Computer Murrains and Moses

I recently wrote a short piece about computers and how they work based on Adam's observations of his anatomy at creation time, taken from one of the scrolls my archeologist friend, Fred, found in Mesopotamia. As it turns out, the Bible is also an excellent user's guide to computer viruses.

For example, I was reading Exodus one morning. This is a rousing good biblical story about a gun slinger named Moses saddling up and riding out of Dodge with his gang, with the direct help of God. The part about God Himself helping the Pharaoh decide to let His people go was of particular interest to me at the time because it dealt with plague. In fact, God tells Moses to warn Pharaoh "There shall be a very grievous murrain upon thy horses and asses and camels and oxen and sheep" and "I will send all my plagues upon"…..basically everything and everyone. Nobody wants his ass to have grievous murrain, that's for sure, so Pharaoh let them go.

The reason these passages caught my attention was this: the evening before I had been doing some biblical research on a well respected on-line library when my virus detector went nuts.

I mean, I wasn't scanning "Debbie does the entire Florida panhandle" or "Big Richard." I was looking for scriptural references related to the early Church history. But apparently in this modern Internet world, there is very little distinction between porn and scripture. What have we become? My computer was flashing red virus warnings all over the screen. Gone was the purity of my good intentions. I spent the next four hours running various virus scanning programs, one called "Hijack This!" and another called "About Buster," sort of penicillin for what ails your computer. Finally I went to bed at around 3:00 AM.

In my dreams it came to me. Microsoft is the digital equivalent of Pharaoh. We, the users, are the slaves and my poor computer had a plague. I needed a Moses with a little help from the Creator to free myself from bondage. So I called the Help Desk, surely a PC Moses if there ever was one, holding aloft the Ten Commandments user's guide so to speak.

After about an hour of waiting, I was greeted with, "Hi, my name is Joe, what is your service request number?" My computer prayer was answered. I assumed it would only be a matter of time for Joe, my PC Moses, to rid my

computer, the equivalent of an ancient Egyptian ass, of my murrained programs, as Exodus explains in detail.

I'm hard of hearing to begin with. And my phone here in the main house has a loud hum on it, probably because the telephone line somewhere outside the house is too close to a power line. The guy making our new front door from cherry wood started cutting planks with his power saw. "*Senor Granito*" as I call the guy putting granite on the counters in our kitchen, started grinding away polishing rough edges. His side-kick outside started cutting another slab with his own power saw at a noise level of about six decibels above the threshold of pain. Dogs in back started to howl. Chickens squawked. It was nearly the feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe so rockets started bursting just over the street in front of our house. Joe, my computer Moses, whispering from Manila in the Philippines, is quietly asking me questions. I ask him to speak up, but at his loudest, Joe talks like Peter Lorre in *Casa Blanca*.

The only way I can handle this conversation and also do what Moses Joe is suggesting I do is to dash into the closet, close the door tightly, listen carefully, badger him to speak louder over the damn humming wires, then open the door, run across the room to do some arcane troubleshooting procedure, sacrifice a chicken in the corner, rattle some bones, chant a few incantations, stick my head over the balcony and say a brief prayer to the Virgin of Guadalupe mosaic at the bottom of our swimming pool, run back into the closet, close the door and scream again to Joe over the incessant shrieking granite saw….for the next two and one half hours.

Thanks to Joe's beatific patience I modified some values in the Windows registry, reset every parameter we could think of, ran some new spy sweeping software Joe recommended…in "safe mode" yet…and finally, voila, no virus, end of biblical computer plague. Pharaoh had been soundly defeated.

Moses Joe from Manila bid me farewell now that Pharaoh and his evil minions had been swallowed up by my new Red Sea murrain scanner. Clean as a whistle.

But I learned my lesson. The moral of this story is: If you are going to get your computer hijacked by a computer plague anyway, you might as well get the damned thing from a good porn site rather than Deuteronomy or Leviticus.