

From Bondage to Glory

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- [0 : 0 0] Please open your Bibles to the book of Exodus. We're continuing our study there. And today we're looking at Exodus chapter 7.
- Last week we looked at verses 1-7, so today we'll start at verse 8 and we'll go all the way through the end of the chapter.
- So chapter 7, verses 8-25. Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, When Pharaoh says to you, Prove yourselves by working a miracle, then you shall say to Aaron, Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.
- So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent.
- Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. For each man cast down his staff, and they became serpents.
- [1 : 1 9] But Aaron's staff was swallowed up by their staffs. Still, Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. Then the Lord said to Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened.
- He refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water. Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent.
- And you shall say to him, The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness.
- But so far you have not obeyed. Thus says the Lord, By this you shall know that I am the Lord. Behold, with the staff that is in my hand, I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood.
- The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile. And the Lord said to Moses, Say to Aaron, Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over the rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood.
- [2 : 3 5] And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants, he lifted up the staff, and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood.
- And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts, so Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.
- Pharaoh turned, and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart. And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile, for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.

Now, seven full days passed, after the Lord had struck the Nile. Let's pray together. O Lord, we see in this how Pharaoh was so blind to your truth, and his heart was hard, and we pray that as your word is open today, that you would take away blindness, that you would soften hearts, that we would not respond like Pharaoh, that we would go away, and go about our business, with hard hearts.

So Lord, we again ask for your spirit to work powerfully, to do what we are incapable of, to soften hearts, to open our eyes, to see the truth of your word. We pray this in Christ's name.

[4 : 12] Amen. I want to remind you of what we've said is happening, in the pleads, and in this interaction with Pharaoh. Remember, there's a battle going on.

Etsis is going to show us who Yahweh is. There's this battle between God, the Lord, who calls himself Yahweh, and Pharaoh. Who is the true God? Who should be worshipped?

Who should be obeyed? To whom do the people of Israel belong? Is it to Yahweh, or is it to Pharaoh? And so, the pleads are interesting. I know they're interesting.

They're amazing. They're miraculous. They blow us away in some ways. But what is most important as we look at the pleads, is what they teach us about God. And so, that's what I want to try to focus on.

I know there may be points of interest that I won't ever even get into. You may ask all kinds of questions. Well, what does it mean when this happened? It's not about the pleads, is what I would say. The pleads are a tool that are teaching us about God.

[5 : 11] And so, we want to see, what do these pleads teach us about God? And throughout it all, Yahweh is going to show that He is the true God.

That He deserves to be worshipped. That He is more powerful than Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt. And so, we see in our passage, and I've just divided the points into what we see here.

We're looking at two things. One is, there's a sign that's given to Pharaoh beforehand, the staff that turns into a serpent. And then I want us to look at the first of the pleads, the Nile turning into, or the water turning into blood.

So first, let's look at the snake. The serpent, I'm sorry, the staff that turns into a serpent. That's in verses 8 through 13. One of the first things that struck me was just how God knows Pharaoh.

We've seen already that God is sovereign over Pharaoh's heart. But God sovereignly knows what Pharaoh will say and what he will demand. Look at verses 8 and 9. Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, When Pharaoh says to you, prove yourselves by working a miracle, then you shall say to Aaron.

[6 : 20] And so God's not amazed. God's not coming up with a backup plan after he hears what Pharaoh's going to say. You can imagine human interaction, right? How we talk to other people. We're going to go talk to someone, and we really don't know what they're going to say.

And we hear what they say, and then we think, Well, how do I respond to that? And maybe some of you are really quick on your feet, and others, you go away the next day, and you think, Oh, I wish I would have said this. God's not somehow responding to man this way.

He knows Pharaoh. He knows what will be said. And so he's prepared. He tells Moses and Aaron what they should say to him. And Pharaoh demands a miracle.

Again, verse 9, When Pharaoh says to you, prove yourselves by working a miracle, Pharaoh isn't interested in bowing his knee to Yahweh. Pharaoh's not at this point where he's saying, Look, if you just prove yourself by some miracle, then I'll be convinced, and I'm going to worship Yahweh.

