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**C0611 – March 15, 2006 – Ex 7:8-8:19 – The First Cycle Of Plagues**

Last week we saw YHWH's assuring response to Moses and Aaron's failure. It illustrates that when we fail it is not due to YHWH but to our HVP gimmicks. Moses had to be reminded of who God is. YHWH is eternal and immanent. That is, He did not begin to exist, He has neither beginning or ending, and He is boundlessly active in history. These characteristics remind Moses that YHWH can effect Israel's deliverance. YHWH is all sufficient and faithful to fulfilling His covenant promises. The issue is not Moses speaking skills but YHWH's power, eternity, and immanence. Yet, because of Moses failure to appreciate who YHWH is he is given Aaron as a mouthpiece before Pharaoh. Moses will be as God to Pharaoh and Aaron his prophet. From now on they will obey YHWH's commandments and see success, not by their hand or their might but by the hand of YHWH and His almighty power as the narrative now progresses to demonstrate.

**I.     The Plagues (7:7-11:10)**

**A.     The Credentials of Aaron and Moses (7:7-13)**

**Exod 7:8** Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,

**<sup>9</sup> "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Work a miracle,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw *it* down before Pharaoh, *that* it may become a crocodile.'"**

**<sup>10</sup> So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus they did just as the LORD had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a crocodile.**

**<sup>11</sup> Then Pharaoh also called for *the* wise men and *the* sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts.**

**<sup>12</sup> For each one threw down his staff and they turned into crocodiles. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.**

**13 Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.**

**14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go.**

Now that both **Moses and Aaron** were commissioned to go before Pharaoh YHWH gives them a **miracle** to perform in Pharaoh's presence. In verse 9 YHWH predicts that **Pharaoh** will expect them to perform a miracle. This reveals God's attribute of foreknowledge (which is a subset of divine omniscience). **Pharaoh** would question **Moses and Aaron's** authority to speak on behalf of their God.. If they could perform a **miracle** then it would validate their authority.

The miracle should be performed exactly as prescribed. Moses **shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh.** This is not Moses staff which is "the staff of God" (Exod 4:20) but Aaron's staff. Likewise, the first cycle of plagues will come by Aaron's staff and not Moses staff (cf 7:19; 8:5-6; 8:16-17). When Aaron throws his staff down the English translation says it will **become a serpent** but the Hebrew text says a **crocodile** (*tannin*).<sup>1</sup> Moses staff became a "serpent" (*nachash*) in the sight of the elders of Israel to convince them that Moses was YHWH's chosen prophet (Exod 4:1-5). That miracle was well-suited for the desert environment. But this is Aaron's staff and it will be transformed into a **crocodile** which is well-suited for Egyptian environment. So, to be correct, you will need to strike out serpent in vv 9, 10, and 12 and replace it with crocodile.

In verse 10 note the obedience of Moses and Aaron. They will not try their own devices but will do **just as the LORD had commanded.** They will obey YHWH down to the last detail. This is always the proper response of the believer to YHWH's commands; obedience down to the last detail.

In verse 11 **Pharaoh called for wise men and sorcerers** who were known as **the magicians of Egypt.** These men were part of an occultic sect who practiced secret arts. For many these secret arts had been passed down from their forefathers.. Secret arts are mysterious incantations, magic formulas designed to achieve something outside the laws of natural causation. The magician believes that he has the power to compel, by his acts and utterances, the forces of nature and demons to do his will. Throughout the entire Bible God absolutely opposes all sorcery and magic. Both are closely associated with idolatry, sexual immorality, and drug use (cf Rev 9:20-21). Aaron will not do magic as demonstrated by the fact that he says nothing, he simply casts his staff to the ground.

What the Egyptian magicians do, while not sleight of hand, is call upon the gods of Egypt, which are actually demons, to accomplish their will (cf 12:12). Ultimately, this is a battle between YHWH, the Creator and Lord of nature, and Satanic beings behind the gods of Egypt..

