

Exodus

April 22, 2007

Chapter 8

I. Plague #2: Frogs

Ex 8:1-7

8:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. **2** If you refuse to let them go, I will plague your whole country with frogs. **3** The Nile will teem with frogs. They will come up into your palace and your bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses of your officials and on your people, and into your ovens and kneading troughs. **4** The frogs will go up on you and your people and all your officials.'"

5 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your staff over the streams and canals and ponds, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.'"

6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land. **7** But the magicians did the same things by their secret arts; they also made frogs come up on the land of Egypt. NIV

Verse 2 Heqt was a goddess who looked like a frog. She was associated with fertility, the rising and falling of the Nile, and with childbirth.

Verse 2 How do you think Pharaoh felt when he was threatening with a bunch of frogs?



Verse 7 Presumably, the magicians produced frogs on a very small scale compared to Moses' infestation. If the magicians' scale was bigger, though, they would have added to the overall difficulty rather than reversing it.

II. Restatement of Purpose

Ex 8:8-15

8 Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray to the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD."

9 Moses said to Pharaoh, "I leave to you the honor of setting the time for me to pray for you and your officials and your people that you and your houses may be rid of the frogs, except for those that remain in the Nile."

10 "Tomorrow," Pharaoh said.

Moses replied, "It will be as you say, so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God. **11** The frogs will leave you and your houses, your officials and your people; they will remain only in the Nile."

12 After Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the LORD about the frogs he had brought on Pharaoh. **13** And the LORD did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the courtyards and in the fields. **14** They were piled into heaps, and the land reeked of them. **15** But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said. NIV

Verse 8 Before Pharaoh had not been bothered directly by the blood; he appears to have been affected by the frogs. His people were undoubtedly sick of them. He seems willing to do about anything to get rid of the frogs.

Verse 10 Strangely, Pharaoh says tomorrow, rather than today or now or immediately. When Moses said to set the time, he probably means a future time. Therefore, tomorrow was probably the first possible time. Of course, time would have been less important to Pharaoh than us; also, he might have thought that even tomorrow was impossible given all the frogs.

Verse 15 Once the problem is gone, Pharaoh changes his mind. Notice that Pharaoh hardens his own heart, while in other places God hardens his heart.

Verse 15 In a sense, the Israelites belonged to Pharaoh; God seems to honor this. Once he agrees to let them go, though, and then breaks that promise, God does need to honor it anymore.

III. Plague #3: Gnats

Ex 8:16-19

16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the ground,' and throughout the land of Egypt the dust will become gnats."

17 They did this, and when Aaron stretched out his hand with the staff and struck the dust of the ground, gnats came upon men and animals. All the dust throughout the land of Egypt became gnats. **18** But when the magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, they could not. And the gnats were on men and animals.

19 The magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen, just as the LORD had said. NIV

Verse 16 A word translated “gnat” can be any kind of two-winged biting insects. It can include types of flies or mosquitoes. We cannot be sure which is meant here.

Verse 18 Again, we cannot tell if the magicians did true magic, or if they were merely deceiving others. If it was true magic, then the magicians might be unable to create true life, even extremely simple gnat life. If the magicians were doing their magic via subterfuge, then it would have been very difficult to catch enough gnats to make an impressive display of their release.

Thought: Pharaoh has a dilemma. More and More it is clear that a special power is helping the Hebrews, even if he does not recognize this power as the supreme God. Even his magicians are claiming that it is the “finger of God.” As such, he must realize that there is a very real possibility of the Hebrews no longer continuing being under the dominion of the Egyptians. He would not want this to happen. Therefore, he became more obstinate in allowing any leeway for the Hebrews to act independently of his authority. In a sense, from his viewpoint, we have a battle between the True God and the gods of Egypt, between his authority and those who would “usurp” it from him.

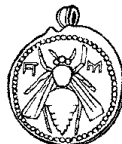
IV. Plague #4: Flies

Ex 8:20-24

20 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning and confront Pharaoh as he goes to the water and say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. 21 If you do not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies on you and your officials, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies, and even the ground where they are. 22 "'But on that day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that I, the LORD, am in this land. 23 I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This miraculous sign will occur tomorrow.'"

24 And the LORD did this. Dense swarms of flies poured into Pharaoh's palace and into the houses of his officials, and throughout Egypt the land was ruined by the flies. NIV

Verse 20 We do not see the end of the third plague of gnats before this one begins. There is some chance that the two overlapped.



Silver Coin of Aradus,
with Figure of a Fly

Verse 20 There are even Egyptian fly gods (e.g. Uatchit and Zimb).

Verse 22 This is the first time that we see God saying that He will deal differently with Goshen, that is the Hebrews.

Verse 23 Basically, this is saying that the LORD will put redemption (i.e. the meaning of the word distinction) between Israelites and the Egyptians. Up to now the Israelites have suffered from the Nile turning to blood, from frogs, and from gnats. Now, they have been redeemed and will not receive the plagues of Egypt. Pharaoh said they could go; God will keep him to his word.

V. More Negotiations, Broken Promises, and Heart Hardening

Ex 8:25-32

25 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God here in the land."

26 But Moses said, "That would not be right. The sacrifices we offer the LORD our God would be detestable to the Egyptians. And if we offer sacrifices that are detestable in their eyes, will they not stone us? 27 We must take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, as he commands us."

28 Pharaoh said, "I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the desert, but you must not go very far. Now pray for me."

29 Moses answered, "As soon as I leave you, I will pray to the LORD, and tomorrow the flies will leave Pharaoh and his officials and his people. Only be sure that Pharaoh does not act deceitfully again by not letting the people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD."

30 Then Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD, 31 and the LORD did what Moses asked: The flies left Pharaoh and his officials and his people; not a fly remained. 32 But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go. NIV

Verse 25 Here we see Pharaoh weakening. He is willing to give the Hebrews part of their demand, but he does not want them to leave his control. Again, he is afraid that they will escape.

Verse 32 The scene repeats with Pharaoh changing his mind when the plague is gone. The man-god is back. The human nature never gives up while we are in this body.

Questions:

- What do you think that Pharaoh is really thinking?
- What do you think that the Egyptians are thinking?
- What do you think that the Israelites are thinking?
- Why does God go through all these maneuvers to free His people when He could have done it so much easier?
- Why does God go through all the maneuvering in our lives to get us where He wants us when He could get us there by fiat so much quicker and easier?