

The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

8 And Je-ho-vah spake unto Mo-ses, Go in unto Pha-raoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (2) And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: (3) and the river shall swarm with frogs, which shall go up and come into thy house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs: (4) and the frogs shall come up both upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants. (5) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Say unto Aar-on, Stretch forth thy hand with thy rod over the rivers, over the streams, and over the pools, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of E-gypt. (6) And Aar-on stretched out his hand over the waters of E-gypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of E-gypt. (7) And the magicians did in like manner with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of E-gypt.

(8) Then Pha-raoh called for Mo-ses and Aar-on, and said, Entreat Je-ho-vah, that he take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice unto Je-ho-vah. (9) And Mo-ses said unto Pha-raoh, Have thou this glory over me: against what time shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, that the frogs be destroyed from thee and thy houses, and remain in the river only? (10) And he said, Against to-morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word; that thou mayest know that there is none like unto Je-ho-vah our God. (11) And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. (12) And Mo-ses and Aar-on went out from Pha-raoh: and Mo-ses cried unto Je-ho-vah concerning the frogs which he had brought upon Pha-raoh. (13) And Je-ho-vah did according to the word of Mo-ses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courts, and out of the fields. (14) And they gathered them together in heaps; and the land stank. (15) But when Pha-raoh saw that there was respite,

he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as Je-ho-vah had spoken.

(16) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Say unto Aar-on, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the earth, that it may become lice throughout all the land of E-gypt. (17) And they did so, and Aar-on stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and there were lice upon man, and upon beast; all the dust of the earth became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. (18) And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: and there were lice upon man, and upon beast. (19) Then the magicians said unto Pha-raoh, This is the finger of God: and Pha-raoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Je-ho-vah had spoken.

(20) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pha-raoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (21) Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the E-gyp-tians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are. (22) And I will set apart in that day the land of Go-shen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am Je-ho-vah in the midst of the earth. (23) And I will put a division between my people and thy people: by to-morrow shall this sign be. (24) And Je-ho-vah did so; and there came grievous swarms of flies into the house of Pha-raoh, and into his servants' houses: and in all the land of E-gypt the land was corrupted by reason of the swarms of flies.

(25) And Pha-raoh called for Mos-es and for Aar-on, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. (26) And Mo-ses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the E-gyp-tians to Je-ho-vah our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the E-gyp-tians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? (27) We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to Je-ho-vah our God, as he shall command us. (28) And Pha-raoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice

to Je-ho-vah your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me. (29) And Mo-ses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will entreat Je-ho-vah that the swarms of flies may depart from Pha-raoh, from his servants, and from his people, to-morrow: only let not Pha-raoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to Je-ho-vah. (30) And Mo-ses went out from Pha-raoh, and entreated Je-ho-vah. (31) And Je-ho-vah did according to the word of Mo-ses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pha-raoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. (32) And Pha-raoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER EIGHT
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. What purpose was in God's mind for his people after Pha-raoh let them go? (8:1; 9:1; 10:3)
2. Where would the frogs originate? (8:3)
3. What would the frogs get into? (8:3-4)
4. Whose hand signalled the frogs to come up? (8:5-6)
5. How did the magicians' frog-miracle compare to that of Moses and Aaron? (8:7-8)
6. What did Pharaoh promise after the frogs came upon the land? (8:8)
7. What did Moses mean by "Glory over me"? (8:9)
8. Where would frogs remain after the plague was removed? (8:9)
9. When were the frogs to be removed? (8:10)
10. What did Moses do to get the frogs removed? (8:12)
11. Where did the frogs die? (8:13)
12. What was done with the dead frogs? (8:14)
13. What was Pharaoh's response after the death of the frogs? (8:15)

14. What was Aaron's rod to smite? (8:16)
15. What did the lice attack? (8:17)
16. Could the magicians duplicate the plague of lice? (8:19)
17. What was the magicians' comment about the lice? (8:19)
18. Where did Moses meet Pharaoh after the plague of lice? (8:20)
19. Where would there be swarms of flies? (8:21)
20. How did the plague of flies affect different areas differently? (8:22)
21. What compromise offer did Pharaoh make to Moses? (8:25)
22. What did Moses refer to as the "abomination of the Egyptians"? (8:26)
23. Did Pharaoh actually promise to let Israel go? (8:28, 8)
24. What second compromise offer did Pharaoh make? (8:28)
25. Where did Moses go to pray that the flies be removed? (8:29-30)
26. How many flies remained? (8:31)
27. What was Pharaoh's reaction after the removal of the flies? (8:32)

EXODUS EIGHT: LITTLE CREATURES — BIG PLAGUES!
(The supremely great smitten by the supremely contemptible!)

