

Exodus Chapters 7 & 8 -- John Karmelich

1. There is a modern psychological expression called “living in denial”.
 - a) It describes a person who refuses to accept the obvious.
 - b) Tonight we’re going to read about such a person, someone who is “living in denial” about the existence of the one true God.
2. It never ceases to amaze me how many people can see the obvious evidence of the existence of God and not *do* anything about it.
 - a) Ever heard somebody say “Oh, God, if you just get me out of this mess, I promise to go to church and never do this again. How long does this repentance last for?”
 - b) Or have you ever prayed, Dear God, if you just show my friend a big miracle, I just know they will change their life?
 - c) The sad truth is that miracles don’t cause repentance. People simply are not willing to give up their lifestyle even when they see the obvious evidence of God’s existence.
3. I opened with this statement because the next 4 chapters of Exodus focus on the Pharaoh of Egypt and the ten plagues. Pharaoh typifies this type of person.
 - a) If you have ever seen “The Ten Commandments”, or “The Prince of Egypt” or vaguely familiar with the Bible, then you know about the plagues on Egypt.
 - b) This is where God truly lets Pharaoh and Egypt know who he is.
 - c) Last week, in Chapter 5 Pharaoh asked a question about God:
 - i) Pharaoh said, " Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go." (Exodus 5:2 NIV)
 - ii) We’ll, God is about to give him a 10-plagued answer to these questions!
4. What is *more* amazing, is that God Himself designed this whole scenario!
 - a) There is an interesting little verse tucked away in the middle of the “plague” sequence that is really interesting...
 - i) In the middle of the plagues, God told Moses to proclaim the following message to Pharaoh (Exodus 9:16 NIV):
 - ii) But I (God) have raised you (Pharaoh) up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.
 - a) Wow. Stop and think about the implications of this.
 - b) This verse says that Pharaoh’s rise to power (and Egypt’s rise to power as the greatest country on Earth!) was all God’s doing!!!!
 - c) Why? So that God will show Pharaoh who he (God) is and the world may know his power!
 - d) This is amazing to think about. Egypt was the world ruler at that time. If you can, pick up a book sometime on the ruins of ancient Egypt civilization and realize that they were as powerful they were. God said it was all his doing, so that the *world* would know who God is.
 - iii) By the way, Pharaoh isn’t the only God-appointed world leader.
 - a) Do you think it was just a “coincidence” that Rome was at the height of its power when Jesus died and rose again? With one-powerful world-government, the Gospel could be spread more easily!
 - iv) Paul comments on this: Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. (Romans 13:1 NIV)

5. Back to a question I brought up earlier: Why 10 plagues?
 - a) Couldn't God just wipe the Egyptians with one big "swoosh" of a plague and let the Hebrews go? Why such a vivid demonstration?
 - i) God answers this question directly in Exodus 9:15 (NIV):
 - a) "For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth."
 - ii) The next verse (Exodus 9:16) is the one we read on the previous page (see 3b)
 - a) That God raised up Pharaoh for this purpose.
6. OK, so now you know that God raised up Pharaoh, God gave him a "hard heart" to resist him and God is "plaguing" Egypt to demonstrate his power.
 - a) What does this have to do with us?
 - i) Lots of things. First of all, it helps us to understand "non-believer" attitude toward God.
 - ii) When you read about "Pharaoh" or "Egypt", transfer the word "non-believer" or the "world's view" of religion in this place.
 - iii) "Egypt" represents people who will worship anything and everything except God. This is why Egypt had lots of gods. The world has lots of gods. Examples include material wealth, sports heroes, fashion, big houses, politicians, pleasure, or in sadder cases, alcohol & drugs.
 - a) Whatever one is "given over to" becomes their "god".
 - b) Wherever one dedicates their free time and money is their "god".
 - c) "Egypt", and Pharaoh as their leader, represents the "world's beliefs."
 - iv) Ever heard the expression "know thy enemy?" It's a great application to life.
 - v) If you ever want to convince anybody of anything, first understand their perspective, and then you can confront them or persuade them.
 - a) Remember Jesus command to us when dealing with non-believers:
 - b) "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves." (Matthew 10:16 NIV)
7. There is another classic expression that applies. Ever heard "you are what you eat"? Well, guess what, you are what you worship too!
 - a) One of the interesting things to learn is that each of the plagues is an attack on a specific god of Egypt.
 - b) During this lesson, I'm going to discuss some of these "gods". In the future, you'll probably forget the details. The key to remember is God wants to prove he is superior to all the other created "gods" of the world and He, and He alone is the only true God.
 - c) There are also "hints" that there are demonic forces behind some of these false gods. One of Satan's goals is to get you to worship *anything* but the true & living God.
8. One last thing about the 10 plagues before we get into the text.
 - a) There are *lots* of commentaries out there about "natural explanations" for the plagues.
 - b) You can read things like a "red-tide" effect caused the Nile to "look like blood".
 - i) This then lead to the frogs leaving Nile due to natural pollution.
 - ii) This then lead diseases, (plagues of lice, boils, etc.)
 - c) The truth is people don't want to believe in God, because acknowledging God means acknowledging their sins, and the fact they have to change their lives.
 - i) Therefore, people look for natural explanations.
 - ii) It's actually pretty easy to refute these "theories" with the story line.
 - a) For example, if God did not turn all the water into blood, why did the Egyptians have to "dig in the ground" for new water source as opposed to using water in storage bins? (A verse mentions God turning the water in their storage containers into blood too!)

