

The First THREE Signs

SLIDE: Welcome >

Good morning saints.

We're continuing on in the Book of Exodus and will be getting into the **first three plagues** today – Lord willing.

~~ humor

A new pastor moved into town and went out one Saturday to visit his parishioners. All went well until he came to one house. It was obvious that someone was home, but no one came to the door even after he had knocked several times. Finally, he took out his business card and wrote on the back: Revelation 3:20 and stuck it under the door.

- Revelation 3:20 reads: "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with me."

The next day, he found the card in the collection plate. Below his message was scribbled the notation: Genesis 3:10.

- Genesis 3:10 reads: "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked."

SLIDE: PLAGUES >

*Frogs and Boils and Hail,
Oh My!*

The Ten Plagues – sometimes called “Signs” or “Miracles” – were a declaration of God’s being the Creator, the One and Only God. The first seven were in part directed at the Pharaoh and his worldview of polytheism, giving him the opportunity to voluntarily embrace the truth. But when he **DID** see the truth, he turned his back on it. The last three plagues then served as God’s demonstration to the Israelites and to the world of Who He is.

Why are there no Egyptian records of Plagues and the Exodus?

“A great majority of the historical monuments were intended as official propaganda with the purpose of transmitting to posterity a “correct” impression of the glory and power of the pharaohs. Crises of revolution and that type of inner strife so common in the Orient, as well as military defeats in foreign wars, were either passed over completely or were interpreted so that the monuments conveyed impressions much distorted and unduly colored to the credit of the Egyptians... darkness must forever continue to be ‘blacked out...”¹

SLIDE: MIRACLES OF EXODUS >

Now, these “plagues” WERE of supernatural origin – they were miracles from the power of God. However, ***MOST OF THE PLAGUES WERE NATURAL*** and had occurred previously in Egypt from time to time, which probably was why it took the Pharaoh some time to see them as anything totally out of the ordinary.

It is completely normal – according to the Scriptures – that God would use *ordinary* events and circumstances and nature’s various elements in an *extraordinary* way to achieve His purposes. **However, there was a significant difference with these plagues:**

1. **PRECISE TIME.**– started and stopped ON COMMAND
2. **PRECISE LOCATION** – miracles 4–9 ONLY AFFECTED the Egyptians and did not harm the Israelites
3. **INTENSITY** – while many of the plagues occur naturally, their magnitude/strength were UNPARALLELED NOW.

SLIDE: Miracles Chart

Click> Egyptian magicians were able to somewhat duplicate the rod–into–snake encounter plus first two plagues

(water turn to blood plus frogs). After that, they just stood by helplessly.

Click> **Prior warnings** – The “strokes” inflicted upon Egypt were actually not 10, but 3 sets of 3, all *progressive* in nature. Every third plague comes *without* a warning from Moses. Why? Perhaps to dispel the notion that Moses is just a good magician – since they happen when Moses is not around, he wasn’t doing them.

Click> **Immunity** –The first set of three plagues affect **both** Israelites and Egyptians. And, they were generally mild in nature, causing little more than discomfort. The next 2 sets of 3, that is, the next 6 “strokes”, were visited only upon the Egyptians; God in this way divided and separated His people from the others in the land of Egypt; He made a distinction between Israel and all others.

➤ **What would you guess** plague #10 would be here? Would it affect only the Egyptians or would it also affect Israelites?

Click> Israelites are affected also: ***NO IMMUNITY, UNLESS THERE IS THE BLOOD OF THE PASSOVER LAMB ON THE DOORPOST.***

As a side note: I think that most people tend to see the acts of God in Exodus as real. However, we TEND TO COMPLETELY DISMISS THE HAND OF GOD when we look at the upheavals of nature that we see today - “Hey, this is just **“nature doing its thing”**, don’t make it one of these wacko religious judgment pronouncements.

- Perhaps we can say that it was “just nature doing its thing” in Egypt, and perhaps it will **BE “NATURE DOING ITS THING”** at the END OF DAYS.

The Miracles in Revelation

SLIDE: REVELATION MIRACLES > ^a

Does Revelation really speak of Nuclear Weapons?

Will the plagues described in Revelation be radically different than the plagues of ancient Egypt? I think many consider that the plagues of Egypt as something we’d only find in backward nations. The bloody water, the hail, skin lesions, the locusts and so on.

