

# Mustard Seed Series

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION



## Pre-Confirmation 2



**Pre-Confirmation 2**

**Teacher Book**



# **MUSTARD SEED SERIES**

**Christian Education Curriculum**

**by**

**The Rev. A.E. Keire**



**Curriculum Development  
Associates, Inc.**

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Brooke Haggerty, 1996, *Grace, Justification, and Sanctification*

# PRE-CONFIRMATION 2

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# OLD TESTAMENT

## FOCUS

- **Moses' Leadership and Pharaoh's Resistance**
- **Egyptian Beliefs**
- **The Ten Plagues**
- **Passover**



### Background Reading

Read pages 50-54 in *Prophets, Poets, Priests, and Kings* and pages 82-94 in *A Parent's Guide to Prayer*.



### Attendance and Sharing

(See Lesson 1.)



### Review

- How was Moses saved from death as a baby?
- Why did Pharaoh want to limit the Israelite population?
- What does the word *exodus* mean?
- Why did Moses go to Midian?
- What happened to him there?
- Fire is the symbol for what? (God's presence)
- Why did Moses have to take off his sandals at the burning bush?
- What made him return to Egypt?
- What did God want Moses to do in Egypt?



### Preparation for Today's Lesson

- Turn in your Student's Book to Lesson 3.

- Before we proceed with our study of Moses and the Exodus, it is important to understand Egyptian beliefs at the time of Moses and how they influenced Pharaoh, his people, and the Israelites. \_\_\_\_\_, will you please read what is written about these beliefs in your Student's Book?
- If Pharaoh and his people believe he is the god above all other gods, how will he react to Moses' request?
- Besides the slavery issue, what other reason would God have for wanting to remove the Israelites from Egypt?
  - God wants the Israelites to renounce idolatrous Egyptian society.
  - God wants to prove to the Israelites and the Egyptians that God is God and not Pharaoh.
  - God wants to remove and shape the Israelites into a faith community devoted to God alone.
- Why do you suppose the Egyptians were so concerned about death and life after death?
- Do modern-day people concern themselves about death? Should they?
- Should modern-day people be concerned about their spiritual destiny? Why or why not?

EXODUS 5-12

## Moses' Leadership and Pharaoh's Resistance



***I am the Lord; I will rescue you ...I will make you my own people. ...You will know that I am the Lord your God when I set you free from slavery in Egypt.***



EXODUS 6:6-7

## MATERIALS

- **Bibles**
- **Student Books**
- **Music to Go Down, Moses**



### Today's Lesson and Discussion Possibilities

- Moses grew up in Egypt. He understood Egyptian beliefs and ways of thinking and reasoning. He knew that Egypt's Pharaohs believed they were god. Moses knew Pharaoh would not recognize any gods of his slaves. Pharaoh believed the gods of slaves were powerless, especially since their god could not prevent their slavery. Moses has an impossible task which he alone cannot accomplish. He has to rely on God's intervention.
- \_\_\_\_\_, will you read "Moses Takes Charge" in your Student's Book?
- \_\_\_\_\_, will you read Exodus 5-6:1?
  - Moses complains bitterly to God. Is Moses justified? Why?
  - Pharaoh increases the hardships on the slaves.
  - They must make the same amount of bricks without any straw being supplied to them.
  - The Israelites turn against Moses and Aaron.
  - What should Moses do? What can he do without either being killed by the Israelites or the Egyptians?
  - What role will faith have in his actions?
- So far, what type of leader has Moses shown himself to be?
  - What qualities make for a great leader?
  - Watch how Moses' leadership and self-confidence changes.
- I am going to divide you into teams of two (or three).
  - I want you to look up in your Bible one of the first nine plagues assigned to you.
  - After you have read about it, you are to try to figure out the psychological or emotional or physical distress your particular plague causes the Egyptians.
- How did Pharaoh react to the plague?
- Then you are to report your findings and thoughts to the rest of the class.
- You will have \_\_\_\_\_ minutes to complete your assignment before making your presentation.
- While each group is making their presentations, you may wish to write in your Student's Book the important points they make.
- (As your students make their reports to the class, you may wish to include the following information, if it is lacking from their reports.)
  - If a country's WATER supply turns to blood, it is undrinkable. Water is needed to sustain life, crops, and animals.
  - FROGS were a nuisance to Egyptian comfort. Their dead bodies became a health hazard. Moses lets Pharaoh set the time for the removal of the frogs, so that Pharaoh will know that God is in charge. Pharaoh is still stubborn and disbelieving.
  - GNATS bring discomfort and the realization by Egyptians that the Hebrews' God is God.
  - FLIES attack only the Egyptians and not the Hebrews. Pharaoh agrees to let the Hebrews worship their God in Egypt. Moses says that their sacrifices would be offensive to the Egyptians and that the Egyptians would stone them to death.
  - The PLAGUE on the cattle was probably anthrax, brought on by the former plagues. What is unusual is that the Hebrew herds were spared.
  - The first four plagues send physical discomfort and the destruction of the Egyptian food supply.

