

Passion for God and His Glory, not just for the Benefits

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[0:00] If you would take your Bibles, please, and go to the book of Exodus. Exodus chapter 7, actually, we'll start there. If you're visiting with us, you can go to that black Bible in the chair in front of you and go right at the beginning to page 46.

Exodus, we'll start chapter 7, page 46, again, of that black Bible. Exodus chapter 7, start in verse 25, and then we'll go into chapter 8 and do all of chapter 8.

So again, we'll start in chapter 7, verse 25, and I'll read starting there through chapter 8, okay? And again, I'll be transferring back and forth when it has the capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D. That's the name Yahweh in Hebrew, so I'll go back and forth. I'm saying Lord and Yahweh, so I'll go back and forth for you just so that you know what I'm doing. And seven days passed after Yahweh had struck the Nile.

Then Yahweh said to Moses, go to Pharaoh and say to him, thus says Yahweh. Let my people go that they may serve me. But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite your whole territory with frogs.

[1:25] And the Nile will swarm with frogs, which will come up and go into your house, 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.

So the frogs will come up on you and your people and all your servants. 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.

So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt. And the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did the same with their secret practices, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses, and Aaron said, Entreat Yahweh that he may remove the frogs from me and from my people. I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to Yahweh.

And Moses said to Pharaoh, the honor is yours. 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?

[2:26] Then he said, tomorrow. So Moses said, may it be according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like Yahweh, our God. And the frogs will depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people.

They will be left only in the Nile. Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses cried out to the Lord concerning the frogs which he had inflicted upon Pharaoh. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses.

And the frogs died out of the houses, the courts, and the fields. So they piled them in heaps and the land became foul. But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them as Yahweh had said.

Then Yahweh said to Moses, say to Aaron, stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth that it may become mosquitoes through all the land of Egypt. And they did so. And Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth.

And there were mosquitoes on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became mosquitoes through all the land of Egypt. And the magicians tried with their secret practices to bring forth mosquitoes, but they could not.

[3:30] So there were mosquitoes on man and beast. Then the magician said to Pharaoh, this is the finger of God. But Pharaoh's heart was implacable. And he did not listen to them as the Lord had said.

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 Yahweh, release my people that they may serve me.

For if you will not release my people, behold, I will release swarms of flies 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 flies and also the ground in which they dwell.

But on that day, I will set apart the land of Goshen where my people are living. So no swarms of flies will be there. And or that you may know that I, Yahweh, am in the midst of the land.

And I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall occur. Then Yahweh did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and the houses of his servants.

[4:33] And the land was laid waste because of the swarms of flies and all the land of Egypt. Verse 25, and Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, Go, sacrifice your God within the land. But Moses said, it is not safe to do so.

For we shall sacrifice to Yahweh 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 stone us? We must go a three days journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to Yahweh our God as he commands us.

And Pharaoh said, I will let you go that you may sacrifice to Yahweh your God in the wilderness.

Only you shall not go very far. Make supplication for me. And then Moses said, behold, I am going out from you.

And I shall make supplication to the Lord that the swarms of flies 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.

So Moses went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to Yahweh. And Yahweh did as Moses asked and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people.

[5:39] Not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also. And he did not let the people go. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Well, Tyler and Emma are married now. The family can give a big sigh of relief. And they did. Yes. Now let's just say, after they got married, let's just say, and I'll use my wife as an example for you, that Tyler said to Emma, well Emma, congratulations.

what do you want to do now I don't think things actually went like that do you probably not what do I have written down here there was love thrill excitement oh we can just be together oh I can do this for him oh I can do this for her they're talking and sharing there's love there's just there's just sheer pleasure that is one picture at least it should be of the Christian life that's one picture of the Christian life Exodus is a historical display of the Christian life and today in our passage what we will see is it's a Christian life that's a life of passion for God and His glory a life of passion for God a life of passion for God and His glory and as I stand up here preaching this passage to you as I will stand up here and preach this to you

I am preaching to you as someone who's trying to do this too I have not arrived but our lives should have a passion for God and His glory not just for the benefits He gives us what if Tyler did that to Emma what if Emma did that to Tyler I don't mean to be inappropriate to you but there's a word for that it's called prostitution and yet that's how we treat God sometimes that's how I treat God you just need to benefit me you just need to give this to me you just need to take this away from me and we treat God like that