- d) I have heard and used a *great* expression in explaining Biblical miracles:
 - i) “If you can handle the first verse of the Bible, you can handle the rest”.
 - ii) The first verse of Genesis says, “In the beginning, God created heaven & earth”.
 - a) If you can believe that,
 - (1) you can believe God parted the Red Sea.
 - (2) You can believe God flooded the whole earth (Noah).
 - (3) You can believe God supernaturally created plagues in Egypt.
 - (4) You can also believe that God came in the form of man to die for our sins.
 - b) If you can’t handle the first sentence of the Bible, you look for excuses for the rest of the book. Some people simply won’t accept the truth, and this is because they refuse to change their lifestyle.
 - c) To quote C.S. Lewis: “The gates of hell will be locked from the inside.”

9. After that two-plus-page intro, lets go to the text: **7:1** So the Lord replied to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. **7:2** You are to speak all that I command you; and Aaron your brother is tell Pharaoh to release the Israelites from his land. **7:3** But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart. And although I will multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt, **7:4** Pharaoh will not listen to you. And I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring out my regiments, my people the Israelites, from the land of Egypt with great acts of judgment. **7:5** Then the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord, when I extend my hand over Egypt and bring out the Israelites from among them.

- a) The first sentence sounds a little confusing “I will make you like God to Pharaoh”
 - i) Think of the word “ambassador”. Moses will be God’s representative.
 - ii) Moses’ brother Aaron will speak on Moses’ behalf.
 - iii) Here’s a good summary: the biblical definitions of “prophet” and “priest”:
 - a) A (true) “prophet” is a messenger from God to the people.
 - b) A “priest” is someone who represents the people before God.
 - iv) This is our role too. When we share the Word of God with someone, we are acting as a prophet. When we pray with somebody or help lead people to God, we are acting as a priest in that moment of time.
 - v) Sometimes we are going to encounter people whose hearts have been hardened. We shouldn’t take it personally when they reject God.
- b) Next, we need to talk about “God hardening Pharaoh’s heart”.
 - i) People will ask, “Well, why is Pharaoh guilty if God hardened his heart?
 - a) “Hardening” in Hebrew is a picture-word. It is like the hardening of a rope by tying strands together. Pharaoh’s heart was already anti-God. God simply “hardened it harder” to suit his purposes.
 - b) If you reject God long enough, he will *make* you unable to accept him.
 - c) Jesus spoke of the “unpardonable sin” (Matthew 12:31 et.al.). Pharaoh is an example. Somebody who turns their back on God *so much*, they are unable to obey the true and living God. They will eventually *acknowledge* the true and living God (as Pharaoh does), but they are too stubborn to ever obey him.
 - (1) (If you are reading this study, you are not, nor have you ever been guilty of “the unpardonable sin”. People who fit in this category never had any interest in spiritual things. The fact you are taking the time to study the Bible shows you are not guilty!)
 - ii) Here’s a good example: If you tell your child not to go into the cookie jar, you leave the room *just knowing* he or she is going to do it anyway, does that make the child any less guilty of their actions?

