

## Exodus 7:14 – 8:32

### The opening rounds



Having finally declared God's message more accurately to Pharaoh, and privately demonstrated the signs of God's power – but being met by intransigence – the stakes are now upped. Signs bringing discomfort upon the whole nation of Egypt are brought into play.

#### ➤ **Patterns in the plagues?**

Quickly flick through the whole sequence of these “signs” or “plagues”. Do you see any pattern to them? – and does it matter?

#### ➤ **Natural or supernatural?**

Particularly for the earlier signs, it has been argued that the sequence is naturally explicable. Even if the subsequent ones are simply “natural” consequences ... is it any less God speaking?

#### ➤ **Literal or literary?**

When it says “blood” (7:17,19,20) ... *literal* blood?

#### ➤ **Water turned to blood (7:14-25)**

The Nile was to the Egyptians a kind of god – as was Pharaoh himself. The Nile is struck (7:17,20), and yields to God's power immediately – *unlike* Pharaoh. The symbol of the Hebrews' destruction (1:22) now becomes one of their coming deliverance.

Did the magicians' (unhelpful!) success contribute to Pharaoh's hard heart? What can keep *our* hearts hard?

#### ➤ **Frogs (8:1-15)**

Are these frogs merely a discomfort or a danger?

Why did Moses require Pharaoh to set the time (9)?

A “respite” (15): what might cause *us* to not follow through on our intentions to follow God?

#### ➤ **Gnats (8:16-19)**

“*This* is the finger of God” (19). So why no response?

#### ➤ **Flies (8:20-32)**

Not trivial! “The land was ruined” (24). But Pharaoh (“I” (28) is emphatic) thinks he is still in charge. Are we similarly foolish?