
Day 23 - January 23

Establishment of a Nation (1525 - 1400 BCE)

Plagues on the Egyptians

Readings: *Exodus 5:1-13; 7:1-8:32*

Reflections:

- Moses' first statement to the Pharaoh suggests that the people would worship God at a festival and would then return back to slavery. Was this Moses' fear speaking because he afraid to say the whole truth? Was this God's way of testing Pharaoh even though God knew that Pharaoh would harden his heart? Was it a lie to deceive Pharaoh and then escape anyway? In the end, it doesn't matter because Pharaoh rejects Moses' request. We may not do everything perfectly but if do the best we can to follow God's direction to us, God will continue to use us and work through us.
- When God comes to deliver the Israelites, it gets worse before it gets better. Their experience of deliverance at first is that things have just been made harder because of this Moses guy. Moses has to be patient because leading at first does not make him popular. Yet, this is still all a part of God's plan. When you are leader following God's plan, you may not always be popular with God's people.
- Moses still feels badly about his speech problem, described as faltering lips. God reassures him that he is to speak the word of God. In a sense, Moses is like an apostle and Aaron a prophet. There are parallels here with the New Testament leadership structure. (Luke 11:48; I Cor.12:28; Eph.2:20; 3:5; 4:11; Rev.18:20) Apostle literally means, "a sent one". These sent ones are commissioned by God to proclaim his message. Their ministry is confirmed with signs and wonders. (See 2 Corinthians 12:12, "The things that mark an apostle--signs, wonders and miracles--were done among you with great perseverance.") As we will see again and again, God leads his people through his "sent ones". They are usually teamed up with a prophet so that every matter may be established by at least two witnesses. (Matt: 18:16-20)
- The text notes Moses is eighty and Aaron is eighty three. These are two older guys. But they did just as the Lord commanded.
- Pharaoh begins to harden his heart. At first the miracle is just for him, but Pharaoh will not listen. The miracles then turn to much larger, more devastating plagues. It is a sign of God's

grace that he was willing to do just a simple miracle for Pharaoh so that the people of Egypt would be spared. But Pharaoh rejected God's grace and came under judgment for rebelling against God's will.