

# The Book of Exodus

## Lesson 5

### Chapters 8 - 10

#### Magicians Copy Miracle – Frogs

**Exodus 8:1** 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.' <sup>2</sup> "But if you refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite your whole territory with frogs. <sup>3</sup> And 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. <sup>4</sup> So the frogs will come up on you and your people and all your servants." <sup>5</sup> 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.'" <sup>6</sup> So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. <sup>7</sup> And the magicians did the same with their secret arts, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

"Frogs" were the next miracle brought by the LORD upon the capital of Egypt. Nevertheless, the magicians did the same and we cannot help but think about the order of the miracles. Surely the LORD arranged the order of miracles for the purpose of exhausting the magician's secret arts. The words "secret arts" occur three times in chapters 7 and 8. The English translation might not be the best for clarity in these passages. Today, we think of "secret arts" as some mysterious ability to cause some supernatural event to occur. However, one short Hebrew word is translated as "secret arts" in the English. The Hebrew word could have been better translated simply as "secrecy." There was nothing supernatural about what the magicians did, what they enacted was what they had learned to do in secret. With all the frogs in the land from the actions of Moses and Aaron, no doubt any good magician could have used sleight of hand to produce some frogs in the sight of the Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron, supposedly imitating the miracle of the LORD. His miracle was real, theirs was misdirection.

#### Pharaoh Asks for Removal of Frogs

**Exodus 8: 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." <sup>9</sup> And 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?" <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> "And the frogs will depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people; they will be left only in the Nile." <sup>12</sup> Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had inflicted upon Pharaoh. <sup>13</sup> And the LORD did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, the courts, and the fields. <sup>14</sup> So they piled them in heaps, and the

**land became foul. <sup>15</sup> But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.**

Blood and frogs were more than Pharaoh could take; he was ready to let the people go to make their sacrifice. We do not normally consider the killing of the frogs as a miracle, but it clearly should be. Moses allowed Pharaoh to name the day the frogs would die. Had he asked that they would die that day, surely the LORD would have enacted it that day. Had Pharaoh said in one week, it would have happened in one week. But Pharaoh said **“Tomorrow”** and with divine action, the LORD killed the frogs as requested. Dead frogs were everywhere. Pharaoh had asked Moses to “remove” the frogs; Moses had asked Pharaoh when he wanted them “destroyed.” Pharaoh’s answer was in reference to there being destroyed, not removed. As a result, the dead frogs had to be shoveled into pile where they putrefied. The stench hardened Pharaoh’s heart against Moses. He had asked for one thing and received another.

### **Magicians Cannot Copy Miracle – Gnats**

**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 gnats through all the land of Egypt.'" <sup>17</sup> And 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. <sup>18</sup> And the magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats on man and beast. <sup>19</sup> 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.**

**“Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, ‘This is the finger of God.’”** The miracles had now surpassed the abilities of the magicians to secretly duplicate. Men could not control gnats with a sleight of hand; therefore, they conceded that they were brought by the **“finger of God.”** We must wonder if the LORD arranged the order of the miracle to facilitate each of the miracles in succession. Where did the frogs come from? Were they attracted to the blood? Where did the gnats come from? Were they a result of the dead frogs? Gnats are flies. Flies lay their eggs in rotting flesh and blood when they have come to feast. Millions of fly eggs are laid by each fly. The eggs turn into maggots which turn into flies. Maggots appear on dead animals between 24 and 80 hours after an animal dies. Because flies feast on blood as well as flesh, the fly eggs could have been laid during that miracle. Maggots eat for four days and then hide in a dark place where they go through a metamorphosis to become a fly. Perhaps the magicians could not replicate this miracle because it was part of God’s plan for the cycle of life by the “finger of God.”

### **Plague of Insects**

**Exodus 8:20 Now the LORD said to Moses, " Rise early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh, as he comes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, " Let My people go, that they may serve Me. <sup>21</sup> "For if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of insects on you and on your servants and on your people and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of insects, and also the ground on which they dwell. <sup>22</sup> " But on that day I**

**will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of insects will be there, in order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land.** <sup>23</sup> **"And I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall occur."** <sup>24</sup> Then the LORD did so. And there came great swarms of insects into the house of Pharaoh and the houses of his servants and the land was laid waste because of the swarms of insects in all the land of Egypt.

