

Pastor Jim Jackson, 2/28/16

Exodus: Finding Freedom, pt. 8—Scarabs, Livestock Death, Boils

Exodus 8:20-9:12

God wanted OBEDIENCE from the Pharaoh

After the Nile recovered from turning to blood and the dead frogs and gnats were gone, the Pharaoh felt relief so he rejected Moses' request to leave again (Ex. 8:15). Moses then warned of more severe plagues coming on the Egyptians but that the Israelites would be exempt. Similar to the first time Moses met the Pharaoh at the water, he was likely performing a ritual thanking one of their gods for stopping the plagues. God then brought a massive invasion (Heb. *arōb*, swarm) of flies or scarab beetles that covered the land, animals, and people. This was an attack on either the air god Shu, or Khepri, the beetle god. Pharaoh pleads for Moses to take them away and when he does, Pharaoh goes back on his promise to release the people for the second time. God then inflicts a plague of disease on Egyptian livestock in the field as a challenge to the bull-god Apis who was revered for livestock strength, fertility, and health. Even after seeing their livestock die, Pharaoh wouldn't change his mind. Moses then brings the most personal plague yet—painful, pus-filled skin boils. This challenged Sekhmet, their goddess of warfare and healer of plagues and ills. It was so severe the magicians, who couldn't stop the plagues, *couldn't even stand up* to talk to Moses! *A hard heart can result in painful bodies!*

The Pharaoh wanted OPTIONS from God

After the plague of flies, the Pharaoh wants to bargain with God to let the people worship *in the land* so as not to lose control. As Israel's sacrificial worship would be revolting to the Egyptians and God commanded them to leave, they must separate to worship God. *Personal control apart from God is an illusion.* Seeing neither the flies, livestock death, nor boils affect the Israelites, Pharaoh starts to see divine distinction between his gods and Israel's God. God told Moses to inform Pharaoh that the LORD (YHWH) is in the *midst of their land* thereby claiming Egypt as His own (Ex. 8:22)! *Personal possessions apart from God are an illusion* (Ps. 24:1). The Israelites were set apart or 'sanctified' to show the Egyptians and the world where the true God could be contacted. This was the purpose of Israel before and is the purpose of the church now (1 Pet. 2:9). *The people of God are to show the power of God so people without God can become children of God!*