I just want the benefits so I don't feel guilty anymore I just want the benefits so I don't suffer anymore but that's not Christianity that's religiosity that's a false religion and yet sometimes I think we have intertwined our American culture with Christianity do I even dare say we have intertwined politics with our Christianity friends that's not Christianity that's a figment of our imagination when all is said and done these plagues are going to funnel down into this one need that we have one truth all the plagues they funnel into this our need to seek Yahweh God not just His benefits don't just seek worship and love His gifts seek love and worship Him

[10:00] Christ God and all these plagues they're funneling us to this one main truth and you'll see we'll see three different truths that kind of push us towards that as well we'll see that in just a

moment but the main thought I want you to see is this the main thought that God wants us to see is this a life of devotion to God and His glory it's a warning to us a warning to us that we not simply want the gifts God gives us but understand that the gifts are supposed to direct us to the giver the gifts are not ends in themselves Jesus is not the ticket to get you to heaven

He's the way to heaven but He is heaven it's a relationship John 17:3 Jesus says this is eternal life that they might know you and Jesus Christ whom you have sent it's about having a passion and love for God and with these three plagues we'll look at today the frogs, mosquitoes, and flies we'll observe three other needs that stem off of this one main one it directs us to the one main one really it's our need for a mediator our need to be humble and our need for submission we'll look at those individually in just a moment but what I also want to point out to you is that each of these twelve plagues we see at least five repeated truths that keep coming up over and over and over again first Yahweh's great sovereign power you'll see Pharaoh's great stubbornness you'll see Yahweh's great faithfulness and His great mercy but then you'll see as well everything funneling into this one truth Yahweh alone is the great God so seek, worship, and love Him and you see that all twelve of these plagues again as I made mention a couple weeks ago and the week before that we're seeing the very character and nature of God in the book of Exodus He was directing us to Him and worshipping and loving Him now before we go into the text let me say a few words about these next couple two, three plagues some have said that due to natural causes that occurred within Egypt at that time and even today actually that was what happened with these plagues just natural occurrences part of that may be true but these plagues went beyond just the natural occurrences in Egypt because you see the mighty great power sovereign power of God so these natural occurrences were accentuated they're heightened so much so that Pharaoh the Egyptians would be forced to acknowledge that these occurrences came from the finger of God by His sovereign power the plagues were naturally unbelievable in other words and with the frogs the mosquitoes and the flies Egypt experienced a severe major amounts of nuisance annoyance and alarm Pharaoh enough that for two out of these three plagues he promised to consent to Moses' demand but then he revoked his promise once he got the suffering to go away and deceived Moses by not releasing the people so we see Pharaoh was a weak deceitful liar who was willing to put his people in harm's way just to get his own way he would rather see them suffer than swallow his pride and release Israel from slavery the scary part about this is that this very attitude of Pharaoh you're going to see the same attitude in the sons of Israel later on in Exodus they would want to do anything to get their own way and the scary part about this too is that's exactly what we do to God we use him to try and get our own way we use him to try and get a benefit to us to me instead of getting a clue that that's not what life is about life is about

God and glorifying him so let's walk through these and I start with number three because that's the third plague the first was the snake remember we talked about that's a sign one of the plagues as a warning throwing the staff down it became a snake or a cobra the second is a Nile turns to blood here's number three the frogs and here's our need for a mediator the plague of frogs emphasizes our need for a mediator so what is accentuated is Moses' role as mediator he was the mediator between Pharaoh and Yahweh later Moses would serve as a mediator between the people and Yahweh the sons of Israel and Yahweh so Moses is a type of what we need in Christ how can you have relationship with God how can you have a life of passion for God how do you get there what's the path it's Christ you love Christ as it says 1st Timothy chapter 2 verse 5 there's one mediator between God and man the man

[16:47] Christ Jesus does our need for a mediator he's the one who mediates so that we can have a life of passion for Christ God and his glory go through the passage verse 25 of chapter 7 into chapter 8 7 days past the Lord says to Moses go say this to Pharaoh let my people go if you refuse I will smite your whole territory of frogs storms of frogs your house your bedroom your bed the houses of your servants on your people in your ovens in your kneading bowls ew what if you like cooked a frog on accident yuck they'll come up on you and your people and all your servants the whole territory was struck with frogs the idea here in verse 3 it will come up the idea of this word is like an invasion so it looked like the frogs were attacking Pharaoh his officials and all the Egyptian people it would be beyond just a mere nuisance it would be like an attack of frogs and though the frogs were truly invading a true invading nuisance that brought genuine suffering to the people of Egypt