*NOTE: There are discrepancies in accounts regarding the animals. If they were all destroyed, as suggested in Ex. 9:6, then why would it be necessary to shelter the animals from the impending hailstorm? Refer to the editing process given under “Problems Confronted in Teaching and Studying the Bible” in your Teacher’s Training Manual.*

- The BOILS create physical discomfort and no one, not even Pharaoh, can make them go away.
  - HAIL. Many Egyptians now believe that the Hebrew God is all powerful—more powerful than Pharaoh—and shelter their animals from the hailstorm. In addition to letting Pharaoh and the Egyptians know that the earth belongs to God, what other significance can be attached to the hailstorm?
    - There is the physical destruction of exposed people and animals.
    - Their present food supply, except for what exists in Goshen, is destroyed.
  - LOCUSTS. Winds are very important in the Exodus story. Here, the locusts come in by a strong east wind and leave by a strong west wind. The locusts ate what little remained of the Egyptian food supply.
    - Pharaoh agrees to allow the men to go into the desert. They must leave women and children behind. Why?
    - Pharaoh agrees to let everyone go into the desert to worship their God, but he insists that all herds stay behind. Why? (Egyptians could use them and the Hebrews would have to return to their food supply.)
  - DARKNESS. If you were an Egyptian, what would be your physical and mental state during and after the three days of total darkness?
    - Remember, the Egyptians lived in darkness when they knew the Hebrews had light. What would your thoughts be regarding the divinity of Pharaoh and his inability to clear the air?
      - Why couldn’t Pharaoh and his magicians clear the air? (God caused the darkness; the others are not God and cannot control God, God’s actions, and the universe.)
      - In Exodus 9:27, Pharaoh confesses that he is beaten. He hopes this confession will appease the Hebrew God.
- The plagues demonstrate that the earth belongs to the Lord, because the powers of nature serve God’s purposes.
  - If you were an Egyptian, what would you want Pharaoh to do?
  - If you were a Hebrew, how would you now react toward Moses and God—even though you have not yet been set free?
  - What personality changes and leadership ability do we find occurring in Moses?
    - He no longer lacks determination and confidence.
    - God has proven to Moses that God is all-powerful.
    - Moses has faith and trust in God’s promises.
    - Moses no longer runs from the responsibility and leadership that God has given to him. Moses knows God is with him and will give him the necessary strength and aid to perform his task.
  - Pharaoh does not want to recognize the Hebrew’s God because it would be an admission that he is a powerless god next to God. Accompanying this recognition is another one: that he, Pharaoh, is not the creator of the universe and of people.
  - \_\_\_\_\_, please read Exodus 11.
    - Why did God command the Hebrews to ask the Egyptians for their gold and silver jewelry?

