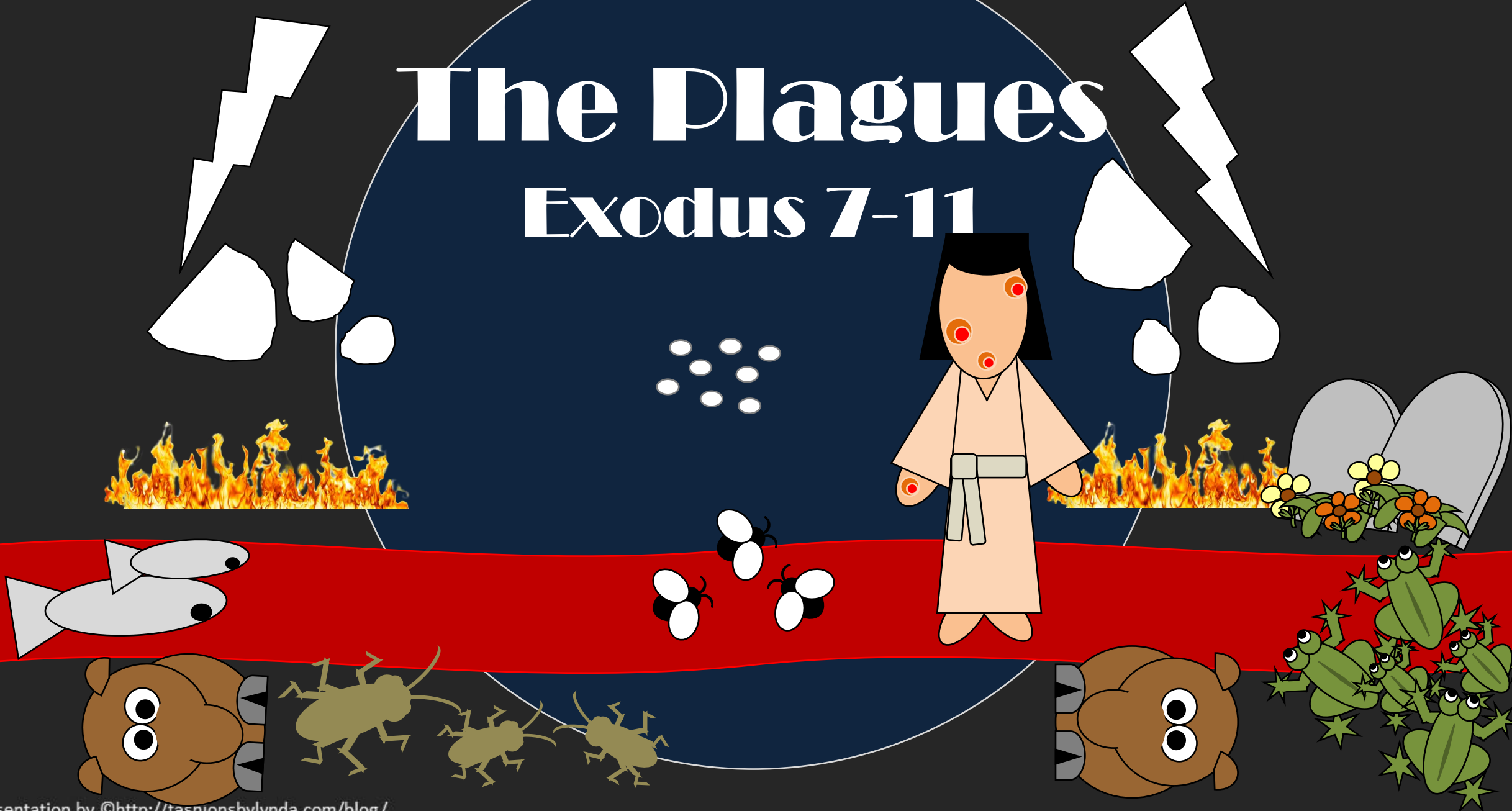


The Plagues

Exodus 7-11



True or False

1. Pharaoh said he was willing to let the children of Israel go free, because he respected the Lord's power. F

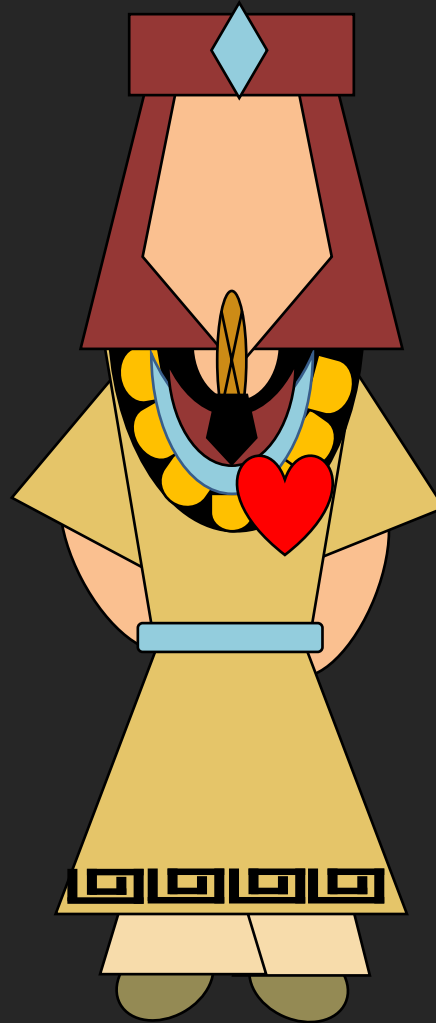
2. After Moses and Aaron asked Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go, the Israelites were eager to listen to Moses and follow his leadership. F

3. Moses was confident in his abilities and excited about his responsibility to free the children of Israel from bondage. F

4. Moses was slow of speech and wondered why the Lord had sent *him* to free the children of Israel. T

Harden Pharaoh's Heart

The Prophet Joseph Smith corrected this verse to read that Moses was to be a prophet to the pharaoh rather than a god. (1)



We know that the Joseph Smith Translation changes the text every time it reads that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart.

Certainly God does not harden the hearts of men; it is men that harden their hearts toward God. (2)

The Rod

Moses' Rod



In the culture of the Israelites, the rod would be a natural symbol of authority, as the tool used by the shepherd to correct and guide his flock.

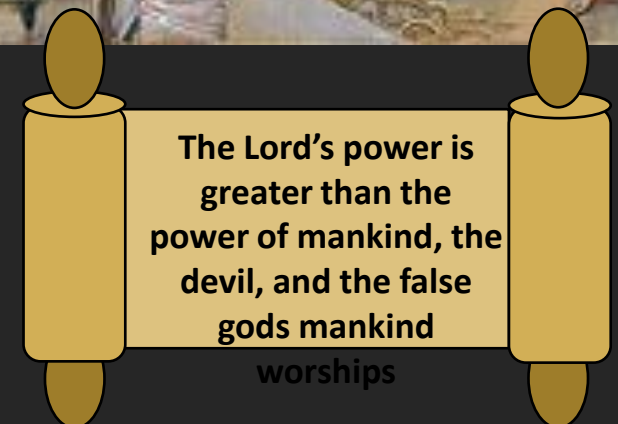
Moses' rod is, in fact, carried by him while he tended his sheep; and later became his symbol of authority over the Israelites.

The rods of both Moses and Aaron were endowed with miraculous power during the Plagues of Egypt.

God commanded Moses to raise his rod over the Red Sea when it was to be parted and in prayer over Israel in battle.

