how God used boils to prove that he is God and we read in the new testament God used healing to prove that Jesus is the Christ (Matthew 8 and Luke 17). Sickness is truly personal and really speaks to us as few escape illnesses and ailments in their lifetime.

## PLAGUE NUMBER 7: Mighty Thunderings and Hail

By Gina Simpson

Exodus chapter 9 verses 13-35 tell us about the seventh plague of thunderings and hail interspersed with fire. In verse 14 God warns Pharaoh that this plague will be upon his heart and in verse 16 God tells Pharaoh that he only stands so that God's power can be declared throughout the earth. The sight will be unlike anything ever seen before (v.18) and it will be deadly (v.19). This is the first plague where the Egyptians are given a warning to bring in their servants and livestock, those who believe heed the warning. After this plague Pharaoh admits he has sinned (v.27) though he later sinned more and his heart was again hardened (v.34).

One thing that has always struck me about this period in Egypt is how the everyday Egyptians must have felt about what was going on around them. For the most part they probably didn't hear about Moses and Aaron going to Pharaoh before the first plague. It must have come as a large shock to see the Nile turned to blood. By the time recorded in Exodus 9 though, there must have been an upheaval among the people. In their religious views maat, the balance of the universe for which their gods strove to maintain, must have been severely out of balance. Did they attribute this upheaval to one of their chaos gods such as Apep or Set? Or perhaps by this point word has spread from the halls of Pharaoh about the visit of a man named Moses and his proclamations of this destruction at the hands of his God?

Today with Facebook and email and TV and twitter and cell phones when something we can't explain occurs we can readily get an answer. If our children become ill we can call and make an appointment with their doctor. The doctor can then evaluate their symptoms and provide treatment options. The Egyptians however looked to their gods when sickness struck. There were personal gods and more widely worshipped deities. Each household may have had a patron god or goddess to whom they would pray to keep their family healthy, to make their crops grow, and a myriad of other daily problems would be brought before the god or gods they had chosen. Perhaps as they saw a neighbor prosper they would adopt the god that had blessed their neighbor in hopes of receiving the same blessings. If a sick child recovered the goddess the family had offered oblation unto may be adopted by the whole neighborhood. People must always have been seeking the right combination of gods and goddesses to bring harmony to their daily lives.

By Exodus 9 the people of Egypt have seen the Nile turned to blood, they have been stricken with illness, they have had their homes invaded by frogs and insects, and they have seen their livestock decimated. What must have been running through their minds? Would they have been starting to doubt their household gods? News must have travelled from the overseers of the Hebrew slaves that the land of Goshen was

untouched. Word of the Hebrew's God taking out his wrath upon the people of Egypt had probably reached every household of Egypt by the time this plague was announced. We have recorded for us in verse 20 that some of the servants of the Pharaoh feared the word of Jehovah and brought in their servants and livestock out of the field. Some Egyptians were most certainly putting two and two together and coming to the realization that the God the Hebrews served was superior to the ones they were worshipping.

After this seventh plague the worshipers of Nut the sky goddess and her brother/husband Geb the god of the earth and livestock must have been questioning the power of their chosen deities. Maybe the words of Pharaoh recorded in verse 27, "Jehovah is righteous, and I and my people are wicked" reached the ears of the people. In verse 30 we can read that the servants and Pharaoh did not yet fear Jehovah God. Did any of the Egyptians turn to the Hebrews for answers? Did they put the puzzle pieces together from what had happened to them? Could they see that those they called gods were nothing but depictions on walls and idols carved by men? We have the overwhelming evidence presented to us in God's word. We have the whole picture, but did those everyday Egyptians draw the correct conclusions and turn from their false gods and worship Jehovah? Perhaps some did, but we do know that by the end they feared the Hebrews and in Exodus 12:33 they were, "urgent upon the people, to send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We are all dead men." Note they didn't cry that Nut or Geb or any of their other deities would surely avenge them or set things back in order. God's purpose was fulfilled and his name and power were declared though all the earth.

