

## Exodus 6-8 Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

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Thanks to Derek for covering Chapter 5 last week.

Since Ch. 6 is a set piece and continues the story of chapter 5, we need to recap as we begin tonight's study.

Moses & his elder brother Aaron have met with Pharaoh to request that they be allowed to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt proper, into the wilderness for a three-day period of devotion to God.

Pharaoh refuses and grows irate, calling the people lazy and Moses and Aaron trouble-makers.

Pharaoh then gives the order that the children of Israel, who have been subjugated to be the slave workforce of the land, are to be given no more straw to be used in the construction of the mud bricks that are the main material of their work projects.

From then on, they will have to gather their own straw, adding to their already overbearing workload.

When word reached the elders of the Jews, they grew irate with Moses and Aaron.

When Moses had first told them of his calling by God and that they would soon be free, they had been excited – but this turn of events seemed to them to be the very opposite of what Moses had said would happen.

They were expecting freedom, instead their slavery becomes more onerous.

Moses himself becomes discouraged and complains to the Lord.

### EXODUS 5

#### *E. Moses' First Encounter With Pharaoh • Ch. 5-6:27*

##### **1. 5:1-19 • Moses & Aaron Before Pharaoh**

## 2. 5:20-21 • Moses & Aaron Before the Elders of Israel

## 3. 5:22-6:9 • Moses Before The Lord

**22** So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why *is* it You have sent me? **23** For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all.”

Moses’ reaction to all that’s happened is so typical.

God had told him he would lead the people from their bondage, and as is so typical for human nature, we immediately jump ahead in our thinking and figure out *how* God is going to work. We devise a lovely scenario for how God will reveal His power and unfold His will.

Rarely does the path we devise lie through trouble and difficulty – not, it’s smooth sailing.

But the deliverance of Israel from bondage would not be a clean and simple affair.

God had far more in mind, far more to accomplish than simply lifting His chosen people out of their oppression.

You see, not only did He plan on taking Israel out of Egypt, He needed to take Egypt out of Israel.

He needed to reveal His absolute power over the nations of the earth so that the Jews might realize He was not just one among many gods – He is THE GOD.

In the world of that day – people thought there were many deities who exerted their power and authority over a certain geographical region, over a particular ethnic group, or over one of the forces of nature.

They believed that whichever nation or ethnic group was ruling over the others had the most powerful deities.

When one nation fought another, it wasn’t just a contest to gain land or resources, it was a showdown between one people’s god and the others.

Every war and battle was a religious contest.

As Israel had been over 400 years now in Egypt and had become a battered race of slaves, her God had become humiliated and subjugated to the mighty & many deities of Egypt.

As God now set about to effect the deliverance of His people, what had to be demonstrated to them was that He was not merely one deity among many, and a defeated one at that!

He is the Maker of Heaven & Earth = the ONLY GOD!

Renewing the covenant with the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob meant first of all, to make Himself known as God Almighty.

The way He would do this was by having a showdown with the supposed unconquerable deities of Egypt.

He would bring them low, and so show Himself to be the Supreme God.

But Moses knew none of this at this point.

All he knew was that the little scenario he'd worked out in his head for how God would use him was not coming to pass as he'd envisioned.

And he was bummed!

Do you know that God has good planned for you?

Do you know that He has a glorious future and a bright hope set before you?

**Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**

Do you know that he is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think?

**Ephesians 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,**

We can't even imagine the things God has in store for us!

**1 Corinthians 2:9 As it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."**

What we don't realize is that the path to such glory and blessing often, *usually*, leads through deep valleys, over rocky pathways, and through dark tunnels.

But that difficult journey is necessary because it's part of the process the Lord uses to mold and shape us so we can more fully enjoy and appreciate the glorious blessing that awaits us.

Tell me, who appreciates a cup of cold water more; the man who's been sitting in the lap of luxury, or the one who's just hiked 5 miles through the blistering heat?

Who appreciates the hot bubbling Jacuzzi spa more; the woman who's just had a massage, or the woman who's just spent 6 hours cleaning the house?

Who will appreciate the glory and power of God more, the one whose lived a life of luxurious plenty, or the one who's life has been known suffering and trial?

