

# Unlocking The Mystery & Treasure Of Our Inheritance

## #24 The Cosmic Battle Begins

### Looking Beyond The Nile, Frogs, Lice and Dung Beetles

Consider: The 9 plagues can be grouped into a series of 3 contests.

1. Plagues 1-3                      Produce Discomfort
2. Plagues 4-6                      Bring greater Damage or Destruction
3. Plagues 7-9                      Produce downright Dread

Note: The longer people resist God's will and refuse to hear His Word, the "louder" He has to speak to them through His judgments.

The Arrangement Of The Plagues Plainly Manifests Divine Order And Design

Note #1: The first plague of each group [#1, 4 & 7] begins "in the morning."

Note #2: The last plague of each group [#3, 6, & 9] comes unannounced and without any warning.

No opportunity to prepare for the disaster, either physically or psychologically

Urquhart: "It was a reminder that God would not always strive; and that warning, repeated but unheeded, will be followed by judgment sudden and terrible."

Note #3:

- |             |                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Plagues 1-3 | The staff is stretched out by Aaron |
| Plagues 4-6 | No staff is used                    |
| Plagues 7-9 | Moses uses his staff                |

Consider: As the plagues progress, Pharaoh's heart becomes increasingly hardened.

When he bargains with Moses for relief, he agrees to grant more and more concessions, but he fails to keep his promises.

Note #4: In plagues 1-3, no mention is made of the Israelites being distinguished from the Egyptians in experiencing the plagues. From plagues 4 -9, a distinction is made or implied.

Note #5: Plagues begin with the magicians imitating the miracles of Moses and Aaron.

Note #6: Then the magicians admit the plagues are due to the finger of God.

Note #7: Finally, the magicians are so afflicted they cannot stand before Moses.

Note #8: Ultimately, all Pharaoh's officials plead with him to release the Israelites before Egypt is completely ruined. [Ex. 10:7]

There is a striking *Introversion* to be observed in connection with the plagues.

1. #1                      the waters of the Nile were turned into blood—the symbol of *death*.  
#10                      there was actual blood-shedding, in the death of all the first-born.
2. #2                      the frogs which are creatures of the night, that is, *of darkness*, came forth;  
#9                      there was actual darkness itself.
3. #3                      the magicians were forced to exclaim, This is the finger of God (8:19).  
#8                      Pharaoh said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God" (10:16).
4. #4                      God *exempted* the land of Goshen—"no swarms of flies shall be there" (8:22).  
#7                      "only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail."
5. #5 & #6              Only the *cattle* of the Egyptians were attacked (see 9:3 and 9:9).

The whole essence of idolatry is the belief that every force in nature has a god that controls it. In Egypt they worshipped the Nile god, the sun god, the cat god, the sheep god, etc.

Key Point #1: The Ten Plagues were designed by God to flip all the laws of nature on end to demonstrate — not just for the Jewish people but for all of humanity, for all of history — that He alone controls all of nature, all of the physical world, and there is nothing outside of His control. If we examine the plagues carefully we can readily see that each one was designed to show God's Control Of All Forces In Nature: water and earth, fire and ice, insects, reptiles and mammals, light and darkness, and finally, life and death.

- a. We have hail — which should be frozen — that is on fire.
- b. We have darkness so dense no one can see or move.
- c. Things that happened to Egyptians did not happen to Jews. All supernatural!

Key Point #2: Ten times God, through Moses, allows Pharaoh to change his mind, repent, and turn to the one true God. Each time the severity of the plagues increases as a consequence of disobedience to His request.

Key Point #3: Ten times Pharaoh, because of pride, refuses and receives "judgments" through the plagues, pronounced upon his head from Moses.

Key Point #4: If Pharaoh submitted to the God of the Hebrews, he could lose his divine status with the Egyptians. It could cost him his throne and threaten his position as Pharaoh.

Key Point #5: Satan is presently the prince and power of the air. (Luke 4: 5-6) A study of the 10 plagues reveal Satan's power is limited. His power is within the constraints of God.