Moses brings forth water from a stone using his rod.

Aaron's Rod



Plague 1

All the water turned to blood and the fish died and the river stank



Blood *Dam* DT

- the Nile was worshiped as a deity
- It made all water unusable for bathing or drinking and causes smell of dead fish; this would have robbed the Egyptians of peace and comfort
- The Blue Nile go Hapi Hapi was sometimes depicted as a mother hippopotamus or with the head of a mother hippo



Plague 2

Frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt



Frogs Tsephardeda צפרדע

- The land stank and made living uncomfortable; they could not sleep because their beds were also invaded
- Heqet was most commonly shown with the head of a frog and body of a woman. Egyptian women wore amulets and scarabs with the image of Heqet to protect them during childbirth.
- Frogs were so sacred in Egypt that even the involuntary slaughter of one was often punishable by death



Plague 3

Lice



Gnats/Lice *Kinim* כינים

- An irritating and carried diseases and bite constantly; bites would have caused itching/irritation of skin
- the lice originated from the dust of the earth
- the Egyptians worshiped Ged (or Geb), the earth god



Plague 4

Flies swarm over Egypt



Swarms/Mixture *Arov* ערוב

- they would have picked at food, laid eggs in food, and caused disease; again, allowing no rest for the Egyptians
- this plague may have been targeting the Canaanite god “the lord of the flies” or “lord of the high place/high lord” *baal zevuv* which may have evolved later into Beelzebub

