

Bo

Exodus 10:1-13:16

Chapter 10

1 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh. For I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his courtiers, in order that I may display these My signs among them, 2 and that you may recount in the hearing of your sons and of your sons' sons how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I displayed My signs among them — in order that you may know that I am the Lord." 3 So 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 worship Me. 4 For if you refuse to let My people go, tomorrow I will bring locusts on your territory. 5 They shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the land. They shall devour the surviving remnant that was left to you after the hail; and they shall eat away all your trees that grow in the field. 6 Moreover, they shall fill your palaces and the houses of all your courtiers and of all the Egyptians — something that neither your fathers nor fathers' fathers have seen from the day they appeared on earth to this day.'" With that he turned and left Pharaoh's presence.

7 Pharaoh's courtiers said to him, "How long shall this one be a snare to us? Let the men go to worship the Lord their God! Are you not yet aware that Egypt is lost?" 8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh and he said to them, "Go, worship the Lord your God! Who are the ones to go?" 9 Moses replied, "We will all go, young and old: we will go with our sons and daughters, our flocks and herds; for we must observe the Lord's festival." 10 But he said to them, "The Lord be with you the same as I mean to let your children go with you! Clearly, you are bent on mischief. 11 No! You menfolk go and worship the Lord, since that is what you want." And they were expelled from Pharaoh's presence.

12 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Hold out your arm over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat up all the grasses in the land, whatever the hail has left." 13 So Moses held out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord drove an east wind over the land all that day and all night; and when morning came, the east wind had brought the locusts. 14 Locusts invaded all the land of Egypt and settled within all the territory of Egypt in a thick mass; never before had there been so many, nor will there ever be so many again. 15 They hid all the land from view, and the land was darkened; and they ate up all the grasses of the field and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left, so that nothing green was left, of tree or grass of the field, in all the land of Egypt.

16 Pharaoh hurriedly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "I stand guilty before the

Lord your God and before you. 17 Forgive my offense just this once, and plead with the Lord your God that He but remove this death from me." 18 So he left Pharaoh's presence and pleaded with the Lord. 19 The Lord caused a shift to a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and hurled them into the Sea of Reeds; not a single locust remained in all the territory of Egypt. 20 But the Lord stiffened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the Israelites go.

21 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Hold out your arm toward the sky that there may be darkness upon the land of Egypt, a darkness that can be touched." 22 Moses held out his arm toward the sky and thick darkness descended upon all the land of Egypt for three days. 23 People could not see one another, and for three days no one could get up from where he was; but all the Israelites enjoyed light in their dwellings.

24 Pharaoh then summoned Moses and said, "Go, worship the Lord! Only your flocks and your herds shall be left behind; even your children may go with you." 25 But Moses said, "You yourself must provide us with sacrifices and burnt offerings to offer up to the Lord our God; 26 our own livestock, too, shall go along with us — not a hoof shall remain behind: for we must select from it for the worship of the Lord our God; and we shall not know with what we are to worship the Lord until we arrive there." 27 But the Lord stiffened Pharaoh's heart and he would not agree to let them go. 28 Pharaoh said to him, "Be gone from me! Take care not to see me again, for the moment you look upon my face you shall die." 29 And Moses replied, "You have spoken rightly. I shall not see your face again!"

Chapter 11

1 And the Lord said to Moses, "I will bring but one more plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; after that he shall let you go from here; indeed, when he lets you go, he will drive you out of here one and all. 2 Tell the people to borrow, each man from his neighbor and each woman from hers, objects of silver and gold." 3 The Lord disposed the Egyptians favorably toward the people. Moreover, Moses himself was much esteemed in the land of Egypt, among Pharaoh's courtiers and among the people.

4 Moses said, "Thus says the Lord: Toward midnight I will go forth among the Egyptians, 5 and every first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the first-born of the slave girl who is behind the millstones; and all the first-born of the cattle. 6 And there shall be a loud cry in all the land of Egypt, such as has never been or will ever be again; 7 but not a dog shall snarl at any of the Israelites, at man or beast — in order that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. 8 Then all these courtiers of yours shall come down to me and bow low to me, saying, 'Depart, you and all the people who follow you!' After that I will depart." And he left Pharaoh's presence in hot anger.

