

The Land Was Destroyed

Exodus 8:16-24, "So the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.' " And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the Lord had said. And the Lord said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the land. I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be." ' " And the Lord did so. Thick swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies."

Let's pray. Dear heavenly Father dear God, I do ask that You would be with us dear Lord as we listen to Your word as Dan speaks. That You would give him wisdom, that You would cause him, by Your Spirit, to say the words that You have for us and that You would, by Your Spirit, would cause us to understand them. That You would allow us to see clearly what You have written and what You want to communicate. I pray dear God that we would not be like Pharaoh who listens to magicians to determine what the hand of God is, that we would know from You, that we would know that this world is not a machine, that this world is Your household and just as we rise in the morning and do things in our household as we see fit, You rise and You do things that You see fit and You are great and You can do whatever You wish. May we fear You dear Lord and may we understand Your words.

As we consider the third and fourth plagues this morning I titled the sermon, 'The Land Was Destroyed' because that is what the last verse is. The NKJV translates it as 'the land was corrupted', but almost every place else in the Bible that word is translated 'destroyed'. One of the reasons that I want to point that out is, we need to make sure we realize just how destructive these plagues were. We think of the frogs and there's heaps of dead frogs everywhere that are rotting and smelling, the dead fish are everywhere and then God sends lice and He sends mosquitos or flying insects. This is destroying the land. It's just important for us to get the scope of the judgement because I think it's really easy for us to read these things and think then there is the plague of hail where it turns to fire and the plague of the cattle dying and all these other plagues, but after the fourth plague the land is already destroyed. That's really important for us

to recognize just how destructive it is when God decides to pour out His wrath. So as we come to these third and fourth plagues, let's make sure we keep them in perspective because they give us a perspective on hell because it's really easy to say it won't be that bad, but this is what God does that's far short of what He does when He sends people to hell. This is a picture of that judgement, when God judges it is a fearful destructive thing and we need to recognize that it is righteous for God to judge and it is good that God judges, but His judgements are about destruction. As we go to the third and fourth plagues, I want to just make a few comments about the differences between those and the first two plagues. When the third plague comes, He's not saying to Pharaoh, 'Let My people go or else this will happen', it just happens. He doesn't need to give warnings before He judges, He's already told him what to do. He can just bring the judgement without somebody opening the Scripture and seeing it without a preacher preaching on it, you can just receive the judgement. Pharaoh had made an oath, he had made a vow, he had said if You take away the frogs, I will let Your people go. God took away the frogs and Pharaoh did not let the people go so God judged Egypt. We look on this judgement, we should look at this as a judgement on Egypt for mocking God, for saying he would do something and then thinking that he can get away without doing it. God speaks a lot about vows in His word, this is a picture of what God does when you break your vows. He doesn't need to give you more warning, He just judges. Even though the heaps of rotting frogs are still there, Pharaoh says God can't do anything and God's answer is, 'Yes I can'. The second thing is that with this plague we see no evidence that God removes the plague of lice. Now, it could be like the blood and I think it probably is, lice are something you can deal with. God doesn't just come in and say the lice are gone like He kills the frogs. He doesn't wait for Pharaoh to ask Him to remove the lice from the land, he will let the people go if He removes the lice. Instead, He hits them with another plague before there is any evidence that the first plague has ended. Again, I just want us to make sure that we remember just how destructive these were. Think about lice, they are parasites, think of them as small ticks, that's what lice are in the sense that they burrow into the skin and drink blood. These are crawling all over every man and every beast in Egypt. This is destruction and then clouds of insects come. If it's one insect, and I think it's a bunch of different flying insects, then I think it's mosquitoes. The picture is that the mosquitoes are so bad that they can't fly in the air and they are all on the ground so when you walk on them the ground is covered with mosquitos. That's how many mosquitos are there when God sends the flies or flying insects. They're not just up in the air, there are so many they are covering the ground and they are all sucking blood. This is why it says in Psalm 78, the flies devoured the Egyptians. Literally, these lice and the flies are devouring the people. That's what mosquitos and lice do, they live off of blood. This is what God is doing to Egypt. Don't treat the judgement of God as a light thing, don't treat the commandments of God as a light thing because God still judges, He judges nations, He judges churches, He judges families, He judges individuals. God still judges and the judgement of God is a fearful thing. Even as He sends these judgement and even as after the third and fourth plague He says the nation of Egypt is destroyed, He then sends six more plagues. This is a God to be feared and when God talks about these things that He does, He talks about them throughout the rest of Scripture, and the thing to be reminded of when He talks about these things in the rest of Scripture, He talks about this is a God to be feared. As we go through these plagues, it's interesting when you think about all the frogs everywhere, but that's not what we are supposed to take away from it. We can imagine everybody crawling with

