

The First Three Plagues — Study Outline

(Exodus 7:14 – 8:19)

I. Big-Picture Frame

1. Purpose of the plagues

- Teach **Israel** who their God really is.
- Expose Egypt's gods as powerless.
- Stage a public “battle of the gods” that reveals **Yahweh alone is Lord** (7:17).

2. Hardness of Pharaoh's heart (7:14; 7:22; 8:15, 19)

- Each defeat intensifies his pride—like Jezebel later (1 Ki 18-19).
 - God permits Egyptian magicians limited success so Pharaoh's inner resistance is fully revealed.
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II. Plague #1 — Water to Blood (7:15-24)

Aspect	Details & Teaching Points
Command	Moses/Aaron meet Pharaoh at the Nile; rod that became a serpent now strikes the water (vv. 15-17).
Extent	Rivers, streams, ponds, pools, even stored water in wooden & stone vessels (v. 19).
Targeted deity	Hapi — Nile fertility god, “bringer of life.” Yahweh turns the life-giver into death.
Moral justice	The river that received drowned Hebrew babies now runs with blood—divine answer to genocide.
Magicians' mimicry	They replicate the sign (v. 22); Pharaoh's heart hardens.
Takeaway	God begins where Egypt feels strongest; He alone controls life's source.

III. Plague #2 — Frogs (8:1-15)

Aspect	Details & Teaching Points
Warning & decree	“Let My people go... or I will smite... with frogs” (vv. 1-4).
Execution	Rod over waters; frogs swarm homes, beds, ovens (vv. 5-6).
Possible natural link	Foul Nile could drive frogs out—but Scripture credits God’s direct act.
Targeted deity	Heqet — frog-headed goddess of fertility/creation. True Creator humiliates false “creator.”
Magicians’ mimicry	They raise more frogs (v. 7) but cannot remove them .
Timed removal	Pharaoh sets the hour; God clears frogs precisely (vv. 9-13) → proves sovereignty.
Lingering witness	Heaps of dead frogs “stank” (v. 14) = olfactory reminder of Yahweh’s power every breath.
Heart check	Relief ≠ repentance; Pharaoh hardens again (v. 15).

IV. Plague #3 — Lice/Gnats (8:16-19)

Aspect	Details & Teaching Points
Action without warning	Dust struck → kinnîm (lice/gnats/mosquitoes) on people & livestock.
Magicians’ failure	They “tried... but could not” (v. 18). Life-from-dust creation is God’s domain (Gen 2:7).
Confession	Magicians to Pharaoh: “ This is the finger of God ” (v. 19).• Word-play: Yahweh promised a “mighty hand ” (3:20); Egypt feels only His finger so far.
Lesson	Human or demonic power can imitate—but cannot originate true life.

V. Theological & Practical Lessons

1. **God dismantles false security** (Nile, Heqet, magic).
 2. **Judgment is also revelation**—each plague teaches truth about God.
 3. **Partial imitations mislead**; discern true power by its source and purpose.
 4. **Relief isn't repentance**—beware Pharaoh's pattern of temporary surrender.
 5. **Divine justice remembers the oppressed** (blood answers slaughtered infants).
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