^a Much of the material in the *Revelation Miracles* section is credited to Tom Bradford, *Torahclass Exodus Lesson 9 chapters 10-11*, <https://torahclass.com/teacher/35-old-testament-studies/old-testament-studies-exodus/128-lesson-9-chapter10-11>

And we tend to believe that the plagues or strokes mentioned in the Book of Revelation will be **A LOT MORE MODERN – MORE TECHNICALLY BASED!**

- *nuclear or biological weapons, our electrical grid failing, computer chips being neutralized, aliens attacking from outer space, zombie apocalypse, etc.*
- But – when you think about it – every one of these plague that we read about in Exodus would be **JUST AS DEVASTATING TODAY ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD AS IT WAS 3500 YEARS AGO IN EGYPT!**

Imagine if our drinking water became polluted on a near universal scale; could we use filtration to solve it? Probably, but at great expense and only the wealthiest nations would initially have it available: hundreds of millions would die from little more than tainted water.

- **Hurricane Harvey** in Texas right now – mostly just water but the extent is devastating... How about the 2004 **Tsunami** that killed an estimated 300,000 people? The great wave of seawater was caused by an earthquake; *you can't get much more low-tech than that.*

SLIDE: HURRICANE CAROL in Rhode Island >

1954 – I was 8 years old – I thought that this hurricane was named after my sister Carol who was a year younger. Here's a picture of the power of this storm.

We can look at what some recent storms did – Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and Hurricane Sandy in NYC. **Nothing particularly high-tech about a Hurricane, is there?** Just a big wind and a lot of rain.

Doomsday Plane: Just a little over a month ago, I ran across a news article from UPI: **“Pentagon's nuke-proof 'Doomsday' planes damaged by tornado:**

23 June 2017 | Updated: 19:24 EDT, 23 June 2017

Two of the Pentagon's specially reinforced "Doomsday" planes, designed to **withstand the heat from a nuclear blast**, were grounded after being damaged by a tornado, the Air Force said Friday. Two were damaged June 16 at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska when a tornado whipped through the area with little advance warning.”²

How ironic – man's best efforts to offset the effects of a man-made nuclear catastrophe is frustrated by a simple act of God's nature.

I know that some here are interested in End Times Prophecy. I've read a lot of the literature – especially during the 1980s – Hal Lindsay, *Later Great Planet Earth*, etc. – and most of these authors seem to treat the Revelation accounts of the seal and bowl judgments as being **REAL** but **NOT literal**.

John's description is said to be **FIGURATIVE**. Since he was writing in the 1st century, John could not really comprehend what he was seeing thousands of years in the future. Therefore – some say – he could only describe events in terms his readers could understand at the time. For example, one famous author on end-time prophecy claimed that when John talked about locusts with tails like scorpions, (Revelation 9), he probably was talking about helicopters (?)

But in fact, **most** of the judgments of Revelation use the ***SAME NATURAL ELEMENTS***, only greatly amplified and much wider spread, that the Exodus account of the plagues do:

- Hail, insects, darkness, boils, oceans and rivers turn blood red and the sea life dies; these all occur in Exodus just as they do in Revelation
 - Of course, some of the Revelation judgments that are not in the Exodus plagues: earthquakes, stars exploding, and meteors coming through our atmosphere.

But – even THESE types of events **DO OCCUR NATURALLY.**

GOD'S PATTERNS AND PRINCIPLES REPEAT all through history, and they will continue until the end of time. When we read of these incredibly destructive end-times phenomena in Revelation, we must not forget that they are of the exact same substance and design that we read in Exodus.

➤ THE **KEY** TO INTERPRETING REVELATION IS FOUND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

WE CAN TAKE THEM LITERALLY, AND SHOULD TAKE THEM LITERALLY, because these things have happened before, literally.

Ok –

Brief review of Free Will

The last time, we looked at the matter of the Pharaoh's free will and the hardening of his heart by God. If you missed it, I recommend that you visit the church website. The audio, the slides and the text of the presentation are there. I think

the information is **important**, because many people see God as *unfair* regarding the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

In reality, God did not *take away* Pharaoh's free will – if anything, he *strengthened* it to allow Pharaoh to do *exactly what he wanted to do!* God didn't do anything to him until the 6th plague – Pharaoh did the hardening all on his own!

- But at the same time – it is undeniable that God *didn't have* to do that – He could have let Pharaoh just give in anywhere from the 6th plague onward.
- God helped Pharaoh in his stubbornness did with a purpose and a Sovereign right to do it.^b

Ok –

SLIDE: EXODUS 7

Where we are in the Exodus story

Moses and Aaron went to the Pharaoh and are asked to show a miracle to demonstrate their credentials.