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Well, God is going to *reveal* His plan now to Moses . . .

## EXODUS 6

**<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.”**

Pharaoh may have *begun* with a strong hand to *resist* God & *keep* the Jews, but in the end he will *drive them out* just as strongly!

**<sup>2</sup>And God spoke to Moses and said to him: “I *am* [YAHWEH] the LORD. <sup>3</sup>I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as [El Shaddai] God Almighty, but *by My name [Yahweh] LORD I was not known to them.* <sup>4</sup>I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. <sup>5</sup>And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.**

God is a covenant keeping God and the promises He made to the fathers of the children of Israel, He will keep.

**<sup>6</sup>Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I *am* [YAHWEH] the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. <sup>7</sup>I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I *am* [YAHWEH] the LORD your God who brings you out from under the**

**burdens of the Egyptians. <sup>8</sup>And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I *am* [YAHWEH] the LORD.’”**

God is impressing on Moses the absolutely certainty of the success of his mission.

He is to go and tell the discouraged leaders of Israel that *their* God is named Yahweh, and that He will move to affect their deliverance – His very *Name* is staked on it!

**<sup>9</sup>So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.**

Here is a classic challenge for the people of God – to believe God’s Word or to believe one’s circumstances.

In this case, the children of Israel failed and chose to look at and believe in their circumstances.

But that wouldn’t change God’s faithfulness – He will still keep His covenant & promise!

#### **4. 6:10-13 • God’s Command To Moses**

**<sup>10</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>11</sup>“Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land.”**

Not for a three-day holiday in the wilderness, but altogether.

**<sup>12</sup>And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, “The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I *am* of uncircumcised lips?”**

If his own people whom He is supposed to be leading haven’t accepted his message, how will his opponent? And then Moses brings up the same sorry excuse he’d used before, that he was not good at official speech-making.

**<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.**

God will have none of Moses’ excuses! His word is final – “Go to Pharaoh and tell him to release the Jews!”

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## 5. 6:14-19 • The Elders of Israel

Now we get a listing of the elders of the children of Israel.

These are the guys with whom Moses and Aaron met to tell them the Word and counsel of the Lord.

- 14** *These are the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. These are the families of Reuben.*
- 15** *And the sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These are the families of Simeon.*
- 16** *These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi were one hundred and thirty-seven.*
- 17** *The sons of Gershon were Libni and Shimi according to their families.*
- 18** *And the sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath were one hundred and thirty-three.*
- 19** *The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of Levi according to their generations.*

## 6. 6:20-27 • The Descendants of Kohath

**20** *Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty-seven.*

**21** *The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri.*

Korah will come to play in the story later, so notice here that he is Moses' *cousin*, the son of his uncle Izhar.

**22** *And the sons of Uzziel [another of Moses' uncles] were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Zithri.*

**23** *Aaron took to himself Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as wife; and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.*

These 4 are the sons of Aaron – remember them because they will

play an important part in the story later.

**24**And the sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These are the families of the Korahites.

**25**Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Putiel as wife; and she bore him Phinehas.

Here's another man who will play an important role in the nation later.

Moses gives this listing of names so as to provide some background for later events.

**These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families.**

**26**These are the same Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies." **27**These are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These are the same Moses and Aaron.

#### ***F. Moses' Second Encounter With Pharaoh • 6:27-7:13***

Verses 14-27 are a parenthesis to the narrative of Moses' confronting Pharaoh, so as he returns to that narrative in v. 27, he sort of recaps . . .

**28**And it came to pass, on the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, **29**that the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I am the LORD. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you."

**30**But Moses said before the LORD, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh heed me?"

## **EXODUS 7**

**1**So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.

In ch. 5, Pharaoh had asked – "Who is Yahweh, that I should obey Him?"

God is telling Moses now that He will reveal Himself through Moses to Pharaoh; He'll do this through the wonders and miracles Moses performs before his eyes.

Since Moses doesn't think he's a capable speaker, Aaron will be his spokesman.

**2You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land.**

God will speak to Moses, who will in turn speak to Aaron, who will then speak to Pharaoh.

