

“The Plague of Lice”
Exodus 8:16-19
(Preached at Trinity, January 21, 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. In **Chapter 5** Moses and Aaron went into the presence of Pharaoh and issued God’s command:
Exodus 5:1 – “Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.”
2. Pharaoh’s response was one of stiffnecked arrogance.
Exodus 5:2 – “And Pharaoh said, Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.”
3. This resulted in a series of plagues upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians designed to demonstrate the mighty power of God and display His glory.
Exodus 7:17 – “In this thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD”
There would be ten plagues in all:
Blood, frogs, gnats, flies, disease, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and death.
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.
4. The Egyptians were an idolatrous people. The Egyptians worshipped more than eighty deities – gods of the Nile River, gods of the land and sky, gods of the crops and livestock. God is proving all other human gods impotent before the one true God.
 - A. In the first plague God turned the Nile into blood, an assault upon the Egyptian gods of the Nile.
 - B. In the second plague God brought frogs to cover the land. The Egyptians worshipped the frog. To intentionally kill a frog brought the death penalty. God brought them to loathe the symbol of their deity. Not only were there frogs everywhere, when God ended the plague the multitude of dead frogs created a nauseating stench that further caused the Egyptians to despise the frog.
 - C. God has a way of crushing human idols and making them vile in our sight. He will also do it to our idols. God will have no rivals.
“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”
5. 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.”
6. As we come to **Verse 16** God unleashes the third plague without warning.
 - A. The exact type of insect is unclear. The Hebrew word, קָנֵי {kane} can refer to several types of insects including lice, gnats, maggots, or mosquitoes.
The curator of the entomological museum in Mississippi said there are at least 100 different species that could fit into this category of lice.

- B. The Septuagint translated the Hebrew word using the Greek word σκνίφες which refers to a small fly.
- C. Philo of Alexandria writing in the first century after Christ described them as creeping up people's noses and into their ears.
- D. Uncontrolled lice in the hair would be horrible bad but swarms of biting gnats would also be a terrible ordeal. I suspect these insects affected much more than the head. They were stinging, biting insects. (Lakeshore)
7. Once again Pharaoh is moved to prove his power, that the gods of Egypt equaled the Hebrew God Jehovah.
Once again he calls upon his magicians to perform their black arts. The magicians had successfully used their powers in the previous meetings with Moses.
- They caused their rods to become serpents
 - They caused the water to turn to blood
 - They caused frogs to come forth
- They were able to perform supernatural wonders.
8. As we come to the third plague, however, the magicians were totally unable to match the power of God. They probably tried for hours. They probably used every Satanic conjuring device at their disposal. Nothing worked. Finally they brought their conclusion before Pharaoh: **Exodus 8:19** – “This *is* the finger of God:”
9. This is an expression that points to the almighty power of God. Jesus used it when He was accused of being in league with Satan.
Luke 11:19-20 – “And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? therefore shall they be your judges. ²⁰ But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.”
10. God was bringing the Egyptians to recognize His almighty power.
There are several things to consider as we ponder the almighty power of God
- I. As great as Satan's power is, it is still limited by the almighty power of God
- A. Satan has been granted certain power upon the earth
1. Paul referred to his sickness or thorn in the flesh as a messenger of Satan
 2. It would seem that he has a certain degree of power over nature
 3. The wind that killed Job's children came from Satan
Job 1:19 – “And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.”
 4. It's possible the wind that Jesus rebuked in the Gospels was sent by Satan in an effort to kill Christ.
 5. Paul describes Satan's power with the revealing of the man of sin
2 Thessalonians 2:9 – “*Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,”
 6. Clearly, these Egyptian magicians were seeped in the occult and empowered by Satan. They were able to change the water to blood and bring forth frogs.
 7. Satan's is powerless, however, against the power of God
- B. Satan is nothing more than a creature. God created Satan and allows him to exist
1. Satan possesses all of the limitations of being a created being.
He is not omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent

