

Exodus 7:1-24

The Plagues Begin

“There are three major purposes for the Ten Plagues. The first and most obvious is to force Pharaoh and the Egyptians to release the Hebrews.

The second is to punish Pharaoh and the Egyptians for the terrible suffering they inflicted on the Israelites over hundreds of years – including for a time the mass murder of newborn Hebrew boys. God and the Torah believe in punishment when appropriate, because God and the Torah are preoccupied with justice. Thank God. While the world needs compassion and other good traits, they must all be rooted in justice, or we end up with neither justice nor compassion.

The third purpose of the plagues is to demonstrate to the Israelites (and to the Egyptians) that God, not the gods of Egypt (including Pharaoh), is the real God. That is why, as we shall see, the plagues were specifically directed against Egypt’s gods.” Prager

- I. God called Moses before the creation of the world to bring His people out of Egypt to the Promised Land as a fulfillment of His covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He orchestrated the affairs of his life from being found by Pharaoh’s daughter as a baby, to being raised by his mother during his most formative years, to being given the best education possible in the Egyptian culture, to being a shepherd for 40 years to teach him humility, to commissioning him at the age of 80 to lead His people out of Egypt. God’s hand was on Moses’ life as His instrument for the Master’s use. He wasn’t a puppet to have his strings pulled to perform as the Master pleased or a pawn to be moved as a chess piece to put Satan’s protégé Pharaoh in checkmate. Instead, he was lovingly enabled and equipped by God for the great and highest honor of serving Him to fulfill His sovereign will in preserving the right of the Israelites to possess the land God had given them, the land of Israel. Moses’ life is a testimony to all who know Christ of God’s intimate involvement in shaping and forming His children into the likeness of His Son Jesus Christ to fulfill His will. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).*

Exo. 6:28-7:1

1 Jn. 3:24

Rom. 8:29 *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

II. If I had been in Moses sandals, I too, would have had doubts about my ability or competence to fulfill God's will in confronting Pharaoh. In fact, I would have preferred He pick someone better enabled and equipped to do so. Yet God chose to display His power through Moses despite his perceived shortcomings. We are told that God's divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3), which means that our competence to live God's will comes from Him alone. God told Moses he would be like God to Pharaoh. In other words, Pharaoh would experience God's powerful presence through Moses' obedience to His commands. His competence or ability to face Pharaoh was God's responsibility, Moses' responsibility was to trust Him to equip and enable him to do so. Guzik states that, *"This idea carries over into the New Testament, especially when Paul wrote that believers are like letters written by Jesus that the whole world reads (2 Cor. 3:2-3). People that won't look to God look at us; those who won't read the Bible read our life."* Moses' obedience to God's commands provided Pharaoh with proof of the undeniable existence of the one and only true God and His preeminence over all things.

Ex. 7:1-7

2 Cor. 3:2-6

James 1:2-4

Rom. 1:20

Rom. 9:14-18

Rom. 1:24

1Jn. 1:7

III. The plagues God brought upon Egypt in His judgment against the Egyptians show the age-old battle between good and evil, light and darkness, wickedness and holiness. They show the power Satan can wield through willing dupes who unknowingly do his bidding and the power of God working through unintimidated holy saints who uncompromisingly stand firm in the faith. It is seen in how Aaron's staff swallowed up what the demons produced as a display of God's power over Satan. It shows the intense spiritual battle that was taking place at that time for control over God's people, a battle that continues to this day, a battle that won't be over until Jesus victoriously steps foot on the Mt. of Olives at the beginning of His millennial reign. And it is seen in how God neutered the false god of the Nile River by taking away its power to sustain life. Therefore, *We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. 20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life* (1 Jn. 5:19-20).

Ex. 7:8-24

2 Thess. 2:9-10, Eph. 4:17-18

tannîyn, tan-noon⁴; serpent, dragon, sea-monster **nâchâsh, naw-khawsh**⁴; a snake (from its hiss):—serpent (Ex. 2:4-5). *"When cast down it became a tannin ('great serpent,' 'dragon,' or 'crocodile').... The connection of the name tannin with the symbol of Egypt is clear from Psalm 74:13 and Ezekiel 29:3."* (Kaiser)

"The Egyptian god Khnum was said to be the guardian of the Nile, and this showed he was unable to protect his territory. The god Hapi was said to be the spirit of the Nile, and was brought low by this

plague. The great god Osiris was thought to have the Nile as his bloodstream; in this plague he truly bled. The Nile itself was worshipped as a god, and there are papyri recording hymns sung in praise of the river.” Guzik