

- I. Matters for Further Discussion from Chapters 3-5
 - A. Burning bush and the image of fire
 - B. Volcanic Activity
 - 1. Burning bush = escaping gases?
 - 2. The mountain as volcano:
 - a. It blazed with fire to the very heavens (Dt. 4:11)
 - b. Smoke and clouds billowed up from it (Dt. 4:11; Ex 19:18)
 - c. The noise of explosions (Thunder) Ex 19:16
 - d. The sound of hot gases escaping (trumpet blasts) Exodus 19:16
 - e. Flashes of lightening in the cloud Ex 19:16
 - f. Volcanic earthquakes (Mountain trembles violently) (Ex 19:18)
 - g. A summit cloud and darkness - (Dt 4:11)
 - h. Lava - Mountain melts like wax before the Lord (Judges 5:5)
 - C. The possible location of Mt. Horeb (Sinai, the “Mountain of God”)
 - 1. See Map
 - D. The Divine Name = “I Am”
 - E. The Plan - v. 4:18
 - F. I will make Pharaoh obstinate? V. 4:21
 - G. The reaction of the People 5:21

II. Chapter 6- Fearful Frettings of the Forgetful

A. Perturbance

1. **5:22** *Then Moses turned again to the LORD and said, "O LORD, why hast thou done evil to this people? Why didst thou ever send me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he has done evil to this people, and thou hast not delivered thy people at all."*

B. Promises and Prescriptions

1. Recapitulation

- a. **6:1** *But the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, yea, with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."*

2. Reminders

- a. **2** *And God said to Moses, "I am the LORD. 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. 4 I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they dwelt as sojourners. 5 Moreover I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold in bondage and I have remembered my covenant.*

3. Requirement

- a. **6** *Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment, 7 and I will take you for my people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.'*

4. Response

- a. **9** *Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel; but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and their cruel bondage.*

5. Resoluteness -

- a. *And the LORD said to Moses, 11 "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the people of Israel go out of his land." 12 But Moses said to the LORD, "Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me; how then shall Pharaoh listen to me, who am a man of uncircumcised lips?" 13 But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a charge to the people of Israel and to Pharaoh king of Egypt to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.*

C. Progeny -

1. ***14 These are the heads of their fathers' houses: the sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; these are the families of Reuben. 15 The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the families of Simeon. 16 These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, the years of the life of Levi being a hundred and thirty-seven years. 17 The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, by their families. 18 The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, the years of the life of Kohath being a hundred and thirty-three years. 19 The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their generations. 20 Amram took to wife Jochebed his father's sister and she bore him Aaron and Moses, the years of the life of Amram being one hundred and thirty-seven years. 21 The sons of Izhar: Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. 22 And the sons of Uzziel: Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri. 23 Aaron took to wife Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and the sister of Nahshon; and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 24 The sons of Korah: Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph; these are the families of the Korahites. 25 Eleazar, Aaron's son, took to wife one of the daughters of Putiel; and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites by their families. 26 These are the Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said: "Bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt by their hosts." 27 It was they who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing out the people of Israel from Egypt, this Moses and this Aaron.***
2. The genealogy serves to credential Moses and Aaron and cause the Jewish reader not to lose heart or write off the pair or adopt the negative attitude of Moses' Jewish contemporaries.

D. Persistence -

1. ***28 On the day when the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, 29 the LORD said to Moses, "I am the LORD; tell Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you." 30 But Moses said to the LORD, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips; how then shall Pharaoh listen to me?" 7:1 And the LORD said to Moses, "See, I make you as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. 2 You shall speak all that I command you; and Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land.***
2. Moses must shift his focus from himself and his limitations to God and God's power and plan.
3. It is noteworthy that God does not say, "I will make you like a god to Pharaoh." He says *I make you as God to Pharaoh*. Hence Moses will

represent God to Pharaoh. God will work through Moses. It will be noted then that God will work as he often does, in successive stages. Since Pharaoh has a hard heart, God seeks to melt it by various successive and growing methods. It is so in his dealings with us who have hard hearts. God appeals to us and then lets us experience increasing consequences to our failure to convert. Moses therefore must adopt the patience and “personality” of God if he is to be as God to Pharaoh.

