

- In our last meeting, we quickly covered the first six plagues of the judgments against Egypt
 - We focused on the overall pattern and picture God was creating through the judgments
 - The judgments follow the structure we identified as we began this part of our study
 - The first nine judgment come in groups of three with certain expectations for how they start and progress
 - We have also noticed how they foreshadow the judgments of Tribulation and how they were intended as an assault against Egypt's gods
 - Tonight we conclude that examination, including learning about the most important judgment, the tenth judgment of the first born
- We left off ready to look at the final three plagues, beginning with the seventh judgment

Ex. 9:13 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.

Ex. 9:14 “For this time I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth.

Ex. 9:15 “For if by now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth.

Ex. 9:16 “But, indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.

- Since this is the first of a three-judgment group, the judgment is preceded with a warning to Pharaoh in the morning
 - This opening is different than those that have preceded it
 - The Lord begins with the same demand: Let my people go
 - But rather than waiting for Pharaoh to respond, the Lord continues with an ominous warning
 - He says this time I will bring “all” my plagues
 - Pharaoh is no longer in a position to stop the judgments
 - They are all coming upon Pharaoh and he must endure all remaining judgments
 - And the Lord says in .v14 that this must happen so that the people of Egypt and the world will know there is no one like the Lord
 - Next the Lord sets the record straight with Pharaoh
 - Pharaoh thinks he has survived the plagues by dint of his god's protection or his own strength
 - But the Lord tells Pharaoh that his survival is merely proof of God's mercy

- Had the Lord wanted to wipe out Pharaoh and the Egyptians people, they would have been gone already
 - But in v.16, the Lord says that Pharaoh and Egypt have been allowed to remain so that they could be witnesses to God's power
 - And in return, they would proclaim God's name throughout the world
- These statements convey weighty theology we must understand to see God's actions in Exodus properly
 - First, God holds the life of every man in His hands, and He allows unbelievers to live along side believers
 - Though we understand and agree with this statement, don't overlook it's significance
 - The earth is populated with billions of people and most do not know and follow the living God
 - They are disobedient, ungodly, and corrupt, and they offend a holy and just God
 - Yet since Cain, they have lived and enjoyed the blessings of a world God created for His glory
 - In the Beatitudes, the Lord cites this principle in pointing out the Lord's long suffering and merciful nature

[Matt. 5:44](#) **“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,**

[Matt. 5:45](#) **so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**

- God is willing to support the physical needs of people whose very existence is offensive to His Holy nature
 - The second point is that God does this for His glory
 - Many believers have questioned why God allows so much evil to live side by side with His children, and the answer is here
 - When God chooses to judge the ungodly, He will have the opportunity He desires to display His power and bring glory to His name
 - This moment in the Exodus is an example of that purpose at work
 - As Paul explains

[Rom. 9:17](#) **For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “ FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH.”**

[Rom. 9:18](#) **So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He**

desires.

[Rom. 9:19](#) You will say to me then, “ Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?”

[Rom. 9:20](#) On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this,” will it?

[Rom. 9:21](#) Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

[Rom. 9:22](#) What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

[Rom. 9:23](#) And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

[Rom. 9:24](#) even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

- The Tribulation will be another such opportunity
- So God tells Pharaoh that he has been preserved through the first plagues so that he would lead to God’s name proclaimed in all the world
 - And now that we’ve reached the final four plagues, the Lord reiterates that Pharaoh will see “all” the plagues God has designed
 - We’ve known this from the beginning, but now the Lord reveals this reality to Pharaoh himself
 - God’s judgment has a purpose, and that purpose is not redemptive
 - That’s the difference between discipline and judgment
 - Discipline is God’s displeasure dispensed against His children for the purpose of correcting disobedience
 - It has a redemptive purpose
 - Judgment is God’s wrath poured out against His enemies as just condemnation for sin
 - It has no redemptive purpose; it is entirely punitive
 - These plagues are judgments, not discipline, as so they will continue regardless of Pharaoh’s behavior
 - In fact, the Lord is actively working to keep the Pharaoh’s heart hard and unresponsive to the pressure God applies
 - And as the ten plagues play out, the Lord’s power is made known and His name is proclaimed throughout the world
 - Who is God’s intended audience for this display of power and glory?
 - God’s people, of course
 - As Paul said

[Rom. 9:23](#) And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

- The unbelieving world will see these wonders too, but they cannot be persuaded by wonders
 - Daniel speaks of this same principle in describing the effects of the Tribulation judgments upon the world of the last days

[Dan. 12:10](#) “Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.

