

# Tomorrow...

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[ 0 : 00 ] and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

Then the Lord said to Moses, Say to Aaron, stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt. And they did so. 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 in all the land of Egypt.

The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. Then the magician said to Pharaoh, This is the finger of God.

But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. Then the Lord said to Moses, Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water and say to him, Thus says the Lord, Let my people go that they may serve me.

Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you, and your servants, and your people, and into your houses, and the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand.

[ 1 : 22 ] But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.

Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen. And the Lord did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' house, so at all the land of Egypt, the land was ruined by the swarms of flies.

Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, Go, sacrifice to your God within the land. But Moses said, It would not be right to do so, for the offerings we shall sacrifice to the Lord our God are an abomination to Egyptians.

If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us? We must go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as he tells us. So Pharaoh said, I will let you go to sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness. Only you must not go very far away. Plead for me.

[ 2 : 35 ] Then Moses said, Behold, I am going out from you, and I will plead with the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people tomorrow.

Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord. So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord. And the Lord did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people.

Not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart, this time also, and did not let the people go.

Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we do thank you again for your word, and ask for your spirit's presence, your spirit's working through the preaching of the word today.

Help us to understand it. Lord, we pray that we would learn from it, that we would not repeat the errors of godless men before us, that you would make us receptive to the truth of your word.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Now remember, we've talked about how the Exodus will show us who God is. We've seen that discussed already in the book of Exodus, that this process of the pleads, and God's people leaving Egypt, will reveal to us who Yahweh, the true God, is.

[ 3 : 56 ] And I said last time, that the pleads are interesting, and it's so fun, maybe, let's say, maybe not to be there, but fun to think about, what would that look like, and what did that happen?

And I'll try to touch on that a little bit, because it's helpful for us, but that's not the main focus, right?

The main focus is for us to understand, who is God, and what's being revealed about God. And we're going to see in all this, that he's greater than Pharaoh, and all the gods of the Egyptians, that they worship.

So, we're covering a lot of ground today, I know. We're looking at three plagues today, all of them in chapter 8, so the plagues are the frogs, the gnats, and the flies.

And so what I want to do, first off, is to consider the plagues themselves. I'm going to quickly, try to go through what happens in these plagues, and then for us to look at two responses, the responses of the magicians, and then the response of Pharaoh, before we make some final application.

So let's look at each of these plagues. First, the plague of the frogs. Now remember what I just said, and what I've been saying in prior weeks, that one thing God is doing, is defeating the gods of the Egyptians.

[ 5 : 00 ] And so with each of these, we want to think about, well, what's the connection, to the gods, of Egypt? Well, with this first plague, there was a goddess in Egypt, whose name was Heket, and Heket was a woman, with a frog's head.

You guys may remember seeing this before, because there's a lot of pictures, of this in hieroglyphics. Sometimes she has a full frog body, other times she looks like a normal woman, with just a frog's head.

But they worship this goddess, they had pictures of her, all over Egypt, that still, some of them are there today, that we can see. And because she was this frog goddess, and again, think of the Nile River, being such a source of fertility, and being so important, to the people of the Egyptians.

Obviously, there would have been frogs there, and in the pools around the Nile River. They would have been familiar with them. They have this god, that's this frog goddess. Well, because of her being a goddess, frogs were considered, sacred to them.

They were not allowed to kill frogs, which is interesting. Coming from the south, that means no frog legs to eat. Even though they're readily available there, in the Nile. But they could not kill them, they could not eat them.

[ 6 : 06 ] So, that's helpful for us, as we think about this plague, as it comes upon them. They worship, a goddess who is a frog. At least partially a frog. We see also in this plague, that Pharaoh is warned, back in verse 2.

If you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your country with frogs. So it's conditioned. Egypt doesn't have to have, the frogs come upon them. If Pharaoh will let the people go.

So he's warned. He's given an ultimatum. And then, because he does not let them go, the frogs come upon them. And hopefully you caught, as I've read through there, the frogs were everywhere.

It talks about them entering into, the homes of Pharaoh, and into his servants, into their bedrooms. Probably there were very few in the land, that might have had bedrooms. Most of them may have been studio, what we think of like a studio apartment, studio house.

But even for Pharaoh, where there might be bedrooms, they're going to get into the bedrooms. Even into their ovens. They're kneading bowls, and their ovens.

[ 7 : 13 ] So just imagine, there's so many frogs around, that they can't even knead bread, without the frogs getting into the dough. And they can't even cook things in the oven, without them getting in the oven.

Apparently even unknown. They open up the oven, they're jumping out, when the oven's cold.