lice, but that's not what we're supposed to take away from it. What we are supposed to take away from it is that this is who God is and this is the destruction that He can bring. What we are supposed to take away from it is to fear God. When the Israelites go and wander in the desert and they go to the Promised Land and they send in the ten spies, they forget what God did in Egypt because they said God couldn't defeat the giants that are in the land and they forget that God demonstrated His power. Let's make sure when we read these plagues that we remember what we are supposed to remember. God is more powerful than anything in this world and He can do whatever pleases Him and He can destroy any power in this world so don't fear the powers of this world, fear God. That's what we are supposed to remember from the plagues. As we go through this, let's make sure we remember the basic thing that we're to remember, which is God has demonstrated His power, He doesn't need to keep doing it because we are supposed to read this, that forty years later they are supposed to go into the Promised Land and Jericho is still shaking with fear because they remember what God can do. We've had a lot more revelation, we've seen the destruction of Israel, we've seen the rejection of the northern kingdom when God divorced them, we've seen the destruction of the Jews, we've seen the Holocaust, we've seen all these things that God does when He judges a people and that's supposed to cause us to fear God. That's what we're supposed to remember so as we go through this, let's make sure as I talk about the details, that we don't forget the big picture. The big picture is this is what God does, this is what God can do, this is what He will do in the future when He says, 'Depart from Me you who practice lawlessness.' The judgement will be far worse than the destruction that came upon Egypt. Make sure you're not in that group that doesn't say Jesus Christ is Lord, that doesn't say Jesus Christ has the right to tell me what to do.

Verses 16-19, "So the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.' " And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the Lord had said." Again, "So the Lord said to Moses." He skips the warning to Pharaoh and goes straight to what he is to do, what he is to instruct Aaron to say. When we've sinned we should expect judgement, we shouldn't expect a bunch of warnings. We should just recognize that God can send judgement upon us. It's like when we train our children, we shouldn't keep giving them warnings to stop, we should chastise them and this is what God does when we know we are doing something wrong, if we are His children, He chastises you, He uses the rod on you. The context of this is interesting because last week we had a discussion on the covenant and next week we're going to vote on the new covenant. This is the case where Pharaoh said to God, 'You do this and I will do that' and the covenant is us saying, 'We'll do this'. We should recognize when we enter into covenant as a church, God holds us accountable to this covenant. I've seen this happen so many times, where people ignore the covenant, they deny the covenant and judgement comes upon them. So as we are in a position where we are being reminded of what our covenant says, as we're making changes to it to try to make it more accurate and make our understanding of it

more correct, let's not forget it's a serious document, it's an important thing when you come before God and say, 'This is my commitment' because God will hold you accountable. As we read the covenant, assuming that it passes, as we re-enter into covenant as a congregation, as we think of that, let's remember this passage where God says He judges, that God says He cares about when we say we will do this to Him. We're very careful in trying to frame the words of the covenant to make it not that we are going to absolutely do these things because we all sin and fall short so we use terms like 'striving' and 'working to do these things', but it doesn't mean that God doesn't know and God can't judge whether it's us stumbling and falling or it's our desire to keep the covenant. Keeping the covenant is a big deal because God cares when people lie to Him. God cares when people take vows and do not pay them. So the Lord says to Moses, "Say to Aaron". Even though there is no direct confrontation with Pharaoh, He is still using Moses to talk to Aaron. It seems very clear here that it's still a public thing because certainly the magicians know about it, and it might have been done before Pharaoh, but it doesn't say explicitly. Again, this is the picture of God the Father telling Jesus Christ to go do things and then Jesus Christ tells His people, His priests to go do things. We should recognize this is still how it's supposed to work today. So he says to Aaron, "Stretch out your rod." This is the same rod that he struck the water with, that caused the frogs to come out so however Pharaoh knew, clearly Pharaoh knew that the lice came because of Moses and Aaron. You don't see the magicians going, 'Well, all these lice just came up', everyone knew they came up because of Moses and Aaron. So he's supposed to take the rod "and strike the dust of the land." When we think of dust, we have a certain view of dust in our culture and our society, but we need to recognize we can close our windows during the summer time because it doesn't get to be 120 degrees inside if we close our windows during the summertime. If you lived before air conditioning you had to have your windows open. If you lived before roads were paved and a vehicle went by, it threw up a cloud of dust. Like you go to Nigeria and there is dust everywhere, you can't avoid the dust. We avoid the dust because we have things like vacuum cleaners that filter it out and gather up the dust. Until 1850 or something like that, something like 70-80% of people lived with dirt floors. Guess what happens if you have dirt floors? There's a lot of dust. We don't realize just how clean of a culture we are compared to most cultures in the world. Most cultures have far more dust because they don't have the wealth to seal the dust out. So when it says to strike the dust of the land "so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt." This is that there is dust everywhere, everywhere there is dust. At the prosthetic clinic, to keep out the dust they mop twice a day and that's even in their offices because culture is just dustier. When Aaron struck the dust so it would become lice, that means everywhere there is lice, everywhere. One of the titles in one of the Bibles I was looking at called this 'nads', but that's not what the word 'lice' means here. The root of the word 'lice' is 'root', these are things that dig into you, that's what lice do. They are kind of like small ticks, they dig into your skin and drink your blood, that's what lice do. So they take root and that's the meaning of this word, it's something that takes root, this is like a parasite. When they turn into lice, this is all these parasitic creatures covering them, covering man and beast. "And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod." Moses did what he was supposed to do and Aaron did what he was supposed to do "and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast." This is just a picture so everyone knew this was from the hand of God. Obviously he didn't strike all the dust, but he strikes the dust in one place and the dust throughout the land becomes lice.