9 Now the Lord had said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not heed you, in order that My marvels may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." 10 Moses and Aaron had performed all these marvels before Pharaoh, but the Lord had stiffened the heart of Pharaoh so that he

would not let the Israelites go from his land.

Chapter 12

1 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: 2 This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months; it shall be the first of the months of the year for you. 3 Speak to the whole community of Israel and say that on the tenth of this month each of them shall take a lamb to a family, a lamb to a household. 4 But if the household is too small for a lamb, let him share one with a neighbor who dwells nearby, in proportion to the number of persons: you shall contribute for the lamb according to what each household will eat. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a yearling male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 You shall keep watch over it until the fourteenth day of this month; and all the assembled congregation of the Israelites shall slaughter it at twilight. 7 They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they are to eat it. 8 They shall eat the flesh that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs. 9 Do not eat any of it raw, or cooked in any way with water, but roasted — head, legs, and entrails — over the fire. 10 You shall not leave any of it over until morning; if any of it is left until morning, you shall burn it.

11 This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly: it is a passover offering to the Lord. 12 For that night I will go through the land of Egypt and strike down every first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and I will mete out punishments to all the gods of Egypt, I the Lord. 13 And the blood on the houses where you are staying shall be a sign for you: when I see the blood I will pass over you, so that no plague will destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

14 This day shall be to you one of remembrance: you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord throughout the ages; you shall celebrate it as an institution for all time. 15 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the very first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day to the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

16 You shall celebrate a sacred occasion on the first day, and a sacred occasion on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them; only what every person is to eat, that alone may be prepared for you. 17 You shall observe the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your ranks out of the land of Egypt; you shall observe this day throughout the ages as an institution for all time. 18 In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19 No leaven shall be found in your houses for seven days. For whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a citizen of the country. 20 You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.

21 Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go, pick out lambs

for your families, and slaughter the passover offering. 22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts. None of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. 23 For when the Lord goes through to smite the Egyptians, He will see the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, and the Lord will pass over the door and not let the Destroyer enter and smite your home.

24 "You shall observe this as an institution for all time, for you and for your descendants. 25 And when you enter the land that the Lord will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite. 26 And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this rite?' 27 you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the Lord, because He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but saved our houses.'"

The people then bowed low in homage. 28 And the Israelites went and did so; just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

29 In the middle of the night the Lord struck down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on the throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle. 30 And Pharaoh arose in the night, with all his courtiers and all the Egyptians — because there was a loud cry in Egypt; for there was no house where there was not someone dead. 31 He summoned Moses and Aaron in the night and said, "Up, depart from among my people, you and the Israelites with you! Go, worship the Lord as you said! 32 Take also your flocks and your herds, as you said, and begone! And may you bring a blessing upon me also!"

33 The Egyptians urged the people on, impatient to have them leave the country, for they said, "We shall all be dead." 34 So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls wrapped in their cloaks upon their shoulders. 35 The Israelites had done Moses' bidding and borrowed from the Egyptians objects of silver and gold, and clothing. 36 And the Lord had disposed the Egyptians favorably toward the people, and they let them have their request; thus they stripped the Egyptians.

37 The Israelites journeyed from Raamses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. 38 Moreover, a mixed multitude went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. 39 And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had taken out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

40 The length of time that the Israelites lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years; 41 at the end of the four hundred and thirtieth year, to the very day, all the ranks of the Lord departed from the land of Egypt. 42 That was for the Lord a night of vigil to bring them out of the land of Egypt; that same night is the Lord's, one of vigil for all the children of Israel throughout the ages.

43 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: This is the law of the passover offering: No foreigner shall eat of it. 44 But any slave a man has bought may eat of it once he has been circumcised. 45 No bound or hired laborer shall eat of it. 46 It shall be eaten in one house: you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house; nor shall you break a bone of it. 47 The whole community of Israel shall offer it. 48 If a stranger who dwells with you would offer the passover to the Lord, all his males must be circumcised; then he shall be admitted to offer it; he shall then be as a citizen of the country. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it. 49 There shall be one law for the citizen and for the stranger who dwells among you.