You know, I've been considering this. What will really just push me over the edge is a miracle. You got any miracles up your sleeve? You could show me that he really is the true God? That's not at all what Pharaoh's seeking to do.

[7 : 31] I think Pharaoh's looking for an excuse that he can continue his opposition to Yahweh, and his refusal to let God's people go. So you can imagine, in any kind of circumstance, you go to someone, and they say, You asked for something.

And their response is, I'll do that for you if you'll just work a miracle. Now, their expectation isn't that you're going to pull a miracle from out of your sleeve, are they? They're saying, It's not going to happen.

What are some of the sayings that we may say in our culture? Things like, When peds fly. Eh, we don't really expect peds are going to grow wings and fly anytime soon, right? So what we're really saying is, When a miracle happens, I'll do that for you.

I think another one is, people say, When hell freezes over. Well, we understand, even biblically speaking, that's not happening. But we put these conditions that we know are impossible. I think that's what Pharaoh's doing here.

He's not looking for belief. I think that's often what our, what the unbelieving world around us does as well. They'll say things like, Well, if God really wanted me to believe in him, he'd just write it in the sky.

[8 : 37] Okay, he's written in his word, but we're still not convinced, right? Or they put some condition upon us, If you could just prove to me that God exists. And the truth of it is, that's not what changes hearts, is it? It's God's spirit that changes hearts.

And so, we need to pray. We need to present the gospel and pray that God would change hearts. But Pharaoh puts this condition down that he thinks will not be answered. And they're going to perform a miracle which God has already done.

You may remember back in Exodus chapter 4, verses 1 through 5. Then Moses answered, But behold, they, and that's the people of Israel, will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, The Lord did not appear to you.

And the Lord has said to him, What is that in your hand? He said, A staff. And he said, Throw it on the ground. So he threw it on the ground and it became a serpent. And Moses ran from it. But the Lord said to Moses, Put out your hand and catch it by the tail.

So he put out his hand and caught it and it became a staff in his hand. And this is God speaking. He says, That they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has appeared to you.

[9 : 40] And so, God has already given this sign to Moses for Moses to show to the people of Israel, which may or may not have actually happened. This may be the instance in which they are aware of it through what he does with Pharaoh.

Or it may be that Moses has already done this a second time. For the sake of the Israelites. And now, this is being done in the presence of Pharaoh for the same reason. That they may know about the Lord, Yahweh, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

And we've talked about this battle that's going on. It's really Yahweh versus the gods. And I'm going to try to bring that to light as we look at the different pleads. But the Egyptians, in this instance, we haven't even gotten to the pleads.

The first sign here. The Egyptians believed that the world was created by the sun god, Ra, who's probably, of all the gods that you may have heard of from Egypt, is probably the one that you're most familiar with. So they believed the sun god, Ra, made the world.

Created the world. And then, Ra, after doing this, took the form of a snake. Which I think is quite significant when we look at what happens here. Moses turns the staff into a snake.

[10 : 48] Which would have had obvious implications or drawn their mind to the idea of that's the image of our god. Which I think will be important down the road.

We see the opposition of the magicians. Pharaoh asks for a sign. Moses gives a sign. What's the first thing Pharaoh does? He calls for his sorcerers, his magicians, to come and try to repeat the sign.

Now, one reason for this may be this. Remember Moses, he's growing up in the house of Pharaoh. He was as well educated as anybody in the land would have been educated. And I tend to believe without a doubt that he would have been taught some of this.

He would have been taught how the Egyptians do magic and sorcery. These things might have been part of his education. And so, Pharaoh may well be thinking, has Moses just become a really good magician?

Is he some type of sorcerer? Is he doing something beyond the capability of my sorcerers or magicians? And so, the opposing magicians are called in.

[11 : 56] 2 Timothy 3.8 actually tells us that their names are Janus and Jambres. Just as Janus and Jambres opposed Moses, and that's really coming from extra-canonical, not biblical books, but other books that were recorded during those times that actually give names to them and talk about their works.

And so, we know from outside the Bible, it's not in the Exodus account, but the names, there were two magicians that were at least the forerunners of this whose name was Janus and Jambres. And so, they came and opposed Moses.

And if we think back, these magicians or the class of magicians or sorcerers in Egypt may have had an ancient grudge against the Hebrews anyway.

