

November 5, 2017 - Ex. 7:8 -8:15 - Plagues of blood and frogs
Torah Reading: Exodus 7:8 -8:15 - Plagues of blood and frogs
Psalm 46
Haftarah: Joel 3:3 – 4:6, 16

Exodus 7:8 - “And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.”

Shew a miracle for *you* - For you, since I don't need a sign to know that you both are frauds.

Serpent = *tanniyn* - dragon, sea monster, serpent

Possibly a crocodile, appropriate to the Egyptian setting.

The magicians did the same.

Exodus 7:12 - “For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.”

Jannes and Jambres

In Jewish and Christian traditions, Jannes and Jambres are the names of the Egyptian magicians.

An apocryphal book called “The Apocryphon of Jannes and Jambres the Magicians” was mentioned by Origen as being the source of Paul's quote in 2 Timothy 3:8. Fragments of the book survive. Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan and The Testament of Solomon also refer to the magicians by the name of Jannes and Jambres. They are called the sons of Balaam, the unwitting non-Jewish prophet of Peor.

2 Timothy 3:8-9 - “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.”

(The second sign — the restoring of the leprous hand — which accredited Moses before the Israelites, was not performed before Pharaoh. The people of God, not the men of the world, are the only ones who have revealed to them the secret of deliverance from defilement of sin.)

Does Satan have power to perform miracles, or were these just tricks? Satan was permitted to transport Jesus from the wilderness to the temple at Jerusalem, and show Him "all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time" (**Luke 4:5**) so we know he is allowed great leeway as prince of the power of the air.

Matthew 24:24 - “For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders that would deceive even the elect, if that were possible.”

Revelation 16:14 - “For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

“There are men and women now posing as evangelists of Christ who are attracting large crowds numbered by the thousand. Their chief appeal is not the message they bear, but their readiness to "anoint" and pray over the sick. They claim that "Jesus" (they never own Him as "the Lord Jesus"), in response to their faith, has through them removed paralysis, healed cancers, given sight to the blind. When their claims are carefully investigated it is found that most of the widely advertised "cures" are impostures. But on the other hand, there are some cases which are genuine healings, and which cannot be explained apart from supernatural agency. So it was with the miracles wrought by the magicians of Pharaoh...”

— Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus*, circa 1925. Pink was in the leadership of the occult Theosophy movement before becoming a Christian.

Nile Turned to Blood

Exodus 7:15 - “Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand.”

Rashi - “behold, he is going forth to the water”: to relieve himself, for he had deified himself and said that he did not need to relieve himself; so, early in the morning he went [secretly] out to the Nile and there he would perform his needs. — [from Mid. Tanchuma, Va'era 14; Exod. Rabbah 9:8]

Exodus 7:17 - “Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.”

The Nile was the lifeblood of Egypt. Without it, Egypt would be a desert.

This plague defiled and revealed as powerless these gods associated with the Nile:

- Hapy (also called Hep, Hap or Hapi) one of the children of Horus and the god of the annual Nile inundation, was the “spirit of the Nile” and its “dynamic essence.”
- The Nile was also supposed to represent the bloodstream of Osiris.
- Sopdet, or Sothis, the personified constellation of Orion near Sirius, was “bringer of the New Year and the Nile flood.”
- The source of the Nile was said to spring from the ram headed god Khnum, also called Khneph, guardian of the Nile and creator of water and life.

Exodus 7:24 - “And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river.”

“They digged round about the banks of the river, but the streams that came up were like veins of the body in a hemorrhage, and spurted up channels of blood like springs, no transparent water being seen anywhere.” - Philo, *Moses* 1:99

Some of the Rabbis see this plague as falling on the Egyptians because of the order to drown the Israelite children in the river.

The Plague of Frogs

Exodus 8:3 - “And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading troughs: And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.”

To understand how loathsome this could be, consider another ancient parallel incident:

"In Paeonia and Dardania," says Phoenias, a disciple of Aristotle, "there appeared once suddenly such a number of frogs, that they filled the houses and the streets. Therefore - as killing them, or shutting the doors, was of no avail; as even the vessels were full of them, the water infected, and all food uneatable; as they could scarcely set their foot upon the ground without treading on heaps of them, and as they were vexed by the smell of the great numbers which died - they fled from that region altogether" (Quoted in Eustathius of Thessalonika, *Commentary on Homer* II, 1 p.35. Also attributed to historian Artapanus in *Apud Athenaei Deipnosophist.* I. 8. c. 2. A similar incident occurred in France, acc. to Varro, historian of ancient Rome, quoted in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* I.8.c.29.

The chief goddess affected by this plague was Heka, the wife of Kneph (see above) represented as frog-headed. She represented creative power, fertility and success - all related to the Nile - and the teeming myriads of tadpoles seemed to illustrate that. The plague now provided Egypt way too much of that kind of “success.”

Many of these plagues would have offended the Egyptian sense of cleanliness, which was a sacred obligation. No nation of antiquity set such a value on cleanliness as the Egyptians. Priests were required to dress entirely in linen, and to wash their entire bodies in cold water twice every day and twice every night (Herod. ii. 37) and shave their body hair regularly.

“the magicians did so with their enchantments” -

Frogs are represented in the book of Revelation as evil spirits - probably promising success and fertility:

Revelation 16:13-14 - “And I saw three unclean spirits that looked like frogs, coming from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. These are demonic

spirits that perform signs and go out to all the kings of the earth, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God, the Almighty.”

Exodus 8:9 - “And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?”

Glory over me - i.e. “You may have the advantage over me in this question. So you can even name the time - to demonstrate there is no one like the LORD our God.”

Exodus 8:15 - “But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”