## PLAGUE NUMBER 8: Locust

By Bailey Gladden

The eighth plague came after God stopped the hail and thunder and (again) hardened Pharaoh's heart. The Egyptians were weary. In fact, when Moses and Aaron warn Pharaoh of the looming locust plague, the Bible says that Egyptians pleaded with Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go that they may serve their God. So, needless to say, the pressure is on. Pharaoh, feeling this pressure but unwilling to yield, offers a compromise to Moses and Aaron. The men could go and serve God, leaving the women, children, and livestock. Moses didn't falter. God doesn't compromise (I could write an entire page on this.) Moses repeated God's command to free the Israelites. Pharaoh refused.

Egyptians believed in life after death. They created elaborate coffins, perfected embalming techniques, and built wondrous final resting places. They had a strong faith in their gods. I'm sure the locust plague was particularly harsh for the Egyptians—mainly because it wiped away any tiny hope they had in their gods, particularly Seth and Osiris (who were to protect the crops.) Anything green that the previous plagues had left behind was wiped away. I'm sure after each plague, they justified to themselves that it wasn't entirely gone; that their gods had spared enough food for them to eat and live. Egyptians believed that Pharaoh was an incarnated god upon earth. They trusted him, and that trust was wavering.

Then the locusts came. This was unlike any swarm they'd ever seen before. God sent the locusts from an east wind (note that history shows that other locust plagues originate from south winds.) The sky was black with their wings. This was no natural disaster. This was God.

Ultimately, after some serious suffering, Pharaoh confesses his sins and God removes the locusts. But, why does God keep taking the plagues away? Especially if he knew Pharaoh's heart? God wasn't just trying to show His power and nullify the Egyptian gods; through the plagues God demonstrates His mercy and forgiveness. The plagues come, the sinner is contrite, God forgives. God is teaching us about redemption.

We see this played out a lot in today's society. When natural disasters occur, when terrible tragedies befall mankind, we will see droves of people turn to God. Why is it that when the crisis is over, when it becomes old news, that we fall back into our old habits? A tragedy occurs in my life and I am on my knees talking to God. It's much easier to forget about God and his commandments when things are going great. It's much easier to take pride in ourselves when good things happen, instead of giving God the glory. It's much easier to ask God to compromise and remain in sinful situations. Being a

Christian in this world is hard. It requires going against everything that the world tells you should be important.

After the locusts are gone, Pharaoh's heart is hardened and he refuses to let the Israelites go. Pharaoh lied again and again to Moses; promising to let the Israelites go and then refusing. I'm sure this did not go unnoticed by the Egyptians. As previously stated, the Egyptians believed in the afterlife. They had a moral code—violations would lead to consequences in the afterlife. As an incarnated god, Pharaoh was supposed to be ethical. Pharaoh's empire was falling. And then the darkness came...

## PLAGUE NUMBER 9: Darkness You Could Feel!

By Erin Cessac

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.’” (Exodus 10:21, NKJV)

This is the part of the horror flick where the director cuts out the lights, realizing that nothing is more terrifying than the unknown. What lurks behind the curtains of one’s own mind, when coupled with dreadful expectations, would be crippling. “Who’s there!?” “Where is my child?!” “What is that sound!?” “My eyes! I’ve gone blind!” “What is happening?”

After grappling with Pharaoh over the Egyptians’ release through eight catastrophic plagues, Moses was instructed to release the darkness for six back-to-back nights, to suffocate the light and annihilate vision. Security and warmth were smothered in one smooth sweep of Moses’ hand. The physical plagues of filth, disease and destruction became miniscule compared to the mental torture conjured up within the human brain. The Lord, of course, designed it that way. Darkness is the absence of light. Darkness is the absence of God (1 John 1:5). Darkness over Egypt was God’s laughter at the ridiculous worship of Ra, the sun god. The darkness illuminated their spiritual emptiness and their spiritual chaos. It foreshadowed the long-lasting emotional darkness every household would endure after losing a child in the final plague. Even worse, it foreshadowed the eternal darkness Egyptians would suffer once God and His people left them.

