

## Exodus Chapters 9 & 10 -- John Karmelich

1. We left off last time in the middle of the plagues.
  - a) The chapters on the 10 plagues (#7-#11) can be subtitled “Let my people go - or else!”
    - i) Or “And you thought *you* were having a bad day! ☺”
2. The one thing that’s difficult for me to comprehend is “Why was Pharaoh so stubborn?”
  - a) You would think after the first several plagues, Pharaoh would give in.
    - i) It’s hard for me to imagine someone being so stubborn, that it would take the destruction of an entire country for someone to give in to God’s will.
      - a) Grant it, these Bible verses teach that God himself hardened Pharaoh’s heart *as well* as teach that Pharaoh hardened *his own* heart.
        - (1) This is not a contradiction. Pharaoh originally had a “heard-heart” toward God. God effectively said “You’re against me, so be it, I’ll make you *really* against me”. This is how God hardens hearts that are *already* hardened to him.
        - (2) People like those exist today. They spend their whole lives doing what they please, essentially ignoring God. They get to a point where it becomes *impossible* for them to turn back. This is what “rejection of the Holy Spirit” is all about. It is a lifetime process.
      - ii) But the next question becomes, *why* do people turn their back on God?
        - a) When you meet a “Pharaoh” it is helpful to remember this scripture.
        - b) The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” (Psalm 14:1a, NIV)
          - (1) The non-believer (a.k.a. “the fool”) has said in his *heart*, not his head that there is no God.
          - (2) It’s not a matter of evidence. It’s a matter of not wanting to change their lifestyle.
          - (3) For Pharaoh to “let my people go”, meant giving up lots of free slaves, giving up his authority, his rulership.
            - a) His stubbornness comes from not wanting to repent.
          - (4) People tend to forget that before one can come to Jesus, first they have to *want* to repent. You can’t sell Christianity based on “the good feelings you get”. Christians go through rough times too. The “joy” is a bonus. The *main* purpose for becoming a Christian is the realization that your (old) lifestyle is *wrong*, and therefore you have a need of a savior. Pure and simple.
  3. Back to the Chapters at hand, as you read through this battle between God & Pharaoh, keep in mind the following facts:
    - a) 1. The plagues are specifically designed to show the superiority of God over the gods of Egypt. God himself wants to show there *is* no other God, which leads to the point that there is *no other way* to salvation except through the true & living God.
      - i) “And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me.” (Isaiah 45:21 NIV)
    - b) 2. The plagues are for the chosen people of God to *remind* them of who God is.
      - i) God wants us to walk by *faith*, not by a set of visible miracles. Therefore, when we do see obvious signs of God working, *remember* those signs, pass them on to your children. Use them as a testimony. People can deny the existence of God. People *cannot* refute evidence of a changed life!

- c) These two things are summed up in Verses 1& 2 of Chapter 10: “Now the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.”
4. With that, let's get to Chapter 9, Verse, 1, or “plague #5 --animal death”. **9:1** Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and tell him, “Thus says the Lord the God of the Hebrews, “Release my people that they may serve me. **9:2** For if you refuse to release them and continue holding them, **9:3** then the hand of the Lord will surely bring a very terrible plague on your livestock in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds and on the flocks. **9:4** But the Lord will put a division between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, and nothing will die of all that the Israelites have. **9:5** The Lord set an appointed time, saying, “Tomorrow the Lord will do this in the land.”
- a) My wife/I have an old comic strip of “Peanuts” hanging on our wall. It shows Lucy reading the story of “prodigal son” to Linus and Snoopy. She was reading the part where the father announced that his son has returned, and we are going to celebrate and kill the fatted calf. (Luke 15:23)
- i) Snoopy then responds “What did the fatted calf do to deserve that?”
- b) I mention this because people have the same attitude toward animals:
- i) Why did God punish innocent animals for the crimes of the Egyptians?
- ii) God told Noah that man is to reign over the animals and be in charge of them. They are our responsibility. (Genesis 9:3)
- iii) They are not to be worshipped as deities as some cultures do, including the Egyptians.
- c) The same reason God punished the innocent animals of Egypt the same way God required sacrifices of innocent animals by the Israelites.
- i) When the Israelites sacrificed *innocent* animals for their sins, it was a reminder that “the innocent suffer” when we commit a sin.
- d) It is also a reminder that all *things* belong to God. When we give sacrifices of our possessions to God, it is a visual reminder that all things are His.
- i) “for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.” (Psalm 50:10 NIV)
- e) Notice in Verse 3 it says “very terrible plague on your livestock in the field.”
- i) This is an important point only because verse 5 says “*all* the livestock of the Egyptians died.” It sounds like a contradiction because some of the latter plagues also affected the livestock.
- a) It is not a contradiction when you understand it only refers to the livestock “in the field”.
- f) Remember that all the plagues are focused on attacks of “Egyptian gods”.
- i) “This plague was directed against the Egyptian god Hathor, who was thought to be a mother goddess was in the form of a cow; in addition, Egyptian religions considered cattle sacred and the cow was often a symbol of fertility. God is showing that He is mightier than this imagined pagan god” David Guzik.

