

God Judges Through Plagues

**God sent Moses to Pharaoh
To set his people free
God sent Moses to tell him,
"Let my people go, that they may serve me."
First he turned the water to blood
The whole Nile, even water in vessels
Of wood and stone became blood**

**God used plagues, plagues, plagues to free his people.
God used plagues to judge those who wouldn't heed his word
God used plagues, plagues, plagues to free his people.
God used plagues to show He alone is God the Lord.**

**God sent Moses to Pharaoh
To set his people free
God sent Moses to tell him,
"Let my people go, that they may serve me."
Second God caused frogs to appear,
Pharaoh's magicians made even more
He wouldn't serve the Lord.**

**God sent Moses to Pharaoh
To set his people free
God sent Moses to tell him,
"Let my people go, that they may serve me."
Third God changed dust to gnats
Pharaoh's magicians could quite match that
"This is the finger of God." So they said...**

God is doing two things in the plagues. He is judging those who do not believe his word and saving those who trust in him. Because of the length and significance of this, this is part one of two. Today we will focus on God's judgement through plagues.

Ex. 7:5-8:19

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water. Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent. ¹⁶ And you shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness." But so far, you have not obeyed. ¹⁷ Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD:

behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. ¹⁸ The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.”” ¹⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.’”

²⁰ Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. ²¹ And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. ²² But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said. ²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart. ²⁴ And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. ² But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your country with frogs. ³ The Nile shall swarm with frogs that shall come up into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed and into the houses of your servants and your people, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. ⁴ The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your servants.””” ⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the canals and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt!’” ⁶ So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. ⁷ But the magicians did the same by their secret arts and made frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

⁸ Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Plead with the LORD to take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.” ⁹ Moses said to Pharaoh, “Be pleased to command me when I am to plead for you and for your servants and for your people, that the frogs be cut off from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile.” ¹⁰ And he said, “Tomorrow.” Moses said, “Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. ¹¹ The frogs shall go away from you and your houses and your servants and your people. They shall be left only in the Nile.” ¹² So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD about the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh. ¹³ And the LORD did according to the word of Moses. The frogs died out in the houses, the courtyards, and

the fields. ¹⁴ And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. ¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

¹⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt.'" ¹⁷ And they did so. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. ¹⁸ The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. ¹⁹ Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Notes:

Like all pagan cultures, the Egyptians, worshiped a wide variety of nature-gods and attributed to their powers the natural occurrences they saw in the world around them. There was a god of the sun, of the river, of childbirth, of crops, etc. Events like the annual flooding of the Nile, which fertilized their soil for crops, were seen as orchestrated by their gods. When Moses approached Pharaoh, demanding that he let the people go, Pharaoh responded by saying, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (Exodus 5:2). Thus began the challenge to show whose God was truly in control.

The first plague....Apis, & Isis were the god and goddess of the Nile. Khnum, was the guardian of the Nile. The Nile was also believed to be the bloodstream of Osiris, who was reborn each year when the river flooded. The river that the foundation of the daily life and national economy of Egypt was devastated, as millions of fish died in the river and the water was unusable. Pharaoh was told, "By this you will know that I am the LORD" (Exodus 7:17)

The second plague... Heqet, the frog-headed goddess of birth. Frogs were thought to be sacred and not to be killed. God had the frogs invade every part of the homes of the Egyptians, and when the frogs died, their stinking bodies were heaped up in offensive piles all through the land (Exodus 8:13-14)

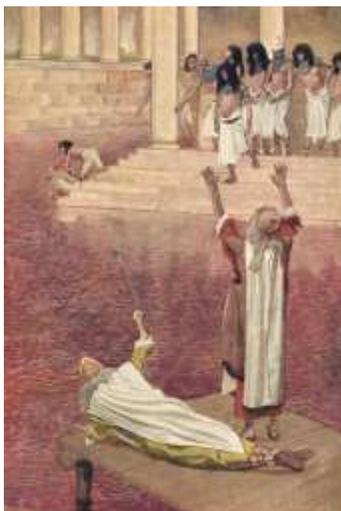
The third plague.... Set was the god of the desert sands. However gnats breed in the flooded fields of the Nile in late Fall. Unlike the previous plagues, the magicians were unable to duplicate this one and declared to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19).

Reflect on Ex. 7:14-8:19 and answer questions 1-3.

1. Considering the first three plagues, how is Pharaoh informed of the coming plagues? See especially Ex. 7:16-18, 20; 8:1-5; 9:16.
2. After noting the pattern here, does the pattern continue in the rest of the plagues? See Ex. 8:20-21, 9:1-3, 9:8-9. And again, Ex. 9:13, 10:3-4, 10:21. What is the significance of God warning Pharaoh first two times and then, after the warnings, sending the third plague in each cycle? What does it say about Pharaoh? What does it say about God?

Patterns of God

1. We see more of God's character in the severity of the plagues. What pattern do you notice in the plagues? How do the early ones compare to the later ones? For the first set of three, see especially Ex. 7:19, 21; 8:6.
2. To answer what the plagues say about God's character, also consider the two responses of Pharaoh and his officials: See Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7. What does this say about Pharaoh and his officials? See Ex. 8:15; 9:27-32; 10:16-20; What does this say about Pharaoh's heart?
3. Notice the response when imitation is no longer possible. See Ex. 8:18-19.
4. What happens when Pharaoh's servants see that negotiation is no longer possible? See Ex. 10:7-11. Even worse, what does Pharaoh say in Ex. 10:28?
5. What does the slowly increasing severity of plagues say about God?



Water Is Changed into Blood, [James Tissot](#)

A Hardened Heart

Pharaoh said in Ex. 5:2, "...I do not know the LORD..." what will God do? Who will know that God is God? See Ex. 6:7; 10:2 See Ex. 7:5 See Ex. 7:17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 29

1. Who gets a front row seat to these things? Who is given the most opportunities to believe? Isn't this sad?
2. See Ex. 7:13, 14, 22; 8:15,19, 32; 9:7,12. How is it that the LORD finally hardens Pharaoh's heart?
3. What changes once it is the LORD hardening Pharaoh's heart and not merely Pharaoh? See Ex. 9:14-17. What does this say about God's judgements against those who don't heed his word?

There are three things I'd like you to consider this week:

1. Meditate on God's relationship with Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Recall that God condemns those who do not trust in his word.
2. Meditate on your own life. Is there a sin over which you have hardened your heart? Be wary! God takes sin seriously.
3. Although this study is on God's judgement, recall how patient God was. He didn't start off by killing Pharaoh's son or by doing big plagues of hail. He started small in order to give time for people to know that he alone is God. He is patient with you too. Even more than this, he has made a new way of salvation for you in Jesus Christ.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, it is frightening to reflect on Pharaoh's hardened heart. Many of us have hardened our hearts over and over again to the point of despair. Remind us this week, that you have done something new since Exodus: you sent Jesus Christ to soften even the hardest heart. We are clothed in Christ's righteousness now. Because of Christ, even our most stubborn sins have been forgiven, and you lead us to walk new lives. Lord, we ask that you would comfort us with this your saving grace and let us also know you in your salvation. In Jesus' name. Amen.