- c) If you have ever wondered what is the purpose of the 10 plagues on Egypt, a good summary of the purpose is written in Verse 5: **“7:5 Then the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord, when I extend my hand over Egypt and bring out the Israelites from among them.”**
 - i) The *true* God is not just “the God of the Hebrews”. He is Lord of all.
 - a) He wanted the Egyptians to know who he was.
 - b) He wanted to give them a chance to repent and serve him *prior* to receiving the judgement, as he does will all people.
 - c) For those who ask the question, what about the people who never heard of the true and living God, study Romans Chapter 1. It says that God will judge people fairly based on what they do know.
- 10. **7:6** And Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the Lord commanded them.
 - a) Amen! If we are remembered for doing what the Lord has commanded us to do, we will have tremendous rewards in heaven!
- 11. **7:7** Now Moses was eighty years old and Aaron was eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.
 - a) When Moses wrote Exodus, I’m sure he had time to reflect on all these events. It was not until Moses was 80 and Aaron was 83 until God used them.
 - i) It is never too early nor too late to be used by God.
 - a) Never use age as an excuse to ask God what you can do to serve Him!
 - b) Jesus tells a great parable in Matthew 20 how God calls some people to work for him “at the beginning of the day” to work for Him, others “in the middle of the day” and others “at the end of day”. This speaks of God calling people at different ages. They all received a full days wages despite the different times in their live they were called.
 - c) Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. (Isaiah 46:4 NIV)
- 12. **7:8** The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, **7:9** "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Do a miracle,' then you are to say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and throw it down before Pharaoh, and it will become a snake.'" **7:10** When Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, they did so, just as the Lord had commanded them-Aaron threw down his rod before Pharaoh and his servants and it became a snake. **7:11** Then Pharaoh also summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the magicians of Egypt by their secret arts did the same thing. **7:12** Each man threw down his staff, and the staffs became snakes. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs! **7:13** Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had predicted.
 - a) This is the 2nd time Moses & Aaron spoke in front of Pharaoh. The first time was back in Chapter 5 when Pharaoh said, “the Hebrews are lazy” and made them work harder.
 - i) It probably took a lot of courage to appear before Pharaoh the second time. This is a reason why God had to encourage Moses in Chapter 6.
 - b) A lot of commentators make a big deal about the fact that instead of a snake in this passage, it may have been a crocodile.
 - i) The argument is based on the fact that the word for “snake” here is different from the one in the Garden of Eden. This word is only used 1-2 more times in all the Old Testament and is elsewhere translated “dragon” or “beast”. It has satanic implications.” Also, archeologists have found records of the magicians turning wax crocodiles into real ones.
 - ii) It is interesting to historians and scholars, but there isn’t much application.

- c) I personally see God's sense of humor in having Aaron's rod swallow up the magicians. God is proving his superiority to other Gods.
 - i) There is a similar passage in 1 Samuel 5:4 where the Philistines captured the "Ark of the Covenant". The "ark" was a golden box in the most holy place of the Israelite Tabernacle. It symbolizes where God dwells. Once, the Philistines captured the ark. When the Philistine placed it in the temple of their god "Dagon", the next day Dagon statue fell face down in front of the ark!
 - d) How were the Egyptian magicians able to "duplicate" this miracle (stick -> snake)?
 - i) A scary but true fact is that God allows demons to have miraculous powers.
 - a) For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. (Matthew 24:24 NIV *emphasis added*)
 - (1) Therefore when you see a great miracle, it may, or may not be from God. The key is the message they are peddling.
 - (2) Paul said it too: "But even if *we or an angel from heaven* should preach a gospel *other* than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galations 1:8 NIV)
 - b) Why? God allows this to test people's hearts. God wants us to come to him out of our free will. Therefore there has to be "tempting alternatives" in order to test our hearts.
 - e) The fact that the magicians could duplicate the miracles is why Pharaoh hardened his heart. He figured "why should I obey *this* God...my "gods" can do the same tricks.
 - i) Think of people who have turned away from the true God due to the "magically healing powers" of false gods (or giving credit to things like self-hypnosis or will power).
13. **7:14** And the Lord said to Moses, "The heart of Pharaoh is hardened; he refuses to release the people. **7:15** Go to Pharaoh in the morning when he goes out to the water. Position yourself to meet him by the edge of the Nile, and take in your hand the rod that was turned into a snake. **7:16** Say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you to say, 'Release my people, that they may serve me in the desert!' But up till now you have not complied.
- a) We're about to begin the first of the 10 plagues - Water turned into blood.
 - b) Before we get into specifics, it might help to learn a little about Egyptian "gods".
 - c) "They (Egyptians) believed in the existence of one great God, self-produced, self-existent, almighty, and eternal." Unfortunately, they felt "that this Being was too great and mighty to concern Himself with the affairs and destinies of human beings." Therefore He "permitted the management of this world ... to fall into the hands of hordes of 'gods' and demons, and good and bad spirits." Sir Wallis Budge.
 - i) What this means is that these "spirits" put themselves into the Nile, into frogs, into the sun and the earth. The Egyptians didn't believe that the Nile or the sun itself was a created being, but that a god-spirit" dwelled within these objects, and therefore they are sacred and need to be worshipped.
 - ii) Paul said it best: "Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles." (Romans 1:22-23, NIV)
 - d) There is also some interesting "patterns" to the plagues. The plagues fell into "groups of threes" with the 10th being different & special.
 - i) The 1st plague in each group was introduced by a warning delivered to Pharaoh early in the morning as he went out to the Nile.
 - ii) Everybody, including the Israelites felt the first 3 plagues.