- g) The point about the livestock is also important in terms of “division”.
  - i) Verse 4 states that “God will make a division between livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt”.
    - a) God separates his own people, and the possessions thereof.
    - b) This verse, as some false teachers say, does not guarantee material rewards simply for believing in God.
      - (1) God does not want people to come to him for the material blessings. He wants us to come to him out of a realization that we *need* a Savior.
  - ii) This was done as a demonstration that the “God was a God of the Hebrews”. He has drawn a specific group of people to himself. Not that they were superior or more obedient than other nationalities. But simply to suit Gods purposes of choosing a nation to bring the Messiah in the World. Just as God has called a “Nation of Christians” to himself for God’s good pleasure.

5. **9:6** And the Lord did it on the next day, and all the livestock of the Egyptians died, but of the Israelites' livestock not one died! **9:7** And Pharaoh sent representatives to investigate, and indeed, none of the livestock of Israel had died. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not release the people.

- a) You can show somebody absolute evidence of the existence of God, and their heart will not be turned.
- b) I’m sure Pharaoh figured either
  - i) There must be some natural explanation why the Hebrew animals were spared,
  - ii) Or, more likely, the cost of “repentance” was too greater than admitting the true God of the Universe is superior to all other false gods.

6. The battle continues...Plague #6 - boils: **9:8** Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Take handfuls of soot from a furnace, and have Moses throw it into the air while Pharaoh is watching. **9:9** It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and will cause boils to break out and fester on both people and animals in all the land of Egypt." **9:10** So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh; Moses threw it into the air, and it caused festering boils to break out on both people and animals. **9:11** But the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians.

- a) A little historical background makes this picture much clearer:
  - i) The soot was a symbolic act. The soot is a byproduct of the furnaces used to make bricks. It was a symbol of Israel’s bondage under slavery.
  - ii) “There was also a logical connection between the soot created by the sweat of God's enslaved people and the judgment that was to afflict the bodies of the enslavers.” Expositor’s Bible Encyclopedia.
- b) This is the first plague that physically afflicted the bodies. The previous ones were “irritations” or loss of possessions.
  - i) This plague also attacked the Egyptian gods of “medicine”.
  - ii) “The Egyptian god of healing was Serapis, and the god of medicine, Imhotep, also known as the guardian of all healing sciences - their inability must have led to deep despair and frustration.” Dr. David Hocking.
- c) This made me stop & think at this point - The Egyptians really trusted in these Gods.
  - i) The Egyptians trusted in these gods for healing their bodies, for bringing good agriculture, for winning wars.
  - ii) The same way today people *really* trust in their own abilities, or “good luck” or “karma” or false deities for blessings.
    - a) God will not share his glory with another. He proves over & over again, that He, and He alone is responsible for our blessings and no other.