They're cooking food, and they bring the food out, and guess what you've got? Cooked in with your food, that's been unprepared, uncleaned.

You have a cooked frog in there, intestines and all, right? Cooked in there with your bread, with your, whatever you have there in your oven. And so, everything they try to do, there's no avoiding the fact, that the frogs are everywhere.

You go to bed, you lay down, and guess what? You're squishing frogs. They're crawling over you at night. Any of you guys get this creepy feeling, where you think something's crawling on you, anyway at night? Think of how freaked out you might have been, to have frogs crawling over you at night.

You go to put your clothes on, and you can't put your clothes on, you reach in your pocket, there's frogs in your pocket, everywhere. And they're sacred, you're not supposed to kill them, but you can't walk, without stepping on a frog, or squishing a frog.

[ 8 : 17 ] So, the land's just covered, with frogs. And remarkably, when Moses prays, they die all throughout the land.

Moses even talks about, the distinction that will be made. He tells Pharaoh, that when he prays, they're all going to be gone, is what he tells him. Except for where?

In the Nile River, where they belong. And so, less Pharaoh, or anyone else, doubt that this is a miracle by God. There's not just some, disease that strikes, all the frauds, and they all die, even in the Nile.

No, they stay, only where they're supposed to be. And they die, where they're not supposed to be. And I find it interesting, he doesn't actually tell Moses, what's going to, I mean, tell Pharaoh, what's going to happen to them.

He only says, they're going to remain in the Nile, the rest of them will be taken care of. Well, how were they taken care of? They all apparently die off, at the same moment. All the frauds, throughout all the land. And it says, they have to clean it up.

[ 9 : 20 ] And so, they pile them up, into these heaps. And in the Hebrew, the form for heaps, is the largest form of measurement, that they have.

So, you guys, this hasn't been true this winter, but have you ever seen, how, you know, they plow the parking lots, and you get a big parking lot, maybe like Walmart. And, over the course of a winter, by the end of it, I remember a few years ago, there was, maybe somewhere in Wiltsbury, they were driving a car up on top.

And they were having people guess on, when the car would finally reach the ground, as the snow melted. You had to guess the date, and you could win the car. Right, so you've seen those huge piles of snow. And just imagine that being dead frauds.

This is what's going, I mean, they're heaping these frauds up, in the land. And they're rotting, so that the land stinks. But the frauds ended, in answer to prayer.

And I think if, we can go ahead, and make one application, it's remarkable, that when Moses prays, they die all throughout the land. We really see the power of prayer. Prayer was used to bring, two of the three, pleads that we look at today, to an end.

[ 10 : 32 ] At least, we're told two of the three, we don't know about the third one. But two of the pleads, we're going to look at, they end, through Moses' prayer to God. Even verse 13, And the Lord did, according to the word of Moses, the frauds died out in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields.

I hope you catch, just how remarkable that is. God is sovereign. He is all powerful. God doesn't do, according to our commands.

And yet, in this instance, when Moses prays, he does it just as Moses asked. Which, I think he's getting to the details, of the fact that, there's a specific date, a time in which it was to happen. So that Moses would know, exactly, that it was God who did it.

Because it happened, at the appointed time. And so, God answered the prayer, just as Moses prayed it, according to what Pharaoh, wanted to happen, is exactly how it took place. And so again, I think we're encouraged, by the power of prayer.

That our God hears, and answers our prayers. I want us to be careful, that doesn't mean we command God. God's not subservient to us. He doesn't, he's not obligated to obey us, in the way we want it answered.

[ 11 : 41 ] Here's my prayer, here's the time I want it answered, and here I want it answered. That's not how God works. But, I think we are taught, a powerful lesson. In this instance, he gives Moses, exactly as he requests.

We know that our God, hears and answers our prayers, and we can be encouraged, ourselves in prayer. We see a reason, behind it as well. Well, before I get there, let me say, I've said already, there were heaps, of dead frauds.

Just as we said, with the fish, that died out in the Nile. Now though, this is spread all throughout the land, you have rotting frauds. I can't imagine, that's a great smell. When we consider the number, where all they were located, you have to imagine, the stuff that they missed.

You know, up under the bed, there's a few that you missed, that are rotting up under the bed. It already stinks out there, everywhere, the smell of rotting frauds, are still there, even though the plague is over. And so, they're reminded, of what God's done, and his power.

They're reminded, of the defeat, of their goddess, whose, if we could call her, her armies, lie dead. Those that were sacred, and could not be killed, by prayer, or killed in an instant.

[ 12 : 53 ] What power, does a cat have, to prevent God, from striking down all the frauds? Our God is more powerful, than their God. And we're told, that that even is part of the motivation for this.