- iii) The 2nd plague in each group (#2, #5, #8) was also introduced by a warning, but it was delivered to Pharaoh at his palace.
 - iv) Beginning with 2nd group, only the Egyptians (not the Israelites) were affected.
 - v) The 3rd plague in each group (#3, #6, #9) commenced without any warning to Pharaoh.
 - vi) The 1st three were “irritations”, the 2nd three were “destruction’s” and 3rd three were “death” sentences. (Notice the progression.)
 - vii) The 1st set of 3 says "By this you [Pharaoh] will know that I am the LORD" (repeated in 8:10 and in effect in 8:19), meaning Pharaoh would come to know just who God was and what his name signified;
 - viii) The 2nd set (8:22): "That you will know that I, the LORD am in this land," meaning God's overseeing providence and guidance of the world;
 - ix) The 3rd set (9:14): "So you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth," meaning the scope and force of God's power.
 - x) Source for “pattern” information: Expositor’s Bible Encyclopedia.
 - e) The point to remember is that the plagues is they were progressively harsh and progressively focused. It is like a parent saying to a child “Don’t do that. Now it’s the 2nd time I’m telling you again, don’t do that. OK now its the 3rd time and you’re going to get punished.” God wanted to give Pharaoh every chance to repent (although God knew he wouldn’t), and each plague was progressively worse and more focused.
14. **7:17** Thus says the Lord: 'In this you will know that I am the Lord: I am going to strike the water of the Nile with the rod that is in my hand, and it will be turned into blood. **7:18** And fish in the Nile will die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will be unable to drink the water of the Nile." **7:19** Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, "Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers and canals, and over their ponds and all their reservoirs, that they may become blood.' And blood will be throughout the land of Egypt, even in the containers of wood and stone." **7:20** And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord had commanded. Moses raised the rod and struck the water of the Nile right before Pharaoh's eyes and before the eyes of his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile was turned to blood.
- a) Stop and picture this in your mind. Turn on the kitchen sink - blood! Turn on the bathtub faucet - blood! Look in your toilet - blood! Go down to nearest river/beach or drainage canal - blood! No matter what your belief in the super-natural, that has to scare you!
 - b) The Nile represented a “god” to the Egyptians. This river was sacred.
 - i) “The Egyptian god Khnum was said to be the guardian of the Nile, and this showed he was unable to protect his territory; the god Hapi was said to be the spirit of the Nile, and was dealt a defeat; the great god Osiris was thought to have the Nile as his bloodstream -now, he is truly bleeding!” David Guzik.
 - c) Some liberal commentators try to explain this away by saying it was some sort of “red-tide” effect. This of course doesn’t explain how the water-blood got into the wood & stone containers listed in verse 19!
 - d) There is an interesting “hint” of idolatry in verse 19: “And blood will be throughout the land of Egypt, even in the containers of *wood and stone*.”
 - i) Why would the Bible bother to mention the containers were “wood & stone”?
 - ii) If you did a Bible “word search” of the expression “wood & stone”, you will find it is used 9 times in the Old Testament. Every time it speaks of idolatry.
 - iii) For example “There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell. (Deuteronomy 4:28 NIV)