- God wants to show the Hebrew slaves the change in the relationship between slave and master caused by God's intervention on the Hebrew's behalf.
- God wants to show the Hebrews that the Egyptians feared their God. Why is this fear important?
- God wants to provide the slaves with some wealth to be used to establish them in their new homeland.
- If you were Pharaoh, how would you have reacted to Moses' threat of a tenth plague and the death of the firstborn sons of Egypt?
- In your Student's Book at the end of today's lesson, there is a definition for hardened heart. \_\_\_\_\_, will you read it please? Do you understand what it means?
- \_\_\_\_\_, will you read Exodus 12:21-28?
  - The Passover feast was derived from an ancient nomadic spring festival which, under Moses' direction, was reinterpreted as a meal in which the Hebrews would celebrate their deliverance from bondage through the divine intervention of God. The blood smeared on the doorposts had at least four symbolic purposes.
  - The blood was considered to be God's portion or gift from the people of their sacrifice. The people were not to withhold anything from God.
  - The blood was considered the source of protection for the Hebrews against the death of the firstborn son.
  - The blood was symbolic of the Hebrews' trust and belief in God.
  - The blood symbolizes the connection between God's judgment and God's mercy. Christians say the blood of the Lamb is Jesus' blood which saves us from eternal death. Jesus will judge us and does show mercy toward repentant sinners. Even though Passover is a Jewish holiday, it shows Christians the universality of God's salvation.
- Passover means that God "passed over" the Hebrews' houses on the night of the tenth plague.
- God wants the Hebrews to perform this Passover ritual once a year. It reminds them of three religious truths.
  - It reminds the Hebrew community that they are God's chosen people who were delivered from bondage.
  - The Hebrews or Israelites are to worship God and no other gods.
  - God is a God of judgment, salvation, and of mercy.
- \_\_\_\_\_, will you read Exodus 12:37-42?
  - How many Hebrews does this account say left Egypt? (600,000)
  - This figure of 600,000 represents only men. It does not include women and children. If they were included, there would be at least two-and-one-half million people leaving Egypt.
  - Biblical scholars believe this number to be an exaggeration and a symbolic way of explaining a large number that cannot be counted.
  - How many years had the Hebrews lived in Egypt? (430)
  - How many of Joseph's family enter Egypt? (70 men)
- What is the religious significance of the plagues? Write your answers in your Student's Book.
  - God and not Pharaoh is in charge.
  - God is the Creator of the universe and of all living beings and things.
  - God wants the Israelites to renounce society as it is lived under the rule of Pharaoh.

- The plagues are signs of Yahweh's activity in Israel's deliverance.



### Activity

- If you have a little time left, you may wish to divide your class into groups to discuss the following questions.
- None of us have the power of Pharaoh, yet many people act as though they are Pharaoh. They will not listen to the message that comes from God as it is made known to us in holy scripture, through the Holy Spirit, and through the people of God today. Many people today believe there is no God, that they need to rely solely on themselves and their resources to achieve what they want from life.
  - How did Pharaoh's disbelief in Yahweh almost destroy his country and people?
  - How can people's disbelief in God destroy them today?
  - Why is Moses someone worth imitating?
  - How does Moses' growth in faith and

understanding increase his growth as a leader?



### Conclusion

- Let us form a prayer circle. Bring your Student's Book and turn to the music *Go Down, Moses*.
- Change is a constant in life; we must learn to take it in stride. Often change brings about a reversal in people's fortunes. It is important to think about God's power and God's wishes for us. Most times God does not make a demonstration of God's power because God does not want us to love or obey God out of fear. Also, God wants us to learn from our faith ancestors and from Jesus, who overcame death and rose to new life. Try to understand why God takes this approach with us.
- Let us pray today for those who do not know or understand God. Who would like to start today's prayer? We will conclude with the Lord's Prayer and will sing *Go Down, Moses ...*

End of Teacher Book Preview.

