



God Sends the Plagues

Exodus 6:1, 7:14, 12:1-30

Matey pushed his big mop across the deck of the Caribbean Queen, spreading sudsy water as he went. Captain Billy had just asked him to swab the deck and he had listened closely to his captain's order. He put his I-Pod earphones over his ears and began to mop to the beat of the music.

Ripply walked out of the cabin beating a metal pot with a wooden spoon. "Attention, all ship mates! Calling all mates! Attention!" He shouted. "There be a big storm comin'. We must get down into the cargo hold! Captain Billy's orders, all mates into the cargo hold!" Ripply walked over to Matey and repeated the warning. "Ahoy, Matey! We have to get below deck."

Matey didn't hear the commotion. He pushed his mop over Ripply's boots and looked up in surprise. "Oh, hello Ripply," he yelled over his own music.

"I say we have to get into the cargo hold. We have to get below! Below!" Ripply said forcefully, pointing down at the trap door that led to the hold.

Through the noise Matey thought he was just waving a greeting. "I said, hello!" He repeated, guessing that Ripply had not heard him the first time.

"You have to get below deck! Down there, down there!" Ripply yelled, this time making big hand motions pointing down to help Matey understand.

Matey looked down at the area he had been mopping. "Oh, did I miss a spot?" he asked. Ripply pulled one of Matey's earphones away from his ear and yelled, "No, take the headphones off so you can hear me!"

Matey looked surprised and pulled his earphones down around his neck.

"I was trying to tell you that Captain Billy wants us below deck!" Ripply repeated.

"I was practicing learning how to listen to God." Matey explained.

Ripply shrugged. "I'm not sure, but one clear way you can hear from God is to read His Word. Let me get out the Traysure Map, right now!" He led Matey over to the treasure chest and removed Captain Billy's Bible from inside. "When God speaks you'll know it. God makes His voice loud and clear."

"He does?" Matey asked curiously.

"Oh yeah," Ripply agreed. "Remember when God sent Moses to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free! That message was loud and clear!"

"If it was so loud, than why didn't Pharaoh hear it?" Matey asked.

"Pharaoh didn't want to hear it and he didn't believe God's warnings about the plagues." Ripply replied.

Matey thought for a moment, trying to remember what the plagues were. "Plagues? Isn't that those nasty things what happened to the Egyptians?"

"Aye, God warned Pharaoh to let His people go! But Pharaoh refused." Ripply opened the Bible to Exodus 6:1 and read, "Then the Lord said to Moses 'Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country.'"

Matey leaned his mop against the ship's rail and asked. "Poor Pharaoh, did he not know those plagues were coming?"

"Oh, he knew! None of them plagues was a surprise. God gave Pharaoh plenty of warning that if he didn't obey, there would be plagues."

"So...warnings are bad things?" Matey wondered.

Ripply shook his head. "No! Not at all! Warnings help us stay clear of trouble. But, Pharaoh didn't listen. If he would only have listened with his heart, the one true God might have blessed the Egyptians. Instead God sent the plagues just as He had warned."

Matey looked over Ripply's shoulder and started reading the plagues from the Bible. "And they were nasty plagues like when God turned the Nile River to blood, or when He sent millions of frogs everywhere you looked," he listed. Then he added, "and then there was the plague of the nuts..."

"Nuts?" Ripply interrupted. "There was no plague of nuts!"

Matey pointed to the passage. "It's right here."

Ripply laughed and explained. "That says gnats! They're tiny little bugs that fly in your mouth and up your nose."

Matey pretended to swat at an invisible gnat. "Eww, that's yucky. Speaking of bugs, God sent flies, locusts, and he even sent hail! One plague made all the livestock die! And then there was the boiling pots of water all over the place!"

"That's not what boils are!" Ripply corrected. "Boils are disgusting puffy sores that you get all over your body!"

Matey shivered and a look of disgust spread over his face. "That's the grossest thing I've ever heard!" he announced.

Ripply continued. "The next plague was darkness! The Egyptians couldn't see or go anywhere for three days but all the Israelites had lights."

"That must've been scary." Matey said.

"Nothing was as scary as the very last plague." Ripply replied. "God said if Pharaoh would not let His people go, He would go through Egypt and every firstborn son of Egypt would die!"

Matey gasped. "How terrible! What about the Israelite first borns?"

"God made a way for them to be saved. It were called the Passover! That's because God told the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb and then put the blood on the doorframes and the Lord would pass over that house."

"I'll bet the Israelites listened to God's instructions!" Matey said.

"They did." Ripply agreed. "They listened and obeyed and every one of them was saved."

"Amen! From now on, when God speaks to me I'm going to listen!" Matey announced.

"That's a good plan! We should all make sure to listen for God's still small voice!" Ripply said.

"And his loud warnings!" Matey added.

Ripply suddenly remembered the coming storm and looked around at the black clouds in the sky. The wind was now howling and the waves were threatening to crash down on the two men standing on the open deck.

"Speaking of warnings, Captain Billy warned us to get below." Ripply reminded as he pulled up on the trap door that led down to the cargo hold. Matey scrambled down into the safety below deck with Ripply right behind him. Matey knew he would now be careful to listen to God.