7. The next verse is another sad reminder of human history: **9:12** But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had predicted to Moses.
  - a) Pharaoh is not unique.
  - b) The Bible is *full* of stories of how the Israelites have turned their back on God despite the obvious demonstrations of his power. Here is a typical verse:
    - i) "While you were doing all these things, declares the LORD, I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer." (Jeremiah 7:13 NIV)
    - ii) Jesus wept over his own rejection by the Israelites in Matt. 23:37 & Luke 13:34.
  - c) And before you shake your head and say "tisk tisk" at Pharaoh, think about your own lives. Think how often we have seen obvious evidence of God's working, yet we still do what we know is wrong.
  - d) Pharaoh makes the same mistake we do. He was focusing on his problems and not God. He didn't want to give up his power. His pride turned his back on God.
8. Therefore, God sends Pharaoh another reminder of who is really in charge. Plague #7 - Hail. **9:13** The Lord said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: "Release my people so that they may serve me! **9:14** For this time I will send all my plagues on your very self and on your servants and on your people, so that you may know there is no one like me in all the earth. **9:15** For by now I could have extended my hand and struck you and your people with plague, and you would have been destroyed from the earth. **9:16** But for this purpose I have caused you to stand: to show you my strength, and that my name may be declared in all the earth. **9:17** You are still exalting yourself against my people by not releasing them. **9:18** I am going to cause it to rain a very severe hail about this time tomorrow, more severe than any seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. **9:19** So now, send instructions to gather your livestock and all your possessions in the fields to a safe place; every person or animal caught in the field and not brought into the house-the hail will come down on him, and he will die!'"
  - a) The most important verses in this passage are 15 & 16. Re-read them carefully. They state the purpose of the whole plagues.
    - i) God is saying in effect "Look Pharaoh, I could have wiped you off the face the earth in one big swoosh and not deal with all this mess. But I, *the* God, have specifically *designed* this whole scenario so that future generations will know that I, and I alone am God!"
  - b) Most people reading this live in California. Hail in California has never been that big a deal. Once a year, maybe we get tiny hailstorms that, at the worse, put some "dings" on our cars. So what's the big deal about this storm?
    - i) Talk to mid-westerners that have seen hailstorms. This was the mother of hailstorms. Large enough hail balls to kill animals, vegetation and man. Imagine *large* balls of hail hitting your head, dropped from a 1,000 feet. They say a penny dropped from a skyscraper can cut through cement on impact.
      - a) "Have you entered the treasury of snow, Or have you seen the treasury of hail, Which I (God) have reserved for the time of trouble, For the day of battle and war?" (Job 38:22-23 NKJV)
    - ii) First of all, predicting a major hailstorm in Egypt is like predicting a 100+ degree-day on the North Pole in January.
      - a) Most of Egypt only gets a 1-2 inches of rain per year, tops.

9. **9:20** Those of Pharaoh's servants who feared the word of the Lord hurried to bring their servants and livestock into the house, **9:21** but those who did not take the word of the Lord to heart left their servants and their cattle in the field.
- a) Well, let's give the magicians a little credit. At least they were smart enough at this point to take cover when Moses announced this plague.
  - b) There is an interesting verse that ties to this in Chapter 10. "**10:1** The Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, in order to display these signs of mine before him, (emphasis added).
  - c) Does this mean that one can obey God & still not be a believer. After all, the magicians appeared to have *believed* God as they brought their remaining livestock under cover.
  - d) The answer is one can *believe* in God, yet not worship him. The key is repentance.
    - i) "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder." (James 2:19 NIV, emphasis added) "
10. Verse 22, here comes the hail: **9:22** Then the Lord said to Moses, Extend your hand toward the sky, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on people and on animals, and on everything that grows in the field in the land of Egypt **9:23** When Moses extended his rod toward the sky, the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran along the ground; so the Lord caused it to rain hail on the land of Egypt. **9:24** Hail fell, and fire mingled with hail; the storm was very severe, more severe than any seen in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. **9:25** And the hail struck everything in the open fields, both people and animals, throughout all the land of Egypt. Everything that grows in the field the hail struck, and it broke all the trees of the field in pieces. **9:26** Only in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were, was there no hail.
- a) It's interesting to stand back and notice the growing confidence of Moses.
    - i) Back in Chapter 4, Moses was making excuses before God that he was not the man for the job. After several excuses, Moses told God "send anyone but me". (Chapter 4, Verse 13).
    - ii) Now we see Moses "extended his rod toward the sky" to start the hail-show.
    - iii) Does this mean Moses' rod has some sort of "magic weather-control power?"
      - a) Of course not. All the power comes from God. God didn't need Moses to put on a show to get the storm going. This is all about building Moses' confidence. God needed Moses to be the leader for the next *forty years*. God needed to build Moses' faith and trust in God.
      - b) God will often work the same way in our lives. As young Christians, God will often work tremendous miracles to demonstrate God's power and build our confidence. As we grow as Christians, the visible miracles often decrease. God is building us up to walk by *faith* & not *sight*.
  - b) Most people have seen lightening storms. They are usually a great visible display. Now picture a countrywide storm "Hail fell, and fire mingled with hail" as described in Verse 24. That had to scare the life out of the Egyptians. The devastation had to be tremendous. I can't imagine anybody living through this & not being scared out of their minds.
    - i) Like the other plagues this is directed specifically at one of the Egyptian Gods..
    - ii) The Egyptians trusted in "gods" to protect them from bad weather.
    - iii) "This plague was directed against Isis (sometimes represented as cow-headed), goddess of fertility and considered the goddess of the air. She is the mythical daughter of Set and Nut, the sister and wife of Osiris, and the mother of Horus. It is said that the tears of Isis falling into the Nile River caused it to overflow its banks and bring nourishment to the land. Isis was a prominent goddess in Egypt, and the plague of hail was directed against her." Dr. J. Vernon McGee.
    - iv) It scared Pharaoh enough to summon Moses' for an apology.