Student Book Preview Follows.

EXODUS 5–12

# Moses' Leadership and Pharaoh's Resistance

“  
*I am the Lord; I will rescue you...I will make you my own people ....You will know that I am the Lord your God when I set you free from slavery in Egypt.*  
 ”

EXODUS 6:6–7

## Egyptian Beliefs at the Time of Moses

The Hebrews living during the time of Moses were greatly influenced by the Egyptian culture and Egyptian beliefs in numerous gods. Hebrew understanding and knowledge of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were shallow at best. No doubt the Hebrews were drawn to and flirted with the Egyptian gods.



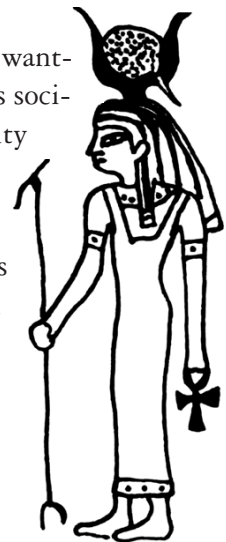
Ra

Our God had to prove to the Hebrews that the Egyptian gods were no match to our God. God wanted to remove the Hebrews from this idolatrous society and shape them into a faith community away from Egyptian society so that they could truly become God's people.

The Egyptians believed in numerous gods and goddesses. These gods often took on the characteristics of birds and animals. Each god served a particular purpose in ordering the world and influencing the lives of the people.

The Egyptians' main god was Ra, the sun god, upon whom all life depended. Ra was sometimes called

Amen-Ra. Egyptians believed he was the creator of the world, of people, and everything else within the world. Ra took on the shape of a man and became Egypt's first Pharaoh. He caused the Nile to rise and flood the land and to leave rich deposits of soil for producing fine crops. Ra lived for over a thousand years. He was the first Pharaoh and was believed to be reincarnated in succeeding Pharaohs. In other words, Pharaoh was god. Pharaoh was the absolute ruler and no one dared question his authority and place in the scheme of the universe.

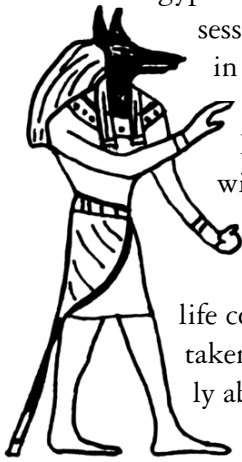


Hathor



Ma'at

Egyptians believed that a dead person's soul needed his body and his most prized possessions to go with him into his tomb in order to be able to survive and enjoy life in the afterlife and in the world of the dead. Wall paintings and hieroglyphs were thought to possess magical powers and covered the walls of tombs. Everything placed in a tomb helped preserve the body spirit, and the winged soul was free to roam the underworld and could return to earth so long as his body spirit survived.