15. **7:21** When the fish that were in the Nile died, the Nile began to stink, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. Blood was throughout all the land of Egypt! **7:22** But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts, and so the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not listen to Moses and Aaron-just as the Lord had said. **7:23** And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. He did not even take this to heart. **7:24** All the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the Nile.
- a) I mentioned a few pages back that God allows demonic powers to exist. The magicians were able to duplicate this miracle. (I sort of picture a bunch of guys sitting in front of Pharaoh with a jar full of fresh water, saying a few words, and then spilling red-colored liquid or blood on the ground for dramatic effect).
 - b) Three times (this is the 2nd) the magicians were able to duplicate this miracle.
 - i) The key word is duplicate. God allows demonic powers *destructive* powers.
 - a) They couldn't fix the mess, just duplicate it.
 - ii) As I mentioned earlier, just because someone or thing has special powers, it doesn't necessarily mean they are approved by god.
 - iii) John the disciple said: "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1 NIV)
 - c) Verse 24 states that the *Egyptians* dug into the ground to find fresh water. No comment about whether or not the Hebrews had to do the same. It isn't until the 4th plague where God announces to Pharaoh that the Hebrews will not be affected by the next set of plagues. So the question arises did the Hebrews have a fresh water supply and maybe the Egyptians were unaware?
 - i) This is one of those debate questions where you could argue it both ways.
 - ii) The point to remember is God *did* preserve his people through the plagues. How much the Hebrew people were affected by this particular one is unknown.
16. OK, time for plague #2, the frogs: **7:25** Seven full days passed after the Lord struck the Nile. **8:1** Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: "Release my people in order that they may serve me. **8:2** But if you refuse to release them, then I am going to plague all your territory with frogs from border to border. **8:3** And the Nile will swarm with frogs, and they will go up and enter your palace, and your bedroom, and your bed, and into the houses of your servants and your people, and into your ovens and your kneading troughs. **8:4** Frogs will go up against you, and against your people, and against all your servants.'" **8:5** And the Lord spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Extend your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the canals, and over the ponds, and bring the frogs up over the land of Egypt.'" **8:6** So Aaron extended his hand over the waters of Egypt, and frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. **8:7** But the magicians did the same with their secret arts, and brought up frogs too. So frogs went up over the land of Egypt.
- a) We as Americans look at frogs as lovable little creatures. They are fine in small numbers. In large bunches everywhere they would be a great nuisance.
 - b) Frogs were associated with the froghead goddess Heqet who assisted women at child-birth. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)
 - c) Interestingly, this is the only mention of "frogs" in the entire Old Testament.
 - i) The only other Biblical mention of frogs has to do with Satan, the AntiChrist and a false- spiritual leader for the AntiChrist in the Book of Revelation:
 - a) Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. "(Revelation 16:13 NIV)
 - ii) Many commentators tie these passages together with evil-spirit implications.