Yahweh was still sending them a huge huge warning message don't harden your heart release my people Aaron stretched out his hand verse 5 with the staff over the river streams pools he did that verse 6 and the frogs came up and covered the whole land of Egypt they obeyed exactly what Yahweh told them to do God displayed his mighty sovereign power notice verse 7 and the magicians did the same with their secret practices they did the same thing with their phony magical practices now some say this is demonic powers or it could have been simply like pulling a rabbit out of the hat just like a little illusion a magic trick they were con men but notice this is interesting what Pharaoh does look at verse 8 it greatly disturbed Pharaoh to have that many frogs all over the land of Egypt an attacking nuisance so he asked

Moses entreats Yahweh that he may remove the frogs from me and from my people and I will let the people go for the first time he does this so here you see Moses in the role of a mediator between Pharaoh and God and notice what he says here Moses says in verse 9 the American Standard says the honor is yours to tell me an actual better translation is this exalt yourself above me why is he saying this he's not being sarcastic Moses was taking Pharaoh at his word and he was allowing Pharaoh to save face in other words kind of like I have no desire to boast that I force you to submit to God he's almost excited to hear Pharaoh's request so he grants Pharaoh the right notice he says when shall I entreat for you and your servants and your people the frogs will be destroyed he grants

Pharaoh the right to set the time for the plague to cease but notice he points out something only he Moses as God's spokesman can has the power to stop the plague he's the mediator Pharaoh had no power to do this so Pharaoh must go through a mediator there's no other way you can't do this yourself you can't take this on yourself it's the first time too you actually see Pharaoh show some type of repentance repentance quote unquote Moses gave Pharaoh the benefit of doubt verse 10 Pharaoh says tomorrow may it be according to your word that there's no one like Yahweh our God the frogs will depart from their houses they'll be left only in the Nile God shows his great sovereign power Moses' authority is shown as well he shows his mercy by stopping the plague by the way some people think this is due to what's called the anthrax virus that the frogs carried from the dead fish from the Nile when the Nile had all those flagellates and then oxygen was spiraling all the dead fish came up and the frogs actually had the anthrax virus and came up onto the land you put that together with the fact they're out of water for so long they died almost immediately and it's quite possible but I believe it's actually stronger event than God did by his sovereign power but notice verse 14 they piled them up heaps and heaps and heaps of frogs ill some even say again brought about the massive amounts of mosquitoes and flies because of the heaps of dead frogs once again maybe this is possible but God supernaturally circumvented the events here I believe but I want to point out to you verse 15 when Pharaoh saw that there was relief

God's power his faithfulness his mercy he hardened his heart and did not listen to him just like Yahweh predicted he would do so the nature and character of Pharaoh comes out we act according to our natures our characters which is why we need God to change our hearts to love and worship him because we're naturally rigid stiff unyielding in our hearts without God's grace I love the fact that the songs that I choose I never realize that those are some of the words that we're going to be singing in reference to the actual passage we'll be looking at but help our unbelief soften our hardened hearts that we were singing show us Christ that connects with this we're naturally rigid without God's grace and it shows us it shows us how much we need Jesus to be our mediator before the powerful sovereign awesome God and he is

[23:23] Jesus is our mediator we get God and Jesus through Jesus and he's the constant mediator as John says in 1 John 2:2 what does he say if anyone sins we have an advocate Jesus Christ the righteous one he's our advocate he stands in the gap for us and then once again you see the final the main point that's trying to be shown and driven home to us Yahweh alone is the great God so seek worship and love him seek worship and love your God number four the fourth plague the plague of mosquitoes we see our need for humility actually not sure about this if it was gnats mosquitoes seems more like it is the generic word for mosquitoes they don't even know what in reference to flies we'll talk about that too when you come to that as we see our need for a mediator with the frogs here we see our need for humility what is underscored in this section here is the fact that the magicians could not duplicate the sign that stands out and the contrast between the attitude of

Pharaoh's magicians and Pharaoh's just blowing this off type attitude whatever the magicians say this is the finger of God Pharaoh didn't care one bit what this Yahweh did the mosquitoes and the flies would make life miserable for the people we need to humble ourselves before God and acknowledge that he knows what he's doing and to humble ourselves before him I mean these magicians who were not God fearers they humbled themselves we'll look at that in just a moment they humbled themselves this is the finger of God what's our response to the fact that God knows what he's doing not to be flippant in any way but one remedy that we have in God's word for anxiety anger fear is our need for humility that God knows what he's doing that's a huge remedy for anxiety that's a huge remedy when you're dealing with fear are you dealing with fear and worry today do you have

