

Place: Lurgan Baptist 7:7:2013

## “ MOSES THE SERVANT OF THE LORD,”

Reading: Exodus 7:1-7

### 6. PLAGUES THAT PREACH

A capable young man was known as a pool shark, that is an excellent billiard player. Hardly anyone in his community could win against him. One night, however, as he was *running the table* as it is called, making one shot after another, he unexpectedly fell over the table. The victim of a stroke, the young man died with his cue stick in his hand. Unknowingly to him and all his friends, he had been playing his last game. Until now, Pharaoh the king of Egypt had not lost a game to anyone. He was the strong man of Egypt, the most capable leader of his era. However, unknowingly to him and all his friends in the Egyptian circle he was playing his last game. The God of heaven was preparing the death stroke for him and his tyrannical system. The table would be cleared, but it would be cleared by divine judgment, an opponent that no-one can overcome.

Now this section of chapters from ( Ch 7-10 ) contain a series of judgments commonly known as “ *The Plagues of Egypt.*” In the book of Exodus these ten calamities are designed as “ *signs,*” ( 4:17:10;1 ) or “ *signs and wonders.*” ( 7:3 ) Actually, there are four eras of miracles in the Bible. Now what’s a miracle ? Is it a miracle when a parking space opens near the shopping centre entrance

when you need one ? Is it a miracle when a mother senses something wrong in an adjoining room and investigates just in time to stop her toddler from poking a paper clip into the electric socket ? Is it a miracle when something prompts a young woman to think of a friend she has not seen for a long time, and she phones to discover that she had called at just the moment her friend needed encouragement ? Are those events miracles ? Well, folk often call them such but they are more properly termed “ *acts of providence.*” They reveal God’s working in our daily lives, and often come as answers to prayer, but they are not the kind of supernatural signs and wonders Scripture classifies as a miracle. ( Acts 2:22 ) So what is a miracle ? **A miracle is a supernatural intrusion into the natural law that can have no explanation other than that God is acting.** Now as I have said there are four great eras of miracles in the Bible. The first burst of miracles took place in,

1. The Days of Moses and Joshua:
2. The Days of Elijah and Elisha:
3. The Days of Christ and the Apostles:
4. The Days of the Tribulation Period:

The truth is that miracles of the Bible did take place but they took place intermittently. But here is an era in which there is brought before us an explosion of miracles. Now I, believe that the plagues were all miracles. I believe God acted in time and space, taking charge over nature and worked supernaturally to do that which could otherwise never have been done. They were displays of His sovereign power over all of creation. Now knocking off

the entire nation of Egypt is not a small task. But God is about to absolutely destroy the nation of Egypt. He will destroy that nation *economically*. He will destroy that nation *politically*. He will destroy that nation *socially*. He will destroy that nation *domestically* and He will utterly destroy that nation *religiously*. How does God do it ? Through a series of “ **Plagues that Preach,**” well, what do they say ? Well, I want you to notice that these plagues preach to us about,

### **(1) THE AWESOME POWER OF GOD**

You see, the Lord is going to do battle with the gods of Egypt and reveal His power. Indeed God says concerning Pharaoh “ *for this cause have I raised thee up for to show in thee my power.* ” ( 9:16 ) You say, “ *Well, the magicians of Egypt had power.* ” ( 7:11 ) Yes, but remember “ *Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods,* ” which they had turned into serpents. Now remember that the serpent was the emblem of Pharaoh and his power. His head dress featured a raised cobra. God was simply showing at the outset that He was supreme over Pharaoh. Indeed after the third sign the magicians of Egypt acknowledged “ *this is the finger of God.* ” ( 8:19 ) Do you recall what God says on Passover night ? ( 12:12 ) My .... in a massive demonstration of divine power that could not be withstood, not even by the multiple gods of this amazing nation of Egypt, God let it be know that He was the Lord. Pharaoh said, “ *Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice ?* ” ( 5:2 ) And the Lord said, “ *Let me introduce myself, here’s my calling card.* ” And the

plagues come. (1) You see, its God versus the gods of Egypt. Look at,

#### **(a) *The Plague of Blood:* ( 7:14-25 )**

To the ancient Egyptians, the Nile was itself a god. They worshiped the Nile as a giver of life. Hapi was the god of the Nile, and Isis the goddess of the Nile. And because they were so dependent on the Nile, they believed that the god of the Nile was a major god. And they worshiped the god of the Nile. They even wrote hymns associated with the Nile. They had hymns of fertility, and hymns of blessing, and hymns of happiness. One of them goes, “ *hail to thee oh Nile, that issues from the earth and comes to keep Egypt alive.* ” The Nile provided transportation, irrigation, pasture, hunting grounds, fish, everything. I mean can you picture your source of water gone ? The fish that provide your family with food, gone. Can you put yourself in their place ? A full week with the grocery stores closed down. At that point I would be ready to declare “ *The Lord He is God. Let the people go. I’m thirsty. I’m ready for a fish supper. Let’s get on with the program.* ” But not Pharaoh. Not on your life. As a matter of fact “ *Pharaoh turned and went into his house.* ” ( 7:23 ) Then there was,