Moses throws down his staff and it turns into a snake. Pharaoh calls for his magicians and they do the same with their staffs. He's saying – what, you're bringing magic to Egypt?

^b Romans 9:17-20 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My Name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.' So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. You will say to me then, 'Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?' On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God?

That's like *bringing coal to Newcastle*.³ Egypt is the land of magic – it's the biggest magician place in the world. *Big deal you have a snake – we have 10 snakes.*

But then Moses' snake devours theirs. Pharaoh is unimpressed and walks out of the meeting. Pharaoh was thinking that Moses was probably just a better magician than his were, not that Yehovah was involved.

Pharaoh hardens his heart after seeing this display. What type of hardening? **Chaved haleb**^c – he *strengthens* his heart, gives himself a pep talk – he's steeling himself for battle with a very strong magician.

This would be the last warning shot fired over Pharaoh's bow.

- *"If you want to play soft, we'll play it soft. You want to play it hard. Let's play it hard."*⁴

^c See the previous presentation for two types of Hebrew words translated as "harden"

OK – that’s where we are in Chapter 7.

Let’s start reading in Chapter 7, verse 14:

SLIDE: EXODUS 7 – NILE WATER INTO BLOOD

1ST PLAGUE – NILE WATER TO BLOOD

Hebrew name: **DAM** ⁵ – **BLOOD**

The Water of the Nile Becomes Blood

¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he goes out to the river. Confront him on the bank of the Nile, and take in your hand the staff that was changed into a snake. ¹⁶ Then say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you: Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness. But until now you have not listened. ¹⁷ This is what the Lord says: By this you will know that I am the Lord: With the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into blood. ¹⁸ The fish in the Nile will die, and the river will stink; the Egyptians will not be able to drink its water.'"

¹⁹ The Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt—over the streams and canals, over the ponds and all the reservoirs—and they will turn to blood.' Blood will be everywhere in Egypt, even in vessels of wood and stone."

²⁰ Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood. ²¹ The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt.

²² But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said.

²³ Instead, he turned and went into his palace, and did not take even this to heart. ²⁴ And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water, because they could not drink the water of the river.

So, God instructs Moses to confront Pharaoh on the bank of the Nile, where the king is to be found in the morning, and say to him:

The God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness. But until now you have not listened."

Feel the tension. This is a public ceremony. It makes a big point that Moses did it in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of all his servants.

Aaron strikes the River with the staff, and all the water in Egypt — in "their streams, their canals, their ponds, and all their pools of water in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone" — turns to blood for seven days. Pharaoh's magicians duplicate

the feat on a minor scale, and Pharaoh turns his back and walks back to the palace.

- Note: you would have thought that the magicians might have *tried to reverse* the situation – but obviously they didn't even try because in a polytheistic worldview, the gods have the power to start some things but it's NOT controllable to the extent that they can turn it off at will.

QUESTION: WAS THERE ANY SORT OF RATIONALE FOR THIS BEING THE FIRST SIGN TO THE PHARAOH?

Certainly, God *could* have chosen to perform a miracle that the magicians COULDN'T imitate:

- ❖ Splitting the Nile River in two and Moses walking back and forth on the river bed to the other side, or...
- ❖ How about freezing-over the Nile and Moses skating on the ice?
 - Why chose a miracle that the magicians could imitate on a limited scale?

Was there any sort of rationale for THIS being the FIRST plague? The murder of the Hebrew male newborns by throwing them into the Nile upon the orders of a previous Pharaoh. (Exodus 1:22)

- NOW – THE WATER OF THE NILE WAS TURNED INTO BLOOD, AND THE COVERUP IS REVEALED!
- ❖ NO LONGER WOULD WATER ASSIST EGYPT IN PRETENDING THAT THE CRIME OF KILLING HEBREW BABIES IN THE NILE DIDN'T OCCUR. This sign is the first act of justice for this greatest of all crimes.

Yehovah had seen the crime. The truth IS now known – the crying infants ripped from their parents and murdered in the Nile – it's on all the nightly news shows – there's no hiding anymore. The aggressor is confronted with the reality of his crimes, and the abused now knows that GOD knows, that EVERYONE else now knows also.

But – just as his father (or grandfather) had shown no concern for the death of the Hebrew baby boys, this Pharaoh missed the entire point. He doesn't realized that this plague prefigured the future death of his own son.