As the gnats disappeared, Pharaoh returned to his regular schedule at the Nile with his baths. There Moses could surely find him each morning.

**"I will send swarms of insects on you and on your servants and on your people."** Flies are insects, but they are small insects and they are tasty delights for larger insects. In the cycle of life, insects eat insects; therefore, the miracle of the plague of insects was still enacted by the LORD. In one way, this plague was a natural miracle that followed the previous; however, the true miracle in this plague was not the insects themselves, it was the object of their location. The Scripture says, **"But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of insects will be there, in order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land. And I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall occur."** There it is! The insects will affect only the Egyptians, not the Israelites who are living in the same area. They did not come to consume the property of God's people but that of Pharaoh.

### **Pharaoh Approves Sacrifice in Egypt**

Exodus 8:25 And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land." <sup>26</sup> 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?" <sup>27</sup> "We must go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He commands us." <sup>28</sup> And Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Make supplication for me."

With the insects, Pharaoh had had enough. He would let Moses take the people to make their sacrifice but he said, **"only you shall not go very far away."** A three days journey would get the Israelites to the border of Canaanite Land, but Pharaoh wanted them to remain in Egypt. Moses objected to Pharaoh's request because the kind of sacrifice the Israelites would make would be **"an abomination to the Egyptians."** Israelites sacrificed bulls, rams and goats. The bull represented the god Juno, the ram Jupiter, the goat Bacchus. Therefore, because of the way this conversation is worded, there must have been a standing order from Pharaoh to the Egyptians was to stone a person sacrificing these animals on the spot where they were caught.

### **Pharaoh Asks for Insects to Depart**

Exodus 8:29 Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you, and I shall make supplication to the LORD that the swarms of insects may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people tomorrow; only do not let Pharaoh deal deceitfully again in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD." <sup>30</sup> So Moses

went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the LORD. <sup>31</sup> And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of insects from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people; not one remained. <sup>32</sup> But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.

After the miracle of the removal of the insects, Pharaoh changed his mind and would not let the Israelites go to offer their sacrifice in the wilderness.

### Plague of Pestilence on Livestock

Exodus 9:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, " Let My people go, that they may serve Me. <sup>2</sup> "For if you refuse to let *them* go, and continue to hold them, <sup>3</sup> behold, the hand of the LORD will come *with* a very severe pestilence on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks. <sup>4</sup> " But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing will die of all that belongs to the sons of Israel.'"" <sup>5</sup> And the LORD set a definite time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land." <sup>6</sup> So the LORD did this thing on the morrow, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the sons of Israel, not one died. <sup>7</sup> And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not even one of the livestock of Israel dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

“Behold, the hand of the LORD will come *with* a very severe pestilence on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks.” First, herein is the first mention of a horse in Scripture. After this time, in other literature, it is clear that both Egypt and Arabia would be famous for their use of horses.

Second, the “severe pestilence” was called a “murrain” which means an extremely contagious disease resulting in general overall inflammation, rapid heartbeat, fever, hot labored breathing, rattling in the lungs, crust in the eyes, swelling in the brain. The Hebrew word for “murrain” is closely associated with the word for mortality. Here it means a disease that leads to death. Once again, the true miracle in this plague is the distinction between Egypt’s livestock and Israel’s. Only Egypt would be afflicted!

### Plague of Boils

Exodus 9:8 Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of soot from a kiln, and let Moses throw it toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh. <sup>9</sup> "And it will become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and will become boils breaking out with sores on man and beast through all the land of Egypt." <sup>10</sup> So they took soot from a kiln, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses threw it toward the sky, and it became boils breaking out with sores on man and beast. <sup>11</sup> And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians. <sup>12</sup> And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

**“And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians.”** Evidently, the magicians had been at Pharaoh’s side during all these miracles; however, no longer. The magicians could not bring themselves to stand with Pharaoh in the presence of Moses. We think of boils as fluid filled blisters in most cases, but the Hebrew word adds that the boils burned which most likely threw the whole body into a fever. The Israelites are not mentioned here: however, we can be assured that they were not afflicted by the burning boils.

