

## Firstborn

In scripture we think of it as applying to males only, yet on occasion it shows females as firstborn. Firstborn is the leader, who gets double portion. Maybe the tenth plague applies to both sexes, because its introduction was not specific, but later references show that - in this instance - it is applying only to males. If it was ALL the firstborn (regardless of age), then wouldn't Pharaoh die? He was probably a firstborn. And if so, then EVERY GENERATION firstborn would have died. However, the other references to firstborn seem to indicate this plague only applied to that current generation.

God gave a warning to Pharaoh before the first plague.

*Exodus 4:22-23*

You are to say to Pharaoh, "This is what YHVH says: 'Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I have said to you, Let My son go, that he may serve Me, but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will slay your son, your firstborn.'" Pharaoh could have avoided all the struggles and deaths. Yes, he DID know of YHVH, because the palace gossip would not have forgotten Joseph and his God. Pharaoh just chose to ignore what was available, because it didn't fit with his desires; he thought he could change reality - after all, Pharaoh was a god!

People try to use the power of government to change reality, to force people to act in a way that is contrary to reality. Socialism does this, and that effort can only be accomplished through the absolute power that comes from a powerful centralized government. The followers of socialism believe in it, like others believe in a god - so when government is the highest law, it IS a god. And in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this god murdered over 100 million people. This explains why socialists get so irritated with believers, because we believe in a higher law, a greater God. Eventually socialists will admit their desire to enslave or eliminate any who disagree with them, like their predecessors in the 20<sup>th</sup> century did, and like Pharaoh did.

Pharaoh told Moshe that he did not want to see Moshe again, and Moshe said "Okay!" This tenth plague might not have been spoken directly to Pharaoh.

*Exodus 11:4-8*

So Moshe said, "This is what YHVH says: 'At around midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt will die - from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the maidservant behind the mill, along with all the firstborn cattle. There will be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, the likes of which has never been before nor will ever be again. But not so much as a dog will growl against any of sons of Israel, neither man nor beast - so that you may know that YHVH makes a distinction between the Egyptians and Israel.' All these servants of yours will come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, you and all the people who follow you!' After that, I will go." Then he went out from Pharaoh hot with anger.

All this destruction was judgment on the gods of Egypt - including Pharaoh, who thought he was a god. Genesis 3 explains this delusion, and why each of us are judged for acting on that delusion - we are not excused because "the devil made me do it" - each person is responsible for his own disbelief.

*Genesis 3:5*

For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

This last plague came because Pharaoh refused God back in Exodus 4:23.

*Exodus 12:12*

For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night and strike down every firstborn, both men and animals, and I will execute judgments against all the gods of Egypt. I am YHVH.

*Exodus 12:29-30*

So it came about at midnight that YHVH struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn cattle. Then Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was loud wailing in Egypt. For there was not a house where someone was not dead.

God doesn't desire the death of anyone - He wants all to believe. This sacrifice of firstborn was caused by rebellion (sin) against the Creator, not some desire for revenge on the part of God. Israel's firstborn are dedicated to God as a kind of sacrifice in memorial of Egypt's sacrifice.

*Exodus 13:1-2,11-15*

YHVH spoke to Moshe saying, "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, from every womb of sons of Israel, both men and animals—this is Mine. Now when YHVH brings you into the land of the Canaanite, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, you are to set apart to YHVH every firstborn from the womb, and every firstborn male animal you have will be YHVH's. Every firstborn donkey you are to redeem with a lamb, and if you do not redeem it, then you are to break its neck. But you are to redeem every firstborn male among your sons. So when your son asks you in times to come, 'What is this?' say to him, 'By a strong hand YHVH brought us out from Egypt, the house of bondage, and when Pharaoh refused to let us go, YHVH slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both men and animals. So I sacrifice to YHVH all firstborn males, but I redeem the firstborn of my sons.'"

*Exodus 34:19-20*

Every firstborn of the womb is Mine, and from all your cattle you are to sanctify the males, the firstborn of the ox and sheep. A firstborn donkey you are to redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then you are to break its neck. You must redeem all your firstborn sons. No one should appear before Me empty-handed.

What does "sanctify" mean in this situation?

*Numbers 3:11-13*

Then YHVH said to Moshe saying, "See, I have taken the Levites from among sons of Israel in place of the firstborn who open the womb among sons of Israel. The Levites will be Mine, because all the firstborn are Mine. In the day when I was striking down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated to Myself every firstborn in Israel - whether man or animal - as Mine. I am YHVH."

The Levites belong to YHVH, so they redeem - ransom - the firstborn of Israel.

