

February 27 – Exodus 8

If we bear in mind that these earlier chapters of Exodus bring before us a symbolic display of the great conflict between good and evil, we shall easily perceive the reason why the Lord permitted Pharaoh's sorcerers to work these miracles. They serve to illustrate the activities of Satan, and this, not only as describing the character of his works, but also, as exposing both the methods he pursues and the limits of his success. The Devil is ever an imitator, as the parable of the tares following that of the wheat (Matthew 13) plainly shows. The aim of Pharaoh was to nullify the miracles of Moses. The Lord's servant had performed miracles—very well, the king would summon his magicians and show that they could do likewise. This exemplifies an unchanging principle in the workings of Satan. First, he seeks to oppose with force (persecution and such), as he had the Hebrews by means of their slavery. When that tactic fails, he resorts to subtler methods, and employs his wiles to deceive. The one is the roaring of the "lion" (1 Pet. 5:8); the other the cunning of the "serpent" (Gen. 3:1).

In 2 Timothy 3:8, we read, "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." Here we learn the names of two of the magicians (doubtless the principal ones) who worked miracles in Egypt. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses. They did this not by having him turned out of the king's palace, not by causing him to be imprisoned or slain, but by duplicating his works. And, says the Holy Spirit, there are those now who similarly resist the servants of God—"as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these (the ones mentioned in vv. 5 and 6) also resist the truth". This is one of the Divinely-delineated characteristics of the "perilous times". The reference is to men (and women) supernaturally endowed by Satan to work miracles. Such are found to-day, we believe, not only among Spiritualists and other false religions, but also in some of the leaders of the Faith-healing cults. 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 bless with worldly prosperity even healing the sick. There is indeed nothing new under the sun.

These plagues furnished a most striking prophetic forecast of God's future judgments upon the world. This is to us, one of the most remarkable things connected with God's judgments upon Egypt. The analogies furnished between those visitations of Divine wrath of old and those which the Scriptures predict, and announce for the future, are many and very detailed. I here call attention only to a few of the more striking ones. During the Time of Jacob's Trouble Israel shall again be sorely oppressed and afflicted (Isa. 60:14 and Jeremiah 30:5-8). They will cry unto God, and He will hear and answer (Jer. 31:58-20). God will command their oppressors to, Let them go (Isa. 43:6). God will send two witnesses to work miracles before their enemies (Rev. 11:3-6). Their enemies will also perform miracles (Rev. 13:13-15) God will execute sore judgments upon the world (Jer. 25:15, 16). God will protect His own people from them (Rev. 7:4; 12:6,14-16). Water will again be turned into blood (Rev. 8:8; 16:4,5). Satanic frogs will appear (Rev. 16:53). A plague of locusts shall be sent (Rev. 9:2-II). God will send boils and blains (Rev. 16:2). Terrible hail-stones shall descend from heaven (Rev. 8:7). There shall be awful darkness (Isa. 60:2; Revelation 16:10). Just as Pharaoh hardened his heart so will the wicked in the day to come (Rev. 9:20,21). Death will consume multitudes (Rev. 9:15). Israel will be delivered (Zech. 14:3, 4; Romans 11:26). It is evident that history will repeat itself, and then will it be fully demonstrated that the ten plagues of God upon Egypt of old foretold the yet more awful judgments by which the earth will experience in a day that may now be very near at hand.