

Exodus Chapter 8

Verses 1-15

Note the concept of Pharaoh's response (in verse 2), as God says: "It thou refuse to let them go".

The fact the "the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs" certainly would not have been a blessing to the Egyptians.

The goddess Heket (the spouse of the god Khnum), who is depicted in the form of a woman with a frog's head, was held to blow the breath of life into the nostrils of the bodies that her husband fashioned (Gen. 2:7), on the potter's wheel from the dust of the earth.

Genesis intends to convey that Israel's God alone rules the world, and that He alone bestows on His creatures, according to His will, the power of fertility.

These frogs, considered by the Egyptians a symbol of fertility, could be transformed, if God so desired, from a token of blessing to one of blight.

Moses allowed Pharaoh to pick the time when the frogs should be removed as he said: "Glory over me: when shall I entreat for thee."

The sense of this language is that Moses allowed Pharaoh the choice of the time when Moses would intercede for him.

The God would remove the frogs.

But notice Pharaoh's response: "When Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them" (8:32; 9:34).

All of this was "as the LORD had said (4:21; 7:4).

Exodus 8:1 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

"Go unto Pharaoh":

The warning for the second plague was delivered to Pharaoh, presumably at his palace.

Warnings for the fifth (9:1), and eighth (10:1), plagues also occurred at the palace.

Exodus 8:2 "And if thou refuse to let [them] go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs:"

"Smite":

The verb God used also meant “to plague”.

Various terms (literally from the Hebrew), namely “plagues” (9:14), “strike” (12:13), and “pestilence” (9:3, 15), were employed to impress them with the severity of what was happening in Egypt.

“Frogs”:

That Egyptians favored frogs was seen in the wearing of amulets in the shape of a frog and in the prohibition against intentionally killing frogs, which were considered sacred animals.

The croaking of frogs from the river and pools of water signaled to farmers that the gods who controlled the Nile’s flooding and receding had once again made the land fertile.

The god Hapi was venerated on this occasion because he had caused rich soil deposits to come downstream.

Further, the frog was the representation, the image, of the goddess Heket, the wife of the god Khnum, and the symbol of resurrection and fertility.

The presence of frogs in such abundance, all over everywhere outside and inside the houses (verse 3, 13), however, brought only frustration, dismay and much discomfort, rather than the normal signal that the fields were ready for cultivating and harvesting.

One of the false gods of Egypt was a frog-headed goddess called Heket.

This frog-headed deity was worshipped, because they believe it had creative power.

We will see in this massive overabundance of frogs, the tearing down of the worship of frogs.

Animals of all kinds were worshipped in Egypt, and even though there were so many frogs, they were forbidden to kill them.

Here, we see the request of Moses and Aaron for Pharaoh to let the people go; and the threat of this great plague of frogs, if he didn’t.

These plagues God brought upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians were to discredit their false gods, as we said before.

In (verse 3), we see just how severe this abundance of frogs was.

Exodus 8:3 "And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading troughs:"

The river Nile; and though water, and watery places, naturally produce these creatures, yet not in such vast quantities as to cover a whole country, and one so large as Egypt, and this done at once, immediately.

For they were all produced instantaneously, and in one day were spread all over the nation, and removed the next: and besides what follows is equally miraculous.

"Which shall go up and come into thine house":

Which though they may come up out of rivers, and be upon the banks and the meadows adjacent, yet are never known to come into houses, and especially into bedchambers and other places that were mentioned.

Being not a bold but timorous creature, and shuns the sight and company of men.

But these came even into the royal palace, nor could his guards keep them out.

"And into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed":

And by their leaping upon him, and croaking in his ears, disturb his rest.

And into the house of thy servants":

And upon thy people both nobles and common people, and not only get into their houses, but upon their persons.

On their hands when they about their business, and on their laps, and into their bosoms, as they sat.

This must have been very offensive and troublesome to them, what with their ugly shape, croaking noise and filthy smell, and the disagreeable touch of them, leaping on them.

And even upon their food, and all vessels used for the same, which must make it very nauseous and distasteful to them.

"And into thy ovens":

Where they baked their bread, and would be now hindered from the use of them:

"And into thy kneading troughs":

Where they kneaded their dough, and made it into loaves, and prepared it for the oven.

Or the "dough" itself, which they leaped upon and licked, and made it loathsome for use.

Exodus 8:4 "And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants."