*Numbers 3:39-51*

All the Levites counted by Moshe and Aaron at the word of YHVH, by their families, inclusive of every male one month old and upward, were 22,000. YHVH said to Moshe, "Count every firstborn male of sons of Israel from one month old and upward and *make a list of their names*. Set the Levites apart for me in place of all the firstborn of sons of Israel, and all the livestock of the Levites in place of the firstborn of the livestock of sons of Israel. I am YHVH." So Moshe counted all the firstborn of sons of Israel as YHVH commanded him. The sum total of the firstborn males of sons of Israel, one month old and upward, listed by name, was 22,273. Again YHVH spoke to Moshe saying, "Take the Levites in place of all the firstborn of sons of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites in place of their livestock. The Levites will be Mine. I am YHVH. To redeem the 273 firstborn of sons of Israel exceeding the number of the Levites, you are to collect five shekels for each, based on the shekel of the Sanctuary, which is 20 gerahs. Give the money for the redemption of the extra ones of the firstborn of them to Aaron and his sons." Hence Moshe collected the redemption money for those exceeding the number redeemed by the Levites. From the firstborn of sons of Israel he collected silver weighing 1,365 shekels, according to the Sanctuary shekel. Moshe gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons, just as YHVH commanded him, in accordance with the mouth of YHVH.

*Numbers 8:16-18*

For they (Levites) are the ones from among sons of Israel given to Me in place of all the first from the wombs of sons of Israel. I have taken them for Myself. For every firstborn among sons of Israel is Mine, whether human or animal. On the day I struck down the firstborn of the land of Egypt, I sanctified them for Myself. So I am taking the Levites in place of the firstborn of sons of Israel.

This is the ongoing command.

*Numbers 18:15-16*

The first offspring of the womb from all flesh, whether human or animal, offered to YHVH, is yours. However, you are to redeem the firstborn of man and the firstborn of unclean animals. When they are a month old, you are

to redeem them at the redemption price of five shekels of silver by the Sanctuary shekel, or 20 gerahs.

Connect to today.

Yeshua is the Son of God, and He is the Son of Man. He is both.

*Philippians 2:5-11*

Have this attitude in yourselves, which also was in Messiah Yeshua, Who, though existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clenched. But He emptied Himself - taking on the form of a slave, becoming the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man. He humbled Himself - becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Yeshua every knee should bow (Isaiah 45:23), in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and every tongue profess that Yeshua the Messiah is Lord - to the glory of God the Father.

Yeshua is the firstborn of mankind, in the sense of the Kingdom of God.

*Luke 2:7*

She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped Him in strips of cloth and set Him down in a manger, since there was no room for them in the inn.

*Luke 2:23*

As it is written in the Torah of YHVH, "Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to YHVH."

*Romans 8:29*

For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

*Colossians 1:15*

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

*Colossians 1:18*

He is the head of the body, His community. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead - so that He might come to have first place in all things.

*Hebrews 1:6 (Psalm 97:7)*

And again, when He brings the Firstborn into the world, He says, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

The priests were the leaders of the Levites (descendants of Aaron, who was the firstborn son of his family). The Levites redeemed the firstborn of the rest of Israel.

*Exodus 19:6*

"So as for you, you will be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."  
These are the words which you are to speak to sons of Israel.

We are to live our lives like priests, dedicated to YHVH.

*Revelation 1:5-6*

Grace to you and shalom from Messiah Yeshua, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father - to Him be glory and power forever! Amen!

Each of us must pay for our own sins (veering off the course of life into death). The example is Korach and his followers. Even though the payment was complete, they were still dead - "holy" in a very sad eternal way.

*Numbers 16:34-38*

All Israel around them fled at their outcry, for they shouted, "Perhaps the earth will swallow us!" Fire also came out from YHVH and consumed the 250 men offering the incense. YHVH spoke to Moshe saying, "Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, to take the censers from the burning, because they are holy, and scatter the coals at a distance. As for the censers of these men who sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be taken and hammered into sheets as a covering for the altar. For they were presented before YHVH, so they are holy. They are to be a sign to sons of Israel."

The purpose of the sacrifices is to redeem us from the sins. Yet we continue to sin - we are not perfect. We need God to redeem us. That is what Yeshua did - He took our place at judgment to pay for our sins - each time. It is not a "one time covers all times" but it is a "confess and repent" each time. Yeshua is the redemption for each of us as believers if we commit to Him, or else we die like the firstborn of Egypt. We are redeemed by the sacrifice of our Pesach - Lamb of God - as we cover the entrance to our lives with His blood, and thus protect us from eternal death.

The only ransom we can claim is accepting that substitution of Yeshua for the payment of eternal death each of us owes. Our individual covenant with YHVH means we follow through on our promise to obey God's precepts to continue growing in His Word. We are accepted by our faith in His atonement AND by changing our lives - teshuvah - to stay on course.