

March 16th, 2023

The Second Plague: Frogs From the Underworld

Exodus 8:1-15

Defeating Egypt's gods

Last week we saw God unleash the first of ten plagues on Pharaoh and all of Egypt for refusing to let His people Israel go. He turned the Nile to blood and it killed all the fish and forced the Egyptians to dig at the river banks for water. It remained that way for seven days and the land stank. God showed Egypt that their river gods Osiris and Hapi were powerless against Yahweh. That's what these plagues are, they are the utter defeating of Egypt's gods.

Progressive nature of the plagues

But there is something else we need to see. There is a progress in these plagues. **First** there is a progress in the severity of the plagues. With each disobedience on the part of Pharaoh, God judges Egypt more severely. The first three plagues attack *their comfort*—the river, the frogs, the gnats. The second three plagues attacked *their possessions*—flies that ruined the land, diseased livestock, and painful sores on their bodies. The last four plagues attacked *their livelihood*—*devastating hail, devouring locusts, darkness and the death of the firstborn*. Each plague gets progressively worse.¹ **Secondly**, there is a progress in the revelation of Yahweh. With each plague we learn more about the LORD. In the first plague we learned that God is a God of justice. The Egyptians drowned Israel's sons in the Nile, so God turned their Nile into blood. Children some of you have memorized a verse on God's justice. Deuteronomy 32:4 "The Rock, his

¹ Insight here provided by A.W. Pink's *Gleanings In Exodus* pg. 101 <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/pink/Gleanings%20In%20Exodus%20-%20Arthur%20W.%20Pink.pdf>

work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.” The bloody river showed that the wages of sin is death. And we learned that Jesus Christ became a river a fountain of blood washing away the sins of all who trust in Him. Here in the second plague, the LORD is going to reveal Himself in such a way so that even Pharaoh would know that “there is no one like the LORD our God.” He is the...

★ Lord of the Animal World

★ Lord of the Underworld

★ Lord of the New World

I. Lord of the Animal World

The untrainable frog

Please look with me at v.I-2 “Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, “Thus says the LORD, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. ²But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your country with frogs.”” The threat itself is amazing. God is telling Pharaoh that He can summon beasts to do His will. I was talking to a brother yesterday who is about to get a new puppy. In order to make that puppy into a hunting dog, much training is required, hours and hours and hours. Dogs can be trained. We can train dogs to hunt, to guide the blind; to sniff out drugs; to heard livestock, to search and rescue. This training is called *operant conditioning*—an animal learns to associate a behavior with a consequence. Do you notice that in these plagues, God summons animals and insects that this type of operant conditioning doesn’t work on; frogs (2nd plague), gnats (3rd plague) and flies (4th plague). Even if operant conditioning could be used on these creatures sometime in the future, it would require intense labors and multiple hours of

training. God threatens Pharaoh with an immediate, spontaneous frog invasion. “Let my people go...[or] I will plague all your country with frogs.” God doesn’t need to train them, hypnotize them, or drug them. He simply summons them and they come. I can’t even get my little chihuahua to do that when she is being stubborn.

Swarming frogs

And God doesn’t do this with one frog, but millions of frogs. Look at v.3 “The Nile shall *swarm* with frogs...” The verb for swarm in the Hebrew means ‘to increase, to multiply to be innumerable.’ It’s used in Genesis 1:20 when God says “Let the waters *swarm* with *swarms* of living creatures”—let the waters increase with multitudes of innumerable creatures. Here God summons an innumerable frog army—millions of frogs—to invade the Egyptians.

Our 1st principle: All creatures are in God’s army

That brings us to our **first principle**: *every creature (bird, beast, fish and insect) on earth is enlisted in the Lord’s army and they do whatsoever He wills.* He is sovereign LORD over the animal world. He did not *merely* create the animal world, He controls them, commands them, summons them to do whatever He desires. And this is all over Scripture.

He sent hornets to drive out Israel’s enemies. Exodus 23:28 “*And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites from before you.*”

He sent snakes to punish Israel. Numbers 21:6 “*Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.*”²

² also cf. Jeremiah 8:17

He caused a donkey to talk to stop a disobedient prophet. Numbers 22:28
 “Then *the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey*, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?””

