

Moses' Preparation

- 1. He has been purged of all self-centred motives
- 2. He has been trained by suffering
- 3. He has learned to be obedient in small things
- Obedience brings blessings to many others

Judgements on Pharaoh

- Designed to force Pharaoh to release Israel
- Many warnings before final judgement
- God would act in such a way that all Egypt would know how real God is
- Knowledge – yes, but not saving knowledge

Moses and Aaron were obedient to God's instructions¹. It had taken time to get them to the point of obedience. Moses is eighty years old; Aaron is eighty-three². God may take a long time getting us to the point of willing obedience and readiness to do His will. Now at last Moses and Aaron have reached a great day in their lives. Three things have brought Moses especially to the point of obedience.

1. **He has been purged of all self-centred motives.** Many years before he had wanted to be the leader of Israel, but at that time he was rather self-confident and self-centred. He has now been cleansed of false motivation.

2. **He has been trained by suffering.** Suffering may be used to produce the best qualities in us. God brings us to the point where we are willing to be utterly obedient to God. Even Jesus learned obedience by suffering¹.

3. **He has learned to be obedient in small things.** We have seen how some of his experiences taught him that God requires faithfulness in detail.

Through the obedience of this man Moses, the people are going to experience God's salvation. It was the same in the case of Jesus. Jesus never sinned. It was 'through the obedience of one man' that 'the many will be made righteous'¹.

Now there comes a series of judgements upon Pharaoh. They are designed to force Pharaoh to release Israel. There are ten of them: the turning of water into blood, the frogs, the gnats, the flies, the plague on the livestock, the boils, the hail, the locusts, the thick darkness, and finally the death of the firstborn. The miracles of judgement produced no release for Israel, for during the first nine judgements Pharaoh refuses to yield. They were saved not by the miraculous signs but by the blood of the lamb.

The judgements were warning judgements. Pharaoh was experiencing the anger of God against his sinfulness and rebelliousness. God gives many warnings to the world before He sends His final judgement and brings the world to an end. Pharaoh came to know something of God. It did not lead to faith in his heart but it brought him to acknowledge that God is real. The unbeliever knows God, instinctively, through the fact that the world he lives in is the creation of God¹. But over and above the knowledge that comes to men and women through creation, there is the knowledge that comes to them through God's mighty acts. The Bible often says that God does powerful and mighty things so that men and women will get to know that He is real. God will do mighty things 'and the Egyptians will know' that Yahweh is real². Miracles will take place that will lead Pharaoh to know that the God of Israel is the all-powerful God³, that God is unique⁴, that God has a special relationship to His people⁵, that He is the one-and-only God over the whole earth⁶, that the earth is His⁷. God would act in such a way that the whole nation of the Egyptians would know how real God is⁸.

Yet this knowledge is not saving knowledge. It is not knowing God in the way that the Christian may know God. It is devoid of any true reverence for God¹. The unbeliever does not know God in the way that the Christian knows God. He knows the truth but he fights against the truth.

¹ 7:6

² 7:7

¹ Heb 5:8

¹ Rom 5:19

¹ Rom 1:21

² 7:5

³ 7:17

⁴ 8:10

⁵ 8:22-23

⁶ 9:14

⁷ 9:29

⁸ 14:4, 18

¹ 9:30

• Evidence gets greater but Pharaoh resists

Consider Moses' **second visit and the miracle of the staff becoming a snake**^{□1}. Pharaoh demands a miracle; God had already told Moses and Aaron what to do^{□2}. Moses threw his stick down and it became a snake^{□3}. But Pharaoh refuses to believe that Moses and Aaron are authentic messengers from God. The evidence will get greater and greater but he wants to fight the truth.

□1 7:8-13

□2 7:8-10

□3 7:8-10

• All sinners have some kind of knowledge of the truth

All sinners have some kind of knowledge of the truth and yet prefer to believe a lie. Sometimes they know what is true but simply will not submit to what they know. Sometimes they simply deny what they know (as the snake of Genesis 3:4 knew he was lying when he said 'You will not die'). Sometimes they ignore the truth. 'They deliberately forget'^{□1}.

□1 2 Pet 3:5

• When sinners resist God they may get help from evil spirits

When sinners resist God they may get help from evil spirits. Men empowered by evil spirits may even be able to perform demonic miracles that imitate miracles that come from the hand of God. Pharaoh's magicians could imitate some of the miracles performed through Moses^{□1}. The magicians could also produce what seemed to be sticks of wood that could become a snake. Yet God's power was greater. The magicians did not turn the snake back into a stick of wood – which would have been more impressive! The fact that the magicians' own snakes could not be turned back into sticks of wood suggests that trickery was involved and that the magicians' 'sticks' were snakes from the beginning! However their snakes were swallowed by Moses' snake!

□1 7:11-12

• More happens than a secular view understands

These events ought to persuade us that there is more that happens on planet earth than is understood by many secular-minded men and women, who often have no idea of the spiritual realm that exists in and alongside the physical realm that we see and handle. These events ought to make us careful about believing a teaching because it is accompanied by miracles; the demons can work miracles!

• Caution – demons can work miracles too

Miracles do not automatically soften the heart. The miracles did not soften Pharaoh's heart. God had said He would harden Pharaoh's heart^{□1} but God did not have to create any hardness. Pharaoh's heart was hard already^{□2}. God just had to leave him alone and bring about the circumstances that would add to his hardness. Without faith the blessings of God are not experienced.

□1 7:3

□2 7:13

 <p>slices.org.uk</p>	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>		
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