- **BLOOD WAS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PLAGUES AND BLOOD WAS AT THE END.**

Question: WAS THIS ACTUAL BLOOD?

MAYBE. The Hebrew word used here is “dam” (Phonetic Spelling: *dawm*), which means blood. But, “dam” also means “bloody”, “bloodlike”, and it is even used when referring to

wine as the *'blood of the grape'* (Genesis 49:11, Deuteronomy 32:14). So, the use of the word "dam" **CAN REFER TO THE COLOR 'RED', 'BLOOD-LIKE'**.

- It *doesn't* necessitate our assuming that the Nile became **literal blood**.

It COULD have been something like a ***VERY SEVERE RED TIDE***. This occurs when a small microscopic plant gets into a body of water and causes it to turn red. Usually, it does kill some fish, but this was a severe case as whatever happened killed ALL the fish.⁶

We're told that everyone had to "dig around the Nile" for water to drink. In other words, just like at the beach, if you get near the water line and dig a little hole in the sand, the hole quickly fills with water as it seeps through the sand. The sand thus can act as a filter!

- **But – no amount of filtering** would have solved the problem if the Nile was *actual* blood.

Being a natural event that the Egyptians had seen before – but only on a much smaller scale and certainly not upon someone's pronouncement – the Egyptians would have known how to filter the microorganisms out of the "bloody" water.

- This would also answer a CURIOUS QUESTION: *WHERE did the magicians get the water from in order to perform their magic?* It probably came from the water that was gained from "digging along the Nile". The Egyptians would be familiar with this "fix" due to previous experience with the algae.

I could go either way on the issue. However, when you take this plague in context with all the others, literal blood seems out of place because **all the other plagues** – except for the 10th plague – used elements of nature. And, the reason why I lean toward it NOT being actual blood is that **it affected the Hebrews just as it did the Egyptians**. The unfiltered water of the Nile stayed "bloody-red" for a full seven days.

- If it had been *literal* blood, no amount of filtering would have made it drinkable – and many people would have been without water and would have died.
 - Because this event is pictured as a GREAT WONDER, NOT as an event of widespread *destruction and death*, I believe that it was not *actual* blood – but I'm not set in concrete on the issue.

But, Pharaoh hardened his heart – gave himself a pep-talk because the magicians could duplicate the miracle somewhat –

and he probably concluded that Moses was just a better magician than they were.

So, bring on the frogs...

2ND PLAGUE – FROGS

Hebrew name: Tzfardeiya⁷ – **FROGS**

SLIDE: EXODUS 8 – PHARAOH AND THE FROGS (starting at verse 1)

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite your whole territory with frogs. The Nile will swarm with frogs, which will come up and go into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed, and into the houses of your servants and on your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls. So the frogs will come up on you and your people and all your servants.'" Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the streams and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.'" So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. The magicians did the same with their secret arts, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Entreat **Yehovah** that He remove the frogs from me and from my

people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the Lord." Moses said to Pharaoh, "The honor is yours to tell me: when shall I entreat for you and your servants and your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses, that they may be left only in the Nile?"

Then he said, "Tomorrow." So he said, "May it be according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God. The frogs will depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people; they will be left only in the Nile." Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the Lord concerning the frogs which He had inflicted upon Pharaoh. The Lord did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, the courts, and the fields. So they piled them in heaps, and the land became foul. 15 when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the Lord had said."

The intent of the Egyptian magicians is on proving that they can do what Moses and Aaron have done – but ironically, they entirely fail to realize that far from making matters better for the Egyptians, they are making them *worse*: more blood, more frogs.⁸ Some people don't know when to stop, do they?

These Nile frogs are a unique variety that is quite small, and they can barely leap or hop at all. They are also known for generating the most obnoxious, never ending croaking.

The frogs crawled up to people. They were on the bed. They were in the ovens. And the ladies went to mix the dough, get the frogs out first. Put on your slippers – frogs frogs frogs everywhere.

Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Entreat Yehovah that He remove the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the Lord." Moses says, "glorify yourself over me. Make me do something you don't think I can do." - "when exactly would you like me to turn off the frogs?" And Pharaoh's response says "do it tomorrow."

- By the way – in the Hebrew text, Pharaoh refers to Moses' God by His Personal name – 'Yehovah'. Originally, Pharaoh said he didn't know of any god by that name – now we see a respect grudgingly developing.