- The final series of Exodus judgments are intended to complete the display of God’s power, not to change Pharaoh’s mind
 - And the final series of Tribulation judgments, the bowl judgments, serve the same purpose
 - They bring God’s wrath against the world and its leaders
 - And they have no redemptive purpose, since they bring no new faith
 - They are exclusively intended to demonstrate God’s power against unbelievers for the benefit of an audience of believers
 - Turning to the seventh judgment itself, God describes Pharaoh what will happen

[Ex. 9:17](#) “Still you exalt yourself against My people by not letting them go.

[Ex. 9:18](#) “Behold, about this time tomorrow, I will send a very heavy hail, such as has not been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now.

[Ex. 9:19](#) “Now therefore send, bring your livestock and whatever you have in the field to safety. Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail comes down on them, will die.”””

[Ex. 9:20](#) The one among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses;

[Ex. 9:21](#) but he who paid no regard to the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.

[Ex. 9:22](#) Now the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that hail may fall on all the land of Egypt, on man and on beast and on every plant of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.”

[Ex. 9:23](#) Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt.

[Ex. 9:24](#) So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a

nation.

Ex. 9:25 The hail struck all that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant of the field and shattered every tree of the field.

Ex. 9:26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel were, there was no hail.

- God warns He will send a plague of hail unseen before in the land of Egypt
 - The purpose of the hail will be to destroy all man and animal life among those left exposed in the field, and to ruin the crops in the field
 - Notice there is a degree of mercy available here for any God-fearing Egyptians in the land
 - Those who heed this warning can at least preserve their livestock from death
 - Their crops will still be ruined though
 - You would think that by now many in Egypt are beginning to get the message and would heed the warning, and this is true
 - In fact, the people of Egypt are beginning to question their Pharaoh's reasoning in not giving in to the Lord's demands
 - Remember, the people of Egypt haven't had their hearts hardened by the Lord as has Pharaoh
 - So they are more easily persuaded and have reached the point of capitulation
 - So for these God-fearing Egyptians, there is now mercy found in this plague
- So the Lord sends a very severe plague of hail against Egypt
 - Notice that this final group of three plagues is accomplished through the hand of Moses
 - And when Moses stretches out his hand, he brings a storm mixing hail, thunder, and fire
 - That's a bad combination even by Texas standards
 - The description of the event continues to emphasize the unprecedented nature of this judgment
 - The effect is devastating
 - Every plant and every tree of the field was shattered
 - Animals and people left out died as well
 - We've seen pictures of areas devastated by hurricanes and Egypt must have looked like that and worse
 - But the land of Israel is untouched, as we've seen since the third plague
 - This plague parallels both the first trumpet and the seventh bowl judgment

- As before, the Pharaoh reacts and calls for Moses

Ex. 9:27 Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “I have sinned this time; the LORD is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones.

Ex. 9:28 “Make supplication to the LORD, for there has been enough of God’s thunder and hail; and I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.”

Ex. 9:29 Moses said to him, “As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease and there will be hail no longer, that you may know that the earth is the LORD’S.

Ex. 9:30 “But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God.”

Ex. 9:31 (Now the flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud.

Ex. 9:32 But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they ripen late.)

Ex. 9:33 So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread out his hands to the LORD; and the thunder and the hail ceased, and rain no longer poured on the earth.

Ex. 9:34 But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

Ex. 9:35 Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not let the sons of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

- Pharaoh continues to seek anyway possible to stop the judgments, especially when he’s in the midst of the judgment
 - He’ll say anything, promise anything to bring it to an end
 - In this case, he announces quiet dramatically that he and his people are wicked and have sinned while the Lord is the righteous One
 - What do we make of this type of confession?
 - The Bible describes moments like this, for example

Heb. 12:15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

Heb. 12:16 that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.