Look at verse 10, in the second half. Be it as you say, so that you may know, that there is no one like the Lord our God. What's going to manifest that, to Pharaoh? Pharaoh sets the time, at which he wants the plague to end.

And God's going to end the plague, at the exact moment, that Pharaoh desires. So that you can know, that this wasn't an accident. That the frauds, just so happened to die, all of them at the same time.

That are not, those short-lived frauds, that only last for a set period of time, and they all died. No, you're going to know, that God did this. And so, we see the purpose of this, again, is to manifest, the fact, that there's no one like Yahweh.

There's no one like God. There is no other God like this. And remember, that is the major point, that we've said, throughout all these plagues. What is God doing? He's showing, the Egyptians, Pharaoh, even the surrounding countries, the world, even today, that there is no God, like our God.

[14:07] And so, you may know, that that's the case. He's going to end the plague, at the appointed time. Secondly, there's a plague of gnats. This is a little complicated, from the Hebrew, because, we don't know exactly, what this word referred to.

So, the meaning, is very broad. If you guys are reading something, other than ESV, I think maybe the King James Version, may, I wish I remembered, what they had now, fleas may be the one they have.

But the meaning is broad. It can mean gnats, fleas, lice, maggots, sand flies, or mosquitoes. So, some form of, small insect, that flies, or gets on you, in some sort.

Okay, we don't know exactly, what it is. That's okay. But don't be caught up, with what a gnat. I even thought, are gnats even a big thing here?

Not, that big. We know, I know there's this time of year, we always get around, in the garden, these little flying things, that sometimes sting or bite, that aren't mosquitoes, gnats of some sort.

[15:09] But, I remember this time in Georgia, where, I played in a soccer tournament, this was in high school, and we played it in Jekyll Island, which, you hear Jekyll Island, that sounds like a really nice place, you know, you go to the beach, or whatever.

So, we go down there, to play this soccer tournament. I've never experienced anything, like it in my life. I'm, I'm going to gross you out. So, we're playing this game, and the local team, I guess is used to this, I don't know how.

But, we're playing, and, of course, you get sweaty. And, these gnats are everywhere, and you're running, and you're moving, and they're getting on you. And so, your arms, any exposed skin, is just covered.

It's black, with gnats, all over. But, it's not just that. You breathe, and they were getting in my nose, like up my nose. I was breathing them in, like you're spitting them out, as you're, you know, they're getting your mouth, where you're running around.

They were getting in your eyes. So, I'm trying to play a game, and there's gnats in your eye. It was the most unpleasant experience, I've ever had playing soccer. And, I think, just imagine that multiplied, because, this, apparently, what I experienced at Jekyll Island, was a normal occurrence there, for whatever reason.

[16:19] It's far worse here. This is a plague that comes upon it. If it's gnats, and maybe we think, oh, that doesn't sound so bad. I mentioned sand flies. I think the baseball team there, in Jekyll Island, or somewhere in that area, is called, the sand gnats.

And, and they bite. And so, the ones that I was there with, weren't biting, thankfully. But, they have some that bite. I just think, ooh, imagine that, and the biting. And so, this land in Egypt, is covered with this bug.

We don't know what it is exactly. But, it's own man and beast, we're told. And so, we get the idea that it's, it's on the person. So, again, it could be lice.

It could be something like that. But, whatever it is, it's all over them. Now, there's a few possibilities here. I think, most obvious would be, that their god of the land, was called Geb.

And so, God does this miracle, by converting dust, into these gnats. Now, obviously, he doesn't do all the dust, because that's probably all the soil.

[17:24] You know, soil is basically dust. So, they still have dirt somewhere, in the land. It may be, the dust that's in the air, but they strike the ground, and, the dust particles may be on the surface.

Maybe this will encourage you, to go home and dust your house this week, right? You know how dust accumulates. All the dust that's there, it turns into, these insets, and gets, all over them. So, again, it may be a defeating of their land god, Geb.

It's interesting, that this time, there's no warning, that's given to Pharaoh. Why is there no warning, given to Pharaoh? Well, I think the answer for us, is because of what just took place, with the frauds, which we haven't really looked at yet, how Moses, how Pharaoh responds.

But, Pharaoh said he would do something, and then once, things got better, Moses' words, I think in verse 29 was, lest you cheat again.

You cheated the Lord. You lied to God about this. And so, it almost comes across as retaliatory. No warnings given. You've done this great sin. Here's another plague for you.

[18:29] Why did, well, I'm getting ahead of myself, but Moses, I'm sorry, Pharaoh went back on his word, because he had a respite. And now God removes the respite. You had a moment, where there was no plague, and you thought, eh, I don't really have to do this.

