

Water and Blood

Exodus 7:14-25

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HDBC

Jan and I love to travel by car. We love to drive the backroads and visit places that are not on the main thoroughfares. During the past 18 months we have taken a number of day trips around the state of Arkansas. As we drive we are looking for **old barns, old schools, old courthouses, old movie theaters, old stores, old water towers**. Ok, we like seeing old things.

We love driving around old towns. There is a history in each one. I can tell you that our state, as with other states, is littered with towns that at one time were larger, **more vibrant than they are now**. We've noticed the empty business districts, the abandoned buildings, the empty schools, etc. It's obvious in most cases that at one time there was much more life. What happened?

Well, each one is unique, for sure. But the common denominator for most is that at some point the **primary foundation of the economy ended** or was taken away. Large mill or factor closed. RR was no longer as important. When the primary source of a town's economy is taken away, it is hard for that town to continue to thrive. The same can be true of a nation. If the **farming** industry in our area was suddenly taken away it would be devastating. **Tourism along Florida coast. Auto industry in Detroit. Mining in West Virginia.**

This is what happened to Egypt with the first of ten plagues. It was a direct attack by God on the economy of Egypt which was based on the Nile River. But it was also an attack on their religion. Let's take a closer look at ***Water and Blood***. Read **Exodus 7:14-25**

1. The Declaration (16)

Interestingly, there is no demand that Pharaoh let the people go. Instead there was the simple declaration of God's previous demand and of Pharaoh's previous response. What was about to happen was based on the previous conversation. At least for now, talk would be replaced with action.

Sadly, this did not have to happen. Pharaoh could have acknowledged that the signs did indeed point to God. He could have let the people go. I believe Egypt would have prospered just fine without the Hebrew-slave workforce.

The grief, anguish and loss of life did not have to happen. But that is the story of our world, isn't it. Human beings tend to clench their fists in the face of God and **determine to bow to no one**, even their creator.

Saying no to God is a serious thing. Because God had not acted immediately when Pharaoh resisted, he might have thought he had won the battle. As the minutes and hours passed by, his confidence and arrogance must surely have grown. Aaron's snake had gobbled up the snakes of his people, but nothing else had happened. All was good.

Just because you have not felt the judgment of God does not mean you have escaped. Right now at this very minute there are billions of people on the planet who are still bearing the guilt for their own sins. Most of them will die in that condition. So far, they have not experienced the judgment of God. But they will. Judgement postponed does not mean judgment avoided. When it comes to judgment, **delay does not mean escape**.

2. **The Demonstration (20-21)**

It is important to note that Moses told Pharaoh what he was going to do before doing it. This would prove that this was not simply some random act of nature. It would be on-demand. It is also important to note that Moses reminded Pharaoh of why it was about to happen. What was about to happen in Egypt would be his fault. The misery, the pain, the frustration among the people would all point back to the bad decision by their leader.

1) **Theological Impact**

When God brought these ten plagues on the Egyptians he was not only coming after Pharaoh and the people, but also was attacking their gods. **James Boice explains it well with these words.**

In order to understand these plagues we need to understand that they were directed against the gods and goddesses of Egypt and were intended to show the superiority of the God of Israel to the Egyptian gods. There were about eighty deities in Egypt, all clustered about the three great natural forces of Egyptian life: the Nile river, the land, and the sky.

Notice that God told Moses to go to the Nile and wait for Pharaoh. We are not told why Pharaoh went to the Nile each day. Perhaps he went to

bathe, like his daughter. Or maybe it was just to take an early-morning stroll. Maybe he was there to pay homage to the gods of the Nile.

Perhaps he uttered the Egyptian hymn, ***Hail to thee, Oh Nile, that issues from the earth and comes to keep Egypt alive.***

Pharaoh and the Egyptian people needed to learn that there is only one God. They needed to learn a theological lesson. The attack on the Nile was the first installment in teaching this important truth. The gods of the Nile were powerless to prevent this from happening.

Numbers 33:4 reinforces this truth. *While the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn whom the Lord had struck down among them. The Lord had also executed judgments on their gods.*

2) **Economic Impact**

This first punch was a body blow to the economic life for the Egyptians. The Nile was their primary source of life and prosperity. It was their primary source of drinking water. Well-water in that day and even today in that region is not good. When that water was turned into blood they lost that as a source of water.