When the frogs do die off at the time Pharaoh himself chose ("tomorrow"), he starts to have an *uneasy feeling* that's not obvious at first to the reader.

SLIDE: HOW TO DEMONSTRATE MONOTHEISM

Here is a question that we raised several sessions ago.

- *How can God demonstrate the truth of monotheism – there is only ONE God – to a world that it steeped in polytheism – the belief that there are MANY gods?*

- **HOW** are You going to convince them? It is not as simple as you might think!

We today think that monotheism is fairly obvious –the mere fact that the plagues *occurred* would be enough of a demonstration for us. BUT... that's **BECAUSE WE DO NOT HAVE A POLYTHEISTIC MINDSET.**

- Remember, most people then believed that there were many gods. **The essence of idolatry is the belief that every force has a god controlling it.** The fact that one god may do one plague and another do a second plague would NOT be proof that there is Only One God.
- Or even if Yehovah does **ALL** the plagues, how do you get across the idea that He is the **ONLY** God – and **not just the most powerful kid on the block?**

Well, the first way to try to convince people is thru an accumulation of evidence. If you were a good polytheist, you would say *“Nile turns to blood, hmm, okay, so let’s see; evidently the Nile god is angry with us”, but that wouldn’t prove that Yehovah is the Creator of the universe.*

- But then the frogs come; *“okay, so I guess the Nile god **TEAMED UP** with the frog god. These two gods made a temporary alliance against me. --- and then they must*

have gotten together with the insect god over here and then the fly god there and then”...

What happens is that the slow accumulation of evidence starts to **POKE HOLES IN THE THEORY** of an **ALLIANCE**.

Remember, in a polytheistic system, each of the gods *don't particularly like* the other gods so alliances would be few and far between.

❖ So at some point, you have to ask yourself – *why are so many gods are angry at us – gods who otherwise hate each other?*

The simplest explanation – if you dare to accept it – is that there is **ONE FORCE IN CHARGE** of all of this. So the accumulation of evidence in the Ten Plagues is one way you might show that you're the Creator.

-Precision-

But there is also a SECOND WAY to demonstrate Monotheism to a polytheistic world and it **BEGINS HERE WITH THE FROGS – IT IS THE CONCEPT OF CONTROL AND PRECISION**.

SLIDE: EDISON >

Thomas Edison said:

*“I know this world is ruled by infinite intelligence. Everything that surrounds us – everything that exists – proves that there are infinite laws behind it. There can be no denying this fact. It is mathematical in its **PRECISION**.”⁹*

- ❖ Edison here gives us **A CLUE** about *WHY* we’ll see that the Pharaoh will be so obsessed with searching for precision in the next 8 plagues...

SLIDE: POWER VS PRECISION >

In a polytheistic system, you could see **POWER**. The water god is going to be powerful, the earthquake god is going to be powerful. *Every god would be powerful.*

- What you **WOULDN’T SEE** is a lot of **PRECISION**.

Why? Because in the polytheistic mind, the way the universe works is with a lot of **CHAOS**. One day there is rain, another day there is sun; there is battles between the sun god and the rain god and nature is unpredictable. You can never really tell what’s going to happen.

- So in a polytheistic universe, you would see **POWER**; what you wouldn’t see is **CONTROL**.

So, certain things that Moses says does get Pharaoh's attention: "Wait a minute, Moses: you're saying that you can TURN IT ON in one second and then you say that you CAN TURN IT OFF with precision in time?" Then, *you said the plague will only affect HERE and no affect THERE whatsoever.*"

- **PRECISION IN TIME AND SPACE**

That's the kind of thing that really gets Pharaoh's attention because that's NOT something you see in a polytheistic universe. It's another indication that you are dealing with the Creator God; **THE AUTHOR OF TIME AND SPACE.**

The following line of reason is from Rabbi David Fohrman's excellent presentation:
<https://www.alephbeta.org/course/lecture/power-v-precision>

I understand that right now you may not completely understand what I am talking about right now.

Let's take a look at Pharaoh's response to the frogs. So remember there are frogs *everywhere*;

- Even his own magicians produced frogs as a demo of their own occult powers – **THE PROBLEM IS**

***THAT THEY CAN TURN ON A MINOR PLAGUE, BUT
THEY CAN'T TURN ONE OFF!***

Pharaoh has had enough of frogs. Pharaoh really just wants to get rid of the frogs, he says that he is willing even to let the Jews go as long as Moses can get rid of the frogs. So he calls Moses in for an audience and he says *“look, I want you to plead with Yehovah and just get rid of the frog.”*

Pretend for a moment that you were Pharaoh, and pretend that I am Moses and I am talking to you. You ask me to beg God to get rid of these frogs, and I will even let you go for your journey.

