

The Book of Exodus

The Tenth Plague And the Exodus from Egypt

Text: Exodus 12:29-51

Introduction:

1. After nine plagues it was clear to all that Pharaoh would not submit to the will of God.
2. Egypt had been decimated by the plagues, yet Pharaoh refused to humble his heart.
3. After preparing the Israelites for the aftermath, God brought a final, devastating plague upon the land.

I. Plague Ten: *DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN* (Exodus 12:29-30)

- A. The tenth plague upon Egypt took place at midnight (cf. Matt. 25:5-6).
- B. The Lord Jehovah smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt.
 1. God was responsible for this punishment upon the Egyptians.
 2. Yet, it seems that this mission was carried out by one called “the destroyer” (12:23; Heb. 11:28).
 3. The implication is that an angel was used by God for this purpose (Psalm 78:42-52; cf. 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Samuel 24:16).
- C. This plague was a fitting act of justice, for Egypt had done the same to Israel (1:16).
- D. Note that this plague did not involve Moses or his rod – it was a sovereign and solemn act of God alone.
- E. All of Egypt was affected, both man and animal, so that there was not one house spared from death.
- F. Yet, Israel was saved by faith, obedience, and blood.

II. The Expulsion of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 12:31-36)

- A. Just as Moses had promised (11:8), Pharaoh ordered the Israelites to leave Egypt.
 1. He fully granted their requests:
 - a. To go serve Jehovah “as ye have said”
 - b. To take their flocks and herds “as ye have said”
 2. Then he added the words, “And be gone” – literally, “Go away, depart; traverse, walk about, walk away.”
 3. Finally, he asked them to bless him also – either by leaving or by seeking favor with God on his behalf.
 4. This amounts to a complete, unconditional surrender of Egypt to Israel.
- B. Furthermore, the Egyptians strongly urged the Israelites to hurriedly leave the land.
- C. So swift was their departure that they could not allow time for their dough to rise!
- D. As they departed, they asked for material wealth from the Egyptians – which was given with gladness.
- E. Thus, Israel spoiled Egypt – truly a conquered people and defeated nation, though no human army had engaged in battle.

III. The Beginning of the Journey to Canaan (Exodus 12:37-51)

- A. Thus, the exodus of Israel from Egypt begins.

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- B. They travelled from Ramses – the central city of Goshen – to the town of Succoth.
 - 1. The Hebrew word *Succoth* means, “Tents or booths.”
 - 2. Thus, Israel began their long years of dwelling in tents as they made their way toward the promised land of Canaan.
- C. At the time of their departure, there were about 600,000 marching men.
 - 1. Numbers 1:46 gives a figure of 603,550 fighting men aged at least 20.
 - 2. Obviously, this number does not include women and children.
 - 3. When combined, there were likely over 2,000,000 Israelites who left Egypt.
 - 4. Keep in mind that this great number began as only 70 who went down into Egypt.
- D. Also, they were accompanied by a “mixed multitude” who travelled with them.
 - 1. This refers to those who were non-Israelites, including Egyptians (Lev. 24:10).
 - 2. They are called “strangers in the camp” and many of them became servants, seemingly desiring to escape the devastation of Egypt (Deut. 29:11; Num. 11:4).
 - 3. It is also possible that some had become believers in Jehovah and wanted to be associated with Him and His people.
- E. Finally, they also travelled with their flocks and herds.
- F. The word for “thrust out” in verse 39 is the same as in 6:1 and 11:1.
- G. The period of sojourning for the children of Israel was 430 years.
 - 1. However, this period is not limited to the time spent in Egypt.
 - 2. God declared that Israel would come out of Egypt in the fourth generation (Gen. 15:16).
 - 3. The generations are: Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Moses (Gen. 29:34; 46:8, 11; Exo. 6:18, 20; 7:7).
 - 4. By adding the ages of these men, a maximum time of 350 years could have been spent in Egypt.
 - 5. The 430 years of sojourning is explained by Paul to have begun with the covenant made with Abraham (Gal. 3:16-17; cf. Gen. 12:1-4).
 - 6. Thus, Abraham and his seed sojourned for about 215 years in Canaan, Mesopotamia, and Egypt.
 - 7. Then, for another 215 years, the children of Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt.
 - 8. 430 years to the day after the covenant was made with Abraham, God brought Israel out of Egypt!
 - a. Genesis 15:13-14 and Acts 7:6-7 mention the time of 400 years.
 - b. This time is limited to the seed of Abraham and their affliction.
 - c. This began with the persecution of Isaac by Ishmael (Gen. 21:8-9; cf. Gal. 4:29-30).
 - d. This occurred 30 years after the covenant was made with Abraham (Gen. 16:3, 16; 21:5).
 - e. Thus, the seed of Abraham was afflicted for 400 years, culminating with their suffering in Egypt.
- H. The night of the Passover was one to be observed and one of observation – foreshadowing the sacrifice of the true Lamb of God (Jn. 13:30; Matt. 26:31, 34).
- I. God gave further instructions for the Passover meal, and the children of Israel obeyed.