

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

7-1-20

Exodus 7

Aaron's Staff Becomes a Serpent - Verses 1-7

Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. ² You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. ³ But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in Egypt, ⁴ he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. ⁵ And the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it." ⁶ Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them. ⁷ Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh.

7:1 God made Moses "like God to Pharaoh"—in other words, a powerful person who deserved to be listened to. Pharaoh himself was considered a god, so he recognized Moses as one of his peers. His refusal to give in to Moses shows, however, that he did not feel inferior to Moses.

7:1-7 The ultimate purpose of God's actions was His own glory (Exodus 7:5). The glory of God was at stake. The Egyptians would acknowledge God's faithfulness and sovereign power in delivering the Israelites from their bondage and fulfilling their holy calling. God's intention was to bless the Egyptians through Israel (Genesis 12:3), but Pharaoh would make that impossible by his stubborn refusal to honor God. Nevertheless the Egyptians would acknowledge Yahweh's sovereignty.

The writer included the ages of Moses and Aaron (80 & 83 respectively) as part of God's formal certification of His messengers (Exodus 7:7). "It is a common feature of biblical narratives for the age of their heroes to be stated at the time when some momentous event befalls them"

"D. L. Moody wittily said that Moses spent forty years in Pharaoh's court thinking he was somebody; forty years in the desert learning he was nobody; and forty years showing what God can do with somebody who found out he was nobody."

Aaron's Staff Becomes a Snake - Verses 8-13

⁸ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹ "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a miracle,' then say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh,' and it will become a snake." ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. ¹¹ Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts: ¹² Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. ¹³ Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the LORD had said.

7:11 How were these sorcerers and magicians able to duplicate Moses' miracles? Some of their feats involved trickery or illusion, and some may have used satanic power, since worshiping gods of the underworld was part of their religion. Ironically, whenever the sorcerers duplicated one of Moses' plagues, it only made matters worse. If the magicians had been as powerful as God, they would have reversed the plagues, not added to them.

7:12 God performed a miracle by turning Aaron's staff into a snake, and Pharaoh's magicians did the same through trickery or sorcery. Although miracles can help us believe, it is dangerous to rely on them alone. Satan can imitate some parts of God's work and lead people astray. Pharaoh focused on the miracle rather than the message. We can avoid this error by letting the Word of God be the basis of our faith. No miracle from God would endorse any message that is contrary to the teachings of his Word.

7:12 You see in all of this, that truly Satan has power in this world but God's power is greater in this world than Satan's; and God's power is not limited to this earth, but is the greatest power in the universe. One other thing that we need to see in this, God defeats the enemy at the enemy's level. Pharaoh trapped himself in all of this when he asked Moses for a miracle. Here was the first battle between Pharaoh's false gods and the one true God, and God won.

The Plague of Blood - Verses 14-18

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go. **15** Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he goes out to the river. Confront him on the bank of the Nile, and take in your hand the staff that was changed into a snake. **16** Then say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you: Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness. But until now you have not listened. **17** This is what the LORD says: By this you will know that I am the LORD: With the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into blood. **18** The fish in the Nile will die, and the river will stink; the Egyptians will not be able to drink its water.'" "

7:14-17 The plagues were penal; God sent them to punish Pharaoh for his refusal to obey God and to move him to obey God. They involved natural occurrences rather than completely unknown phenomena. At various times of the year gnats, flies, frogs, etc, were a problem to the Egyptians.

Evidence that the plagues were truly miraculous events is as follows. Some were natural calamities that God supernaturally intensified (frogs, insects, murrain, hail, darkness). Moses set the time for the arrival and departure of some. Some afflicted only the Egyptians. The severity of the plagues increased consistently. They also carried a moral purpose (Exodus 9:27; Exodus 10:16; Exodus 12:12; Exodus 14:30).