Lice are a parasite, they can't fly, all they can do is crawl, but all of a sudden you have dust everywhere and all that dust becomes lice and what's the first thing ticks and lice have to do? They're a parasite, they have to go find that host. They die after a couple days if they don't have a host so you have all these lice and what are they all going to head to? They all have to head to things with blood, they head to man and beast. All the dust that is everywhere, now all of it starts to crawl towards living things. Remember how destructive these plagues are, it's so easy for us to think of the frogs hopping up and not think that they had them heaped up. That's how many there were and these lice, everywhere there was lice and all those lice would do the same thing, they'd all head towards blood because that's what lice do. A parasite has to get a host so when you think about this, recognize the escalation. The first plague was largely in the Nile, yes it hit other things and if you had a bucket of water in your house it would turn to blood, but largely it was outside the house. Then God brings the frogs and now it's inside the house, inside their beds, inside their kneading bowls, but now with the lice it's inside them because the lice are digging under their skin. Each step is a significant escalation from the step before. Before the frogs at least were outside, now the lice are not just affecting their houses, they're affecting them, they are digging into their skin to get to their blood. "All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt." God is emphasizing this, this is all the dust everywhere this happens to. Lice are visible creatures. I always thought lice were smaller than this, but if this is the same lice as ours are, what it means is that this is a creature that roots, like a parasite. Lice are about the size of a sesame seed so you see all these lice everywhere. They can be scraped off your skin and combed out of your hair, they could have worked to deal with it, but these are everywhere. The magicians tried to do what they did in the first two plagues, they started speaking their enchantments, started to do these mutterings that controlled the demonic spirits, but God decrees that it's not going to work. The first two times God allowed it to work. There's the old story about how you boil a frog. If you turn the heat up right away they jump out of the pot, but if you boil it slowly they don't jump out of the pot. That's exactly what God is doing with Pharaoh. If He wanted Pharaoh to let the people go without the judgements coming to fold, He just starts by not having the magicians be able to do it, but since they could do it for the first two plagues, when they get to the third plague Pharaoh is probably just thinking if he had better magicians they could do it because He is hardening Pharaoh's heart so he won't let the people go until the firstborn son dies because that's God's plan. So the first two plagues God allows the magicians and enables them to do their enchantments and these things happen, they get more frogs, they turn water into blood, but now God says no and "they could not." They realize that their powers didn't extend that far, that God could use them for whatever purpose that He wanted and now He decided it was time for them to stop being able to do it. "So there were lice on man and beast." They couldn't produce the lice and they couldn't remove the lice, they couldn't do anything. So "then the magicians said to Pharaoh." Remember the magicians are like the cabinet speaking to the president. These are the wise men, the leader of Egypt, these are the powerful people in positions of authority. They turn around and say, "This is the finger of God." I find that a very interesting phrase. As you go through this this is the hand of God, Pharaoh says that even with a mighty hand, no one will cause him to let the Israelites go out of the land, but then the magicians, his council of state if you will, come to him and say this is the finger of God. The finger of God is only used in four other places, two of them are when God writes with His finger to write out the law of God. The fourth place is when Jesus says it's the

