

Exodus
April 15, 2007
Chapter 7

I. Do It!

Ex 7:1-5

7:1 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 miraculous 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." NIV

Verse 1 Basically, the Lord is telling Moses that he is representing God to Pharaoh. Remember the word prophet means one who speaks from God. The gods of Egypt will now be attacked. The LORD is strong enough to make Moses appear like God to Pharaoh. The LORD will now show that the gods of Egypt, which are merely stone or perhaps demons, are far inferior to Him.

Verse 3 Basically the LORD is telling Moses and Aaron that even if they do what He says, Pharaoh's heart will be hardened. It is not their fault. They should not feel rejected or that they have failed. It is the LORD who tells them what to do, and it is the LORD who determines the outcome.

Verse 3 Why does God repeat that Pharaoh will not respond positively?

What is the implication to us of God being in control? Does this mean that we do not need to act? Does it mean that our actions do not matter?

II. Restatement of Purpose

Ex 7:6-7

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. NIV

Moses and Aaron obeyed. Of the three forty-year sequences in Moses' life, Dwight Moody said:

“-Moses spent 40 years in the courts of Pharaoh thinking that he was someone.

-Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness learning that he was a nobody.
-Then God used him for 40 years because he was somebody who had learned that he was nobody.”

We have two aged men, even if they would live another 40 years or so, who were taking on the greatest empire of their day. With God, they won.

III. Who is the LORD?

Ex 7:8-13

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.

NIV

Verses 9-10 God tells Moses what to do, and he did it.

Verse 12 The question that has long plagued scholars is “What did the Egyptian magicians do? No one knows the answer to this. It is impossible to tell if the magicians used some kind of deception, or if their miracles were enabled by demons.

Verse 13 Despite the Moses’ miracle, Pharaoh remains resolute. Indeed, even though they lost their staffs, the magicians had done the same miracle. Even if Pharaoh knew that his men had done it with subterfuge, he would still not be all the worried about Moses and Aaron.

Verse 13 Who hardens Pharaoh’s heart?

While I tend not to study closely types in the Bible as they are sometimes hard to verify and often become far-fetched, some people find the following general types in the book of Exodus:

- Pharaoh represents oppression.
- Israel’s slavery and bondage is a type of all that oppresses man from within.
- The plagues are God’s judgment on man’s sinful nature.
- Exodus is the deliverance and redemption as indicated in all Scripture.
- Moses is a type of Christ as redeemer and deliverer.

IV. The Nile Becomes Blood

Ex 7:14-20

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 water. Wait on the bank of the Nile to meet him, 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 desert. 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.'" 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 the wooden buckets and stone jars.'

NIV

Many point out that the ten plagues might have natural explanations. The most popular theory today seems to be the volcanic destruction of Thyratira, which created Santorini, was partly to cause. While God might have used naturalistic methods to create some or even all of the plagues, the wording of Exodus does not support anything other than pure miracle, although it also does not fully deny naturalistic possibilities. Of course, even if God did choose to use some naturalistic means, the timing of the plagues would make them miracles anyway. For this class, I will assume that these miracles were caused directly by God without speculating on possible natural causes.

Verse 15 What was Pharaoh doing? Pharaoh might have been preparing for his morning bath. He might also be preparing to worship to the Nile or some other of his gods.

Verse 18 Neith was a goddess that guarded the lakes, the largest fish in the Nile.

Verse 18 As we go through the plagues, we will see one food source after another being destroyed. As more foods are affected, the plagues increase in impact on the people of Egypt. Without food, the ability for the government to rule will come into question. Also, remember that the ancient gods were responsible for protecting the people and most importantly the source of food. The plagues are a full-scale war against the underlying concepts of the Egyptian nation (and by extension to all the other nations of the world at this time). The goal of Israel is to be a different kind of nation!)

V. Counter Miracle

Ex 7:22-24

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. NIV

Verse 22 Apparently at least initially, there was some water not affected allowing the magicians to duplicate the miracle, perhaps water enclosed in something to protect it (see verse 24). Perhaps, all the water in Egypt did not change at the same time, but took some time to take effect. “Everywhere” in verse 19 can mean “every part of Egypt” or “every type of water.”

Verse 22 The “miracle” of the magicians is enough for Pharaoh to deny God’s power in this miracle, despite the fact that Moses’ actions were much greater than his magician’s. Again their methodology is not revealed.

Verse 23 From Pharaoh’s viewpoint, he had not lost much. Perhaps, he could no longer take a bath.

VI. Rest

Ex 7:25

25 Seven days passed after the LORD struck the Nile.

NIV

If the impact/interval was the same for the other miracles, it might have taken three months or so for all the miracles to occur.

VII. The God of Egypt

Ex 12:12

12'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. NKJV

NOTE on Egyptian Religion: Many commentators point out that this god or that one was attacked by the plagues. This verse supports this speculation. The big problem with Egyptian religion is that it was not all that codified but tended to have a lot of diversity, thousands of different gods. The diversity comes from the fact that different locales had different beliefs and different gods. It comes from the huge time frame of ancient Egypt in which beliefs changed and evolved. As such, one cannot be totally dogmatic in discussing this religion. Even to this day, we do not have a good analysis of how many gods that the ancient Egyptians had. In other words, it is pretty easy to say that each of the plagues attacked some god or another, as basically everything was a god somewhere/sometime in ancient Egypt. In some cases, the god being attack is easier to identify, such as the attack on the Nile.