

THE BEGINNING OF JUDGMENTS UPON EGYPT

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

LESSON 53 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief" (Proverbs 28:14).

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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The First Judgment: Water Changed to Blood

¹ Moses is told to announce God's first judgment, sent that the Egyptians might know of the Lord Jehovah, Israel's God, Exodus 7:14-19;

Exodus 9:14-16 ¹⁴ For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that *there is* none like me in all the earth.

¹⁵ For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.

¹⁶ And in very deed for this *cause* have I raised thee up, for to shew *in* thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

¹ Samuel 4:7-9 ⁷ And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

⁸ Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these *are* the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

⁹ Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

Joshua 2:9-11 ⁹ And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

¹⁰ For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt: and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that *were* on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

¹¹ And as soon as we had heard *these things*, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he *is* God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

² Corinthians 4:3-4 ³ But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

⁴ In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

² Moses and Aaron obey God and the plague is sent as Pharaoh and his servants watch, Exodus 7:20, 21;

Psalms 78:44-45 ⁴⁴ And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.

⁴⁵ He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.

Psalms 105:29 ²⁹ He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.

³ The magicians try to disprove the miracle, and Pharaoh again hardens his heart, Exodus 7:22, 23;

Matthew 24:24 ²⁴ For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 ¹ If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

² And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;

³ Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

² Thessalonians 2:7-12 ⁷ For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

⁸ And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

⁹ *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

river.

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

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Revelation 13:12-15 ¹² And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

¹³ And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

¹⁴ And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

¹⁵ And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

4 The plague causes great suffering in Egypt, Exodus 7:24, 25;

Genesis 15:13-14 ¹³ And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

¹⁴ And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

Revelation 16:3-4 ³ And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*, and every living soul died in the sea.

⁴ And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

II The Second Judgment: A Plague of Frogs

1 Pharaoh is warned of another judgment, Exodus 8:1-4

2 The judgment is pronounced and frogs are sent upon Egypt, Exodus 8:5, 6; Psalms 78:45 ⁴⁵ He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.

Psalms 105:30 ³⁰ Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.

3 The magicians again do the same with their enchantments, Exodus 8:7

4 Pharaoh appeals for deliverance and is given it on his own terms, Exodus 8:8-13

5 When Pharaoh saw the respite he hardened his heart, Exodus 8:14, 15;

Romans 1:28 ²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Romans 1:32 ³² Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

III The Third Judgment: A Plague of Lice

1 The dust is turned to lice without a previous warning to Pharaoh, Exodus 8:16, 17;

Psalms 105:31 ³¹ He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, *and* lice in all their coasts.

Jeremiah 6:10 ¹⁰ To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear *is* uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

Zechariah 7:12 ¹² Yea, they made their hearts *as* an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

2 The magicians fail in their attempt to disprove the miracle, and they admit the supremacy of Israel's God, Exodus 8:18, 19

3 Pharaoh hardens his heart again, Exodus 8:19

NOTES:

"Who is the LORD?"

God heard the cries and groanings of the Israelites as they labored as slaves in Egypt, and He sent Moses to lead them into a land that was promised to them many years before. Moses went before Pharaoh several times and requested that Israel be permitted to go into the wilderness to worship their God; but Pharaoh refused, being reluctant to let a group so profitable to Egypt slip from his control. He stated that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was not known to him, so he need not obey Jehovah's commands or favor His people. Instead, Pharaoh demanded that the Israelites work harder than ever before.

The contention between the Israelites and the Egyptians resolved itself to

heaps: and the land stank.

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)

this one point: Was there such a God as Jehovah? and if so, what was the extent of His power? and what, if any, were the obligations that the Egyptians owed to Him? To prove His existence and power and to bring about a deliverance of His people, God sent a series of judgments upon the wicked, idolatrous Egyptians. These are known as the Ten Plagues of Egypt.

Egypt was a land of many gods. The people worshiped various things: the Nile river, the crocodiles and other living things in the river, land animals, insects, and even the sun. The Lord directed His judgments against those gods of the Egyptians, first of all to prove to Pharaoh and all Egypt that the God of Israel was the true God; and secondly, that there was no other God.

God first made Himself known to Moses, who repeated God's instructions to Aaron; and then the two men went before the elders of Israel. Through the miracles God performed in the sight of the Israelites He demonstrated that these men were sent by Him to lead the captives to freedom. One of these same miracles was performed in the sight of Pharaoh for this same purpose, but he hardened his heart against God and refused to believe in Him.

Water Turned to Blood

The first judgment, a plague where the water of the river was turned to blood, was announced prior to its being sent. Promptly, when Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them, the water of their sacred river was rendered unfit for use. It was ordinarily pure and good for drinking; and at all times, with the exception of the flood periods, was very clear and sparkling — but now it was nothing but blood.