Anubis

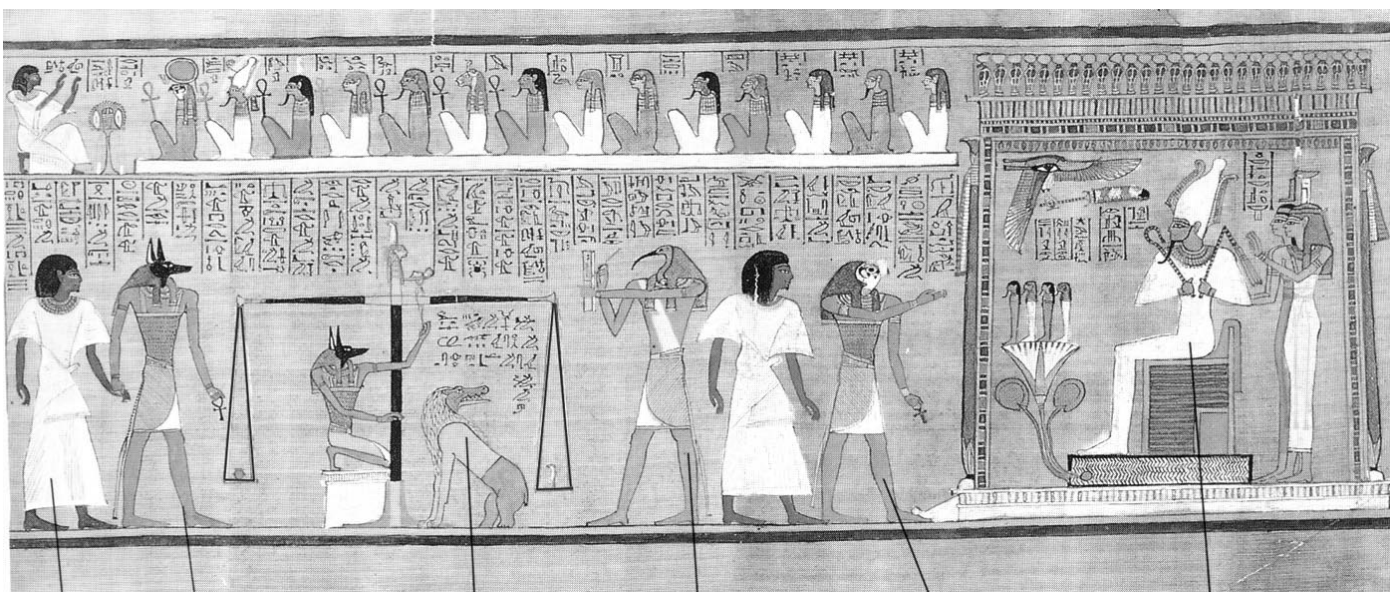
Egyptians believed in an underworld called Duat. They believed that life could continue indefinitely there, provided certain precautions were taken during life. Rich Egyptians and Pharaohs were the only ones financially able to take these precautions for the afterlife. They had to build tombs that were secured against grave robbers. Within these tombs, the mummified corpse was placed inside double or triple coffins that portrayed their looks as they would like to appear for eternity.



Nefertem

The underworld or next life or the Kingdom of the West was believed to be a happy land somewhere in the West. Entry into this land required the dead person to be properly mummified with his heart and various organs encased in Canopic jars. The dead person had to convince the ferryman to carry him across the River of Death. Then the dead person had to go through twelve gates guarded by serpents and through the Lake of Fire. An instruction book called the Book of the Dead told him how to bypass these dangers and what spells and incantations had to be used.

When the dead person arrived at the Judgment Hall of Azores, he was brought forward by Anubis, the jackal headed god of mummification. See the picture below. On the top of the picture there are 42 assessors who accuse the dead person of crimes he committed in his life time. He would have to deny these crimes. To determine whether a dead person's heart were pure and whether he had done good deeds in his lifetime, the dead person's heart would then be weighed in the Hall of Two Truths. His heart would be on one side of the scale and the feather of truth on the other side of the scale. Then the god of wisdom, Toth, declared in his book whether the