E. Predictions -

1. *3 But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, 4 Pharaoh will not listen to you; then I will lay my hand upon Egypt and bring forth my hosts, my people the sons of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. 5 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them." 6 And Moses and Aaron did so; they did as the LORD commanded them.*

- a. God says he will harden Pharaoh’s heart. We must discuss the notion of Primary Causality to understand what a text like this means. God is not engaging in futile, self defeating behavior here but in terms of primary causality is the “cause” of all that takes place. He sovereign even in our sinful stubbornness.
- b. God clearly steels Moses for a long fight. Moses should not look for immediate results, Pharaoh is a hard case. This is not because God is powerless. Rather it is God’s choice to use Pharaoh’s stubbornness to show His power and continuing call to conversion.
- c. The outcome is clear and without doubt though the route is circuitous.

F. Performance -

1. *7 Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty- three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh. 8 And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 9 "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Prove yourselves by working a miracle,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.'" 10 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did as the LORD commanded; Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. 11 Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers; and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same by their secret arts. 12 For every man cast down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. 13 Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them; as the LORD had said.*

- a. The casting down of the rod into a snake is impressive but Pharaoh has his wise men and sorcerers “produce” a similar result! How do we understand this? Several possible ways:
 - (1) Moses’ action is presented as a work of God. And so it is.

However it is possible for mere mortals to produce a similar effect by pressing on a nerve in the snake's neck and causing it to become stiff like a branch. Then when it is cast free it becomes supple again.

(2) We must never presume that Satan is not also capable of misleading many through signs and wonders. This is clear from the Book of Revelation:

(a) **Rev 13:11** Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth... And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.

(3) Hence we must not be impressed merely by signs and wonders. We must carefully discern the fruits of each wonder-worker to know his origin.

(a) **Mat 7:15** "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.

(4) Clearly Moses and Aaron are matched against a formidable foe. Gradually however Pharaoh's magicians are out done as we shall see. Perseverance is essential for Moses, Aaron and for us! This is all foreshadowed by the fact that Aaron's rod swallowed the snakes of the magicians.

G. Plagues:

1. First Plague: Water to Blood - 7:14-24

a. *14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuses to let the people go. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water; wait for him by the river's brink, and take in your hand the rod which was turned into a serpent. 16 And you shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness; and behold, you have not yet obeyed." 17 Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the rod that is in my hand, and it shall be turned to blood, 18 and the fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile shall become foul, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink water from the Nile.'" 19 And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.'" 20 Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded; in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, he lifted up the rod and struck the water that was*

in the Nile, and all the water that was in the Nile turned to blood. 21 And the fish in the Nile died; and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. 22 But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts; so Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them; as the LORD had said. 23 Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not lay even this to heart. 24 And all the Egyptians dug round about the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile. 25 Seven days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile.

- b. Notice the pattern, Pharaoh will be confronted before the mighty deed, given a chance as it were to repent. Then the deed, explained already in full is carried out and Pharaoh's reaction is recorded. This pattern will be repeated in each sign.
- c. Many commentators point out that the water is turned to blood, not merely the color red. In so doing they reject a naturalistic explanation of a Red Tide. (See below)
- d. The Miracle has a cascading effect, the fish die, then decompose, then the water stinks and becomes truly non potable. As if it's turning to blood had not already done so!
- e. The Book of Revelation includes a similar plague and includes a social condemnation that the plague is deserved:
 - (1) **Rev 16:3** The second angel poured his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a dead man, and every living thing died that was in the sea. The third angel poured his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of water say, "Just art thou in these thy judgments, thou who art and wast, O Holy One. For men have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink. It is their due!"
- f. Natural explanation? - There was a previous description of the Nile turned to blood from Egyptian documents of 300 years earlier. Is there some natural mechanism for this miracle? Red tides are common in saltwaters due to red algae accumulations. However, the Nile is fresh water. Did the saltwaters back up into the Nile delta due to drought? The delta region is actually an estuary (salt and fresh water mix). In the delta region red tides can happen. A possible combination is hot weather, nutrient rich water common in September due to floods upstream. The combination could have been severe and caused a major red tide which killed the fish in large numbers. But there are problems:
 - (1) The text does not say the Nile turned the color of blood but that it turned to blood.
 - (2) Even water in jars was affected.