1. Frogs; 8:1-15.
2. Lice (gnats); 8:16-19.
3. Flies; 8:20-32.

COMPROMISES THAT CONTINUE CAPTIVITY!

(Pharaoh's compromise offers)

1. "Go; sacrifice in the land." (8:25)
(The compromise of remaining in the "world.")
2. "Go, but not very far." (8:28)
(The compromise of lukewarmness)
3. "Go, ye that are men." (10:11)
(The compromise of undedicated families)

4. "Everyone go; but leave your flocks." (10:24)
(The compromise of undedicated livelihoods)

FLEETING REPENTANCE IN FRIGHTENED REBELS

(8:8-15)

1. Caused by disasters; (8:8)
2. Causes men to call God's ministers; (8:8)
3. Causes men to make promises; (8:8)
4. Causes procrastination in seeking deliverance; (8:10)
5. Brings blessings briefly (8:11-14)
6. Quickly forgotten; (8:15)

THE FINGER OF GOD! (8:19)

1. Cannot be escaped; (8:16-17)
2. Cannot be counterfeited; (8:18)
3. Cannot be comprehended by some; (8:19)

GOD'S REDEMPTION FOR HIS PEOPLE; (8:23)

1. It is obvious; (8:22)
2. It is protective; (8:24)
3. It is instructive; (8:22)
4. It leads to deliverance; (8:20, 25)

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER EIGHT

1. *What is in chapter eight?*

This chapter contains the stories of three plagues - the frogs, the lice (or gnats), and the flies. The chapter closes with Pharaoh's first compromise offers to Moses. The chapter tells how the plagues soon forced Pharaoh to admit that Jehovah was causing them, and that Moses' prayers could remove them. Also in this chapter we learn how the magicians of Egypt (and the gods of Egypt) utterly failed to match Moses' deeds or protect Egypt.

2. *What demand and threat did Jehovah give Pharaoh?* (8:1-2)

He demanded the Pharaoh let Israel go so that they might *serve* Him. *Serving* God in this case involved sacrificing to Him (3:12, 18). God threatened to smite ALL of Pharaoh's land with frogs if he refused to let Israel go.

Refusing was a habit with Pharaoh. See 7:14. The warning, "If you refuse . . .," was given before several plagues. See 8:2, 21; 9:2; 10:4.

3. *What did the Egyptians think of frogs?*

Frogs were highly regarded before this plague. Each September after the summer overflowing of the Nile had gone down, frogs would become numerous in ponds of water all over Egypt. Their croaking was a reminder that the gods had done their duty again and another fruitful year lay before them.

Within Egyptian mythology the frog was the embodiment of the life-giving power.¹ The frog was the symbol of the goddess Hekt (Heqt), who was thought to blow the breath of life into the nostrils of the bodies of men that her husband (Khnun) fashioned on the potter's wheel from the dust of the earth. She also supposedly assisted women in childbirth, and was a symbol of the resurrection and fertility.

4. *Where would the frogs penetrate? (8:3-4)*

From the river they would go everywhere. Frogs would enter the houses, where they would be particularly offensive to the scrupulously clean Egyptians. (See notes on 8:15, 17.) Psalm 105:30 says, "Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the *chambers of their kings*." There was no escaping this scourge. By digging holes the Egyptians had found some relief from the water-to-blood plague, but they could not escape the frogs. They entered homes, bed-chambers, even ovens and kneading troughs, where unbaked bread was rising. This was most unusual; for frogs do not normally seek dry places like beds or ovens, nor do they crawl on people.

An Egyptian oven was only a hole in the earth, in which

¹Martin Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

they put wood for a fire, and over which they put an earthen pitcher. The bread was placed inside that, and baked by the action of the fire in the hole beneath. We can imagine that when this hole was filled with frogs the preparation of bread would become utterly impractical.

5. *What act started the plague of frogs?* (8:5)

Aaron stretched forth his hand with his rod in his hand, over the rivers (referring to the branches of the Nile delta), the streams (or canals), and pools. See notes on 7:19. Aaron used the rod in the first three plagues (7:19; 8:5, 16).