#### **(b) *The Plague of Frogs:* ( 8:1-15 )**

Now, frogs are nice little cute things when you’ve got one or two of them. But in this kind of situation, they wouldn’t be very popular. Can you imagine it ? Crawling into bed and a bunch of frogs in there ? Frogs in your clothes.

Frogs all over the kitchen. Frogs everywhere. By the way, isn't frog a delicacy somewhere? *You see, the Egyptians worshipped the frog.* The frog was one of their gods. So frogs were big deals. Sacred animals. Did you know that you could face the death penalty for killing a frog intentionally or unintentionally if you got caught? It sounds like India today with the sacred cows, doesn't it? If you stepped on a frog inadvertently and killed him, you violated the gods. My .... before this was all over, people were squashing frogs all over the place. You see, frogs represented the deities, and it was God against the gods of Egypt. And God was devastating their religion. God was wiping out the stupidity of their idolatry. Do you know something? When old Moses said to Pharaoh "*when do you want the frogs destroyed.*" ( 8:9 ) Do you know what Pharaoh said? "*Tomorrow.*" ( 8:10 ) Can you believe it? I think it's Alan Carr who has a message "*Just another night with the frogs.*" I wonder is that what you're saying? "*Just give me one more drink, one more stiff, one more smoke, one night with sin. Tomorrow I will come to Christ.*" Now scholars have divided these plagues into three threes and it's interesting to notice that every third plague came on without warning.

**(c) *The Plague of Lice: ( 8:16-19 )***

Whether the Hebrew word *ken* means gnats, mosquitoes, ticks, or lice this pest became a powerful force against the Egyptians. But even with this Pharaoh did not soften his heart. So God sends,

**(d) *The Plague of Flies: ( 8:20-32 )***

Local people tell me they have swarms of flies down at Ardmore at certain times of the year. The word "*swarm,*" here means "*a mixture,*" the conclusion is that many sorts of flies came into the land. The Psalmist says, "*He sent divers sorts of flies among them which devoured them.*" ( Ps 78:45 ) Now we know that flies were attached to certain gods in Egypt so God again was judging the gods of Egypt. I mean there were flies everywhere. *Everywhere but Goshen.* Do you know why put a division between His people and the Egyptians? You say, to protect Israel from suffering. No, it was to promote the testimony of God. That "*thou ( Pharaoh ) mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.*" ( 8:22 ) Do you know what many believers think? In order to reach the world we need to be like the world. That's not what God says here. He says separation, distinction, and demarcation is what helps the world know about the Lord. What a plague this was. Amazingly, Pharaoh still refused to yield. So there was,

**(e) *The Plague of Murrain: ( 9:1-7 )***

The plague on the livestock. Now there was no red meat or milk. Yet over the border in Goshen the Hebrews livestock prospered. Their animals never got sick. Do you see why I say this is miraculous? *This isn't some natural phenomenon, because natural phenomena doesn't distinguish between who owns the cows.* This is God. And so He says your animals are going to die. Now the previous plagues brought about irritation and pain. This is the loss of personal property. This would literally devastate the food supply, and devastate the economics of

the land. This would wipe them out. You see this plague which struck the livestock dead was yet another stab at the pagan deities. If their pagan gods had any power, they should have come through here. *The Egyptians worshiped Hathor, the cow-headed mother goddess.* But she was powerless against the true God. Oh, you worship the cows, do you ? Well, I'll just make them sick, your god is a sick cow. You say, "*well how foolish, people worship a sick cow.*" My ... do you remember what Israel did when they got into the wilderness ? They made a golden calf and worshipped it. You say, "*people would not worship a sick cow.*" My .... listen, folk made heroes and stars out of rock singers who are on drugs, alcohol, and sex perverts. Sick cows and people worship them. But Pharaoh is still unmoved, so there was,

