

# CHAPTER 8

Three more of the plagues of Egypt are related in this chapter,

## **I.** That of the frogs, which is,

- 1.** Threatened (v. 1-4).
- 2.** Inflicted (v. 5, 6).
- 3.** Mimicked by the magicians (v. 7).
- 4.** Removed, at the humble request of Pharaoh (v. 8-14), who yet hardens his heart, and, notwithstanding his promise while the plague was upon him (v. 8), refuses to let Israel go (v. 15).

## **II.** The plague of lice (v. 16, 17), by which,

- 1.** The magicians were baffled (v. 18, 19), and yet,
- 2.** Pharaoh was hardened (v. 19).

## **III.** That of flies.

- 1.** Pharaoh is warned of it before (v. 20, 21), and told that the land of Goshen should be exempt from this plague (v. 22, 23).
- 2.** The plague is brought (v. 24).
- 3.** Pharaoh treats with Moses about the release of Israel, and humbles himself (v. 25-29).
- 4.** The plague is thereupon removed (v. 31), and Pharaoh's heart hardened (v. 32).

## **EXODUS 8:1-15**

### **THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT**

Pharaoh is here first threatened and then plagued with frogs, as afterwards, in this chapter, with lice and flies, little despicable inconsiderable animals, and yet by their vast numbers rendered sore plagues to the Egyptians. God could have plagued them with lions, or bears, or wolves, or with vultures or other birds of prey; but he chose to do it by these contemptible instruments.

**1.** That he might magnify his own power. He is Lord of the hosts of the whole creation, has them all at his beck, and makes what use he pleases of them. Some have thought that the power of God is shown as much in the

making of an ant as in the making of an elephant; so is his providence in serving his own purposes by the least creatures as effectually as by the strongest, that the excellency of the power, in judgment as well as mercy, may be of God, and not of the creature. See what reason we have to stand in awe of this God, who, when he pleases, can arm the smallest parts of the creation against us. If God be our enemy, all the creatures are at war with us.

**2.** That he might humble Pharaoh's pride, and chastise his insolence. What a mortification must it needs be to this haughty monarch to see himself brought to his knees, and forced to submit, by such despicable means! Every child is, ordinarily, able to deal with those invaders, and can triumph over them; yet now so numerous were their troops, and so vigorous their assaults, that Pharaoh, with all his chariots and horsemen, could make no head against them. Thus he *poureth contempt upon princes* that offer contempt to him and his sovereignty, and makes those who will not own him above them to know that, when he pleases, he can make the meanest creature to insult them and trample upon them. As to the plague of frogs we may observe,

**I.** How it was threatened. Moses, no doubt, attended the divine Majesty daily for fresh instructions, and (perhaps while the river was yet blood) he is here directed to give notice to Pharaoh of another judgment coming upon him, in case he continue obstinate: *If thou refuse to let them go*, it is at thy peril, v. 1, 2. Note, God does not punish men for sin unless they persist in it. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword* (<sup>407</sup>Psalm 7:12), which implies favour *if he turn*. So here, *If thou refuse, I will smite thy borders*, intimating that if Pharaoh complied the controversy should immediately be dropped. The plague threatened, in case of refusal, was formidably extensive. Frogs were to make such an inroad upon them as should make them uneasy in their houses, in their beds, and at their tables; they should not be able to eat, nor drink, nor sleep in quietness, but, wherever they were, should be infested by them, v. 3, 4. Note, 1. God's curse upon a man will pursue him wherever he goes, and lie heavily upon him whatever he does. See <sup>4586</sup>Deuteronomy 28:16, etc.

**2.** There is no avoiding divine judgments when they invade with commission.

**II.** How it was inflicted. Pharaoh not regarding the alarm, nor being at all inclined to yield to the summons, Aaron is ordered to draw out the forces, and with his outstretched arm and rod to give the signal of battle. *Dictum factum* — *No sooner said then done*; the host is mustered, and, under the direction and command of an invisible power, shoals of frogs invade the land, and the Egyptians, with all their art and all their might, cannot check their progress, nor so much as give them a diversion. Compare this with that prophecy of an army of locusts and caterpillars, <sup><3412></sup> Joel 2:2, etc.; and see <sup><3416></sup> Isaiah 34:16, 17. Frogs came up, at the divine call, and *covered the land*. Note, God has many ways of disquieting those that live at ease.