You may remember the story of Joseph at the end of the Genesis account. Genesis 41.8 Pharaoh sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men.

Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh. So, when Pharaoh is perplexed by these dreams he's having, he calls all these magicians and not one of them can interpret his dream.

[13 : 06] And then later in chapter 41, after Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams, we read in Genesis 41.39, then Pharaoh said to Joseph, since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are.

So, the magicians got shown up by Joseph in the past. Our God, Yahweh, did something that they could not explain. And he used his man to say, I know more than you do. And so, Joseph was seen as more wise and discerning.

And so, there may have been an ancient grudge. They may have been pleased to try to show him up. I want to just pause and go off on a tangent for a minute, but I'll say I don't have a ton of biblical support for this, but the more I've studied, the more I've become convinced of something.

Two things, really. One is that these gods of Egypt, I believe that the Egyptians are not worshipping just names that they're making up.

I believe false gods oftentimes are tied with demonic powers. Angels that have fallen, demons, are oftentimes attributed to these things and are worshipped. And so, I believe at least that we in America seem very far removed from the idea of worshipping false gods.

[14 : 27] We have plenty of idols that we love, but they're usually tied into consumerism. But in terms of real false gods, we don't really think in these kind of terms like Hinduism, the gods of Hinduism. Maybe we look at Egypt and think they're polytheistic and when we think of polytheism, we just mean, oh, they're welcoming of whatever god you want to worship.

My personal conviction is that these gods that they're worshipping probably represent demonic powers or demons themselves. And so, when we talk about Ra, Ra may be a real spiritual being. Whether or not that's the correct name or whatever, there's probably some demonic force that they're worshipping behind that.

So, that's point one that I'm throwing out there. It's okay with me if you think, well, maybe it's not that serious. I believe that there's power behind that. And then, I would go beyond that and say, because I'm sure you're wondering, how are these magicians doing it?

Right? We know Moses and Aaron have the power of God to do this. How are these magicians changing their staffs into snakes? magicians. Magicians in our day typically are good at deception.

Sleight of hand. They want to distract you and do something when you're not paying attention. Right? It's tricks. We know it's tricks. Sorry, kids, if you didn't know that. It's tricks, though. Right? They're fooling you. But what we see going on here, I would say, is completely different than what we talk about with typical magic in our day.

[15 : 53] They somehow change the staff into an actual snake. This isn't some optical illusion. They don't have different mirrors that they're fooling you with. Moses and Aaron, their staff actually consumes, it eats their snakes.

Right? So, how is this being done? Well, the way I would answer this is that I believe that such magic is done with real spiritual power. Demonic power.

Now, I know, again, this is probably something else that will be hard for some of you to hear and accept, but there's real demonic power behind a lot of this. Some of this is deception, some people are faking it, but let me, for a second, give some biblical examples to why I would argue that this is true.

Because I want you to understand this, because when we see this over and over again, first of all, know that Moses and Aaron aren't just deceiving people with holograms or tricking them into thinking that the water really is blood.

Right? Or that this staff really is a serpent. I think these things really are taking place by God's power. And some of these, and not for very long, but the first few of the signs and plagues are going to be done also by the magicians.

[17 : 03] How do they do it? I would argue, again, it's by demonic power. So, let me make an argument, and at the end of the day, if you reject it, I think it's okay. So, first, Leviticus chapters 19 and 20, in both chapters, God warns against going to necromancers, and issues a deconence on anyone who practices such things.

So, I want to, because I think this is the same kind of demonic power, I'm going to point some to necromancy. A necromancy is talking to people who are already dead. Okay? You may have heard of that.

I want to be careful the same way, but I'm always struck by, right next to Paul Thompson's house, I didn't have to throw Paul under the bus, but I always drive by, Paul, you probably know what I'm talking about, there's a big sign out there, there's a woman who has a palm reading business and fortune telling business.

Right? So, first off, let me just say, Leviticus says that anyone who practices these things should be put to death, that this is wrong.

Why is this such a grave sin? The issue is not that they've broken the commandment about lying, that they've deceived. I think what's being said is to do this means that you're going to these demonic forces to do something that ought not be done.

