

Moses' Second Encounter with Pharaoh and the First Plague

Exodus 7

Exodus 7 – *“So the Lord said to Moses: “See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. ² You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land. ³ And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. ⁴ But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. ⁵ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them.” ⁶ Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the Lord commanded them, so they did. ⁷ And Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.*

⁸ Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ⁹ “When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Show a miracle for yourselves,’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent.’” ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the Lord commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. ¹¹ But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. ¹² For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods. ¹³ And Pharaoh’s heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the Lord had said.

¹⁴ So the Lord said to Moses: “Pharaoh’s heart is hard; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river’s bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. ¹⁶ And you shall say to him, ‘The Lord God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness”; but indeed, until now you would not hear! ¹⁷ Thus says the Lord: “By this you shall know that I am the Lord. Behold, I will strike the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. ¹⁸ And the fish that are in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river.””

¹⁹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.’” ²⁰ And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the Lord commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. ²¹ The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. ²² Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh’s heart grew

hard, and he did not heed them, as the Lord had said. ²³ And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. ²⁴ So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. ²⁵ And seven days passed after the Lord had struck the river.”

Background Notes

Once again we read that God would harden Pharaoh's heart (v3), but we also see in verses 3-4 the reason why God would harden Pharaoh's heart: *“I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply My miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, 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.”* So the plagues of judgment upon Egypt actually brought glory to God, because God would be seen as supreme and victorious over all the gods of Egypt. God brought the plagues on Egypt in such a way that, by the time of the Exodus, the Egyptians knew that they were not dealing with freak natural events! They knew they were up against the LORD, the God of Israel. Look again at verse 5: *“And the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out.”*

When Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh the second time, they worked a miracle under God's direction. Aaron threw down his staff and it became a snake. However, when Pharaoh's sorcerers were also able to turn their staffs into snakes, Pharaoh hardened his heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron.

So, God brought the first plague on Egypt. The Nile River, its tributaries, and the reservoirs of water in Egypt were all turned to blood. Remember, the Nile River was the source of survival in Egypt. The only drinking water available was underground, and the Egyptians had to dig wells for it (v24). But when the Egyptian magicians were also able to turn water into blood, Pharaoh once again hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron (v22).

When verse 22 says “the magicians of Egypt did the same enchantments,” they were not able to turn the Nile into blood, because the Nile already was blood. But they were able to turn small containers of water into blood. The big question here, of course, is, how were the sorcerers of Egypt able to turn their staffs into snakes, and containers of water into blood? Was it done by sleight of hand, or illusion, or was it by demonic power? The fact that both verse 11 and verse 22 say that the Egyptian sorcerers used “secret arts” or “enchantments” indicates that they did their “miracles” by demonic power.

Doctrinal Points

1. Satanic power is directed against God's program.

The names of two of these Egyptian magicians are given to us in 2 Timothy 3:8-9: *“...Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth...”* in this passage in 2 Timothy, the apostle Paul was talking about false teachers and false religious leaders. This Scripture tells us that the sorcerers of Egypt who confronted Moses were

not just magicians doing counterfeit miracles. They opposed the truth. They were agents of Satan, just as all false teachers are. As tools of Satan, they were part of Satan's strategy to thwart God's plan.

All Satanic power is directed against God's program. Satan knew that God's program was to preserve the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, because through this line that the Redeemer would come, and through the Redeemer that all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12). Satan knew that it would be this Redeemer, the "seed of the woman" (Genesis 3:15), who would crush his head. Thus, all of Satan's efforts were directed against the children of Israel, and against God's program of preserving them and delivering them out of Egypt.

Certainly Pharaoh's edicts to put to death and drown all the male babies of the Hebrews were a satanic plot to overthrow God's program. And during the plagues, God's judgment on Egypt, Satan did whatever he could to oppose God's program of delivering His people from Egypt—even counterfeit miracles! Satanic power is directed against God's program.

2. Satanic power is limited under God's authority.

I love reading verse 12, don't you? *"Each one [Pharaoh's sorcerers] threw down his staff and it became a snake, but Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs."* I love it! There was no question that the power of the gods of Egypt was inferior to the God of the Hebrews! Their power was under the control and authority of the God of Israel.

The ten plagues were not just random, arbitrary bursts of divine power against Egypt. Each of the plagues was directed against one or more of the gods of Egypt. They were specifically designed by God to show God's power and authority over the demonic powers that the Egyptians worshiped as gods. Look at what God said in Exodus 12:12, at the time of the tenth plague: *...I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.*" Notice—against all the gods of Egypt. Satan's power is under God's authority.

Do you remember the story of Job? Satan was able to touch Job only when God allowed it. God had a "hedge" about Job that Satan could not penetrate in any way unless God allowed it. This is true for the believer today. I John 5:18 says that God protects the believer from the evil one, and James 4:7 says that if we resist the devil, he will flee from us.

There is no doubt that there really is a "Satan"—a real spirit being who is a fallen angel. In addition, there are spirit beings of lower rank called demons, and they are also fallen angels. There is no doubt that real satanic power and demonic power is directed against God's program and God's people—not just at the time of the Exodus, but throughout human history, ever since the Garden of Eden. But Satan's power is under God's authority. In fact, Satan is not even in charge of hell, as cartoons would lead you to believe. No! **God** is in charge of hell -- and Satan will be in hell. Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels.

Don't ever think that Satan can operate with unlimited power. No! Satan's power is limited under God's authority.

Practical Application

Don't think you're "over the hill" when you're 80!

Verse 7: *"Moses was 80 years old and Aaron was 83 when they spoke to Pharaoh."* Moses and Aaron were both in their eighties, and yet they were still being used of God in a big way. This is true today, too. Don't think you're over the hill when you're 80!

"But," you may say, "they lived longer in those days." So what? God can still use you for His glory when you're in your eighties, even if they did live longer in those days! Committed believers in their eighties can be outstanding models of godliness. They can be very encouraging to younger believers in their families and churches. Some believers in their eighties have been very challenging and encouraging to me in my life as a believer.

So if you're a believer in your eighties, be encouraged! You may not have the same level of energy that you once had, but don't think you're over the hill when you're 80.