

THE BEGINNING OF JUDGMENTS UPON EGYPT

BIBLE TEXT: Exodus 7:14-25; 8:1-19

LESSON 53 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the bands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31)"

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

¹⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart *is* hardened, he refuseth to let the people go.

¹⁵ Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand.

¹⁶ And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear.

¹⁷ Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that *is* in mine hand upon the waters which *are* in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.

¹⁸ And the fish that *is* in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river.

¹⁹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and *that* there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *vessels of* wood, and in *vessels of* stone.

²⁰ And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote 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 And the fish that *was* in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

²² And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.

²³ And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also.

²⁴ And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Discouraged Israel

When Moses and Aaron requested Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go into the wilderness a three-days' journey to make sacrifices unto God. Pharaoh curtly refused their petition and made them work harder than they ever had before. The Israelites may have been sorry the subject had been brought up, because they suffered more than ever. They might have questioned that if God were going to deliver them, why did He not do it at once. If God were all-powerful, why did He not make Pharaoh willing to send the people out? or if Pharaoh remained stubborn, why not remove him from the throne and thus break his power?

But God had told Moses that there was more at stake than just the release of the Children of Israel. The Egyptians were going to know something of the glory of the true God by the time He had finished dealing with them. And the Israelites were going to receive a much greater blessing if they awaited God's time to lead them out.

Patience Rewarded

Sometimes we become discouraged when waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled, but discouragement is not pleasing in the sight of God. He knows what is best, and if we can await God's time He will shower us with blessings. We have an instance of this in the life of Elijah. When Queen Jezebel was after him to slay him for the destruction he had wrought upon the 450 prophets of Baal, Elijah fled into the wilderness and asked God to let him die. He felt he was the only one left who loved God, so why should he stay longer on earth? But God had greater things in store for him. First, there was work for him to do: he was sent by God to anoint a new king over Syria, another king for Israel, and a prophet to take his place. And then came the glorious translation of Elijah; he went to Heaven in a chariot of fire and did not need to die. If he had had his way and had died in his hour of despondency, he would have missed the triumphant ascension that only one other person, Enoch, had experienced. What a blessing we receive by awaiting God's time!

Heart Hardened by Rejecting God

God gave Pharaoh every opportunity to repent of his original decision. The more emphatically the Lord speaks to a sinner, the harder that person's heart becomes if he refuses to yield. "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Proverbs 29:1). Thus Pharaoh's heart grew harder and harder as he continued to refuse the pleas of God's people.

The Nile God Dethroned

God told Moses to tell Pharaoh of the first plague that was going to come upon the land. All the water was to be turned to blood, and all the fish would die. We have learned that the Egyptians worshiped the Nile River because their living depended upon its waters to irrigate the land. There were also very few roads, and the Nile was their main highway. Canals were built for secondary thoroughfares. As the Egyptians also worshiped many animals, their meat diet was mostly fish. So we can see what happened when the water was turned to blood and the fish died. In the first plague, it

²⁵ And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river. Exodus 7:14-25 (KJV)

¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

² And if thou refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs:

³ And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs:

⁴ And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.

⁵ And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt.

⁶ And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt.

⁷ And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

⁸ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD.

⁹ And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, *that* they may remain in the river only?

¹⁰ And he said, To morrow. And he said, *Be it* according to thy word: that thou mayest know that *there is* none like unto the LORD our God.

¹¹ And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only.

¹² And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh.

¹³ And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields.

¹⁴ And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank.

was a blow at their god of the river. Was not their god more powerful than the. God of the Hebrew slaves? The Egyptians' god of the Nile went down in humiliation before the stretched-out rod of Moses; the waters were polluted and were unfit for use; and the fish died, depriving the Egyptians of a very important food.

There seems to have been one way of getting fresh water, by digging holes beside the river. The magicians were still trying to copy the miracles of Moses and Aaron, and the text tells us that they, too, could turn the water into blood, so they must have worked on that kind of puddles. How puny were their efforts in comparison with what God's people did! If they had wanted to show their power they should have removed the plague and made the waters pure again; but that they were unable to do.

Pharaoh's heart was not touched by the suffering of the people, and at the end of a week the plague was lifted. But another one was coming.

Frogs

The second plague was that of frogs. This was also a battle between the gods of the land and the true God Whom Moses and Aaron represented. The Egyptians had a god with a frog's head, and they would never think of killing that little green animal.

However, when God sent frogs everywhere upon the land, the Egyptians found out they could be very unpleasant. They could not build fires in their stoves because there would be frogs in the firebox; frogs would get mixed up in their dough when they tried to make their bread; the cold, clammy creatures would be in their beds when they wanted to go to sleep. By that time they probably began to wonder if a frog were a god after all. God had said, "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD." The magicians could also bring up frogs, but they were powerless to destroy the plague.

It seemed that this plague was going to have the desired results. Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and told them to intreat the Lord to remove the frogs, and he would let the people go. How happy Moses was that they had won this battle! Pharaoh's will was broken and he begged Moses for mercy — but how short-lived his humility! As soon as the frogs were lying in heaps, dead, he changed his mind. Many people pray to God when in trouble; but as soon as good times come again, they forget God. God is noticing all that, and His mercy will not continue forever: He has said He will mock when their fear cometh.

Judgment Without Warning

The next plague God sent came without warning. God first talks to people and warns them of impending judgment, but if they refuse to listen the time comes when He lets sudden disaster strike. This often happens in our day. At one time a person sat in a church service and felt that he should give his heart to God, but he said, "Not tonight," and went out into the night. Before he got home he was killed in an accident. The same thing happened to another man who rose in answer to the invitation to pray; but a friend pulled him down and said, "Don't be foolish." He then refused the invitation; and that night he went into eternity without God. The Spirit of God will not always strive with men.

Satan's Power Limited

The lice that came upon the land were upon all the people and all the animals. Oh, how they suffered as the little insects crawled over them!

The magicians had been able to turn their rods into serpents, to turn water into blood, and to bring frogs upon the land; but when they tried to imitate Moses in bringing lice, they

¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

¹⁶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

¹⁷ And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

¹⁸ And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast.

¹⁹ Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This *is* the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. Exodus 8:1-19 (KJV)

could not. They admitted that the work of Moses was of the true God, and they were powerless to do the same thing. Satan and his angels can do only as much as the Lord allows them to do.

As terrible as the plagues were that came upon the Egyptians, the time is coming when even greater ones will be poured out upon the earth. In the book of Revelation we read about much the same plagues, but instead of coming upon a few people in one country, they will be intensified in their horribleness, and will come upon all the people who have turned from God. We must walk close to the Lord every moment, in order to be counted worthy to escape the terrible things that will come upon the earth in the Great Tribulation.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What were the first three plagues?
- 2 Why were they sent?
- 3 Why was the plague on the Nile River such a terrible calamity?
- 4 Could the magicians turn the water to blood, and bring frogs upon the land? Could they take away the plagues?
- 5 What did the magicians say when they could not bring lice upon the land?
- 6 What does the inability of the magicians to imitate Moses in the third plague teach us?