[18 : 20] You've submitted yourself to these demonic powers. It's also tied in Leviticus 19 and 22 the acts that were going on in Canaan before God's people got there.

These are instances, these are the reasons why God judges the land of Canaan. Why? Because they worship false gods. What's one indication of the worship of false gods? Well, practices such as necromancy.

Deuteronomy 18, 10-12 There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination, or tells fortunes, or interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a necromancer, or one who inquires of the dead.

For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations, the Lord your God is driving them out before you. So again, God's driving them out of the land because of these great sins.

Notice again though, God's word doesn't say they're false, that they're faking it. I believe it's arguing that these are real practices that are going on, and they're wrong because of the demonic influence of them. 2 Kings 21 Manasseh was 12 years old.

[19 : 32] This is quoting 2 Kings 21. Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hezebul, and he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord according to the despicable practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel.

He burned his son as an offering, and he used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. So again, we see the same practices.

Notice again, they're tied to human sacrifice to false gods. So that was probably part of the practice of being able to know the future or to talk to those who are dead, but he's specifically judged because of this.

And then 1 Samuel 28 is probably the most famous one, maybe one that you guys may have thought of as well. Saul has a medium, or again, that's just another word for a necromancer, bringing the spirit of Samuel, the prophet Samuel, with whom he actually speaks.

So in God's word, there's a recorded instance of which a necromancer brings back the spirit of Samuel to talk to Saul. And Saul is greatly judged because of this.

[20 : 45] So what I'm arguing, and again, this isn't finally a thing that you have to accept, I think. This isn't a gospel issue, okay? But what I'm arguing is that God's word speaks of this as though this is a reality.

And there's at least one instance in which we actually see the prophet Samuel not pretending the necromancer isn't just, you know, doing a little voice ventriloquist over here. Samuel actually appears and interacts with Saul.

And so what I'm arguing is that this is real, and this is serious, that this is involved or demonic powers or at work here, and that these things may really take place with demonic power.

Now, I hope that doesn't pique your interest because as Christians, I think it's clear that it's something we should never take any part in. We should not participate in. So, in summary, I would say people today that claim this, many of them are probably faking it.

You know, it's just tricks to get people's money. But let me say as well, I'm not ruling out the possibility that even today people could do this by demonic power. Now, the point of all that is to say, Janice and Jambres, their secret arts, I would argue, are somehow they're working with demonic power to do things that, humanly speaking, are impossible.

[22 : 10] When we say miracle, what we mean is things that defy the ordinary means. They're doing things that don't ordinarily happen. A staff cannot turn into a snake in any way that we understand science.

The atoms don't change in those ways. They're doing something that we would say is miraculous. But I would argue it's through demonic power. That's the secret arts that are going on. Now, again, that's not a major argument in my sermon, but I think it's important that we understand how is it that they're matching these things.

So, when we think of the big picture, so zone out, I know I kind of on a sidetrack there for a minute, but let's zone back out. what's going on in all the pleads?

What's happening? We've talked about God's making Himself known. How's He making Himself known? There's a battle going on. Who's the battle between? God.

And let's just start with Pharaoh. But what's represented by Pharaoh? Pharaoh believes himself to be a god instead of the Egyptians. and we're going to see in each of the pleads that God is defeating the gods of the Egyptians.

[23 : 17] So, what's this really about? God's going to make Himself known in the world, in Egypt, and among Israel, and among all the nations that would hear this, even to this day who read it.

God's going to make Himself known. And how's He going to do that? He's going to defeat the gods of Egypt. And my argument is, the gods of Egypt weren't just names that they were making up for things that they worshipped that were just in ignorance.

that they truly are demonic powers that are being defeated by our God. So, I know it sounded like I got kind of crazy there for a little bit, okay? That's okay with me. But, understand the big picture is this.

God is defeating actual demonic powers. There's real victory going on. It's not just a hypothetical thing. He's beating up on these false gods that are just names that they worship and there's really no power in the Nile.

Well, there's not. But there's a God behind that power. And so, I want you to understand that because when we see this over and over again, what God is doing is say, look, I know there's power there.

[24 : 16] There's legitimate power. Your magicians can use that power to do things that people can't explain. But my power supersedes that power. I am the God of gods.

