

18-19 Bible Study #9

11/6/18

Exodus 7

Aaron's Miraculous Rod

Exodus 7

- **Exodus 7:1-6**

- “Prophet” meant that *Aaron* was *Moses’* mouthpiece
- Father said that the little details like this will help us with the rest of the Bible, as “prophesy” in the New Testament will be one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit ⁷
- Again, we see the statement “great acts of judgment”
- **Exodus 12:12** will give us the full statement as these great acts of judgment will be against the gods of *Egypt*
- Again, we hear that *Pharaoh* does not “know” who this God is, so God is going to show him who He is*

Exodus 7 (Cont)

- **Exodus 7:7-12**

- Father said that he never wants to hear any of his students say that we are too old for this job! (teaching bible study)
- Next, *Aaron* turned his rod into a snake
- *Pharaoh* summoned his magicians who were able to do the same thing
- This process was repeated until the *Egyptian* magicians and sorcerers gave up and admitted that was way beyond their powers

Exodus 7 (Cont)

- Father pointed out that these were beyond parlor tricks and then provided possible explanations
 - Angels, who have powers beyond that of humans, certainly had the ability to do some of these things
 - Angels are not gods, but they can do amazing things beyond the powers of humans
 - That means that some of these events may have been done by fallen angels (demons)
 - Anyone who has talked to an exorcist may have heard about some extraordinary events
 - This is exactly what Paul says in **1st Corinthians 10:14-22***

Exodus 7 (Cont)

- **Exodus 7: 13-25**

- Throughout this entire story, we hear how God hardens *Pharaoh's* heart or that *Pharaoh's* heart was hardened
 - Exodus 8:15
 - Exodus 8:19
 - Exodus 8:32
- Sometimes it says that God hardened *Pharaoh's* heart and at other times it says that *Pharaoh* hardened his own heart
- We often read this and think that God was causing *Pharaoh* to harden his heart

Exodus 7 (Cont)

- This was not what was going on here
- There was a synergy going on in the relationship between the will of *Pharaoh* and the will of God
- In fact, *Pharaoh* was hardening his own heart
- As discussed earlier the great French Dominican theologian named *Garrigou-Lagrange* wrote a book entitled *Predestination* in which he clearly points out that Pharaoh had free will throughout this entire episode

Exodus 7 (Cont)

- At this point, we see the **first plague**, turning the water of the *Nile* into blood
- This did not succeed in turning *Pharaoh's* heart because his magicians were able to replicate this act*

Exodus 8

The Second Plague: Frogs

Exodus 8

- **Exodus 8:1-7**

- After hearing about turning the Nile to blood, we now turn to the **second plague**, the **frogs**
- There is a relationship between the plagues
 - When the water in the Nile was turned into blood, the frogs were not able to live
 - So now the frogs came out of the water onto the hot desert until they died in the heat
 - Thus, there was a relationship between *Hapi*, the god of the Nile, and *Heket* the god of the frogs

Exodus 8 (Cont)

- This indicates that the god of the Nile was dead or at least that the God of the Hebrews was more powerful
- The same applied to *Heket* the God of the resurrection
 - When the frogs came out of the mud in the spring after their hibernation, the people believed that they were coming back to life
 - The great image of *Heket* was going from death to life
 - So when all the frogs died, it meant that this god was either weak or dead before the God of the Israelites
 - This will apply to each of the 10 plagues*

The 10 Plagues of Egypt

Plague

Nile to blood

Egyptian god

Apis –god of Nile

Hapi –god of Nile

Isis –goddess of Nile

Khnum –guardian of Nile

Orsis –bloodstream of Nile

Frogs

Heqet –frog-headed goddess of birth

Gnats

Set –goddess of desert

Flies

Uatchit – fly god

Death of livestock

Hathor – depicted as cattle

Apis –depicted as cattle

Boils

Sekhmet – god of health and disease

Sunu – god of health and disease

Isis – god of health and disease (nile)

Hail

Nut – sky goddess

Osiris –god of crop fertility

Set – storm god

Locusts

Nut, Osiris and ***Set***

Darkness

Re – sun god

Firstborn males

Isis –protector of children

Exodus 8 (Cont)

- **Exodus 8:8-14**

- Again, the Egyptian magicians were able to replicate the event
- Notice that the text does not say, “let my people go”
- That is clear throughout the entire story
- The purpose of the plagues was not to free the Israelites, but to reveal who was the true God*

