

Exodus Part 9 – “The Finger of God”

1. Prayer -
2. Joke – “Power in the blood” mosquito.
3. Exodus 8:1-15
 - a. *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. 2 "But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite your whole territory with frogs. 3 "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. 4 "So the frogs will come up on you and your people and all your servants.'"*
 - b. *5 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.' " 6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. 7 The magicians did the same with their secret arts, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt. 8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Entreat the LORD 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."*
 - c. *9 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?" 10 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. 11 "The frogs will depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people; they will be left only in the Nile."*
 - d. *12 Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had inflicted upon Pharaoh. 13 The LORD did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, the courts, and the fields. 14 So they piled them in heaps, and the land became foul (stank). 15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.*
4. **2nd Plague: Frogs**
 - a. Up till now, we have had a single miracle, that of the Nile river turning to blood. Now, another plague is pronounced and Pharaoh is warned.
 - i. 2 warnings, 2 plagues.
 - b. Imagine having frogs in your beds, your ovens, your kneading bowls (where you cook your food) and everywhere in your house. Ribbit.
 - i. Most of us keep our homes so clean that a fly cannot survive.
 - ii. Here were slimy amphibians, hopping everywhere, big frogs and little frogs,
 - iii. These were edible frogs and the only species of the area, but they were not especially regarded by those who didn't see them as food, but rather a nuisance.
 - iv. Why didn't God send crocodiles or bears or other man eating creatures out after them?
 1. Because one might suspect that these animals simply ran around looking for human foods and might have accorded their arrival to a natural cause.
 2. I also believe that God didn't want His plagues confused with natural phenomena that could be rationalized away, but wanted to send a clear message that He was the author of the action.
 - c. Magicians imitated the miracle but could not remove them from the land.
 - i. Their inability to remove the frogs had to to make them wonder if their powers were limited.
 - d. Pharaoh offers to let the people go if the plague of frogs is ended..
 - i. Moses replies *“that you may know that there is no one like the Lord OUR God.”*

1. Oh that you may know that there is no one like the Lord Our God!
 2. What signs and wonders can prove...how do we yet explain them away?
 3. How and why do we find excuses to deny the evidence of God's existence and love?
 4. Over and over God demonstrates that there is none like Him.
 5. And over and over, we act like Pharaoh and deny the evidence right in front of our faces.
- ii. And Moses tells him to name the time. Do you know why Moses did this?,
1. He did this in order to show that the coming and going of the plague had no dependence upon the positions of the planets, or the luckiness of any one hour more than another; which were the things that the magicians depended upon.
 2. Moses is making sure that there is no doubt that the Lord is known as the only God and that there is none like Him!
 3. Moses prays to God and it happens. The frogs die, and they stink! That's a nice reminder of God's judgments.
- e. But as soon as there was relief, Pharaoh hardens his heart.
- i. **Promises made to God in times of crisis rarely last.**
 1. I have often seen a person who is sick asking for prayer, begging God to make them well, and offering to serve Him in whatever way they can, forever if they are healed.
 - a. Then, when they get well, they never darken the door of the church, but live again the way they did before their disaster struck.
 2. I know of individuals when going through a divorce have come to church to seek God's help and comfort for a few months, but then disappear as soon as they meet someone new.
 3. When I counsel someone who is going through a crisis, my advice and my prayer is not for them to simply have their problem solved or their prayer answered.
 - a. To do that ignores their long term need.
 - b. Instead, I counsel them to get as close to God as they possibly can during this crisis, to not focus upon relieving the pain, but upon getting close to Jesus.
 - c. When the crisis passes, whether or not your prayer was answered to your own satisfaction or not is not important.
 - d. What is important is that you KNOW Jesus personally and intimately.
 - ii. Too often people will reject personal dependence upon God when things are going good, but they will seek God's favor when life is difficult or in crisis..
 1. These are those Jesus spoke of in Matthew 7:21-22 "*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*"
 - iii. Unless the heart of a person is renewed and their spirit reborn, they can expect to hear the words, "I never knew you" at the end of their lives.
 1. Jesus said that "*unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of heaven.*"
 2. This means that being a Christian is not about asking God to be your magic genie.
 - a. There is nothing special in that!
 - b. People all over the world pray to their gods for help.
 3. **Being a Christian is about becoming a brand new creation through Jesus Christ..**
 4. Your own efforts will never earn you entry into the kingdom of heaven!

