

February 26 – Exodus 7

This chapter begins the actual work of redemption. So far as Scripture informs us the “great conflict” is being fought out in this world, hence this historical drama, with its profound symbolic moral meaning, was staged in the land of Egypt. So many apparent realities in society today trouble us, as did the circumstances in which the Israelites found themselves. In many ways the great mystery, in connection with the conflict between Israel and Egypt, is forcibly shown us in the prosperity of the wicked and the adversity of the righteous. The Egyptians held the upper hand while the Hebrews groaned under unbearable oppression. I am certain this is why David wrote in Psalm 37:1-3, “Do not fret because of evildoers, be not envious toward wrongdoers; for they will wither quickly like the grass...trust in the Lord and do good.” It’s hard sometimes to hold onto this truth when evil seems to be winning. Surely the Israelites struggled with these thoughts as many of us do at various times in our lives.

The leading characters in the scene are Moses as the representative of God, and Pharaoh as the representative and emissary of Satan. The powerful and haughty king takes fiendish delight in persecuting the Lord’s people, and openly defies the Almighty Himself. To outward sight the issue seemed long in doubt. The kingdom of Pharaoh was shaken again and again—as has the kingdom of Satan been during the course of the ages, in such events as the Flood, the destruction of the Canaanites, the Advent of the Son of God, the day of Pentecost, the Reformation, the Great Awakenings, etc.—but each fresh reprieve of God’s power and the withdrawal of His judgments only issued in the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart. We must remember however, that trials serve to “produce in us endurance, which leads to proven character, which increases our hope in the Lord as our faith is strengthened” (Rom. 5:3-4). The persistence of the Egyptian contest gave full opportunity for the complete testing of human responsibility, the trying of the saints’ faith, and the manifestation of all the perfections and attributes of Deity. These three results may be the chief ends which the Creator has in view in allowing the entrance and continuance of evil in His fields.

The great drama closes by showing the absolute triumph of Almighty God, the completed redemption of His people, and the utter overthrow of His and their enemies. Consequently, it has been revealed to the eye of faith the Glorious Consummation when God’s elect—through the work of our Mediator, The Lord Jesus, shall be emancipated from all bondage, when every high thing that exalts itself against the Almighty shall be cast down, and when God Himself shall be all in all. We shall now follow step by step the various stages by which this end was reached through the book of Exodus.

Before we get to the plagues, I wanted to point out a statement God makes in verse 2 where He tells Moses, “You shall speak all that I command you.” A similar charge is laid upon God’s servant today: he is to “preach the Word” (2 Tim. 4:2) and to “retain the standard of sound words” (2 Tim. 1:13), and is warned that “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is a fool, and understands nothing” (1 Tim. 6:3, 4). We must be true to the entire counsel of God.

The first plague, turning water into blood (v. 14-25) represents judgment and death. There is a striking contrast between this first plague and the first miracle performed by the Lord Jesus when He turned water into wine (John 2). The Bible says, “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). All that the Law can do to its guilty transgressor is to sentence him to death, and this is what the water turned into blood symbolized. But in Christ, the believing sinner is made to rejoice, and this joy is what the turning of the water into wine may represent.