

The Sixth Plague: Boils Exodus 9:8-12

In an action somewhat reminiscent to the plague of the dust/lice, the Lord orders Moses, with assistance from Aaron, to toss soot into the air that it may become the genesis of boils that will affect both humans and animals. This act of tossing things into the wind seems to convey the idea of spreading trouble over a large area. In this case the result is the spread of bacteria that form a boil or carbuncle (group of connected boils) on the skin. Again we assume that the Israelites were protected, while the Egyptians suffered greatly. But Pharaoh is determined to outlast Moses and Moses' God.

I. **Furnace Soot**

(like soot from a train ride in the old days)

- A. Having become brick makers, the Israelites worked with an abundance of furnaces.
- B. It is certain that the soot thrown into the air by Moses came from a nearby brick kiln. (9:1)
- C. Note, then, the irony: the symbol of Israelite suffering produces suffering for the Egyptians.
- D. Analysts suppose that the boils turned black (like the soot), also a reminder of the furnaces.
- E. For victims and readers, the boils show how our sins eat away at us until they kill us.

II. **Festering Boils** *(the boils of Egypt – Deut. 28:27)*

- A. These boils tended to break out all over the body and cause great anguish.

Job 2:7 – So Satan left the LORD's presence and infected Job with terrible boils from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.

Isaiah 38 – Hezekiah became terminally ill . . . For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a poultice upon the boil, and he shall recover.

- B. The goddess Hekmet supposedly controlled disease and healing but didn't show up.
- C. The goddess Isis was considered a healer with power to raise the dead. (no help)
- D. The previous plagues had been hateful irritations, but now lives were at stake.
(Later on these boils were associated with leprosy, and in turn with incurable sin.) [Lev.13]
- E. How much better (Psalm 103:3) a God "who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases..."

III. **Defeated Magicians** The magicians could not stand before Moses. (11)

- A. Still embarrassed, the magicians hurt so badly from boils they couldn't even stand w. the King.
- B. In good health they had to acknowledge "the finger of God," but in pain they simply cried.
- C. God put them in this position for Pharaoh to observe and wonder about his own demise.
- D. It is possible that Satan gave Pharaoh both stamina and obstinacy to ignore the magicians.
- E. But God will not be ignored when He puts all enemies under the feet of Christ.

IV. **Judicial Hard-Heartedness**

- A. As we have pointed out before, Pharaoh's hardness of heart was already there.
- B. God hardened his heart by withholding grace and letting sin take its course. (Romans 1:24)

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts.

- C. God kept talking, but the longer one refuses to listen to God the harder the heart.
- D. The extraordinarily hardened person will refuse God even in the face of his own death.
- E. The Psalmist (95:7,8) warned, "Today, if you would hear His voice, do not harden

your hearts..."