

## ACTS OF GOD OR NATURAL DISASTERS?

Exodus 7:3-5

February 22, 2009 Sunday pm

### INTRODUCTION

- A. The Bubonic plague is believed by many to be the “Black Death” that swept through Europe in the 1340s. The deadly disease has claimed nearly 200 million lives since the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The most infamous and devastating instance of the plague was the Black Death, which killed a third of the population of Europe. The Black Death is thought to have originated in the Gobi Desert. Carried by the fleas on rats, it spread along trade routes and reached the Crimea in 1346. In 1347 it spread to Constantinople and then Alexandria, killing thousands every day, and soon arrived in Western Europe
- B. Imagine not one, but ten plagues arriving one after the other. This was the situation Egypt found itself in, in the book of Exodus.
  - 1. In our study of Exodus we have examined God’s plans for Israel during their Egyptian slavery and how Moses responded to setbacks in his service for God.
  - 2. Today we shall examine the plagues God used to deliver the Israelites from their slavery.

### I. FIRST, THE TEN PLAGUES WERE MIRACLES NOT NATURAL DISASTERS.

- A. This is the question pondered through the years.
  - 1. Some believe the ten plagues were merely natural disasters and not miracles.
  - 2. It goes something like this: **The Nile turned red because of an unusually heavy rainfall which brought red dirt from the Abyssinian and Ethiopian plateau into the river, turning it unusually red. This polluted the Nile, killing the fish and causing the frogs to leave the river. This in turn caused an unusual amount of mosquitoes, etc, etc, etc.....**
  - 3. The other approach is to believe these plagues were not just not disasters run amuck but miracles of God.
- B. Consider four reasons these had to be miracles.
  - 1. First, the Bible itself tells us they were miracles.  
**Exodus 7:3-5 <sup>3</sup> But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, <sup>4</sup> he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. <sup>5</sup> And the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it."**
  - 2. Second, the Bible tells us these plagues were started and stopped by Moses. Natural disasters cannot be controlled by a man.
  - 3. Third, the severity of the plagues exceed all other known plagues, even that of the Black Death.
  - 4. Fourth, several of the plagues were “selective”, affecting only the Egyptians and not the Hebrews (i.e. darkness, boils, gnats, death of livestock and death of firstborns).

### II. SECOND, THE TEN PLAGUES WERE MEANINGFUL.

- A. First, the plagues demonstrated God’s superiority over Egyptian gods. Do people worship false gods today? (i.e. sin, success, money, etc).  
**Exodus 12:12 "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn--both men and animals--and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.**
- B. Second, the plagues demonstrated God’s love for his people, the Hebrews. Today, the Cross demonstrates God’s love for us.

C. Third, the plagues reveal the consequences of sin. Sin is still serious today.

**Exodus 9:34 When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts.**

### **III. THIRD, THE TEN PLAGUES REVEAL GOD'S MERCY.**

A. In God's mercy the plagues started small.

1. God did not begin with the death of the firstborn Egyptians.

2. He sent nine other plagues to encourage Pharaoh to repent.

3. It was only when Pharaoh refused to repent that the next plague was sent.

B. God is still merciful today.

**2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

### **CONCLUSION**

A. The Ten Plagues were miracles not natural disasters.

B. The Ten Plagues revealed the consequences of sin and the love of God.

C. The Ten Plagues demonstrate God's mercy then and now.

D. The lesson here for us is not to harden our hearts as Pharaoh did.