He summoned ravens to feed the hungry prophet Elijah. 1 Kings 17:4 “You shall drink from the brook, *and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.*”

He caused hungry lions not to eat His faithful people. Daniel 6:22 “*My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths*, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him...” **He caused other lions to eat unfaithful people.** 2 Kings 17:25 “And at the beginning of their dwelling there, they did not fear the Lord. *Therefore the Lord sent lions among them, which killed some of them.*”

He caused a whale to swallow a disobedient prophet. Jonah 1:17 “*And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah.* And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.” **And He caused that same whale to spit him out.** Jonah 2:10 “*And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.*”

Celebratory Use

There is not one creature on earth—whether it be a frog or a firefly, a lion or a lamb, a crocodile or a cricket that He does not command. Dear congregation, this is the God of the Exodus, the God who can summon every creature on earth to accomplish His will. What does this reveal to you about the God you serve? Well we shouldn’t conclude that God needs the aid of the animals, as if He needed these frogs. God doesn’t need frogs or any creature. As the WCF 5.3 says

“God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, *yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.*”

Or as Puritan George Swinnock says “Whether God have little or great means, means or no means, it is all one to Him...for he does as much when he has means as when he has none.”³ God doesn’t need the animals. So then *why* does He use them? **Well, consider that in all those examples given the LORD uses His animal army to aid us in our great redemption.** God employs the animal world not only to manifest His great power and glory but to ensure the salvation and deliverance of His people. What a staggering thought! Not only does God send angels to serve us who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14), but He sends animals. The LORD has sent animals to feed prophets, to warn and punish the wicked, to drive out enemies, to prevent evil, to redirect disobedient prophets to preach the gospel to a lost people. Animals are *not* just here for our food and clothing and to help us in labor. Certainly those are all great blessings. But this passage makes us look further. God has used His animal army throughout redemptive history to promote righteousness and punish wickedness. God has used His animal army to preserve gospel preaching, to protect His people, to execute His judgments on the wicked.⁴ That’s the God we serve, the God who not only employs angel armies but animal armies to promote His glory and save His people. That’s our **first point**: *God is Lord over the animal world*

II. Lord of the Underworld

The frog princess

There is more going on here than *mere* frogs. This was an assault against Egypt’s worship of the frog goddesses Hekhet. John Currid notes here:

³ George Swinnock, *The Incomparableness of God*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2020), pg. 94

⁴ cf. <https://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/lions-reportedly-saves-pastor-and-his-friends-from-attack-by-islamic-extremists.html>

“The Egyptians regarded the frog as a symbol of divine power and a representation of fertility. One of the major goddesses of Egypt was Hekhet, who is depicted as a human female with a frog’s head.”⁵

She was the goddess of sex. This frog princess, they believed, helped women in their fertility. And “frogs were a symbol of natural fertility” because they “... regularly and normally bred each year in abundance.”⁶ So do the math. What does an outta control frog population say? That Hekhet, the frog princess, is powerless against Yahweh.

Eating and sleeping with the frogs

And the frog population was out of control. All three social statuses were affected—the King, the middle class, and the slaves. Look at v.3 “The Nile shall swarm with frogs that shall come up into *your* house (Pharaoh) and into *your* bedroom and on *your* bed and into the houses of your servants (their slaves) and *your* people (the ordinary folk), and into your ovens and your kneading bowls.” Children, boys and girls, when I was your age I always thought this was the cool plague. Frogs! I’ve always been fascinated with frogs. They jump high, swim fast and can catch flies with their tongues. But as I was lying in bed the other night thinking about this passage, I realized how horrible this plague would have been. The frogs were in their beds. How could they sleep? They were in ovens and kneading bowls—those instruments used to prepare food. How could they eat?

⁵ John D. Currid, *Exodus Vol. 1: Chapters 1-18*, (Auburn, MA.,: Evangelical Press, 2000), pg. 173

⁶ Rousas John Rushdoony, *Commentaries on the Pentateuch: Exodus*, Vallecito, CA.,: Ross House Books, 2004), pg. 86

“I’m froggy”

But it was even worse than that. Look at v.4 “The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your servants.” The frogs shall even come up on you! On your person. Meaning, they are climbing up your legs, jumping on your lap, your face. You couldn't read a book. You couldn't have a normal conversation. You couldn't find rest anywhere. Look at the end of v.6 says “the frogs came up and *covered* the land of Egypt.” This word ‘covered’ is used elsewhere in Exodus to signify a complete submersion. The locusts in 10:5 ‘covered’ the land “so that no one [could] see the land.” Pharaoh and his men were ‘covered’ by the Red Sea when God collapsed the walls of water down upon them (Exodus 14:28). Here the land was covered, submerged in frogs, so you couldn’t see the ground. The frogs were one on top of another, and it appeared the ground was in constant motion. You couldn't walk around without frogs exploding and popping under your feet.

