



Study Guide: Exodus – Chapter 10

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Exodus Chapter 10 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Exodus Chapter 10 continues the dramatic confrontation between God, through Moses and Aaron, and Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt. This chapter advances the narrative of the ten plagues, focusing on the devastating plague of locusts and the deepening hardness of Pharaoh's heart. It contributes significantly to the unfolding story of God's judgment against Egypt and His deliverance of Israel. Readers should watch for the interplay between divine power and human stubbornness, as well as the escalating severity of the plagues that reveal God's sovereignty over nature and nations.

Context

The immediate literary context of Exodus 10 is the series of plagues God sends upon Egypt to compel Pharaoh to release the Israelites from bondage. This chapter follows the plague of darkness and precedes the final plagues leading up to the Passover. The covenantal frame is rooted in God's promise to Abraham and the deliverance of His chosen people, Israel, from slavery. The key speakers are Moses and Aaron, God's appointed agents, and Pharaoh, whose hardened heart resists God's commands. The setting remains Egypt, where the power struggle between God's will and Pharaoh's obstinacy unfolds dramatically.

Outline

The chapter divides naturally into two main movements. First, there is the announcement and execution of the plague of locusts, where Moses warns Pharaoh and God brings a swarm that devastates the land. This section highlights the escalating judgment on Egypt's agriculture and economy. Second, the chapter records Pharaoh's reaction, including his temporary repentance and request for relief, followed by his renewed hardening after the plague is lifted. These movements reveal the pattern of confrontation, judgment, temporary concession, and renewed resistance that characterizes the plagues.



narrative.

Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1-3: God commands Moses to confront Pharaoh again, warning him that if he refuses to let Israel go, the land will be overwhelmed with locusts. This warning serves as a final opportunity for Pharaoh to obey before the plague strikes.

Verses 4-6: Moses stretches out his staff over Egypt, and an east wind brings a massive swarm of locusts that covers the land, consuming all vegetation left after the previous plagues. This demonstrates God's control over nature and the severity of His judgment.

Verses 7-9: The locusts invade every part of Egypt, including houses and fields, leaving devastation in their wake. Pharaoh's officials urge him to relent, recognizing the disaster's scope.

Verses 10-15: Pharaoh summons Moses and Aaron, admits his sin in opposing God's commands, and pleads for forgiveness and relief from the plague. Moses prays to God, who then removes the locusts by a west wind, restoring the land.

Verses 16-20: Despite Pharaoh's apparent repentance, God hardens his heart once more, preventing him from releasing the Israelites. This divine hardening serves to demonstrate God's power and fulfill His purposes.

Verses 21-29: Moses warns Pharaoh of the impending plague of darkness, describing it as a tangible, oppressive darkness that will cover Egypt but not Israel's land. Pharaoh's response is defiant, refusing to let Israel go, which sets the stage for the next plague.

Key Themes

One key theme is the sovereignty of God over creation and nations, as seen in His control over the winds and locusts. Another theme is the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, which contrasts human stubbornness with divine purpose. The chapter also emphasizes judgment as a means of deliverance, showing that God's plagues are targeted acts to free His people. Additionally, the theme of mercy appears briefly in Pharaoh's request for forgiveness, highlighting the tension between judgment and grace.

Cross-References



The plague of locusts in Exodus 10 recalls the earlier plague of flies in Exodus 8, both illustrating God's power over Egypt's environment. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart echoes similar divine actions in Exodus 9 and later in Exodus 11, underscoring a theological motif about God's control over human will for His redemptive plan. The description of darkness in verses 21–29 connects to the creation narrative in Genesis 1, where God brings order to chaos, here reversed as judgment. Finally, the motif of deliverance through judgment parallels the broader biblical narrative of salvation history, as seen in the New Testament's portrayal of Christ's victory over sin and oppression.

Application

Modern disciples can learn from Exodus 10 the importance of recognizing God's authority and responding to His call with obedience rather than resistance. The chapter challenges believers to consider the consequences of hardened hearts, both individually and corporately, and to seek God's mercy before judgment. It also encourages trust in God's sovereign power over life's difficulties and injustices. Furthermore, the pattern of repentance and relapse seen in Pharaoh's behavior invites reflection on the need for genuine transformation rather than superficial compliance in our spiritual walk.

Summary

Exodus Chapter 10 presents a pivotal moment in the plagues narrative, where God's judgment intensifies through the devastating plague of locusts and the looming darkness. The chapter reveals the tension between divine sovereignty and human obstinacy, as Pharaoh's heart remains hardened despite clear evidence of God's power. This chapter advances the story of Israel's deliverance by demonstrating that God's judgments are purposeful acts to compel obedience and fulfill His covenant promises. The interplay of judgment, mercy, and hardened resistance sets the stage for the final confrontations that will culminate in Israel's liberation.