- Okay? Moses says, *“exactly when would you like me to get rid of these frogs?”* It’s like *“you tell me when, and Yehovah will stop it right then.”*
 - Moses says to Pharaoh: ***“PICK A TIME, ANY TIME.”***¹⁰
 - ***THIS IS NOT MAGIC, PHARAOH, BECAUSE YOU ARE DETERMINING THE TIME, NOT ME.***

If you were Pharaoh, what would you say? *“Yesterday would be good! Now would be even better! Like, let’s get rid of them already! Stop playing games with me”!*

- But Pharaoh’s actual response: ***“do it TOMORROW.”***

Why does Pharaoh specify *tomorrow*? He wants to see if Moses can really pull it off tomorrow.

Then Moses says, ok – just as you say. And it happens. God’s agenda here is that He wanted Pharaoh to learn:

- His power, through the **strength** of the plagues, and
- His **precision**, by limiting the impact of the plagues to only specific times and places.

And there’s also a **THIRD DIMENSION** of God’s agenda. And to illustrate that, let’s go back to **October 1, 1932**.

SLIDE: BABE RUTH CALLS THE SHOT ¹¹

We are at Wrigley Field in Chicago and it’s the 5th inning in the 3rd game of the **1932 Baseball World Series**. The Yankees and Cubs are tied 4–4. **BABE RUTH** steps up to the plate. Called Strike 1 – the crowd jeers. Called Strike 2 – the crowd jeers even louder. The crowd is in a frenzy. Just then, Ruth does something that would forever be remembered. With his bat resting on his shoulder, he points to a flagpole behind the center field fence as if to say, *“That’s where I’m gonna to hit it – over that wall.”*

The next pitch comes, Ruth leans in, and he smashes the ball over the center field wall, right by the flagpole – estimated

490 feet shot. Babe Ruth predicted his own homerun, in what would forever be known as **"THE CALLED SHOT."**

- **What made the "called shot" so epic?** What's the moment when you realize that you're witnessing history?
 - Is it when you see Ruth *point* to center field? – No – he just pointed!
 - **It's when he hits it** – that's when you realize how significant the earlier call was!

Perhaps that's exactly what's happening in the Exodus plagues and their stopping at God's command – God's version of "called shots". That *should* get Pharaoh's attention to with Whom he is dealing.

SLIDE: Tomorrow

So... up to now, the Pharaoh and the Egyptians saw the plagues as just a form of magic, not miracles. To Pharaoh's "magicians", Moses and Aaron are people like themselves who practice "secret arts". So they replicate them: they show that they too can turn water into blood and generate a horde of frogs. **But, now we see something different.**

Moses says to Pharaoh – when Yehovah stops this plague is **your** call, Pharaoh, **so there’s no possibility of trickery involved here.** *You tell me when, and it will happen, Pharaoh.*
And Moses says...

“This is going to demonstrate that there is no one like ‘yud hey vav hey’ ” = “like the Creator God.” (verse 8)

- Pharaoh should begin to realize that he was *not* dealing with the **garden variety of pagan magic** or with one of the many polytheistic gods that could *start* something but *could not turn it off* on command.
- There’s something different going on here. **You don’t find** this power over TIME in the polytheistic universe.

What’s Pharaoh’s response?

- He **CHOOSES** to make **himself STUBBORN, an impenetrable rock hardness to what he has just witnessed...**
- He’s just seen the fact that Yehovah is **not just powerful** but *also* **precise**, but he chooses to ignore it and not listen to Moses. (verse 12)

- **EVIDENTLY GOD HAS TO TALK LOUDER FOR THE PHARAOH TO HEAR!**

~~ God's sense of Humor!

As a side note: There were four Egyptian gods and goddesses depicted with the head of a frog.¹² One is Heh (Huh) – Egyptian god of time He was the god of **infinity and time, the god of long life and eternity.**

- **God shows that HE controls Time by making frogs hop along to do His bidding!**
- **Pretty humorous scene – like in the old western when the gunfighter makes someone dance by shooting at the person's feet.**

Every hopping frog in Egypt, every croak, every ribbit ribbit ribbit, was saying “Yehovah is God.”