6. *How disastrous was the plague of frogs?* (8:6)

It was not a mere inconvenience; it was a *destruction*, or ruination. Psalm 78:45 says, "He sent . . . frogs, which *destroyed* them." It stopped all usual activities of life. People could not work, or sleep, or eat, or move about without the most dreadful interference from the frogs. Frogs leaped upon and crawled over people wherever they were.

We are sure that the popularity of the frog-goddess Hekt dropped to near zero after this plague.

Egypt's power was defeated not by lions, but by frogs. The supremely powerful Pharaoh was brought low by the supremely contemptible frogs.

The plague of frogs was clearly a miracle. The frogs came and died suddenly at the command of Moses and Aaron. Their coming in such great numbers can be accounted for on no other basis.

7. *How did the magicians respond to the frog plague?* (8:7)

By their enchantments (secret arts) they brought up more frogs upon the land of Egypt. This certainly did not help the Egyptians. They needed frogs removed, and not more frogs. But to Pharaoh the implications of the magicians' duplicating the frog miracle were more important even than relief from the frog-scurge. At least he could satisfy himself that he was not dealing with a uniquely powerful Jehovah and a uniquely powerful Moses.

Note again that it was by *enchantments* that the magicians brought up frogs on Egypt. This makes us think that

supernatural powers of Satan were involved. Compare 7:11, 22; 8:18. Rev. 16:14 prophesies, "Three unclean spirits, as it were *frogs*, proceed forth; for they are spirits of demons, working signs."

8. *What did the frogs teach Pharaoh about Jehovah?* (8:8)

He learned that Jehovah was very real and "out of his league"; and that he needed Moses as an intercessor. The man who once said that he did not know Jehovah (5:2) now requests that Jehovah be entreated. He begins and ends his speech with the name of Jehovah.

9. *What did Pharaoh ask Moses to do?* (8:8)

To entreat, or intercede, to Yahweh (Jehovah) to take away the frogs. In return he promised to permit Israel to go and sacrifice. He certainly did not keep this promise. This pattern of appeal-promise-renegeing soon became a habit. Four times Pharaoh asked Moses to entreat the LORD to remove some plague (8:8, 28; 9:28; 10:17). Four times Moses complied (8:12, 30; 9:33; 10:18). Four times Pharaoh backed down and would not keep his promise (8:15, 32; 9:34-35; 10:20).

Pharaoh's repentance was that of a hypocrite, and not a godly sorrow. He desired not a new life, but simply removal of the judgment that had come upon the nation. When hypocrites have been overpowered, they often beg for deliverance and make promises. Thus did king Jeroboam I (I Kings 13:6), and Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:24). Pharaoh was like people who repent and make promises when in the anguish of a sick room, or in a storm, or war, or bankruptcy. Such repentance and promises often do not last long when the troubles are past.

10. *What does "Glory over me" mean?* (8:9) *Who said this?*

Literally it says, "Glorify thyself." It means to take the honor or advantage over me, by directing me as to *when* I shall entreat God for you and your servants, to cut off the frogs from you. This was a face-saving gesture granted by Moses to Pharaoh. Moses did not say when he would remove the frogs, but when he would pray about it.

Granting Pharaoh the privilege (?) of designating when

Moses should pray for deliverance from frogs actually enhanced the power and honor of Moses! Pharaoh would perceive that Moses could do this not just at some time of Moses' choosing, but at any time Pharaoh said.

11. *Why did Pharaoh not ask for immediate deliverance? (8:10)*

Why wait till tomorrow? Possibly Pharaoh hoped that by the next day the frogs would be going away by themselves, and he would be clear of the plague without being obligated either to Moses or to Jehovah.

Perhaps it was a face-saving gesture for Pharaoh. It was as if he said, "I can tough this out another day! You have not made me cry out in utter abject helplessness." He was still basically unwilling to yield to the claims of God upon him and to Moses' authority.

12. *What would Pharaoh learn by the removal of the frogs? (8:10)*

That there was no one else like Jehovah, *our* God. Compare 9:14. The *our* reflects some justifiable Israelite pride. The truth that no one else is like God is frequently asserted in later scriptures (Deut. 33:26; II Sam. 7:22; Isa. 46:9).