**3And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. 4But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them."**

There it is – God's plan *why* Pharaoh didn't just let the people go upon the first instance of Moses coming before him.

As I mentioned a couple weeks ago, at first reading, it appears that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, just so that He could bring the plagues on Egypt, but this is not the case.

Pharaoh hardened his own heart *first!* Then he hardened it again and again.

God simply honored his choice to not let the children of Israel go, and turned it to an *advantage* by using Pharaoh's hardness and rebellion to His command as the backdrop upon which to exercise His power and supremacy over all the gods of Egypt – which is what the plagues were all about.

Here's how it worked – Moses came to Pharaoh and said, "Let my people go."

Pharaoh, in his arrogance as the visible manifestation of the chief deity of Egypt was not about to bow in submission to the God of some inferior race of slaves and refused.

Having said "No" once, it made each subsequent refusal *easier*, even though the heat kept getting turned up as a repercussion to



his hardness & resistance.

At first, the Spirit of God was striving with Pharaoh, urging him to yield, but Pharaoh neglected this conviction of the Spirit and dug in his heels.

With each refusal, the ante was upped until the Spirit halted His striving with the king.

Since the only thing might have lead to his surrender was the striving of the Spirit, once that striving was removed, there was nothing left but his resistance.

So really God hardened Pharaoh's heart by simply honoring his choice and withdrawing His conviction.

**6 Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the LORD commanded them, so they did.**

Meaning they went in again before Pharaoh and demanded that he let the people go.

**7 And Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.**

**8 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,**

**9 "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a**

**serpent.'" 10 So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.**

**11 But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12 For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. 13 And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.**

Pharaoh was worshipped as a god among the Egyptians, and indeed, he had godlike powers of life and death over his subjects.

The monuments of Egypt stand today as mute testimony to the incredible power of the kings of Egypt.

So when Moses and Aaron appeared before this man who claimed

deity, he would ask what their credentials were.  
God told Moses to show the sign he'd learned in Exodus 4 when he stood before the burning bush – of turning the staff into a serpent.

Sure enough, Pharaoh asked for proof they were the emissaries of God and Aaron cast down his staff to have it turn into a snake. But this didn't seem so impressive to Pharaoh who called for his court spiritual advisers who were able to accomplish the same feat.

In 2 Timothy 3:8 the Apostle Paul names the chief magicians who took Moses' challenge as "*Jannes and Jambres.*"

There are some modern day commentators who say that what the magicians did was merely an illusion; that they came in with serpents who had been trained to appear as rods but when released from the hand would retain their normal shape.

This is unlikely. What we are seeing here is real, supernatural power. Remember that God is going to be showing his superiority over all the gods and powers of Egypt and it begins here, with His power over the priests of the Egyptian religious systems. These men were deep into the occult arts and had tapped into demonic power.

It was this which helped hold the people of Egypt in their insidious grip.

But God here shows His superiority to the gods and powers of Egypt by having Aaron's serpent-rod consume those of Jannes & Jambres.

Actually, this is pretty humorous! Imagine the look on their faces! Never forget that miracles are part of Satan's arsenal.

As it says in 2 Thess. 2:9-10, when speaking of the coming of the antichrist, "The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they may be saved."

Miracles only prove that something is *supernatural*, not that it's necessarily *true*.

A bit later, when God gave the Law at Mt. Sinai, He warned the children of Israel about blindly following someone just because

he or she was able to work some dramatic miracle or foretell the future.

He said that we must always check the message that follows the miracle – it too must square with the Word and revelation of God. If it doesn't then it has to be rejected.

Today, we have large meetings in which supposed healings are taking place.

There are a few televangelists who make wild claims about the miracles associated with their ministry.

They then use all this as explicit validation of their ministry and message, which is inevitably the health and wealth success gospel – which turns godliness into gain.

Investigations of the healings and miracles claimed by these charlatans all too often turn up bogus claims and fakery.

People who work for the supposed ministry masquerade as attendees, and engage people as they stand in line waiting to get in.

They discover what healing they are looking for and a bit about their personal lives.