Heb. 12:17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

- Esau is held up as an example of a man who came up short of the grace of God

- As a result, when he learned of the consequences of his sin, he displayed tears of regret hoping to plead his case
 - His unpleasant circumstances drove his tears
 - But the Bible says clearly that these tears were not the result of godly repentance
- As Paul explains

2Cor. 7:10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

- The kind of sorrow Esau displayed – and the kind Pharaoh is displaying – is the sorrow of the world
 - It looks convincing and it may fool us to think there has been a change of heart
 - But soon enough, the truth will become known
 - An unrepentant heart ceases its sorrow once the consequences have been removed
 - You will very often see this pattern in children
 - When they are caught in a mistake, they cry tears in the face of a punishment
 - If we relent too quickly, we risk allowing them to fool us into thinking they have truly repented when in fact it's just a game to get rid of the consequences
 - Making this mistake repeatedly with kids leads them to adopt a specific behavioral condition with a very technical name: they become monsters
 - And with adults, we need to keep a discerning attitude toward those who claim a changed heart, even accompanying tears, but don't show true spiritual change
- The first clue to know that nothing has really changed in Pharaoh's heart is his request that Moses pray for him
 - Rather than Pharaoh opening dialog directly with the Lord, he asks someone else to approach the Lord on his behalf
 - This is a typical pattern when unbelievers try to project a spiritual perspective
 - To their unbelieving ears, it sounds spiritual to ask for prayer, and it is, but in this context it simply highlights that the person has no personal relationship with the Lord
 - You see the same thing in Acts 8 when Simon the magician asks Peter to pray for him to receive God's forgiveness
 - True repentance will always lead the sinner to pray to the Lord himself confessing his own sin
 - Pharaoh also promises (again) to let Israel go
 - As we read in v.30, Moses isn't fooled by this display
 - Nevertheless, Moses agrees to stop the plague after he has left the city of

Pharaoh

- And once the pressure is taken off, Pharaoh remains as he is
 - The leopard doesn't change his stripes, as I'm known to say
 - Notice also that God is still at work hardening the Pharaoh's heart
- In vs.31-32 Moses makes an interesting comment regarding the effects of the plague
 - The Egyptians raised three kinds of grain, primarily barley, flax and wheat
 - As this plague hit, the flax and barley were ripening in the field
 - This happens in Jan and Feb every year
 - The wheat doesn't come up until Mar or Apr, so that crop was spared at this point
 - However, they will be lost in the next plague
 - This means that there is about 2 months between the hail and the eighth plague
- Finally, there were multiple Egyptian gods discredited in this judgment
 - Shu - Sky god and son of Ra
 - Nut - sky goddess
 - Seth - agricultural god
 - Isis - agricultural goddess
- Now we move to the eighth plague

Ex. 10:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them,

Ex. 10:2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed My signs among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.”

- Before the seventh plague, the Lord explained His purposes in preserving the life of Pharaoh and the Egyptians despite Pharaoh's resistance
 - The purpose was to use Pharaoh as a platform on which the Lord would display His power and glorify His name among the nations
 - Now as He begins the eighth plague, the Lord gives Moses additional information about His purposes in extending this drama further
 - The Lord tells Moses to once again approach Pharaoh with his request
 - And because the Lord has continued to harden the Pharaoh's heart, this request will give yet another opportunity for God to display His power
 - But then the Lord adds a new purpose: so that Moses and the Israelites will recount what they see to future generations

- Specifically, God wants Israel to remember how God made a mockery of Egyptian power
- God mocks Pharaoh, the Egyptian gods, the Egyptian might, and in the end the Egyptian army
 - And the Lord wants this story to become part of Israel collective conscience
- We noted in the last judgment that the intended audience for God's display of power was primarily His children
 - Here we see the Lord confirming that intention
 - And this display of power is unprecedented in all history
 - It will only be equaled and exceeded in Tribulation
- This reminds us of one of our responsibilities as believers of the living God
 - We have been ushered into the family of God by God's mercy for the purpose of bringing glory to God
 - Our very existence is proof of His goodness, and so we testify by our mere existence
 - But that's the least we can do
 - The call of faith of is ultimately a call to works that testify to the glory of God, as Jesus said

