

Cindy Cottone

The Bible Corner



The first two plagues

Judith sighed in weariness as she made her way toward the water station. Even at this early hour, it was certain to be crowded with other servants like herself.

For seven days, Judith had risen much earlier than usual in order to go and collect the water for the Egyptian household in which she served. Water, once plentiful, had become scarce in Egypt. Now it was like a precious jewel. The Nile River had been polluted by a strange series of events. The whole district had talked of nothing else for days.

It had all begun when the Hebrew, Moses, had gone before Pharaoh with his brother, Aaron, and demanded the release of the Hebrew slaves. When Pharaoh had refused, Aaron had struck the Nile River with Moses' rod, and suddenly the lifeline of Egypt had become a stagnant stream of blood. At the same time, the water everywhere in Egypt, in the marshes, streams and even the water pots in the households, had turned to blood, too.

Some people had claimed that Pharaoh's magicians had actually performed this miracle, but others were certain the God of the Hebrews had brought swift judgment on the cruel king of Egypt. All Judith knew was that now life had become more difficult for her. Pharaoh had ordered new

wells dug, and every day Judith had an additional burden as one of Pharaoh's slaves.

"If only we could be free of this Pharaoh," she thought sadly to herself. "All of my ancestors have served the Egyptian kings for centuries. I have no such dreams."

The woman Judith served cared nothing about either the God of the Hebrews or the magicians of Pharaoh. What she did want was her daily bath, and since the Nile River was no longer a suitable place, Judith carried enough water back for this, too.

Still, Judith was not complaining. She had been more fortunate than other Hebrew slaves who worked all day in the hot sun, building great monuments for Pharaoh. And at least, she and her son, David, had a small measure of freedom. They had been given their own quarters, however small or cramped, so that Judith would be readily available to serve the household.

It was midday by the time she had collected enough water. After filling all of the household water pots, Judith heated the rest for the bath. But just when the long task was about to be completed, a big, brown, ugly toad leaped out of the water. Judith let out a cry, and the toad jumped

quickly out of sight. She also lost her balance and spilled a great deal of the water.

When David suddenly appeared in the doorway, she eyed him suspiciously and said, "David, did you put that frog in the water? Now I am going to have to go back for more water."

"Mother," David said, grinning, "I didn't do it, but I wish I had." Then seeing her downcast look, he added, "I'll go back to the well for you, Mother. I know that you are tired."

"I'm very tired," she agreed. "But we'll go back together." Judith knew that the Egyptians would surely deny a request from a Hebrew boy.

As they approached the Nile River, a lingering stench hung in the air from all of the fish that had died. A large crowd had gathered near the river and were pointing excitedly.

"What's wrong?" Judith asked a bystander.

"Another contest between the God of the Hebrews and Pharaoh's magicians."

When they reached the banks of the river, a huge mass of frogs was emerging from the water. They were ugly, brown toads, the same type that had caused Judith to spill the water.

"Look, Mother!" David cried, "I've never seen so many frogs in my whole life!"

They both watched as Pharaoh's officials ordered the servants to sweep the frogs back into the Nile River. But just as quickly as they worked, the frogs multiplied and started jumping on the people.

"Mother, why can't Pharaoh's magicians stop the frogs?" David asked.

A stranger, overhearing David, replied, "It has been said that all of these events are a sign from the God of the Hebrews. They will not cease until Pharaoh has released

the Hebrews from Egypt."

And for the first time, Judith felt a small seed of hope take root in her heart. "To be gone from Egypt? After all of this time? It's too wonderful to believe."

Soon afterward, the frogs covered all of the land of Egypt. They went into all of the houses, into the ovens and even into the kneading bowls. Although Pharaoh's chief servants tried their best to keep the frogs away, soon the creatures had come into the palace and had begun to jump all over the stubborn king.

Finally, Pharaoh called Moses to him and said, "If you will pray to your God to remove these frogs from Egypt, I promise that I will let your people go and sacrifice to Him."

But after Moses had prayed to God and all of the frogs had died, Pharaoh changed his mind and refused to honor his promise. This all happened according to God's plan. There were many more signs to come, so that both the Egyptians and the Hebrews would believe in the one true God.

For discussion:

- 1) The Hebrews had been Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt for over 400 years. Do you think that God needed to remind them that He had not forgotten them?
- 2) The Egyptians worshipped many false gods. What was the name of one of their false religions?
- 3) According to God's plan, Pharaoh would keep refusing to allow the Hebrews to leave until 10 signs had occurred. Why do you think God worked so many miracles?

For further reading:

The story of the plague of the water and the frogs is found in Exodus, Chapter 7:14-8:15.

National Merit Corporation honors two Nazareth students

Two Nazareth Academy seniors have been designated by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as commended students in the 1987 National Merit Scholarship competition.

Cynthia Aleo and Marylynn Dandrea were honored as a result of their performance on the College Entrance Examination. Out of more than one million participants, these students rank in the top two percent of

college-bound high school seniors in the country.

Aleo and Dandrea have participated in Nazareth Academy's honors program over their four years of high school, and both are currently undecided as to college plans.

Aleo is the daughter of Joseph and Eileen Aleo, and lives on Ledgewood Drive in Greece.

Dandrea is the daughter of Robert and Lynn Dandrea and lives on Gemini Circle in Gates.

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