Since water was very necessary for human, animal, and vegetable life in this hot climate, the Egyptians considered the Nile among the greatest of the thousands of gods they worshiped. So the first plague was in itself a great test of their gods and their religion. If the God of Israel could turn the waters of the Nile into blood, it would be an obvious fact to the Egyptians that He was more powerful than their own highly revered god, the river.

But Satan, the great deceiver of men, had his emissaries present to try to discredit every supernatural demonstration sent to convince these people that Jehovah was the true God, the only God. The magicians of Egypt did a similar miracle with their enchantments; and, no doubt, because of their work the heart of haughty, stubborn Pharaoh was hardened. Perhaps he reasoned that since there was nothing unusual in the miracle sent to demonstrate God's power, now that it had been duplicated by his own men, therefore there could be nothing unusual in Israel's God or His power.

Frogs from the River

The second plague was one that not only distressed the Egyptians but destroyed some of them as well (Psalm 78:45). Frogs came out of the river and were found in almost every conceivable place in the land. It is difficult to imagine the extent of this detestable plague or what nauseating suffering it brought.

The frog was also one of the gods of Egypt, and again we can see in this plague the hand of God directed against their idolatrous worship. Pharaoh pled with Moses to intercede that the plague might be removed — tacitly conceding that the God of Israel was greater than any of the gods of Egypt. By the prayer of Moses the frogs died where they were, presenting a far more striking, vivid, and unforgettable confirmation of the miracle than if they had simply — even though miraculously — retired to their haunts.

The fact that Pharaoh was allowed to choose the time of the plague's removal was but another projected demonstration to him that none other than divine power could be back of it. The rotting of the dead frogs was not only an obnoxious reminder that their frog-god was not omnipotent, as was the God of the Israelites, but also that he was subject in all ways to Israel's God.

Lice from the Dust

The plague of frogs was, like the plague of water that was turned to blood, sent only after a warning of its coming; but the third judgment the plague of lice — was given without advance notice. It seems to have been sent as a sudden judgment upon the truce-breaking Pharaoh and his people. Lice came from the very earth itself and tortured man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt. The Egyptians have been reported as being a very clean people who, unlike many other idolatrous nations, had rigorous standards of personal cleanliness in their idol worship, and the presence of lice on their persons rendered them unclean for their worship.

This was the end of Satan's attempts to disprove the miracles by duplicating the plagues. The magicians could not produce any such plague as the plague of lice, and admitted of their own will that it was nothing but the finger of God. Since their own magicians had said the plague was sent by none but the God of Israel, it again proved to the Egyptians and also to men of all ages the supremacy of that God. The offended gods could in no way interfere to put an end to or diminish in any way this plague that made it impossible for the idolaters to carry on their shameful and despicable devotions.

The Mercy of Present Judgments

God sent the plagues to deliver Israel but also permitted them in mercy to the Egyptians, that they might see that their trusted gods were utterly incapable of saving them. It was thoroughly demonstrated that even though the magicians might duplicate in a small way two of the ten plagues, yet they could not undo or bring to a conclusion one of them. That this revelation was successful in accomplishing God's purpose, in a small degree at least, is borne out, first, by the fact that the magicians themselves testified that the plague of lice was sent by the finger of God (Exodus 8:19); secondly, by the fact that the servants of Pharaoh who feared the Word of the Lord and acted in accord with that Word were spared

the effects of the plague of hail (Exodus 9:20, 21) ; and thirdly, in the fact that on at least one occasion the servants of Pharaoh pled with him to grant Moses' request because they feared the consequences of not doing so (Exodus 10:7).

Thus, God is known by His judgments, for in every operation of His hand during men's natural lives His purpose is to enlighten their minds that He might bring them from false dependencies to a trust in Himself alone; that they, being saved from error and sin, may become wise, holy, and happy. It has been said that when God's judgments are abroad in the land the inhabitants learn righteousness. How thankful we can be that God does thus deal with men and nations, striving to bring them all to Himself.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Describe the first two plagues.
- 2 Why did God strike Egypt with these particular plagues, and at what were they directed?
- 3 What was the third plague?
- 4 What is thought to be the reason for this particular plague, and what did it apparently prohibit the Egyptians from doing?
- 5 What satanic reaction was manifest at the performing of these three miracles?
- 6 Did Moses contend with, or attempt to expose, these satanic manifestations?
- 7 Were the magicians successful in their attempts to prove their contention?
- 8 What was Pharaoh's reaction to each of the three plagues?
 - 9 In what way can we say that these judgments were given in mercy?
- 10 Are we taught in the Scriptures that these judgments had any effect on the Egyptians?