PTSD as they've described it an anxiety generic anxiety disorder how they describe it here's one remedy in God's word God knows what he's doing notice what happens verse 16 the Lord said to Moses and notice they didn't he didn't go to Pharaoh he just went right into this is what we're going to do right into the next plague stretch out your staff strike the dust it becomes mosquitoes here's the staff didn't have power in of itself it was a symbol of power and authority it's the means God uses to display his power and to display his mercy so this just a side note for us this relates to God's word the Bible God's word this speaks about God's judgment and mercy shown to us at the cross of Christ either we will be humbled before his mercy or we'll have to face his power and judgment so they did so verse 17

Aaron stretched out his hand struck the dust of the earth mosquitoes were everywhere notice verse 18 the magicians could not duplicate this they tried with their secret practices but they could not and then they said to Pharaoh this is a big deal this ain't no trick maybe they were trying to stir up a cloud of mosquitoes like Aaron did but they failed the truth comes out and they said this is no trick divine power is working here we can't imitate it they admitted that Moses was really invoking the power of God this is no illusion do you see how they're humbling themselves notice the contrast same verse verse 19 but Pharaoh's heart was implacable notice it doesn't say he made his heart hard like it says what in verse 15 in verse 15 it says and Pharaoh hardened his heart it doesn't say that does it it just says his heart was hard or implacable or relentless unmoved he just ignored the facts laid before him and the advice from the magicians plus notice he didn't persuade Moses to have the plague go away you see that maybe because of his pride maybe because he figured it would just go away on its own look one can deny God working in and through his word but at some point eventually it is so apparent that even those who are unsaved may admit it's

God's power there are some people whose hearts are softer than others you know them and there's some people whose hearts are harder than others what about our hearts what about your heart is your heart soft you just sang that oh God help us to humble ourselves to your word and notice as we humble ourselves we see again Yahweh alone he is the great God so seek worship and love him he gets all glory and I want to focus all my devotion all my attention to him so we see what the frogs are need for humility we see what the mosquitoes are need excuse me are need for a mediator but the mosquitoes are need for humility and then here's the fifth plague third one that we're looking at the plague of flies are need for submission this is a miserable nuisance yet again [30 : 38] Pharaoh deceitfully lies but here you're going to notice for the first time Pharaoh tried to bargain with Moses but he only bargains on his terms on Pharaoh's terms that is look we don't negotiate with God coming to him on our terms we don't put demands on God he puts demands on us we don't say oh well you know maybe I'll do this you know if you do this for me then yeah that's what people think of God don't they and that's what we do to God if you just take this away from me I'll I'll make sure I you know it's about us submitting ourselves to God and what he wants for us we need a mediator we need humility and we need to submit to this

I mean think about it how do you negotiate with someone who has everything and you have nothing how do you negotiate oh let me negotiate with you God it's the other way around Jack God's gonna negotiate with you I should wipe you out right now fool but tell you what I'll save you so you will love me because I'm the end all be all says the Lord right God negotiates with us we don't negotiate with God this where we see what the plague of flies our need for submission notice what happens verse 20 Yahweh said to Moses rise early in the morning present yourself to Pharaoh say to him thus says Yahweh and I translated this for you from Hebrew and it's a play on words release my people that they may serve me for if you will not release my people behold

I will release on you you see the play on words from the Hebrew there I will send release upon you flies the odd part is the only word used in reference to this plague fly or gnat or whatever it is insect so they think it's a subgroup for the generic word Hebrew word for fly so we'll go with that maybe it was a massive horsefly it's as big as your hand who knows they don't know but whatever it was it would be a major painful nuisance maybe it was biting the people which is why the cattle died in chapter 9 and why the people got boils in chapter 9 but notice the difference that takes place it's going to be in your houses full of the flies verse 22 on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen notice the distinction that comes here comes into play

Goshen would be spared notice God showing his faithfulness and his mercy to his people in order that you may know that I Yahweh am in the land it would only come upon all the Egyptians so Pharaoh would know the plague was directed against him and his people because they refused to listen to Yahweh God who has invaded the land I'm here I've invaded the land tomorrow this sign shall occur the Lord did so there came great swarms of insects the houses of Pharaoh the houses of his servants the land was laid waste in the sense that life was unbearable and miserable I mean we can hardly live with a couple flies flying around us it bugs us we don't like that I mean can you imagine the hundreds of flies swung around you all day every day maybe biting you oh those no-see-ums oh they're evil