3RD PLAGUE – GNATS/LICE

Hebrew name: Kinim¹³ – gnats/lice

SLIDE: EXODUS 8 – OF LICE AND MEN

Let's go to the final plague for today – the 3rd plague, the plague of Lice.

Exodus 8:16 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become [m]gnats through all the land of Egypt.'" 17 They did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats through all the land of Egypt. 18 The magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were [r]gnats on man and beast. 19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God (**Eloheim**)." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

This third plague – like every 3rd plague in the series – was UNANNOUNCED, so it took the Egyptians and most of the Israelites by surprise. The "plague" came when Aaron, as directed by Yehovah, had struck the dust of the earth with his rod.

It is impossible to determine what particular troublesome insect pest is meant by the 3rd plague, whether body-lice or mosquitoes or sandflies or ticks or fleas (kinim, "gnats" (Ex 8:16)). The KJV translates the word as **"LICE"**, but most other versions talk about "gnats"¹⁴, which would probably indicate **"FLEAS OR "SAND FLEAS"**¹⁵ – and Egypt had plenty of sand. Lice seems somewhat unlikely, because unless different kinds of lice were sent, there is no one kind that torments both man and beast.¹⁶

Those of us who have experiences with what we in the NE call **"NO-SEE-UMS"** know what pests they are. Tiny insects – **ALL TEETH!** My father, who joined the Marines in WWII and had basic training on Paris Island SC, said that the sand fleas would drive you insane; **they would get into places he didn't want to mention.** The Marine drill sergeant took pleasure in having the recruits lie on the beach and require them to remain perfectly still, simulating a combat situation, even while flies are biting. Anyone who moved caused company punishment for everyone.

SLIDE: FINGER OF GOD

Throughout all Egypt, the dust turned into these biting sand fleas. But when the magicians tried to produce them by their secret arts, they could not. The biting insects attacked

men and animals alike. The magicians said for the first time to Pharaoh, ‘This is the finger of God.’

- The occult can go so far, but at that point God said, “No further”. And they couldn’t duplicate this miracle.

Click>: Now – when they said, **“THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD”**, They don’t say “This is the finger of ‘YUD HEY VAV HEY’

- They say, “This is the finger of **Eloheim**”.¹⁷

Click> And as we previously, ‘Eloheim’ is a generic term in Hebrew that means POWER and it can apply to *multiple sources* that have power over you – a god (small ‘g’), gods, Yehovah, or even human rulers or judges.

- So, when our translations say “*God*” here, we can completely miss the point. All the magicians are saying here is that *some power – some deity* – is involved here. It’s no longer a contest of magic – it’s **NOT OUR FAULT** that we can’t produce this effect.
- But... this is NOT an admission that they recognize Yehovah. But, **THEY DO ADMIT THAT THEY’RE HUMBLLED BY THIS OUTSIDE POWER.**

So – we see here my point on how difficult it is to convince someone like Pharaoh who has a polytheistic mindset of the truth of monotheism. Yehovah is seen as just one of many gods – albeit perhaps the most powerful one – but still one of many.

- Yehovah will clear up the vagueness as the plagues go on.

So, Pharaoh now knows at this point that he's dealing with *some* supernatural POWER, not some form of super magic on Moses' part. Pharaoh is not yet at the point of understanding that this is the Creator at work; he sees this as the action of just one of the polytheistic gods,

And what's his response to all this? He *strengthens* his heart (**chazak, strong, make courageous.**)¹⁸

- You see, up to now, the plagues are affecting BOTH the Egyptians and the Israelites. Pharaoh probably is thinking "***I CAN ENDURE*** this discomfort as long as those Hebrews slaves can", and thus Pharaoh is back to giving his heart a **PEP-TALK** to continue to struggle.

However, starting with the *next* plague (dog flies), the Hebrews would NOT be affected at all. So his hardening on his own

heart will then be of the second type (*kabed haleb*)¹⁹ – stubbornness – that is needed to continue his struggle.

SLIDE: HUMOR

I mentioned God’s sense of humor with His control over Time and the frogs. There’s a lot of **humor in the Torah that I missed for years.** ²⁰

- The Holy Spirit often uses **SATIRE** to **MOCK THE PRETENSIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS** who think they are prideful and in control.

This third plague of sand fleas is a marvelous example for how God laughs at mankind’s pretentiousness.

