

## Bible Study # 13 Exodus 8:1–15 02–22–2021

Seven days after the Nile was struck, the Lord instructed Moses to go to Pharaoh with the same message as previously (cf. 5:1; 7:16). The threat was that if he refused, then the whole of Egypt would be plagued with frogs. The phrasing concerning this new judgment highlighted the impending event. The participle of the verb ‘to strike with’ [plague, or death] is used. Two nouns from this same root are used later in the narrative.

The Hebrew word for ‘frogs’ occurs thirteen times in the Old Testament, all of them appear here in Exodus, except for two psalms that refer to this event (Pss. 78:45; 105:30). The word itself may be onomatopoeic word (a name given by imitating the sound the creature makes), ‘the croakers’. Most likely this plague was an attack on the concept of the frog-headed god of the Egyptians.

No one and nowhere in Egypt was exempt from the plague of frogs. Even Pharaoh’s palace would be invaded, including his bedroom and bed. The houses of everyone, high and low, would experience the frogs, and the kitchens where food was prepared would also be affected. We worry about bugs running around in our houses, imagine if it was frogs instead.

As with the previous sign, stretching out by Aaron of the staff would symbolize God’s power. The streams, canals and ponds (all mentioned 7:19) would produce abundant numbers of frogs so that the land would be covered with them.

When Aaron did this, it happened as the Lord had said. For the second time, the Egyptian magicians imitated a divine action, and were able to claim that they had brought up frogs from the Nile. There was no reversal of the judgment, rather an intensification of it.

Pharaoh’s response (v. 8) was a request them to pray to YHWH. While he didn’t confess that he now knew that the God of the Israelites was really God, yet he did acknowledged the source of the sign. He made a promise that if the frogs were removed, then he would allow the Israelites their sacrificial worship in the desert.

Mose’s request was for Pharaoh to designate a time when Moses would pray for him, his officials, and people that their homes would be free of the frogs. The one exception that was made was that the request did not extend to the river Nile. Only there they would remain.

Although Pharaoh had acknowledged that the frog sign came from God, the request to know a set time for this to occur should help awaken him to the fact that the LORD is at work. The fact that God would also leave the frogs in the Nile was a sign how he also controls all of nature. Doesn’t that sound like someone worth listening to?

Pharaoh tried to put off the timing of the prayer, perhaps indicating that he thought that the sign would come to an end of its own accord. Perhaps that was what he observed of the court magicians. They could make it happen for only a short time. He might have been hoping the frogs Moses sent would also disappear. His request for a cessation of the sign was heard, and it also would again be a demonstration of the Lord’s power.

It was a revelation of God that should have led to the acknowledgement of His existence and omnipotence. The Hebrew text implies that as soon as Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, they cried out to the Lord . The verb ‘cry out’ is interesting because it often implies crying out in a distressful situation (cf. Gen. 27:34; Exod. 17:4), and it has already appeared earlier in this book concerning the Israelites’ cry to God for deliverance.

The divine response was to kill all the frogs in the houses, the enclosures, and the fields. But the outcome was different from what Pharaoh would have expected. The frogs did not disappear but were simply piled up in

heaps, and the whole land stank because of them. In spite of these circumstances, Pharaoh thought that there was going to be some alleviation of the conditions in the land.

Sadly the outcome was the same as before. He hardened his heart, refusing to listen God who was speaking to him through Moses and Aaron.

Next we study Exodus 8.16–32.