13. *Where would there be frogs after the plague? (8:11)*

In the river only. Their presence in the river indicates that the river was no longer polluted. The blood was all gone.

14. *Where did Moses pray about the frogs? (8:12)*

He "went out" from Pharaoh. This he did also after the plagues of flies (8:29), hail (9:29), and locusts (10:18). Often prayer is best done privately. Praying in Pharaoh's presence would seem like casting pearls before swine.

15. *Did Moses' prayers remove the frogs? (8:13-14)*

Yea, verily! The frogs outside of the river, in fields, court-yards, and houses ALL died. They were gathered (maybe raked up) into heaps, and the land *stank* again. Compare 7:21.

The deeds of sinners often leave stinking heaps of after-effects, even after the sins are forgiven. Past sins may leave behind weakened bodies, bad memories, broken marriages, debts, and enmity.

16. *What did Pharaoh do after the frog-plague was removed?* (8:15)

He hardened his heart, and would not let Israel go, as he had promised he would. Pharaoh was still unwilling to admit that the God of the Hebrews had outdone the gods of Egypt in a demonstration of power.

17. *How did these plagues affect most Egyptians?*

The plagues caused total disruption of their usual life-patterns and much misery. When a father or a ruler sins, he brings misery on his whole family or nation. Thus Pharaoh caused others to suffer even more than he did.

The Greek historian Herodotus (about 450 B.C.) wrote about the Egyptians:

All other men pass their lives separate from animals; the Egyptians have animals always living with them. [The murrain of cattle disrupted this life-style!]

.....
They are religious to excess, far beyond any other race of men, . . . They wear linen garments [See Ex. 9:31!], which they are specially careful to have always freshly washed. . . . The priests shave their whole body every other day, that no *lice* or other impure thing may adhere to them when they are engaged in the service of the gods. Their dress is entirely of linen. . . . They bathe twice every day in cold water, and twice each night [What did they do when their water turned to blood?]; besides which they observe, so to speak, thousands of ceremonies.²

18. *What warning was given before the plague of lice?* (8:16)

No warning was given before this plague. Similarly no warning was given before plagues six (boils) and nine (darkness). Aaron's rod was employed before the plague of lice, as with the previous two plagues.

19. *What insects are referred to as "lice"?*

²Herodotus II, 36, 37, Translated by George Rawlinson (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), pp. 88-89.

Probably *gnats*. This is the translation of the Hebrew word *kinnim* in the R.S.V., the Catholic *New American Bible*, the *Berkeley* version, and the *New American Standard Bible*. Nonetheless, the meaning of the word is still uncertain. The *New English Bible* renders it *maggots*, and the *Jerusalem Bible* as *mosquitoes*. The Jewish historian Josephus translated the word as *louse* (Gr. *phtheir*), as did the Jewish Talmud; and these renderings have influenced most later translations. The Greek O.T. (LXX) rendered it as *sknips* (pl. *skniphes*), probably meaning *flea*. The *skniphes* were small insects which pierced the skin, and also set up intolerable itching and penetrated the ears and nostrils.

Gnats and other small insects are a common affliction in Egypt, but not to the disastrous degree reached in this plague.

20. *Where did the gnats (or lice) originate?* (8:17)

From the dust of the earth. "ALL the dust of the earth became lice throughout all the land of Egypt." We hardly suppose that every particle of dust in Egypt became an insect on a one-to-one basis, but the expression certainly refers to limitless hosts of insects.

All in Hebrew usage sometimes means a very large portion, but not necessarily *all* in an absolute sense. Thus in the days of Noah "*All* flesh had corrupted their way" (Gen. 6:12); however, Noah and his family had not. Similarly *all* the cattle of Egypt died in plague five; but some cattle were still alive during plagues six and seven (Ex. 9:6, 9, 25).

21. *How did the lice affect Egypt?* (8:17)

They were upon both man and beast. Compare Psalm 105:31. See note 17 in the notes on this chapter.

22. *How did the magicians react to the lice?* (8:18-19)

They tried by enchantments to produce lice (gnats) but they could not. They did not give up; they were defeated! How small a thing the Lord used to put down the Egyptians! God apparently set this as the limit on the Satanic powers by which they had changed rods to crocodiles, made water blood, and produced frogs. The magicians had tried to

salvage their own honor and the reputation of their gods, but their folly now became manifest (obvious) to all men (II Tim. 3:8-9). We wonder why Pharaoh and the magicians were so slow in perceiving that ALL of the plagues were the work of God's finger.

