



January 5, 2005

The River of Life and Death - Part 2

The Nile river had come to represent life, prosperity and power to the Egyptians. It had given rise to their culture and thus revered in their religion. As the Hebrews lived in the land, and the Egyptians came to fear them, the river became an instrument of death for the male children. Moses, rescued from death in the Nile by his mother, had left Egypt and was later sent by God to deliver the people from their bondage. As Moses and Aaron stood before Pharaoh, delivering God's message, the Lord brought great plagues on the land because of this arrogance and hostility. The first of these plagues would touch the life blood of Egypt directly. ***"And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood."*** (Ex 7.19-20). The miraculous nature of this event has been explained away over the years by those who claim that the reason the water was turned to blood was because of deposits that had washed out of underground springs, or dust from an asteroid or meteor that had struck the Earth. Contradicting this assumption is the fact that God stated that even water that was already in "vessels of wood" and "vessels of stone" would change into blood. This rules out any terrestrial or extraterrestrial influence that would have polluted the water. Of course, to believe this you have to believe in a God that has the ability to create worlds by speaking them into existence. The water was turned to blood. Blood in the scriptures is reserved as representing life (Gen 9.4). There are numerous passages throughout the Bible that refer to the loss of life as "*shedding of blood*". Even in modern times the loss of life is referred to "*bloodshed*". The river had been the instrument of destruction for the innocent blood of the male Hebrew children that were murdered. It would now be the instrument of death for the Egyptians. ***"And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river."*** (Ex 7.24-25). We are not told how many Egyptians died during this first plague, but considering that dehydration happens very quickly when the human body is deprived of water, it is logical to conclude that there were some that died. We use a term, "*poetic justice*", when those who have done wrong receive the same treatment in a fashion similar to that which they have imposed upon others. In this case, God saw fit to visit death on the Egyptians, striking at the heart of their prosperity and pagan ungodliness. This first great plague was the beginning of deliverance from tyranny and oppression. God demonstrated that His power was beyond that of mankind. The power of the throne of Egypt was no match for God. Likewise, the blood that Christ shed on the cross was the beginning of freedom from oppression that many live in. The bondage of sin. A silent and deadly condition that many do not acknowledge. For those who reject the call of God through the Gospel, the end result will be the same as that of Egypt when Pharaoh defied God. We may not have to live through great plagues, as the Egyptians did, but in the end those who do not render obedience will be destroyed. Historically there is not much evidence in the ancient writings of the Egyptians to indicate that these things happened. We have the Bible as the inspired word of God. It is possible that the plagues visited upon these people, so devastated the land that they did not wish to record their humiliation at the hands of a greater deity than the manmade idols they worshiped. It is also possible that the chaos from these events was so severe that there was no one left to record the events and so they passed until another dynasty rose and rebuilt the nation, ignoring events of the past. Sometimes there are things too terrible to put into words, or in images, on the walls of buildings. As the Egyptians could not stand in the face of God and prevail, so will we fail to stand in judgment if the blood of Christ has not cleansed us from our sins. Paul states, ***"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."*** (2 Cor 5.10-11)

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