Elenctic Use

Where did this frogs come from? Look at v.5-6. Probably this happened after Pharaoh had refused to obey. “And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the canals 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.” But someone may say ‘How could these frogs come from the Nile and all the waters if they were just now spoiled by the plague of blood?’ The God who turned the Nile into blood doesn’t need pre-existing frogs. He called them forth into existence.

Clue #1: They came from the abyss

The important question is *not how* they got there, but what do they represent? There are several clues. **First**, notice these frogs came from the

water itself—the Nile, the rivers, the canal, the pools. They came from the darkness of the deep. Water in Scripture can signify life. But it can also signify the grave, the abyss, Sheol. The Psalmist cries out in Psalm 69:1-2 “Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. ²I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me.” I suspect that is why Revelation 21:1 says “the sea was no more” in the New Heavens and the New Earth, not because there is no more sea literally, but that it will no longer be a sign of the dark abyss where death abides. That’s our **first clue**, these frogs came from the place Scripture associates with death.⁷

Clue #2: They were unclean and defiling

Our **second clue** is that frogs were “unclean” and “detestable” according to OT dietary laws. Please turn to Leviticus 11:9-12 “These you may eat, of all that are in the waters. Everything in the waters that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. ¹⁰*But anything in the seas or the rivers that does not have fins and scales, of the swarming creatures [frogs] in the waters and of the living creatures that are in the waters, is detestable to you.* ¹¹You shall regard them as *detestable*; you shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall *detest* their carcasses. ¹²Everything in the waters that does not have fins and scales is *detestable to you.*” Now this is amplified in v.41-47 where He says the Israelites would become unclean and defiled if they ate them. That’s our **second clue**, these frogs were said to be detestable and would defile and make unclean those who ate them.

Clue #3: They are types of demonic spirits

Our **third clue** is that frogs are associated with demonic spirits. Please turn to Revelation 16:13-14. Now whether this particular event was already

⁷ For a fuller explanation of this cf. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, (Tyler, TX.,: Dominion Press, 2011), pg. 244

fulfilled in 70 AD or it awaits a future fulfillment, the lesson is still the same. “The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. ¹³And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, *three unclean spirits like frogs*. ¹⁴*For they are demonic spirits.*” Wow. John associates frogs with unclean demonic spirits. That’s our **third clue**.

Summa Theologica

So let’s put our three clues together. These frogs are associated with the abyss (death), they are associated with the unclean, and they are associated with demonism. This plague was a sign of demonic invasion on the land of Egypt. In other words, the unclean spirits whom Egypt worshiped have now turned against them.⁸

Our 2nd principle: Even the demons obey Him

That brings us to our **second principle**: *The LORD has ordained that those who give themselves over to unclean spirits will be ruled and ruined by them*. The plague of frogs in Egypt is a type of what God does to a people when they serve unclean spirits. He hands them over them over to these spirits, and they rule and ruin them. We see many cases of this in Scripture.⁹

First, when King Saul turned to evil, God handed him over to an evil spirit. ¹ Samuel 16:14 “Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, *and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him.*”

⁸ “Whereas the first sign turned those waters into blood, a sign of death, the second sign caused an innumerable horde of frogs, creatures commonly associated with the underworld, to come up out of the waters, invading the people of Egypt.” L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, (Downers Grove, IL.: IVP Academic, 2020), pg. 60

⁹ Also see Romans 1:24, 26, 28; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 9:1-12 (cf. Chilton’s commentary on Revelation here)

Second, the LORD punished Ahab who worshipped Baal by sending him a deceiving evil spirit. The spirit told the LORD in 1 Kings 22:22 ‘I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And [the LORD] said, ‘*You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.*’

