

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF MOSES

Taught in Ambassador's Class of Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, California

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Lesson #10, Exodus 8:24-32 - March 9, 1980, Plague #4 flies concluded

We are finishing Exodus 8 this morning dealing with plague #4, the blood sucking dog-flies. You'll recall God is trying to teach Pharaoh and the Egyptians and, also the Israelites, the fact that He is truly God in the heavens above, the earth beneath and also in Egypt. You will recall also that the Egyptians acknowledged that the gnats, which they could not reproduce in the prior plague, were the result of the finger of god, the finger of Elohim, that great god up there somewhere and that that god was greater than they and apparently greater than the gods of Egypt, but they would not acknowledge that that God was Yahweh, the God of the Hebrew slaves. They deliberately used Elohim when, in fact, Pharaoh had entreated Yahweh before to relieve the problem of the frogs. So God is bringing on the next plague, the dog-flies. These are worse than gnats because they are blood suckers. They light around the eyelids and in the corners of the eyes. They are vicious little things. They cause blindness. There was extensive blindness in Egypt in those days. This way God is going to teach them that He is not just Elohim, some god out there, that He is Yahweh in the land. He is Mr. Big in Egypt. He is Yahweh, the God of the slaves, and there is no way they can avoid the connotation that the God of the Jews, the God of the Israelites, is the God of the Universe, Mr. Big. He is above and beyond any other god, and He is going to prove it.

And so in verses 20 through 24, we saw that He brought this up that they might know that Yahweh was the God in the land and not Elohim. [Watch that little phrase "in the midst of the land."] It gives Pharaoh a beautiful entree.

Satan is a brilliant person. He may be evil, but don't ever kid yourself that he is not smart. The first big lie here is when he tells the Jews they can go free that they aren't really under bondage, they can go free if they'll just cut off the plagues. Pharaoh told them, "I have frogs up to my ears, and you can go anytime you want, just cut off the frogs." That is how Satan starts out, the big lie, "You are not under bondage in Egypt, all you have to do is cut off the frogs."

He uses it on us. "You are not under bondage to sin. I mean you can quit anytime. It doesn't really have you hooked. It isn't harming you." Does that sound familiar to you? Excellent excuse if you try to quit smoking, for example, especially if you don't really want to quit. I used it many, many times. My first trick to avoid the problem of quitting was to pretend I wasn't hooked. It's my first trick in any kind of sin in my life which the Lord is putting His finger on. I'm not talking about sins of ignorance or sins that you are not mature enough in the Lord to handle and which He doesn't expect you to really handle yet. I'm talking about sins He has His finger on, therefore, they are sins that can go at this point in your growth. They are sins that will hinder your ministry, that will blemish your life. Our first response to any sin the Holy Spirit puts His finger on is, "I'm not really in Egypt. I'm not really in bondage. I'm not really hooked. I can really quit. This isn't such a big deal. This isn't really hurting me."

That is the first big lie we saw back there in the plague of the frogs. Well, if that doesn't work Satan is always willing to compromise. He is the world's greatest negotiator. And so he starts the negotiation process in Exodus 8,

verse 25 with the first compromise. Pharaoh has bloodsuckers all over him, all over his people, all over his servants, all over his courtiers, all over his magicians. Everybody in Egypt has bloodsuckers on them, and they cannot get them off. So...

Exodus 8:25:

And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land." But Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we shall sacrifice to the LORD our God what is an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice what is an abomination to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not then stone us? We must go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He commands us."

O.K., Yahweh says He is God in the midst of the land, so Pharaoh says, "O.K. if He's in the midst of the land, why go out? Why not worship God right in Egypt?"

First compromise with sin when God puts His finger on it, "Well, why not worship God and live with my sin?" I try and I fail, so I 1John1:9. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." So, I confess, I am forgiven, I'm cleansed, and God says He forgets it. Then I wait until the next temptation comes along. Then I do a little hustle but finally I give in to it, I capitulate. So, I 1John1:9 again. Next time it comes along and I commit the sin again, I 1John1:9 again. I kid myself that I can worship God and 1John1:9 my way through life. And, of course, it doesn't work. I am still in Egypt, while God wants me in the Promised Land, in the Land of Rest, and I wonder why my life is one of despair. I wonder why my life is in chaos. I wonder why my life has depression in it, why nothing seems to go right spiritually speaking. Maybe physically it might go well for awhile, but spiritually nothing seems to be right. Well, I am just 1John1:9ing my way through life. What a wonderful verse. Aren't you glad that it is in the Bible? Man, that has given me more excuses for my guilt, that should be real guilt, than you have ever dreamed of. "Cigarettes aren't really that bad. Besides if I quit, I can't study." I used that one many times in grad school when I was trying to study some dull economics theory. Why not? So I'd pick up a weed, light up, 1John1:9 and away we'd go. Only problem was, I was hooked again, and I wondered why there was no power in my life, why I couldn't seem to reach God. I wondered why I didn't seem to have any walk of the Spirit. Well, God doesn't care for cigarette smoke in a Christian. This is not to say this is the greatest sin. I am just telling you it is one of the sins I had such a struggle with. I think most of you do who try to quit smoking. The idea that cigarettes are something mild, a peccadillo, is right out of the pit. In counseling, I have seen more struggle with guys trying to quit smoking than probably any other sin except some sexual vice. Outside of homosexuality, or masturbation, or something of that nature, I don't know of anything that grips a person stronger than a cigarette. The reason, I think, is because it is "Not as bad" as, say, adultery or fornication or drunkenness.