11. **9:27** So Pharaoh sent and summoned Moses and Aaron and said to them, "I have sinned this time! The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are guilty. **9:28** Pray to the Lord, for the mighty thundering and hail are enough! I will release you and you will stay no longer. **9:29** And Moses said to him, "When I leave the city I will spread my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth belongs to the Lord. But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not fear the Lord God."
  - a) First of all, give Moses a little credit to walk in faith. The neighborhood where the Israelites lived was spared of the hail, lightening and fire-show. Now imagine being Moses and having to walk *through* this storm to Pharaoh's palace. That alone would make me fearful. Moses had enough faith in God to walk through the storm.
    - i) Moses *continued* to walk in faith by saying to Pharaoh (essentially), "Tell you what Pharaoh, I'm walking out of here, in the middle of this storm. I know this storm has no affect on me. When I'm out of the city boundaries, *then* I'll ask God to put an end to it! Moses is demonstrating *who* this storm is aimed at!
    - ii) Moses also knew Pharaoh's heart by this time. He knew Pharaoh's apology was half-hearted. So why did Moses' agree to stop the storm?
      - a) So Pharaoh is without excuse before God. Pharaoh can't walk up to God some day & say "But I was sincere when I asked Moses to stop the hail. You never gave me a chance to repent". Even though God & Moses knew Pharaoh wouldn't turn, God won't give him any excuses.
12. **9:31** (Now the flax and the barley were struck by the hail, for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was in bud. **9:32** But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they are later crops.)
  - a) We interrupt this story for a crop report ☺. Why?
    - i) These two verses state that not *all* the agriculture of Egypt was destroyed by the hail, fire and thunder.
    - ii) God is teaching a wonderful message by these two verses.
    - iii) As long as man has *something else to rely upon*, he won't turn to God.
      - a) As long as there is some material wealth or savings, people won't pray to God for help.
    - iv) God wants us to seek him *first*, not as a last option.
13. **9:33** So Moses left Pharaoh, went out of the city, and spread out his hands to the Lord, and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain stopped pouring on the earth. **9:34** When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder ceased, he sinned again: both he and his servants hardened their hearts. **9:35** So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not release the Israelites, as the Lord had spoken by the hand of Moses.
  - a) "Gee, now there's a surprise ☺. Everything went the way God predicted.
    - i) If God says something is going to happen, count on it.
14. God is now setting the stage for the next round. **10:1** The Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, in order to display these signs of mine before him, **10:2** so that you may tell your son and your grandson how I made fools of the Egyptians, and about my signs that I displayed among them, and in order that you may know that I am the Lord."
  - a) As I mentioned earlier (top of page 2) this is a key summary of the purpose of the plagues. God reveals to Moses the purpose
    - i) "Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7 NIV)
  - b) So why inform Pharaoh of all this?
    - i) I suspect by this time Pharaoh had to be wondering "how do I stop this guy?"
    - ii) This warning to Pharaoh is giving him another opportunity to repent. Essentially to say to Pharaoh "you can't win".

