

The First Plague: The Nile Turned to Blood

Exodus 7:15-25

All the preliminaries are out of the way. Pharaoh has had his opportunity to accept the Lord's command and let the Israelites go into the wilderness to worship Him. Now God arms Moses and Aaron with the miracle staff that would act as the tool of Yahweh to make nature itself turn on those who would harm His chosen people. It all begins "down by the riverside" with the Nile turned to blood.

I. Why the plague, Why the First Plague?

- A. Pharaoh has not listened [taken God's command through Moses seriously] (16)
- B. Pharaoh does not know that Yahweh is the one true God. (17)
- C. The plagues are meant to void the gods of Egypt and to bring death to men and creatures.
- D. "But those who fail to find me harm themselves; all who hate me love death." (Prov.8:36)
- E. The first plague warns that continuing hardness leads to death.

II. The Benign Nile "God"

- A. Hapi was the god of the Nile, and the river was sacred to the Egyptians.
- B. Pharaoh's (and daughter's) daily ritual of going to the Nile was not just hygienic.
- C. Without the Nile River Egypt would be a wasteland, no civilization, no life.
- D. But Egypt is not the gift of the Nile, but the gift of this one true God. (15,17)
- E. Yahweh called the Israelites to leave the Nile and worship Him in the wilderness.
- F. Years later God would say of Israel, "They...ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods." (Psa. 106:28)

III. The Significance of Blood

- A. There is no indication that the blood in the Nile was other than normal blood.
- B. Blood consists of cells that are suspended in a liquid.
- C. The Bible says that blood in its proper places (blood vessels of living things) = life (Lev. 17:11)
- D. Blood in improper places (like the river) = Lifelessness, as seen in dead things (fish, etc)
- E. Bloodshed = violent death – such as by wounds.
- F. This is a good place to be reminded of Christ's violent death on behalf of sinners.

IV. More Tricks – That Old Red Magic

- A. God thus made His point: His alone is the supernatural power of life and death.
- B. The king and his people could only avoid death and destruction by yielding to Yahweh.
- C. Pharaoh's trusty magicians produced a similar red effect that gave the king an excuse.
- D. Satan is always ready to give us excuses not to obey the LORD.
- E. Eventually the magicians would run out of tricks.

V. Nothing to Drink

- A. In the meantime the people of Egypt were going thirsty (24), maybe for a week. (25)
- B. The magicians could not supply drinking water, nor water for irrigation.
- C. In God's providence the flow of the Nile would cleanse the water.
- D. But God was not through using the Nile river, as we'll see next time.
- E. For now, let those who are thirsty come to Jesus and drink the water of life. (John 7:37)

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.