**III.** How the magicians were permitted to imitate it, v. 7. They also brought up frogs, but could not remove those that God sent. The unclean spirits which came *out of the mouth of the dragon* are said to be like frogs, which go forth to the kings of the earth, to deceive them (<sup><6613></sup> Revelation 16:13), which probably alludes to these frogs, for it follows the account of the turning of the waters into blood. The dragon, like the magicians, intended by them to deceive, but God intended by them to destroy those that would be deceived.

**IV.** How Pharaoh relented under this plague: it was the first time he did so, v. 8. He begs of Moses to intercede for the removal of the frogs, and promises fair that he will let the people go. He that a little while ago had spoken with the utmost disdain both of God and Moses is now glad to be beholden to the mercy of God and the prayers of Moses. Note, Those that bid defiance to God and prayer in a day of extremity will, first or last, be made to see their need of both, and will cry, *Lord, Lord*, <sup><4022></sup> Matthew 7:22. Those that have bantered prayer have been brought to beg it, as the rich man that had scorned Lazarus courted him for a drop of water.

**V.** How Moses fixes the time with Pharaoh, and then prevails with God by prayer for the removal of the frogs. Moses, to show that his performances had no dependence upon the conjunctions or oppositions of the planets, or the luckiness of any one hour more than another, bids Pharaoh name his time. *Nellum occurrit tempus regi* — *No time fixed on by the king shall be objected to*, v. 9. *Have thou this honour over me*, tell me *against when I shall entreat for thee*. This was designed for Pharaoh's conviction, that, if his eyes were not opened by the plague, they might by the removal of it. So various are the methods God takes to bring men to repentance. Pharaoh sets the time for *to-morrow*, v. 10. And why not

immediately? Was he so fond of his guests that he would have them stay another night with him? No, but probably he hoped that they would go away of themselves, and then he should get clear of the plague without being obliged either to God or Moses. However, Moses joins issue with him upon it: “*Be it according to thy word, it shall be done just when thou wouldst have it done, that thou mayest know that, whatever the magicians pretend to, there is none like unto the Lord our God.*” None has such a command as he has over all the creatures, nor is any one so ready to forgive those that humble themselves before him.” Note, The great design both of judgments and mercies is to convince us that there is none like the Lord our God, none so wise, so mighty, so good, no enemy so formidable, no friend so desirable, so valuable. Moses, hereupon, applies to God, prays earnestly to him, to remand the frogs, v. 12. Note, We must pray for our enemies and persecutors, even the worst as Christ did. In answer to the prayer of Moses, the frogs that came up one day perished the next, or the next but one. They all died (v. 13), and, that it might appear that they were real frogs, their dead bodies were left to be raked together in heaps, so that the smell of them became offensive, v. 14. Note, The great Sovereign of the world makes what use he pleases of the lives and deaths of his creatures; and he that gives a being, to serve one purpose, may, without wrong to his justice, call for it again immediately, to serve another purpose.

**VI.** What was the issue of this plague (v. 15): *When Pharaoh saw there was a respite*, without considering either what he had lately felt or what he had reason to fear, he hardened his heart. Note,

**1.** Till the heart is renewed by the grace of God, the impressions made by the force of affliction do not abide; the convictions wear off, and the promises that were extorted are forgotten. Till the disposition of the air is changed, what thaws in the sun will freeze again in the shade.

**2.** God's patience is shamefully abused by impenitent sinners. The respite he gives them, to lead them to repentance, they are hardened by; and while he graciously allows them a truce, in order to the making of their peace, they take that opportunity to rally again the baffled forces of an obstinate infidelity. See <sup>2011</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11; <sup>1984</sup>Psalm 78:34, etc.

## ~~0186~~ EXODUS 8:16-19

### THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT

Here is a short account of the plague of lice. It does not appear that any warning was given of it before. Pharaoh's abuse of the respite granted to him might have been a sufficient warning to him to expect another plague: for if the removal of an affliction harden us, and so we lose the benefit of it, we may conclude it goes away with a purpose to return or to make room for a worse. Observe,

**I.** How this plague of lice was inflicted on the Egyptians, v. 16, 17. The frogs were produced out of the waters, but these live out of *the dust of the earth*; for out of any part of the creation God can fetch a scourge, with which to correct those that rebel against him. He has many arrows in his quiver. Even the dust of the earth obeys him. "*Fear not then, thou worm Jacob, for God can use thee as a threshing instrument, if he please,*"

~~2314~~ Isaiah 41:14, 15. These lice, no doubt, were extremely vexatious, as well as scandalous, to the Egyptians. Though they had respite, they had respite but awhile, ~~6114~~ Revelation 11:14. The second woe was past, but behold the third woe came very quickly.