The confession of the magicians that this was the *finger of God* is a thoroughly Egyptian expression. Compare I Sam. 6:3, 9; Luke 11:20. We would probably use the idiom "the hand of God." G. L. Robinson says that the phrase *finger of God* occurs often in Egyptian magical texts. For example, we read of the "*finger of Seth*" (who was one of the principal gods of Egypt). Also in a condemnation of the monster-dragon Aphophis, the sun-god Re said, "The *finger of Thoth* [the Egyptian recorder-god] is before thy eyes."³

The magicians do not imply that they are converted to Moses' God; but they surely recognize that he is a God, and has some potent powers.

23. *How did Pharaoh react to the defeat of the magicians? (8:19)*

Their confession of impotence did not convince Pharaoh of the need of ceasing his resistance to the command of God. His heart was hardened. The text does not indicate whether he himself hardened it, or God, or both.

24. *Where was Moses to accost Pharaoh before the plague of flies? (8:20)*

Moses was to rise up early the next day and meet Pharaoh at the water, presumably at the brink of the Nile. Compare 7:15. Moses was to make the same demand as before (7:16; 8:1). Pharaoh was surely getting the message by this time.

25. *What kinds of flies afflicted Egypt (8:21)*

Many kinds! Indeed *swarms*! The Hebrew word here translated "swarms" (of flies) means "mixture."⁴ Psalm 78:45 says (in KJV) "He sent divers sorts of flies"; this is an

³*The Bearing of Archaeology on the Old Testament* (New York: American Tract Society, 1944), p. 42.

⁴The Hebrew word *'arob* used here is employed nine times in the O.T., and is always related to this plague.

accurate rendering of the idea. The Hebrew word is similar to that used in Ex. 12:38, where it refers to the *mixed* multitude that left Egypt with the Israelites.

The Greek O.T. translated "swarm" as *kunomia*, or dog-fly. Since the Greek Bible was translated in Egypt, this may be a precise description of the type of fly that attacked the Egyptians. The dog-fly (also called the stable-fly, because of its usual presence in stables) has a sharp and painful bite, which may cause inflammation. It is the species *Stomoxys calcitrans*.

Other translations have been made of "swarms" (of flies). *Jerusalem Bible* and *Berkeley* version give it as *gadflies*, a word referring to any of various flies, as horseflies, botflies, warble flies, that bite and annoy livestock. This seems like an excellent translation.

The Jewish commentator J. H. Hertz renders it *beetles*. Beetles (particularly the scarab beetle, a dung beetle) were sacred bugs in Egypt. The ichneumon fly, which was regarded as a manifestation of the god Uatchit, has been suggested. Another common view is that the "swarms" were swarms of various creatures, not just insects. This is a common Jewish view. Josephus (*Antiquities* II, xiv, 3) said they were "various sorts of pestilential creatures, with their various properties, such indeed as had never come into sight of men before." Another Jewish view, that they were "swarms" of "evening wolves," is not regarded as acceptable.

Once again we must note that most of the plagues had religious significance, and were directed against the gods of Egypt.

26. *What distinction was made during the plague of flies? (8: 22-23)*

There were to be no flies in Goshen where the Israelites were. This is the first specific mention of such a distinction during the plagues, although we are by no means certain that it had not been the case during the first three plagues.

This distinction would cause Pharaoh to know that Israel's god was "Jehovah in the midst of the earth." It was God's

great goal in the plagues to make this truth real to Pharaoh. (Ex. 7:5, 17; 14:4, 18)

27. *What would God place between his people and the Egyptians?* (8:23)

Literally the text says, "I will set a *redemption* (or ransom) between my people and thy people." The Hebrew word *peduth* is also translated *redemption* in Ps. 111:9; 130:7; Isa. 50:2.

However, some authors feel the word is more accurately rendered *division*. The Greek O.T. and Latin Vulgate render it *division*. So also the R.S.V.: "I will put a division. . . ." We still prefer the translation of *redemption*.⁵ As Keil and Delitzsch⁶ assert, the exemption from the plague of flies was essentially a redemption, or deliverance, for Israel. It was not just a division from harm, but involved deeper deliverance and blessings.