15. The Moses & Pharaoh confrontation continues: **10:3** So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Release my people that they may serve me! **10:4** But if you refuse to release my people, I am going to bring locusts into your region tomorrow. **10:5** And they will cover the face of the earth, so that one will not be able to see the ground. They will eat the remainder of what was left-what is left over for you from the hail-and they will eat every tree that grows for you from the field. **10:6** And they will fill your houses, and the houses of your servants, and all the houses of Egypt, such as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen since they have been in the land until this day!'" Then Moses turned and went out from Pharaoh.
  - a) This has got to scare Pharaoh. Moses doesn't just say "Locusts are coming, but gives a detailed description of the devastation that will occur.
  - b) Again, notice the growing confidence of Moses.
    - i) I envision Moses actually yelling at Pharaoh at this point.
    - ii) Verse 6 said Moses "turned (his back) and went out from Pharaoh.
      - a) Trust me, you don't do that to a king. You leave when you're excused.
      - b) Pharaoh must have feared Moses enough to respect him.
      - c) Non-believers often have the same attitude in front of clergymen. They will respect them as being "from God", but are not interested in changing their lives or talking to them about repentance.
16. **10:7** Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Release the people so that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not know that Egypt is destroyed?"
  - a) The magicians/advisors are now saying to Pharaoh, come on your highness, you have to give in. These guys won. Throw in the towel.
    - i) Ever seen people be defiant out of sheer spite and ego? Even though they know they are defeated, they press on out of defiance. That's what we have here.
17. **10:8** So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the Lord your God. Who all are going with you?" **10:9** And Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old, with our sons and our daughters, and with our sheep and with our cattle, because are to hold a pilgrim feast for the Lord." **10:10** And he said to them, "The Lord be with you in this way, if I release you and your little ones! Watch it! Trouble is facing you! **10:11** No! Go, you men only, and serve the Lord, for that is what you want." Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh's presence.
  - a) Standard Satan strategy, if you can't beat 'em get them to compromise.
    - i) When the church first started, it suffered persecution for hundreds of years.
    - ii) Then the church "married" the Roman system, producing centuries of compromise and corruption (a lot of good & bad came out of those years).
  - b) Pharaoh wants the men to go, but leave the wives & kids in Egypt. Why?
    - i) Pharaoh figured if he lets *everybody* go, he will never see them again. If Pharaoh allows just the men to go, they will *have* to come back for wives & kids.
  - c) Moses stands firm. God wants *obedience* from our lives, not compromise.
    - i) "Don't you realize that you can choose your own master? You can choose sin (with death) or else obedience (with acquittal). (Romans 6:16a TLB)"
  - d) When Moses refused to compromise, Pharaoh drove them away. Big Mistake!
  - e) The model for us, of course, is the danger of compromising with the world.
    - i) "Acting one way on Sunday, and another the remaining days of the week."
    - ii) Christianity has *always* been about "putting your money where your mouth is".
      - a) It is about *living* the Christian life, not just giving it lip service.