### **Command Pharaoh to Let People Go – Plague of Hail**

Exodus 9:13 **Then the LORD said to Moses, " Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, " Let My people go, that they may serve Me. <sup>14</sup> "For this time I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth. <sup>15</sup> "For *if by* now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth. <sup>16</sup> "But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth. <sup>17</sup> "Still you exalt yourself against My people by not letting them go. <sup>18</sup> "Behold, about this time tomorrow, I will send a very heavy hail, such as has not been *seen* in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. <sup>19</sup> "Now therefore send, bring your livestock and whatever you have in the field to safety. Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail comes down on them, will die.'"" <sup>20</sup> The one among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses; <sup>21</sup> but he who paid no regard to the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field. <sup>22</sup> Now the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that hail may fall on all the land of Egypt, on man and on beast and on every plant of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." <sup>23</sup> And Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. <sup>24</sup> So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. <sup>25</sup> And the hail struck all that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant of the field and shattered every tree of the field. <sup>26</sup> Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel *were*, there was no hail.**

**"For *if by* now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth. But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.”** Clearly, anyone of the miracles, from the blood to the boils could have killed a majority of the Egyptian people, but the LORD, in His Divine plan, did not allow any of them to die - another miracle. He wanted all the Egyptians to recognize and know His power. Now it was time for the powers of the heavens to let loose, not with creatures but with **“thunder and hail, and fire.”** They would afflict man, beast, plant and tree! Only the Israelites would be free from the plague of this miracle.

## Pharaoh Asks for Supplication

Exodus 9:27 Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, " I have sinned this time; the LORD is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones.<sup>28</sup> " Make supplication to the LORD, for there has been enough of God's thunder and hail; and I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer." <sup>29</sup> And Moses said to him, "As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be hail no longer, that you may know that the earth is the LORD'S. <sup>30</sup> " But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God." <sup>31</sup> ~~(Now the flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. <sup>32</sup> But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they ripen late.)~~<sup>33</sup> So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread out his hands to the LORD; and the thunder and the hail ceased, and rain no longer poured on the earth. <sup>34</sup> But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. <sup>35</sup> And Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not let the sons of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

**"I have sinned"** was Pharaoh's plea as the thunder, hail and fire rained down on the land. He was ready to let the Israelites go if Moses would bring an end to the plague. Herein is another miracle rarely noticed; the plague would end when Moses left the gate of the capital on his way back to Goshen; it would occur when he **"spread out"** his hands to the LORD. But Moses threw Pharaoh's lie back in his face, he knew Pharaoh was not ready to let them go.

## Warning of a Plague of Locusts

Exodus 10:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, <sup>2</sup> and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and how I performed My signs among them; that you may know that I am the LORD." <sup>3</sup> And Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. <sup>4</sup> 'For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. <sup>5</sup> 'And they shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one shall be able to see the land. They shall also eat the rest of what has escaped-- what is left to you from the hail-- and they shall eat every tree which sprouts for you out of the field. <sup>6</sup> 'Then your houses shall be filled, and the houses of all your servants and the houses of all the Egyptians, *something* which neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day that they came upon the earth until this day.'" And he turned and went out from Pharaoh. <sup>7</sup> And Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?"

**"And Pharaoh's servants said to him, 'How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go... .'"** For the first time in all the miracles of the plagues, the servants of Pharaoh were brave enough to speak their minds. Although all the fields that were owned by the Egyptians were beaten down by the last miracle, the crops will still lie on the ground. With an influx of



locusts such as Moses pronounced, the nation would be thrust into a time of famine which it could not survive. The servants were right; therefore, Pharaoh inquired for more information from Moses.

### **Pharaoh Brings back Moses and Aaron**

**Exodus 10:8** So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God! Who are the ones that are going?" <sup>9</sup> And Moses said, "We shall go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD." <sup>10</sup> Then he said to them, "Thus may the LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Take heed, for evil is in your mind. <sup>11</sup> "Not so! Go now, the men *among you*, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desire." So they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

Pharaoh wanted to know who would be leaving to make the sacrifice. Moses' answer was everyone and everything they owned. Pharaoh would not agree; therefore, the locusts were on their way.