Everything's okay now. And then, boom, God strikes them with the gnats, another plague. This is the shortest account, of the three plagues, and that may be the reason why, because there's no warning beforehand, there's no interaction with Pharaoh, it's just the plague.

And so, as I've said, the dust become gnats, people look to this, and you think, all the fish in the Nile died, in a previous plague. Now, we have all these frauds that have died.

If you have rotting frauds, what are you going to get? Probably maggots, flies, gnats. Right? This ought not surprise us, that we're getting, a load of insects there.

But, but I want you to understand that, this isn't a natural occurrence. This isn't just because, you have rotting frauds, and fish over your land, that you're going to get flies and gnats.

[19:36] How do we know this? Well, one is, it says, that Aaron struck the dust, and the dust changed into gnats. That is not a natural occurrence.

Right? We know how things work, on a molecular level. Dust doesn't change into gnats. That's not how gnats come about. And so, probably in addition to the natural, insects that might be there, from rotting fish and frauds, we have this, supernatural occurrence.

And we'll look in a minute, but the, magicians aren't able to reproduce this. So again, this points to the fact, that this is no natural occurrence. God is miraculously doing something here.

And then thirdly, the flies. Flies, or flying beetles, were a manifestation of, the God, Yuthchit.

There's also the possibility here, that this could be, a, attack on Beelzebub. You guys probably are more familiar with that. That name's mentioned in the Bible, but Beelzebub, that literally just means, Lord of the flies.

[20:44] And his job, it was to protect the people from flies, and other natural disasters. So his job is to protect them from flies. So if God brings flies upon the land, what does that say? How's Beelzebub doing in his job?

He stinks, right? Our God's more powerful. He can't prevent God from, striking him at the very thing, that he's been tasked with, given the responsibility of taking care of. Now, you guys may remember my argument, that, these false gods, probably most of them, maybe all of them, have some demonic base behind them.

That there's, there really are, demonic spiritual powers, that these Egyptians may have been worshipping, as gods. Well, Luke 11, 15 identifies Beelzebub, with Satan.

It says, but some of them said, he cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons. We understand it, to understand this passage, that, the prince of demons is Satan. And so, they're identifying, or there's at least some understanding, they knew this name, to be associated with Satan.

And so, again, if we were to think about, there being a demonic representation, whatever the name they call him, they may be worshipping Satan, as this god, who's going to protect them from flies.

[21:55] And so, we see a defeat here, of this demonic power, this god, as, our god, Yahweh, brings, flies, upon the people.

And we see, in verses 20 through 21, Pharaoh is warned, I mentioned already, it could be worked, through the natural means, of dead fish and fraud, so there would be flies, naturally produced.

But again, the timing, and the location, both point to, the power of God. They're warned beforehand, Pharaoh is warned, and then, they speak, and it happens, at God's timing.

But in addition, we'll look in a moment, but, there's a distinction, that's being made too. God's people are protected. It doesn't happen, in the land of Goshen. So, again, let's just imagine, if we say, people try to argue against this, and say, well, there are rotting fish and frauds, all over the land.

So that's when the flies are there. And yet, no flies, enter into the land of Goshen. You imagine, there's this line even.

[ 23 : 02 ] You know, you're living in Goshen, you've got to go to town for food, you step over the line, and flies everywhere. Like, an invisible barrier, walls up. There's no question, the people there would understand, that this isn't normal.

Flies would normally be, probably there. Maybe God even pushed out, the normal flies that would be there. It says, there's not one fly, in all the land of Goshen. Not one. So, not only are they protected, they're actually blessed, because you've got to think, there's probably normally flies around.

Right? For a moment, you don't have that annoying buzzing, until you go to town, and there, it's covered. They have flies everywhere. But not one fly, in all the land of Goshen. So again, no natural occurrence.

It points to the power, of God. So we see this distinction, in verses 22, through 23.

And again, we see the reason, in verse 22. I will set apart, the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies, shall be there, that you may know, that I am the Lord, in the midst of the earth.

[ 24 : 09 ] So why are there no, flies in all of Goshen? To show that Yahweh, is the true God. It's a manifestation, of his power. No one can do that. We're still trying to buy stuff, that will keep flies, out of our house.

Right? We have those little candles, maybe, that keep the mosquitoes away. We have fly strips, and we do everything we can, and what? They still get in our house. But God shows his power, that he's sovereign, even over a fly.

I think we also learn, from all of these plagues, that God has righteous wrath, against sin. Habakkuk prays, in wrath, remember mercy. In wrath, remember mercy.