The fish in the Nile provided food and income. When the fish died they lost a source of food and income. Except for small amounts of water they had in their homes, there was none available. It was a **source of transportation** and commerce. That came to a halt.

This went on for seven days. Imagine going seven days with no grocery stores open and with utilities turned off. That would be tough. I'd be ready to concede. Not Pharaoh. He simply shrugged and went back to the palace with no concern at all. He didn't give it a passing thought. This points to the arrogance and callousness of his heart. He was unconcerned about how this was affecting his people. But you can be assured that the people were grumbling.

The source of life had become a **river of death**. Imagine the stench of the blood and of the dead fish. We can imagine the impact this had on the nation. Like us, they assumed that what had been true in the past would continue to be true in the future. Things would simply continue as

they had. They were given a powerful object lesson that this may not be true. We have a tendency to think the same way. **We go to the grocery store assuming it will have what we need. Gas stations. Utilities. Etc. I think in the past 18 months we have gotten a little glimpse at just how fragile our way of life can be.**

3. The Imitation

Notice verse 22. Egypt's magicians were able to replicate this miracle. That raises some questions. The text seemed to indicate that all the water was turned into blood. But that is not exactly what it says. Certainly the Nile and other rivers and their tributaries, as well as all the reservoirs that were already being use to hold large quantities of water were affected.

Verse 19 says blood would be in *vessels of wood and stone*. Note that the word *vessels* is in italics. That word is not in the Hebrew. The Hebrew simply reads *blood would be in wood and stone*. Normally when the Hebrew refers to wood and stone it is speaking to idols. So, this could simply be indicating that the wood and stone idols would be stained with blood as well.

At any case, we know that not all the water was impacted because the magicians were able to replicate the miracle. Maybe there was a supply of water in the palace that was not impacted. There were some small amounts of water that people must have had in their homes. The amounts would have been small and insignificant. But it enabled Pharaoh's people to show that they were capable of doing a similar thing, even if on a smaller scale.

If they really had power, they would have reversed what God did. It's interesting that they did not even attempt to do this. Rather than making things better, **they actually made things worse**. They took some of the water that was still water and turned it into blood. What an interesting picture. Even when Satan was trying to assert himself, he was yielding to God's bidding. Even his counterfeit signs ultimate serve God's purposes.

The supreme example of this is the death of Jesus. At the time it must have seemed like a great triumph by Satan; the Son of God suffering, bleeding and dying. But what Satan did not know was that as Jesus was on the cross, He was **redirecting the wrath that we deserved from us to Himself**. In doing so He was paying our sin debt, making it possible for us to be right with God. Three days later Jesus rose from the grave and what Satan thought was his

greatest victory became a **bitter defeat**. The death of Jesus as the very thing God used to save sinners from hell and give them eternal life.

The chapter ends with the pathetic picture of the Egyptians hastily digging wells in search of life-sustaining water. When the great gods of the Nile failed to rescue them they were left on their own. This is what happens to people who refuse to recognize that there is one God and that He loves them and wants them to love Him back. When a person refuses the only real source of eternal life, they are left to try to find another source. But that search will be futile. I'm reminded of a couple of key statements in the New Testament.

Jesus said, ***I am the way, the truth and life. No one comes to the Father except through me.***

Peter, in the books of Acts, ***There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.***

As God took away the Nile from the Egyptians, one day He will take away all the false gods that people worship today. **Money. Power. Popularity. Status. Health. Education. Career.** You name it. Whatever gods are controlling your life will one day lose their ability to sustain you. Then, you will be like the Egyptians, digging for another source of life. But there will be none.

In Egypt the source of the life (Nile) became a source of death.
On the cross, the source of death became the source of life.

In Egypt blood led to death.
In Jesus blood led to life.

In Egypt the blood left the stench of sin and death.
IN Jesus the blood washed away our sins and rescued us from death.

What had been a blessing in Egypt was turned into a curse.
What had been a curse in Jerusalem (hanging on a cross) was turned into a blessing for all who would place faith in Christ.

The God of exodus is also the God of Easter.