[Matt. 5:16](#) “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- So when the Lord has revealed His power and goodness to us, as He is doing here to Israel, an expectation attaches that we would respond with testimony
 - Moses was to declare God's works to Israel
 - And in turn Israel would make this declaration to one another from generation to generation
 - And so the glory of this work is preserved for future generations
 - Likewise, we should seek an attitude of thankfulness coupled with the self-discipline to speak of God's work and glory to everyone we encounter
 - Even simple comments like “God told me...” or “I felt the Lord leading me...” will communicate His work to unbelievers
 - As the Psalmist said

**[Psa. 71:14](#) But as for me, I will hope continually,
And will praise You yet more and more.**

**[Psa. 71:15](#) My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness
And of Your salvation all day long;
For I do not know the sum of them.**

**[Psa. 71:16](#) I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord GOD;
I will make mention of Your righteousness, Yours alone.**

**[Psa. 71:17](#) O God, You have taught me from my youth,
And I still declare Your wondrous deeds.**

**[Psa. 71:18](#) And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me,
Until I declare Your strength to this generation,
Your power to all who are to come.**

- So then came the instructions for the next plague

[Ex. 10:3](#) Moses and Aaron went 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.

[Ex. 10:4](#) ‘For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory.

[Ex. 10:5](#) ‘They shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the land. They will also eat the rest of what has escaped — what is left to you from the hail — and they will eat every tree which sprouts for you out of the field.

[Ex. 10:6](#) ‘Then your houses shall be filled and the houses of all your servants and the houses of all the Egyptians, something which neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day that they came upon the earth until this day.’” And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

- The eighth plague is locusts, another example of intensifying a natural phenomenon
 - The second in the series always comes with a warning, and the Pharaoh learns that this plague will cover the earth of Egypt with locusts
 - There will be so many that the ground will literally be black
 - Locusts occasionally swarm in various places on earth, and the effect is always devastating
 - They are voracious eaters consuming virtually any vegetation
 - The Lord says this particular plague will bring so many locusts that Egypt will have nothing to compare it to
 - The numbers will exceed anything that has existed before
 - Everywhere except Goshen will be so covered you will not be able to see the land underneath
 - They will eat anything that survived the hail, which means the wheat that has come up since the hail hit
 - Also, any remaining trees that have begun to grow back in the two months since the hail

- This plague has an indirect connection to the Tribulation judgments
 - In the fifth Trumpet judgment, demons are released from the pit to torment men for five months
 - And John describes the appearance of these demons as looking like locusts

Ex. 10:7 Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?"

Ex. 10:8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God! Who are the ones that are going?"

Ex. 10:9 Moses said, "We shall go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we shall go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD."

Ex. 10:10 Then he said to them, "Thus may the LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Take heed, for evil is in your mind.

Ex. 10:11 "Not so! Go now, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desire." So they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

- I mentioned in the previous judgment that the populace of Egypt was losing patience with the Pharaoh's stubbornness
 - And now we see that insurrection beginning to take shape publicly
 - Before the plague has even begun, the servants of Pharaoh opening challenge Pharaoh in his court
 - They ask Pharaoh how long he intends to let this go on, since Egypt is destroyed
 - The Hebrew word for destroyed means "annihilated"
 - Obviously, these servants believe Moses' word and fully expect something bad to happen in response to Moses' warning
 - It's hard to overstate how striking this conversation would have been
 - The Pharaoh was considered a god and his authority could never be challenged
 - Should anyone ever dare to do so, death would follow quickly
 - The fact these servants were willing to challenge Pharaoh publicly tells us two things
 - First, it's an indication of how bad things have become in Egypt
 - The people are willing to risk death to make their opinions known to Pharaoh
 - Secondly, it shows God at work to discredit the most power Egyptian god...the Pharaoh himself
 - The people have begun to question his judgment
 - More importantly, they have seen that there is a power in creation that far exceeds the power of Pharaoh