This they then print up on cards and hand to the miracle worker who memorizes them and then later has a supposed word of knowledge while on stage, calling out people's ailments, healings, and so on.

The crowd gets whipped into a frenzy of excitement, and then the buckets are passed and guilt is applied to make people fill them.

Does God heal today – absolutely! Does God still perform miracles – of course!

But Christ came to show us *how* the Spirit of God works – quietly and with tender compassion.

No one performed more healings or dramatic miracles than did Christ.

Yet consider the humble and quiet way He did so.

It's difficult in the extreme to imagine Jesus *show-boating* as the modern televangelists of today do.

Listen to the message! That's the key. The presence of the supernatural is not enough.

Listen to the message – is it faithful to the Word of God?

## **G. The Plagues • 7:14-12:30**

### **1. 7:14-25 • The First Plague – Nile Turns To Blood**

**14**So the LORD said to Moses: “Pharaoh’s heart *is* hard; he refuses to let the people go.

This is a simple *diagnosis* on God’s part – He is telling Moses how Pharaoh himself has responded to the sign of the serpent.

**15**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; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. **16**And you shall say to him, ‘The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness”; but indeed, until now you would not hear! **17**Thus says the LORD: “By this you shall know that I *am* the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which *are* in the river with the rod that *is* in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. **18**And the fish that *are* in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river.””

**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.*” **20**And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that *were* in the river were turned to blood. **21**The fish that *were* in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was **blood throughout all the land of Egypt.**

God told Moses & Aaron to approach Pharaoh when he went to the riverside in the morning.

The Nile was esteemed by the Egyptians as one of their gods, or at

least, it was overseen by several of their deities.  
*Khnum* was the guardian of the Nile, but was shown to be impotent now.

*Hapi* was the spirit of the Nile who was defiled by the water turning to blood.

One of the chief Egyptian gods was *Osiris* who was thought to have the Nile as his bloodstream. If so, then now he was *bleeding!*

Pharaoh's morning trip to the river's edge was probably a formal religious ritual in which he went and bathed, or performed some rite which renewed the river's life-giving virtue.

It was fitting that Moses and Aaron arrive just at that moment to affect this first plague.

Aaron lifted his rod over the river, and when he did so, the water turned to blood, as did all of the stores of water drawn from the Nile throughout the land.

There was only one source of water left unchanged – that drawn from wells . . .

**22**Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. **23**And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. **24**So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. **25**And seven days passed after the LORD had struck the river.

It's been asked were the magicians got fresh water in order to duplicate the miracle and so enforce Pharaoh's resistance to God.

V. 24 tells us. Any water whose source was the Nile was turned to blood.

The only water not struck was well water.

## **EXODUS 8**

### **2. 8:1-15 • The Second Plague – Frogs**

**1**And the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that

they may serve Me. <sup>2</sup>But if you refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs. <sup>3</sup>So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. <sup>4</sup>And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants.””

<sup>5</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.’” <sup>6</sup>So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. <sup>7</sup>And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

With the first two plagues, Moses went to Pharaoh and first said, “Let my people go, or such and such will happen.”

Both times Pharaoh refused, and so the plague came.

This second time, it was frogs everywhere!

The Egyptians worshipped a goddess named *Heqt* who was always pictured with the head of a frog.

Frogs were considered *sacred* by the Egyptians because they lived along the banks of the Nile, much as the entire nation did.

The frog was sort of a *mascot*, the national symbol for the *people* and *culture* of Egypt.

And if they wanted to worship frogs, then God would give them frogs galore.

V. 3 says there were frogs everywhere – in their bed, even in their cooking pots and bowls.

When Pharaoh called for the magicians, they too were able to duplicate the miracle – that is, they were able to make frogs too.

But this isn't really the help Pharaoh would have liked from them.

Not *more* frogs, *less* frogs was the order of the day.

But the magicians weren't able to do anything about the abundance of amphibians.

<sup>8</sup>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 sacrifice to the LORD.”**

Oh, so it looks like the plague of frogs is going to work! Not quite.