Third, Jesus prophesied against Israel that they would be handed over to demonic spirits for rejecting Him. Matthew 21:41-45 “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. ⁴⁴ Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ *Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself,* and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. *So also will it be with this evil generation.*” Demonic invasion was part of the punishment of 70 AD. Josephus reports in *The Jewish War* that this demonism manifested itself in “...the loss of all ability to reason, the frenzied mobs attacking one another, the deluded multitudes following after the most transparently false prophets, the crazed and desperate chase after food, the mass murders, executions, suicides, the fathers slaughtering their own families and mothers eating their own children.”¹⁰

Informatory Use

Isn't this what we see in the disintegration of Western Culture today? What we are experiencing cannot be explained by naturalistic causes. Frogs have covered the land--unclean spirits. What's happening in America is judgment from the LORD. As a nation, we have worshipped the goddess of sex, and now that spirit has swarmed and multiplied and increased such that sexual perversion is everywhere. You can't go anywhere and *not* see it. This frog is

¹⁰ Chilton, pg. 246. Revelation 18:2 “...Babylon [Apostate Israel] has become a dwelling place for demons...”

seemingly omnipresent. Like the Egyptians, we are in a hopeless situation. How can the land be cured? If God be against us, who can be for us? If the Lord of the Underworld has sent out unclean spirits, only He can bring a cure.

Can Satan cast out Satan?

That's kind of the point of v.7. Look there with me: "But the magicians did the same by their secret arts and made frogs come up on the land of Egypt." They couldn't cure the land of the unclean. They could only make it more unclean. Satan doesn't cast out Satan.¹¹ No. We need the true Lord of the Underworld, the LORD of lords and King of kings to rescue us. That brings us to our third point.

III. Lord of the New World

The frogs destroyed them

The Egyptians were in despair from this plague. Rabbis speculated that this plague continued for 7 days, just like the first plague.¹² The Psalmist captures how bad it was. Psalm 78:45 "[God] sent among them swarms of flies, which devoured them, *and frogs, which destroyed them.*" Other translations say devastated, spoiled, overran, ruined.

'Enough is enough!'

Finally Pharaoh had enough. Please look at v.8 "Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, "Plead with the LORD to take away the frogs from me

¹¹ cf. Matthew 12:26

¹² Currid, pg. 175

and from my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.” The King of Egypt could not remove the plague. What the LORD has opened no one can shut (Revelation 3:7). So get this Pharaoh asks Moses the mediator to remove the plague. And he promises to let the people go. This was a lie, as v.15 shows. But Moses plays along anyway, confident that God is in control.

He mocks them

He responds in v.9 “*Be pleased to command me* when I am to plead for you and for your servants and for your people, that the frogs be cut off from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile.” Just as God mocks the kings of the Earth in Psalm 2, so Moses here is mocking Pharaoh’s sovereignty. In essence, “I give you the honor of picking the time.”¹³

Pharaoh’s impossible request

Pharaoh answers in v.10 “Tomorrow.” This seems strange, almost as if he is delaying mercy. But I think what is actually happening, as John Currid suggests is that Pharaoh is actually asking for something impossible. In other words, “Solve that insolvable frog problem by tomorrow.”

The incomparableness of God

But Moses doesn’t bat an eye. He says halfway through v.10 “Be it as you say, *so that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God.*”¹¹ The frogs shall go away from you and your houses and your servants and your people. They shall be left only in the Nile.”¹² So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the Lord about the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh.¹³ And the Lord did according to the word of Moses. The frogs died out in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields.¹⁴ And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank.” A literal reading of v.14 is “And the heaped them up, heaps,

¹³ Note in Reformation Heritage KJV Study Bible

heaps.”¹⁴ Other translations says “They were piled into *countless heaps...*”¹⁵ or “And they gathered them in *heaps by heaps...*” The frogs died *within* a day. And the land was rotten with the stench of these unclean beasts. And all of Egypt saw that it wasn’t their magicians that healed them. It wasn’t their Pharaoh. It was the work of a Mediator pleading with the LORD.

