

Exodus Chapter Seven

Read **Exodus 7:1-9** – Moses Encouragement

v.1 “AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, SEE, I HAVE MADE THEE A GOD TO PHARAOH: AND AARON THY BROTHER SHALL BE THY PROPHET.”

God had made Moses a god in the sight of Pharaoh because he will speak for Him. Pharaoh will see Moses the source of the power that creates the plagues. God is essentially repeating what he had told Moses at the burning bush.

Exodus 4:16 “AND HE SHALL BE THY SPOKESMAN UNTO THE PEOPLE: AND HE SHALL BE, *even* HE SHALL BE TO THEE INSTEAD OF A MOUTH, AND THOU SHALT BE TO HIM INSTEAD OF GOD.”

v.2 “THOU SHALT SPEAK ALL THAT I COMMAND THEE: AND AARON THY BROTHER SHALL SPEAK UNTO PHARAOH, THAT HE SEND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL OUT OF HIS LAND.”

God renews the instructions that he gave Moses in the wilderness. He will tell Moses what he wants communicated to Pharaoh and Aaron will be the spokesman for Israel. God will demand that he send the children of Israel out of Egypt.

v.3 “AND I WILL HARDEN PHARAOH'S HEART, AND MULTIPLY MY SIGNS AND MY WONDERS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT.”

God warns Moses again that Pharaoh's heart will be hardened, warning him of what is to come in time and which we will see in the next seven chapters. Pharaoh will be stubborn, obstinate toward God. He does not believe in Jehovah, the only self-existent ruler of this universe. So God is reinforcing what he told Moses in the wilderness:

Exodus 4:21 “AND THE **LORD** SAID UNTO MOSES, WHEN THOU GOEST TO RETURN INTO EGYPT, SEE THAT THOU DO ALL THOSE WONDERS BEFORE PHARAOH, WHICH I HAVE PUT IN THINE HAND: BUT I WILL HARDEN HIS HEART, THAT HE SHALL NOT LET THE PEOPLE GO.”

In allowing Pharaoh to exercise his free will and oppose him for this period of time God has another purpose implied in the latter part of this verse. What is it? Through signs and wonders He establishes that He is Lord, God; Jehovah Elohim for the benefit of the Egyptian people, the Israelites and also all of those who read and study His revelation recorded by Moses, including you and I.

Exodus Chapter Seven

v.4 “BUT PHARAOH SHALL NOT HEARKEN UNTO YOU, THAT I MAY LAY MY HAND UPON EGYPT, AND BRING FORTH MINE ARMIES, *and* MY PEOPLE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT BY GREAT JUDGMENTS.”

God is going to bring great judgments against Pharaoh and against Egypt. In addition to humbling them to the extent that they will literally drive Israel from their land, initially at least. They will be punished for the oppression that they have placed upon God’s chosen people.

v.5 “AND THE EGYPTIANS SHALL KNOW THAT I *am* THE **LORD**, WHEN I STRETCH FORTH MINE HAND UPON EGYPT, AND BRING OUT THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL FROM AMONG THEM.”

Another purpose that God had in bringing his power and might against Egypt was to impress upon them that He is indeed the Lord God of the universe. At this time this is the greatest empire on earth and I’m sure that Pharaoh knew that. The Egyptian rulers frequently erected monuments to themselves, used walls of buildings they built to brag about their accomplishments. They worshiped false gods and at this moment are defying the God of heaven by holding Israel captive.

v.6 “AND MOSES AND AARON DID AS THE **LORD** COMMANDED THEM, SO DID THEY.”

Moses and Aaron did what God commanded them. This process of freeing Israel is going to take time. God’s representatives are now prepared to carry out his instructions. They are like Noah of old:

Genesis 6:22 “THIS DID NOAH; ACCORDING TO ALL THAT GOD COMMANDED HIM, SO DID HE.”

Like Joshua when it came time for him to conquer the promised land:

Joshua 11:15 “AS THE **LORD** COMMANDED MOSES HIS SERVANT, SO DID MOSES COMMAND JOSHUA, AND SO DID JOSHUA; HE LEFT NOTHING UNDONE OF ALL THAT THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES.”

v.7 “AND MOSES *was* FOURSCORE YEARS OLD, AND AARON FOURSCORE AND THREE YEARS OLD, WHEN THEY SPAKE UNTO PHARAOH.”

So Moses was 80, Aaron was 83 and we know that Miriam was older than Aaron but we’re not told how much older. Some might think that this information is trivial but it helps us to identify some things about the time when all of this occurred and the exodus of Israel took place. In fact Adam Clarke, in his commentary, give the year as 1491 BC, 2513 years after the creation.