7:17 God dramatically turned the waters of the Nile into blood to show Pharaoh who he was. Do you sometimes wish for miraculous signs so you can be sure about God? God has given you the miracle of eternal life through your faith in him, something Pharaoh never obtained. This is a quiet miracle and, though less evident right now, just as extraordinary as water turned to blood. The desire for spectacular signs may cause us to ignore the more subtle miracles God is working every day.

The Plague of Blood - Verses 19-24

¹⁹ The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt—over the streams and canals, over the ponds and all the reservoirs—and they will turn to blood.' Blood will be everywhere in Egypt, even in vessels of wood and stone." ²⁰ Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood. ²¹ The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt. ²² But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said. ²³ Instead, he turned and went into his palace, and did not take even this to heart. ²⁴ And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water, because they could not drink the water of the river.

7:20 Egypt was a large country, but most of the population lived along the banks of the Nile River. This 3,000-mile waterway was truly a river of life for the Egyptians. It made life possible in a land that was mostly desert by providing water for drinking, farming, bathing, and fishing. Egyptian society was a ribbon of civilization lining the banks of this life source, rarely reaching very far into the surrounding desert. Without the Nile's water, Egypt could not have existed. Imagine Pharaoh's dismay when Moses turned this sacred river to blood!

The Plague of Frogs

²⁵ Seven days passed after the LORD struck the Nile.

7:20-25 Many students of the plagues have noticed that they appeared in sets of three. The accounts of the first plague in each set (the first, fourth, and seventh plagues) each contain a purpose statement in which God explained to Moses His reason and aim for that set of plagues (Exodus 7:17; Exodus 8:22; Exodus 9:14). God had announced His overall purpose for the plagues in Exodus 7:4-5. The last plague in each set of three came on Pharaoh without warning, but Moses announced the others to him beforehand. The first set of three plagues apparently affected both the Egyptians and the Israelites, whereas the others evidently touched only the Egyptians. (See Plagues of Egypt Chart Below)

THE PLAGUES ON EGYPT

Exodus 7:14-12:33

Blood - Chapter 7:14-24

What Happened: Fish die, the river smells, the people are without water

Result: Pharaoh's magicians duplicate the miracle by "secret arts," and Pharaoh is unmoved.

Frogs - Chapter 8:1-15

What Happened: Frogs come up from the water and completely cover the land

Result: Again Pharaoh's magicians duplicate the miracle by sorcery, and Pharaoh is unmoved.

Gnats - Chapter 8:16-19

What Happened: All the dust of Egypt becomes a massive swarm of gnats

Result: Magicians are unable to duplicate this; they say it is the "finger of God," but Pharaoh's heart remains hard.

Flies - Chapter 8:20-32

What Happened: Swarms of flies cover the land

Result: Pharaoh promises to let the Hebrews go but then hardens his heart and refuses.

Livestock - Chapter 9:1-7

What Happened: All the Egyptian livestock die—but none of Israel's is even sick

Result: Pharaoh still refuses to let the people go.

Boils - Chapter 9:8-12

What Happened: Horrible boils break out on everyone in Egypt

Result: Magicians cannot respond because they are struck down.

Hail - Chapter 9:13-35

What Happened: Hailstorms kill all the slaves and animals left out or unprotected and strip or destroy almost every plant

Result: Pharaoh admits his sin but then changes his mind and refuses to let Israel go.

Locusts - Chapter 10:1-20

What Happened: Locusts cover Egypt and eat everything left after the hail

Result: Everyone advises Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go, but God hardens Pharaoh's heart and he refuses.

Darkness - Chapter 10:21-29

What Happened: Total darkness covers Egypt for three days so no one can even move—except the Hebrews, who have light as usual

Result: Pharaoh again promises to let Israel go but again changes his mind.

Death of First Born - Chapter 11:1-12:33

What Happened: The firstborn of all the people and cattle of Egypt die—but Israel is spared

Result: Pharaoh and the Egyptians urge Israel to leave quickly; after they are gone, Pharaoh again changes his mind and chases after them.