Plague 5

Infectious disease of livestock



Livestock Pestilence רב7

- flies and gnats carrying diseases from dead fish and frogs; killed sacred animals and food sources
- the god Apis was represented as a bull
- Apis was the most important of all the sacred animals worshiped in Egypt
- In connection to crops, herds, fertility, resurrection, and Pharaoh's strength and fertility

Plague 6

Boils afflict man and beast



Boils *Shchin* שחין

- the first plague to harm the physical bodies of the Egyptians
- Thoth, the Egyptian god credited with inventing medicine among many other arts and sciences, was unable to cure the boils; depicted with head of either an ibis (bird) or baboon
- Nefertem god of healing and beauty; originally a water lily; son of the sky god and earth goddess; would mature to be Ra; Egyptians carried a small statue of him as a good luck charm

Plague 7

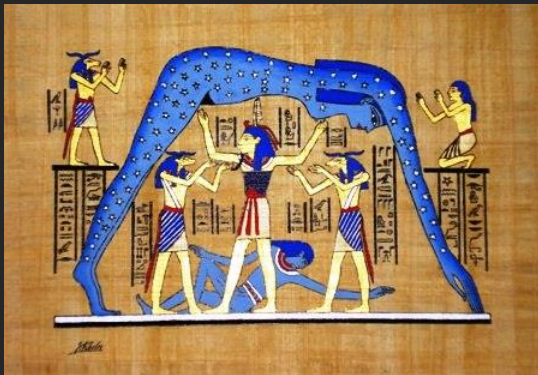
Thunder and Hail

Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, was there no hail.



Hail *Barad* ברד

- destroys people, animals, crops, land and green things
- Egyptian goddess Nut, goddess of the sky who covers the earth; she was called “she who bore all the gods” and “she who protects Ra” (the sun god) and “she who holds a thousand souls”
- Tefnut, goddess of moisture and rain; mother of Nut (goddess of the sky); depicted many ways: a lioness with female body, female only, a serpent, or lion headed serpent



Plague 8

Locust destroy grain,
herbs, and fruit



Locust (Many) *Arbeh* ארבה

- destroyed what the hail did not
- covered the land so no one could even see the land
- ate every green tree; filled houses of Egyptians
- the god Nepri (god of grain)

Plague 9

Thick darkness in all the land for 3 days



Darkness *Hosek* חושך

- Ra, Egyptian sun god
- associated with hawk or falcon; thought to rule the sky, earth, and underworld
- Ra sent his eye (the all seeing eye) in the form of Sekhmet (lioness; warrior goddess of healing) to punish the humans



Plague 10

Death of Firstborn



Charles Sprague Pearce

Death of the Firstborn *Bekor* (Firstborn) *Makot* (Plague) מכת בכורות

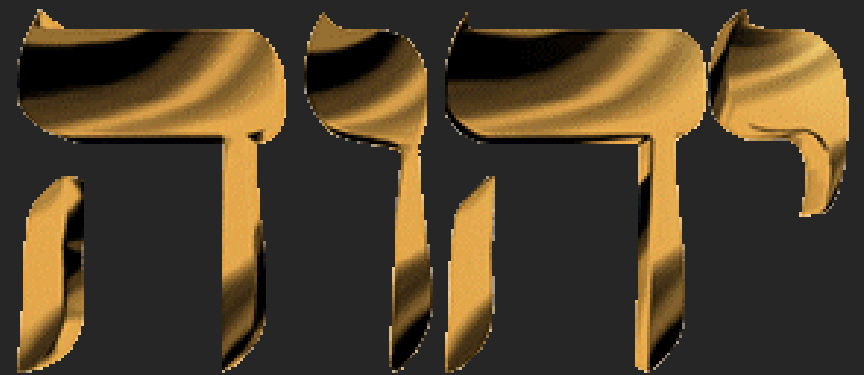
- Min: the god of procreation
- Isis: the goddess of fertility
- Selket: the guardian of life
- Renenutet: cobra-goddess who was the guardian of Pharaoh
- Bastet or Bast: protector of the pharaoh and solar goddess; depicted as a lioness or cat

The Egyptian Gods Could Not Save Them

The Egyptians and the Israelites had been steeped in Egyptian culture for 400 years. The Israelites soon saw the Pharaoh (a self-proclaimed god) and the other Egyptian gods rendered helpless against YHVH. That made them more confident in trusting YHVH to lead them out and to make YHVH their only God.