Plague #1 The Nile Turned Into Blood - Ex. 7:14-25 So the LORD said to Moses:

"Pharaoh's heart *is* hard; he refuses to let the people go. <sup>15</sup> Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him;

1. God told Moses to go to the bank of the river Nile in the morning. God knows that the Pharaoh would be there (Ex 7:14-15). Why would the Pharaoh visit the Nile in the morning? He was probably praying to the god of River Nile (Hapi) to protect the land.
  - a. God wanted the Pharaoh to understand the God who controls River Nile is actually the God of the Hebrews.

Ex. 7:19 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *buckets of wood* and *pitchers of stone*.'"

2. God miraculously changed the Nile River to BLOOD, killing the fish, making the water stink and preventing the Egyptians from drinking it.
  - a. This was done in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants.

## Plague #1 God Declared Judgment Against At Least 9 Separate Deities

### A. The Nile River

1. The Nile was worshiped as the single most important element needed for the ongoing success of the culture, economy and paganism of the Egyptian people. Could not live without the Nile!

a. The Nile was considered the "life blood" of Egypt.

b. It was the channel from life to death and the afterlife.

c. The annual flooding of the Nile brought new life and sustenance to over 1,000 miles of Egyptian-dominated settlements.

d. It was perceived by the Egyptians as the best evidence the gods of the Nile were pleased.

2. When God challenged the welfare and divinity of the Nile River, He struck a blow at the core of the Egyptian's faith and pantheon.

B. The fearsome ram-headed god, Khnum, was supposed to protect the Nile from the contamination of human blood and other impurities.

1. Nile waters were considered sacred. Blood was an abhorrence to the Egyptians.

C. Khnum consorted with Sati, goddess of Elephantine, who was the dispenser and protector of the cool waters.

D. The Nile was possessed by the spirit of Hapi, god of the Nile River, responsible for the annual flooding which brought the abundant fertility of the land.

E. The Nile was believed to be the bloodstream or divine "life flow" of Osiris, who was reborn each year when the river flooded. Hapi was the guardian of the lungs of the deceased Osiris.

Note: The fish of the Nile were considered sacred and were protected by 2 goddesses.

F. Hathor - goddess of the sky and queen of heaven who protected the small fish

G. Neith - goddess of war who protected the large fish

H. Sobek - evil god of the Nile with a crocodile head [may have been who Pharaoh wanted to offer the Hebrew male babies to]

I. Isis - goddess of the Nile

Key Point #1: The supernatural pollution of the waters was a humiliation to the gods the Egyptians worshiped.

Key Point #2: Pharaoh's magicians were able to imitate this miracle.

Ex. 7:22 Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments.

Is Satan's power the same as God's power? It was God who wanted the River Nile turned into blood; they could only reproduce the miracle and not reverse it.

The devil's power is limited by the will of God.

Key Point #3 The Egyptian gods were found to be inferior and under God's authority.

Ex. 7:17 Pharaoh was told, "By this you will know that I am the LORD."

Ex. 7:23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house.

Note: An interval of "seven days" (7:25) separated the second plague from the first.

Full opportunity was thus given to Pharaoh to repent, before God acted in judgment again.

## Plague #2 - The Frogs - Ex. 8:1-15

1. This was a judgment against Heqet, the frog-headed [woman's body] goddess of birth.
  - a. From her nostrils, came the breath of life that animated the bodies of those created by her husband, the great god, Khnum, from the dust of the earth.  
"Mortal clay would be breathless and inanimate without the goddess Heqet."
  - b. The waters of nourishment and breath of life flowed from Heqet's mouth.
2. Escape was impossible! The frogs not only "covered the land of Egypt" but they invaded the homes of the Egyptians, entered their bed-chambers, and defiled their cooking-utensils.
  - a. Pharaoh could not order the Hebrew slaves to destroy and haul away the frogs. Since the frogs came out of the sacred Nile, frogs were sacred and it was a capital offence to kill a frog.  
Ex. 8:7 "And the magicians did so with their enchantments and BROUGHT FORTH FROGS upon the land of Egypt."
3. The magicians could not drive the frogs away, nor could they erect any barriers against their encroachments. They could not go against God's will. They could only bring more frogs.
  - a. Prince of this world: Satan is unable to exterminate the evil which he has brought into God's creation. He is unable to check its progress. All he can do is multiply wickedness.
4. Pharaoh admitted the frogs had been sent by the LORD.
5. Moses gave Pharaoh the option of naming the time for the frogs to be removed.
  - a. He chose the next day probably hoping they would go away by themselves before the appointed time thus showing Moses and his God were not in control.
6. The frogs died, placed in heaps, and the land stank.
  - a. God forced the people to carry away the dead bodies and dispose of them.
  - b. The stench created by dead frogs all over the land "symbolized the stench in the nostrils of God of all false religion and idols" that people place in their life over God and His rightful place and the worship of Him.