finger of God when the demons are being cast out. The finger of God is not Him stretching out His arm, this is just His finger. The magicians are saying, 'Understand we have no reason to think this is the end of what God could do.' He's just beginning, this is just His finger, wait until He reaches out His mighty arm. Aaron keeps stretching out his arm, it's not a mighty hand that is causing this to happen, it's the finger of God according to the magicians. He has far more ability to do far more destruction, but still Pharaoh will not hear. "But Pharaoh's heart grew hard." Even though the magicians understood their power compared to the power of God, none of that moved Pharaoh. Instead Pharaoh says he will not let them go. Just because the magicians couldn't do it doesn't mean that God has power. "And he did not heed them, just as the Lord had said." The testimony of Scripture is God's power, this is what God wanted to happen. Pharaoh thinks he is doing his will and he is doing his own will, but his will, just like all of our wills, is to do the will of God. Nobody can resist God's will as it says in Romans 9. So he says he is going to do the opposite of what God says, but he is doing exactly what God wanted him to do. The lice are crawling and attaching themselves to all the people, but that's not sufficient to cause Pharaoh to turn to God. It's really important for us to recognize the difference between judgement and chastisement. God did not want Pharaoh to turn, He wasn't chastening Pharaoh, He was judging Pharaoh. He was punishing Pharaoh for what he did. Understand we receive chastisement, any Christian receives chastisement from God so as we see these judgements, the difference between the judgement on Pharaoh and what happens to the Christian is, the purpose of the judgement for a Christian is to change us, that's why God chastens us, it's to change us. When God sends the judgements on Pharaoh, when He sends the trials on Pharaoh, it's not to change Pharaoh, it's so Pharaoh continues in his path of destruction. So as we see this and as we read them, let's make sure we're not like Pharaoh where we receive the trials, where we receive the judgements for our sin and instead of turning and repenting, we keep walking the same path. That's the difference between the believer and unbeliever, not that the believer doesn't receive judgement and consequences for our sin, it's that God uses those consequences to change us and He never uses the consequences to change Pharaoh. God's not chastening Pharaoh, He is judging Pharaoh.

Verses 20-21, "And the Lord said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand." So the Lord again speaks to Moses and we don't know how long this is between the plague of the lice and the plague of the flies. We know Pharaoh's heart is hardened, we know that he doesn't make the vow, he doesn't take the time. It seems like it's probably not that long because Pharaoh doesn't come and ask Moses to intercede with God to remove the lice, but instead God just brings another judgement upon them. And he says, "Rise early in the morning." It's time to confront Pharaoh again and he confronts him in the same location, "as he comes out to the water." This is the same place he confronted Pharaoh when he turned the water into blood and when the frogs come out of the river. Again, the Egyptians thought bathing was an association with worship so they would bathe before going to worship so this is probably God confronting

Pharaoh before he goes and commits his idolatry. So he is supposed to stand before Pharaoh as he is at the water, "then say to him, 'Thus says the Lord.'" He is supposed to declare to him a judgement that is about to come upon you. Again, the same thing, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." The people are to be sent out in the wilderness. Pharaoh wants them to serve him but God says they are His people. "Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold." He is telling Pharaoh that He knows Pharaoh won't let His people go so he is saying, 'See this', don't let the things going around you, don't ignore them. That 'behold' is, 'watch, you're going to see this'. All this is so Pharaoh knows that God is the Lord. We need to make sure that we're watching, watch the judgement of sin, watch what happens when a nation exalts and calls evil good and good evil. God says woe to that nation. Watch what happened, look at the insanity in America over the last five or six years, ever since we said two men can marry. We have gone insane as a nation. Can you imagine two worst candidates for president? Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, or Donald Trump and Joe Biden. We have gone insane as a nation and we should recognize this is what the judgement of God looks like. Make sure that we see it too, let's not just wander through life and not see the hand of God in the things that are happening around us. It says, "I will send swarms of flies." That word 'flies' isn't in the text, the text just says that God will send swarms. That word 'swarms' actually has the picture of intermingling with one another so most commentaries that I was looking at say this is really a picture of not just one insect, it's probably a whole bunch of different flying insects, swarms of different kinds of insects. If it is one insect, because of the way mosquitoes interact if there is a swarm of mosquitoes, sometimes this word is used specifically for mosquitoes. So this is either mosquitoes or it's a mix of different flying insects. Personally I think it's a mix of flying insects, but it might just be that mosquitoes are covering the ground. It's important for us to get a picture of how terrible this judgement would be. I remember once when I was playing golf and all of a sudden I was in the midst of this mosquito swarm and it is miserable and that was nothing compared to what is being described here. I mean, people ran off and just left their golf clubs there and here you can't run, you have to leave Egypt to escape it. You have to get the scale, we have to have an understanding as to just how damaging this was. It probably wasn't just mosquitoes, it was probably all kinds of insects. Psalm 78 says they devoured Egypt so these aren't insects like that are just flying around and annoying you, these are not house flies, these are flies that bite, these are flies that eat people. That's what the picture is. Psalm 78:45, "He sent swarms of flies among them, which devoured them, And frogs, which destroyed them." It's all of a sudden there are swarming insects everywhere. Just like the lice were eating the people, there is a big difference in lice and mosquitoes or the flying insects. I was looking at the CDC website yesterday about lice and they say you should get rid of lice but they won't hurt you. The reality is that lice cause you to itch, but other than that they don't really hurt you. They don't transmit diseases, they don't consume that much, people lived with lice for thousands of years. You read history and everybody had lice because lice aren't that damaging. Now, if it's mosquitoes, mosquitoes on the other hand, one of the employees of the clinic, her son was running a fever in Nigeria so they took him to the hospital and they immediately started treating him for malaria because malaria is what kills many, many, many people in Nigeria so they didn't even think to check anything else, they just treated him for malaria. He actually had a bone infection so he had to have surgery, but in Nigeria mosquitoes, when we go over there we take medicine to protect from the mosquitoes. The purpose of the CDC was to stop malaria, they just