- g. *But the magicians of Egypt did the same - a puzzling statement. How can they do the same to waters already turned to blood. Some other water source must be meant but it is not specified. Another puzzlement is, if they have to power to do this, why not use the power to undo Moses' miracle? Hence their power merely mimics Moses' it does not surpass it.*
- h. There is mention of the Nile to blood at the time of the Exodus (1300-1350) in secular sources. (ANET 441, ii 10)
- i. Apparently the water reverted after some time to potable water since it is not mentioned in future verses.

2. Second Plague: Frogs - 8:1-15

- a. *8:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. 2 But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your country with frogs; 3 the Nile shall swarm with frogs which shall come up into your house, and into your bedchamber and on your bed, and into the houses of your servants and of your people, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls; 4 the frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your servants."'" 5 And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your rod over the rivers, over the canals, and over the pools, and cause frogs to come upon the land of Egypt!'" 6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. 7 But the magicians did the same by their secret arts, and brought frogs upon the land of Egypt. 8 Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said, "Entreat the LORD to take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD." 9 Moses said to Pharaoh, "Be pleased to command me when I am to entreat, for you and for your servants and for your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile." 10 And he said, "Tomorrow." Moses said, "Be it as you say, that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. 11 The frogs shall depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people; they shall be left only in the Nile." 12 So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh; and Moses cried to the LORD concerning the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh. 13 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; the frogs died out of the houses and courtyards and out of the fields. 14 And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. 15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart, and*

would not listen to them; as the LORD had said.

- b. This is an interesting plague in that Moses reverses it at Pharaoh's request. This shows his power over against the magicians who can mimic the plague but not reverse it.
- c. The miracle begins by God inviting Pharaoh to relent and permit the people to go. He refuses and thus the plague.
- d. It is fascinating that Pharaoh asks Moses to pray to God (Yahweh). In so doing he admits the existence of Israel's God and His power to save. Pharaoh even says he'll allow them to go forth.
- e. His hard heart makes him recant however.
- f. Natural description? - a plague of frogs is the natural consequence of the death of large numbers of fish in plague one. The dying fish and polluted waters force the frogs ashore. Away from their natural food sources they scour the land and enter houses seeking food (insects etc.). September - October is the normal time for large numbers of frogs in the Nile Delta. If this was the time of plague, it was bad news for such large numbers to be forced ashore. These huge numbers of frogs would not last long away from the Nile and would have died in huge numbers setting up for the next plague, flies and gnats.
 - (1) Problem - the text says Moses drove them back to the Nile by the power of God, not that they died all over the place.

3. Third Plague: Gnats - 8:16-19

- a. *16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become gnats throughout all the land of Egypt.'" 17 And they did so; Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and struck the dust of the earth, and there came gnats on man and beast; all the dust of the earth became gnats throughout all the land of Egypt. 18 The magicians tried by their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. 19 And the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them; as the LORD had said.*
- b. The new element here is that Pharaoh's magicians realize that this is from the hand of God. This is far from a surrender. Yet they have been shaken.
- c. The link to the dust is significant in lieu of this being a kind of de-

creation event. Man came forth from the dust as this serves as a type of reminder to Pharaoh that he is mere humus (dust) and must have humility in the face of God. But Pharaoh is hardened.