### **Plague of Locusts**

**Exodus 10:12** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up on the land of Egypt, and eat every plant of the land, *even* all that the hail has left." <sup>13</sup> So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD directed an east wind on the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. <sup>14</sup> And the locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled in all the territory of Egypt; *they were* very numerous. There had never been so *many* locusts, nor would there be so *many* again. <sup>15</sup> For they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt.

"... and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts." Just to be clear, locusts abound in the countries east of the land of Goshen and the capital of Egypt, especially in the spring of the year. All the LORD had to do was drive them into Egypt with an east wind. Still the miracle usually missed in this passage was Israel's exclusion from the locusts where they lived.

### **Pharaoh Admits His Sin**

**Exodus 10:16** Then Pharaoh hurriedly called for Moses and Aaron, and he said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. <sup>17</sup> "Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and make supplication to the LORD your God, that He would only remove this death from me." <sup>18</sup> And he went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the LORD. <sup>19</sup> So the LORD shifted *the wind* to a very strong west wind which took up the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not one locust

**was left in all the territory of Egypt. <sup>20</sup> But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.**

**“Then Pharaoh hurriedly called for Moses and Aaron.”** It did not take long for Pharaoh to realize the mistake he had made; therefore he called for Moses and Aaron. Another miracle occurred with Moses’ prayer; the west wind drove the locusts out of Egypt. But notice that it drove them into the Red Sea. Properly it should be called the *Sea of Reeds*. The Greek Septuagint called it the *Edom Sea* from which we draw the name Red Sea (Edom meaning red). It is more likely that the *Edom Sea* name came about because of its proximity to the land of Edom than its being red in color. The *Sea of Reeds* is suspect too unless it is a reference to the varied varieties of coral that live in the sea many of which resemble floating reeds.

### **Darkness for Three Days**

**Exodus 10:21 Then the LORD said to Moses, " Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt." <sup>22</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. <sup>23</sup> They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings.**

The miracle of the plague of the darkness was not announced to Pharaoh; the LORD just caused it to happen. Pharaoh and the Egyptians could see nothing; the Israelites could see everything. Had Pharaoh not sent for Moses on the third day, the darkness would most likely have continued until he did.

### **Moses to Leave Without Livestock**

**Exodus 10:24 Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you." <sup>25</sup> But Moses said, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice *them* to the LORD our God. <sup>26</sup> " Therefore, our livestock, too, will go with us; not a hoof will be left behind, for we shall take some of them to serve the LORD our God. And until we arrive there, we ourselves do not know with what we shall serve the LORD." <sup>27</sup> But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to let them go.**

Pharaoh was willing to let the people go, but not the livestock. Moses was not willing to leave without the livestock. It was a stalemate and Pharaoh refused to let them go.

### **Pharaoh Threatens Moses**

**Exodus 10:28 Then Pharaoh said to him, " Get away from me! Beware, do not see my face again, for in the day you see my face you shall die!" <sup>29</sup> And Moses said, "You are right; I shall never see your face again!"**

**“Beware, do not see my face again, for in the day you see my face you shall die!”** Up until this time, Pharaoh had left the door open for negotiations with Moses and Aaron. With this



statement, that door was permanently closed. Pharaoh further threatened Moses that if he tried to enter his court, he would be put to death.

**"You are right; I shall never see your face again!"** In Exodus 12:31, Pharaoh and Moses will speak again face to face; therefore, something in the modern English translation is lacking. After researching the original and other translations and versions, it seems Pharaoh's words are properly given. His threat is correct and he does not intend to entertain Moses again. As a rebellious sinner in the path of God, Pharaoh's words are logical. However, Moses' words are not logical in the English translations of today. Perhaps a literal translation would help. It says, *"and Moses said, 'Rightly have you spoken, I add not any more to see your face.'"* The key words to properly understand this statement are *"I add not any more."* In other words, during the days that Moses had been in Egypt, he repeatedly asked permission from Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to leave the land. *"I add not any more"* means that he will not ever ask again for permission to leave. As we will see, in the depth of despair, Pharaoh will basically order the Israelites out of Egypt, only to change his mind again. Nevertheless, between his despair and his change of mind, the Israelites will leave Egypt, and the neighboring Egyptian women will send them out wealthy with the bounty of Egypt on their backs, their beasts of burden and in their wagons.