
Day 24 - January 24

Establishment of a Nation (1525 - 1400 BCE)

Plagues on the Egyptians

Readings: *Exodus 9:1-11:10*

Reflections:

- One of the questions many people ask is why did Pharaoh not believe? There are two reasons. First, the miracle of the snakes and plagues at some level was able to be replicated by Pharaoh's own magicians and so this did not convince Pharaoh. Even though Moses' snakes swallowed up Pharaoh's magicians' snakes, it was not convincing. Pharaoh could explain away these things. Second, researchers have pointed out that the plagues against Egypt follow a natural pattern that has happened at other times in their history. In this case, it was more severe, but it follows a logical sequence. The water turning to blood can be explained by a red clay pollution that has happened before in the history of the Nile. Heavy rains can produce run off that causes red clay to turn the water red. As the clay pollutes the water, the fish die and it becomes dead water. In turn, all the frogs leave the water's edge and end up in houses. Because of the heat, they die and begin to rot. In turn the gnats and flies get bad. Following this, the spread of disease is quite common. Moses throws the black soot in the air, but it still follows an explainable sequence.
- The plague of hail, the wind storm, locusts, and darkness with some light again can be explained by natural consequences. God is using nature and so it could be explained away as just bad luck or coincidence.
- The final plague is the last and terrible judgment of death. Even if this could be explained away by the disease, it is still terrible.
- Notice that the pattern goes from Pharaoh hardening his heart to now God hardening his heart. If someone rebels against God long enough, God gives them over to their hardness and rebellion. Notice as well that Moses' anger burns against Pharaoh for his rebellion. Moses apparently identifies with God's anger against Pharaoh.
- Pharaoh's heart was unwilling to see God at work in the signs he was given. This would be paralleled by the religious leaders of Jesus' day who always wanted miracles but then would still not believe what they saw. We see in John 2:18 and John 12:37 this statement: "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe

in him.” Also see 1 Corinthians 1:20-25 that asks, “Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.”

- Yet, God was in control the whole time, revealing his power and grace.