- d. Natural insight: all the dead fish and rotting frogs naturally give way to flies and gnats

4. Fourth Plague: Flies - 8:20-32

a. *20 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and wait for Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. 21 Else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. 22 But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there; that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. 23 Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. By tomorrow shall this sign be."'" 24 And the LORD did so; there came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants' houses, and in all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by reason of the flies. 25 Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land." 26 But Moses said, "It would not be right to do so; for we shall sacrifice to the LORD our God offerings abominable to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us? 27 We must go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as he will command us." 28 So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Make entreaty for me." 29 Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you and I will pray to the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow; only let not Pharaoh deal falsely again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD." 30 So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. 31 And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained. 32 But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.*

- b. The Hebrew actually refers to mixed swarms of flies. Hence it was all types of insects that swarmed.

- c. What is new here is the exclusion of the land of Goshen from the

swarm. This underscores that the miracle is from God against Pharaoh.

- d. The refusal to sacrifice in the Land is that Israel would sacrifice some animals the Egyptians considered sacred. This would surely lead to reprisals. Further, God will not compromise with Pharaoh. The people must be permitted to go forth. Still Pharaoh asks for terms and Moses agrees to entreat the Lord. The flies are removed but Pharaoh hardens his heart.
- e. Perhaps too we can recall times that we told the Lord we would relent from certain behaviors if he removed his hand. But later we went back on that word?

5. Fifth Plague: Pestilence - 9:1-7

- a. *9:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. 2 For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, 3 behold, the hand of the LORD will fall with a very severe plague upon your cattle which are in the field, the horses, the asses, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. 4 But the LORD will make a distinction between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt, so that nothing shall die of all that belongs to the people of Israel.'"* 5 *And the LORD set a time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land."* 6 *And on the morrow the LORD did this thing; all the cattle of the Egyptians died, but of the cattle of the people of Israel not one died. 7 And Pharaoh sent, and behold, not one of the cattle of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.*
- b. Up till now the plagues have involved discomforts and annoyances. It is time for God to turn up the heat.
- c. With the loss of cattle goes the loss of wealth and food. This is a significant blow to the Egyptian economy and a judgement on its gods.
- d. Natural insight: Notice only certain animals were effected: cattle, horses, asses and camels. This makes the likely candidate for the disease African Horse Sickness, and/or blue tongue. Interestingly enough this disease is spread by insects.

6. Sixth Plague: Boils - 9:8-12

- a. *8 And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take handfuls of ashes from the kiln, and let Moses throw them toward heaven in*

the sight of Pharaoh. 9 And it shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." 10 So they took ashes from the kiln, and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses threw them toward heaven, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast. 11 And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians. 12 But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them; as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

- b. The plagues now become more personal. Not just animals now, Egyptians themselves are afflicted.
- c. The magicians now are not only incapable of replicating the miracle, they are unable to stand in Moses' presence.
- d. Note that nothing is said to Pharaoh before this plague. By now he should know what it is about.
- e. What is this? Skin anthrax? Such bacteria could have come from the dying animals and as their bodies decayed, a wind-borne bacterium or virus could have spread. Further, the burning of the dead animal bodies could have spread a harmful irritant. The details are too vague to draw strict conclusions as to the exact nature of the plague.

7. **Seventh Plague: Hail - 9:13-35**

- a. *13 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. 14 For this time I will send all my plagues upon your heart, and upon your servants and your people, that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. 15 For by now I could have put forth my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth; 16 but for this purpose have I let you live, to show you my power; so that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. 17 You are still exalting yourself against my people, and will not let them go. 18 Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. 19 Now therefore send, get your cattle and all that you have in the field into safe shelter; for the hail shall come down upon every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home, and they shall die.'" 20 Then he who feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his slaves and his*

cattle flee into the houses; 21 but he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his slaves and his cattle in the field. 22 And the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch forth your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man and beast and every plant of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." 23 Then Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt; 24 there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 The hail struck down everything that was in the field throughout all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and the hail struck down every plant of the field, and shattered every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, there was no hail. 27 Then Pharaoh sent, and called Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time; the LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. 28 Entreat the LORD; for there has been enough of this thunder and hail; I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer." 29 Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth is the Lord's. 30 But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God." 31 (The flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. 32 But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they are late in coming up.) 33 So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and stretched out his hands to the LORD; and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured upon the earth. 34 But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. 35 So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