adopted other things afterwards, but it was founded to stop malaria. This is so when we think of the escalation between lice crawling all over you and all of a sudden swarms of mosquitoes, swarms of mosquitoes are death. This is a picture of death coming so when it says the flies devoured them, mosquitoes are on a different scale. We have largely eradicated most of the diseases because of mosquitoes because of DDT, but if you look throughout the rest of the world and especially Africa, mosquitoes are where most deaths come for most people. Most of the plagues, it's either rats or mosquitoes that transmit plagues. We need to recognize this is a really significant step up when God says He is going to send swarms of biting insects "on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses." These flying insects that will sting and bite, Pharaoh is not going to escape them. Remember the concern that Pharaoh first expressed when Moses came to him, is that the Israelites wouldn't work, but now you have mosquitoes and lice crawling all over his servants, they're not going to be very productive. All the people would be being attacked by these insects. "The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies." This isn't that they got a mosquito or two in their house. Most Americans get upset if they are laying in bed at night and they hear one mosquito flying around. That's not what this is, the house is thick with swarms of mosquitoes and flies and insects. This isn't just outside, this is inside their houses. Nobody can escape from these swarms of insects. "And also the ground on which they stand." Think about that, the mosquitoes don't usually go on the ground, but if you have so many mosquitoes in the air, there's a point in where there can't be that many flying and they covered the ground. That's the picture here. There are so many mosquitoes and stinging insects that they are covering the ground so when you walk on them you are walking on the insects. See the scale of the judgement, God is just beginning, this is just the finger of God. This is so much different than anything that anybody in this room has ever experienced. We need to make sure we recognize that, this is more insects than anyone has ever experienced and this was throughout the whole land.

Verses 22-24, "And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the land. I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be." ' ' " And the Lord did so. Thick swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies." The Israelites got all the frogs, the Israelites got all the lice, the Israelites had to dig for water. None of these were actually that destructive, they would be very miserable to have rotting frogs and rotting fish piled all around you and your schedule completely changes because you have to dig along the edge of the river that's not blood, but in the end these things are survivable. Now it starts to become deadly. With the flies it becomes deadly and God in His mercy doesn't send this deadly plague onto the Israelites. "And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen." When the Israelites first came to Egypt, Joseph said he wanted the Israelites to be separated from the Egyptians because he knew what would happen. What happens all the time, you look in America and there's so much talk about how the Hispanics will come in and change all the culture and everything else. You know what? In two generations people don't think of themselves as Hispanic anymore, they think of themselves as Americans. All the

statistics about children and the practice of religion, in two generations it's all gone. People move from California, very liberal, and move to Texas and in two generations they become more like Texans instead of Californians. This is what happens, this is what people are like, they merge with the people around them. Joseph said he didn't want that to happen to Israel so I'm going to put you in the land of Goshen, I'm going to put you with your sheep over there because the Egyptians hate shepherds, they find them an abomination. He successfully separates them from the Egyptians so the Israelites are still seen as a separate people. There's a land of Goshen where the Israelites dwell because Joseph said he wants them to be a separate people. Obviously led by God, but for 250 years they maintain being a separate people even though there is a nation of seventy people when they walk in. Joseph succeeds in keeping them a separate people so that the land of Goshen is known as where the Israelites live in the midst of the land of Egypt. This is the region of the country and it doesn't mean there aren't other people there as well because when the plague of the firstborn son hits, the women go to their neighbors and ask for gold and silver so there are Egyptians in the land. So when we think about this and him setting apart the land of Goshen, there are Egyptians that don't get eaten up by flies, there are Egyptians that don't have mosquitoes in their houses because they live in the land of Goshen. "That no swarms of flies shall be there." The blood affected their ponds, the frogs got into their houses and beds and kneading bowls, the lice were crawling all over them, but when the destruction comes of the flying insects, the stinging insects, it doesn't come to the Israelites or the land where the Israelites are. So it's "in order that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the land." The 'you' there is singular so Moses, through Aaron, is saying this to Pharaoh so he may know this is God. Obviously the magicians have already figured it out, the common people probably have a good idea because it said before that because of the plague the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord and the last plague said specifically that 'thou shalt know', singular so that he would know. God is separating Goshen so that Pharaoh knows. Now remember he knew before, that's what God said, I am going to do this so you know which means Pharaoh knew. This isn't new information to Pharaoh, Pharaoh knows, but he denies the knowledge and pretends like it's not true. Pharaoh is a type of Satan, that's what Satan does, he knows one thing is true, but yet he acts in a different way and pretends it's not. He holds two contradictory views at the same time, Satan is the father of lies and the person he lies to the most is himself and Pharaoh is doing exactly the same thing. This is what we do. We know something to be true but we pretend it's not so we can fulfill the lusts of the flesh and that's what it means to act like Satan, that's what Pharaoh does and we need to make sure we don't do the same. If you know something to be true, do it, don't lie to yourself and pretend like it's not true. That's what Pharaoh did, that's what it looks like to harden your heart. That is the most basic hardening of your heart, to know something is true but deny that it's true so you can do what you want to do. That is hardening your heart, look out for ways that you are hardening your heart. Hypocrisy is central to hardening your heart because it's central to who Satan is, it's central to what Pharaoh is doing. Many ancient cultures believe the gods were specific to a land. One nation would beat another nation in a war and that meant their god beat the other god. God is making clear to Pharaoh that He is Lord there, the gods of Egypt are not ruling over Egypt, God is ruling over Egypt. Pharaoh is going to be made to know this by God saying this part of Egypt, it is not going to happen to even though there will be flies crawling through the rest. "I will make a difference between My people and your people." Again, this is a picture of

