

Sent: Thursday, November 5, 2020 1:58 AM
Subject: Tuesday Nite's MOB Session on Exodus 7:1-8:19

"The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst!" (Exodus 7:5)

Last week we saw how God reminded Moses that He was "the LORD...who appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...and established His covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, where they had sojourned..." And so now, after over 400 years of silence (not in the land of Canaan!), He told Moses that He had "heard the groanings of the sons of Israel," because of their bondage in Egypt, and that He had remembered His covenant"! And that Moses should tell the sons of Israel that He would "deliver them from their bondage...and be their God...and bring them back to the land" which He swore to their forefathers! And, more specifically, that Moses was to be the one to go before Pharaoh and tell him to "let My people go"!

As Exodus 7 begins, we see God telling a very reluctant and insecure Moses that He would make him "as God to Pharaoh," and that he, along with his brother Aaron, were to speak to Pharaoh "all that I command you" to speak, but that He would "harden Pharaoh's heart" so that He (God) might "multiply His signs and wonders in the land of Egypt"! And, ultimately, that the Egyptians--through it all--"would know that I am the LORD when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst"!

And so, the contest between God and Pharaoh begins! ("Let the games begin!")

Exodus 7:10 says, "Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent!" But, somewhat surprisingly, the magicians of Egypt were able to do the same thing--verse 11 says, "with their secret arts"--although Aaron's staff "swallowed up their staffs" (which should have settled the issue)! And yet this only "hardened" Pharaoh's heart!

And this began the string of ten plagues which God would inflict on Pharaoh and the Egyptians, all directed in one way or another at the Egyptian gods, with growing intensity--and all for the purpose of showing Pharaoh that the God of Israel was, indeed, "the LORD"! The "most high" God! The God over all!

"Then God said...Go to Pharaoh, in the morning, as he is going to the water" (the Nile River)--most likely MacArthur notes, as a daily washing, and in the performance of some religious rite--and have Aaron "lift up his staff and strike the water...turning all the water into blood"! Verse 21 says "the blood was through all the land of Egypt"! But, again, the magicians were somehow able to do the same thing, "with their secret arts"! And, Pharaoh's heart was once again "hardened"! And, verse 25 say, "seven days passed"!

Exodus 8 records the second plague! Aaron again "stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt"! Frogs were considered a "sacred animal," connected with the goddess Heqt, and a symbol of fertility, among other things! But the Nile "swarming with frogs, coming up into Pharaoh's house and into his bedroom and on his bed...and into the houses of his servants and all the people"???

But again, verse 7 says, the magicians were able to "make frogs come up on the land" as well!

Pharaoh responded with a plea to Moses and Aaron to "entreat the LORD to remove the frogs from him and his people, and even promised that he would "let the people (the sons of Israel) go that they might sacrifice to the LORD." But when Moses asked Pharaoh "when he should entreat the LORD," Pharaoh said, "Tomorrow!" And so, Pharaoh spent "one more night with the frogs" (which was the title of a message I once heard a preacher give)!

When all the frogs were destroyed and "heaped on a pile, with the land becoming foul," Pharaoh would renege on his promise and once again "harden his heart" (verse 15)!

This then led to the third plague! Gnats (or lice) "on man and beast"! Verse 18 says the magicians tried with their secret arts to "bring forth" gnats, but could not--and said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God!" And yet Pharaoh's heart was once again "hardened," and he didn't let the people go!

This lesson raises at least two significant questions! First, how can we explain the ability of the magicians of Egypt to replicate actions of Aaron in turning his staff into a serpent and, later, in turning the water of the Nile into blood, and then in bringing up frogs from the Nile--but not in "creating" gnats?

Just so happens that magic and sorcery played a major role in the pantheistic religion of Egypt!

In 2 Timothy 3:8-9, the apostle Paul referred to two likely Egyptian magicians - Jannes and Jambres - who were the likely ones who opposed Moses in our Exodus passage. In fact, according to Jewish tradition, these same magicians pretended to become Jewish proselytes, instigated the later worship of the golden calf (in Exodus 32), and were killed with the rest of the idolaters in the same episode!

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 says, "No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light! Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds!"

MacArthur notes that the turning of rods into snakes, and later turning water into blood, and calling forth frogs, were not the same as trying to create gnat from inanimate dust. At that point, the magicians had no option but to confess their failure!

All of which brings up the magicians' response to the gnat issue in Exodus 8:19, "This is the finger of God!" We see this same reference to "the finger of God" elsewhere in Scripture, including in Exodus 31 with the giving of the two tablets with the ten commandments (which we'll be getting to in a future lesson in Exodus)!

Exodus 31:18 says, "When He (the LORD) had finished speaking with Moses upon Mount Sinai, He gave him the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God!"

And remember (in Daniel 5) how the "finger of a man" (referring to God) suddenly appeared at Belshazzar's feast, after he brought out the sacred gold and silver vessels which his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, and began writing on the wall of the king's palace, with the inscription "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN"--an inscription only Daniel (and not the king's "wise men") could interpret: "You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting! Your kingdom will be taken over by the Medes and Persians!" (That night Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom!)

In Luke 11:20, Jesus said, "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you! (In Matthew 12:28, the words "by the Spirit of God" is used!)

It's clear that the term "finger of God" is an "anthropomorphism" since God is "spirit" but accomplishes whatever He will! Psalm 8:3 says, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of your fingers (or "hands" in some versions), the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You take thought of him...?"

And so we see in our lesson Tuesday nite, and in so many other related passages in the Bible, the greatness of our God, and the fact that He was, and is, and will be, involved in our world, and in the affairs of our nation (even the election), and in every aspect of our lives! He is "LORD"!

May God bless your week!

Lowell