

Sermon Notes Exodus 7. The Lord – I AM – acts. 14/3/21

Background. In chapter 6 Moses is assured that God will make Pharaoh let God's people go (6:1). Moses/Aaron tells the people that God will rescue them, but the Israelites do not listen to (believe) Moses. God then tells Moses to tell Pharaoh to '*let the Israelites go out of his country*'. Moses is reluctant given the Israelites had not listened to him! (6:10-11).

Chapter 7 The true God, the Lord (Yahweh) the One revealed as 'I am', makes Himself known, through judgment and salvation.

7:1-7. '*The Lord (I am) said...*'. Moses will be God's presence before Pharaoh and Aaron God's mouthpiece. Moses and Aaron are now commanded to tell Pharaoh to 'let the Israelites go out of his country' and are reassured that God is in control both of their speaking and Pharaoh's reactions.

God hardens Pharaoh's heart (7:3) that is, God strengthens Pharaoh's resolve to not let the Israelites go. This confirms God's sovereignty, His authority over the so-called 'god-king' of Egypt. But also, Pharaoh hardens his own heart (8:32), which confirms that Pharaoh is responsible for his rebellion against God. All the Egyptians will know when God acts (7:5) when He will 'stretch out' His hand on Egypt.

7:8-13. '*The Lord (I am) said...*'. When Pharaoh seeks to test Moses and Aaron they respond by obeying the Lord. Aaron's staff becomes a 'snake' or 'reptile' (different word to 4:3-4) as he obeys the Lord's command (see Ezek. 29:3; 32:20). The Egyptian magicians/sorcerers replicate the acts of Aaron, each supernatural but from opposing sources. The superiority of the Lord who is revealing Himself is shown as Aaron's reptile swallows the others!

At the end of each strike/plague Pharaoh fails to 'know the true God' and hardens his heart – stubbornly wills to reject God and His word, just as the Lord said. The Lord's sovereignty is affirmed through the resistance of Pharaoh.

7:14-25. '*Then the Lord said...*' Again, Pharaoh's stubborn refusal to let the people go (= 'Pharaoh's heart is unyielding') is as God predicted. The Lord's act through Aaron is so that Pharaoh '*will know that I am the Lord*'.

This means that Pharaoh is to be held accountable for not listening, for not acknowledging ('*knowing*') the one true God.

The words of the Lord are '*with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water of the Nile, it will change into blood*'.

So, when Aaron is told to '*Take your staff and stretch out your hand*' he is acting as the agent of the true God.

Pharaoh's magicians/sorcerers also turn water into blood but they are only adding to the disaster not reversing (remedying) it.

The response of Pharaoh his '*heart became hard*', that is he hardened his resolve not to listen to Moses and Aaron, is '*just as the Lord said*' it would be.

The polluted Nile waters lasted seven days.

Why these strikes/plagues? There is a clear confrontation between divine claims and authority. The actions of the Lord to rescue His people are linked to His acts of judgement against injustice and rebellion against Him.

Reflection/response.

Reflect on how the Lord, the only true God reveals Himself to us through the Exodus account.

How does God's written word help us see God's hand at work in the world around us and in our own lives?

To truly know God is to respond to Him in obedience. BB