

A Bible Adventure

Edition 05

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The Plagues of Egypt!

A dramatized retelling of Exodus 5 to 12

Moses was on a mission. God had spoken to him of the Egyptian oppression of the Israelites and had charged him with leading the Israelites to the Promised Land. Moses was acquainted with the tyranny of Egypt, for as a baby, due to his sister's shrewdness, Moses himself had escaped the Egyptian government's decree that all sons born to Hebrew parents were to be tossed into the Nile. Now, despite reservations about his leadership abilities, Moses clings to God's promises of wisdom, protection, and anointing for the colossal task before him.

Our story takes place as Moses and Aaron—Moses' brother and spokesman—confront Pharaoh with God's command to let the Israelites leave Egypt.

A crafty, corpulent official in Pharaoh's court named Leobim was riding home in his chariot at the end of the day, and he passed a procession of Hebrew slaves trudging back toward the land of Goshen.

"So your Moses says your God commands you to take time off to worship Him?" he shouted. "Then let Him help you make bricks without straw!"

Leobim's vast estate was on the southern border of the land of Goshen in the fertile Nile Delta, and as he turned off the main road to his mansion, the weary Hebrews crossed a bridge over a canal into Goshen.

Jemima looked up from her cooking when her father and brothers came in.

"Oh, dear God!" she cried, seeing their bleeding backs. "They beat you again today!"

"Yes," her father said wearily. "Moses told Pharaoh that God commanded him to let His people go to worship Him, but

Pharaoh has refused and has made our work even harder by making us gather straw instead of providing straw for us as they usually do. Then his slave drivers beat us when we couldn't make the required quota of bricks for the day."

"O Lord, deliver us!" Jemima said as she tended to their wounds.

Moses and Aaron were discouraged; their first attempt at convincing Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go had failed. Not only that, they seemed to have made things more difficult for the very people they were trying to rescue.

Moses sought God's guidance, and God predicted that Pharaoh would ask them to perform a miracle. When he did so, Aaron was to throw down his staff, and it would turn into a serpent. This all happened just as God had said.

At the palace, after Aaron's staff had turned into a snake, Pharaoh remained unimpressed and promptly called for his own court magicians to turn their staffs into snakes. Despite their being able to do so, Aaron's snake ate the magicians' snakes. Yet still Pharaoh hardened his heart against the God of the Hebrews and refused to let the Hebrews go.

The next morning, as Pharaoh went down to the banks of the Nile River, Moses and Aaron went to meet him as God had guided them to do.

"By this you will know that God is God," Moses pro-

claimed. "With this staff I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it will turn into blood. The fish in the Nile will die, and the Nile will stink. You will grow sick of drinking water from the Nile."

Aaron struck the river with the staff and Pharaoh's mocking indifference turned into shock as the Nile water changed from a greenish brown into a deep red! Everywhere in Egypt, the water in the streams and canals, the ponds and reservoirs—even the water in stone jars—was turned to blood. The Nile smelled putrid and was undrinkable, and all the fish in it died. But when the magicians in Pharaoh's court performed a similar act using their secret arts, his heart was hardened once more.

Seven days passed, and Moses and Aaron went again to Pharaoh with God's

decree: "Let My people go!" But Pharaoh still refused. So Aaron stretched his staff over the streams, canals, and ponds, and frogs appeared and covered the entire land. Not even Pharaoh's palace was spared.

Riding home, Leobim saw with horror that his fields were covered with a pulsating sea of croaking frogs. He was further horrified to find, after wading through the frogs in his courtyard and entering his house, that the frogs were in his kitchen, inside his ovens, even in his bedroom and on his bed. His wife and son were hysterical as the burping, bug-eyed creatures leaped all over them. Meanwhile, Jemima, her brothers, and a crowd of Hebrews stood on the edge of the canal looking across into the land of Egypt in amazement. Leobim's property was seething with frogs, yet in Goshen all was well.

Pharaoh finally begged Moses to get rid of the plague of frogs, and Moses agreed, saying, "So that you will know that there is no one like the Lord our God."

Then Moses prayed, and the din of millions of frogs fell silent as all the frogs died. Leobim ordered his servants to sweep the carcasses out of his house and rake those in his fields into piles. For the next few days, the entire land of Egypt reeked with dead frogs!

Unfortunately, even though his land was now free from the plague of frogs, Pharaoh hardened his heart again. So God commanded Moses to tell Aaron to strike the dust of the ground with his staff. When he had done this, the dust became lice, and they crawled all over every man and beast in Egypt. Pharaoh commanded his magicians to perform this act as well, but they could not.

Under God's authority, Moses came again and commanded Pharaoh, "Let my people go or else God will send swarms of flies to plague you."