**II.** How the magicians were baffled by it, v. 18. They attempted to imitate it, but they could not. When they failed in this, it should seem they attempted to remove it; for it follows, *So there were lice upon man and beast*, in spite of them. This forced them to confess themselves overpowered: *This is the finger of God* (v. 19); that is, "This check and restraint put upon us must needs be from a divine power." Note,

**1.** God has the devil in a chain, and limits him both as a deceiver and as a destroyer; *hitherto he shall come, but no further*. The devil's agents when God permitted them, could do great things; but when he laid an embargo upon them, though but with his finger, they could do nothing. The magicians' inability, in this less instance, showed whence they had their ability in the former instances which seemed greater, and that they had no power against Moses but what was given them from above.

**2.** Sooner or later God will extort, even from his enemies, an acknowledgment of his own sovereignty and over-ruling power. It is certain they must all (as we say) knock under at last, as Julian the apostate

did, when his dying lips confessed, *Thou hast overcome me, O thou Galilean!* God will not only be too hard for all opposers, but will force them to own it.

**III.** How Pharaoh, notwithstanding this, was made more and more obstinate (v. 19); even those that had deceived him now said enough to undeceive him, and yet he grew more and more obstinate. Even the miracles and the judgments were to him a savour of death unto death. Note, Those that are not made better by God's word and providences are commonly made worse by them.

## ~~CRD~~ EXODUS 8:20-32

### THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT

Here is the story of the plague of flies, in which we are told,

**I.** How it was threatened, like that of frogs, before it was inflicted. Moses is directed (v. 20) to rise early in the morning, to meet Pharaoh when he came forth to the water, and there to repeat his demands. Note,

**1.** Those that would bring great things to pass for God and their generation must rise early, and redeem time in the morning. Pharaoh was early up at his superstitious devotions to the river; and shall we be for more sleep and more slumber when any service is to be done which would pass well in our account in the great day?

**2.** Those that would approve themselves God's faithful servants must not be afraid of the face of man. Moses must *stand before Pharaoh*, proud as he was, and tell him that which was in the highest degree humbling, must challenge him (if he refused to release his captives) to engage with any army of flies, which would obey God's orders of Pharaoh would not. See a similar threatening, <sup>2378</sup> Isaiah 7:18, *The Lord will hiss (or whistle) for the fly and the bee*, to come and serve his purposes.

**II.** How the Egyptians and the Hebrews were to be remarkably distinguished in this plague, v. 22, 23. It is probable that this distinction had not been so manifest and observable in any of the foregoing plagues as it was to be in this. Thus, as the plague of lice was made more convincing than any before it, by its running the magicians aground, so was this, by

the distinction made between the Egyptians and the Hebrews. Pharaoh must be made to know that *God is the Lord in the midst of the earth*; and by this it will be known beyond dispute.

**1.** Swarms of flies, which seem to us to fly at random, shall be manifestly under the conduct of an intelligent mind, while they are above the direction of any man. “Hither they shall go,” says Moses, “and thither they shall not come;” and the performance is punctually according to this appointment, and both, compared, amount to a demonstration that he that said it and he that did it was the same, even a Being of infinite power and wisdom.

**2.** The servants and worshippers of the great Jehovah shall be preserved from sharing in the common calamities of the place they live in, so that the plague which annoys all their neighbours shall not approach them; and this shall be an incontestable proof that God is *the Lord in the midst of the earth*. Put both these together, and it appears that *the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the earth*, and through the air too, to direct that which to us seems most casual, to serve some great designed end, that he may *show himself strong on the behalf of those whose hearts are upright with him*, <sup><4469></sup>2 Chronicles 16:9. Observe how it is repeated: *I will put a division between my people and thy people* v. 23. Note, The Lord knows those that are his, and will make it appear, perhaps in this world, certainly in the other, that he has set them apart for himself. A day will come when you shall *return and discern between the righteous and the wicked* (<sup><3088></sup>Malachi 3:18), *the sheep and the goats* (<sup><4052></sup>Matthew 25:32; <sup><3547></sup>Ezekiel 34:17), though now intermixed.