I hate those things oh they love me oh boy look at that guy's ankles you know they started gnawing at my ankles like it was chocolate or something like that life was agonizing for the Egyptians but look Pharaoh you must come to terms with God you're called and commanded to yield to him and his great power or you will continue to face his just righteous power instead of his mercy it changes verse 25 Pharaoh called for Moses go sacrifice to your God within the land so now he's just trying to negotiate with Moses for the first time Pharaoh tries to negotiate with Moses with terms that would be more beneficial to him not to God's people it's like when we try to negotiate with God we're gonna obey the Lord on our terms not his well Moses says verse 26 it's not safe literally safe that's a better word for us to do so why it's an abomination to the

[36:11] Egyptians if we sacrifice what's an abomination they're gonna stone us they're gonna kill us who would we want to do that for the people would writhe and kill the Israelites look we must have a three day journey into the wilderness you must release us to worship Yahweh our God verse 28 fine fine fine fine fine fine I'll release you only you shall not go very far notice he's trying to try to negotiate make supplication for me what a little liar a weasel but but notice he could not deny or doubt Moses as God brought the plague right he could not deny that Moses had the power to stop the plague right no all he wanted was relief all he wanted was the benefits not to submit to

Yahweh notice the prelude to Moses' warning to Pharaoh okay verse 29 I'm going out from you I'm going to make supplication like he's doing this I'm leaving but do not let Pharaoh deal deceitfully again and not letting the people go to sacrifice to Yahweh he makes supplication but don't mess with us again by deceitfully lying just so that you can get the plague stopped to get relief and not release God's people verse 30 Moses went out from Pharaoh made supplication to the Lord the Lord did as Moses said Yahweh did exactly what Moses said the fly is turned away not one remained notice what it says though in verse 32 but Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also he did not let the people go he made his heart laden but not releasing the people

Pharaoh is nothing one writer puts it like this nothing but a quote obstinate and duplicitous person he was so stubborn to truth you know it's scary that our hearts can be so stubbornly and irrationally hard to God and his truth we even use God to get what we want out of life maybe to get the guilt feelings to go away maybe so I can just have forgiveness and then I don't have to worry about it again but as John Piper said in his book God is the gospel we get God the way of the treacherous is hard says Proverbs 13 15 the way of the fool is a hard road your life will be miserable if you are unrepentant and hard hearted to God and his perfect word and I know I'm talking to us who are Christians I think most here but that's still to you oh Christian your life will be miserable if you're unrepentant and you're hard hearted to God and his word so we see our need for a mediator to be humble before God and submit to him because he's the one who should be our delight again all the plagues are directing us to this one need that we seek Yahweh God not just his benefits we have a passion a life of passion for God and his glory we just don't seek God and worship God and love God because he gives us these gifts if you do you're acting just like Pharaoh you're acting just like him again it's a warning to us that we not simply want the gifts God gives us but understand that the gifts are supposed to direct us to the giver sex is supposed to direct you to the giver food is

supposed to direct you to the giver what you drink is supposed to direct you to the giver that relationship is supposed to direct you to the giver marriage is supposed to direct you to the giver your job is supposed to direct you to the giver money is supposed to direct you to the giver all these things that are given to you forgiveness in Christ is supposed to direct you to the giver the gifts are not ends in themselves

Jesus is not the ticket he's the way to heaven but he is heaven may we see our need our need for the mediator Christ our need to humble ourselves before God and his word submitting to him and really this a passion for God and his glory Father help us we need to see our need for you oh Jesus to be our mediator to humble ourselves before you and submit to your grace and to be so enamored and just heart filled love for you it will just spill out of our lives in our relationships with Christians with non-Christians with siblings with uncles in our marriages in our parenting with our employees with our bosses with our neighbors this is the Christian life let us be passionate for you oh God as we sang a few moments ago oh God reveal your glory through the preaching of your word that our hearts might confess

[42 : 49] Christ you are Lord be Lord in my life draw us in the deeper love for you draw us in the deeper devotion to you even in a few moments within the next 30 minutes or so within the next hour we'll be eating lunch even as we eat whatever we do as Paul says whether we eat or drink whatever we do may be done for your glory take this time to take a few moments to ponder what we've seen in God's word we'll have a few moments of silence for you to think for you to ponder and after a few moments we'll worship in our giving we'll sing our last two songs and our closing prayer just these few moments of silence sit think ponder maybe pray and and to