Still Pharaoh would not listen, so God sent swarms of flies into his palace and into the houses of his officials. Throughout Egypt, the land was contaminated with flies. Leobim went crazy trying to drive away the flies crawling over him, and was bewildered to discover that not a single fly flew in the land of Goshen.

"You can go!" Pharaoh screamed at Moses. "Just take these horrid flies with you!"

Nonetheless, as soon as Moses had prayed and God had removed the flies from Egypt, Pharaoh went back on his word.

Moses again appeared before Pharaoh with a message from God: "If you refuse to let the Hebrews go, God will send a

severe plague upon your livestock, and all Egyptian livestock will die, but the livestock of the Israelites will live."

Then God sent a plague on the horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep, and oxen of the Egyptians. Leobim watched all of his livestock die, while only a short distance away in Goshen, livestock grazed contentedly in their pastures, and not a single one died. Leobim was in Pharaoh's palace when the next plague fell. Moses took handfuls of soot from a furnace and tossed it into the air in Pharaoh's presence. It then became fine dust all over the land of Egypt, and boils broke out on people and animals. Leobim cried in pain as he broke out in boils from head to toe.

Pharaoh himself and his magicians were covered with boils, but still Pharaoh would not yield, so finally Moses stormed into his courts and said, "Thus says the Lord: 'By

now I could have stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But so that all may know that I am the true God, tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt from the day it became a nation until now.' "Bring in all your livestock to a place of shelter, for the hail will fall and slay every person and animal out in the open."

Pharaoh and all his officials had a whole day to heed this warning, and several of the officials who feared the Word of God brought their slaves and livestock into safety, but Leobim, like Pharaoh and most of the court officials, ignored Moses.

The next day, Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the heavens darkened with clouds while thunder rumbled. Then, one fork of lightning after another flashed and hail rained down. The noise was deafening. All

over Egypt, hail fell, lightning flashed, and fire raged across the ground. On and on the storm went. Finally Pharaoh promised to let the Hebrews go, so Moses prayed and immediately the storm stopped.

When it was over, Leobim trudged home through the slush of melting hailstones. As far as he could see, everything growing in the fields had been beaten to the ground. Every tree left standing was stripped of leaves and branches, and when he arrived at his estate, he saw the bodies of his slaves and livestock that had been killed by the hail!

After the clamor of the storm had passed, Jemima and all the Hebrews had come out of their houses to see if their land had been destroyed, but to their joyful amazement, all the fields and trees in Goshen were unharmed. Yet across the canal, the land of Egypt was disaster stricken.

Even though the storm had stopped, Pharaoh refused to keep his promise. Once more, Moses warned Pharaoh to let his people go. Pharaoh refused. Then Leobim and the other officials pleaded, “Let the people go! Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?”

When Pharaoh refused, God sent an east wind that blew all night and by morning had brought unprecedented swarms of locusts over all of Egypt. From the bank of the canal, Jemima watched unending swarms sweep upon Leobim’s fields and devour all that the hail had left. When they had finished, nothing green remained on any tree or plant throughout Egypt.

Yet—as though being held back by some invisible wall—not one locust flew into the land of Goshen. Jemima and her brothers, as well as the crowd of Hebrews standing there, fell to their knees in awe and worship of God’s mighty power.

After the locusts were gone, Pharaoh again hardened his heart, and so the next plague fell.

Jemima and her family went out and saw swirling above the bridge that divided Goshen from Egypt a wall of the darkest mist they had ever seen. This darkness then covered Egypt so that no one left their house. Consequently, the entire land came to a standstill for three days. Leobim, stumbling through his mansion, found that not even the light of a lamp could pierce the darkness.

Yet in the land of Goshen, the sun shone as brightly as ever.

Then God brought one last plague upon Pharaoh and Egypt. Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves and kill the Passover lamb. Take the blood from the lamb and paint your two doorposts with this blood. Do not leave your house

until morning, for God will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, God will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.”

As Moses had instructed, the Hebrews ate the Passover meal and painted their doorposts with the blood of a lamb to show their faith in God’s protection. When God came to a house with blood on the doorposts, He passed over it, but where there was no blood, the firstborn died.

At midnight, God struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh in his palace to the firstborn of the prisoners who were in Pharaoh’s dungeon. From the land of Goshen, the Hebrews could hear the wailing of millions of

Egyptians throughout the land, for not a house was without someone dead.

But among the Israelites everything was quiet; not even a dog barked. The Egyptians, mourning and in great fear of God’s power, begged the Hebrews to leave.

Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Leave! Go, serve your God. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone!”

That night, the Israelites left Egypt, and began their journey to the Promised Land. God’s magnificent power had freed the Hebrew people.

Footnote:

1. lintel: a horizontal architectural member spanning and usually carrying the load above an opening (“lintel,” *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. 2008. Print.)

See “Heroes of the Bible: Moses”
for more on this fascinating Bible character.