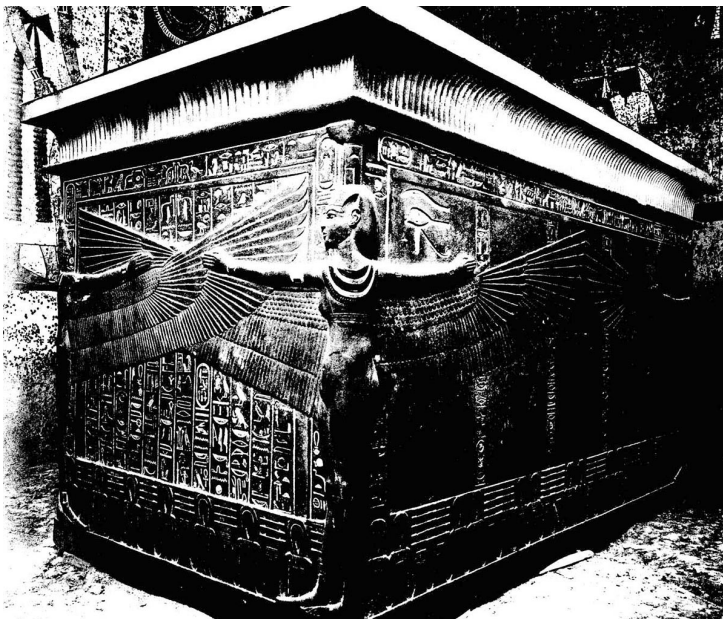
dead person is innocent or not. If found guilty, the dog-like figure known as the Devourer of the Dead would eat the dead person's heart. Without his heart, the dead person would not survive the afterlife. If found innocent, the dead person would go before Azores, the god of the Underworld, who would permit this person to enter his kingdom where he would live in the Fields of the Blessed.