50 And all the Israelites did so; as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

51 That very day the Lord freed the Israelites from the land of Egypt, troop by troop.

Chapter 13

1 The Lord spoke further to Moses, saying, 2 "Consecrate to Me every first-born; man and beast, the first issue of every womb among the Israelites is Mine."

3 And Moses said to the people,

"Remember this day, on which you went free from Egypt, the house of bondage, how the Lord freed you from it with a mighty hand: no leavened bread shall be eaten. 4 You go free on this day, in the month of Abib. 5 So, when the Lord has brought 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 observe in this month the following practice:

6 "Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival of the Lord. 7 Throughout the seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten; no leavened bread shall be found with you, and no leaven shall be found in all your territory. 8 And you shall explain to your son on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt.'

9 "And this shall serve you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead — in order that the Teaching of the Lord may be in your mouth — that with a mighty hand the Lord freed you from Egypt. 10 You shall keep this institution at its set time from year to year.

11 "And when the Lord has brought you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and to your fathers, and has given it to you, 12 you shall set apart for the Lord every first issue of the womb: every male firstling that your cattle drop shall be the Lord's. 13 But every firstling ass you shall redeem with a sheep; if you do not redeem it, you must break its neck. And you must redeem every first-born male among your children. 14 And when, in time to come, your son asks you, saying, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'It was with a mighty hand that the Lord brought us out

from Egypt, the house of bondage. 15 When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord slew every first-born in the land of Egypt, the first-born of both man and beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord every first male issue of the womb, but redeem every first-born among my sons.'

16 "And so it shall be as a sign upon your hand and as a symbol on your forehead that with a mighty hand the Lord freed us from Egypt."

Haftarah for Bo

Jeremiah 46:13-28

13 The word which the Lord spoke to the prophet Jeremiah about the coming of King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon to attack the land of Egypt:

14 Declare in Egypt, proclaim in Migdol,
Proclaim in Noph and Tahpanhes!
Say: Take your posts and stand ready,
For the sword has devoured all around you!

15 Why are your stalwarts swept away?
They did not stand firm,
For the Lord thrust them down;
16 He made many stumble,
They fell over one another.

They said: "Up! let us return to our people,
To the land of our birth,
Because of the deadly sword."

17 There they called Pharaoh king of Egypt:
"Braggart who let the hour go by."

18 As I live - declares the King,
Whose name is Lord of Hosts -
As surely as Tabor is among the mountains
And Carmel is by the sea,
So shall this come to pass.

19 Equip yourself for exile,
Fair Egypt, you who dwell secure!
For Noph shall become a waste,
Desolate, without inhabitants.

20 Egypt is a handsome heifer -

A gadfly from the north is coming, coming!

21 The mercenaries, too, in her midst
Are like stall-fed calves;
They too shall turn tail,
Flee as one, and make no stand.
Their day of disaster is upon them,
The hour of their doom.

22 She shall rustle away like a snake
As they come marching in force;
They shall come against her with axes,
Like hewers of wood.

23 They shall cut down her forest

- declares the Lord -

Though it cannot be measured;
For they are more numerous than locusts,
And cannot be counted.

24 Fair Egypt shall be shamed,
Handed over to the people of the north.

25 The Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, has said: I will inflict punishment on Amon of No and on Pharaoh - on Egypt, her gods, and her kings - on Pharaoh and all who rely on him. 26 I will deliver them into the hands of those who seek to kill them, into the hands of King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon and into the hands of his subjects. But afterward she shall be inhabited again as in former days, declares the Lord.

27 But you,
Have no fear, My servant Jacob,
Be not dismayed, O Israel!
I will deliver you from far away,
Your folk from their land of captivity;
And Jacob again shall have calm
And quiet, with none to trouble him.

28 But you, have no fear,
My servant Jacob

- declares the Lord -

For I am with you.
I will make an end of all the nations
Among which I have banished you,
But I will not make an end of you!
I will not leave you unpunished,
But I will chastise you in measure.

Taken from *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures*,
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