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Note: The task of the reader in this section cannot be so effectively achieved through questions. It is imaginative work -- erase the kitschy ten plagues clip art that is polluting your mind, and read the story anew. Try to develop a sense of the horror of it, of the profound and unsettling effect it had on regular people within Egyptian society. This is the most terrifying display of the power of God that exists in literature, so do not be a blasé reader.

Q1: What does it mean for God to claim to be revealed to Moses in a way never before revealed, even to the patriarchs? Are we getting an inkling of this new way in this section?

Q2: God forecasts the whole course of events to Moses, including the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Why is it important for Moses to know that from the outset?

Q3: What is tactically valuable for Moses in demanding a three-day leave instead of total liberation? Is it deceptive? Is it necessary?

Q4: Why is our story interrupted by a partial genealogy of the Israelites? Which tribes are represented, in what detail, and why?

Q5: Aaron acts as Moses' speaker, but also as the agents of the early plagues. Why is he involved at first, and why does his role recede later?

Q6: Why these plagues, and why in this order? Try to pay close attention to the details of how they manifest, and what lasting effects they have.

Q7: What else intrigues you?