Habakkuk is mindful, of the fact that, the Babylonian Empire, is about to destroy, and carry into captivity, God's people. And even though, God's going to do this, rightly, righteously, in the midst of that wrath, remember to show mercy, to your people.

And that's exactly, what we see taking place here. God's pouring out his wrath, on a people who, have opposed him, and worshiped false gods. And in the midst of it, he's showing mercy, to his own people. And there were so many flies, throughout all the land of Egypt, we read in verse 24, that the land was ruined, by the swarm of flies.

[ 25 : 28 ] We don't know exactly, what this means, how is it ruined, but you get the sense of, this isn't just, there are a lot of flies. I remember one time, in our house, we had gotten grain from, I forget what it was now, what kind of grain we got, but from, maybe some Amish, in Lancaster, and, we brought it back, and, we kept getting these flies, in the house.

I mean, these certain kind of flies. And then, one day we discovered, that apparently there were, some eggs or something, in this, and, they had been hatching, for some time. And so we found the source, and got rid of it.

I can tell you, all kind of gross stories. One time we forgot, some onions back behind, this is back when we lived in Georgia, some onions back behind, the trash can, back there. And we had fruit flies, all over the house.

Where are they coming from? And so you ask, these kind of questions, so you finally find, the source. In this instance, God is the source.

There's no natural occurrence, he brings them, supernaturally, and the land's ruined by them.

There's no comfort, for the people, whatever it is, they feel, they can't even live here, because the flies are such a problem.

[ 26 : 39 ] And again, we see in verses 30 through 31, they're removed in response to prayer. And so, I'd like to point out that, these pleads, aren't just the revelation of God's, God's power, and who he is, but also, they're merciful, to Pharaoh, and to the Egyptians, because, each time, God's giving them a chance, God's giving them a chance, to repent, and to set the people free.

And when we consider the fact, that there are ten pleads, and again, we know that God's manifesting his power, but understand as well, that God gives, multiple chances, for Pharaoh to repent. And he keeps doing the same thing, over and over again.

Let's look at the court's response. How do the, the magicians in the court respond? Well, with the frauds, the magicians replicate it, that's all we're told. In verse 7, they, they do the same thing. I even think, how remarkable must this be?

There are frauds everywhere. You can't even like, pull, you know, put your hand in your pocket, without frauds. You can't open your oven, without a fraud, and somehow, they make frauds. So, maybe they do it, okay, by their secret arts, we have to take God's word, is what it says.

They do it. They make some frauds appear, somehow. And what a blessing for the people. They're covered with frauds, and now the magicians are making more frauds. Thanks a lot, guys. But that's all we're told in that one.

[ 27 : 55 ] But when the gnats come, in verse 18, we see the magicians try to replicate it, and they cannot do it. What's going on here?

Why can they not do it? You guys remember what I talked about, when I said, or when it says secret arts, my argument was, because they're worshipping these demonic powers, that it may be that they're doing these things, as God's word says, we take it at face value, they're actually performing these miraculous things, through demonic power.

So, what do we learn here, when they cannot replicate it? There's a limit to such power. Demonic power only goes so far. Our God is more powerful, than all other spiritual beings.

Sometimes we have this perception, that there's Satan and God, who are equal powers, that are badder than get out. That's not how things work. You remember, Manichism, which probably, you guys aren't that familiar with, but you remember Looney Tunes cartoons?

Some of you do. And there will oftentimes be, maybe it's Sylvester, and he'll have a, he'll have a little demon, a Satan, Sylvester on one side, and a, I don't know which side it was, but, a God, Sylvester on the other side, and they're whispering in his ear, which way is it going to go?

[ 29 : 13 ] It's a 50-50 chance, who's going to win this battle? That's not how the world works. Our God is sovereign, over all things. And so, these demonic powers, they have a limit to their power.

They cannot do it. And in fact, this is the last instance. None of the rest of the pleas, are they able to replicate. So, somewhere along the way, I've lost count.

I guess they, they were able to replicate, two of the pleads, before they failed with the third. And then, their power can't keep up with God's. And so, again, I think we're taught that, Yahweh has set a limit to their power, and that he's, defeated the gods, in this instance, in the fact that they cannot replicate, the pleads from here on out.

And this is so much the case, that look at the response of the magicians, in verse 19. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, this is the finger of God. So, these pagan magicians, that are steeped in, probably demonic worship, that they can use these powers, to do what they're doing, recognize, that there's a God in the earth, that's more powerful than they are, and he just, demonstrated by his finger, he revealed his power to us.

