

The Plagues of Gnats, Flies, and the Death of Egyptian Livestock

Exodus 8:16 – 9:7

Introduction

- In our last passage, Exodus 7:8-8:15, God began to reveal His sovereignty over the might of Egypt.
- In our sermon today, we continue to see the sovereign power of God as He graciously works to teach both Pharaoh and Israel Who is and who is not God.

- God continues to show that the “gods” of Egypt are false and that Pharaoh has no power but what God allows him to have.
- In our last message we ended with **Exodus 8:15**: “But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.”

- In stopping the plague of frogs, God was merciful to Pharaoh; but instead of humbling himself before God in light of God's mercy, the king only further hardened his heart.

Consequently, the Lord sent a third plague and caused the dust of the ground to become gnats.

The Plague of Gnats – 8:16-19

^{ESV} **Exodus 8:16** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt.'" ¹⁷ And they did so. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the

earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt.¹⁸ The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast.¹⁹ Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and

he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

- Pharaoh's court magicians couldn't duplicate this miracle and had to admit it was "the finger of God."
- Notice, even in the face of this evidence, Pharaoh refused to submit to the Lord and only hardened his

- heart even more. Neither God's mercy nor God's power caused him to repent and obey the Word of the Lord.
- The fact that the desert dust became gnats was a judgment against **Set**, the Egyptian god of the desert. Yahweh was so great that He could give life to insignificant dust and use

- that life to punish the people who revered Set.



- God is gracious and long-suffering, but there comes a time when He will no longer tolerate the disobedience and arrogance of defiant sinners. “To the faithful You show Yourself faithful, to the blameless You show Yourself blameless, to the pure You show Yourself pure, but to the crooked You show Yourself shrewd” (Ps. 18:25-26)

- If we walk contrary to Him, He will walk contrary to us (Lev. 26:23–24)

The Plague of Flies 8:20-32

God's Gracious Warning (8:20-21)

- ²⁰ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. ²¹ Or

- else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand.

Explanation

- Again, God warned Pharaoh what was coming but he refused to believe the Word of God and persisted in his disobedience.
- The fact that each plague occurred just as God described it, at the time announced, should have convinced

- Pharaoh and his officers that the God of Israel was in control of these spectacular events.
- Pharaoh's magicians could neither prevent these plagues nor reverse them, nor were they mere coincidences.
- Without a doubt, the hand of the Yahweh, the God of the Israelites,

- was against the land of Egypt.

God's Grace and Protection to the Israelites in Goshen (8:22-23)

²² But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am

the LORD in the midst of the earth. ²³
Thus I will put a division between my
people and your people. Tomorrow this
sign shall happen.“”

- The Lord added a new feature to this plague by announcing that the Jews in the land of Goshen would escape the plague completely.



Ancient Goshen



Alexandria

Damietta

Port Fuad

El-Agamy

Al Mahallah Al Kubra

Izbat Barakah

El-Hamam

Ezbet Fathi

Tanta

Rushdi

Ismailia

Cairo

New Cairo City

Faiyum

Al Qababt

Izbat Sultan Abu Jilayl

Beni Suef

Massara Haggag

Ezbet Abd El-Moneim

Samalut

Minya

Suez

Nekhel

Abu Zenima

Ras Abu Rudeis

Ras Ghareb

St Catherine

El Tor

Sharm el-Sheikh

Petra

Mann elaa

Aqaba

Gulf of Aqaba

Tabuk

Haifa

Irbid

As Suwayda

Netanya

Tel Aviv-Yafo

Ashdod

Gaza

Gaza Strip

West Bank

Jerusalem

Be'er Sheva

Amman

Madaba

Jordan

Karak

Israel

El Dabaa

الاشكندرية

العجمي

عزبة فادي

الحمام

دمياط

المحلة الكبرى

عزبة البركة

الإسماعيلية

القاهرة

مدينة القاهرة الجديدة

الفيوم

القيماط

عزبة سلطان أبو جليل

بنى سويف

محافظة حجاج

عزبة عبد المنعم

سمالوط

منيا

السويس

نخل

أبو زينة

رأس أبو رويس

رأس غارب

سنة كاترين

الطور

شرم الشيخ

بترا

مانع

العقبة

الخليج العقبة

تبوك

حيفا

إربد

السوداء

نتانيا

تل أبيب-ياfo

أشدود

غزة

قطاع غزة

الضفة الغربية

القدس

بئر السبع

عمان

مدبا

الأردن

كراك

إسرائيل

الضفة الغربية

الاشكندرية

العجمي

عزبة فادي

الحمام

دمياط

المحلة الكبرى

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بنى سويف

محافظة حجاج

عزبة عبد المنعم

سمالوط

منيا

السويس

نخل

أبو زينة

رأس أبو رويس

رأس غارب

سنة كاترين

الطور

شرم الشيخ

بترا

مانع

العقبة

الخليج العقبة

تبوك

- Only the God of Israel could control the flight pattern of tiny flies and keep them from entering the land of Goshen.
- God's providential care of Israel was evident in all these seven last plagues, because the Israelites escaped each one of them (vv. 22–23; 9:4, 11 [“all the Egyptians”], 26; 10:6 [“all the Egyptians”], 23; 11:7)



The Plague of Flies

God Keeps His Promises (8:24-32).

