

Passover Seder Teaching: The Ten Plagues as Judgments on Mitsrayim

By Gordon Hayes

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Tonight, as we remember the Exodus, The Road Out, we are not only remembering that The Almighty delivered Israel from slavery. We are also remembering that He publicly **judged Mitsrayim, Pharaoh, and the gods in which Egypt trusted.**

The Torah says in **Exodus 12:12**, *“I will execute judgments against all the gods of Egypt; I am Yud-Heh-Vav And Heh, The Eternal One.”* That means the plagues were not random disasters. They were **targeted acts of judgment.** The Almighty was showing Egypt, Israel, and ultimately the whole world that **He alone rules heaven, earth, river, field, sky, life, and death.**

Even before this, while Moshe was still in Midyan, The Almighty said to Moshe, “I will make you Elohim to Pharaoh.” (Ex. 7:1) This is a declaration that Moshe would be a much greater power than Pharaoh, who was seen as a god by the Mitsrahim/Egyptians. Moshe’s power would be greater than Pharaoh’s because Moshe represented the Almighty to Pharaoh.

Before the Plagues: Aaron’s Rod and Pharaoh’s Judgment

Before the ten plagues even begin, Moshe and Aaron appear before Pharaoh, and Aaron’s rod becomes what many English Bibles call a **“serpent.”** But the Hebrew word in **Exodus 7:9–10** is ***tannin***, which can mean a **great reptile**, sea creature, or dragon-like creature. In an Egyptian context, many teachers believe it may even point to a **crocodile-like image**, not merely a small snake.

That matters because the crocodile was deeply symbolic in Egypt. The crocodile was associated with Egyptian divine power, especially through the god **Sobek**, and crocodilian imagery also connected with death, fear, and judgment. Egyptian religion taught that after death the heart of a person would be weighed, and the condemned could be devoured by a crocodile-like being called **Ammit** in the judgment of the dead. Ancient Egyptian religion centered judgment in the afterlife around divine beings and the weighing of the heart.

So before Pharaoh is ever struck by plague, The Almighty gives a sign that says, in effect:

“You do not judge Israel. I judge you.”

And then Aaron's rod-creature **swallows** the rods of Pharaoh's magicians.

That is not just a trick. That is a declaration:

“Your power, your throne, your priests, your symbols, and your gods will all be swallowed up by the power of the Elohim of Israel.”

The Ten Plagues

1. Water Turned to Blood

The Nile was the lifeblood of Egypt. Egypt depended on it for drinking water, crops, transportation, trade, and survival. It was treated as sacred and connected with divine life and fertility.

So when The Almighty turns the Nile to blood, He is judging Egypt's trust in the Nile and in its river gods.

But there is also a deeper moral judgment here.

Pharaoh had earlier decreed that every newborn Hebrew male was to be **thrown into the Nile** in **Exodus 1:22**. The Nile had been turned by Pharaoh into a place of death for Hebrew children. Now The Almighty turns that same river into blood. It is as if the blood of all these innocents was crying out. Pharaoh used the Nile to destroy life, and now the Nile itself becomes a witness against him.

Commentators have long noted Pharaoh's decree to cast Hebrew boys into the Nile and the irony that the river later becomes a site of divine judgment.

So the first plague says:

“Pharaoh, you shed innocent blood. Now your river testifies against you.”

2. Frogs

Frogs were associated with Egyptian fertility and life. But what Egypt saw as sacred now became a curse. The frogs multiplied beyond control.

What Egypt worshipped, The Almighty made unbearable.

3. Gnats or Lice

From the dust came tiny afflictions. Even the earth itself obeyed The Almighty. Egyptian priests were obsessed with ritual cleanliness, but now they could not remain clean.

The message:

“Your priesthood cannot protect you.”

4. Swarms

Whether flies or biting insects, this plague showed that The Almighty controls the land and the atmosphere. But now a distinction is made: **Goshen is spared.**

This is important. The plagues are not chaos. They are **measured judgments**. The Almighty knows how to separate His people from the world around them.

5. Pestilence on Livestock

Egyptian religion was filled with sacred animal imagery—bulls, cows, rams, and livestock associated with divine power and fertility.

Now their animals die.

The message is clear:

“The gods you trusted to sustain your strength and prosperity cannot save even themselves.”

6. Boils

This plague struck the bodies of the Egyptians, including likely the priests and magicians.

Those who claimed spiritual power could not even stand before Moshe.

What a statement this is:

“Your religion cannot heal you. Your priests cannot shield you. Your magic cannot save you.”

7. Hail and Fire

This was a judgment from the sky itself. Egypt had gods associated with weather, sky, and storm, yet none of them could stop what was falling from heaven.

The Almighty was showing:

“The heavens answer to Me, not to Pharaoh.”

And notice—He even gave warning beforehand. That shows judgment mixed with mercy. Those who feared His word could still bring their servants and animals inside.

8. Locusts

The hail had damaged the land, but the locusts finished what remained. Egypt’s food supply, wealth, and future were consumed.

This was judgment on the pride of abundance.

Everything Pharaoh trusted to secure Egypt’s future was stripped away.

9. Darkness

This plague was especially powerful because Egypt was obsessed with the sun. Pharaoh himself was viewed as a son of the sun and a divine ruler.

But for three days, Egypt sat in darkness.

This was not merely a weather event. It was a direct humiliation of Pharaoh and all claims of divine kingship.

The message was unmistakable:

“Pharaoh is not light. Pharaoh is not divine. Yud-Heh-Vav And Heh, The Eternal One alone commands the light.”

10. Death of the Firstborn

This final plague strikes at the very heart of Egypt.

Pharaoh had attacked Israel’s sons.

Now Egypt’s firstborn are struck.

This is not random cruelty. It is divine justice.

Pharaoh had said, in effect:

“Israel’s sons can die.”

And The Almighty answered:

“Then your house will learn the cost of resisting Me.”

And in the middle of that judgment, Passover reveals mercy: **the blood of the lamb** marks those who belong to Him.

So the final plague teaches two truths at once:

Judgment for rebellion

Mercy for those under the blood

Conclusion

So what do the plagues mean for us tonight?

They mean that Passover is not only about deliverance from slavery. It is also about **the public defeat of false power.**

Every plague was The Almighty saying:

- **I am greater than your river**
- **greater than your land**
- **greater than your sky**
- **greater than your kings**
- **greater than your religion**
- **greater than your gods**
- **and greater than death itself**

And perhaps that is still the message of Passover for us today.

Because every generation has its own “Egypt.”

Every generation has its own idols.

Every generation has its own Pharaohs.

But Passover reminds us:

No throne can stand against The Almighty.

No false god can deliver.

No oppressor has the final word.

The One who judged Mitsrayim is still the One who redeems His people.

And that is why tonight we remember, we give thanks, and we say:

Blessed be Yud-Heh-Vav And Heh, The Eternal One, who brought His people out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.