

Bible Stories

GOD VS. EGYPT

Exodus 5:22-6:1

July 30, 2022

When we left Moses, he was on his way back to Egypt. Having finally arrived, he and Aaron went immediately to the elders of Israel. Aaron told them everything that had happened and performed the signs before them ---- and they believed!!!

- **Exodus 4:31** - And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.

Thrilled with the response, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh:

Aaron: *This is what the Lord said, 'Let My people go, to that they can celebrate a festival for Me in the desert.'*

Pharaoh: *NO! I don't know your God and I will **NOT** let your people go worship him – and by the way, get back to work!*

Pharaoh stopped deliveries of straw for making bricks **YET** ordered that brick production must remain the same.

The Israelite foremen went before Pharaoh to plead their case:

Foremen: *Why are you treating us this way?*

Pharaoh: *You're lazy! Why else would you say, 'Let us go worship our God in the desert.' Now get back to work!*

The Foremen went and found Moses and Aaron.....

Foremen: *What have you done to us?! Pharaoh despises us now more than he already did and you have given him the ammunition to kill us!*

Things could not have turned out worse for our poor sheep herder. The Egyptians were laughing at him and the Israelites wished he'd just go away.

- **Exodus 5:22-23** - Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, "O Lord, why hast Thou brought harm to this people? Why didst Thou ever send me? ²³ "Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he has done harm to this people; and Thou hast not delivered Thy people at all."

God responded {Exodus 6:1-8}:

Now you shall see what **I will do** to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he shall let them go, and under compulsion he shall drive them out of his land

I am Yahweh;

I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty.... But my name is Yahweh.

I established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan....

I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians....

I have remembered My covenant.

Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel,

I am Yahweh.

I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

I will deliver you from their bondage.

I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

I will take you for My people.

I will be your God; and you will know that it is **I who brought you** out from under the burden of the Egyptians....

I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob....

I will give it to you for a possession....

I am Yahweh.

God vs. Egypt {Exodus 7:8-12:30}

I have no doubt that God would have preferred the headline *“Pharaoh frees slaves after Moses’ staff eats Priest’s staffs”*, but Pharaoh wanted to play, *“My god’s bigger than your God”* ---- and so, the fun began.

Blood: God turned the Nile and its tributaries to blood ---- Pharaoh could have raised the white flag – he didn’t:

- **Exodus 7:22** - and Pharaoh's heart was hard, and he did not listen to them, as Yahweh had said.

7 days go by...Frogs: God sent an overwhelming army of frogs ---- Pharaoh could have raised the white flag – he didn’t:

- **Exodus 8:15** - But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he made his heart insensitive and did not listen to them, as Yahweh had said.

Lice: God sent swarms of gnats/lice ---- Pharaoh could have raised the white flag – he didn’t:

- **Exodus 8:19** - Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hard, and he did not listen to them, as the Yahweh had said.

Flies: God sent swarms of flies ---- Pharaoh could have raised the white flag – he didn’t:

- **Exodus 8:32** - But Pharaoh made his heart insensitive this time also, and he did not let the people go.

Death of Livestock: God sent a plague upon the livestock and decimated their food supply even further ---- Pharaoh could have raised the white flag – he didn’t:

- **Exodus 9:7** - And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not even one of the livestock of Israel dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was insensitive, and he did not let the people go.

Boils: After Moses and Aaron threw ash from the furnace into the air – painful, festering boils broke out on both men and animals ---- Pharaoh could have raised the white flag – he didn’t:

- **Exodus 9:12** - And Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

Pharaoh **WOULD NOT** yield, yet, in the midst of these judgments we see the hand of mercy extended. Before the next plague came, the Egyptians were urged to bring their servants and all their remaining livestock in from the fields.

- **Exodus 9:20-21** - The servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of Yahweh made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses; ²¹ but those who paid no regard to the word of Yahweh left his servants and his livestock in the field.

Hail: God sent a hail storm that included thunder and lightning. People died and more crops and animals were destroyed ---- Pharaoh could have raised the white flag – he didn’t:

- **Exodus 9:34** - But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and made his heart insensitive, he and his servants.

Locust: God sent a swarm of locusts ---- Pharaoh could have raised the white flag – he didn’t:

- **Exodus 10:7** - And Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve Yahweh their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?"
- **Exodus 10:20** - But Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.