²⁴ And the LORD did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants' houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies.

²⁵ Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your

God within the land." ²⁶ But Moses said, "It would not be right to do so, for the offerings we shall sacrifice to the LORD our God are an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us? ²⁷ We must go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD

our God as he tells us." ²⁸ So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go to sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away. Plead for me." ²⁹ Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you and I will plead with the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from

his servants, and from his people, tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD." ³⁰ So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. ³¹ And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not

one remained. ³² But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.

- Some students think that the fly was especially sacred to the Egyptian god **Uatchit**, so the plague was also God's way of dishonoring another one of the false gods of Egypt.

- Pharaoh offers a compromise and tells them to worship Yahweh “in the land.” He thought He could bargain with God through Moses and Aaron.
- Moses knew that some of the animals the Jews would sacrifice were sacred to the Egyptians. The goddess **Hathor** was pictured having the head of a cow, the god **Apis** the head of a bull, and **Khnum** the head of a ram.



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Hathor



Apis



Khnum

- The cow was sacred to the goddess **Isis** and the ram to the god **Amon**. If the Egyptians had seen the Israelites sacrificing these animals to Yahweh, they would have protested violently and probably attacked the Jews who, after all, were nothing but slaves in the land.

ISIS

MOTHER OF THE GODS IN EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY



Isis was the most powerful female deity of Ancient Egyptian mythology.

Her influence spread around the world and still exists in modern-day paganism.

She was the mother goddess, and the goddess of the moon, life, magic, marriage, spells, motherhood, and healing.

Her roles included:

- Mother
- Magical Healer
- Mourner
- Queen
- Protectress
- Mother and Queen of Egyptian Rulers

Amun



- Pharaoh offers a second compromise to let the Israelites go worship their God outside the land if they did not go too far away.
- We know from Pharaoh's response after the plague of flies was removed, Pharaoh was not interested in either the will of God or the welfare of the Israelites. Pharaoh choose to

- hardened his heart all the more.
- Often in Scripture, **Egypt** symbolizes the ungodly world system with its pride and bondage.
- God's people face similar "Egyptian compromises" today as we seek to serve the Lord. The enemy tells us we don't have to be separated from sin because we can serve God "in the

- land,” or we don’t need to get to far away from “Egypt” (the sinful world).
- The people of Israel had to separate themselves a three days’ journey from Egypt in order to please the Lord.
- When God redeems His people, He expect them to abandon the world and its sinful values and pleasures.

Death of Egyptian Livestock 9:1-7

9:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. ² For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, ³ behold, the hand of the LORD will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock

that are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. ⁴ But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that belongs to the people of Israel shall die." ⁵ And the LORD set a time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land." ⁶ And the next day the LORD did this

thing. All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one of the livestock of the people of Israel died. ⁷ And Pharaoh sent, and behold, not one of the livestock of Israel was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

Explanation

- As we study the account of the plagues of Egypt, keep in mind the purposes God was fulfilling through these momentous events.
- First of all, He was manifesting His power to Pharaoh, his officials, and the Egyptian people and proving to

- them that He alone is the true and living God.
- Second, the Lord was exposing the futility of the Egyptian religion and the vanity of the many gods they worshiped, including Pharaoh himself.
- Since there were still livestock in Egypt that were affected by the next two plagues (9:9, 19–21), the word

- “all” in verse 6 evidently focused on livestock “in the field” at the time of this plague. It appears that not all the Egyptian livestock were in the fields at all times. Where the livestock that escaped this plague were located is not told us.
- Perhaps enough time elapsed between these plagues for the

- Egyptians to purchase replacement livestock from the Israelites?
- Gen. 47:6, since the time of the migration to Egypt, the Pharaoh's used Israelite shepherds to care for Pharaoh's flocks. Where? Perhaps some of Pharaoh's herds and flocks were in the land of Goshen which was protected from this plague.

- Lastly, notice that Pharaoh chooses to continue to harden his heart.

Summary

So far we have seen :

- Aaron's rod which turned to a snake that ate the magician's snakes.
- The surface waters in Egypt turned to blood.
- Swarms of frogs.
- Swarms of gnats.

- Swarms of flies.
- The death of the Egyptian livestock that were in the fields of Egypt.
- God separated the land of Goshen from the rest of Egypt in the plagues of the flies and the death of Egyptian livestock.
- In these chapters of Exodus we learn that Yahweh is gracious but always keeps His promises!

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