

The Book of Exodus

The Next Three Plagues

Text: Exodus 8:20 – 9:12

Introduction:

1. The first 3 plagues were annoying and troublesome, but they brought no real lasting harm to those involved; however, the next 3 plagues will harm both man and beast.
2. The first 3 plagues covered the entire land of Egypt; but, the next 3 plagues will not affect the children of Israel in the land of Goshen.
3. The first 3 plagues received little response from Pharaoh; yet, the next 3 plagues will cause him to attempt to compromise with Moses and with God.
4. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart and his continual rebellion against Jehovah brings more and more suffering upon the nation of Egypt.

I. Plague Four: *FLIES*

(Exodus 8:20-32)

- A. As with the first plague, Moses was to meet Pharaoh early in the morning before he visited the Nile River – likely in worship.
- B. God promised that if Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go, He would send a plague of flies that would swarm upon the people, fill their houses, and cover the ground.
 1. Literally, God said that He would send swarms upon the Egyptians. {*The words “of flies” are in italics because they are supplied by the translators.*}
 2. Thus, the exact nature of the animals that swarmed is not specified.
 3. However, an important detail is recorded twice in the book of Psalms: the Egyptians were plagued with “diverse sorts of flies” (Psa. 78:45; 105:31).
 4. The same Hebrew word is used in all three passages, but the slight difference in translation gives insight into its meaning.
 5. It is certain that these were not common “house” flies, for the Bible states that these swarms “devoured them.”
 6. There are two popular views of the identification of these insects:
 - a. Many suggest that it was the “dog-fly” – a biting bug that was known to be a greater nuisance in swarms than mosquitoes.
 - i. Also, the Egyptians revered the dog in the form of the god Anubis.
 - ii. The LXX translated the Hebrew word into the Greek word *kunomia*, referring to the dog-fly.
 - b. Others suggest that it was a species of beetle, possibly the scarab.
 - i. These insects also give a painful bite to animals and man.
 - ii. Also, they were considered sacred by the Egyptians.
 7. Likely, the best way to understand this plague is to think of swarms of various kinds of biting insects.
- C. With this plague, God began to separate His people in Goshen from the rest of Egypt.
 1. The swarms that devoured the Egyptians would not cross the border into the land of Goshen.
 2. There can be no explanation for this separation other than the miraculous power of God.
- D. On this occasion, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and offered them a compromise.

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1. They could offer sacrifices to Jehovah, but they must do it in the land of Egypt.
 2. It is important to learn that one must not compromise in the slightest the will of God.
- E. Moses responded that they would obey God by doing exactly as He had commanded.
1. The cow was a sacred animal to the Egyptians, worshipped for its connection to Isis.
 2. If the Israelites worshipped Jehovah by sacrificing cattle in the land of Egypt, it would be an abomination to the Egyptians and incur their wrath.
- F. Pharaoh agreed to let them go into the wilderness to worship if God would remove the plague of flies.
- G. However, once the plague ceased, Pharaoh went back on his word.

II. Plague Five: *PESTILENCE (MURRAIN)* (Exodus 9:1-7)

- A. The next plague upon Egypt was a grievous pestilence that affected their livestock.
1. The Hebrew word for ‘murrain’ means, “Pestilence or disease.”
 2. The word ‘murrain’ means, “Great mortality” and expresses the result of the plague – the death of multitudes of the Egyptian flocks and herds.
 3. Note that it affected cattle, horses, donkeys, camels, oxen and sheep.
- B. All of these animals – especially the cattle (oxen) – were worshipped by the Egyptians.
- C. Again, none of the cattle of Israel was affected or died.
- D. This fact angered Pharaoh and he hardened his heart, refusing to let Israel go.

III. Plague Six: *BOILS* (Exodus 9:8-12)

- A. The next plague was a terrible affliction upon both man and animal – boils blooming into blains.
1. The word “boil” indicates a type of ulcer or burning inflammation.
 2. The word “blain” means, “To belch forth” like a pustule or blister.
- B. The source of this plague would be the ashes of the furnace – a reference to the worship of the god Typhon.
1. Sacrifices were made to this god by burning them on a grate connected to the image.
 2. The ashes from those offerings were winnowed by the Egyptian priests and cast into the air.
 3. They believed that if anyone were touched by those ashes, he would be safe from any defilement of his body.
 4. Again, God turned the false religion of Egypt on its head and prove its lack of power and credibility.
- C. So terrible was this plague that even the magicians could no longer stand before Pharaoh.
- D. Sadly, the response of Pharaoh remained the same: he hardened his heart and refused to obey Jehovah.