

## That'll Take a Miracle

### Exodus 7:14-24 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> The fish in the Nile will die, and the river will stink; the Egyptians will not be able to drink its water.' " <sup>19</sup> 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 of wood and stone." <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> Instead, he turned and went into his palace, and did not take even this to heart. <sup>24</sup> And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water, because they could not drink the water of the river.

"That'll take a miracle." That's what we say when we look at a situation and realize that the solution we want or are hoping for has a very low probability of happening and it's what we have to say if we want any hope for a situation when everything that we observe indicates that the outcome we want is an impossibility. It'll take a miracle, something supernatural, outside of the confines of what we know can happen, to make this happen.

We got two miracles today: turning water into wine and turning water into blood. If only we could have been there, right? If only we could have seen those things with our own eyes, then we would not have any doubts regarding our faith. If only my Mom, my Dad, my son, my daughter, my friend, my neighbor, my coworker could have seen those, then they would believe like me with no hesitation. It's easy to come to the conclusion that seeing a miracle means that now this person has to believe in God. That's what happened with Jesus' disciples, right? John 2:11 said, "What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him." See. The disciples saw a miracle, and they believed in Jesus.

But then how do we explain Pharaoh? The verses immediately before this massive turning water into blood miracle was another miracle. Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh asking that he let their people go, and then they performed a miracle by the LORD's command. Aaron threw his staff to the ground, and it became a snake - just as the LORD told him it would. But Pharaoh's magicians did the same thing. Even though Aaron's snake swallowed the magicians' snakes, Pharaoh was unimpressed. He hardened his heart and would not listen to LORD's messengers. He would not let their people go.

Maybe it was too little a thing to turn a staff into a snake. If we saw that, we would rationalize it away saying that it was misdirection, an illusion, that any well-trained magician could pull off. We are just missing how he did it. Maybe that's why Pharaoh didn't listen.

The LORD then has Moses and Aaron perform another miracle in front of Pharaoh. Moses and Aaron to confront him on the bank of the Nile - a time when he would be there to check the water level, to bathe, and, yes, to worship Hapi, the god of the Nile. After pointing out Pharaoh's hard heart, 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 of wood and stone." (verse 19) And it happened just as the LORD said it would. All the water from the Nile turned to blood. The fish died. The river smelled. The Egyptians could not drink the water.

"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. Instead, he turned and went into his palace, and did not take even this to heart." (verses 22-23) The whole Nile River just changed to blood, even the water in wooden and stone containers turned to blood, but Pharaoh refused to listen to the LORD in spite of the miracles.

The LORD knew, and even foretold, that Pharaoh would not change his heart even after personally witnessing miracles. So, why do these miracles for Pharaoh to see if it wasn't going to change his heart? The LORD tells Pharaoh and us exactly why: "By this you will know that I am the LORD." (verse 17)

Miracles, these supernatural events that God does, are meant to showcase and reveal the LORD as the one and only God that exists. No one else can do what he does. No one else is like him. He is the LORD, the great I am, the one who always has been and always will be, the one who is the same yesterday, today, and forever without any change. When the LORD turns the Nile River into blood, this effectively shows Pharaoh the truth that Hapi, this Egyptian god of the Nile, is nothing. He's dead, so to speak. The fish died in him. He smells like death. He can't provide the life-sustaining water to the people. Pharaoh, your god is dead because there is only one God – the LORD, the God of the Hebrews. It took a miracle to show Pharaoh and all those watching that the LORD is the one and only God.

But seeing the miracle was not enough for change Pharaoh's heart. He refused to believe what he saw with his own eyes, wrote it off as something like a magic trick that his own people could do, and he hardened his heart more.

Is there anything that we harden our hearts about? Are there certain teachings from the Bible that we simply we refuse to live out and believe, that when we hear them we reject them outright saying, "Well, I don't believe that"? Do we refuse to believe in a six day, 24 hour creation of the world because of what others have observed even though God defines those days very clearly in his Word? Have we casually accepted sex outside of marriage since it's the norm for so many people nowadays even though God designed this gift to be enjoyed only within the confines of marriage between one man and one woman? Do we hear God's teaching that we are to forgive as he has forgiven us, but sometimes we let our hearts be hard and hold a grudge and refuse to forgive, that we demand some kind of way that the person makes it up to us before we forgive them?

There are so many more things that God has said and done that people harden their hearts against. Part of me wishes they could see the miracles because then they would believe, then they would no longer dismiss it. But Pharaoh saw it and still dismissed it. It's not seeing miracles that makes people believe; it's God working miracles in people that makes them believe.

God recorded for us these miracles so that we would have the proof and assurance that our LORD does do miracles. He did them in the past; he still does them today. They are all around us. One of the most common miracles that he does we can't necessarily see. The LORD miraculously changes hardened hearts. We say about some of those most adamantly opposed unbelievers, "That'll take a miracle to change their heart," and that's what our LORD does. He describes this miracle in the Old Testament book of Ezekiel: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26)

This LORD who does these miracles to change people's hearts is our LORD. The same LORD who changed water into wine and water into blood can certainly replace a hardened heart of stone with a soft, believing heart of flesh. And even if that person still hardens their heart in spite of the evidence of these miracles, that doesn't negate the fact that our LORD does miracles.

Each miracle recorded for us is another opportunity for God to change a heart. Pharaoh got nine more chances after this one with nine more miracles. Sadly, by the end, the LORD gave Pharaoh what he wanted: a hardened heart. He continued to reject the evidence of the all-powerful God right before him. The LORD let him have his rejection. Pharaoh most likely died in unbelief, having rejected the LORD time after time.

When we share our LORD with others, it can be very frustrating as all we see is a heart hardened against him, not listening, not believing. Instead of growing discouraged or angry, remember that our LORD is the one who does miracles. He changed water into wine. He changed water into blood. He can change the most hardened of hearts to believe in him. So, we tell others about him because through his Word he does the miracle of changing hearts.

Lord, continue to perform miracles as only you can do. Continue to soften our hearts to always accept you at your Word. Help us to continue to share you with others knowing that you are our LORD who does miracles, including changing people's hearts to believe in you. Amen.