separating a people, but that word 'difference' there comes from, I think it's used in three other places and all of them have to do with redemption. This is covenantal language. Remember when God meets Moses before the burning bush he says, I remember that covenant I made with Abraham and so the reason He is separating them out is so everybody knows these are the covenantal people of God, these are the people I am going to redeem and take out because of the covenant that he made. We need to understand that throughout the Bible is separation over and over again. It's so easy for us, we're not of the world but we are in it so we think we shouldn't be separated from the world, but we should be separated from the world. God talks about separation when He separates Noah from the rest of the world. He talks about it when He has Abraham leave his family in Ur. He does it with Jacob and Laban. Repeatedly God makes a separation because this is what the gospel and belief do, it creates a separation. This is what a covenant does, there are people of the covenant and people not of the covenant and we need to make sure you're in the new covenant. The new covenant is not like there's the land of Goshen where all the Israelites were, the people of the Abrahamic covenant. That's not what it looks like now, it's not a land in the Middle East, it's not a land over there where the people dwell. Now we worship where we are in spirit and in truth, but it doesn't mean that Christians are any less separate than the Israelites were when they dwelt in the land of Goshen. We are still to be a separated people, this is still God sending His Son to separate a people unto Himself who will worship in spirit and in truth, a people that will be volunteers, a people that will desire to obey the laws of God and the commandments of God. The sign isn't that we have a land that we dwell in, the sign is that we love our neighbors so we are different than the world. We need to make sure that we recognize that just because we're not in a separate land that God is still separating a people, the covenantal people of God are always separated from the world. Then he says, "Tomorrow this sign shall be." Before Moses gave Pharaoh the honor of choosing when the frogs would disappear, but now God is just decreeing, this is when the flies will come, they will come tomorrow. You can know that it's from the hand of God because that's when the flies will come. "And the Lord did so." God did just as He said, sent "thick swarms of flies". That word translated 'thick' means 'heavy'. The KJV translates it as 'grievous' because they're looking at it as heavy in terms of the damage that's done. The NKJV translates it as 'thick', they're just saying it's heavy with flies, with the stinging insects. Either way, both are true, there's enough there that they are crawling on the ground, that the ground is covered with them, that the houses are filled with swarms of biting insects. It's very heavy destruction. They "came into the house of Pharaoh." The swarms weren't just outside, they are in Pharaoh's house. It didn't matter how many people he had, they couldn't get the flies out. You can use a comb and get rid of lice, but the flies just sweep around and come in the other side. This is a destruction that people can't deal with nearly like they could with even the frogs and lice. The flies are different, they would have been swarming all over Pharaoh and devouring him. And "into his servants' houses." It filled his slave's houses as well. He didn't want to let the people go because he didn't want to lose the benefit of their labor and now he has lost the benefit of his own slave's labor. "And into all the land of Egypt." The whole land was one giant swarm of mosquitoes, think about it that way, for miles and miles. This is what the judgement of God looks like. "The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies." The word translated 'corrupted' when you read that, I'm not sure why they chose that word. I think there are like 164 times that the word is used and like 115 of them it's a form of 'destroyed'. I think destroyed is

the right word here, the land is destroyed already. The people are devoured. It's used in Psalm 78:45, "He sent swarms of flies among them, which devoured them, And frogs, which destroyed them." These plagues are so bad the land is destroyed. They were being consumed. Make sure you fear the judgement of God. Don't fear what man can do, fear the judgement of God.

