

God’s Power and Precision

Amazing! The whole story about the events leading up to the Exodus is truly amazing. It all starts with Aaron obediently throwing his staff down before Pharaoh, which makes it turn into a snake (Exodus 7:10). For any ordinary citizen this miracle show would have done its job but not for Pharaoh’s magicians, who were quick to also produce snakes by their secret art. Aaron’s staff-turned-snake swallowing up the evil staff-turned-snakes (Exodus 7:12) should have told the bystanders something, and perhaps it did, but surely not to Pharaoh!

This incident is setting the very scene for a string of staggering events - the ten plagues. We can argue until we are blue in the face if its fair for God to harden Pharaoh’s heart and then punishing him for it. Fact is that God is a righteous God, no matter what. Perhaps it was the crept-in ungratefulness of Egypt regarding God saving the nation from certain death during Joseph’s time? Perhaps it was the increasingly ruthless and oppressive treatment of the Hebrews who once had been invited into Goshen (part of Egypt) out of thankfulness? Fact is that the Lord determined to bring glory to Himself through the events that followed.

And what followed were plagues that can drive any person into despair, frustration, anger, fear, craziness and delusion - (1) the Nile water turned into blood, (2) frogs creeping up everywhere, (3) gnats like dust coming upon men and animals, (4) houses full of flies, (5) death of livestock, (6) festering boils on men and animals, (7) worst hailstorm of Egyptian history killing all men and animals that were in the open, (8) swarms of locusts devouring what’s left from hail, (9) tangible pitch-black darkness for three days, and (10) the death of every firstborn of men or animals (Exodus 7-11). There is so much we could deduct from those plagues, but for space limitation lets just concentrate on just a few issues here.

- Just like Aaron’s staff-turned-snake, the first three plagues were copied by the Egyptian magicians,. Now that tells us that evil can perform some kind of miracles, too. Hence miracles don’t necessarily show that God is at work! Today, how many miracles are used to lure people and yet God has nothing to do with it?
- Perhaps the counter miracles of evil magic are also the reason why the first three plagues affected both the Egyptians and the Israelites? That could/should give us something to think about. Is it possible that every now and then we do believe we are following God because of the results we see and yet its the enemy deceiving us? Remember, Satan loves to disguise himself as the angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14)? Are we possibly in trouble cause we confuse the sources of what we see? Are we relying on the wrong power?
- From plague four onwards the magicians were no longer able to copy God’s doing. What’s more, at some stage they sort of had to admit to the end of their wits (Exodus 9:20; 10:7) and God’s greatness. This and Aaron’s staff gobbling up the magician’s staffs reveal that ultimately good will triumph over evil, even if it doesn’t look so now. Do we believe it and live accordingly? Might be a question of perseverance. Do we hold on to the truth and its power, even if it doesn’t look like we are on the winning side?
- Plagues four to ten also showed the greatness of God in another way. Whatever those plagues did to the Egyptians it didn’t affect the Israelites! Now that is absolutely startling, cause they lived in Egypt, too. Wow. Who can do such things? I mean, on a real large scale? Who but God Almighty has the power and ability to deliver punishment without collateral damage? Even our most sophisticated weapon systems today can’t deliver such precision. Of course, we are asked to flee evil, but Israel had no chance to flee. So if we are in a similar situation, do we trust the Lord to exercise justice with such a precision that we are secure even in the midst of all evil?