



“LICE WERE EVERYWHERE, on man and beast” (Exodus 8:14), during the third plague visited on the Egyptians after Pharaoh again denied Moses’ request to let the Israelites go. The Israelites, too, were later afflicted with these bugs: Ancient lice combs, with 2,000-year-old louse eggs lodged between their teeth when discovered, attest to widespread infestation throughout Israel.

This second-century C.E. wooden comb from the Judean Desert, like most de-lousing combs, has two sets of teeth, one used to straighten hair and the other, with tighter teeth, used to remove lice and eggs. This comb has denser and more numerous teeth than most lice combs, rendering it all the more effective.