18. Here comes Plague #8 - Locust **10:12** And the Lord said to Moses, "Extend your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up over the land of Egypt and eat everything that grows in the ground, all that the hail has left." **10:13** So Moses extended his rod over the land of Egypt, and then the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all night. The morning came, and the east wind had brought up the locusts! **10:14** And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and settled down in all the territory of Egypt. They were without number. There had been no locusts like them before, nor will there be such ever again. **10:15** They covered the surface of all the ground, so that the ground became dark. And they ate all the vegetation of the ground and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Nothing green remained on the trees or on anything that grew in the fields throughout all the land of Egypt.
- a) Most people have seen a movie with locusts coming. It's not a pretty site.
    - i) Imagine so many locusts to where the ground became dark.
    - ii) You get to a point where you just stand/sit there & can't move.
  - b) Locusts are used several times as an instrument of judgement in the Bible.
    - i) The book of Joel (in the Old Testament) speaks of a great locust plague to come.
    - ii) The book of Revelation (Chapter 9) speaks of a locust-like creature that God uses to judge people in the end-times who refuse to repent.
  - c) Some commentaries point out that locusts naturally exist in the Arab dessert, and God "blew them in" via the wind.
    - i) Some miracles are more "super-natural" than others. In this case, God probably took an existing group of locusts and moved them several hundred miles.
  - d) Continuing my list of "which false-god is the True-God picking on this time":
    - i) "Now the Lord God shows Himself to be greater than the Egyptian god Seth, thought to be the protector of crops" David Guzik
  - e) God also makes a strong point & promise about this God. "There had been no locusts like them before, nor will there be such ever again." This has several implications.
    - i) He is telling Pharaoh "this locust plague is the worse one ever." Period.
    - ii) God is stating in effect Egypt will still continue to be a nation. Despite Pharaoh's refusal to repent, God did not wipe out Egypt as a nation unlike most other ancient tribes & peoples.
    - iii) An interesting speculation would be "Gee, does that mean the locust plague in Revelation will be *less* severe than this one?" If it was, God would be going back on his promise. The most likely answer is that the "locusts" of Revelation 9 are a different kind of creature. It is an "apple & orange" comparison.
19. Here comes another Pharaoh apology. **10:16** Then Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you! **10:17** So now, forgive my sin this time only, and pray to the Lord your God that he may take away from me this death only." **10:18** Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord. **10:19** And the Lord turned a very strong sea wind and it picked up the locusts and threw them into the Sea of Reeds. Not one locust remained in all the territory of Egypt. **10:20** But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not release the Israelites.
- a) This pattern is getting repetitive. Pharaoh gets hurt. Pharaoh says I'm sorry. Moses prays to halt the plague. The plague stops. Pharaoh changes his mind.
  - b) God allows this repetition simply because he wants to give Pharaoh and the Egyptian people a chance to repent. When the Israelites finally leave Egypt, a "mixed multitude" go with them. Some Egyptians do repent.
    - i) Peter talked about this trait of God: "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9 NIV)



- c) Every time I read Revelation, I am always amazed by the *lack of repentance* of people toward God. The plagues of Revelation make the Egyptian ones look like “a rainy day” in comparison. Yet *twice in two* verses it states the peoples refusal to repent:
  - i) “They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, *but they refused to repent and glorify him.* (Rev 16:9 NIV)
  - ii) “and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they *refused to repent* of what they had done. (Rev 16:11 NIV)
  - iii) Don’t expect most people to repent when you witness to them. There are many “Pharaoh’s around today, and will be until the end of this era. It is not excuse to not try, but don’t always expect positive results. In Jesus’ parable of the soils (Matthew 13, et.al.), the “soil” is the word of God. Only one in four seeds produced good results.

20. Here comes Plague #9 - darkness. Notice the lack of warning to Pharaoh. **10:21** And the Lord said to Moses, "Extend your hand toward heaven so that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness that could be felt." **10:22** So Moses extended his hand toward heaven, and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. **10:23** No one could see another person, and no one could rise from his place for three days. But the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

- a) First let’s summarize the physical aspect of this plague. It is supernatural. Not even candles were working. The best comparison would be if you’ve ever toured underground caves (like Carlsbad Cavern) and had the lights turned out. It paralyzes you. You don’t want to move.
  - i) I picture families huddled together for 3 days. Nobody moving. Babies and children were crying. This has to be the most terrifying plague so far.
- b) Finishing my list of “which false-god is the True-God picking on this time”:
  - i) The most prominent Egyptian god was “Ra”, the sun-god.
  - ii) By having “total darkness”, God is showing superiority over their greatest God.
- c) “Darkness” plague is something special in prophecy and attributes about life & death.
  - i) Darkness is not just the opposite of light, it is the void of absence of light.
    - a) Being in “darkness” means that people don’t want God’s “light”
  - ii) Let’s look at several verses from the gospel-writer John on “light”.
    - a) This is the message we have heard from him (Jesus) and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5 NIV)
    - b) In him (Jesus) was life, and that life was the light of men. (John 1:4 NIV)
      - (1) (By the way, these two verses together show Jesus *is* God.)
  - iii) This plague of darkness is God saying (in effect), all right you people, you don’t want the “light of god”, fine, I’ll give you over to darkness!
    - a) Three times in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus describes “hell” as “outer darkness”. Here is an example:
      - (1) And many an Israelite--those for whom the Kingdom was prepared--shall be cast into outer darkness, into the place of weeping and torment." (Matthew 8:12 The Living Bible)
    - b) In the Book of Jude it mentions in Verse 13 that non-believers “for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.”
    - c) Hell is a very literal place. It does not consist of a bunch of devils with pitchforks poking at people in high temperatures. It is darkness. This “darkness” is the future for non-believers.
- d) Verse 22 says the darkness lasted for 3 days. Most commentators see this as a prophecy of 3 days between Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection.