- a. All of the good things you can do will not be enough.
 - b. Only the cross of Christ is sufficient to pay your way.
 - c. When you recognize that your sin is too costly for you to pay for it, and in your desperation, you call upon Jesus to take your place (which He did 2000 years ago on the Cross), He comes into your life and in a supernatural act, causes you to be born again.
 - d. In this wonderful experience, your spirit is reborn and God's spirit takes up residence inside of you and begins the renewal process from the inside out of your life.
 - e. No longer are you trying to win God's approval, but you become His child, and possess the inheritance of eternal life.
 - f. The bible says that "*all who believe in His Name will not perish but have everlasting life.*"
 - g. This is God's promise for you.
- iv. Don't be like Pharaoh, coming to God for a handout when things get tough, just to turn your back on him later when the pressure is off.
 - v. Come to Jesus today. Give Him your heart and let Him come into your life. He will always be there for you if you do.

5. 3rd Plague: Exodus 8:16-19

- a. *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become 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 gnats on man and beast. 19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.*
- b. Aaron strikes the dust of the earth and it becomes gnats.
 - i. No warning is given to Pharaoh. No edict is given.
 - ii. Imagine this, Moses and Aaron don't tell Pharaoh that this next judgment is coming, Aaron is simply told to act and God responds.
 - iii. The Egyptians can only wonder where this is coming from, since Moses and Aaron aren't present and didn't warn them. Yet, their magicians know how to add 2+2 and they come to the conclusion that this is another plague sent through Moses and Aaron.
- c. If you have ever tried to breathe when you walk through gnats, you know how tough it is, and how gross it can be.
 - i. Insect repellent doesn't even work on gnats.
 - ii. They just hover and flit and fly all over you. They get in your eyes, your nose, and your mouth.
- d. Others translate this as lice, not gnats.
 - i. This is the preferred interpretation that the context supports, as gnats do not land ON people so much as swirl around them.
 - ii. But lice, they take up residents on both people and animals.
 - 1. In the space of twelve days a full-grown female lays one hundred eggs, from which, in the space of six days, about fifty males and as many females are produced. In eighteen days these young females are at their full growth, each of which may lay one hundred eggs, which will be all hatched in six days more. Thus, in the course of six weeks, the parent female may see 5,000 of its own descendants!
 - 2. One commentary noted that this insect buries both its sucker and head in man or animal; and can only with very great difficulty be extracted before it is grown to

its adult size, and filled with the blood and juices of the creature on which it preys.

- e. The magicians try to use their secret arts and cannot. They can only tell Pharaoh, there is someone bigger than us here.
 - i. This is the finger of THEIR God.
 - ii. The magicians are willing to acknowledge the God of the Israelites, but the Pharaoh is not willing to. His heart is hard.
 - iii. The magicians are willing to admit “This is the finger of God.”
 1. The Pharaoh’s heart is still hardened.
 2. He hardened his heart the first time when the plague of frogs stopped, and he does it in the face of this newest plague.
- f. What does the finger of God look like?
 - i. **The finger of God is the unmistakable and undeniable evidence of God’s activity and power.**
 1. **The ten commandments** - that God gave to Moses on two tablets of stone were “*written with the finger of God*” (Exodus 31:18; cf. Deuteronomy 9:10).
 - a. In other words, God authored them and supernaturally placed them in writing on the stone tablets.
 - b. This was unmistakable. Their origin was unquestionably from God.
 2. **God’s creation:**
 - a. “*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?*” (Psalm 8:3-4)
 - b. It is beyond human understanding how that which was not came into being at the simple word of God.
 3. **Miracles.**
 - a. Jesus stated: “*But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you*” (Luke 11:20)
 - b. Miracles are more than unexplained activities.
 - c. **Miracles are events that defy and even contradict the natural laws of the created order.**
 - d. Science will never explain a miracle. Only faith can grasp it.
6. Here is a question for you that is relevant for this week, “Are storms the finger of God?”
 - a. I got emails from people declaring the N. Orleans was being punished for its decadence and sin. They blamed the destruction on the finger of God in retribution for its evil.
 - i. But what about Buloxi, MS and Mobile, AL? Were they as evil as New Orleans?
 - ii. Why was the French Quarter spared while the rest of the city destroyed?
 - b. It is distressing that natural disasters are often termed “acts of God” while no “credit” is given to God for years, decades, or even centuries of peaceful weather.
 - i. God created the whole universe and the laws of nature (Genesis 1:1).
 - ii. Most natural disasters are a result of these natural laws at work.
 - iii. Hurricanes, typhoons, and tornados are the results of divergent weather patterns colliding.
 - iv. The Bible proclaims that Jesus Christ holds all of nature together (Colossians 1:16-17).
 1. Could God prevent natural disasters? Absolutely!
 2. Does God sometimes influence the weather? Yes, see Deuteronomy 11:17 and James 5:17.
 3. Does God sometimes cause natural disasters as a judgment against sin?

