

Exegetical Notes, Exodus 7:14-24

“The Humbling Hand of God, Part #1: Blood”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19329

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

Exodus 7:14-24

Verse 14

Then YHWH said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go.”

- This is now the problem. Pharaoh was the most powerful man on the earth at that time. He had refused to acknowledge YHWH the God of the Hebrews and so would not grant Moses’ request made in God’s name to let the Hebrew people go into the desert to worship him. Though YHWH has given him many opportunities to grant this request, he has consistently refused. He has set himself up to oppose the will of God.

Verse 15-16

“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. Then say to him, ‘YHWH, 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.’”

- Moses is given very specific instructions:
 - + He is to go down to the place where Pharaoh bathes each morning. As the Nile was considered holy by the Egyptians, and Pharaoh thought to be the representative of the Egyptian gods on earth, this may have been a ritualistic bath.
 - + Moses is to wait for Pharaoh at this place on the bank of the Nile with the staff/snake in his hand. (See Exodus 7:8-13.)
 - + When Pharaoh comes, Moses is to deliver God’s judgment upon Pharaoh and Egypt. He is to begin by telling Pharaoh that what is about to happen is about to happen because Pharaoh would not grant the request of YHWH, the God of the Hebrews.

Verse 16-18

“This is what YHWH says: By this you will know that I am YHWH: With the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into blood. The fish in the Nile will die, and the river will stink; the Egyptians will not be able to drink its water.”

- Moses is to tell Pharaoh that God’s humbling hand is about to fall on all Egypt because of him. As a result, Pharaoh will know the power of God and acknowledge him to be the God of the Hebrews.
- God then told Moses what he was going to do. Using Aaron’s staff, God will strike the water of the sacred river to the Egyptians, the Nile, changing it to blood. The fish would die and the water would stink and become undrinkable.

Verse 19

YHWH 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 the stone jars.”

- Not only is the water in the Nile changed to blood but as Aaron, acting according to Moses’ words, stretches out his staff, all water in the land of Egypt turns to blood, even water already collected in wooden buckets and stone jars.

Verse 20-21

Moses and Aaron did just as YHWH had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood. The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt.

- Moses and Aaron did exactly as God commanded them to do and the result was exactly as God predicted it would be.
- Some Bible scholars contend that all of the plagues with which God humbles Pharaoh have a natural explanation. They point out that every year the Nile floods and that when it does it fills with red sediment that makes it look like blood. They contend that that is what happened here, that the river was simply flooded with red sediment. However, this explanation is entirely unsatisfactory for several reasons:

1. The Bible says that the river turned to blood. It does not say that it was flooded with red sediment that made it resemble blood. The Bible says this many times. If it was not blood, the Bible is an untrustworthy document.
2. Two, if it was red sediment, the people of Egypt would have known that it was red sediment. They would simply have allowed the sediment to settle out and used the water.
3. The text says that blood was everywhere in Egypt, not just in the Nile. Even water in standing buckets and stone jars turned to blood. This could not have happened if the Nile was flooded. How would the sediment have gotten into previous collections of water and into ponds and puddles not connected to the river?

Verse 22-24

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 YHWH had said. Instead, he turned and went into his palace, and did not take even this to heart. And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water, because they could not drink the water of the river.

- Again the sign proves to be unreliable, for Egypt's magicians are able to duplicate it by the power of the secret arts they practice. They can duplicate the very act of God.
- Consequently, Pharaoh is unimpressed. He simply goes back into the palace letting none of this effect his thinking. He still refuses to acknowledge YHWH or to grant the request to let the Hebrews go.
- The people of Egypt are forced to dig holes along the river to find acceptable drinking water. Their magicians can duplicate the miracle but they cannot reverse the judgment of God on Egypt.
- Pharaoh's refusal to acknowledge YHWH and honor his request has its effect, but not on Pharaoh and his officials. The common person feels the first effect of judgment while Pharaoh's heart remains hard.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *The Humbling Hand of God! Part # 1: Blood*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)