***(f) The Plague of Boils: ( 9:8-12 )***

People had oozing sores. By the way, they had a god known as Sekhmet, and this particular god had the responsibility to prevent diseases. Well, he was losing popularity fast. They had another god by the name of Sunu, and Sunu was a god who had a special kind of a priesthood, and they wore amulets around their arms and legs to ward off diseases. But all of this was useless. They believed in the god Sarapas, who was the god of healing, and he was useless. You may have heard of their famous god, Imhotep, the Egyptian god who was suppose to be the god of medicine, but he couldn't do anything either. Listen, Jehovah was unstoppable. For plague number seven was,

***(g) The Plague of Hail: ( 9:13-35 )***

Do you see ( 9:23 ) They had a god known as Mut. And Mut was the sky goddess, and they believed that Mut was the great benefactor who gave them goodness from the sky. Because in Egypt, the climate's the same all year round. But all of a sudden everything went haywire. *What happened to the god that was coming from the sky to bless them ?* Have you ever been on an airplane in a lightening storm ? I tell you its helps your prayer life. You promise the Lord all sorts of things on that plane don't you ? I mean can you imagine what this was like ? With the hail and the fire, their entire crops were destroyed. And still Pharaoh didn't listen, so God sent,

***(h) The Plague of Locusts: ( 10:1-20 )***

A lady was talking to her neighbour one Monday morning. She said to her "*I had the locust preacher yesterday for dinner.*" Her friend said "*you mean the local preacher.*" "*No,*" the locust preacher. "*Why a locust she said are things that eat everything before them and leave nothing.*" She said "*that was him.*" Now locusts are amazing creatures. A locust is capable of eating its own weight every day. One square mile of locusts will contain between 100 million and 200 million locusts. And by the way, swarms are as wide as 400 square miles. They're able to flap their wings nonstop for 17 hours. They're able to fly at a cruising speed of 10-12 miles an hour for 20 hours at a time. Incredible little things. And they will literally devastate an entire nation. You see, the Egyptians believed in a locust god. Do you

see what God was doing ? He was dismantling the gods of Egypt. Finally, at this time there was,

*(i) The Plague of Darkness: ( 10:21-29 )*

The Bible says “ *And there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.* ” ( 10:22 ) What’s the significance of this ? Well, what did the Egyptians worship more than anything else ? The sun. Rah. But the sun god could not help them. Darkness covered the land. Finally, there was the death of the firstborn. But this is not amazing ? God devastated one entire nation in an incredible display of supernatural miracles like the world had never seen. ***All to let his people go.*** So those are the plagues. God was preaching a sermon to them. God was giving them a message. Can I ask you, has God ever preached you a sermon with a plague ? Has God ever sent you a plague to try to get your attention ?

What about that time you went to the doctor and the doctor detected some irregularities in that old heart ? What about that time you had trouble at your job and it looked like you were going to lose your job ? What about that time when there seemed to be a plague in your family, there seemed to be family turmoil ? My .... could it be could it be that God was preaching through a plague trying to get your attention ? You see, these plagues preach to us about (1)

**(2) THE AWFUL PUNISHMENT OF GOD**

You see, these plagues were punitive in their nature. God used them to show Pharaoh, and all who were observing, that He is not one to trifle with. I mean can you see God’s punishment here,

**(a) NATIONALLY:**

As your eye skims across the Scripture covering the plagues that shook the land you will see the word “ *all,* ” time and again. “ *There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt,* ” ( 7:21 ) “ *All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.* ” ( 8:17 ) “ *And there was a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt.* ” ( 11:6 ) You see, every plague reached all the Egyptians. Now do you recall that God gave a special promise to Abraham and his descendants? God said, “ *I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee.* ” ( Gen 12:3 ) It’s a promise that every age proves true. Attack the Jews and you are doomed. The land of Egypt discovered that ( Gen 12:3 ) was no joke. God was true to His word. Think of it, for years Egypt had persecuted God’s chosen people. Do you remember what they did with the little baby boys? They threw them into the Nile. You can imagine the crocodiles feasting on those Jewish babies as the blood flowed freely. So what does God do ? He causes them to reap what they had sown.