- e) This plague did not effect the Israelites. Did it mean the sun still shown on their houses? Did it mean the Israelites could light candles? We can only speculate. We only know the light of God comforted them in a world of darkness.
    - i) This reminds me of the “very-end” times and God’s light. In those days, after the 1,000 year millenium, God is going to destroy the earth and make a new heavens and new earth (Isaiah 65:17, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1).
      - a) The interesting thing about the “new earth” is that there will be no sun-light nor starlight!
      - b) “They (us) will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light.” (Rev 22:5b, NIV)
21. OK, back to the semi-repenting Pharaoh: **10:24** Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, "Go, serve the Lord-only let your flocks and herds be detained. Even your women and children may go with you." **10:25** But Moses said, "Will you also provide us with sacrifices and burnt offerings that we may present them to the Lord our God? **10:26** Our livestock must also go with us! Not a hoof is to be left behind! For we must take these animals to serve the Lord our God. And until we arrive there we do not know what we must use to serve the Lord."
- a) I suspect Pharaoh called for Moses after the 3 days of darkness were up. I’m sure this one shook up Pharaoh and he was probably immobilized for 3 days.
  - b) Again, Moses offers a compromise. Last time it was “leave behind the wife & kids”. Now its just “OK, take the families, but leave behind you’re livestock”.
    - i) Was this a request to have pity on the Egyptians because they have no food left or an incentive for the Israelites to return?
      - a) More likely the latter, but possibly some of each.
  - c) The real thing to notice hear is Moses’ *total* obedience.
    - i) Moses has matured spiritually from one who didn’t want to be used by God to a state of total obedience.
    - ii) Moses didn’t even know yet *how* the livestock were to be used in sacrifice (Verse 26), but God said to take the livestock & Moses is complying.
    - iii) The lesson to us again, is one of total obedience. God does not always reveal *all* His intentions for us. He will often only reveal the next step. Our job is to take that step in faith and then wait & see what God has for us as the next step.
22. Here comes Pharaoh’s last stand. **10:27** But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to release them. **10:28** And Pharaoh said to him, "Go from me! Take heed to yourself! Do not appear before me again, for when you see my face you will die!" **10:29** And Moses said, "As you wish! I will not see your face again."
- a) What a tragedy on Pharaoh’ behalf. God gave him every chance to repent. Despite all the plagues and suffering, he refused to repent and serve God.
  - b) As you read the Bible, not much is said about “the great judgement day”, when people must face God.
    - i) Revelation teaches there are two judgements, 1,000 years apart. The first is for believers, where our *rewards* are determined based on obedience. (Matt. 16:27)
    - ii) The second, “The great white throne judgement” (Revelation 20:11) where non-believers are judged based on their deeds.
    - iii) I see a lot of “Pharaoh’s” who had *evidence* beyond belief of the existence of God, who would rather die and go to “outer darkness” than turn to God.
23. OK, I promised myself a 10 page limit ☺. Let’s Pray. Father, we thank you for these lessons that you have taught us about your nature and what you expect from us as believers. Help us to be obedient to your calling, and not compromise with the world’s view of you, Lord. May all the Bible evidence, plus the evidence you have shown us be as a reminder that you are always there guiding us. Help us to walk by faith. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.