They did not only invade their houses, but their persons, armed as they were with a divine commission and power.

“And upon thy people”:

Not upon the Israelites, whom God here exempts from the number of Pharaoh’s people and subjects, including all of their servants.

The Pharaoh had full warning about how bad this plague would be before it happened.

There would be frogs everywhere, even in the food.

He could repent, but he would not.

Exodus 8:5 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt."

By a secret impulse upon his mind, for he was now in the presence of Pharaoh, who had refused to let Israel go.

"Say unto Aaron, stretch forth thy hand with thy rod":

For Aaron carried the rod, and he was the minister of Moses, who was appointed a god to him. And he was to speak and to do whatever he ordered him from the LORD.

"Over the streams, over the rivers and over the ponds":

The seven streams of the river of Nile, and over the canals cut out of it, and over all places where there was a collection of water for any use for man or beast.

"And cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt":

Out of the streams, rivers, and ponds, immediately.

Here again, we see this rod that God had given Moses, used to bring this plague of frogs.

Some of the writers try to explain where the frogs came from, but they came from God.

This again, was a miracle that God brought.

Moses, Aaron and the rod were all used of God to bring this about.

Exodus 8:6 "And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt."

That is, towards the waters of the Nile, and towards all places where any water was; for it was not possible he could stretch out his hand over all the waters that were in every place.

"And the frogs came and covered the land of Egypt":

They came up at once, and in such multitudes everywhere, that the whole land was full of them.

This was done on the twenty fifth of Adar, or February, the same day the former plague ceased; that Moses by his rod produced frogs, locusts, and lice.

At first the inhabitants killed them, and keeping their houses shut, bore it patiently some time.

But when it signified nothing, and their household goods were covered with them, and they found them boiled and roasted with their food, and lay in such heaps that they could not tread for them.

They were so distressed with the smell of the dead ones, they forsook their country.

We see here that just as God had warned, the frogs came when Aaron stretched out Moses' rod over the rivers.

Exodus 8:7 "And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt."

"The magicians did so":

Once again, instead of reversing the plague, the magicians in demonstrating the power of their secret arts only appeared to increase the frog population to the added discomfort of the people.

Their power was not sufficient enough to do more than play "copycat."

That the magicians could duplicate but not eradicate the problem was, however, sufficient to solidify royal stubbornness.

Here again we see Pharaoh's magicians brought frogs as well.

Verses 8-15

Here, a common pattern begins: the pestilence comes; the pain is felt; Pharaoh seeks "relief" and promises to "let the people go"; the plague is dismissed; and Pharaoh resists God's grace once again (see 3:19; 4:21; 5:2; 7:3, 13-14).

Exodus 8:8 "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD."

“Entreat the LORD”:

Using the LORD’s name and begging for relief through His intervention was more a point in negotiation and not a personal or official recognition of Israel’s LORD.

This unbelievable overflow of frogs had gotten to the Pharaoh, and he said that he would let the Hebrews go and worship.

Here was the first weakening of Pharaoh and he had gone so far as to promise then to let the people go.

This was a terrible predicament the Egyptians were in.

They could not kill these frogs because they were objects of worship to them.

Exodus 8:9 "And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, [that] they may remain in the river only?"

“May remain in the river only”:

A specific detail like this in Moses’ question indicates that the Nile and the waters had returned to normal and again continued to support life.

Here we see Moses asking Pharaoh, how soon he would let the children go?

Then Moses could go back and speak to God to kill the frogs in the houses and get the rest to congregate in the rivers.

It seems Pharaoh had more than one house and the frogs were in all of them.

Exodus 8:10 "And he said, Tomorrow. And he said, [Be it] according to thy word: that thou mayest know that [there is] none like unto the LORD our God."

“Tomorrow”:

Having been granted the privilege to set the time when the LORD would answer Moses’ prayer for relief, Pharaoh requested a cessation only on the next day.

Presumably he hoped something else would happen before then so that he would not have to acknowledge the LORD’s power in halting the plague, nor be obligated to Moses and his God.

But God answered the prayer of Moses, and Pharaoh remained obstinate (verse 15).

This first "he" here was Pharaoh answering Moses' question from verse 9, and he said "tomorrow".

The second "he" was Moses.

Moses was, in essence, telling Pharaoh to recognize the supremacy of Almighty God.

Moses accepted the date that the Pharaoh had set.

Exodus 8:11 "And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only."