2. He is under the power and authority of God
 3. God could have destroyed him when he fell or at any time since
 4. Satan is doomed. He moves about by God's permission.
 5. God allows him to exist according to His purpose - a mystery
- C. Satan is under the sovereign control of God - all of creation moves according to God's good pleasure
- Daniel 4:35** - "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"
1. Satan could not touch Job except at the permission of God
 2. Satan received permission to tempt Peter
- Luke 22:31** – “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift *you* as wheat.”
ἐξαίτεομαι – to ask from or to beg permission
3. At the betrayal of Christ Satan entered into Judas but God decreed it.
 4. Satan's power was demonstrated in the Egyptian magicians as long as God allowed it and no longer. With the coming of this third plague God no longer allowed Satan to act.
 5. Satan is still under the mighty hand of God

II. God's power is absolute

- A. He does not receive His authority from any source outside Himself
1. He works all things according to His plans and purposes
 2. Notice that with the first two plagues God sent Moses to command Pharaoh to let His people go. This third plague, however, came suddenly and without warning.
God is sovereign to work in His time and in His manner.
These plagues were of God's choosing
- B. These plagues were all supernatural, yet natural
1. God could have used any means to free His people
He could have caused a train to suddenly appear. He could have sent a force of angels to destroy the Egyptians.
 2. God used natural means, yet there was no doubt that He was the Author
 - a. God commanded when they began and when they ended
 - b. Although they were natural occurrences they were all sent to a supernatural degree.
Never had the water turned to blood
Never had frogs covered the land
Never had insects invaded Egypt
 3. Satan could imitate the first two plagues but could not remove them.

III. God's power demands submission

- A. It isn't enough just to recognize God's mighty power
1. Many have been mesmerized by God's mighty works
 - a. Mighty works attracted many to Christ

John 2:23-25 – “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

- b. The magicians were convinced of God’s mighty power
Exodus 8:19 – “Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This *is* the finger of God.”
 - c. To witness these events must have been amazing
To see a shepherd’s rod become a serpent
To see the mighty Nile River flowing in blood
To see frogs cover the country side
Then to have insects swarm like a great dust storm
This was the mighty finger of God
2. Most people look at the mighty works of God but remain unaffected
- a. People refer to disasters as acts of God
When going through a severe trial they call out to God for help
But they do not submit to His authority – They do not confess Jesus Christ as Lord.
 - b. The magicians admitted that there was a power greater than their own, but a power they would not submit to
 - c. Pharaoh was thoroughly convinced but would not submit
- blood - **Exodus 7:21-23** – “And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. ²² And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said. ²³ And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also.”
- Frogs - **Exodus 8:8** – “Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD.”
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.”
- Lice - **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.”
- B. God shows His mighty power and then says submit to my sovereignty
- 1. Creation and Providence clearly demonstrate God’s mighty power – He has clearly left His fingerprint on everything.
Romans 1:20 – “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”
 - 2. God has been pleased to reveal Himself as the mighty God and demands obedience. A failure to submit results in God’s wrath
Romans 1:18 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”

- C. Who would dare try to battle with such overwhelming power?
1. This demonstrates the depravity of man
 - a. We are naturally filled with pride – we think we are worthy of ruling our own life. We deserve to do things our way
 - b. This is what Pharaoh was doing. The Israelites were his. He was not about to humble himself before God. He would risk destroying Egypt but he would not submit to God.
 2. The lost man battles against God even though he knows he cannot win. But he cannot help himself. He is in greater bondage than the Israelites were.

Conclusion:

1. Pharaoh saw the finger of God – he could not doubt the mighty power of God. He could not doubt that it was superior to the power of the magicians and superior to his own power. But his heart was hardened and he would not submit.
2. Have you seen God's fingerprint in your own life? Have you submitted to His Lordship?
3. This is God's demand for humanity. It is His demand for salvation.