

Title:    **FROGS, LICE, FLIES AND PHARAOH**

Text:       Exodus 8:1-32

Subject:    *Lessons from the Plagues*

Date:       Tuesday Evening — June 26, 2007

Tape #      Exodus 49

Readings: *David Burge and Larry Brown*

Introduction:

Turn with me tonight to the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Exodus. Seven days have passed since God turned the water into blood in Egypt. Here, the Lord God sends Moses back to Pharaoh. In this chapter we see three more plagues poured out upon the land of Egypt. Frogs, lice and flies are sent upon the land. By the command of God Moses brought these three successive plagues upon the land of Egypt. What is their significance? Why are these things recorded in the Book of God? Are they written here as mere records of history? I am sure they are not. Are they recorded merely to demonstrate God's omnipotence? No. These things were brought to pass and Moses was inspired of God to perform them and to record them for our benefit, for our learning, to teach us patience, give us comfort, and encourage us to believe God, that we "*might with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Romans 15:4, 6).

(Romans 15:4) "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

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(Romans 15:6) “That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Book of Revelation makes it crystal clear that the plagues God wrought upon the Egyptians were typical of the judgments God brings upon the world today. As we read the description of those trumpet judgments described in the Book of Revelation, we avoid seeing the similarity between them and the judgments of God upon the Egyptians in the book of Exodus. As then, the plagues were all poured out upon Egypt and Israel was unharmed, even so, the judgments fall upon the wicked today never harm God’s elect, but only assist in the accomplishment of their salvation! — “*There shall no evil happen to the just*” (Proverbs 12:21). Let’s look at this chapter together, asking God the Holy Spirit to be our Teacher, as we observe that which he has recorded in these 32 verses about frogs, lice, flies and Pharaoh.

**FROGS**

In verse 1 the Lord God issues his command to Pharaoh a third time.

(Exodus 8:1) “And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.”

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The command is the same as Pharaoh had heard before. He will hear it eight times. Though he harden his heart, again and again, God's command will not be altered. He is determined to deliver his people out of Egypt. He is determined to prevail over Pharaoh. Israel must be saved. **It is God's purpose to save his people; and save them he will** (Romans 8:28-30).

- By Divine Purpose
- By Divine Purchase
- By Divine Power
- By Divine Providence

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

**Let us ever pray for grace to make us obedient to our God, to keep us from hardening our hearts like Pharaoh** (Psalm 119:4-6). “*Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart!*” Four times in the Book of God we are urged, “*harden not your heart,*” because we

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are constantly tempted to do so. Harden not your heart against...

- The gospel of Christ.
- The doctrine of God our Savior.
- The providence of God.
- The revelation of God.

(Psalms 119:4-6) “Thou hast commanded *us* to keep thy precepts diligently. (5) O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! (6) Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.”

**All who harden their hearts against the revelation of God**, either in obstinate rebellion or in attempts to compromise that which God has revealed, prove themselves reprobate and court the judgment of God.

(Exodus 8:2) “And if thou refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs:”

(Psalms 107:40) “He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, *where there is no way.*”

(Psalms 7:12-13) “If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. (13) He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.”

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Read on...

(Exodus 8:3-6) “And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs: (4) And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants. (5) And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. (6) And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt.”

(Psalms 78:45) “He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.”

**This second plague, like the first, was directed against the idolatry of the Egyptians.** The Nile River was revered by them as the source of life. Frogs were worshipped by them as gods representing fertility. So the Lord God multiplied their ugly, croaking, smelly gods until he made their gods obnoxious to them. The frogs not only “*covered the land of Egypt*” but invaded their

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homes, entered their bed-chambers, crawled into their ovens, and even filled their kneading troughs!

The only time these dirty creatures are mentioned in the New Testament is in Revelation 16. There the Holy Spirit shows us **the significance of this plague**. They represent the corrupting influence of false religion, specifically as it opposes Christ, his gospel and his people. They are “*the spirits of devils, working miracles.*”

(Revelation 16:13-14) “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. (14) For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

**In the seventh verse, the Lord God gives Pharaoh’s magicians power to imitate his servants.** — “*And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.*” (Compare Job 12:16; 2 Timothy 3:8 and 2 Thessalonians 2:7-11.)