- The plague caused by the **TINIEST** of insects *could not be replicated by the magicians*.

Their attempts must have been hilarious to see – they try, they fail, they try again – all the while scratching at the bites of the fleas. They go and tell Pharaoh of their failure, and Pharaoh just gets up and leaves the room, scratching all the way! Not so important now, are you Pharaoh? – you’re afflicted as much as the lowest of your subjects and the ugliest camel.

- Those in Egypt who **THOUGHT THEY COULD CONTROL THE GRAND POWERS OF NATURE** just discovered that they **COULD NOT EVEN CONTROL A FLEA.**

God mocks them by His presence in the tiniest of creatures. They had thought that their puny “powers” made them the masters of human destiny.

SLIDE: BE HUMBLE >

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up in honor. James 4:10

God was acting against Pharaoh’s PRIDE. Pride is the great downfall of humans.

STORY OF NAMAAN ^d

Namaan – commander of army of Aram, held a high position – he contracted leprosy. He comes to Israel to find the prophet Elisha, hoping for a cure. He thought, surely this lowly prophet of Israel will come out to me, Naaman the great warrior; and he will wave his hand over the area of my leprosy and I will be cured.

Elisha doesn’t go out to meet him but sends a message that he is to dip himself in the River Jordan 7 times and he will

^d 2 Kings 5:1-19

be cured. Namaan is insulted – he was a proud man. He was proud of his accomplishments, talents, power, position, and wealth. This prophet doesn't even have the respect to see me in person! Bathing in the Jordan for a cure was too lowly a task for him. Ask me to do something great, or just cure me outright because I am a great man.

Namaan's servants convince him to do it – “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed’!

So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

The first three plagues are the story of Pharaoh's pride and how he continues to ignore his obvious shortcomings in this battle with Yehovah.

SLIDE: JESUS CREATED THEM

Through Him **all things** were made, and without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men...

John 1:3-4

All things were made through Him. Jesus made those no-see-ums. And they were to serve a purpose – drive people to Himself.

*** By the way – THE GREATEST CALLED SHOT in history?

"Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.... But Jesus was speaking about the temple of His body" John 2:19, 21

Go to Jesus today and be cleansed.

Well – that's all for today... The next time we will come to the second grouping of the plagues. From here on out, there is a distinction between Goshen, where the Israelites were, and the rest of Egypt.

Endnotes

- ¹ Georg Steindorff and Keith Cedric Seele, *When Egypt Ruled the East*, University of Chicago Press, 1942 and 1957, p. 6
- ² *Tornado damaged two U.S. Air Force E-4B 'doomsday' planes*
<http://www.upi.com/Tornado-damaged-two-US-Air-Force-E-4B-doomsday-planes/3991498309846/>
- ³ <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/carry-coals-to-newcastle.html>
- ⁴ From movie *The Fifth Element*, Bruce Willis as Korban Dallas.
- ⁵ Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Hebrew #1818. 'Dam', Phonetic Spelling: (*dawm*); blood
- ⁶ National Ocean Service, *What is a red tide?* <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/redtide.html>
- ⁷ Strong's Hebrew #6854. Tsephardea Phonetic Spelling: (*tsef-ar-day'-ah*), frog
- ⁸ Lord Jeffrey Sacks, *Va'eira (Exodus 6:2-9:35)*, <http://www.aish.com/tp/i/sacks/185800472.html>
- ⁹ <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/t/thomasaed149045.html>
- ¹⁰ Takeoff on Rabbi David Fohrman, *The Exodus You Almost Passed Over*, p. 108
- ¹¹ AlephBeta, The Parsha Experiment, *Parashat VA'ERA: The Exodus and Babe Ruth*
- ¹² <http://egyptian-gods.org/egyptian-gods-kuk/>
- ¹³ Strong's # 3654. 'Ken' - Phonetic Spelling: (*kane*), gnats, <http://biblehub.com/hebrew/3654.htm>
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, *Plagues of Egypt*, <http://www.internationalstandardbible.com/P/plagues-of-egypt.html>
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Strong's Hebrew #430. 'Elohim'
- ¹⁸ Strong's Hebrew #2388. 'Chazaq', Phonetic Spelling: (*khaw-zak'*), strong, make courageous
- ¹⁹ Strong's Hebrew #3513. 'Kabad', (pronounced *kaw-bad'*), heavy, insensible, dull of the eyes, so as to be unable to see.
- ²⁰ Sacks, *ibid.*