There is an upsurge of magic today, particularly through the writings of J.K Rowling who wrote the Harry Potter series. There's been a lot of debate among Christians about these books and movies, whether they are ok for children or not. Some have claimed there is nothing wrong with them because it is just imagination and it is not wrong for children to imagine such things. However, the answer is clear from Scripture, there is no reality other than God's reality and we are never given the right to think in terms of alternative realities that do not conform to the laws of God's reality. Another argument is that the magic used by Harry Potter is used to do 'good'. This argument is wrong for two reasons. First, it's a misuse of the term 'good'. What is good? God defines 'good'. What may appear 'good' to us may be 'evil' to God. God always declares magic to be 'evil' no matter its desired end. Second, the same magic can and is used to do evil. It is much like 'the force' in Star Wars which is supposedly both good and evil. Thus, magic has no place at all in the Christians life. It is all absolutely evil.

So, in verse 12, each of the Egyptian magicians, using their **secret arts**, magical incantations, **threw down his staff and they turned into crocodiles**. However, the obvious difference between the two is obvious from verse 12. **Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs**. Aaron simply threw down his staff and waited for the Lord of nature to do as He pleased; the Egyptian magicians uttered magical incantations over their staffs with a lesser result. Aaron's crocodile (singular) swallowed the magician's crocodiles (plural). This showed that Israel's YHWH nullified the works of the magicians.

Nevertheless, in verse 13, **Pharaoh's heart was hardened**, that is, it remained hard as before. **And he did not listen to them** or obey them, **As YHWH had** predicted (3:18; 5:4).

## **B. The First Cycle of Plagues (7:14-8:19)**

Before we look at the first plague let's lay out the structure and purpose of the 10 plagues. "By the plagues God was judging the gods of Egypt (of which there were many) and showing Himself superior to them (12:12' 18:11; Num. 33:4)." By the plagues YHWH was also showing Himself superior to Pharaoh who, in the eyes of Egypt, was a

god. Lastly, by the plagues, YHWH was teaching both the Egyptians and the Israelites who He was.

As per structure, there are basically two ways the 10 plagues can be organized. Both of these come from observations in the text. The first structure recognizes that the first nine plagues come in three cycles of three plagues each. The first plague in each cycle is introduced by YHWH's words; **Go to Pharaoh in the morning**, while he is taking his walk by the Nile. The second plague in each cycle is introduced by YHWH's words, **Go to Pharaoh**, presumably in his royal palace. The third plague in each cycle always comes without any warning at all to Pharaoh.

1 <sup>st</sup> Cycle	2 <sup>nd</sup> Cycle	3 <sup>rd</sup> Cycle	Warning
1. Blood	4. Flies	7. Hail	In the morning by the Nile
2. Frogs	5. Pestilence	8. Locusts	In the royal palace
3. Gnats	6. Boils	9. Darkness	None

The second structure divides the ten plagues into pairs and I think makes the order easier to remember. The first and second plagues relate to the Nile, the third and fourth relate to insects, the fifth and sixth damage living beings, the seventh and eighth damage crops, the ninth and tenth cause darkness (darkness on Egypt and the darkness caused by the death of the first-born son).

Plague #	Plague	Relationship
1-2	Blood-Frogs	Relate to the Nile
3-4	Gnats-Flies	Relate to Insects
5-6	Pestilence-Boils	Damage Living Beings
7-8	Hail-Locusts	Damage Crops
9-10	Darkness-Death	Relate to Darkness

There are also other differences which were presented in the Bible Knowledge Commentary in chart form on page 119. That chart is reproduced in modified form below:

### **PLAGUES, WARNINGS, USES OF STAFF, AND PHARAOH'S RESPONSES**

<b>PLAGUES</b>	<b>WARNINGS</b>	<b>USES OF STAFF</b>	<b>PHARAOH'S RESPONSE</b>
<i>First Cycle</i>			
1. Blood	In the morning by the Nile	Aaron's staff	Did not listen
2. Frogs	In the royal palace	Aaron's staff	Agreed to let them go if frogs taken away
3. Gnats	None	Aaron's staff	Refused to listen
<i>Second Cycle</i>			
4. Flies	In the morning by the Nile	No staff	Suggested they sacrifice in Egypt
5. Pestilence	In the royal palace	No staff	Refused Moses' request
6. Boils	None	No staff	Refused Moses' request
<i>Third Cycle</i>			
7. Hail	In the morning by the Nile	Moses' staff	Promised to let them go if rain and hail stopped
8. Locusts	In the royal palace	Moses' staff	Offered to let the men go
9. Darkness	None	Moses' hand (maybe the staff was used)	Agreed that people could go but not animals
<i>Final Judgment</i>			
10. Death	Probably in royal palace		Commanded them to go

### 1. Blood (7:14-25)

<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go.