(Job 12:16) “With him *is* strength and wisdom: **the deceived and the deceiver are his.**”

(2 Thessalonians 2:7-11) “For the mystery of

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iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. (8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: (9) *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (11) And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.”

Read verses 9-15 and learn this. — **Judgment never brings repentance.** Many, like Pharaoh, tremble because they are terrified by God’s judgments, but judgment never brings repentance.

(Exodus 8:9-15) “And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, *that* they may remain in the river only? (10) And he said, To morrow. And he said, *Be it* according to thy word: that thou mayest know that *there is* none like unto the LORD our God. (11) And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. (12) And Moses and Aaron went out

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from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. (13) And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. (14) And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank. (15) But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”

**“The goodness God leadeth thee to repentance”**  
(Romans 2:4). — *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death”* (2 Corinthians 7:10).

I do not say that God does not use acts of providential judgment to arouse, impress, subdue, and humble his elect and bring them to repentance. He does graciously use these things (Psalm 107:1-31; Luke 15:11-20). But I am saying this: — Divine judgment, in and of itself, will never produce repentance in the heart. The heart of man is so obstinate, proud, and hard that even in the torments of hell the damned will never repent (Revelation 16:9).

Until God the Holy Spirit comes into the heart by the mighty, saving operations of his grace, no affliction, judgment, or terrifying alarms, though they be ever so great, ever so heavy, and ever so multiplied, will reach the soul (Psalm 78:31-37).

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(Psalms 78:31-37) “The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen *men* of Israel. (32) For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works. (33) Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble. (34) When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God. (35) And they remembered that God *was* their rock, and the high God their redeemer. (36) Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. (37) For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.”

Not only is it true that judgment never produces repentance, **even when favor is shown** to the wicked, they will not repent, except God grant them repentance by the saving revelation of Christ in them (Exodus 8:15; Isaiah 26:10; Zechariah 12:10).

(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.”

(Isaiah 26:10) “Let favour be showed to the wicked, *yet* will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.”

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(Zechariah 12:10) “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.”

**LICE**

(Exodus 8:16-19) “And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. (17) And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. (18) And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. (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.”

(Psalms 105:31) “He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, *and* lice in all their coasts.”

There are several things here that demand attention. *First*, notice that **Aaron smote the dust of the land**

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**“and it became lice in man and beast”** (8:16). In the judgment God pronounced upon fallen Adam we read that he said, *“Cursed is the ground for thy sake,”* (Genesis 3:17) and again, *“for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”* (Genesis 3:19). When Aaron smote the *“ground,”* and its *“dust”* became lice, and the lice came upon the Egyptians, what a graphic picture that is of the fact fallen man is under the curse of the holy Lord God.

**Second, when Pharaoh’s magicians tried to imitate God’s servants by their enchantments, this time “they could not” do so.** God restrained them. Therefore they were helpless. He permitted them to make it appear that they produced snakes like Aaron. He permitted them to make it appear that they could turn water into blood and bring forth frogs, just like Moses and Aaron. But, when God withheld their magical powers, they were helpless to deceive. So it is with Satan himself. Satan’s power is prescribed, limited, and controlled by the Almighty. He cannot wiggle without God’s decree. God may permit him to bring forth uncleanness and deception, just as he permitted Pharaoh’s magician prophets to deceive him; but with the curse he and his messengers cannot remove. — That can be done only according to the gospel, only by God’s law (Moses) being satisfied by God’s Priest (Aaron).

**Third, in verse 19 we read, “Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God.”** That is the

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last thing recorded in the Scriptures that they said. With their final word, they were forced to acknowledge the hand of God. So it shall be in the last day. Satan, the beast, the false prophet, and all who follow their deception shall bow before and publicly confess that Jesus is the Christ, confessing him as God and Lord alone (Philippians 2:9-11).

*Fourth, **there is a striking correspondence between this third plague and what is recorded in the eighth chapter of John's Gospel.** There we see a similar contest between the Lord Jesus and false religion. The Scribes and the Pharisees, using the woman taken in adultery as their bait, sought to ensnare the Savior. His only response was to stoop down and write on the ground. After saying to them, "*He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,*" we read that "*Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground*". Do you remember what happened next? — "*They which heard, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one...and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*" As the Lord Jesus wrote in the dirt, by their action they acknowledged "*this is the finger of God.*"*

*Fifth, I find it strikingly delightful that **God was pleased to use something as small, weak, insignificant and dirty as lice to subdue these false prophets** who withstood Moses. He might just as well have turned the dust into lions or scorpions; but he chose to use lice. He*

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still uses such instruments, choosing weak things to confound the mighty (Psalm 64:5-10).