Applications:

1. Don't think that just because you have received judgement that there's not more judgement that God can do. We can think that something is so terrible and how we have been chastised. God destroyed Egypt and He continues to destroy them six more times. Don't think you can understand the end of the judgement of God. We are in a nation that Romans 1 says is in the judgement of God. I will turn you over so that men do not use the natural use of women, that men go after men. We're a nation that has a plague upon it, but don't think that's the end. Don't think that we should just say, 'Ok, God has done everything He can do. He has turned us over because we don't want to retain God in our knowledge.' No, God can continue to judge, He continues to destroy. God judges nations and even when the judgement seems so bad, He can go around and judge it more. He's the almighty God and too often we presume on His mercy to those who are in rebellion to Him, even contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Woe to you who call evil good and good evil. We should expect far greater woes in America than we have received so far because that's the promise of Scripture.
2. In response to that, don't fear the one who can destroy the body. Fear God who can cast body and soul into hell. In Psalm 78, it explains what they forgot when they were in the wilderness. Verses 40-43, "How often they provoked Him in the wilderness, And grieved Him in the desert! Yes, again and again they tempted God, And limited the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His power: The day when He redeemed them from the enemy, When He worked His signs in Egypt, And His wonders in the field of Zoan." This is what they did, they camped out there in the wilderness and they kept saying, 'There's no water here, there's not meat, why don't we have the leeks and onions?' The reason they kept rebelling against God in the wilderness is that they forgot the power of God. Make sure you don't forget the power of God. That's what it means to fear the One who can cast body and soul into hell rather than just fearing those who can destroy the body. It's to remember, this is what God's judgement looks like. He can do worse than killing us, He can cast us into hell where the worm does not die and the flesh is not consumed. Nobody can do what God can do in terms of judgement so don't worry about what man can do, about the judgement that comes upon if you speak the truth, if you preach the gospel, don't worry about the judgement that comes on a society that rejects God. We look at these plagues and you look at the depth of the plague and right now we're in this worldwide fear-fest because 5,500 people died. That's about the number that get diagnosed with cancer on a given day in America and over three monthss 5,500 people die and the world is in a panic. Make sure you keep these things in perspective, make sure that you keep in perspective of the plagues of God, if He really wanted to judge us what they look like. I'm sure a lot more than 5,500 people died from mosquito bites when

God sent this swarm in a much smaller population than the 7 billion that are in the world today. If God wants to destroy us, God can destroy us. Fear God, don't fear things. Our society is built on selling fear, that's why there is Fox News, that's why there is CNN, that's why there are all these stations, that is what they do, they sell fear. We need to make sure we're not buying it because it's fear of the world instead of fearing God. So remember the plagues of Egypt and in the new covenant God has given us another example we are to remember as well. 1 Kings 9:6-8, "But if you or your sons at all [a]turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will [b]cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?'" We're also supposed to look at the destruction of Israel and the Holocaust and say that this is what God does to a people that profess to be His people but do not obey Him, this is what He does. That's not to say the Nazi's weren't evil, the Nazi's were evil, this is what God does and this is what judgement looks like. It's so easy for us to forget they are to be a proverb and a byword. We don't just have the example of Egypt, we have the example of Israel and Judah. We are supposed to look at those examples and see the same thing. We are supposed to look at them and say, 'Therefore, fear God.' This is what God does to a people who take His name in vain.

3. Don't think God can't allow evil miracles to happen. We've all been raised in a Darwinian environment and a Darwinian environment means that we think everything is physical. Therefore, if there is something miraculous it comes from God, but no, the magicians did miracles, they did evil miracles. I remember one case and some of you were there, where there was a toddler who had serious health problems and he was dramatically getting better, no question that he was dramatically getting better because somebody used a remedy maker on him. A remedy maker had these two metal plates and what you did was put the thing that you thought was harming them on one plate and you put a vial of water on the other plate and you pressed a button and then you would give the water and it would become a medicine according to them and they would put drops of water in food. They were putting drops of water in the food of a two year old and this two year old was being healed. No question that he was being healed. You know what the device did? You pressed a button and it lit a light for thirty seconds. Don't think that there are not still evil miracles going on now. God allows these things to happen, God causes these things to happen because we're not supposed to say the world is all physical, instead we are supposed to say there are powers and principalities in the air. The standard is not, does it work? The standard is obedience to God. Deuteronomy 13:1-3, "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." He causes them to work, to test us whether we are going to say, 'I

don't care, I'm going to obey God.' That's really important for us to remember because this is the charismatic movement. If someone can show a sign that they healed somebody, does it matter if they are committing adultery? This means they are a man of God. That's not what God says, He says He will send people who can actually heal people to test them whether they follow Him or not. Let's make sure that we don't discount that these things are real and really come to pass because God causes them to work because God has set a standard. God has set a standard of what we're supposed to look and how we're supposed to behave. We're not supposed to seek after things of this world. Signs and wonders are never supposed to be about what we base our faith on because you will be misled. Water witching works, people who take sticks and they can walk out. I think where Marc worked, when they were digging they would take a stick and say there's a pipe here so we can't drill here and they would be right. I'm sorry, sticks don't take magnetic fields. They say sticks pick up magnetic fields, but it takes iron to measure a magnetic field, it's not possible to do this with a forked stick. People say it works so it must be righteous. No, it's not given to you, it's not given to us. These things work in the world. It's really important for us to recognize that otherwise signs and wonders will lead us astray, that is the charismatic movement.