The scriptures are rich with references to the Lord using darkness as a symbolic and merciful gift of time to come to repentance. In addition to the ninth plague upon Egypt, Jonah was cast into three days of darkness while inside the great fish (Jonah 1:17), paralleling his spiritual rebellion. The world was cast into three hours of darkness directly before Christ’s death (Matthew 27:45). Paul suffered three days of darkness through loss of eyesight on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:8-9). Every time the Lord removed vision through darkness, he also gifted time for reflection and repentance. No longer could the blind build up his own confidences on what could be clearly seen (Hebrews 11:1). Instead, he was made vulnerable and exposed to God, alone in his thoughts and prayers.

Much like Egypt, our world has been gifted with the chance to consider and turn from the darkness of sin and the absence of God. The gift is not the darkness, which we walk in without our Lord, but the opportunity for repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Egypt knew not how long the darkness would last. Had Pharaoh repented, his nation and his own

household would have never known the stabbing grief over the loss of a child or, much more, the loss of hope for salvation.

Neither do we know the time God has appointed for each man to die (Hebrews 9:27). Each breath, each moment is a plea from our Lord to follow Him into an eternity of light.

## PLAGUE NUMBER 10: The death of the firstborn

By Julie Shafer

And the Lord said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt..." Thus says the Lord: 'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again.' (Ex. 11:1,5)

Of course God made a way for His people to be saved if they obeyed. This is where the first Passover was instituted. Exodus 12 gives the details of what the Hebrews were to do to be excluded from this final plague. Then God says 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. (Ex. 12:12-13) Similarly, if we obey God's instructions for us today, we will be saved by Christ's blood. (Matt.26:28, Eph.1:7)

In Exodus 4:22,23 we read the first time that Pharaoh is warned that his own son would die...'Thus says the Lord: "Israel is My son, My firstborn. 23 So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn." God was serious from the beginning that He had come to save His people! So after nine stinky, slimy, scary, frustrating, terrible plagues placed on pharaoh and his people, it was time for the one true God to crush this man-god of the Egyptians.

The pharaoh was a god to the Egyptian people, he would have been considered a "son of Ra", Ra was the sun god. Pharaoh was so proud, even powerful in his own mind, and God knew his heart and how stubborn he would be even before Moses spoke to him. In Exodus 3:19, 20 God says, "But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. In the end, God won this contest of who was more powerful and proved to the Pharaoh, Egypt and the whole world who was in control! (Ex. 9:16)

It is interesting to me what a contrast there is between Moses and Pharaoh. When God first asked Moses to go back to Egypt and speak to Pharaoh, Moses says, "Who am I...?" He gives excuses for himself and believes there must be someone better and more able. Then there is Pharaoh who arrogantly believes himself to be a god! And

Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go." (Ex. 5:2) I love that God used a meek man to take down this pharaoh!

Another thing I noted about Pharaoh is that he quickly went back on his word after the threat of a plague had ended. We should be careful not to be like Pharaoh when we go through tough times. We may say, "God, if you will get me through this, I will do this or that for You". But then after the trials are over, we forget to hold up our end and go right back to the way things were before.

Just out of curiosity I had to do some research to find out if we could know who the pharaoh was at the time of the plagues. And in the interest of keeping this short, I'll just give you some of the highlights of what one man believes. Steve Rudd gives some compelling evidence (using scripture and archeology) for this Pharaoh being Thutmose III, who would have been Moses' step-brother, by adoption. Rudd claims that Hatshepsut was "the daughter of pharaoh" who adopted and named Moses. Since Moses was the only son of Hatshepsut and Thutmose II, Moses would have been the 'legal' heir to the throne of Egypt, making Thutmose III (his parents being Thutmose II and Iset) a "second-born," maybe explaining why he didn't die in the final plague. We can also see even more clearly, what Moses may have given up according to Hebrews 11:24-26 when he gave up the rewards of Egypt. Then there are the 17 annual military campaigns that Pharaoh led. But the 18th campaign didn't happen because...the soldiers had drowned in the Red Sea that year! I just thought these things were interesting. Check out this link if you would like to read more about this: <http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-exodus-date-1440bc.htm>

Other resources used:

<http://www.apologeticspress.org/DiscoveryPubPage.aspx?pub=2&issue=814>

<https://www.apologeticspress.org/DiscoveryPubPage.aspx?pub=2&issue=785>