- b. This plague perhaps best of all shows Pharaoh's hardness of heart. So hard is his heart that God gives the Egyptians a chance to personally withdraw from the full effects of the plague by sheltering their animals. Still, the hail devastates the crops.
- c. The agricultural details help to time this plague as sometime if Feb to March.
- d. Moses knows by now that Pharaoh's claim to repent is hollow, yet still he entreats the Lord and the hail stops.

8. Eighth Plague: Locusts - 10:1-20

- a. *10:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, 2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your son's son how I have made sport of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them; that you may know that I am the LORD." 3 So Moses and Aaron went in 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? Let my people go, that they may serve me. 4 For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, 5 and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land; and they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat every tree of yours which grows in the field, 6 and they shall fill your houses, and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians; as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.'" Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh. 7 And Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God; do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?" 8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh; and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God; but who are to go?" 9 And Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old; we will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the LORD." 10 And he said to them, "The LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind. 11 No! Go, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desire." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence. 12 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left." 13 So Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning the east wind had brought the locusts. 14 And the locusts came up over all the land of Egypt, and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever shall be again. 15 For they covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left; not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt. 16 Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. 17 Now therefore, forgive my sin, I pray you, only this once, and entreat the LORD your God only to remove this death from me." 18 So he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated*

the LORD. 19 And the LORD turned a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. 20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

- b. God had left some crops for the Egyptians but now even these will be devoured due to Pharaoh's hardness.
- c. Pharaoh's servants call him to account and beg him to repent. They ask an important question: "Can you not see that all of Egypt is ruined." But Pharaoh is out of touch with reality and blinded by ideology and pride.
- d. The story of Pharaoh's "repentance" and later recanting is getting old and becomes a powerful symbol of just how stubborn and stiff-necked he is.
- e. What of us?
- f. Natural insight: damp sand from the hail moisture a connection to the locust? They look for damp sand to lay their eggs. Locusts frequently come in heavy after a damp spell.

9. **Ninth Plague: Darkness - 10:21-29**

- a. *21 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt." 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days; 23 they did not see one another, nor did any rise from his place for three days; but all the people of Israel had light where they dwelt. 24 Then Pharaoh called Moses, and said, "Go, serve the LORD; your children also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind." 25 But Moses said, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. 26 Our cattle also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the LORD our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there." 27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. 28 Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me; take heed to yourself; never see my face again; for in the day you see my face you shall die." 29 Moses said, "As you say! I will not see your face again."*
- b. Here closes a dialogue. Moses and Pharaoh will not see each other again. Negotiations have broken down.

- c. Insight from nature: The darkness could be felt. Is this from a dust storm?

10. Tenth Plague: Death of Firstborn - 11:1-9

a. *11:1 The LORD said to Moses, "Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence; when he lets you go, he will drive you away completely. 2 Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, jewelry of silver and of gold." 3 And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people. 4 And Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: About midnight I will go forth in the midst of Egypt; 5 and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sits upon his throne, even to the first-born of the maidservant who is behind the mill; and all the first-born of the cattle. 6 And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever shall be again. 7 But against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, not a dog shall growl; that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between the Egyptians and Israel. 8 And all these your servants shall come down to me, and bow down to me, saying, 'Get you out, and all the people who follow you.' And after that I will go out." And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. 9 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen to you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." 10 Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.*

b. Here is a shocking plague. God will kill all the firstborn of the land of Egypt

(1) Yet the word *nega* meaning plague or pestilence is used.

