

## Study 17: Moses, Part 4 Exodus 7-8

Ex 7 Then the Lord said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. 2 You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. 3 But **I will harden Pharaoh’s heart**, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in Egypt, 4 he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. 5 And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it.”

[The question of “free will” usually arises in reference to the “hardening of Pharaoh’s heart.” So, what is “free will,” biblically-speaking? Most people think it’s simply “the ability to make choices,” or “the ability to make choices that aren’t predestined by God.” but these aren’t what the term means in theology. According to the Bible, man’s choices are determined by God, but morally determined by one’s nature. Man willingly makes choices that flow from his heart, and the heart of man is desperately wicked (Jer 17:9).

Paul, in Romans 9, says: 14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses,

“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,  
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”[Ex 33:19]

16 It [salvation through faith in Jesus Christ] does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. 17 For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”[Ex 9:16] 18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

19 One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?” 20 But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’”[Isa 29:16; 45:9] 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?

22 What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? 23 What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— 24 even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? 25 As he says in Hosea:

“I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people;  
and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,”[Hosea 2:23]

26 and,

“In the very place where it was said to them,  
‘You are not my people,’  
there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’” [Hosea 1:10]

6 Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded them. 7 Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh.

8 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 9 “When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Perform a miracle,’ then say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh,’ and it will become a snake.”

10 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. 11 Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts: 12 Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. 13 Yet Pharaoh’s heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said.

14 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he goes out to the river. Confront him on the bank of the Nile, and take in your hand the staff that was changed into a snake. 16 Then say to him, ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you: Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness. But until now you have not listened. 17 This is what the Lord says:

By this you will know that I am the Lord: With the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into blood. 18 The fish in the Nile will die, and the river will stink; the Egyptians will not be able to drink its water.”

19 The Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt—over the streams and canals, over the ponds and all the reservoirs—and they will turn to blood.’ Blood will be everywhere in Egypt, even in vessels [or *even on their idols*] of wood and stone.”

[In Ex 12:12, God said He would execute judgment “against **all the gods of Egypt**.” The Nile River was considered a “life-giver.” The Egyptians believed the Nile was his bloodstream of Osiris, god of the underworld. Other gods associated with the river were Khnum, guardian of the Nile, usually represented as a human being with a ram’s head, Hapi (sometimes represented as a crocodile), god of the annual flooding of the Nile, described as the “lord of the fishes, birds and marshes,” and considered to be “spirit of the Nile” and its “dynamic essence,” Tauret, the hippopotamus goddess of the river, and Nu, the god of life in the Nile.]

20 Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood. 21 The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt.

22 But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh’s heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said. 23 Instead, he turned and went into his palace, and did not take even this to heart. 24 And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water, because they could not drink the water of the river.

25 Seven days passed after the Lord struck the Nile.

Ex 8 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the Lord says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. 2 If you refuse to let them go, I will send a plague of frogs on your whole country. 3 The Nile will teem with frogs. They will come up into your palace and your bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses of your officials and on your people, and into your ovens and kneading troughs. 4 The frogs will come up on you and your people and all your officials.’”

[The frog was considered the theophany of the goddess Heqt, wife of the creator of the world and the goddess of birth. She was always depicted with the head and body of a frog. According to one source, “Frogs were so sacred in Egypt that even the involuntary slaughter of one was often punished with death.”<sup>1</sup>

“The Egyptians [also] considered [as] sacred the lion, ...ox, ...ram, ...wolf, ...dog, ...cat, ...ibis, ...vulture, ...falcon, ...hippopotamus, ...crocodile, ...cobra, ...dolphin, different varieties of fish, trees, and small animals including the frog, scarab, locust and other insects.”<sup>2</sup>]

5 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the streams and canals and ponds, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.’”

6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land. 7 But the magicians did the same things by their secret arts; they also made frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

8 Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Pray to the Lord to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the Lord.”

9 Moses said to Pharaoh, “I leave to you the honor of setting the time for me to pray for you and your officials and your people that you and your houses may be rid of the frogs, except for those that remain in the Nile.”

10 “Tomorrow,” Pharaoh said.

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<sup>1</sup> David Padfield. [http://www.padfield.com/2002/egypt\\_1.html](http://www.padfield.com/2002/egypt_1.html)

<sup>2</sup> John Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, p. 95