(Psalms 64:5-10) “They encourage themselves *in* an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them? (6) They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward *thought* of every one of *them*, and the heart, *is* deep. (7) But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. (8) So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away. (9) And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing. (10) The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.”

**FLIES**

Now, let's read verses 20-24.

(Exodus 8:20-24) “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. (21) Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms *of flies* upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the

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houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of *flies*, and also the ground whereon they *are*. (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. (23) And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be. (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*.”

(Psalms 78:45) “He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.”

(Psalms 105:31) “He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, *and* lice in all their coasts.”

The plague of flies was a striking display of divine sovereignty. The Egyptians worshipped Beelzebub as the god of flies. What could be more admirably suited to show for their idol than the use of flies, the very objects of their idolatry, to punish them? That which they worshipped devoured them!

(Ecclesiastes 10:1) “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour:

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*so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.”*

God used flies again to punish those who despised and reject his darling Son (Isaiah 7:14, 17-18).

(Isaiah 7:14) “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

(Isaiah 7:17-18) “The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father’s house, days that have not come from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; *even* the king of Assyria. (18) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall hiss for the fly that *is* in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that *is* in the land of Assyria.”

Flies are most abundant where manure is thickest. That is exactly how God would have us look upon all free will, works religion. Like Paul, we are to count it but dung.

Let us ever give thanks to our God for that great mercy by which he has set us free from all the dunghill deities of false religion. **Notice, there were no flies in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel dwelt** (v. 22). The Lord God said, “**I will put a division between my people and thy people**” (v. 23). Thank God for

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distinguishing, free grace! Thank God for the difference he makes!

- By Election
- By Redemption
- By Effectual Calling

*“Thanks be unto God, for his unspeakable gift”* (2 Corinthians 9:15). He who is our God is God indeed! — *“For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth”* (Psalms 74:12).

## **PHARAOH**

Now, let’s take a look at Pharaoh, as he is set before us again in verses 25-32.

(Exodus 8:25-32) “And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. (26) And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? (27) We will go three days’ journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us. (28) And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me. (29) And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will entreat the LORD that the swarms *of flies* may depart from

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Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD. (30) And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the LORD. (31) And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. (32) And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.”

Pharaoh pretended to relent, but his pretense only demonstrates the greater hardening of his heart. He tried to get Moses and Aaron to compromise with him. (See Sermon #40 in this series — **No Compromise.**) Let me call your attention to just four things in these verses, and I will send you home.

1. **The Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, demands absolute surrender.** Multitudes, like Pharaoh, vainly imagine that God will accept them on their terms. He will not. He demands complete surrender.
2. **That sacrifice by which we worship and serve our God, the crucified Lamb of God, is now, always has been, and ever shall be an abomination to this world.**

(Galatians 6:14) “But God forbid that I should

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glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

3. **We cannot worship and serve our God by compromise.** Any compromise of the gospel, any compromise with God’s enemies is damning, both to the compromiser and to those who follow him.
4. **Hardened hearts will only continue to be hardened, until God, by his great mercy and grace breaks them.** From hardness of heart and contempt of his Word, may God ever deliver us!

But let us remember, all these things were done, not merely as acts of judgment upon the Egyptians, but also as acts of grace toward Israel. God sent the frogs, and the lice, and the flies, and hardened Pharaoh’s heart, for the salvation of his chosen people. When we see that all things are ordained of God and work by his sovereign hand the salvation of our souls, such a view of heavenly mercy ought to endear our faithful, gracious, covenant God to our hearts. Oh, how we ought to rejoice in and give thanks for our heavenly Father’s love, our great Redeemer’s grace, and the Holy Spirit’s unrelenting mercy!

How blessed a thing it is to have the God of heaven and earth as our Savior and Friend at all times! Such insignificant things as frogs, lice and flies, and even such mighty things as the King of Egypt are employed by our

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God for the saving of our souls, how joyful we ought to be, knowing that we live always under the smile of divine favor. How peaceful, how confident, we ought to be of whom the God of heaven says, *“I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.”*

Amen.