- a. Yes, see Numbers 16:30-34. The book of Revelation describes many events which could definitely be described as natural disasters (Revelation chapters 6, 8, and 16).
 - 4. Is every natural disaster a punishment from God? Absolutely not.
- v. In much the same way that God allows evil people to commit evil acts, God allows the earth to demonstrate the consequences sin has had on Creation.
 - 1. Romans 8:19-21 tells us, *“The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”*
 - 2. The fall of humanity into sin had effects on everything, including the universe we inhabit.
 - 3. Everything in Creation is subject to “frustration” and “decay.”
 - 4. Sin is the ultimate cause of natural disasters just as it is the cause of death, disease, and suffering.
 - 5. That God used supernatural disasters to judge Egypt, to “show His Power” should not surprise us.
- vi. But, I believe that **the finger of God is evidenced not so much in the disaster but through of the hands of people who show God’s love in its wake.**
 - 1. Thousands of disaster relief workers from SBC have begun the journey to feed, clothe and rebuild the homes lost in the disaster.
 - a. Millions of dollars will be given through people like you and me. Not just to relieve the suffering but to show the love of God in a practical way.
 - b. God will touch many through this horrific event if we will let Him work through us.
 - 2. Arcola Trailer Park outreach was the finger of God touching them through us.
 - a. Report the results
 - b.
- c. So, when a tornado tears through a community, is God destroying that community for its sins?
 - i. Is the tornado the finger of God?
 - ii. Jesus faced a similar question in Luke 13:4-5. *“do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? 5 “I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”*
 - iii. Do you see His answer? Natural disasters for the most part are not God’s judgment against a community. If it were true that they were, then why should we help them clean up?
 - 1. The Old Testament is filled with references to God using disasters, storms, lightning, hail, etc. to show His fury and His wrath against people.
 - 2. But nowhere in the New Testament is there references to these kinds of events. (except in the book of Revelation where there are a few earthquakes and meteors sent by God).
 - 3. Preachers for years have used the Old Testament to infer that the horrible calamities that have happened were the acts of judgment of an angry God upon sinners.
 - a. And I believe that Christians have missed the lesson that we should really learn from these disasters. The disasters are not about God’s wrath. They are really about God’s mercy.
 - iv. Folks, God’s anger at sin was completely vented upon sin at the cross 2000 years ago.