Darkness: God sent a great darkness, a darkness that could be felt ---- Pharaoh could have raised the white flag – but he didn’t:

- **Exodus 10:27-28** - But Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to let them go. ²⁸ Pharaoh said to Moses, "Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my face you will die."

Unfortunately for Egypt, despite being given evidence after evidence that he could not win this war – Pharaoh chose to battle on. He would sacrifice his entire country rather than let THOSE PEOPLE go.....

And yet, even now, before the final plague, God gave Pharaoh time to change his mind – time to repent – time to acknowledge Him:

- **Exodus 11:4-8** - So Moses said, "This is what Yahweh says: 'About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. ⁵ Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. ⁶ There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt-- worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. ⁷ But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.' Then you will know that Yahweh makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. ⁸ All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, 'Go, you and all the people who follow you!' After that I will leave." Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.

Death of Firstborn: This would have included people from every station of life as well as the remaining animals – and there was an horrendous cry throughout the land.

Finally broken, Pharaoh relented – not repented – just relented:

- **Exodus 12:31-38** – Then he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, "Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship Yahweh, as you have said. Get out of here, but bless me before you go.

Soon, however, Pharaoh will change his mind – **AGAIN** – setting the stage for the great final battle between God and Egypt.

What do we do with this story?

God chose Moses for a specific reason, which did not include doing what God had promised to do. Moses was to represent God’s mission and intent – that’s it! God would do all the work – He was about to make Himself known.....

The *“signs and wonders”* that occur in **Exodus 7:8-12:30** are far from random. This was not a mere battle of wills between Moses and Pharaoh. This was spiritual warfare – a conflict between the God of Israel and the gods of Egypt.

The Ten Plagues		
Plague	Reference	Egyptian Deity
1. Blood	7:14-25	<i>Khnum</i> – guardian of the Nile <i>Hapi</i> – Spirit of the Nile <i>Osiris</i> – Nile was his bloodstream
2. Frogs	8:1-15	<i>Hapi/Heqt</i> – Frog goddess of Egypt, goddess of resurrection/fruitfulness {fertility}
3. Lice	8:16-19	<i>Seb</i> – earth god of Egypt
4. Flies	8:20-32	<i>Kheprer/Uatchit</i> – god of flies and the flying scarab (large beetle)
5. Death of Livestock	9:1-7	<i>Hathor</i> – mother goddess (cow) <i>Apis</i> – bull of the god <i>Ptah</i> , fertility symbol <i>Mneuis</i> – holy bull from Heliopolis <i>Khnum</i> – ram headed god
6. Boils	9:8-12	<i>Sekhmet</i> – goddess of plagues and epidemics <i>Senehem</i> – god protector against plagues <i>Serapis and Imhotep</i> – gods of healing
7. Hail	9:13-35	<i>Nut</i> – sky goddess <i>Isis/Seth</i> – goddess of life – agricultural deities <i>Shu</i> – storm god associated with strange and frightening events
8. Locust	10:1-20	<i>Serapia</i> – god protector against locust
9. Darkness	10:21-23	<i>Re, Amon, Amon-Ra, (Re), Aten, Atum, Horus</i> – sun deities – king of gods <i>Thoth</i> – moon god
10. Death of Firstborn	11:4-7, 12:29-30	<i>Osiris</i> – god of life; Pharaoh himself <i>Bes</i> – protector god of the family

Each plague would reveal the truth – the gods/goddesses that Egypt held so tightly to – were nothing but metal, stone and wood – powerless against the God of the universe.

Stubbornness will kill you – just ask the monkey who refused to pull his hand out of the jar...

The hardening of Pharaoh’s heart:

When God shows up, His very presence causes a reaction – **Clay or butter.**

People either fall to the ground in humility and obedience or throw their fist in the air refusing to yield.

Compare to the reaction of the king of Nineveh to Jonah’s sermon {Jonah 3}

God did not destroy Pharaoh’s power of choice. 10 plagues came and went. At any time, Pharaoh could have yielded and saved his country - he was even encouraged to do so by his servants – **BUT HE WOULD NOT.** Pharaoh **CHOSE** to be unyielding.

It was Pharaoh, not God who destroyed Egypt.