

Foundations Devotional

• FOR THE WEEK OF SEPT 13 - SEPT 19 •

MONDAY // EXODUS 8-9

Because Pharaoh refused to listen to Moses and free the Israelites, God unleashed a series of ten plagues on the nation. The water in the Nile River turned to blood. Then frogs, gnats, and flies overran the land. One plague caused the death of livestock. Another brought boils, while another was a plague of deadly hail. As with everything God does, the goal of the plagues was that the Egyptians would see His glory on display. Moses announced each plague, and each arrived and departed exactly as he stated. These announcements served as warnings to Pharaoh, and they gave him the opportunity to act. They also gave a testimony to God's grace. His plagues weren't set in stone, and had Pharaoh acknowledged God and freed His people, God would have extended grace to Pharaoh and the nation. However, Pharaoh would not relent. The plagues punished Egypt, showed the powerlessness of their gods, and demonstrated God's glory.

TUESDAY // EXODUS 10-11

Exodus 10-11 describe the final three plagues—a swarm of locusts, darkness that descended over all of Egypt, and the plague on the firstborn males in the Egyptian households. As with the previous plagues, Pharaoh initially repented, but changed his mind after God withdrew the plague from the land. However, God told Moses He would send one final plague, and after that the people would be free. Again, the goal of the plagues was that everyone, the Israelites and the Egyptians, would recognize the power and glory of God. That's why He went into such detail with Moses' instructions in the first place. God left no room for doubt as to who was in control. Exodus 11:5-7 reveals God's plan to protect the firstborn sons of the Israelites, further evidence that He would protect His people and continue to uphold His covenant with Abraham.

WEDNESDAY // EXODUS 12

On the night of the plague on the firstborn Egyptians, God established Passover—a Jewish holiday that commemorates God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. Passover got its name from the animal blood smeared on the door posts, which marked the Israelites apart from the Egyptians and served as a sign for God's angelic death to "pass over" the house without killing the firstborn. Once the plague came down on the people, Pharaoh summoned Moses and ordered the Israelites to leave. With that, the Israelites began their exodus journey. Centuries later, Jesus Christ became the ultimate Passover Lamb when God sent Him to be the sacrifice to save people from the bondage of their sins once and for all. In Jesus, all of the ritual aspects of the Passover described in Exodus 12 find their fulfillment.

THURSDAY // EXODUS 13:17-14

God's presence accompanied the Israelites from the very beginning of their exodus journey, as symbolized by the pillars of cloud and fire that led them on their way. The Israelites had not been out of Egypt long, though, when their fate seemed to take a turn for the worse. Once again God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and Pharaoh gathered an army to track down the Israelites. Exodus 14 makes it clear that this was all a part of God's plan. Moses encouraged the people to trust God, and this encounter culminated in the most famous event in the exodus—the parting of the Red Sea. Moses stretched his hand over the sea, God divided the waters, and the Israelites crossed on dry ground. When the Egyptians pursued the Israelites across the dry sea floor, God brought the waters back together, drowning Pharaoh's army. With that single act, God acted in final judgment against Pharaoh, and the Israelites feared God and believed in Him (14:31).

FRIDAY // EXODUS 16-17

The Israelites were free from slavery, but they were not free from hardship. God used this to test their dependence on and obedience to Him. With food difficult to find in the wilderness, the Israelites remembered the days of Egyptian slavery when they at least had enough to eat. The people complained to Moses, and God responded by sending quail and manna—daily provisions of food to sustain them on their journey. God met the people's need for food (and then again for water in chapter 17), again revealing His care and provisions for His people. By sending the food daily, the people had no choice but to remain dependent on Him, something they struggled to do despite all the ways He had already provided for them. This struggle with trust would be the defining characteristic of the Israelites' 40 years in the desert, and it is a good reminder for us when our trust in God waivers or we forget how faithful He truly is. Just as God provided water and food to sustain the Israelites, He has given us Jesus to forever quench the hunger and thirst of our souls (John 4).

WEEKEND // CATCH UP NEEDED?