- d) You have to see the humor in this. God is saying in effect “OK, you want to worship frogs, I’ll give you *plenty* of frogs. More than you can stand.
 - i) “Though he is the Lord of hosts he has no need of powerful armies, the ministry of angels, or the thunderbolts of justice to punish a sinner or a sinful nation; the frog or the fly in his hands is a sufficient instrument of vengeance.” (Clarke)
 - ii) Worshiping anything but the true God will never satisfy you no matter how many “frogs” you have!
 - a) The bumper sticker “You can never be too rich or too thin!” is a perfect modern example of never having enough. We are built with a desire to worship the true and living God that nothing else can satisfy.
 - e) As to the magicians, all they can do is make more frogs. It doesn’t stop the problem of making the abundance of frogs go away. Satan works that way. If you desire *anything* but the true & living god, he can give you plenty of it, not enough to satisfy, but enough to keep you away from worshipping the *true* God!
17. **8:8** Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray to the Lord that he may take away the frogs from me and my people, and I will release the people that they may sacrifice to the Lord."
- a) Pharaoh figured out the magicians can’t stop the plague. He turned to Moses.
18. **8:9** And Moses said to Pharaoh, "You may have the honor over me-when shall I pray for you and your servants and your people, for the frogs to be removed from you and from your houses, so that only in the Nile they will be left?" **8:10** And he said, "Tomorrow." So Moses said, "It will be according to your word, so that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God. **8:11** And the frogs will depart from you, and from your palace, and from your servants, and from your people; only in the Nile will they be left."
- a) When somebody comes to us in repentance saying they want help, then by all means help. You don’t say “too bad Pharaoh, you lose. Its too late for you!” God *always* wants people to repent and if we can assist them in any means, do so.
 - b) This is what Moses is doing here. Pharaoh realizes he is up against a power that is more powerful than his magicians.
 - c) Moses does something amazing here. He essentially says to Pharaoh “Tell you what Mr. Pharaoh sir, just to prove that *our* God is the one behind all this, *you* name the time and place for this plague to stop, and I’ll tell God to comply. How does that sound? And to *further* prove that God has the power to do this, we’ll leave the frogs alive in the Nile just to show it is *not* a natural phenomena that the frogs die.”
 - i) That’s amazing “hoospa” by Moses. Without consulting God, Moses tells Pharaoh to name the time for the plague to stop and I’ll intercede.
 - ii) Its more amazing that God complied with Moses request.
 - iii) God is leaving Pharaoh without any excuses. God complying with Moses’ request is supplying all the proof Pharaoh needs that *this* is the *true* God!
19. **8:12** Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh; and Moses cried to the Lord because of the frogs which he had brought on Pharaoh. **8:13** And the Lord did according to Moses' word- the frogs died out of their houses, out of their villages, and out of their fields. **8:14** The Egyptians piled them together in countless heaps, and the land stank. **8:15** But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, just as the Lord had predicted.
- a) As I mentioned in my opening paragraph, Ever seen a person in big trouble say “Oh God, if you just get me out of this mess, I promise I’ll go to church every Sunday and I’ll never get drunk again.” Then by some miracle, they get out of the mess. The repentance is usually good for oh, say an hour or two and they’re back to their old ways.
 - i) You’re watching a prime example of that situation right here in these verses.

- b) The important thing to understand is that when we come before God in judgement day, we will be without excuse. We can't say God didn't give us a chance to repent.
 - i) "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." (Romans 1:20 NIV)
 - ii) The reason we turn to Jesus *as a substitute* for our sins is the realization we can't be good enough for God under our power. It is only by God working *through us* that we are able to live up to his standards.
20. Plague #3 - Lice: **8:16** And the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Extend your staff and strike the dust of the ground, and it will become gnats in all the land of Egypt'." **8:17** And they did so; and Aaron extended his hand with his staff and he struck the dust of the ground, and it became gnats, on people and on animals. All the dust of the ground became gnats in all the land of Egypt. **8:18** When the magicians tried to do the same, to bring forth gnats with their secret arts, they could not. So there were gnats on people and on animals. **8:19** The magicians said to Pharaoh, "It is the finger of God!" But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had predicted.
- a) No warning. Pharaoh refused to repent, and is now suffering the consequences.
 - b) The word *lice* could mean gnats or mosquitoes, or some other biting insect.
 - i) The consensus opinion is "gnats". Its root means to "cover", "nip" or "pinch."
 - c) "One man tells about his experience with them in Egypt: "I noticed that the sand appeared to be in motion. Close inspection revealed that the surface of the ground was a moving mass of minute ticks, thousands of which were crawling up my legs. I beat a hasty retreat, pondering the words of the Scriptures, 'the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'" From J. Vernon McGee's commentary.
 - d) Notice the words of Pharaoh's magicians "'It is the finger of God!'"
 - e) "It possibly was designed to humiliate the Egyptian priests, who were known for their physical purity - no blemishes, scabs, or scars. They taught the people that they were the only ones who could pray to the gods because they were physically clean." Dr. David Hocking.
 - i) God will often place harsher judgement on *false-leaders* that lead people astray.
 - f) The magicians, like the demons *acknowledge* the existence of God, but do not worship him. Just as many people today *acknowledge* God, but never make any effort to do anything about it.
 - g) Despite the magicians telling Pharaoh in effect "Hey Pharaoh, Moses is right. Give in. This is beyond our control." Pharaoh is still stubborn.
 - i) Ever see a person go beyond any sort of logic, or beyond any advice of close and trusted friends to refuse to accept God? Here is the ultimate example.
 - ii) At this point it is a matter of ego. Pharaoh wanted to prove that he is greater than any other God. God responds to this challenge.
21. Plague #4 - The first one not to directly affect the Israelites...**8:20** The Lord said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning and take your position before Pharaoh as he goes out to the water; and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, "Release my people that they may serve me. **8:21** If you do not release my people, then I am going to send swarms of flies on you and on your servants and on your people and in your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies, and even the ground where they stand. **8:22** But on that day I will make a distinction with the land of Goshen where my people are staying, so that no swarms of flies will be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between my people and your people. This sign will be seen tomorrow.'"" **8:24** And the Lord did so. A thick swarm of flies came into Pharaoh's palace and into the houses of his servants, and throughout the land of Egypt the land was ruined because of the swarms of flies.