1. Every bit of His wrath was poured upon Jesus, His own Son, who was taking our sin and the punishment and wrath it deserved.
- v. Truth is, we are all guilty before God.
 1. None of us is an innocent bystander, but sinners before a perfect and holy God.
 2. The disasters are not God's judgment. This is a terrible mischaracterization of God's nature.
- vi. Sometimes we wonder why Bad things happen to God (relatively speaking) people.
- vii. But the wonder should be "why good things happen to bad people!" (of which we all fall into at some level.)
- viii. The wonder then isn't that natural disasters occur, but rather why God doesn't use them to punish every one of us!
 1. And the awe and wonder is found in the cross of Jesus Christ.
 2. Jesus was the only one who didn't deserve to die or deserve to experience God's wrath, yet he not only took our sin upon himself, but the wrath that they deserved, so that we could be forgiven when He died in our place.
- ix. If you are walking around thinking that God is mad at you, you are so wrong. He may be disappointed in you, but He is not angry at you.
 1. He loves you and wants you to be saved.
 2. He wants you to spend eternity in Heaven.
 3. There is only one place, one judgment left...and it is not on this earth. It will be when you leave this body.
 4. Jesus said it in the passage above. "*Unless you repent (change) you will all likewise perish.*"
 5. Repent means to turn around. We will all die someday.
 - a. Some of us will die in terrible storms and accidents, others in the quiet of our own homes at the end of a long and fulfilling life.
 - b. How our lives end is not as important as being ready for that day by having Jesus in our hearts.
 6. Don't you want to hear Him say, "I knew You. You knew Me. You are mine. Come in to the joy of Your Master."
 7. You can.

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9. In *The Problem of Pain*, C.S. Lewis said: "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."
- a. I believe the finger of God is most evidenced at the Cross. The Cross is the pinnacle of the work of God on earth; His supreme gift to you and I. What does Christ's death on the cross show us about the finger of God?
10. **Christ died on the Cross to show us our sin.**
- a. Part of the message of the Cross is that Jesus went there to pay the penalty for our sin.
 - i. Our sin sent him there.
 - ii. In his death on the Cross, we see the gravity of our sin
 - iii. If there were another way that God could have dealt with our sin he would not have done it?
 - iv. That Jesus Christ had to die to atone for our sins speaks volumes concerning the sinfulness of our sin.
 - v. Sin is not simply a mistake.
 - vi. It is not merely a shortcoming or a fault.
 - vii. God takes it extremely seriously, and so should we.
 - viii. Sin is an evil thing, an affront to a holy God.
 - ix. It is a deadly cancer eating away the moral life of the soul.
 - b. It is on the cross that sin is judged.
 - i. The finger of God points to sin and calls it death.
 - c. We only treat sin in a casual manner because we do not see the seriousness of our own sin. It is at the Cross that we finally see sin for its utter horror.
11. **Christ died on the Cross to show us our inability.**
- a. There is absolutely nothing that we can do to pay for our own sin.
 - b. We have been so thoroughly corrupted by sin that we need a Savior.
 - c. We cannot reform ourselves.
 - d. We cannot do enough good works. God's finger points to our inability to pay the price of our sin. All of the good works that I can do will not be enough to cancel out even one sin, much less a life time of choosing my own way.
 - e. All our righteousness has come up short. We need a savior to pay our way!
12. **Christ died on the Cross to show us God's love.**
- a. It is true that we are sinful. It is also true that we cannot save ourselves.
 - b. It is also true that God would be perfectly justified in condemning us. T
 - c. This is not a popular notion, but it is absolutely true. I
 - d. God is holy and has every right to demand payment from us for our sin.
 - e. But what we see in the Cross is that God is love.
 - f. While He is holy and must punish our sin, He is love and pays for our sin himself!
 - g. That is what we see in the Cross— God, in the person of Jesus, suffering for our sin. Isn't that Incredible!
13. **Christ died on the Cross to show us the way of life.**
- a. What we see in the Cross is more than a sacrificial death.
 - b. What we see portrayed there is a way of life.
 - c. **We are now to live by the principle of the Cross.**
 - d. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."
 - e. This means that there must be a daily surrender of ourselves to God.
 - f. There must be a daily dying to our own agenda apart from God.
 - g. To pick up our Cross daily is to affirm our allegiance unconditionally to him.

14. Christ crucified means that we must live the crucified life of dependence.

- a. The secret of the Christian life is not to be found in keeping some set of abstract principles
- b. This is where the power comes in. ‘
- c. The secret pf the Christian life is found in living a crucified life, one that refuses to depend on your own strength and chooses God’s strength.