And that's just not, it's not just a phrase that we say sometimes, right? There's meaning behind He is the God of gods. even demonic powers will one day bow their spiritual knee to our God.

And He's about to make it happen through the Exodus. And so, demonstration number one of that. They make their staffs into snakes. And the serpent, the snake of Aaron and Moses, their staff goes and swallows up their snakes.

And so, again, it's anything you can do, I can do better, right? Okay, you did that, but look, we can do that too. Yeah, but my snake's going to swallow up your snake. And I think, again, it's probably not a great meaning in that other than this, that God's power is superior.

They can do some things, but God's about to show that His power supersedes their power and is far beyond what they can do. Again, the point is, God is defeating the gods of the Egyptians. If I were to put this specifically into the language of this, He is swallowing up or consuming their gods.

[25 : 32] Maybe that helps us to understand. Pharaoh's response is, His heart is hardened. We'll see over and over again. Why is his heart hardened? Well, it seems to be, in this instance, his heart is hardened because, so what?

My magicians can do that. They do the same thing. Your God's nothing. My God can do the same thing. My gods do the same thing by my magicians, just as your God does through you.

And so, it looks like it's a one-to-one ratio right now. Who's going to win this battle? It's a close one. But Pharaoh's not convinced that our God's anything special based on this sign. And so, we move into the pledge.

And you almost have to view the first sign as a warning to Pharaoh. Look, believe now before things get worse. And now, we move into the first of the pledge with the water turning into blood in verses 14-25.

I want to just say before we dive in that, do you guys remember Jesus' first miracle, his first public miracle?

[26 : 36] I think his first miracle, period. His first miracle was turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana. I don't know how far to take that. There's got to be some correlation that the first plague, the first miracle produced there is one that involves a changing of water.

And I would even say there's probably some symbolism in the fact that what Moses does brings death to the people. The changing of the water brings death. And what Jesus does, forgive me for those of you who take offense, brings joy.

Right? God, we even read in the passage that the wine was being enjoyed and this is the best of the wines. It's a blessing to the people at the wedding. And so, there's got to be some correlation there that I don't want to go too far in, but maybe death versus joy but there's miracles of water being changed.

Now, again, as we look at this, I want you to see how the gods are being defeated. Happy, Hapi, Hopi, I don't really know how to say it, H-A-P-I, was the god of fertility that the Egyptians worshipped.

And the god of fertility was closely associated with the Nile River. Now, this ought to make sense to all of you without much explanation. Why would the Nile River be a sign of the god of fertility?

[27 : 50] Well, you live in a desert land, and you have to have a major river running through your land. All agriculture is dependent on the Nile River. There's not one farm that exists that's not getting its water from the Nile River.

It's desert apart from the Nile. So, you have this fertile area where the Nile goes down, where it spreads out. You have this delta in which they can grow crops. And so, fertility is associated with the Nile River.

And so, verse 15, go to Pharaoh in the morning as he is going out to the water. So, Pharaoh's already going out to the water.

Why is he going out to the water? Look specifically, what water is it? Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him. So, in the morning, Pharaoh goes out to the Nile River, and God knows he's going out, and he has them be out there waiting for him to meet him.

Why is Pharaoh going out to the Nile River? Well, there could be a lot of reasons. But I think it's at least possible he's going out there to worship. So, on Pharaoh's way to church, you interact with him.

[28 : 55] On his way to go worship his God, when he goes to worship at the Nile, you interact with him, and we're going to defeat his God. And Pharaoh's warned beforehand, verses 17 and 18, Thus says the Lord, By this you shall know that I am the Lord.

Behold, with this staff that is in my hand, I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.

All this happens before it's been repeated when they actually do it. So, Pharaoh's warned, this is what's about to happen. But his heart isn't softened. But I do see in this that our God is gracious and merciful.

Before he just brings this wrath upon these people, he warns them and gives Pharaoh a chance to repent. And I would encourage you that that's true for you as well.

Right? Our God is still gracious and merciful, and he still gives warnings to us. 2 Peter 3, 9-10 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise that some count slowest.

[30 : 01] Do you remember what promise that Peter's talking about here? What is the promise that he's talking about God's not slow to fulfill? It's the return of Jesus Christ. And really, the end of this world as we know it.