**9**And Moses said to Pharaoh, **“Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, *that they may remain in the river only.*”**

**10**So he said, **“Tomorrow.”** And he said, **“*Let it be according to your word, that you may know that *there is* no one like the LORD our God.*”** **11**And the frogs shall depart from you, from your houses, from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only.”

**12**Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses cried out to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. **13**So the LORD did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields. **14**They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. **15**But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

Pharaoh went back on his word.

### **3. 8:16-19 • The Third Plague - Lice**

**16**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.’”** **17**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.

The third plague comes without warning and it was one which struck a mortal blow to the arrogance and pride of the Egyptians.

You see, they considered themselves superior to all others because

of their fastidiousness in personal hygiene. Most body hair was plucked or shaved and they practiced the most elaborate cleansing procedures. The priests were especially fastidious.

But lice were an affliction for the unkempt, for those whose personal hygiene left much to be desired.

A plague of lice would be a heavy burden, not only for the personal discomfort it would bring, but for the crippling effect it would have on their national psyche.

No priest would be able to officiate in the essential daily rituals that were supposed to sustain the life and prosperity of the nation.

**18** Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. **19** 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.

As defiled priests, the magicians would be contaminated by the lice and so cut off from laying hold of the power of their deities.

They saw in this third plague a brilliant strategy on the part of Yahweh and confessed his superiority over the gods of Egypt. But Pharaoh still considered himself a god and wasn’t going to admit defeat just yet.

#### **4. 8:20-32 • The Fourth Plague - Flies**

**20** And the LORD said to Moses, “Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me. **21** Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms *of flies* on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms *of flies*, and also the ground on which they *stand*. **22** And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms *of flies* shall be there, in order that you may know that I *am*



**the LORD in the midst of the land. <sup>23</sup>I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.”””**

With the fourth plague, God once again warns Pharaoh, and again Pharaoh refuses, so the plague descends – billions of flies that come over all Egypt, but do not inflict the realm and homes of the Jews.

This means that for the first 3 plagues, the children of Israel had been afflicted along with the Egyptians.

The purpose for this was to show that God *recognized & honored* Pharaoh’s rule over the land and all its inhabitants, and that his actions affected and afflicted others.

But with the 4<sup>th</sup> plague, God is moving now to show that Pharaoh doesn’t in fact have authority over the children of Israel; the day of his dominion over them is at an end!

**24 And the LORD did so. Thick swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants’ houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies.**

**25 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God in the land.”**

Pharaoh appears to relent, but it’s only a partial compromise, not a genuine yielding to the Lord; he says the people can take a break from their labor to worship after their fashion, but *only within the borders of Egypt*.

But Moses knows that the Egyptians would never allow the Jews to worship according to the way God commanded, which was by offering sacrifices of cattle and sheep.

Cattle were sacred while sheep were an abomination!

If the Jews set about to start offering such sacrifices as worship, the Egyptians would have been incensed and would have attacked them.

**26 And Moses said, “It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us?**

**27 We will go three days’ journey into the wilderness and**

**sacrifice to the LORD our God as He will command us.”**

**28** So Pharaoh said, “I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me.”

Pharaoh gives in – the flies are too much to contend with so he relents and asks that Moses quickly pray to his God to remove the plague.

**29** Then Moses said, “Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the LORD, that the swarms of flies may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.”

**30** So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. **31** And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. **32** But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.

V. 32 shows us that all along, up to this point – it’s been Pharaoh who’s hardened his own heart, while the Lord has been *striving* with him, both outwardly through the plagues, and inwardly with his spirit to move him to surrender.

But as soon as the distress is lifted, Pharaoh always reverts to his rebellion and refusal to yield to the Lord.

## **CONCLUSION**

I wonder if there are any Pharaoh-like ones among us tonight -

A man or woman who’s been confronted with the reality and power of God again and again but who resists and refuses to yield to the Lord.

A man or woman who keeps getting into trouble, and asks for help from the Almighty, but as soon as the trouble passes, forgets all about the Lord and lives as though there is no God.

You’ve heard the gospel time and again, but have always resisted.

God has striven with you, urged you to come, but you’ve held back.

Listen – there will come a time when God will no longer strive

with you.  
He'll honor your choice – and you will be truly lost!