- a) As I stated earlier, the purpose of the next set of three plagues is to show that God makes a *distinction* between those who choose to follow him and those who don't.
 - b) Commentators argue over what type of insect this was. It was some sort of "biting" creature similar to the lice.
 - i) "When it is full grown, the fly prefers to infest houses and stables, and it bites both men and animals...thus it becomes the principal transmitter of skin anthrax (boils - plague #6), which it contracts by crawling over the carcasses of animals that have died of internal anthrax." Hort - "Plagues," pp. 99, 102.
 - ii) "The Ichneuman fly which deposits its eggs on other living things where its larvae can feed, was regarded as the manifestation of the god." David Hocking
 - c) The fact that there was a place where this plague did not exist - the land of Goshen where the Israelites dwelt, gave the *Egyptian people* a chance to repent.
 - i) They now had a place to run to and acknowledge God.
 - ii) By the time of the Exodus, there is a comment about a "mixed multitude" going with the Hebrews out of the country (Exodus 12:38). Some Egyptians did repent. Therefore one can not make the argument that the Egyptian people were "innocent bystanders" harmed by this plague.
22. **8:25** Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the this land." **8:26** But Moses said, "That would not be the right thing to do, for the sacrifices we make to the Lord our God would be an abomination to the Egyptians. And if we make sacrifices that are an abomination in the eyes of the Egyptians, will they not stone us? **8:27** We must go on a three day journey into the desert and sacrifice to the Lord our God, just as he is telling us." **8:28** And Pharaoh said, "I will release you so that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the desert, but you must not go very far. Only pray for me."
- a) Pharaoh was offering a compromise. Instead of letting the people go, he wanted them to worship God there in Egypt.
 - i) God wants us to *separate ourselves* from the world. God wants us, as much as possible to be away from the "worldly influences" when we worship Him.
 - ii) Satan is aware how distracted we can be by the world. That is why he will often use this compromise in our life."
 - iii) Pharaoh tries compromise #2 in Verse 28 "Don't go very far"
 - a) Same principal. Satan is saying "Don't do what God asks. Come on, be reasonable, you don't want to cause a scene do you? What will the neighbor's think of you make a big spectacle of worshipping God?"
23. **8:29** And Moses said, "I am going to go out from you, and then I will pray to the Lord, and the swarms of flies will depart from Pharaoh and from his servants and from his people tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh deal falsely again by not releasing the people to sacrifice to the Lord." **8:30** So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord. **8:31** And the Lord did according to Moses' word, and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh and from his servants and from his people. Not one remained. **8:32** But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not release the people. (Underlined emphasis added)
- a) Moses saw Pharaoh giving in a little, and he probably thought, "OK, Pharaoh is giving in a little, maybe if I remove this plague, Pharaoh will agree to our terms".
 - i) Wrong! Pharaoh "hardening his heart" again shows his real intentions". Like I stated earlier, there is a point of not-turning back your attitude toward God. Moses may not have fully comprehended that at this point.
24. We'll finish the plagues next week. Let's pray. Father, let not our hearts be stubborn. You give us so much evidence of your existence, and yet we still fail to trust you on a moment by moment basis. Help us to keep our eyes focuses on you and your promises and not our problems. Increase our faith as we walk in your love. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.