Exodus Chapter Seven

v.8-9 “AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES AND UNTO AARON, SAYING, WHEN PHARAOH SHALL SPEAK UNTO YOU, SAYING, SHEW A MIRACLE FOR YOU: THEN THOU SHALT SAY UNTO AARON, TAKE THY ROD, AND CAST *it* BEFORE PHARAOH, *and* IT SHALL BECOME A SERPENT.”

The time has come for God to start working on Pharaoh and showing his might to both Israel and Egypt. This is the first of the signs that Moses was given.

Exodus 4:2-3 “AND THE LORD SAID UNTO HIM, WHAT IS THAT IN THINE HAND? AND HE SAID, A ROD. AND HE SAID, CAST IT ON THE GROUND. AND HE CAST IT ON THE GROUND, AND IT BECAME A SERPENT; AND MOSES FLED FROM BEFORE IT.”

This rod is referred to several times in the chapters that follow. It was a simple shepherd's rod that Moses carried working for Jethro. But it became a tool of great power because of the way God used it. In later references it is called the rod of God, the rod of Moses and the rod of Aaron and eventually it was kept inside the Ark of the Covenant.

Read **Exodus 7:10-13** – The First Confrontation

v.10 “AND MOSES AND AARON WENT IN UNTO PHARAOH, AND THEY DID SO AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED: AND AARON CAST DOWN HIS ROD BEFORE PHARAOH, AND BEFORE HIS SERVANTS, AND IT BECAME A SERPENT.”

Moses and Aaron did as God commanded them. It would appear that when they first approached Pharaoh their request for Israel to go into the wilderness and worship God seemed to be just that a request. In other words, they asked rather than demanded. It seems that this meeting was conducted on a different plane, in a different atmosphere, more of a demand than before.

So when Aaron cast down his rod it became a serpent. We not told what kind of a serpent. In fact, Adam Clarke, in his commentary contends that the word translated serpent can be and is translated differently in different contexts and writes extensively about that. Be that as it may, it was a miracle and a greater miracle will occur before this confrontation ends.

v.11 “THEN PHARAOH ALSO CALLED THE WISE MEN AND THE SORCERERS: NOW THE MAGICIANS OF EGYPT, THEY ALSO DID IN LIKE MANNER WITH THEIR ENCHANTMENTS.”

When Pharaoh calls his sorcerers, the magicians of Egypt they were able to duplicate the sign that Moses was given. How could they do that? Did God give them this power? The Apostle Paul testifies that Satan is the source of “LYING WONDERS”.

Exodus Chapter Seven

II Thessalonians 2:9 “*Even him*, WHOSE COMING IS AFTER THE WORKING OF SATAN WITH ALL POWER AND SIGNS AND LYING WONDERS,”

Even Jesus testified that there would be those during the time of the disciples who would be able to “CAST OUT DEVILS” and do “MANY WONDEROUS WORKS”.

Matthew 7:22 “MANY WILL SAY TO ME IN THAT DAY, LORD, LORD, HAVE WE NOT PROPHESED IN THY NAME? AND IN THY NAME HAVE CAST OUT DEVILS? AND IN THY NAME DONE MANY WONDERFUL WORKS?”

v.12 “FOR THEY CAST DOWN EVERY MAN HIS ROD, AND THEY BECAME SERPENTS: BUT AARON'S ROD SWALLOWED UP THEIR RODS.”

Adam Clarke in his commentary states that Egypt “was remarkably addicted to magic, sorcery, etc.” and I expect that this was true of most of the known world at this time. Who can tell me the names of two of these magicians, because we’re told in scripture who they were:

II Timothy 3:8 “NOW AS JANNES AND JAMBRES WITHSTOOD MOSES, SO DO THESE ALSO RESIST THE TRUTH: MEN OF CORRUPT MINDS, REPROBATE CONCERNING THE FAITH.”

Paul uses these Egyptian magicians as an illustration, an example of the men that would trouble the church during the perilous times that were coming.

What was the significance of Aaron’s rod swallowing up all of the rods of the Egyptians? It was given as a sign of God’s power over them, the superiority of the God of heaven over the source of their power to duplicate the miracle given to Moses and Aaron.

v.13 “AND HE HARDENED PHARAOH'S HEART, THAT HE HEARKENED NOT UNTO THEM; AS THE **LORD** HAD SAID.”

Both Adam Clarke and the authors of the Baker Commentary take issue with the translation in this verse. Both contend that it should read:

v.13 “AND THE HEART OF PHARAOH WAS HARDENED, THAT HE HEARKENED NOT UNTO THEM; AS THE **LORD** HAD SAID.”