Signifying there should be a full and clear riddance of them.

"They shall remain in the river only":

The River Nile.

This was Moses speaking here, telling Pharaoh that as he wished, it would be done.

God's desire in this punishment, as in all punishment, was to cause men to repent.

It seemed as though this was the case here that Pharaoh had repented.

Exodus 8:12 "And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh."

To the place where they used to pray to the LORD, and meet with him, and receive messages from him; this they did the same day the plague was inflicted, the day before the morrow came when the frogs were to be removed.

"And Moses cried unto the LORD":

Prayed unto him with great fervency, and with a loud voice, most fervently entreating that the frogs might be removed on the morrow, as he had promised, that so he might not be covered with shame and confusion before Pharaoh.

His faith of the miracle being wrought did not hinder the use of prayer to God for it.

"Because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh":

As an army: or "put upon" him, as a judgment on him.

Or rather the sense is, as it may be rendered, "because of the business of the frogs, which he had proposed or promised to Pharaoh".

That is, for the taking of them away, he had proposed to Pharaoh to fix the time when he should entreat the LORD for the removal of them; and he having fixed on the next day.

Moses promised it should be done according to his word; and now he is persistent with the LORD, that it may be done as he had promised.

Note here, that Moses promised Pharaoh that the plague of the frogs would be over, even before he prayed to God.

Moses knew the purpose of the frogs and knew that God had accomplished what He set out to do with them.

Moses knew in his heart that God would do this.

Exodus 8:13 "And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields."

God, who knew the heart of Pharaoh, and its insincerity, or at any rate its changefulness, took the plague of frogs away in a manner that made its removal almost as bad as its continuance.

The frogs did not return into the river; neither were they devoured by flights of cranes or large wading birds, they simply died.

God could as easily have dissolved them into dust, but he would have them to lie dead before their eyes, as a token that they were real frogs and no illusion, and as a testimony of his wonderful power.

Exodus 8:14 "And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank."

Swept them up, and laid them in heaps out of the way.

They died where they were in thousands and tens of thousands, so that they had to be "gathered upon heaps".

"And the land stank":

With the stench of the dead frogs, which was another proof and evidence of the reality of the miracle; and that dead frogs will cause such an ill smell appears from the above account of what befell the inhabitants of Paonia and Dardania, unless that should be the same with this, only the names of places and some circumstances altered (see Exodus 8:16).

In the great plague of frogs mentioned by Eustathius (see the comment on Exodus 8:1-4), it was the stench of the frogs after they were dead which caused the people to quit their country.

Probably this was a drastic understatement.

I am sure the odor from that many dead frogs was overwhelming.

The LORD did not let Moses down; He did exactly as Moses promised Pharaoh.

The relief from the frogs was just in part, because this terrible odor remained for a while.

Exodus 8:15 "But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said."

Hitherto Pharaoh's nature had not been impressed; his heart had remained dull, callous, and hard.

Now an impression had been made (Exodus 8:8), and he must have yielded, if he had not called in his own will to remove it.

Herein was his great guilt. (See the comment on Exodus 4:21).

"And hearkened not unto them":

To Moses and Aaron, to let the children of Israel go, as they had required, and he had promised.

"As the LORD had said":

Had foretold that he would not hearken to them, nor let Israel go as yet.

Here we see a liar or a double-minded man in Pharaoh.

He had no intention of letting them go.

This Pharaoh was a false god himself.

He didn't believe in God.

Therefore, he had no morals; so a lie was nothing to him.

It is terribly dangerous to play games with God.

A man like Pharaoh was wishy-washy.

He was unstable in all his ways.

He lied when he said he had chosen God.

Woe be to Pharaoh and his people.

Verses 16-19

For “dust” to be turned to “lice” or gnats (the Hebrew word describes either one), was particularly awful for the scrupulously clean Egyptians.

With this plague, Pharaoh’s magicians could no longer duplicate the LORD’s signs, and finally they acknowledge what Pharaoh would not: “This is the finger of God”.

Exodus 8:16 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt."

The third plague, like the sixth and ninth, concludes a cycle and comes unannounced as a special judgment for failing to heed the others.

This was the first plague that the magicians could not reproduce, and they were forced to admit that “This is the finger of God,” an expression conveying the miraculous power of God (as in Exodus 31:18; Deut. 9:10; Psalm 8:3), and a comparison of (Luke 11:20 with Matthew 12:28).