<sup>15</sup> "Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he is going out to the water, and station yourself to meet him on the bank of the Nile; and you shall take in your hand the staff that was turned into a serpent.

<sup>16</sup> "You shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness. But behold, you have not listened until now.'"

<sup>17</sup> "Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to blood.

<sup>18</sup> "The fish that are in the Nile will die, and the Nile will become foul, and the Egyptians will find difficulty in drinking water from the Nile.'"

<sup>19</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools, and over all their reservoirs of water, that they may become blood; and there will be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *vessels of wood* and in *vessels of stone*.'"

<sup>20</sup> So Moses and Aaron did even as the LORD had commanded. And he lifted up the staff and struck the water that *was* in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that *was* in the Nile was turned to blood.

<sup>21</sup> The fish that *were* in the Nile died, and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt.

<sup>22</sup> But the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

<sup>23</sup> Then Pharaoh turned and went into his house with no concern even for this.

<sup>24</sup> So all the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the Nile.

<sup>25</sup> Seven days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile.

Verse 14 is a statement of the condition of **Pharaoh's heart**. By an act of his own will Pharaoh **refuses to let the people go**. Since his **heart is hard** (*kabed*) then YHWH is fully justified in using compulsion; besides, this ill treatment of Israel calls for cursing upon Egypt for "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you (Gen 12:3).

As with plagues 1, 4, and 7 YHWH commands Moses to meet **Pharaoh in the morning...on the bank of the Nile**. Moses is not to bow before Pharaoh but to **station** himself, that is stand to meet him not being in awe by his presence. And he is to take with him the staff of God (Exod 4:20) which turned into a serpent (Exod 4:1-5).

In verse 16 YHWH instructs Moses to give the following warning to Pharaoh that extends through verse 18. Pharaoh had refused to listen so YHWH will take drastic measures to make him listen. Verse 17 is important **Thus says YHWH, “By this you shall know that I am YHWH.** Pharaoh said “I do not know YHWH” (Exod 5:2).but through this plague he will come to know YHWH. The plague is turning the water of the Nile...to blood. The result is that the **fish...in the Nile will die, the Nile will stink and the water from the Nile** will not be fit to drink. This is what Moses is to tell Pharaoh.

The Egyptians considered the Nile to be a god. Several Egyptian gods were related to the Nile. As we will see, each of the judgments is aimed at one or more of the Egyptian gods. Biblically, there are no such things as “gods”. There is but one God, the Creator of all. As such, “gods” are the creation of men’s imaginations or titles given to demonic beings. In the case of Egypt there were actual demons behind the gods of Egypt. Each plague is therefore a demonstration of the superiority of YHWH over the demonic gods of Egypt. In the case of the Nile, the key god was Osiris.<sup>ii</sup> Since the annual flooding of the Nile was the source of life, to turn it to blood and kill all the fish was a devastating judgment on Osiris. There were other gods that purportedly protected the fish, but such a judgment would demonstrate that YHWH not these gods was the one true God.

Verses 16-18 are what Moses is to say to Pharaoh but in verse 19 **Moses** is to **Say to Aaron.** So, Moses is the sole channel through which all the divine revelation is coming. Apparently, Moses and **Aaron** are both going to use their staffs to affect the waters of Egypt. **Moses** is going to use his **staff** to affect the Nile. **Aaron** is going to use his staff to affect the rest of the **waters of Egypt.** **Aaron’s** staff alone is used in the second and third plagues. **Aaron** is to take his **staff and stretch it out over the waters of Egypt.** This simply means that he will point toward various rivers, streams, and pools. When he does they will turn into **blood.** Some say this is not real **blood** but simply a fungi with a reddish hue (Cassuto, 98), but that doesn’t explain the instantaneous change in the waters. What was once fresh water (H<sub>2</sub>O) teeming with life will now be turned to **blood** (hemoglobin) and will kill the fish and will stink terribly. What does YHWH mean by the final phrase of v 19 **both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone? wood and stone** are common descriptions of idols. In Egypt the priests would wash the **wood and stone** images of their gods in water each morning.. So, the meaning is that even the water that the Egyptian gods of **wood and stone** were washed in would be turned to blood.