Our 3rd principle: Christ alone can remove the unclean spirit

That brings us to our **third principle**: *Christ alone can overcome every unclean spirit on our behalf.*

Dear friends, don’t you see? What happened to the Egyptians is a picture of all of us. We were all born with a plague, with an unclean spirit that has defiled us, and made us detestable. Job 15:14 “What *is* man, that he should be clean? and *he which is* born of a woman, that he should be righteous?”¹⁶

Just as the plague touched everyone from Pharaoh to the slaves, this unclean spirit is present to every class of human beings. No matter who you are, blue collar/white collar, rich/poor, of high esteem or low esteem you were born with an unclean spirit. This explains what is wrong with you—“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”¹⁷

Just as the plague of frogs ruined their sleeping and eating so this unclean spirit ruins all our comforts. It’s the cause of husbands and wives fighting, the cause old age, disease, addiction, every sorrow and every affliction. Ecclesiastes 2:23

¹⁴ Currid, pg. 178

¹⁵ Berean Standard Bible

¹⁶ KJV

¹⁷ Romans 3:23

“For all his days *are* sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest.”¹⁸

Just as the plague in Egypt was the bane of their lives, so this unclean spirit is the bane of our souls. In fact, this unclean spirit is what brings us to eternal death. Revelation 21:27 “*But nothing unclean will ever enter it*”—speaking of the New Heavens and Earth. “But as for...`...their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).

And there is no power on earth that can remove your unclean spirit. Kings cannot remove it. Politicians cannot make us clean. Sorcerers and scientists cannot remove our uncleanness. No amount of policy or technology can ever make us clean. Job 14:4 “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one.”

The only Mediator who can clean us

There is no *mere* man who can make us clean. But there is a God-man, the “...one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” God’s only Son, the Great Physician is the healer of unclean spirits, He is the remover of every defilement and plague.

It was Jesus that cleansed the leper. Mark 1:40-45 “...a leper came to him, [and] said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” ⁴¹Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; *be clean.*” ⁴²*And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.*”

It was Jesus who cast out the demons of the man. Mark 1:25-27 “But Jesus ... [said] “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶ And *the unclean spirit...came out of him.*

¹⁸ KJV

²⁷ And they were all amazed...saying, “What is this?...He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.””

The most unclean thing

But *how* does Christ do this? *How* does He remove our uncleanness? He became the unclean. He became the stench. The heaps and heaps and heaps of our sin were piled up on Him and He became the most detestable object that has ever walked the earth. That’s why God the Father forsook Him, because He became the embodiment of our defilement. “[He] made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”¹⁹ Dear child of god, Jesus became unclean for you. If you have trusted Christ, the plague has already been removed, you are no longer unclean, you are no longer defiled.

Lord of the New World

This is *why* Jesus is Lord of the New World. He is the One who makes all things new. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”²⁰

Admonitory Use

Two takeaways. **First**, if Christ is not your Savior, if you have not called out to Him to cleanse you, to forgive you of your sin, be warned by this passage. You are part of the old dying world. The world plagued by defilement and every unclean thing. Pharaoh found religion when he couldn’t heal himself. But when the Lord removed the plague, he hardened his heart again. Have you experienced that before? You find yourself in a bind and you promise God “LORD I’ll follow you if you get me out of this.” And then He does, but you didn’t

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:21

²⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:17

keep your word. Don't you know the end of this story? Pharaoh perishes. You will perish too if you don't turn to Christ. You can not remove your own uncleanness. You need the Lord of the New World. Cry out to Jesus Christ! 'Have mercy on me Lord! Wash Me! Remove my sin! Forgive Me! I trust in You!' The Scripture says that "...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."²¹

Hortatory Use

Secondly, dear child of God look at how God moved upon Egypt when Moses prayed to Him—He cleansed Egypt. Moses prayed and the Lord healed. Moses prayed and the unclean perished. Moses prayed and the world was made new. Yes it was temporary, *but* it is a type of the redemption that He desires to accomplish. 2 Corinthians 5:19 "*...in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.*" The Lord of the New World has a plan to make the world new. That's *why* Jesus instructed us to pray "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." That's not a vain prayer. Jesus didn't teach us to pray for something that wouldn't come to pass. Pray like Moses. If God cleansed Egypt of this plague, can he not cleanse America? Pray that in Christ, God would reconcile the world to Himself. Ask Him to remove our uncleanness and defilement. Ask Him to move upon the land so that all would know that there is no one like our God. Amen

²¹ Romans 10:9