

**“Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment...”** *Ex. 12:12; Num. 33:4*

In ancient times, Egypt was one of the first (3100 BC) and foremost nations of the world. Egypt was well-established and quite powerful. In fact, the nation was founded upon several pillars that appeared to be unshakeable. However, God was not impressed nor intimidated by them. In order to remove His people from its grip, the Lord removed these pillars one by one, until the whole of Egypt’s “house” came crumbling down. In the process, He executed judgment on its gods and proved Himself superior to them all.

## **Pillar #1 — Pharaoh**

How do you get the attention of the most powerful man on earth? When he is wearing a head-dress that is adorned with the head of a cobra, a symbol of Wadjet, the goddess of Lower Egypt, who protects him, a good start would be with a staff-snake that consumes the staff-snakes of his magicians (*Ex. 6:8-12*). Quickly, Pharaoh was sobered to the reality that neither he nor his gods were as powerful as portrayed.

## **Pillar #2 — Nile River**

The word “Egypt” literally means “gift of the Nile.” Since this nation’s existence was owed to a river, it makes sense that God would curse the river by turning it into blood (*Ex. 7:14-25*). The very spring that once provided life (Hapi, god of fertility) for an entire nation now bred death for seven days.

## **Pillar #3 — Sorcerers & Magicians**

While the many gods of Egypt may be false, their power was not. It was supplied by demonic forces. Thus, the sorcerers and magicians who wielded that power held positions of influence in Egypt. However, their power was ousted by the One True God whom they did not know. Before long, those men were powerless to stand before Moses (*Ex. 8:16-19; 9:8-12*). In the meantime, Heket (frog goddess of birth), Geb (god of the soil), as well as Isis and Sekhmet (gods of medicine and pestilence) fell to God’s plagues of frogs, gnats or flies, and boils.

## **Pillar #4 — Arrogance**

Egyptians believed that they were the blessed people of the earth, that other people were lower and unworthy of them, especially the shepherd people of Israel. With the plague of the gnats or flies (Khepri), God made a clear distinction between the nations and didn’t allow it to bother Goshen, where Israel dwelled (*Ex. 8:20-32*).

## **Pillar #5 — Animals**

In the ancient world, animals (horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep, etc.) were a nation’s only source of productivity, food, and transportation. A pestilence caused most of Egypt’s animals to die (*Ex. 9:1-7*). The gods Hathor, Apis, and Bat supposedly protected the animals, particularly the sacred bull, but not this time. Once again, there was a distinction between Egypt and Israel. None of Israel’s animals perished in this plague.



## Pillar #6 — Land

Because of the Nile, Egypt boasted some of the most fertile farm lands in the ancient Near East. It was nicknamed “the Breadbasket of the World,” because it provided the majority of the grain. Two of God’s plagues (*Ex. 9:13-15; 10:1-20*) devastated Egypt’s crops and, no doubt, forced a temporary famine — a storm of hail and fire, then a horde of locusts. Anyone who knows farming understands the dangers of hail, fire, and grain-eating insects. Egyptians believed their shamans could control the weather. They were wrong. The power of Nut (god of the sky), Seth (protector of fields), and others (Shu, Tefnut, Senehem) were put to shame.

## Pillar #7 — The Sun

While Egypt was polytheistic (worshiping many gods), they honored one as the most high — Ra, the god of the sun. Of course in the desert, the sun is the constant and dominant factor in one’s life. Like a blanket for three days, God pulled a thick darkness over all the land (except in Goshen, *Ex. 10:21-29*). It was one thing to pick off the puny gods one by one, but to defy the power of Ra was impressive to the Egyptians.

## Pillar #8 — Children

With Egypt’s natural borders (Nile to the east, desert to the south and west, and the Mediterranean to the north), the people had not been invaded or had they experienced death in ages; they had a sense of security there. In fact, the other symbol on Pharaoh’s headdress was that of a vulture (Upper Egypt), a

symbol of Nekhbet, the goddess of life and death and the protector of children. However, God would thwart her power with His final plague (*Ex. 11:1-10*). Also Anubis was the god of the dead and embalming. It was said after the Death Angel came that no dog was heard barking (*Ex. 11:7*). Since Nekhbet was said to protect the royal children, this plague hit home with Pharaoh.

## Pillar #9 — Military Might

Egypt boasted one of the world’s finest militaries, but God was not impressed. He covered Egypt’s army with the waters of the Red Sea (*Ex. 14:15-31*). One of Egypt’s last hopes, **Sobek** — military protector — was no match for the God of nature.

## Pillar #10 — Extreme Nationalism

Obviously, Egypt’s pride was deflated by these plagues and miracles. It had boasted its superiority over other nations, particularly the Hebrews, forcing them into slavery. However, God has the last say with men and nations. He’s never intimidated by their forces or rulers. After removing its labor force (some 3 million people), Egypt’s strength was undermined and its decline inevitable. For many centuries to come, Egypt would be conquered and ruled by outside forces (i.e. Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, British Empire, and others). Our God is the one true God!