In verse 20 we find Moses and Aaron doing exactly as YHWH **commanded.** They are obedient from this point forward and will not use their own devices to deliver Israel. Moses says nothing, no magical incantations, he simply **stuck the Nile in the sight of**

**Pharaoh and his servants and it turned to blood.** He merely waited on the creator and Lord of nature. As a result **the fish in the Nile died and it became foul and the Egyptians could not drink the water from the Nile.**

Verse 22 is an enigma for some. If **Moses** and **Aaron** struck all the waters of Egypt then what waters were left for the **magicians of Egypt** to strike? Apparently, **all the waters of Egypt** is a figure of speech called “hyperbole”. The great majority of the waters were turned to blood but some remained. These Egyptian magicians did a very stupid thing. They made the plague even worse. Their method was not relying on God but uttering magical incantations, calling on the gods of Egypt whom demons were behind. The Bible claims that Satan and the demons can do counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders (Matt 24:24ff; Rev 13:11-15). Apparently, Pharaoh was satisfied with **the magicians of Egypt** and his **heart was hardened and he did not listen to them**, as **YHWH** had predicted (YHWH knows our hearts intimately, even knowing in advance how we will respond). It is interesting that the 10 plagues seem calculated to overcome Pharaoh’s hardness to let the people go just as the Tribulation judgments seem calculated to overcome Israel’s hardness so they will repent.

So, **Pharaoh turned around and went into his royal palace with no concern for this.** **So, all the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink.** Apparently all the waters related to the Nile were turned to blood but the small amount of water not related to the Nile was not affected. They had to dig to get to this water. The plague lasted for **seven days YHWH struck the Nile**, the Egyptian god, Osiris, was defeated. One by one the Egyptian gods will be defeated by YHWH. Next on the list, Heqet, the frog goddess of birth and fertility.

## 2. Frogs (8:1-15)

<sup>1</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me.

<sup>2</sup> "But if you refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite your whole territory with frogs.

<sup>3</sup> "The Nile will swarm with frogs, which will come up and go into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed, and into the houses of your servants and on your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls.

<sup>4</sup> "So the frogs will come up on you and your people and all your servants.'""



<sup>5</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the streams and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.'"

<sup>6</sup> So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

<sup>7</sup> The magicians did the same with their secret arts, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

<sup>8</sup> Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Entreat the LORD that He remove the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD."

<sup>9</sup> Moses said to Pharaoh, "The honor is yours to tell me: when shall I entreat for you and your servants and your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses, *that* they may be left only in the Nile?"

<sup>10</sup> Then he said, "Tomorrow." So he said, "*May it be* according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God.

<sup>11</sup> "The frogs will depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people; they will be left only in the Nile."

<sup>12</sup> Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had inflicted upon Pharaoh.

<sup>13</sup> The LORD did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, the courts, and the fields.

<sup>14</sup> So they piled them in heaps, and the land became foul.

<sup>15</sup> But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Here is the second plague of the first cycle. Moses does not go to the Nile in the morning to meet Pharaoh but goes to his royal palace. He goes right into Pharaoh's house, where he dwells like a god. The warning comes in verse 2, **if you refuse to let them go, behold I will smite your whole territory with frogs.** "The ancient Egyptians saw thousands of frogs appear all along the Nile at certain times of the year. This appearance of the reptile came to symbolize fruitfulness and coming life. "The Egyptians attributed to the frogs, which swarmed in the waters in countless numbers, a divine power, and regarded them as a symbol of fertility. One of the goddesses of the Egyptian pantheon, Heket...is depicted in the form of a woman with a frog's head."



"She was thought to be the wife of Khnum, the god who creates men on his potter's wheel, and she gave the newly created being the breath of life before the child was placed to grow in the mother's womb."