“Lice”:

The Hebrew term is preferably taken to designate tiny, stinging insects barely visible to the naked eye.

Those priests, who fastidiously kept themselves religiously pure by frequent washing and by shaving off body hair, were afflicted and rendered impure in their duties.

The word that was translated from "ken", some believe means mosquitoes.

But it really doesn't matter whether this was an overwhelming attack of mosquitoes or lice.

The results were the same.

They brought disease and great discomfort.

It was interesting that God made them of the sand as he made man from the dust of the earth.

God can turn any type of matter into any form He desires.

He is God.

Here we see that God gave no warning to Pharaoh.

It was automatic punishment for Pharaoh's lies.

Exodus 8:17 "And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt."

"All the dust of the land ... throughout all the land":

The record stresses by its repetition of "all" and "land" the tremendous extent and severity of this pestilence.

We see literally billions of these pests.

God could have brought these lice, or mosquitoes, whichever one they were, without Aaron stretching the rod over the sand.

This was a show for Pharaoh, so that he would know for sure that this plague came from the one true God.

There is nothing worse for man or beast than either of these pests.

These pests have been known to drive livestock mad, and even cause their death.

With this many, there would be total torment for the people as well.

When it said "all the dust of the land became lice", you can see the horribly terrifying amount of pests turned loose all over Egypt.

Exodus 8:18 "And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast."

These lice were produced out of the dust of the earth; out of any part of the creation God can fetch a scourge, with which to correct those who rebel against him.

Even the dust of the earth obeys him.

These lice were very troublesome, as well as disgraceful to the Egyptians, whose priests were obliged to take many pains that no vermin ever should be found about them.

All the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, had reference to their national crimes, or were rendered particularly severe by their customs.

The magicians attempted to imitate it, but they could not.

It forced them to confess, "This is the finger of God"!

The check and restraint put upon us needs be from a Divine power.

Sooner or later God will force even his enemies to acknowledge his own power.

Pharaoh, notwithstanding this, was more and more obstinate.

Here we see the magicians were stumped, they could not do this.

Magicians are really sleight of hand people.

As in the blood, they probably had some pill they put in the water to make it appear to be blood.

Magicians really have very little power and the power they do have comes from Satan, not God.

Throughout these two plagues we have read about in these lessons, God was trying to get the attention of Pharaoh and his people, and make them realize who He was and that they must obey Him.

So far it seemed to have caused Pharaoh to get more and more calloused.

Tragedy does one of two things.

It will either cause you to come closer to God or it will drive you from Him.

Here, Pharaoh was further away.

The more he ran from God the harder his heart became.

As I said before, it was not important whether this was literal lice or whether, as some believe, it was mosquitos, the end result was the same.

This was a terrible pestilence on Pharaoh, his people, his livestock and his land.

Notice Pharaoh brought this upon himself when he lied to God.

Exodus Chapter 8 Questions

1. In verse 2, God told Moses to tell Pharaoh to let the people go, and if they would not, God would bring a plague of what?
2. What did the frog have to do with false gods in Egypt?
3. What power did they believe this goddess had?
4. Why could not the Egyptians destroy the frogs?
5. What was the purpose of the plagues?

6. Where were the frogs to be?
7. How did this affect the food?
8. What was Aaron to do to bring the plague?
9. What and whom did God use to bring the plague about?
10. What did the magicians do?
11. When the frogs came, what did Pharaoh do?
12. What did he promise?
13. When did Pharaoh promise?
14. What did Moses do in behalf of Pharaoh?
15. What had Moses already promised Pharaoh?
16. Did God honor Moses' promise?
17. Moses told Pharaoh to do what?
18. What was this punishment for?
19. What happened to the frogs in the houses?
20. What did the people do with them?
21. What did this cause in the land?
22. What did Pharaoh do, when the plague of frogs was over?
23. What two things do we see in Pharaoh?
24. Who was Pharaoh, that made him think he could get away with this?
25. Did God give warning of the next plague?
26. What was the next plague?
27. What two things did this pestilence bring?
28. What did God make them of?
29. What shows the magnitude of them?
30. Why did God use Aaron and Moses, when He could bring the plague without their assistance?

31. Were the magicians able to do this?
32. Who are magicians?
33. Do they really have power? Explain.
34. Tragedy will either _____ you closer to God, or _____ you _____.
35. Who actually caused this plague of lice?
36. How?