

“Flies”  
Exodus 8:20-32  
(Preached at Trinity, January 28, 2007)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We’ve been looking at the plagues God sent upon Egypt. There would be ten plagues in all: Blood, frogs, gnats, flies, disease, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and death. They were designed to demonstrate the mighty power of God and display His glory. They were also judgment upon Egypt’s idolatry. They worshipped more than eighty gods. The first two plagues were against the gods of the Nile. The next four plagues were against the land gods. The next three plagues were against the gods of the sky. Finally the plagues culminated with the death of the firstborn.
2. So far we’ve looked at the first three plagues. God turned the waters of the Nile into blood. This was followed by the land being inundated with frogs, and then they suffered under a multitude of lice-like insects that were as numerous as the dust.
3. Pharaoh had no intention of bowing before God. He had no intention of giving up his Hebrew slaves.  
**Exodus 8:15** – “But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”  
**Exodus 8:19** – “Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This *is* the finger of God: and Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”
4. As we come to **Verse 20** God sent Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh once again commanding him to submit to the one true God.  
**Exodus 8:20** – “And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.”
5. Pharaoh’s refusal to repent and trust God resulted in the fourth plague:  
**Exodus 8:24** – “And the LORD did so; and there came a grievous swarm of *flies* into the house of Pharaoh, and *into* his servants’ houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of *flies*.”
6. There are some who try to explain the plagues as a natural course of events.
  - A. The Nile was filled with a red algae or red sediment which depleted the river of oxygen causing the death of the fish. Without the fish to consume the frog eggs and tadpoles the frog population exploded. With the Nile waters poisoned they left the waters but not before being infected with a lethal dose and soon died and decayed causing the plague of flies.
  - B. The problem with this line of reasoning was that each plague began and ended suddenly at the command of God. With most of the plagues Pharaoh was forewarned and given an opportunity to repent. And it surely doesn’t explain how the Israelites were spared from the plagues.
  - C. There was no doubt these plagues were from the hand of God. Pharaoh knew it, the magicians knew it, Egypt knew it, and God’s people knew it. God’s purposes were being accomplished

**Romans 9:17** – “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”

7. The plagues are becoming more severe with each one. God is a gracious God but His wrath is revealed against all rebellion. The nature of the Gospel is God commands us to repent and follow Christ. He must be obeyed.  
**Hebrews 3:7-12** – “Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: <sup>9</sup> When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. <sup>10</sup> Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. <sup>11</sup> So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) <sup>12</sup> Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”
  8. This was yet another grievous plague. The Septuagint written 200 years before Christ by Jews in the region of Egypt refers to these flies as dog flies. Dog flies are small flies that cling to the body and bite and draw blood. They bite particularly around the eyes and can cause blindness. This would have been a terrible torment.  
**Psalms 78:45** – “He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them”
  9. Tonight I want us to direct our attention at the fourth plague – the plague of flies.
- I. Things demonstrated again
- A. Once again we find God demanding full and uncompromising submission  
**Exodus 8:20-21** – “Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. <sup>21</sup> Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of *flies* upon thee,”
    1. God demands absolute obedience from human beings. God wasn’t making a suggestion. God’s Word goes forth as an absolute imperative.
    2. Most think God’s Word is a something that can be dismissed. Few understand the true nature of sin.  
**Exodus 23:21** – “Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions:”  
**Psalms 5:4-6** – “For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. <sup>5</sup> The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. <sup>6</sup> Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.”
    3. It only takes a single sin to make a man guilty before God and subject to His wrath.
    4. God commands Pharaoh to submit to His Word – Pharaoh tries to make a compromise – **Verse 28** – “I will let you go and worship your God, only do it here in Egypt.”
      - a. Some might have thought this to be a reasonable compromise. The people of God would be able to worship.
      - b. This is what many do today. They seek to justify themselves by making compromises with God.
      - c. Every day we are tempted to compromise  
 God doesn’t accept compromises.