*He punishes them in the coin in which they had sinned.* Now the chickens are coming home to roost. Egypt was not bothered by the blood they had put in the river but they were certainly bothered by the blood God puts in the river. Someone has said, “ *If God does not judge western*

*society He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.*” Where are we as nation today ? Why we are a nation that have turned our backs on,

1. *The Jewish Race:*
2. *The Word of God:*
3. *That is saturated with Idolatry:*
4. *Whose leaders made fun of the commandments of God:*
5. *Ripe for Judgment:*

**(b) INDIVIDUALLY:**

Do you notice that the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart is described in three ways? In some places we are simply told “ *And Pharaoh’s heart was hardened,*” ( 7:13, 22 8:19 9:7 ) In other places we are told that Pharaoh “ *hardened his heart.*” ( 8:15, 32 9:24 ) And in other places we are told “ *And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh,*” ( 9:12 10:20, 27 ) You see, when people harden their hearts against God, the Lord gives them what they prefer. My .... like Pharaoh have you played fast and loose with your life ? Have you ignored warning after warning from the Lord ? Have you shoved aside eternal truths for so long that your heart has become hardened ? Will can I remind you, you cannot disobey God without suffering the consequences. You cannot sin and get away with it. Sooner or later your sins will catch up with you. The Bible says, “ *Be not deceived God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.*” ( Gal 6:7 ) Someone has rightly asked, “ *Why all the theatrics ? Why didn’t God just cut to the chase and kill the Egyptian firstborns to begin with ?*” Why didn’t He ?

The answer is mercy. God is a merciful God. You see, these plagues started small and ended large. They started relatively mild in their intensity, but got worse. God went through nine arduous plagues before He began killing Egyptians. Why ? Because God is merciful. “ *As I live saith the Lord God I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*” ( Ez 33:11 ) My unsaved .... has God not warned you time and again ? Has God not sought to get your attention so that you would surrender to Him ? How awful it would be, if you continue to walk in defiance and God said, “ *Enough.*”

**(c) PROPHETICALLY:**

For these plagues give us a preview of what God is going to do at the end of the age. I think anybody who has studied these plagues cannot help but notice that there is a similarity in the book of the Revelation to these plagues. There we are told that during the Tribulation period the Lord is going to send His judgments upon a godless, Satanic world, so what you have here in Exodus is just the future judgments in miniature. God is giving us a little dress rehearsal of what’s going to happen in greater intensity at the end of the age. So these are ***Plagues that Preach.*** Do you see what they are preaching about ?  
(1) (2)

**(3) THE ABSOLUTE PRE-EMINENCE OF GOD**

Before the fireworks ever began the Lord said. “ *And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a*

*God and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*” ( 6:7 ) Even in the first plague the Lord declared, “ *In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord.*” ( 7:17 ) God is absolutely pre-eminent. And His pre-eminence is seen,

**(a) OVER THEIR FALSE WORSHIP:**

Listen to these words again, “ *Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment, I am the Lord.*” ( 12:12 ) Later Moses wrote of the plagues like this, “ *Upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments.*” ( Num 33:4 ) It was God against the gods of Egypt. And these plagues are the greatest testimony in the Old Testament to the stupidity and futility of idolatry. My .... In this so called “ *multi faith,*” society do we not need to be reminded of the fact “ *that the Lord He is God, there is none else beside Him.*” ( Deut 4:35 ) This is why idolatry in the Bible is viewed as an offence ( Hosea 4:17 8:4 ) for it usurps the place that is God’s by right. Could it be that you have allowed something or someone to come into you life that has taken the place of God ? You see, an idol is anything we put before the Lord. What is it that you are putting before God ? (a)

**(b) IN HIS TRUE WITNESSESS:**

I mean you can’t read these passages without noticing the tremendous change especially in Moses. You see, they were Faithful: “ *And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them, so did they.*” ( 7:6 ) No longer is there

any resistance they just fulfilled their God given assignments. And how old were they ? In their eighties. My .... do you realise that your greatest work for God may be done in your old age ? They were Powerful: for when they cast the rod down it became a serpent. My .... do you realise that so much power is lost through disobedience ? You see, when we disobey we become like Samson when he got his hair cut lying on the lap of his Delilah. They were also Prayerful: I mean can you see Moses with outspread hands interceding for the land of the oppressors of His people ? ( 9:29 ) It was as if lived in the secret place of the Most High and abode under the shadow of the Almighty. What was happening ? Little by little the Lord was becoming pre-eminent in Moses life.

Is the Lord pre-eminent in your life ? Do you give the Lord a Place in your life ? Do you give the Saviour prominence in your life ? Or do you give Christ Pre-eminence in your life ? Is He number One ? At Queen Victoria’s coronation she was instructed to remain seated during Handel’s Messiah. So as the “ *Hallelujah Chorus,*” began the Queen remained seated while the lords and nobles stood with uncovered heads. However, when the Queen heard the crowning chorus, “ *King of Kings and Lord of Lords,*” she was moved to tears. She rose to her feet and removed her crown to acknowledge Christ as Lord of all.

**Oh, that with yonder sacred throng  
We at His feet may fall  
Join in the everlasting song  
And crown Him, Lord of all**