So, Jesus' promise he's coming back, but it's taken a long time. But know that the Lord is not slow to fulfill his promises. Some count slowness. But it's patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

So, why has Jesus not returned to this day? It's God's patience. He's giving you a chance to repent and to trust in him. But, the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

And then the heavens will pass away with a roar and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved. And the earth and the works that are done in it will be exposed. So, know that God is patient.

Why is it taking so long for Christ's return? Because you haven't repented yet. And he desires you to repent. But know also that he will return suddenly.

[31 : 08] In a day when we don't expect that like a thief comes. We were reading recently, my wife and I, of our favorite soccer team that shall no longer be named in public because of how poorly they're doing this season.

But that doesn't matter. But we were reading about one of our defenders who got his house robbed. And guess when they robbed his house? When he and his whole family were at the soccer game.

He's playing in the game. They know he's not at home. And I told my wife that this is probably the eighth time that I read about something like this happening in England where they'll go over and they'll rob a house of some soccer player while he's out playing the game.

And I thought, there's an example. If you would have known when he was coming, you would have had security waiting for him. You would have been ready. But our God is gracious and he's warning you to repent because you don't know when he's coming.

And it may come in a day when you're not ready. So be ready beforehand. And I see the same going on for Pharaoh, but his heart isn't softened. And the plague had terrible consequences.

[32 : 08] Let me just quickly note these because you may have caught these already. Verse 25 says it lasted for seven days. So for seven days, the water in the Nile and the water throughout Egypt was turned into blood.

It says the Egyptians had to dig along the edges of the Nile. What may be spoken of is that they're digging wells. So they're getting groundwater that maybe hasn't been turned into blood. That seems likely.

It's also possible that they're digging water from the sand around the Nile that has been filtered through the sand. So at least it's drinkable even if there may be some tint of blood still to it.

But whatever the case, they're desperate to find any water to drink. They're having to dig for it now maybe through wells, maybe through the filtration of the sand around them. There's a visual aspect to this.

There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. It says even in the wooden vessels and the stone vessels. So let's say you have a cistern at your house where you store water. Even those were turned into it. You can imagine at our...

[33 : 06] Now they didn't have indoor plumbing. Don't misunderstand me. But imagine turning on your water faucet and what comes out is blood. You fill your tub up and it's blood. You fill your pot up to boil your noodles for lunch today and there's blood in there.

Everywhere they go there's blood. And so visually they keep seeing blood over and over again which although blood may represent life, we understand as well that there's a representation of death.

And this blood, again, not an optical illusion because all the fish that were in the Nile died. And so this blood was such that the fish couldn't live in it. So, I'm no scientist, the hemoglobin, everything, the parts of blood were there and they're drinking it and it kills them.

And so the fish die. Understand that means also a major food source. Right? How you feed people in Egypt.

One of the major food sources was fish. One biblical testimony of this in Numbers 11.5 when God's people began to grumble against God, one of their complaints is we remember the fish that we ate in Egypt.

[34 : 14] So I'm not making it up. They were big on eating fish there. That's one thing that they remember fondly how great it was to have fish and the first plague would have put an end to that. probably not just for those seven days but for months before more fish could come downriver.

They could again spawn and so it may well have affected fishing for maybe years to come. But the fish die a major food source. And then I don't know how many of you have ever been around a dead fish or the remains of a dead fish you come across sometime later.

You ever walked across the river and seen one on the side and you know long before you see it don't you? Fish stink when they're dead. Fish is one of my favorite foods but they stink when they're dead and rotting.

Now just imagine all the fish and all the Nile in that area they all die at the same time. They're floating on the water they're washing up on the shore. Imagine what Egypt would have smelled like.

It says throughout all the land that would include the tributaries everywhere you go so it probably spread don't just think of you think of the Susquehanna River think of all the rivers that go into the Susquehanna. Any water source around was turned into blood and all the fish died.

[35 : 32] Think of the sadness of all the fishermen. That's not actually my notes. Sorry. Some of us like to fish so I'm sure there was some sadness there as well. But the land stuck the food source was gone and then we see in verses 22 through 23 that the magicians repeat this.

