

EXPLORING EXODUS

7-12 The Ten Plagues

Introduction

1) Review of Exodus 7:1-25

- a) Aaron would be Moses' "prophet" (spokesman); God reiterates what He will do to Egypt
- b) Aaron's rod becomes a serpent before Pharaoh and swallows up the serpents of the magicians
- c) First plague: water of Nile turned to blood; creates hardships, but Pharaoh's heart is hardened

2) Our study today is **an overview of the purposes and lessons of the ten plagues on Egypt**

I) **Meaning of "Plague"**

A) Three Hebrew words used:

- 1) *Maggephah* – a blow, slaughter, plague, pestilence (Ex. 9:14)
- 2) *Nega* – a stroke, plague (Ex. 11:1)
- 3) *Negeph* – a blow, striking, smiting (Ex. 12:13; Josh. 24:5)

B) More than just a disease or epidemic – something that afflicts, troubles, harasses

C) Called "signs" and "wonders" (Ex. 7:3; 8:23; 10:1; Deut. 4:34; 6:22; Ps. 78:43; 105:27)

D) Called "judgments" (Ex. 7:4; 12:12)

II) **Views Held about the Plagues**

A) Only natural events (that were turned into acts of God through later oral traditions)

- 1) Denies divine miraculous actions and that Moses wrote from his eyewitness testimony

B) Miraculous acts of God ("the finger of God" 8:19)

- 1) *Intensification* – intensified beyond any ordinary occurrences
- 2) *Prediction* – time of appearance and disappearance predicted in several plagues
- 3) *Discrimination* – Some did not affect the Israelites
- 4) *Orderliness* – severity gradually increased
- 5) *Moral purpose* – not simply bad coincidences, but sent for special purposes

III) **Purposes of the Plagues**

A) Force Pharaoh to let Israel go (Ex. 3:20; 7:4)

B) Show that God is the LORD [Yahweh]

- 1) To the Egyptians (7:5, 17; 8:22) and to the Israelites (6:7; 10:2)

C) Show God's power over Pharaoh (9:14-16; as well as his magicians and gods)

D) Punish Pharaoh and Egyptians for treatment of Israel (6:6; Ps. 78:49-50)

E) Execute judgment on the gods of Egypt (12:12; Num. 33:4; cf. 2 Kgs. 18:33-35)

F) Show God's distinction between His people and Egypt (8:23; 11:7)

G) God's name and fame spread throughout earth (9:16)

H) Produce fear in surrounding nations (1 Sam. 4:8)

I) Strengthen Israel to remain faithful and obedient to God (Deut. 7:18-19; Ps. 78:42; 106:7, 21-22; Deut. 4:34-35; 6:20-24)

IV) **Lessons Learned from the Plagues on Egypt**

A) Pharaoh's bad choices = *ignore* God's word, *belittle* God's judgment, and *hinder* God's purposes

B) God is serious with His word, and those who oppose God will be punished (1 Thess. 1:4-8)

C) God will hold men and nations accountable to His will (2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 19:15)

D) We must trust and obey God to be safe and victorious (1 Cor. 15:57-58; Col. 2:15)

Conclusion

Keep this study in mind as we continue our study of the ten plagues that God brought upon Pharaoh and Egypt. Let us respect the great power, glory, and name of our Almighty God!