

EXODUS (REVISED EDITION)

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Some time back, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) aired a documentary called “Moses,” which attempted to lay the explanation for most of the Ten Plagues at the feet of an ancient volcanic eruption. According to Religion Correspondent Jonathan Petre, in an article titled, “Biblical plagues and parting of Red Sea ‘caused by volcano’” on the website of the Telegraph Group Limited (www.news.telegraph.co.uk, 11 Nov. 2002), the program “will suggest that much of the Bible story can be explained by a single natural disaster, a huge volcanic eruption on the Greek island of Santorini in the 16th century BC.”

The reasoning goes something like this. Volcanic ash could have blocked the sun and blanketed Egypt in darkness (plague #9). It is alleged the Santorini eruption could also have resulted in Egyptian storms, including hail (plague #7). The ash cloud may have reduced rainfall, leading to a drought, after which the Nile could have turned a reddish color due to pollutions from the volcano (plague #1). Not happy in a naturally polluted Nile, millions of frogs came on land (plague #2). Once out of the river, the frogs would die. Without frogs, lice (plague #3) and flies (plague #4) would have free run of the country. An unchecked fly population could have transmitted fatal diseases to cattle (plague #5) and led to boils on people (plague #6).

The BBC’s version of “Moses” may deserve high marks for creativity, but its lack of respect for the sacred text is appalling. Yet, this mindset is nothing new. There will always be those who thumb their noses at God’s word and discount the supernatural in favor of natural explanations. In their eyes, the Exodus account, as written, cannot hold a candle to the latest theory of an on-camera skeptical oceanographer or a technologically impressive computer climate simulation.

When you consider the amount of unbelief that is out there, we who accept and defend the inspired record, as written, must be viewed by the world as superstitious fools. But we should never be discouraged. “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.’ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe” (1 Corinthians 1:18-21, ESV).

One of the most vociferous critics of the Pentateuch was an American orator of the 1800’s named Robert Green Ingersoll. On the speaking circuit, crowds would pay fifty cents a head to hear Ingersoll lecture on “The Mistakes of Moses.” Someone observed that, though he had not heard or read Ingersoll’s criticism of Moses’ alleged mistakes, yet he would have gladly walked a hundred miles for the opportunity to hear Moses lecture on the mistakes of his critic.

Those who worship at the altar of science are in for a rude awakening, for the God of all true science is also the God who miraculously afflicted Egypt with the plagues. It had nothing to do with a volcano, and everything to do with a powerful, supernatural demonstration of God’s superiority over all the gods of Egypt. It happened as stated, and then the Author had it recorded for posterity in a book that, to this day, needs no revision.