Exodus 8 (Cont)

- **Exodus 8:15-27**

- In the **third plague**, there were **gnats** on man and beast
- At this point, the Egyptian magicians gave up and declared that this was by the “**finger of God**”
 - In English, this finger (of God) was singular
 - In Hebrew, it says the fingers of Elohim
 - The polytheist magicians were saying that this was being done by the fingers of the gods and thus it was beyond their abilities
 - The magicians, wise men, sorcerers and counselors, were telling Pharaoh that this was beyond their power
 - This leads to the **fourth plague** of the **flies** (but there were **no flies in Goshen**)

Exodus 8 (Cont)

- This led *Pharaoh* to allow the Hebrews to go and sacrifice to their God, but only within the land of Egypt
- In all likelihood, they would have been able to do this before
- Thus, we can see that this was a religious battle to determine whose God the people were going to worship*

Exodus 8 (Cont)

- **Exodus 8:28-32**

- *Pharaoh* wanted to make sure that his labor force would return to their work
- He even asked Moses to make entreaty for him to the God of Israel
- He hoped that the God of the Hebrews would have mercy on him
- So *Moses* tells *Pharaoh* that he would pray to the Lord, but he had better not change his mind again
- Unfortunately, *Pharaoh* hardened his heart again*

Exodus 9

The Fifth Plague: Death of the Egyptian Livestock

Exodus 9

- **Exodus 9:1-6**

- Here we are introduced to the **fifth plague**, the **death of Egypt's cattle**, horses, asses, camels as well as the herds and flocks
- Father suggested that we mark the location of each plague with a small Roman numeral in the margin
- He also described how he used colored highlighters to identify the key aspects of this text to include the place where Pharaoh's heart was hardened*

Exodus 9 (Cont)

- **Exodus 9:7-13**

- Next, we are introduced to the **sixth plague, boils** which were on beasts and man to include the “magicians”
- As we saw after the second plague, not only could the magicians not replicate this plague, but it actually affected them
- This was a continued escalation of each successive plague and its impact on Pharaoh and his subjects

Exodus 9 (Cont)

- At this point, Father Sebastian gave an explanation of how a polytheist was converted to monotheism
 - A polytheist did not believe in every god, but only those he believed would bring him good or harm
 - The determining factor for which gods should be worshipped was a demonstration of their power
 - Thus, the first step toward monotheism was to demonstrate that the God of the Israelites was more powerful than any and all of the gods of Egypt
 - Second, it was necessary to prove that the God of the Israelites was a “jealous God” who would not tolerate other gods

Exodus 9 (Cont)

- Thus, the God of Israel was the only God one needed to fear and worship
- Once a polytheist accepted the power of the God of the Israelites, he recognized that he no longer needed to worship any other god
- To recap, the God of Israel was the most powerful and a very jealous God*

Exodus 9 (Cont)

- **Exodus 9:14-26**

- This is a very critical text as it demonstrated the uniqueness of the God of *Israel*
- God told Pharaoh that He could have simply killed everyone in Egypt in one big plague
- But, he did not because He wanted to demonstrate His power, might, and glory so the people of the rest of the world may know that He was the true God and the God to be worshipped (Promise to Abraham)

Exodus 9 (Cont)

- This is part of the Divine Revelation
- He presented 10 plagues to demonstrate the awesomeness of this power and glory
- He started with a threat – let Israel, my first born son, go to worship me or I will kill your first born son (**Exodus 4**)

Exodus 9 (Cont)

- From there on, every time Pharaoh failed to comply, the plagues were ratcheted up
 - It started out with a snake where no one got hurt
 - Then the bloody Nile created a problem for people acquiring drinking water followed by the destruction of the frogs
 - When this was followed with the boils, things got personal
- Father suggested that this was like disciplining a small child who initially accepts the punishment without consenting to the requirement until it gets so severe that he relents

Exodus 9 (Cont)

- Each time *Pharaoh* says “no,” God says “Ok,” then this is what is going to happen next, until *Pharaoh* finally lets them go to worship their God
- Here we see the **seventh plague**, the destructive **hail** upon man and beast
- We will come back to this plague later on

Exodus 9 (Cont)

- **Exodus 9:27-35**

- This section sets the stage for the **eighth plague**, the **locusts***