**III.** How it was inflicted, the day after it was threatened: *There came a grievous swarm of flies* (v. 24), flies of divers sorts, and such as devoured them, <sup><3985></sup>Psalm 78:45. The prince of the power of the air has gloried in being *Beelzebub — the god of flies*; but here it is proved that even in *that* he is a pretender and a usurper, for even with swarms of flies God fights against his kingdom and prevails.

**IV.** How Pharaoh, upon this attack, sounded a parley, and entered into a treaty with Moses and Aaron about a surrender of his captives: but observe with what reluctance he yields.

**1.** He is content they should sacrifice to their God, provided they would do it in the land of Egypt, v. 25. Note, God can extort a toleration of his

worship, even from those that are really enemies to it. Pharaoh, under the smart of the rod, is content they should do sacrifice, and will allow liberty of conscience to God's Israel, even in his own land. But Moses will not accept his concession; he cannot do it, v. 26. It would be an abomination to God should they offer the Egyptian sacrifices, and an abomination to the Egyptians should they offer to God their own sacrifices, as they ought; so that they could not sacrifice in the land without incurring the displeasure either of their God or of their task-masters; therefore he insists: *We will go three days' journey into the wilderness*, v. 27. Note, Those that would offer an acceptable sacrifice to God must,

**(1.)** Separate themselves from the wicked and profane; for we cannot have fellowship both with the Father of lights and with the works of darkness, both with Christ and with Belial, <sup><464></sup>2 Corinthians 6:14, etc.; <sup><1364></sup>Psalm 26:4, 6.

**(2.)** They must retire from the distractions of the world, and get as far as may be from the noise of it. Israel cannot keep the feast of the Lord either among the brick-kilns or among the flesh-pots of Egypt; no, *We will go into the wilderness*, <sup><304></sup>Hosea 2:14; <sup><271></sup>Song of Solomon 7:11.

**(3.)** They must observe the divine appointment: "We will sacrifice as God shall command us, and not otherwise." Though they were in the utmost degree of slavery to Pharaoh, yet in the worship of God, they must observe his commands and not Pharaoh's.

**2.** When this proposal is rejected, he consents for them to go into the wilderness, provided they do not go *very far away*, not so far but that he might fetch them back again, v. 28. It is probable he had heard of their design upon Canaan, and suspected that if once they left Egypt they would never come back again; and therefore, when he is forced to consent that they shall go (the swarms of flies buzzing the necessity in his ears), yet he is not willing that they should go out of his reach. Thus some sinners who, in a pang of conviction, part with their sins, yet are loth they should go very far away; for, when the fright is over, they will return to them again. We observe here a struggle between Pharaoh's convictions and his corruptions; his convictions said, "Let them go;" his corruptions said, "Yet not very far away:" but he sided with his corruptions against his convictions, and this was his ruin. This proposal Moses so far accepted as that he promised the removal of this plague upon it, v. 29 See here,

(1.) How ready God is to accept sinners' submissions. Pharaoh does but say, *Entreat for me* (though it is with regret that he humbles so far), and Moses promises immediately, *I will entreat the Lord for thee*, that Pharaoh might see what the design of the plague was, not to bring him to ruin, but to bring him to repentance. With what pleasure did God say (<sup>129</sup>1 Kings 21:29), *Seest thou how Ahab humbles himself?*

(2.) What need we have to be admonished that we be sincere in our submission: *But let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more*. Those that deal deceitfully are justly suspected, and must be cautioned not to return again to folly, after God has once more spoken peace. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*; if we think to put a cheat upon God by a counterfeit repentance, and a fraudulent surrender of ourselves to him, we shall prove, in the end, to have put a fatal cheat upon our own souls.

*Lastly*, The issue of all was that God graciously removed the plague (v. 30, 31), but Pharaoh perfidiously returned to his hardness, and *would not let the people go*, v. 32. His pride would not let him part with such a flower of his crown as his dominion over Israel was, nor his covetousness with such a branch of his revenue as their labours were. Note, Reigning lusts break through the strongest bounds, and make men impudently presumptuous and scandalously perfidious. Let not sin therefore reign; for, if it do, it will betray and hurry us to the grossest absurdities.