The other reliable translations agree with the commentators and translate the original in a manner that removes the implication that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart or took any direct action upon him of any nature. It confirms that Pharaoh was in complete control of his own faculties, his own mind, wants and desires. God had not overruled his basic nature and caused him to refuse.

Exodus Chapter Seven

Read **Exodus 7:14-25** – The Plague of Blood

v.14-15 “AND THE **LORD** SAID UNTO MOSES, PHARAOH'S HEART *is* HARDENED, HE REFUSETH TO LET THE PEOPLE GO. 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.”

Pharaoh's heart is hardened. According to Clark the word translated here is *cabed*, which means “heavy” or “stupid”. Up home we would describe his attitude as “bull-headed”.

So Moses is instructed to go out in the morning to the river because Pharaoh would be going “OUT UNTO THE WATER”. The Egyptians worshiped the Nile as the god Hapi which was literally the god of the annual flooding of the river. The floods of the Nile were what caused the valley to be fertile, otherwise it would have been desert. Without this annual flooding the Egyptians could not exist because they wouldn't be able to grow the amount of food required to sustain them.

If Pharaoh was going out to worship the river god then the plague that is coming has even more significance than I've heard given to it in prior studies.

v.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 WOULDST NOT HEAR.”

God wants Pharaoh to understand clearly that the miracle that is about to be performed against the Egyptian god of the Nile is happening because he has refused to hear the demands of the “**LORD** GOD OF THE HEBREWS”.

v.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.”

To display his power before Pharaoh, God will turn the Nile into blood. Some Bible skeptics contend that this wasn't a miracle because of the characteristics of the river. Before the spring flood the Nile is green and not fit to drink. About mid-June it becomes clear, then turns yellow and finally a ochre red due to the presence of various micro-organism. But as we will see in another verse or two, it wasn't just the water in Nile River that was turned to blood.

v.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.”

Exodus Chapter Seven

With all of those dead fish in the desert sun and the river itself being filled with blood. We can only imagine the stench. The first thing that I think of when I encounter this scripture is something we called “tankage”. It was a dry high-protein supplement made from blood and other offal from the slaughter house that we fed to the hogs.

It is also significant that the Egyptian people would be “LOTHE TO DRINK OF THE WATER” because the Nile water is held in very high regard as drinking water. Their well water and cistern water is barely drinkable and rain is almost non-existent in this desert land. So not only is God striking at the river that they worshiped as a god, he is also depriving them of one of their most cherished necessities.

v.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.”

So not only was the river to be turned into blood but all of the water in the land, even that found stored in vessels in homes. Nile river water was stored in these vessels which also were used to settle and purify the water before it was used.

v.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.”

In his reminder to Israel of all of the good things that God had done for them Asaph in a psalm recounts this occurrence.

Psalms 78:43-44 “HOW HE HAD WROUGHT HIS SIGNS IN EGYPT, AND HIS WONDERS IN THE FIELD OF ZOAN. AND HAD TURNED THEIR RIVERS INTO BLOOD; AND THEIR FLOODS, THAT THEY COULD NOT DRINK.”

v.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.”

Not only is this plague a blow against Egypt because of the condition of their water; it was also a blow against Egypt because the primary source of food fish was the Nile River. Fish taken from salt water, such as the Mediterranean Sea were considered impure.

Exodus Chapter Seven

v.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.”

Pharaoh's magicians were able to duplicate the miracle that God did through Moses and Aaron. Again we have what we discussed earlier as “LYING WONDERS”.

Pharaoh's heart was hardened, he's probably an angry man at this point and that anger will grow until God finally breaks him with the death of his first-born son. The wisdom of God tells us this about human nature:

Proverbs 29:1 “HE, THAT BEING OFTEN REPROVED HARDENETH *his* NECK, SHALL SUDDENLY BE DESTROYED, AND THAT WITHOUT REMEDY.”

v.23 “AND PHARAOH TURNED AND WENT INTO HIS HOUSE, NEITHER DID HE SET HIS HEART TO THIS ALSO.”

So Pharaoh just turns and walks away, goes home and doesn't allow this disaster to turn his mind or impact his thinking.

v.24 “AND ALL THE EGYPTIANS DIGGER ROUND ABOUT THE RIVER FOR WATER TO DRINK; FOR THEY COULD NOT DRINK OF THE WATER OF THE RIVER.”

The lack of water drives the Egyptians to dig to try to find water just to have water to drink.

v.25 “AND SEVEN DAYS WERE FULFILLED, AFTER THAT THE **LORD** HAD SMITTEN THE RIVER.”

The plague of blood lasted seven days. Earlier we referred to the natural discoloration of the Nile that occurs every year. The fact that the blood lasted only seven days is another proof that the condition of the river was not as a result of the natural discoloration as that usually lasted for about three weeks.