Maybe through the wells that were dug they pull up some water that's not already turned into blood and then they do it to prove that they can do it. There's very little water in all the land and now these magicians are turning what's left into blood as well.

And so 22 and 23 I think we see again why Pharaoh's heart's hardened is because the magicians repeat it. But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts so Pharaoh's heart remained hardened and he would not listen to them as the Lord had said.

Pharaoh turned and went into his house and he did not take even this to heart and it seems to be the case verse 25 and all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink for they could not drink the water of the Nile seven full days passed after the Lord had struck the Nile.

So Pharaoh's hard heart resulted in a full week of this his people suffering more but because they could repeat this act his heart remained hardened. So I've tried just positionally to work through what we've seen in the passage.

[36 : 49] Now I want to make some application and really try to help us to think about how does this apply to us. I think we're warned here not to be deceived in the way that Pharaoh was deceived.

The magicians replicate these miracles. Does that mean that God's not at work or God's not powerful or that there's equal standing? Listen to Deuteronomy 13 1-4 If a prophet or dreamer of dreams arises among you gives you a sign or wonder and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass which let me just say is what Moses gives us a sign to know if someone's a true prophet does it come to pass?

So it comes to pass and then if he says let us go after other gods which you have not known and let us serve them you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer or dreams for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. And so I see in Deuteronomy we're being told don't be deceived by what people do.

There will be some dreamers of dreams and prophets who will get some things right and if they do and then say let's worship other gods or let me go as far as to say worship the true God in wrong ways don't be deceived.

[38 : 25] Maybe we could say be Bereans tested all by the word of God what does God's word say? We're to love him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. And if anyone encourages us to do anything other than that we can know they're false.

And I think guys we're filled in a day in which just loads of false teachers. And they're going to say a lot of things that sound right but in the end of the day if they encourage us to worship God wrongly or worship other gods don't be deceived.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And then walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice and serve him and hold fast to him. And so we're encouraged to hold fast to God.

I see Pharaoh someone else can do what God does at this point at least in smaller ways. And it's enough for him not to bow the knee.

I think God's word is warning us don't be deceived. Secondly we see God's victory over our enemies. one of the commentators McKay he says Pharaoh the incarnation of the sun god represents all forms of external opposition to God's people.

[39 : 37] He is typical that means he's a type of the power of evil whether human or demonic that sets itself against God's people precisely because they are God's people.

And so as we look at this what he's arguing I want you to see as well as we go through is that Pharaoh is really representative of all evil that would oppose God's people.

Pharaoh's keeping them in bondage God's people in bondage. He's representative of these false gods. And so let's not take this as a single instance but let's understand that there are powers that are in opposition to us.

If I were to go all the way back to the beginning in the fall Genesis 3.15 remember the promise of the gospel that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the seed of the serpent but that God would put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

My understanding of redemptive history is that's exactly what happened after the fall or after they leave the garden. Cain kills Abel.

[40 : 44] Seth comes along there's these two lines that go and they begin intermarrying to the point that there's very few who are left to worship God. And then Noah and the ark and the flood.

And then what happens? History repeats itself again. God's people intermarry or they turn against him and in the end there's a remnant that's left. But my point with this is to say there will always I think be enmity between God's people and those who let me just state it bluntly follow the serpent.

Satan. And so we ought not be surprised that an unbelieving world would oppose God's people. But we also ought to have great encouragement. Why? Because of what we see right here in Exodus.

God is destroying the false gods and the false idols and we can know that God's doing the same in our time. He's destroying those who would oppose his people but also understand that he's destroying our false gods and our false idols.

Matthew Henry says that creature and he means by creature the creation things that are created so that creation which we idolize God justly removes from us or embitters to us he makes that a scourge to us which we make a competitor with him.

[42 : 02] And so God's still fighting against all those things that might compete with him for our attention and for our worship. And so know that God's victorious over our enemies but know also that God's still dealing with us isn't he?

God's sanctifying us and there's still things in our heart that we place on an equal plane with God or compete with God for worship. And so pray that God would embitter us to those things would make us not love those things that he would show us rightly that he is he and he alone is deserving of our worship.