This is a lot of frogs. Look at verse 3-4. "**The Nile will swarm with frogs.** They will even **come up and go into your house.** It was abnormal for frogs to leave the waters of the Nile yet they will go into the Pharaoh's own royal palace (perhaps because of the stink of the dead fish in the Nile). No guards could keep them away. They will also go **into your bedroom and on your bed.** This is irony because "Amulets of Heqet were worn by women to protect them while they gave birth" in their **bedroom**.. Now the frogs have invaded the **bedroom** and even the **bed** itself. **And into the houses of your servants and on your people.** They would go into Hebrew and Egyptian homes equally. They would even go **into** people's kitchens and get inside **ovens** and **kneading bowls.** There would be so many that verse 4 says they **will come up on you and your people and all your servants.** They will climb up people's legs, even up the legs of his majesty himself. We're talking about an unimaginable swarm of frogs.

In verses 5-6 Aaron is given the command to use his staff to bring about the plague. He merely stretches out his hand and staff over Egypt and waits on the creator and Lord of nature. He says no magical incantations. Thus, YHWH would be victorious over the Egyptian goddess, Heqet, demonstrating that He alone is the Lord of nature and He alone bestows life. These frogs, which they considered a sign of blessing would become a terrible blight.

In verse 7 it records that **the magicians did the same with their secret arts.** They had to utter magical incantations to **make the frogs come up on the land of Egypt.** It's difficult to imagine more **frogs.** But what does this accomplish but plague added on plague. Verse 8 seems to indicate that Pharaoh wanted his magicians to remove the **frogs,** not make more **frogs.** But this was beyond their power and thus **Pharaoh called** for Moses and Aaron, asking them to **entreat YHWH that He remove the frogs.** He clearly understands that the plague of frogs does not come from the hand of Moses or

Aaron but YHWH, the God of Israel. He then promises that If YHWH removes frogs **I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to YHWH.**

In verse 9 **Moses** demonstrates complete trust in YHWH. Moses will not declare when the frogs will be removed but only asks **Pharaoh** to tell him the time when he would like him to **entreat YHWH** to return Egypt to normal, leaving frogs **only in the Nile**. Of course, **Pharaoh** says **tomorrow**, the idea is, as soon as possible. Thus, by leaving the time for entreaty to be decided by Pharaoh it will only further solidify the fact that YHWH is the source of the frogs and they can only be removed at His pleasure. Thus, verse 10 says **that you may know that there is no one like YHWH our elohim**. The God of Israel is incomparable. There is none like Him, no equal, no comparison. He is absolutely unique. No one is eternal and immanent and all powerful as YHWH. The plague itself as well as the removal of the plague are meant to be teaching devices. Pharaoh said, I do not know YHWH, but by this Pharaoh **may know that there is no one like YHWH**. As such, verse 11 states that it will happen just as he asks the Lord.

Moses **cried to YHWH** shows a fervent prayer. If they were to be successful then this plague would be lifted and Pharaoh would let the people go! And verse 13 we see that YHWH answers prayers. To remove the plague YHWH removed the frogs by death. They died everywhere they were found except the Nile. **So they piled them in heaps, and the land became foul**. This is a massive amount of frogs. So massive that the **land stank** as the Nile had stunk because of the dead fish. **But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the LORD had said**. When Pharaoh got relief **he hardened his heart**. He did not let them go as he had promised. He broke his promise. This is a common human response to God. How many times have you heard someone say, "God, if you'll just give me relief from this I promise to do so and so for you." Human promises to God are vain. Most people break them even when God gives them relief.

### 3. Gnats (8:16-19)

<sup>16</sup> **Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become gnats through all the land of Egypt.'"**

<sup>17</sup> **They did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats through all the land of Egypt.**

<sup>18</sup> **The magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats on man and beast.**

**19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.**

Here is the third plague of the first cycle. He does not go to Pharaoh in the morning on the bank of the Nile nor does he go to Pharaoh's royal palace. He simply judges Egypt because of Pharaoh's hardening his heart. Thus, YHWH **said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, "Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become gnats through all the land of Egypt."'** And thus, this plague comes by Aaron's staff. Upon striking **the dust of the earth** (from which man was originally made) the dust **became gnats through all the land of Egypt**. Aaron needed to say nothing but simply wait on YHWH, the creator and Lord of nature. The god of the desert was Set, possibly this is a judgment on this Egyptian god. The result was a swarm of small winged insects that bite and drive both man and beast mad. When it says in verse 18 that the magicians tried to **bring forth gnats, but they could not**, the sense is not that they tried to create more gnats but that they tried to destroy them. Since **they could not**, verse 18 goes on to say, **so, there were gnats on man and beast**; that is, the terrible infestation remained. Their **secret arts** could not nullify what YHWH had done because YHWH is the Lord of nature, not the gods of Egypt.

