

Up From Slavery

A man / A people / A plan

DOES IT PAY TO BOX WITH GOD?

Exodus 9:13-10:29

“Young Man, Young man—your arm is too short
to box with God.”

God's Trombones
James Weldon Johnson

Plague	Reference	Object
Nile turned to blood	7:14-25	Hapi (also called Apis), the bull god, god of the Nile; Isis , goddess of the Nile; Khnum , ram god guardian of the Nile; and others
Frogs	8:1-15	Heqet , goddess of birth, with a frog head
Gnats	8:16-19	Set , god of the desert
Flies	8:20-32	Re , a sun god; Uatchit , possibly represented by the fly
Death of livestock	9:1-7	Hathor , goddess with the cow head; Apis , the bull god, symbol of fertility
Boils	9:8-12	Sekhmet , goddess with power over disease; Sunu , the pestilence god, Isis , goddess of healing

Hail

9:13 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, ¹⁴ or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. ¹⁵ For 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. ¹⁶ But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. ¹⁷ You still set yourself against my

people and will not let them go. ¹⁸ Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now. ¹⁹ Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every man and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die.’ ”

²⁰ Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. ²¹ But those who ignored the word of the LORD left their slaves and livestock in the field.

²² Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt—on men and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt.” ²³ When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. So the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt; ²⁴ hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. ²⁵ Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields—both men and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree.

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²⁷ Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. “This time I have sinned,” he said to them. “The LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸ Pray to the LORD, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don’t have to stay any longer.”

²⁹ Moses replied, “When I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to the LORD. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may know that the earth is the LORD’s. ³⁰ But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the LORD God.”

³¹ (The flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom. ³² The wheat and spelt, however, were not destroyed, because they ripen later.)

³³ Then Moses left Pharaoh and went out of the city. He spread out his hands toward the LORD; the thunder and hail stopped, and the rain no longer poured down on the land. ³⁴ When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. ³⁵ So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

Locusts

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them ² that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD.”

³ So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, “This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, so that they may worship me. ⁴ If you refuse to let them go, I

will bring locusts into your country tomorrow. ⁵ They will cover the face of the ground so that it cannot be seen. They will devour what little you have left after the hail, including every tree that is growing in your fields. ⁶ They will fill your houses and those of all your officials and all the Egyptians—something neither your fathers nor your forefathers have ever seen from the day they settled in this land till now.’ ” Then Moses turned and left Pharaoh.

⁷ Pharaoh’s officials said to him, “How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the people go, so that they may worship the LORD their God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?”

⁸ Then Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. “Go, worship the LORD your God,” he said. “But just who will be going?”

⁹ Moses answered, “We will go with our young and old, with our sons and daughters, and with our flocks and herds, because we are to celebrate a festival to the LORD.”

¹⁰ Pharaoh said, “The LORD be with you—if I let you go, along with your women and children! Clearly you are bent on evil. ¹¹ No! Have only the men go; and worship the LORD, since that’s what you have been asking for.” Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh’s presence.

¹² And the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over Egypt so that locusts will swarm over the land and devour

everything growing in the fields, everything left by the hail.”

¹³ So Moses stretched out his staff over Egypt, and the LORD made an east wind blow across the land all that day and all that night. By morning the wind had brought the locusts; ¹⁴ they invaded all Egypt and settled down in every area of the country in great numbers. Never before had there been such a plague of locusts, nor will there ever be again. ¹⁵ They covered all the ground until it was black. They devoured all that was left after the hail—everything growing in the fields and the fruit on the trees. Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt.

¹⁶ Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. ¹⁷ Now forgive my sin once more and pray to the LORD your God to take this deadly plague away from me.”

¹⁸ Moses then left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. ¹⁹ And the LORD changed the wind to a very strong west wind, which caught up the locusts and carried them into the Red Sea. Not a locust was left anywhere in Egypt. ²⁰ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go.

Darkness

²¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt—darkness that can be felt.” ²² So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. ²³ No one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

²⁴ Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, “Go, worship the LORD. Even your women and children may go with you; only leave your flocks and herds behind.”

²⁵ But Moses said, “You must allow us to have sacrifices and burnt offerings to present to the LORD our God. ²⁶ Our livestock too must go with us; not a hoof is to be left behind. We have to use some of them in worshiping the LORD our God, and until we get there we will not know what we are to use to worship the LORD.”

²⁷ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he was not willing to let them go. ²⁸ Pharaoh said to Moses, “Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my face you will die.”

²⁹ “Just as you say,” Moses replied, “I will never appear before you again.”

Hail	9:13-35	Nut, the sky goddess; Osiris, god of crops and fertility; Set, god of storms
Locusts	10:1-20	Nut, the sky goddess; Osiris, god of crops and fertility
Darkness	10:21-29	Re, the sun god; Horus, a sun god; Nut, a sky goddess; Hathor, a sky goddess

To Go . . .

- Why do people continue to deny the person or presence of God in the face of overwhelming evidence?
- Are we tempted to follow the same paths in any way?
- How can we guard our hearts against apostasy?