(2) The death of the first born is explained by naturalists as resulting from the fact the firstborn often got "special" meals etc. But this seems somewhat fanciful

c. The story is retold in liturgical form in the next chapter.

H. Passover 12:1ff

1. Themes to discuss
 - a. The initiative is God's, it is his saving act
 - b. But a human response is required, this final plague includes obedience from the people
 - c. Liturgy
 - (1) precedes event, not just recalls it
 - (2) Liturgy also makes present an event
 - (a) we are present in the events
 - (b) God saved *us* not just them
 - (3) so that its saving power extends to future generations
 - (a) redemption as memory
 - (b) redemption as hope
 - d. Two sources woven here?
2. Provision - **12:1** *The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, 2 "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. 3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. 4 If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. 5 The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.*
 - a. First month - things are starting all over
 - b. The meal should unite in charity. All are to receive a substantial amount, nothing is hoarded, nothing is wasted.
 - c. The lamb should be a choice animal, the best.
 - d. Mass:
 - (1) First day of the week
 - (2) All partake and unite
 - (3) Firstfruits
3. Protection - **6** *Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. 7 Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.*
 - a. Twilight = edge of day and night
 - (1) God is bringing something to an end
 - (2) But it is a dark and foreboding deed
 - (3) The shed blood of the animals points to the death of the firstborn but also to the blood of the lamb (Jesus) that is slain
 - (4) The blood of the lamb protects from the wrath of God
 - (a) Rom 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his

blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

- (b) 1 Thess 1:10 They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.
 - (c) 1 Thess 5:9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- (5) The painting of the door with blood amounts to an act of faith which leads to life:
- (a) John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."
4. Preparedness - **8** *That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. 9 Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire--head, legs and inner parts. 10 Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. 11 This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover.*
- a. Since this is a sacred meal, leftovers are unthinkable. It is only to be eaten in the context of the sacred liturgical setting.
 - b. Burning the rest up sends it to God.
5. Passover - **12** *"On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn--both men and animals--and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. 13 The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.*
- a. This blood will be a sign for you?
6. Postscript - **14** *"This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD--a lasting ordinance. 15 For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. 16 On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat--that is all you may do. 17 "Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. 18 In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth*

day until the evening of the twenty-first day. 19 For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is an alien or native-born. 20 Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread."

7. Prescriptions - *21 Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. 22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. 23 When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down. 24 "Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. 25 When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. 26 And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' 27 then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'" Then the people bowed down and worshiped. 28 The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.*
 - a. For the first time since 4:31 the people bow and worship!
 - b. Not only that, but obedience follows
8. Perishing - *29 At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. 30 Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.*
9. Product - *31 During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. 32 Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me." 33 The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. "For otherwise," they said, "we will all die!"*
10. Plundering - *34 So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing. 35 The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. 36 The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.*

11. **Passage - 37** *The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. 38 Many other people went up with them, as well as large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds. 39 With the dough they had brought from Egypt, they baked cakes of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves. 40 Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years. 41 At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the Lord's divisions left Egypt.*
- a. 600,000?
 - (1) This number only includes adult males!¹
 - (2) That would mean over 2 million in the Exodus including women and children
 - b. A possible corrective is that the Hebrew word *elep* which is usually translated “thousand” can, according to some scholars also be translated as “clan” or “troop” Hence, 600 family units or troops went forth
 - c. Notice, the word “divisions” is used in verse 41.
 - d. Another theory extends the “Exodus” all the way to the building of the Temple by Solomon some 480 years later. With that many years, 2 million is not an unlikely number.
12. **Postscript 2 - 42** *Because the LORD kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil to honor the LORD for the generations to come. 43 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "These are the regulations for the Passover: "No foreigner is to eat of it. 44 Any slave you have bought may eat of it after you have circumcised him, 45 but a temporary resident and a hired worker may not eat of it. 46 "It must be eaten inside one house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones. 47 The whole community of Israel must celebrate it. 48 "An alien living among you who wants to celebrate the Lord's Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part like one born in the land. No uncircumcised male may eat of it. 49 The same law applies to the native-born and to the alien living among you." 50 All the Israelites did just what the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron. 51 And on that very day the LORD brought the Israelites out of Egypt by their divisions.*
13. **Practices 13:1** *The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Consecrate to me all the first-born; whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine." 3 And Moses said to the people, "Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of*