And of all people, again, I think we can think of these magicians, almost like they're demonic priests. They're the ones who are, most steeped in the worship of these powers.

[ 30 : 41 ] And they say to Pharaoh, basically, bow your knee to this God. Worship this God. There is a God, that's more powerful than us, and our gods. It's him who's doing this.

Know it. And so you have evangelists, in the land of Egypt. And the evangelists are the ones, who are most opposed to God. Telling Pharaoh, to bow your knee. To understand that this is God, who's done it.

It's an acknowledgement, that God's power, is superior to their power, their demonic power, or the gods, of Egypt, that they worship. And then finally, with the flies, the magicians, have stopped even trying, to replicate it.

We hear, no more mention of it. They're not even trying anymore. We give up. They're defeated, along with their gods. And so, you feel like, the battle's already over. The war's over.

And Pharaoh just doesn't know it yet. And so there's going to be more pledged, but the gods are defeated already. And finally, I want us to look at Pharaoh's response. I'm not going to go in the set order here, because, there's one thing, I really want to point out to you.

[ 31 : 50 ] So first, because of the gnats, the magicians, acknowledge the plea to be the finger of God, we just saw that, but Pharaoh's hard heart prevents him, from seeing or believing, what's

obvious to others, even those who, are opposed to our God, and worshiping false gods.

They see it, and Pharaoh's hard heart, prevents him from seeing it. This reminded me of, in the gospels, when Jesus claimed to know God, the Father, and to be sent by God, the Father, we see, two similar responses.

This is John 7, 31 and 32. Many of the people believed in him, that's in Jesus, they said, when the Christ appears, will he do more signs, than this man has done? The Pharisees heard the crowd, muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees, sent officers to arrest him. So again, remember in the gospels, we see this response, over and over again. Jesus manifests his power, by signs, by miracles, much like these signs, and pleads, in Egypt.

And what's the response? Some believe, and others reject him. Why? Well, I think the answer we would give, is the hardness of their heart, their opposition, but there's another reason as well.

[ 33 : 11 ] Listen to John 11, 47 through 48. So the chief priests and Pharisees, gathered the council, and said, what are we to do? For this man performs many signs.

So he's performing miracles, and signs that he's true. What do we do? How do we respond to that? If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come, and take away both our place, and our nation.

So we cannot let Jesus keep doing these signs. Why? Because if he does, we lose our place. And so I have to think that, why are the magicians seeing this, when Pharaoh doesn't?

I've said the hardness of his heart, but why is Pharaoh's heart hardened? What would you answer that? What would you say? Why do you think Pharaoh's heart's hardened? It's power. He's the king, the emperor of the greatest empire in all the world.

He is in that day, the most powerful man in the world, and he's worshipped by his own people as a god. But what happens if he one day says, I thought I was a god.

[ 34 : 20 ] And there is a true god. A god of gods, who's more powerful than all the demons that we've worshipped, to whom I bow my knee, and I obey him.

When he says, let my people go, I say, yes sir. What happens? People won't worship him anymore. He may remain the king of Egypt, but without the power that he had.

And so I think he has much to lose, and so he fears. Much like the Pharisees, he did not want to lose his power. He wanted to remain the god king of Egypt. He cannot afford to bow his knee to a greater king.

So I think this really hits on the reason for his hard heart, is because of his position, and the power that he enjoyed in that position. And then with the gnats, Pharaoh gives permission to sacrifice to Yahweh, within the borders of Egypt.

We saw in verse 25. And when they say, we can't do that, the people will hate us. He says, okay, you can go to the wilderness. And remember, they wanted to go a three day trip into the wilderness. He says, you can go to the wilderness, but not too far.

[ 35 : 30 ] In other words, you can cross right over the border, where people can't see you, hanging out there. You're close enough that if I have to go and grab you, I can. And so he's not really willing to let them go at all.

He's just trying to make some condition to placate them, to allow them to do what they desire to do, and then not actually leave.

And then finally, going back to the first of these, the plague of the frauds. Pharaoh asked, or we might even say beds Moses, for relief from the frauds. Look at verse eight.

Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, plead with the Lord. Again, that word's Yahweh. Plead with Yahweh. So, remember before what he said? Who is Yahweh that I should listen to him? I don't know this name.

I never heard of this guy. Who's Yahweh? Now he's saying, you plead with Yahweh to take away the frauds from me and from my people. And I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.

[ 36 : 32 ] And so he makes a promise. I don't think to Moses, but to God. Here's what you tell Yahweh. That if he will stop this plague of the frauds, I'm going to let his people go.

I'll do what he tells me to do. I will obey him. It's what Pharaoh promises. And again, it's an acknowledgement of Yahweh. He now knows the name. He knows the power behind the frauds.