Finally in application Pharaoh is blind to God and his power and we have to know that so are many in our day. 2 Corinthians 4 3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled it is veiled to those who are perishing.

In their case the God of this world which is Satan again demonic power has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God.

So why here is my trick question for you why is Pharaoh's heart continually hardened? Well answer number one because God is sovereign and God has said his heart will be hardened God has hardened his heart but you could say as well why is Pharaoh's heart hardened?

[43 : 27] Because the God of this world Satan in demonic powers has blinded him to the truth of the reality of what is going on. He sees it and opposes it instead of bowing his knee to it because he's been so blinded by demonic forces.

So what does that mean? If I take that and all that we've seen in today's passage what I want you to understand is that we are in the midst of spiritual warfare. I know a lot of times Christians don't like thinking about this and reformed churches aren't great at emphasizing these spiritual realities but we're in the midst of spiritual warfare.

Ephesians 6.12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers Now remember it's not flesh and blood so we're talking about non-flesh and blood rulers.

The rulers against the authorities against the cosmic powers over this present darkness against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Christians do we wrestle against flesh and blood? Of course we do because there's real people who are opposed to us. So why does he say we don't wrestle against that? Because he's saying ultimately it's not about them.

[44 : 39] Our real battle is a spiritual warfare that's going on behind the scenes that we know very little of. And God has drawn back the curtains for a little bit and says look what's going on here in Exodus.

Look at this demonic power going on. Look at this worship of false gods. And God's showing himself to be superior but I want you to understand that we're in the midst of spiritual warfare. So how do we respond? Just two responses and we have more time in coming weeks we can talk about more of this but for now I think two responses.

One is we need to pray that God would remove spiritual blindness to those who don't know him. It's not foremost about what miracles you can do.

You can't. But it's not about how you can prove to unbelievers that God exists. I am confident that Romans makes clear that unbelievers know that God exists and they suppress the truth.

Why? Because of unrighteousness. They love their sin and they don't want to admit that God exists because they'd have to bow the knee to God. They're like Pharaoh aren't they? They can see the evidence but evidence isn't enough to convince them.

[45 : 46] What do they need? They need the spirit to work in their heart. To take the heart of stone and make it a heart of flesh. To remove spiritual blindness. And so we need to be praying that God would do that in Hazleton.

And do that at your place of work. And do that in your family. And do that with your friends. But God works ordinarily through means. And what's the means that he's appointed for this to take place?

It's the sharing of the gospel. And so pray for those around us. That God would remove spiritual blindness. And then do something to see blindness removed.

share the gospel with them. And pray that God would use it to change hearts. And then the second thing is that we need to be prepared for the battle. So I read to you Ephesians 6.12 that says we war against these cosmic powers.

But the next verse says therefore here's the conclusion in light of this spiritual warfare what do we do? Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all this to stand firm.

[46 : 53] What hope is there that we're going to stand firm? It's not how strong we are is it? It's that we would clothe ourselves with the armor of God. And so that would be my encouragement. We need to be men and women who know God's word and who are girded with the armor of God that we may be ready to face such spiritual warfare.

Let's pray together. Father, dear Heavenly Father we thank you for your word and how it encourages us how we see even examples of demonic and ungodly opposition to your people and yet we see you triumphing over that and that gives us encouragement and courage Lord that we can face this world that we live in that our hope isn't ultimately in what president we have or who's ruling over us what policies are put into place Lord our hope is in your sovereign power our hope isn't even ultimately in that this will be a great country to live in but our hope is in the new Jerusalem and the return of our Savior Lord we pray that you'd give us boldness to face the world around us clothed with the armor your armor the armor of God that we may be able to stand firm against spiritual opposition so Lord we pray that you would help us in this that we would be empowered by you

Lord we pray as well that you would remove blindness we think of even those in this room there are many here who are listening to the word preached today who do not know you Lord remove their spiritual blindness we pray that they would have understood the gospel by your spirit working in their heart and we pray that you would save them and Lord give us boldness and wisdom shrewdness in sharing the gospel this week that we would be bold to speak it and proclaim it saturating it with prayer that you would do a work that's beyond our power to do that you would do that miracle of salvation in giving new life regeneration to those who are spiritually dead we pray all these things in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen nauseous lifted women bounty