## Plague #3 - The Gnats - Lice - Ex. 8:16-19 - Unannounced & NO Warning

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.'" <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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.

1. Judgment on Set, god of the desert; Geb, god of the earth
2. A single louse would render an Egyptian priest unclean and not able to perform his duties.
3. The lice seem to symbolize the uncleanness of the Egyptians in their sin, and all unbelievers in their sin, regardless of how religious they may be.
4. Pharaoh was considered "god incarnate." Dust of Egypt was considered "holy ground."  
It was a slap in the face for God to transform sacred dust into lice.

5. Magic and sorcery played a large part in ancient Egypt. Pharaoh summoned his magicians to try to replicate the miracles God had performed through Moses and Aaron (Exodus 7:11). By "secret arts", or witchcraft, the magicians managed to replicate some of the amazing feats. But they failed completely at trying to turn dust into lice or gnats. Power of Satan is limited!
6. Superiority of God -Only God has the ability to create life out of the dust of the earth. This is a fact to which atheists and skeptics even today sadly cover their eyes.

Plague #4: SWARMS - Exodus 8:20-32 - In The Morning - God Gave A Warning

[Note: of flies is not in the original; LXX = dog fly]

Those Affected: Pharaoh, his servants, his people, his houses, houses of Egyptians, the ground  
Ex. 8:22-23 "And I will sever [set apart] in that day [that Pharaoh refuses] 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. And I will put a division between my people and thy people: tomorrow shall this sign be."

Note: Now there will be discrimination between the Egyptians and the Israelites.

1st plague delivered directly from God, without the use of the rods of Moses and Aaron.

1. Judgment on Uatchit, [Egyptian equivalent of Baalzebub = evil god and "lord of the flies."]  
  - a. He was the producer of flies and they thought he controlled them.
  - b. According to the *Grimorium Verum* and *Grand Grimoire* {18<sup>th</sup> century texts on magic}, Baalzebub manifested himself in the image of a huge fly when he was summoned by sorcerers.
2. The Scarabs: The word is `arob, a swarm, possibly suggesting incessant motion.  
  - a. Khepri, god of rebirth, sunrise and the scarab.
  - b. The deification of the scarab beetle is still conspicuous in the jewelry and artifacts celebrating ancient Egypt. Some of the giant scarabs were even accorded the honor of mummification and entombment with the Pharaohs.
  - c. The scarab is actually a dung beetle about the size of a nickel and feeds on dung in the fields or the side of the road. When animals defecate, these insects swarm from their holes in the ground and collect their provender for future meals by forming it into round balls about the size of golf balls, which they roll across the ground to their underground dwellings.
  - d. Since they seemed to "come from nowhere, these beetles became associated with creation.
  - e. The plague of swarms of scarabs, with mandibles that could saw through wood, and destructive qualities worse than termites, must have caused extreme consternation since they were so venerated and thus were not to be interfered with!

You will see villages living on dung hills in Cairo today!

This is not a typical "third world" country: it once ruled the known world!

3. Pharaoh called Moses, pleaded for cessation and is willing to negotiate.  
  - a. Israelites can have time off to worship their God, but only if they stay in the land of Egypt.
  - b. When Moses refused this offer, Pharaoh countered with an offer that they could "go into the desert, but not very far" (8:28).
  - c. Moses left, but with the warning there must be no more deceit on Pharaoh's part regarding his promise to let Israel go.

d. But when the insects were gone, so was Pharaoh's motivation to let Israel go. God doesn't compromise: judgment continues.