So, Pharaoh said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land." Well, you don't go around in Egypt sacrificing their sacred animals if you are a slave, and you don't have the right to sacrifice anyway. Only a priest could sacrifice in Egypt. That is where God is going to call their hand in the tenth plague. Every Jewish head is going to publicly sacrifice an animal in Egypt, spread it's blood all over the top of the doors, and say, "Hey, take a look Egyptians. I just slaughtered an animal, what are you going to do about it?" In poker it is called, "Put up or shut up."

Moses knows he has to leave Egypt. God has made it so he has to leave Egypt. This is literally true. They will get butchered if they don't leave Egypt. It did happen in history. Pharaoh recognizes it.

Exodus 8: 28:

And Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, [He understands his own people. He understands that this will result in a slaughter] that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Make supplication for me."

So Pharaoh gives the second compromise.

What do you do when your 1John1:9s don't work, and you finally face up to the fact that you can't get away with 1John1:9ing any more? What do you do with your cigarettes? Let's take that as an example. I know what I did. I quit smoking, made a firm resolve, but I always made sure there was a pack around somewhere in the house. Why? Just in case I couldn't make it. The liquor stores close at 2 in the morning. What if I want a cigarette at 3am? I found something. Throw your cigarettes down the toilet, a massive step of faith, but make sure you keep some long butts in the ash tray, just in case. Never saw the limb off. Never go too far. Never go so far out there that you can't turn around without losing face. Never do that, and you will stay hooked the rest of your natural life. God demands that, if you want to break some sin in your life, you cut the limb off and take a public stand of some kind so you know you are going to lose face, you are going to lose stature, that it is going to be humiliating if you give in. And so God demands we saw the limb off or we will never be free from our sin.

No, Pharaoh doesn't want the Jews to escape. He wants to keep his clutches on them so "'not too far into the wilderness' so I can get my army after you." But how about the Jews? Did they want to go "far into the wilderness?" What do the Jews do all the time in the wilderness, at Mt. Sinai and all the way to Kadesh-Barnea and end up 38 more years in the wilderness?

Class comment: They grumble and complain.

Bob's response: They grumble and mumble, but about what?

Class comment: Going back to Egypt

Bob's response: Yeah! "You brought us out into this wilderness to kill us with thirst. Remember the fish and the leeks and the garlic and the onions and all those delicious things we had in Egypt and you brought us out here to this "Manna." Manna comes from part of the Hebrew word "mawn" = "What is it?"

Have you ever eaten the same breakfast food for 38 years? I have eaten the same breakfast food since 1973. They have this cardiac diet at Stanford which will not make you live longer, it only seems longer. Every morning I get up and go out into the kitchen and, on orders from Stanford Medical Center, I find some pills, a cup of hot water, 5 prunes, and a bowl of, I guess it is some mash from the Santa Anita Race Track rejected by the horses. I am allowed some MochaMix, a soy bean cream, with which to cover up the mash. You shovel it down and when you are starving to death, it tastes pretty good. I feel for those poor guys and their "manna."

No, the Egyptians didn't want the Israelites freed because they wanted to keep them as slaves. Unfortunately the Jews didn't want to go either. There is a kind of security in slavery. It is scary to step out in faith. I don't think I have enough guts to do what Paul did or, as one of our congregation does, take Bibles into China when I know they don't want them there. I don't know if I have that kind of guts. I know the Lord has that much power, but I don't know if I have that much guts.

And so the tragedy is the Jews didn't want to be free either.

Now, let me ask you a question. Are you having trouble with some besetting sin in your life? Well, check yourself out #1: Are you kidding yourself that you are not really in bondage? Satan says you are free to leave anytime you want. You can get out of Egypt anytime you choose. #2: Are you rationalizing, trying to quit, but you really don't want to so you 1John1:9 "I'm going to give it my best shot this time, but I always know that back there is good old 1John1:9. When the pressure gets tough and I finally capitulate, well." We know the problem with sin is not the sin itself, it's the hassle during the temptation to sin. You sin and all the pressure comes off. The Lord didn't have to sin in order to understand temptation. Once I've sinned, there's no more pressure. The battle is up to, but not including, the actual sin. Why are you continually 1John1:9ing your sins? "If we confess our sins..." Confession means you agree with God or literally, "Say with God." Well, God calls sin, SIN. He hates it. He slew His Son because of it. He doesn't like it. If you "say with God," then Sin is SIN. If you don't mean it, it doesn't work. #3: When you finally make that step of faith, are you making provision for the flesh? My Bible says, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its desires." When I finally quit cigarettes, I flushed them all down the toilet, got rid of all the ash trays, went around and told all my friends, "I am

quitting smoking, and I don't want you to offer me a cigarette. I don't want you to buy me any cigarettes, and, if I start to take one, grab it out of my hand." You go around and tell all your friends, all your buddies, all the people you know so that you will look like a stupid fool and a weakling if you give in to it. You saw the limb off as far as possible. Or you can do like they did, just don't go too far into the wilderness, always have a way back, never smoke your cigarette all the way down, always keep a nice long butt around. If you don't saw the limb off, it is Egypt all the way. No matter how you slice it, it is still baloney.

We've got two more compromises coming up.

Father, we thank you so much that you revealed in Scriptures the wiles of Satan. We don't have to be deceived by this great deceiver, this giant intellect, who is bent upon the destruction of your people, particularly, and the world in general. Thank you, Father, that in Your word You have opened our eyes to his approaches, the way he operates, and we don't have to go down the tube like the Jews did 3500 years ago. We can enter Your rest right now, this day, by faith in Jesus Christ. Father, we thank you so much in Jesus' name. Amen.

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