28. *When was the plague of flies to start?* (8:23)

The next day! The flies arrived the next day as predicted. The fulfillment of this prediction shows that the plague was a miracle.

29. *What effects did the flies have on the land?* (8:24)

The land was *destroyed*,⁷ or ruined. "Corrupted" seems too weak a translation here. The Hebrew word *shahat* means to *destroy* when physical objects are referred to. Thus, a vineyard is destroyed (Jer. 12:10), a temple (Lam. 2:6), or a crop (Judges 6:4; Mal. 3:11).

Psalm 78:45 says, "The flies *ate them up*."

The plague is said to have been *grievous*, meaning heavy,

⁵The question hinges around whether *peduth* is from the verb *padad*, meaning to divide, or from a very similar verb *padah*, meaning to redeem. Both Davies' *Lexicon* and Harkavy's *Hebrew Dictionary* say it comes from *padah*.

⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 485.

⁷The Hebrew verb *destroyed* is in the imperfect, or future, tense, but it has a past significance here. Ancient Hebrew did not always distinguish carefully between the tenses. The imperfect tense here may indicate the continuation of the flies' destruction of the land for some days: "it was being destroyed."

or massive, or abundant, or numerous. This is a form of the same word used to describe the heavy (or hardened) heart of Pharaoh. God sends heavy plagues to defeat men's heavy resistance.

30. *What effect did the flies have on Pharaoh?* (8:25)

This plague brought him to Moses with a compromise offer. Pharaoh promised to let Israel go and sacrifice, but only in the land. Pharaoh had found no deliverance from the gods of Egypt, his magicians, or his own bluster; therefore, he now seeks compromise with Moses. Persecutors like Pharaoh never want God's people to go far out of their reach and power.

This was the first of four compromise offers by Pharaoh. Any of them would have effectively prevented Israel from leaving the land permanently, and Moses turned them all down.

PHARAOH'S COMPROMISE OFFERS

1. Go sacrifice in the land of Egypt. (Ex. 8:25)
2. Go out of the land, but do not go far. (8:28)
3. The men alone may go sacrifice. (10:8, 11)
4. Everyone may go, but leave flocks and herds in Egypt. (10:24)

31. *Why couldn't Israel sacrifice in the land of Egypt?* (8:26-27)

Because the Israelites would offer sacrifices that would be an abomination (a detestable thing) to the Egyptians, so that the Egyptians would stone them. Also to sacrifice to Jehovah acceptably, they had to obey His command to go three days' journey out of the land. Compare 3:18.

Moses did not specify what the Egyptians would find abominable about their sacrifices; but apparently Pharaoh sensed the truth in Moses' objection. At least he offered no rebuttal.

The "abomination" did not involve sacrificing cattle, for the Egyptians did sacrifice and eat cattle, even though some

cattle were sacred to them. See notes on 7:15. Probably the best explanation is that the abomination somehow involved the use of sheep for sacrifice. Every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians (Gen. 46:34).

This dialogue between Moses and Pharaoh suggests that during their stay in Egypt the Israelites had not sacrificed to their God.

32. *What second compromise offer did Pharaoh make? (8:28)*

He would let them go and sacrifice in the desert out of the land of Egypt; only they should not go far away. Pharaoh's offer is a significant concession, and shows the plagues were truly having effect on him. Note Pharaoh's request for Moses to "Entreat" for him. See notes on 8:8.

The world does not want Christians to move too far from it, or be too different from it. They want us to be in their power, and not to condemn them by the example of a life too righteous.

33. *What did Moses caution Pharaoh about doing? (8:29)*

"Let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more." Pharaoh had done deceitfully previously when he promised during the plague of frogs to let Israel go, but refused to do so after the plague (8:8, 15).

God's servants like Moses are ready to help persecutors in misery, and to pray for them. But also they *warn* them about sin.

On "going out" to pray for Pharaoh, see 8:12.

34. *How fully were the flies removed? (8:31)*

"There remained not one!" How great is God's deliverance! The flies were removed in answer to prayer. God removes swarms of judgments when his servants pray to him.

35. *How did Pharaoh fulfill his promises to Moses? (8:32)*

He hardened his heart again, and would not let them go. He broke his promise (8:28). This *also* refers back to the second plague (the frogs), when he hardened his heart after promising to let them go if the frogs were removed (8:8, 15).