*Looking Beyond The Nile, Frogs, Lice and Dung Beetles*  
God Calls Me To Come Out Of Egypt - Bondage:

1. Nile River - Egyptians believed they could not live without the Nile River and the favor of its god, Hapi. It was the channel from life to death and afterlife; a perpetual source of sustenance. Question: What is my "Nile River" - a person, thing, behavior, activity that I think I cannot live without? What is my strongest affection? What is competing with God's best for me? What is preventing me from pursuing a growing, thriving relationship with my Savior? Of being transformed into His image and living His abundant life? What is causing me to drag my feet to come out of that bondage? The excuse that I cannot live without my Nile is a mental god I have exalted against God. To provoke us to "exodus," God must plague our Nile.

Turning The Nile Into Blood: What once brought life was now bringing death and disgust

1. God contaminates my Nile. It causes me problems, stress and distress.

2. God said He alone would be our river of life, our supreme lifeline and perpetual sustenance.

Jer. 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, *and* they have hewn for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns which cannot hold water.

2. Frogs - Egyptians pedestaled the frog as an icon of new life.

a. Frogs have a dual identity; two lives or two modes of existence.

b. Spend their young life as a plant-eating aquatic tadpole; their adult life as a land carnivore.

c. God caused an overwhelming invasion of frogs. The almighty frog Egypt once admired for its fertility was now a repulsive mini-monster debilitating the most basic routines.

d. Pharaoh could no longer stand it so he called Moses who told Pharaoh: "I will ask God to take the frogs out of the land. You tell men when shall God remove the frogs?"

Pharaoh: Wait until tomorrow. Give me one more night with the frogs!

Application: Our desire to hang on to some of our "old self" causes perpetual double-mindedness.

Our lack of full surrender is a mental god. This causes me to have 2 modes of existence.

We become double-minded: am I going to be content where I am spiritually or am I willing for absolute surrender and spiritual maturity?

1. God plagues my "frog excuse." He lets me experience, in overwhelming measure, the consequences of being wishy-washy about His will.

James 1:6-8 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> *he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James 4:8-10 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

2. Don't be an amphibian. Have only 1 mode of existence. Who wants to be a tadpole forever, swimming restlessly in unstable waters?

3. Lice - Geb - god of the dust of the earth

a. His name is derived from gebeb = weak or lame one. He is exposed as a weakling demon-god.

b. He could not produce or remove the bugs.

c. Man is inherently weak. God will use a "lice plague" to reveal our weakness.

"Lice" can defeat, overcome and embarrass us.

d. When I have my fill of unnecessary defeat by fleas I should be whipping, I will look earnestly to the Mighty One to find His strength in me.

e. Moses, 10 spies, Gideon and Saul all struggled with weakness.

Moses and Gideon became powerful in Yahweh, the strong One.

The 10 spies and Saul remained weak through their "mental geb."

Application: 1. We receive His strength as we humble ourselves and surrender to our Lord.

2. Step out in faith and trust Him. Fear and weakness cannot stand in the face of faith in Him.

Judges 6:25-32 -Gideon found His strength in the Lord by destroying Baal's altar and Asherah's pole. These were risky acts of obedience, but THEN he was made mighty to face the Midianites.

Tozer: God is looking for people through whom He can do the impossible.

What a pity we plan to do only the things we can do by ourselves.

4. Swarms - Khepri - god of Rebirth & Renewal

a. Egyptians believed scarab beetles were created and recreated miraculously from dung.

Application:

a. How many Christians spend much of their lives blaming their personality, traits, behavior, etc. on the "dung" of the past?

b. Just like the scarab beetle, we have managed to emerge from the dung and create a decent life. Remember: The beetles never permanently leave the dung.

c. Many Christians function above and around the "dung" in their lives, but they never completely and permanently leave it. They created the next generation in the same dung.

d. God desires and provides His life, the abundant life, to be lived in and through us.

[John 10:10]

e. He has provided us with an inheritance we cannot even begin to imagine. I Cor. 2:9

f. We must not continue to use our "dung" as an excuse to live in defeat.

God will "plague" it until we realize we must resolve it and leave it forever.

g. Claim your new identity of who you are in Jesus Christ. Get into His Word. He promises by the power of the Holy Spirit and the transforming power of the Word of God to change you into the image of Jesus Christ who will live His victorious, abundant life in you and through you.