- And this greater power is humiliating and annihilating Pharaoh and Egypt along with it
- Probably shocked by his servants' daring and sensing some vulnerability, the Pharaoh calls for Moses and Aaron to return
 - Then Pharaoh makes his third attempt to negotiate a face-saving compromise
 - He begins by asking Moses who of the nation would be going out of Egypt
 - He's implying that not all would leave
 - Moses responds with the obvious answer
 - We're all going, old, young, sons, daughters, animals, everyone
 - Once again, Moses is taking Israel away from Egypt forever
 - While Pharaoh is looking for a way to force Israel to be kept in the land
 - The entire discussion of leaving to sacrifice is merely pretext for discussing a full release of Israel
 - Pharaoh's response is a bit difficult to understand in our English translation, because the translation is wrong
 - Pharaoh says in a sarcastic tone may your Lord be with you should I ever let you and your little ones go
 - He's saying that should I ever let you go, then you had better have your God on your side to protect you
 - Why does he say this?
 - Because in the second half of the verse Pharaoh says evil in your mind
 - That is an unfortunate translation of the Hebrew and it completely obscures Pharaoh's real meaning
 - The Hebrew only says "See Ra is before you"
 - The word Ra is the name of the Egyptian sun god
 - But that word (ra) is also the Hebrew word for evil
 - The translators have taken the word ra to be the Hebrew word for evil rather than seeing it as the name of the Egyptian sun god
 - But Pharaoh used the name Ra, not the Hebrew word for evil
 - Pharaoh was considered to be the incarnation of Ra on earth
 - So Pharaoh was saying Ra was standing before Moses (meaning Pharaoh was standing before Moses)
 - And Pharaoh was threatening Moses by suggestion that if Moses and Israel were ever released, they would need protection from the wrath of Pharaoh
 - And with that Pharaoh grants only the men to go worship
 - Normally, this would be a sensible compromise, since women usually didn't participate in religious ceremony in Eastern cultures
 - But of course, that's not God's plan

- With that, Pharaoh sends Moses and Aaron away hoping they accept the deal and he avoids the plague

Ex. 10:12 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up on the land of Egypt and eat every plant of the land, even all that the hail has left.”

Ex. 10:13 So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD directed an east wind on the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

Ex. 10:14 The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled in all the territory of Egypt; they were very numerous. There had never been so many locusts, nor would there be so many again.

Ex. 10:15 For they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt.

Ex. 10:16 Then Pharaoh hurriedly called for Moses and Aaron, and he said, “I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you.

Ex. 10:17 “Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and make supplication to the LORD your God, that He would only remove this death from me.”

Ex. 10:18 He went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the LORD.

Ex. 10:19 So the LORD shifted the wind to a very strong west wind which took up the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not one locust was left in all the territory of Egypt.

Ex. 10:20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.

- Just as God promised, locusts consume Egypt
 - Whatever food sources the people had managed to cultivate since the devastating hail were now gone
 - For 24 hours an east wind brought locusts from somewhere so that by morning the next day they wind had delivered them
 - Notice that the plague is a supernatural increase of a natural event
 - The locust were brought in the usual way, by a wind
 - But this wind brought a lot more locusts than usual!
 - After a day or so of munching on everything Egypt had, the Pharaoh pulls another crocodile tear episode
 - He calls for Moses again, begs for forgiveness
 - Moses appealed to the Lord, and the wind reversed taking the locusts into the sea

- Notice the removal of the plagues was as miraculous as their arrival
 - Egypt didn't even have a single locust remaining in the land to give evidence of what had happened
 - All that remained was the evidence of what the locusts had done
- And of course Pharaoh's heart is hardened to continue to process
- The gods mocked in this plague were
 - Seth – the agriculture god that looked like a locust
 - Isis – the agricultural god
- The ninth plague is now upon Egypt, and as with the final plague of every series, it comes without warning

[Ex. 10:21](#) Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt.”

[Ex. 10:22](#) So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days.

[Ex. 10:23](#) They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings.

