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# The God Who is Powerful

Exodus 6v28 - 10v29

## Intro

People are always comparing: who is the fastest, who is the cleverest, which is the most powerful? When I was a boy there were the computer wars. The Spectrum owners argued with the Commodore owners over whose computer was the best, the most powerful. I had a ZX81, so didn't have a leg to stand on.

In Moses day, Egypt were the superpower in the Middle Eastern world. They had conquered their neighbours and set up a dynasty that lasted for thousands of years. They built great monuments to themselves to show off their might, their wealth and their culture. The Israelites in our story have gone from guests to slaves in 400 years. But God is going to free them.

## Purpose

We're going to see God inflict plague after plague on the Egyptians. Why didn't he just extract them from the land? To show his power. He tells us this in the passage.

- 6v28-7v1,5 - Moses realises he has nothing to offer. How can he convey God's message to Pharaoh? He can't speak well. God responds by assuring Moses that he has the power to use Moses speech. And he says that the reason for bringing the plagues is that Egypt will know his power.
- 9v14-16 - God's message to Pharaoh. He could easily strike them and release his people but he's doing all these wonders so that Egypt will know that he is powerful, and that the whole world will proclaim his name.

## Plagues

Let's look at the plagues that God brought upon the Egyptians.

1. Water into blood - 7v19
2. Frogs - 8v5
3. Gnats - 8v17
4. Flies - 8v24
5. Diseased livestock - 9v3
6. Boils - 9v10
7. Hail - 9v23

8. Locusts - 10v13-15

9. Darkness - 10v22

As the plagues progress, each one is harsher than the previous one. We start with discomfort, move on into damage and end with disaster. Perhaps the 9th, darkness, doesn't seem so bad to us, but imagine the fear that will have gripped them as the sun, source of life to them, is shut out.

### Protection

One of the ways we see God's power in this section is through his protection of his people Israel. Not only is God able to bring disasters on the land but he is able to control those disasters to preserve his people:

- From flies - 8v22
- From dying livestock - 9v6
- From hail - 9v26
- From darkness - 10v23

When we think of power sometimes we just have think of destruction. And certainly we see that in the plagues. But we also have a god who is powerful to protect.

### More powerful than the magicians

Some of the most powerful people in Pharaoh's court were the magicians: the wise men and sorcerers who would make prophecies and advise Pharaoh, authenticated by their illusions. At the start of our narrative we find them mimicking God's actions to try and show they have as much power as the Hebrew deity, but they soon find they are limited and end up humiliated.

- Serpent - 7v11-12 - but Aaron's serpent consumes theirs.
- Blood - 7v22 - they mimic turning water into blood
- Frogs - 8v7 - they too can make frogs come out of the Nile
- Gnats - 8v18 - but their limit is found as they fail to produce gnats, and indeed any further plague
- Boils - 9v11 - in fact when it comes to the plague of boils, they are affected just like everyone else.

### More powerful than the gods

The Egyptians had a whole host of Gods, and they believed their gods were the reason for their great power. So of course their gods must be more powerful than the god of their slaves. Well, the Lord God of Israel was going to show them differently. Who was more powerful than Hapi, the god of the Nile? Perhaps the one who could turn the Nile into blood. Who was more powerful than the god of the earth? Maybe the one who could turn the earth into

gnats. What about the goddess of medicine? Well the god who can bring sickness to all the cattle has her beaten. And what of the most powerful of the panoply? Ra, the sun god? Well, he who can bring darkness over the whole land for 3 days. The whole land except for his own people that is.

### More powerful than Pharaoh

But more powerful than any of the gods was pharaoh, leader of an empire. It looks like Moses has to rely on Pharaoh to accept his proposal to allow the people to go worship in the desert. It seems Pharaoh is in control. But really god is in control the whole time.

- 7v13 - serpents - pharaoh hardened his heart
- 7v23 - blood - he seems unmoved as he turns away
- 8v8,15 - frogs - pharaoh is moved this time but then is hardened
- 8v17 - gnats - he hardens his heart
- 8v25,28,32 - flies - he tries a compromise, but eventually hardens his heart
- 9v7 - cattle - he hardens his heart again
- 9v12 - boils - this time god hardens his heart
- 9v27-28,34 - hail - he gave in to Moses but changed his mind again
- 10v10-11 - locusts - he tries to compromise again, and again god hardens his heart
- 10v24 - darkness - a compromise attempt again and god hardens his heart again

This is not a battle of nerve between God and Pharaoh. God is in control through the whole 9 episodes.

### Conclusion

We pause after the 9 plagues, knowing that the final one is to come, the one that seals God's authority, his judgement and his mercy.

When we look at Jesus we see similar signs and wonders. These too were to show his power and authority. But they were quite different from the signs in Egypt.

- Instead of water into blood Jesus turned water into wine
- Instead of creating a storm Jesus calmed the storm
- Instead of bringing disease Jesus healed people of their diseases
- Instead of death Jesus brought life
- Instead of darkness Jesus brought life.

God is powerful and demonstrated that in Egypt in amazing ways. His son also demonstrated his power in the miracles he performed. He is powerful to judge, but also powerful to save. And be encouraged by Moses: a man who thought he had uncircumcised

lips, who had nothing to offer. See how God used him to do marvellous things. He can do the same with us.