In the Tanakh, YHVH is the personal name of God and his most frequent designation, occurring over 6,800 times. This is the Ineffable Name or Unutterable Name of the God of Israel. Because it is composed from the four Hebrew Letters Yod, Hey, Vav, and Hey, It is also referred to as the "Tetragrammaton," which simply means "the four letters."

(Hebrew for Christians.com)



Pharaoh Had So Many Opportunities

“Individual agency is so sacred that Heavenly Father will never force the human heart, even with all His infinite power.

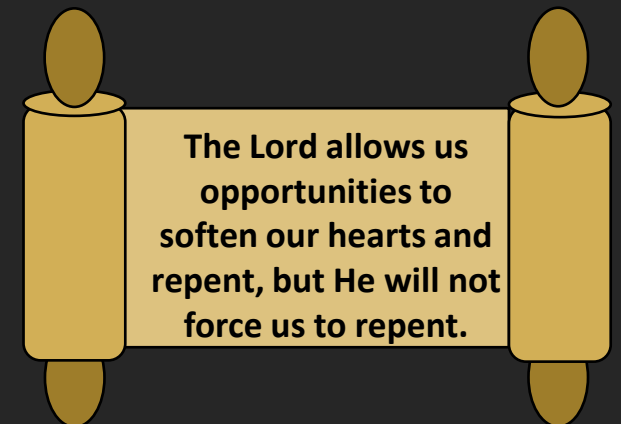


Man may try to do so, but God does not.

To put it another way, God allows us to be the guardians, or the gatekeepers, of our own hearts.



We must, of our own free will, open our hearts to the Spirit, for He will not force Himself upon us.” (5)



Sources:

Suggested Hymn: #8 Awake and Arise

1. Student Manual Institute Old Testament
2. Gospel Doctrine.com
3. Wikipedia
4. **The 10 Plagues of Egypt** Published by Voice in the Desert
5. Elder Gerald N. Lund (“Opening Our Hearts,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2008, 33).



Magicians?

“All down through the ages and in almost all countries, men have exercised great occult and mystical powers, even to the healing of the sick and the performing of miracles. Soothsayers, magicians, and astrologers were found in the courts of ancient kings. They had certain powers by which they divined and solved the monarch’s problems, dreams, etc. One of the most striking examples of this is recorded in Exodus, where Pharaoh called ‘the wise men and the sorcerers’ who duplicated some of the miracles the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron to perform. When Aaron threw down his rod, it became a serpent. The Egyptian magicians threw down their rods, and they also became serpents. ...

“... The Savior declared that Satan had the power to bind bodies of men and women and sorely afflict them [see Matthew 7:22–23; Luke 13:16]. If Satan has power to bind the bodies, he surely must have power to loose them. It should be remembered that Satan has great knowledge and thereby can exercise authority and to some extent control the elements, when some greater power does not intervene.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:176, 178.)

Attempting to Explain the Plagues:

There have been numerous attempts through the ages to explain the plagues described in these chapters of Exodus. Some have tried to show that the various plagues were the result of some natural phenomenon such as passing meteorites or the explosion of a volcanic island in the Mediterranean Sea. While there is some degree of logical progression in the plagues (the river’s pollution could have driven the frogs out of the marshes to die, and this situation would then have bred lice, flies, and disease), it is not possible at present to explain how the Lord brought about these miraculous events. The fact that the plagues were selective (that is, sent upon the Egyptians but not the Israelites) adds to their miraculous nature. God often works through natural means to bring about His purposes, but that fact does not lessen the miraculous nature of His work. In the plagues and eventual deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt is a record of remarkable and miraculous intervention by God in behalf of His children. *How* He actually intervened is not nearly so significant as that He *did* intervene.

The plagues served an important purpose. They showed Pharaoh, Egypt, and the Israelites that Jesus Christ (Jehovah) is more powerful than the false Egyptian gods. Egypt had many false gods, including the pharaoh himself. “[Some] interpreters suggest a symbolic correlation between each plague and an Egyptian deity, assuming they were each meant to demonstrate Jehovah’s superiority over a specific god. This explanation is difficult to confirm in every case. ... [However,] there is no doubt that the plagues as a whole were intended to demonstrate the power of Jehovah over the Egyptian pantheon, which included the divine Pharaoh himself” (Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Dana M. Pike, and David Rolph Seely, *Jehovah and the World of the Old Testament: An Illustrated Reference for Latter-day Saints* [2009], 90).