- Moses initiates a darkness on the land that Moses describes as being felt
 - This tells us that this darkness is part physical, part spiritual
 - People can see nothing whatsoever
 - It's as if they have gone completely blind
 - But it can be felt also
 - It brings everything in Egypt to a stop
 - Certainly the darkness would have greatly reduced people's movement
 - But complete stillness is better explained by the darkness having a debilitating effect
 - This is probably what Moses meant by the darkness being felt
 - But Goshen still has light in homes, but notice this implies that Goshen itself did experience the outer darkness
 - So the sun isn't shining in Egypt, though the Israelites can compensate with internal lights
 - That was absent elsewhere in Egypt
- Consider God's sense of irony in this judgment
 - In an earlier moment the Pharaoh had declared that Israel had better fear the Egyptian sun god Ra
 - Now this plague, which came without warning, plunges Egypt into a sunless

existence

- In the pantheon of Egyptian gods, more gods represented the sun, moon and stars than any other part of creation
 - A partial list of gods mocked in this judgment includes:
 - Ra – the sun god (ram)
 - Khepre – another sun god (eagle)
 - Harakhte – another sun god (hawk)
 - Aten – sun disk god
 - Horus – winged sun disk god
 - Atum – god of the setting sun
 - Thoth – moon god
 - Nut – sky goddess

Ex. 10:24 Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, “Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you.”

Ex. 10:25 But Moses said, “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice them to the LORD our God.

Ex. 10:26 “Therefore, our livestock too shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we shall take some of them to serve the LORD our God. And until we arrive there, we ourselves do not know with what we shall serve the LORD.”

Ex. 10:27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he was not willing to let them go.

Ex. 10:28 Then Pharaoh said to him, “Get away from me! Beware, do not see my face again, for in the day you see my face you shall die!”

Ex. 10:29 Moses said, “You are right; I shall never see your face again!”

- God has to set a time limit on this plague, because until the darkness is lifted, Pharaoh and Moses could never meet
 - So once the darkness ends after three days, Pharaoh calls for Moses and then says Israel may go
 - And for the fourth time Pharaoh tries to negotiate with Moses
 - He says leave the flocks
 - Remember, his purpose in these negotiations is to give Israel reason to return
 - And this was Pharaoh’s weakest reason yet
 - He was risking that Israel would go without their flocks and still not come back, though it would have been risky for Israel
 - The flocks were needed to sustain such a large group of people

- Moses makes the obvious point to Pharaoh
 - If we don't take our flocks, we won't be able to sacrifice
 - Moses says quite comically not a hoof will be left behind
 - Perhaps Pharaoh was even giving some consideration to Moses' demands, but it didn't matter
 - God stepped in to harden Pharaoh's heart thus ensuring that the tenth and final judgment would take place
- This plague has a direct parallel to the plagues of Tribulation
 - There are several instances of the sky being darkened in Tribulation
 - But the most direct parallel is found in the fifth bowl judgment when a similar darkness comes upon the world
 - In that case, the darkness is so great it leaves men gnawing their tongues in pain
- In scripture, the number nine is associated with judgment
 - The first nine judgments are clearly separated from the tenth judgment so as to make a point that this is a period of judgment for Israel
 - And the nine judgments are grouped in threes
 - The number three is the number for God in complete form
 - Taken together, we have a series of plagues designed to communicate God at work bringing judgment
 - And the number ten is the number for testimony
 - Testimony refers to a witness of God
 - And the tenth plague will be that witness to the world of God's work
- In fact, looking looking across all nine plagues, God has shown his power in multiple ways
 - He has shown His power over the natural world, proving He is the Creator
 - Egypt believed other gods were responsible for elements of creations, but God reveals those other gods to be frauds
 - He has shown his power over life and death, having taken Egyptian lives and livestock while preserving Israel untouched
 - Egypt believed they were preserved by their own power and the power of their gods
 - The Lord has shown his power to sovereignly control human events to confirm to His eternal plan
 - These plagues and the effect they have on Egypt is a perfect picture of God's work still to come during Tribulation
 - Leaving us with evidence that God is at work orchestrating all human history toward an appointed end

- God has demonstrated His authority over the hearts of men
 - Pharaoh was raised up for the purpose of God turning his heart as God pleased, yielding the outcome God assigned from the beginning
- Finally, God has demonstrated that He is a covenant-keeping God, fulfilling all the things He promised centuries earlier
- Next time we focus down on the final judgment, which established the Passover feast