And he knows that it's only him who can take it away. And Moses does something really interesting, doesn't he? In verse 9. Moses said to Pharaoh, be pleased to command me when I am to plead for you and for your servants and for your people that the frauds may be cut off from you and your

houses and be left only in the Nile.

Why does Moses say this? I think Moses wants to make sure that Pharaoh knows that it's God who does it. So how about this? Pharaoh, you set the time.

You tell me when you want God to end the plague. Yeah, tomorrow. That's what Pharaoh says. And so, God and Moses allows Pharaoh to choose the time of relief.

[ 37 : 36 ] Which again, points us to the fact that God is sovereign over every aspect of the plagues down to the very second that it's going to stop. But one thing that I was so struck with is the fact that he answers tomorrow in verse 10.

There's back in my hometown there's a famous I guess sermon that's gone around. I think it's it may have preceded the pastor of First Baptist Jonesboro but he preached it and then my pastor would preach it I think every year he preached the same sermon.

And then the church I grew up with in Griffin and then in a neighboring town there's now a Methodist pastor who preaches that sermon every year and wrote a book about it. But they all used the same title as One More Night with the Frauds.

And it plays out well but I think there is a really good point that I want you to see from this passage. He's given a chance to end the plague whenever he chooses.

And he chooses to do it the next day. To spend one more night sleeping in the bed with the frauds crawling over him all night. Walking to bed eating food that's covered in frauds one more night.

[ 38 : 46 ] Why? Well I think one reason is because he lightly doubted that God was the source even though he's asking Moses to pray. His hope is if I say tomorrow and it ends before then then I won't have to bow.

Do you understand? If it happens for some other reason if they just go away on their own then maybe I won't have to bow the knee to this God. Or even that I won't have to release the slaves in the land.

I get to keep my slaves and I don't have to acknowledge someone else's power. And then there's also the fact of his hardened heart. With the gnats his heart is hardened even though his court tells him it is from God.

And with the flies it says he hardens his heart and does not let them go outside of Egypt to sacrifice to Yahweh in verse 32. And then when the frogs die according to the time he asked for according to Moses' prayer he relents of his promise to God in verse 14.

And they gathered them together in heaps that's not verse 14 oh verse 15 but when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite he hardened his heart and would not listen to them as the Lord had said.

[ 39 : 55 ] As the Lord had said he would harden his heart that's exactly what he did. So once there's a respite it doesn't seem as bad as it did previously. And the promises that he made in the midst of the turmoil seem silly to him now in the daylight.

And his heart is hardened. And so as I think of application for us I want us to think about the ways in which we too cry tomorrow like Pharaoh. Do we do the same kind of thing that Pharaoh did?

We make all kind of plans about what we will do tomorrow or in the near future. Not just religious stuff right? We just got past New Year's and I forget what it said that I think January 13th is usually by January 13th something like 86% of people have given out their New Year's resolution but we make all kind of promises.

I can tell you Deonardo when we were out of town we were eating food that wasn't probably the healthiest food. And we kept saying we'll get back onto our normal diet on Monday. Right?

When we're back home we get settled in and we'll get back to it. I don't know how he's doing. I'm still trying to wait for Monday to come. So we make these kind of promises and we don't come through with them do we?

[ 41 : 09 ] We say we're going to do this on we're going to maybe diet maybe exercise. I always want to start exercising on Monday so it's Thursday I know I should probably start exercising but I'm like beginning of next week I'll start my exercising.

But we put all things naturally we put all things. But do we also do this with God? I think sometimes we promise things in the midst of suffering that we maybe have no intention to carry out.

We promise God that if the suffering will end we'll do this or that. And then when it stops what happens to us? Well there was a respite and he hardened his heart and would not listen to them as the Lord had said.

Is that true of you? Have you made such promises to God that you're going to do things and then when things aren't as bad we go back on those things. Well Jesus warns us about such delays. Luke 9 57-62 As they were going along the road someone said to him I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus said to him fosses have holes and birds of the air have nests but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

[ 42 : 21 ] To another he said follow me but he said Lord let me first go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Yet another said I will follow you Lord but let me first say farewell to those at my home.

Jesus said to him no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. Are there some of you in this room who treat God in this way?

God I want to follow you. I want to pray more. Maybe I want to read my Bible more. Maybe it's salvation itself. Maybe you've been convinced from the word of God that God is who he says he is. That Jesus is who he said he was. And you think I should believe in him. I should put my faith and trust in him. But not today. Maybe tomorrow.