Burial Mask of King Tutankhamun

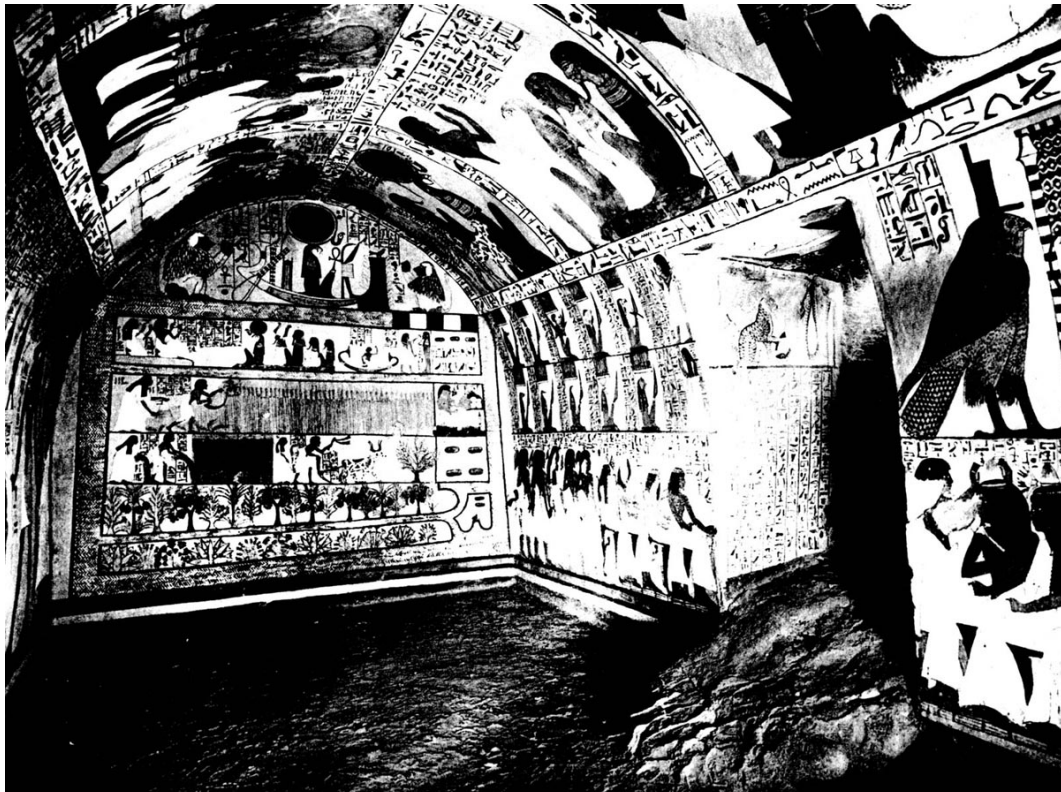


King Tutankhamun and his wife Ankesenpaaton



Goddesses at each end of the sarcophagus protect King Tutankhamun

In 1922, Howard Carter, a British archaeologist, discovered King Tutankhamen's tomb. King Tutankhamen reigned from 1334-1325 B.C. He had three gold coffins inside an outer and large stone sarcophagus (name for a stone coffin). The first two outer coffins were made of carved wood covered with gold leaf. The innermost coffin was made out of solid gold and weighed over 220 pounds (we assume not troy pound but regular pounds). Today's value of the coffin would be one pound divided by one pound troy times 12 troy ounces equals 14.58 troy ounces times 220 pounds times \$400 per troy ounce = \$1,283,332. Each coffin presented an idealized portrait of the dead Pharaoh with certain representations of gods or goddesses and hieroglyphs protecting the dead person's body.



Inside a burial chamber of the 19th dynasty

## Moses Takes Charge

Moses returns to Egypt with his wife and children. He is met by his brother Aaron in the desert. Moses tells him of his experiences and what the Lord wants him to do. Aaron calls all the Hebrew leaders together and tells them what God has said to Moses. Moses performs all the wondrous signs that God told him to perform in front of the people so that they will believe. After seeing these signs, the people believe and bow down and worship God. Their despair turns to hope.

But their hope is short-lived. Please read Exodus 5-6:1. The people are furious with Moses and Aaron and will not listen to them. They believe their God is powerless against Pharaoh. They believe it is more important

to stay in the good graces and favor of the god Pharaoh. (Exodus 6:2-13)

Now God begins to take dramatic action by sending plagues or natural disasters upon Pharaoh and the Egyptian people. The Book of Exodus contains 10 plagues that occurred over a relatively short period of time. The first nine plagues are listed below.

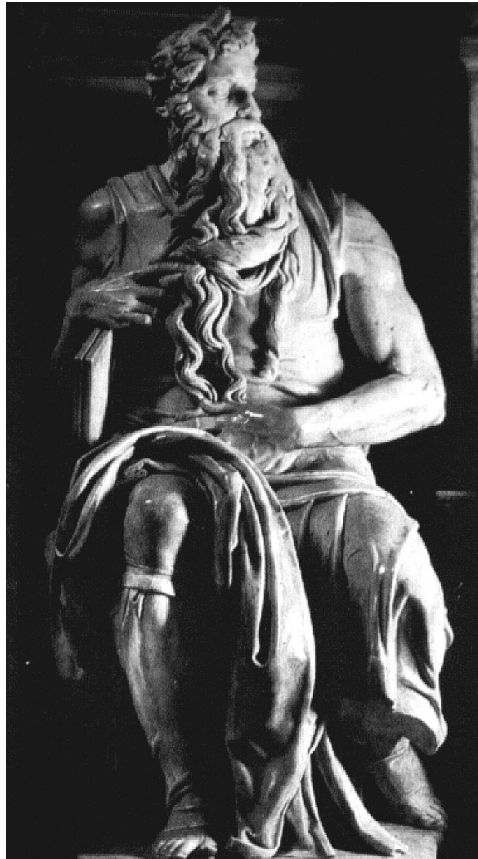
Ex. 7:14-25 Water turned to blood

Ex. 8:1-15 Invasion of frogs

Ex. 8:16-19 Invasion of gnats

Ex. 8:20-32 Invasion of flies

Ex. 9:1-7 Death of animals



Michelangelo, c. 1500, *Moses*

Ex. 9:8-12 Boils

Ex. 9:13-35 Hail

Ex. 10:1-20 Invasion of locusts

Ex. 10:21-29 Darkness

The tenth plague is the death of the first-born sons.

*A hardened heart* is an interior condition indicating lack of faith. It is a serious condition of unbelief or even disobedience. In Pharaoh's case, it was difficult for him to believe that anyone other than himself was divine and had power over him.



Nuremberg Bible, 1483, *Moses Sends Plague of Locusts*

What is the religious significance of the plagues?