- B. Once again we find God demonstrating His mercy upon stubborn humanity
1. God had several purposes in sending the plagues
    - His greatest purpose was to manifest His own glory
    - He was demonstrating His wrath upon sin
  2. God was also manifesting mercy upon Pharaoh giving him much time to repent.
    - a. Why does God say “tomorrow” in **Verse 23**  
**Exodus 8:23** – “to morrow shall this sign be.”  
 God is giving Pharaoh 24 hours to consider his wicked ways – 24 hours of grace
    - b. God is longsuffering but will not allow the unrepentant to go unpunished.  
**Nahum 1:3** – “The LORD *is* slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of his feet.”
- C. Once again we see God’s unlimited power demonstrated
1. The Egyptians were guilty of worshiping many gods.
  2. God was establishing His mighty power and the impotence of the Egyptian false gods.
  3. God’s rules this earth with absolute power and authority

II. God distinguishes His own people from the rest of the world

**Exodus 8:23** – “And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be.”

- A. We are distinguished by God’s love
1. Over and over God refers to Israel as “My people”  
 “Let my people go”  
**Exodus 4:22** – “Thus saith the LORD, Israel *is* my son, *even* my firstborn:”
  2. God’s ultimate fulfillment of His covenant with Abraham is found in the New Covenant – God’s true covenant people are those who are in Christ.
  3. God’s people are the beloved in Christ. He loves us with a particular passionate love. We are distinguished from everyone else upon the face of the earth.  
 “And I will put a division between my people and thy people”
- B. We are distinguished by God’s provision
1. In a general sense God cares for all of His creation. Pharaoh enjoyed all of thee riches of Egypt
  2. Only God’s people have the promise of His particular care
    - a. The Israelites were slaves but only they were called, “My people”
    - b. Only God’s people have the promise of **Romans 8:28**
  3. Only God’s people have the promise of Providential watch care
    - a. It was Israel that God took sympathy upon their condition  
**Exodus 2:25** – “And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto *them*.”
    - b. God remembers His covenant with His people  
**Exodus 2:24** – “And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.”

4. Only God's people have access to His throne in prayer  
**Exodus 2:23-24** – “And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. <sup>24</sup> And God heard their groaning”
- C. We are distinguished from God's wrath  
**Exodus 8:22** – “And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of *flies* shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the earth.”
1. God makes a difference in His people through Christ. Forgiveness from sin comes only through Him.  
**Psalm 32:1-2** – “Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven, whose sin *is* covered. <sup>2</sup> Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile.”
  2. God knows those who belong to Him. There will be a perfect separation on the day of judgment.
  3. The word for “division” in **Verse 23** literally means redemption. Exodus is a story of redemption. God is redeeming His people from bondage and granting them liberty. God has set a redemption for His people
- D. Why did God make the distinction?
1. It is easy to understand why God singled out the Egyptians to receive His wrath. They were wicked, stubborn, and rebellious. God was justly sending His judgment upon them.
  2. But why did He spare the Israelites?
    - a. Were they less wicked, stubborn, and rebellious?
    - b. This would be seen clearly in the wilderness  
**Exodus 32:8-9** – “They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people:”
    - c. God already knew their hearts. He already knew they were a wicked people.
  3. So why did God smite Egypt and spare the Israelites?
    - a. God had chosen them. He had made a covenant with their fathers
    - b. This was all by grace
    - c. God did not choose Israel because of their goodness or worthiness. God made a covenant with Abraham and God is a covenant keeping God.

**Deuteronomy 7:7-8** – “The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: <sup>8</sup> But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

4. Why did God choose you?
  - a. God’s election is by grace alone
  - b. Why doesn’t God case you aside now because of your sin? Because you are the beloved in Christ.

**Conclusion:**

1. God has blessed us abundantly by His grace. To whom much is given much is required. Paul knew this.  
**1 Corinthians 15:10** – “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”
2. Are you serving Christ with your whole heart?
3. And if you have not trusted in Christ do you think you will escape any more than the Egyptians. God has graciously granted you time to repent. Do not continue in your rebellion against God. His command to repent must not go ignored. Those who are outside of Christ will be forever marked for damnation. God forever makes a difference between those who trust Christ and those who do not.
4. God invites everyone to enter His salvation and embrace the love of Christ.