You guys may be familiar with Constantine who said he converted to Christianity. But at that time there's a belief in baptismal regeneration. Which means you become a Christian when you're baptized and all the sins that you do before baptism are wiped away but then you're supposed to be good afterwards.

[ 43 : 34 ] And so Constantine wanted to wait until his death bed. Don't baptize me to the very end so I can keep on sinning. That's not looking so hot is it? But do some of us do the same thing?

Do we think I know I should believe in God but I'm not ready to yet? I don't want to give up what I'm doing. I don't want to give up my sin. Maybe some of you who are Christians in the room even treat sin that way.

I know I shouldn't be doing this and I'll stop after this time. Or maybe next week I'll stop that. Jesus said no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back God.

That ought to strike fear in our hearts. I think we also have to understand the hardening effects of delay. What happens to our hearts the longer we put things off?

Hebrews 3, 7-8 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion on the day of testing the wilderness. Don't harden your heart to what God is saying to you today, what he's sin is deceitful.

[ 45 : 03 ] We think it's okay just to play around with it. But we don't know what it's doing to our heart and how hard it may become. How hard might it be tomorrow to repent when you feel that conviction today?

And then I think we also have to be reminded that we may not be given tomorrow. Proverbs 27. Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.

And again, James 4, 13-14. Come now, you who say, today or tomorrow, we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit.

Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Do we see our life as a mist or a vapor?

Do we realize how short our time is and that we're not guaranteed tomorrow? Think of the parable of the rich fool that Jesus told. That fool said, I will tear down my barns and build larger ones.

[ 46 : 10 ] And there I will store my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, fool, this night your soul is required of you.

And the things you have prepared, whose will they be? And then Jesus draws this conclusion. So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. And I think, are there ways that we operate in that kind of mentality?

Let's just relax a little bit. We don't have to worry about that thing. Maybe it's again, salvation. I'm in a good place, let's just relax. What are we living for?

Where is our treasure? I think we have to understand as well that when we make promises that we do not fulfill, we lie to God. Look at verse 29 of our text.

Then Moses said, Behold, I am going out from you, and I will plead with the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.

[ 47 : 20 ] You made a promise to God that you didn't fulfill. You've cheated not Moses, not the Israelites, but you've cheated God. It's reminded in Acts 5 of Ananias and Sapphira.

Peter says to them, You have not lied to man, but to God. And when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last, and great fear came upon all who heard it. I'm not praying or suggesting that God do this today, but notice the response of the church.

Great fear fell upon them. When you look at Moses crying out tomorrow, or Ananias, or the rich fool, does great fear fall upon your heart?

What happens to me if I put this off to tomorrow? Will I even be given a tomorrow? What happens when you say you're going to do it tomorrow, and then you don't do it? You haven't lied to man. You haven't lied to yourself. You've lied to God. And that ought to strike great fear in our heart. I think of the foolishness of Pharaoh, who could have had immediate relief, but instead decided to stay with the frauds and with the plague for another day.

[ 48 : 37 ] Although it's not stated, we could argue the same may even be true with other plagues. Remember the plague of the blood in the Nile and in all the water lasted for seven days. What would have happened if Pharaoh would have repented on day one?

And so I think how foolish it is also for us to remain in our current state another day when God offers immediate relief. Foremost this is true in the gospel and salvation. If you have never put your trust and faith in Jesus Christ, trust in him today.

Don't put it off to tomorrow when you can have relief today. When that spiritual burden you think of Pilgrim's progress, that burden on your back, that sin that weighs you down can be taken away and placed on the cross of Christ.

Put your trust in him today that you may have that relief. God's word encourages us. Unbeliever and believer alike to lay aside all hindrances to follow Christ.

I want to close just with this last passage, Hebrews 12, 1-2. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

[ 50 : 01 ] Are there ways in which those sins and the things that cling to us, we just hold on to them? let us set aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we do thank you again for your word, and we pray that it would be working in the hearts of all who are gathered here today.

Lord, there are probably ways in which all of us have said, at one time or another, tomorrow. We put it off, maybe it's repenting of our sin, maybe it's sharing the gospel with a friend or family member, inviting someone to church, reading our Bibles, prayer, or maybe it's salvation itself.

Lord, we pray that today it would be today. This would be the day that we would put it off no longer. Lord, we pray that you would work in us to strike in us an urgency that we would not continue in our sin and the weight that holds us back from running the race of the Christian life with endurance focused upon Christ.

Help us now to focus upon Christ. We pray for any in this room who don't know you, that you'd work in their heart to save them today and that they would not wait another day but that this would be the day of salvation.

[ 51 : 27 ] We ask this in Christ's name. Amen.