4. While we should not desire unrighteous miracles, we should look for the finger of God. The magicians saw the finger of God and they said it came from God. We need to be looking for that and seeing that and not closing our eyes to that. God is doing this so Pharaoh knows that the Lord is ruling in the midst of Egypt, but we're supposed to look for the same things to say that the Lord is ruling in the midst of America. If instead we just say everything is natural processes, nothing is judgement, nothing is from the finger of God, then we won't see that God is Lord, we will think the world is Lord. Just like we're not supposed to seek after unrighteous miracles, we should be seeing the world the way God sees the world.
5. Understand that God sends trials so that we can understand our relationship to Him because in the midst of the trial if it's judgement we won't change. We might scurry around and avoid the things that are judging us but we won't repent. If we are His children, He is a faithful Father and He does chasten us so that we change. The purpose of the chastening is so we change. When you receive chastening you need to examine yourself and ask yourself, 'Do I change with the chastening?' Bad things happen to everybody, but what's your response to bad things? Is it to turn from your sin or is it to deny it? Hebrews 12:10-12, "For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees." Is this what trials produce in your life? Holiness and the fruits of righteousness, peaceable fruits of righteousness, this is what God chastens us with, He is the perfect Father. We spank our children and they don't change. When God does it, He does it effectively, He causes us to be conformed to the image of His Son. He works this in us through His Spirit that convicts us. Do trials change you? Trials should change you.

6. Are we affecting our neighbors? The neighbors of the Israelites were blessed. They didn't get the flies, they didn't get the destruction from the flies, they were protected from the wrath of God because they were in that land. Understand this is what the church is to do, this is what the church effectually does. This is why we are the light of the world, this is why we are the salt of the earth. This is the picture of the Egyptians in the land of Goshen being protected because they were in the land of Goshen. Is that the effect that we are having? Is that the effect that we are having on Youngsville and Wake Forest? This is the effect we are supposed to have. The church shines forth the light and the darkness flees from that light. If for no other reason but to hide their evil deeds, and then it changes the nation and God judges the nation differently. Simple things, going to the abortion clinic and holding up a sign that says 'Babies are murdered here'. This is how we shine forth the light, this is how you protect the nation from judgement. We should ask ourselves where we are failing to shine light into darkness. We are a nation under judgement and the church should be a protection from that judgement when the church is being faithful and declaring truth, when the church is causing darkness to flee. We have a duty to the people around us to call them to righteousness not just to the professed believers. That's one of the ways that we love our neighbors because if you shine forth the light and you cause wickedness to be constrained, Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people." God removes judgement from the land when the church shines forth the light that they should shine forth.
7. God continues to separate His people from the people of the earth. They were separated by where they lived. The ones in Israel, the ones in Judah were separated by where they lived, we're still to be a separate people. What separates us is not from living in a different place, what separates us is that we don't love the world. 1 John 2:15-17, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." This is how we're separate, we don't love the same things the world does, we don't love puffing up our pride, we don't love accruing power, we don't love accruing how much stuff we can get, how much we can feed our flesh. We're separate not because of where we live, we're separate because of how we live and people are to see the separation. God gives us His Spirit so we can be a separate and holy people, a people where righteousness dwells. The world will see that separation. John 15:18-19, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." God still separates His people and God still makes the separation known. Are you hated by the world? If you are separated from the world, the world will hate you. Are you hated by the world? This is what God says is the sign of being separate, not that you will live in the land of Goshen, but that the world hates you because you are not of the world. Are you separate from the world? This is not our work, this is not our strength, this is not our changing ourselves, this is what God does, He

makes a holy people. He sent His Son, He sent His Holy Spirit so there would be a holy people making us separate. Are you separate?

Let's pray. Oh Lord God we do thank You for Your word. Pray that we are a people that respond differently to the world, that we see Your finger in all things, that we see Your actions, that we see it through the lens of Scripture and not through the things the world says. Lord we pray that as our nation undergoes plagues, as it undergoes Your judgements that You make us faithful to shine forth Your light. Let us be like the land of Goshen, a separate people, so the people say that God is truly in the midst of those people, He is truly ruling this land. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, amen.