¹Ex 38:26 ...everyone who had crossed over to those counted, twenty years old or more, a total of 603,550 men. And Numbers 26:51 The total number of the men of Israel was 601,730.

the house of bondage, for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place; no leavened bread shall be eaten. 4 This day you are to go forth, in the month of Abib. 5 And when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month. 6 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. 8 And you shall tell your son on that day, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.' 9 And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. 10 You shall therefore keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year. 11 "And when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, 12 you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstlings of your cattle that are males shall be the Lord's. 13 Every firstling of an ass you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every first-born of man among your sons you shall redeem. 14 And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 15 For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of cattle. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb; but all the first-born of my sons I redeem.' 16 It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes; for by a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."

a. General comments:

- (1) **GOD WORKED THIS WORK** - The text continues to focus the reader's attention on what God has done on Israel's behalf. Again and again the events are rehearsed and explained (vv. 3, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16), finishing with a flurry of references. For all that Israel is called upon to do, it is God's redemptive activity that fills the scene.
- (2) **GOD IS FAITHFUL** - At the same time, there is a repeated look to the future and the time in a new land, a place both of gift and responsibility (vv. 5, 7, 11). The divine commitment to Israel's future is recalled (vv. 5, 11). Israel can be assured that God will see to this commitment; God has bound himself in this regard. Yet the focus for talk of the future is not merely a vague hope; the settlement in the land is considered so much a certainty that

responsibilities can be delineated for the time beyond the fulfillment of promise.

- (3) **LITURGY AS RESPONSE** - The basic rhythm of the text is thus not that of memory and hope but of memory and liturgical responsibility. Because of what God has done, Israel is to respond in certain ways. Even more, the liturgical responses correspond to specific aspects of those events.
 - (a) The consecration and the redemption of the firstborn correlate with the death/life of the firstborn on passover night. Because of the divine redemption of Israel's firstborn, they belong to God.
 - (b) the eating of unleavened bread specifically replicates the haste with which Israel left Egypt and the call to purity that it symbolizes (12:34, 39).
 - (c) The various liturgical details of passover are also replications of the events of that original night.
 - (4) **THROUGH LITURGY THE SAVING ACTS OF GOD TOUCH THOSE WHO CELEBRATE** - While these responses are certainly vehicles for Israel's expression of gratitude for what God has done, the text contains no explicit language in this regard. Moreover, they are not simply means by which Israel engages in the recollection of the past; the memory language, explicit (vv. 3, 9) and implicit, has a deeper significance. As with Passover (see 12:1-28), the concrete and replicative nature of each of the rituals indicates that they are vehicles in and through which God effects salvation for each new generation.
 - (5) **LITURGICAL UNDERSTANDING** - An integral part of this experience is that what happens in the liturgy receive appropriate interpretation. Specific instruction for children is highlighted in each instance, with (12:26; 13:14) and without (13:8) their request. The interpretive word is central to the liturgical activity.
 - (6) **BODILY MEMORY** - Understanding and memory involve not only the mind but also the body. The Body, not just the mind is engaged in liturgy
14. Path - 17 *When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest the people repent when they see war, and return to Egypt." 18 But God led the people round by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle. 19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for Joseph had solemnly sworn the people of Israel, saying, "God will visit you; then you must carry my bones with you from here." 20 And they moved on from Succoth, and encamped at Etham, on the edge of*

the wilderness. 21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night; 22 the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.