The results are recorded in verse 19. **the magicians** tried to communicate to **Pharaoh** that this was not a magic trick by saying, **"This is the finger of God"**. They say, this is *elohim*, they do not say, this is YHWH. They are saying this is the finger of *a god* but not the finger of *YHWH*. This is some unnamed god. By saying **finger** and not hand they are saying that a god has a small part in this. They are getting closer to the truth but they are not quite ready to admit that this is YHWH the God of Israel who has fully accomplished this horror. **But Pharaoh's heart was hardened**. Just as YHWH had predicted his attitude does not change.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of the plagues is three-fold; to show YHWH's supremacy over Pharaoh, to teach the Egyptians and Israelites who He was and to judge the gods of Egypt. The structure of the plagues is clear. Three cycles culminating in a final judgment. The first cycle includes blood, frogs, and gnats. These plagues judged the life god of the Nile, Osiris, the fertility goddess of frogs, Heqet, and the desert god, Set. There are many lessons to learn from the first cycle of plagues. First, several aspects of the doctrine of God are revealed. (a) God is omnipotent. His works cannot be reversed by calling on demons by way of magical incantations. God's works are far superior to and swallow up

human works that mimic His works. (b) God is the Lord of nature. All nature obeys Him. The chemical H<sub>2</sub>O turns into hemoglobin at His pleasure. The dust of the earth becomes a swarm of gnats at His command. (c) God is incomparable. There is no one like Him. God used the plagues as teaching devices to reveal His incomparable nature. (d) God is faithful to His covenant promises. God promised to bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel. Here he is cursing Egypt by way of plagues for their slave treatment of His people Israel. (e) God is a judge of both man and nature. With the first plague God judged the Nile River as well as the Egyptians. God judges nature because of the original dominion mandate which stated that nature was under man's dominion. When man fell under sin nature fell under sin too. Since man and nature are under sin both are subject to God's judgments. As such we see God as judge. Second, we see the doctrine of magic. Magic is always evil in the Bible. It cannot be tolerated or practiced in any form by Christians. These secret arts have behind them demonic beings who lead those who practice them into mass idolatry, drug use, and sexual immorality. Third, the hardness of Pharaoh's heart. It is apparent that Pharaoh was ripe for judgment because of the hardness of his heart. As YHWH revealed Himself further to Pharaoh he only hardened his heart further. This was predicted by YHWH and thus demonstrates the final aspect of God's character, foreknowledge. God knows the hearts of all men and how they will act in a given situation. As such, the 10 plagues are calculated to break the hardness of Pharaoh's heart so he will let the people go. Lastly, the doctrine of obedience. Moses and Aaron were obedient down to the last dotted i and crossed t. They gave up on their own HVP gimmicks and followed divine commandments. This always results in victory because it is God who acts through us and not us acting on our own behalf.

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<sup>i</sup> In the Hebrew a *tannin* is a large sea monster or dragon and can refer, as here, to a large reptile, most likely a crocodile.

<sup>ii</sup> BKC, 119.

<sup>3</sup> "The ten plagues may have occurred over a period of about nine months. The 1<sup>st</sup> occurred when the Nile rises (July-August). The 7<sup>th</sup> (9:31) was in January, when barley ripens and flax blossoms. The prevailing east winds in March or April in the 8<sup>th</sup> plague (10:13) would have brought in locusts. And the 10<sup>th</sup> plague (chaps 11-12) occurred in April, the Passover month" (BKC, 119).

<sup>4</sup> The Nile was actually considered the bloodstream of Osiris. Osiris was also the god of the dead and the underworld.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/heqet.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/heqet.htm>

<sup>7</sup> We also see both man and nature judged in the Flood and the Future Tribulation.

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