

Wayside Bible Chapel

April 27, 2025 | Exodus 7

Slides	Introduction	<p>Good morning. My name is Dan Rawlins, I am one of the Elders here at Wayside. We are a church that believes in receiving the whole counsel of Scripture, so we teach in an expository fashion through the Bible.</p> <p>Our Senior Pastor, Paul Wallace has been teaching through Song of Songs, and he will take us back there when he returns two Sundays from now. When it has been my turn to bring the message, I've been working through the Book of Exodus. Please stand with me while I read a portion of today's passage from Exodus Chapter 7.</p>
	slides	Scripture Reading: <b>Exodus 7:1-13</b>
		<p>When we were last in Exodus, in chapter 6, Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh and asked him to let God's people go. Not only did Pharaoh refuse, but he imposed new hardships on the people of Israel. He took away the straw they used to make bricks, and made them find it themselves, and he did this without otherwise reducing their daily quota of bricks. Pharaoh was not happy. The people of Israel were not happy. Moses was not happy. Nobody was happy, except perhaps for the Lord, who had everybody right where he wanted them.</p>
		<p>When we start here in Exodus 7, the children of Israel are still in slavery in Egypt. But Exodus is a story of deliverance, and the tables are about to turn. Spoiler alert! I think many of you know this...They end up getting out of Egypt, and go on their way to the promised land.</p>
		<p>Now the great news about that is that throughout the Old Testament after these events took place, God kept reminding them of what he did. Over and over again; you will see the phrase repeated in the Old Testament, "<i>I Am the God that brought you out of Egypt.</i>" Just to emphasize: "I have redeemed you. Now you belong to me."</p> <p>And you realize that this concept translated into the New Testament context in light of the Work of Jesus on our behalf in a very powerful way. Because the Lord says the same thing to us.</p> <p>When we become followers of Jesus, he sets us free just as much as he brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt. And constantly, the Word of God points back to the act of Jesus that did that on our behalf.</p> <p>He says, "I am the God who purchased you at the cross." "Jesus died for your sins." Remember that central work of redemption on your behalf. So, when we are studying the book of Exodus, it is not just a fascinating story that we all enjoy and get a lot out of. This book speaks of God's work in our lives right here. Right now. Fulfilled in the perfect work of Jesus.</p>

1	Exodus 7:1-2	<sup>1</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. <sup>2</sup> You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land.
		Now, just as chapter 6 ended, Moses was in funk, having another one of his “contentions with God. He was feeling unworthy. Feeling incapable. Feeling like he really couldn’t do the work. And in Chapter 7, it is as if God just ignored all of Moses’ complaints and protests and said, “ <i>Get back in the game!</i> ” Sort of like a coach dealing with a discouraged athlete. “ <i>I can’t do it!</i> ” says Moses, “ <i>Pharaoh is beating me up out there!</i> ” “ <i>You <u>can</u> do this!</i> ” says God. “ <i>Just get back into the game!</i> ” God is going to send Moses back to Pharaoh, but notice He wants to send him back with a particular mentality. The mentality is right there in verse 1 of chapter 7, where God says, “ <i>See, I have made you like a God to Pharaoh.</i> ”
		I find it fascinating that Pharaoh, in a previous confrontation with Moses, rejected any direct dealing with God. As a matter of fact, when the LORD spoke to Pharaoh through Moses, and said, “ <i>Let my people go.</i> ” Pharaoh’s response is recorded in Exodus 5:2
2	Exodus 5:2	<b>But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”</b>
		It’s kind of a question, at first it sounds innocent, but its also defiant. “ <i>Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?</i> ” Well, Pharaoh is about to find out. God is about to introduce himself in powerful, dramatic ways that Pharaoh and Egypt will not soon forget. Now, just a note that I think will help us understand today’s passage. The Egyptians considered Pharaoh to be a god. They deified him. They identified Pharaoh as the god “Horus”, the son of the god, “Hathor”. And they said Hathor’s father was “Amon RA”, the sun god. They related Pharaoh to the worship of the sun.
		We will see, beginning with this chapter 7 and on through the next several chapters as a showdown between God and Pharaoh. God will show Pharaoh who’s boss. God will not merely judge Egypt in some random sort of way to free the Israelites, but He will act very decisively to judge all the false gods and goddesses in the land of Egypt. So back to verse 1
3 (1)	Exodus 7:1-2	<sup>1</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. <sup>2</sup> You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land.
		God is sending Moses back to Pharaoh, but with a new mentality. Pharaoh could not relate to an unseen God. So, when Moses and Aaron first come to Pharaoh talking about YHWH, Pharaoh replies, “ <i>Who is God, that I should worship him?</i> ” Pharaoh could not relate to an unseen God, and here is why:

		<p>All of the gods and goddesses of Egypt had some sort of physical, tangible manifestation. There were statues or idols of stone, or metal: gold, silver, etc. The Egyptians deified humanity (like Pharaoh) or the rivers or animals. Everything in Egypt was tied to a god. It was a polytheistic worship system (There were many gods). It was also a pantheistic worship system (everything was god). It was visible. It was tangible.</p> <p>The signs that God is going to perform, through Moses, are going to be very visible. Very tangible. It is going to affect the life of every Egyptian. So, God is going to do those miracles through Moses; thus elevating Moses, in the eyes of Pharaoh, to be like God. <i>“Look at Moses being able to perform these miracles. He must be a deity.”</i> Powerful. Unmistakable. And God will later transmit his Word through Prophets. That is the role God assigns to Aaron. God will speak his Word to Moses. Moses will whisper it in the ear of Aaron. Aaron will be the mouthpiece to proclaim it. Remember, back at the burning bush, one of Moses’s objections was that he could not speak in public. <i>“I’m a man of slow speech, uncircumcised lips.”</i></p> <p>The next part of God’s charge to Moses and Aaron is <i>“You shall speak all that I command you.”</i> This is very clear instruction. <i>“You are just to say what I tell you to say.”</i> Don’t add a single word. Don’t take a word away. If you don’t like what I tell you, say it anyway.</p> <p>This instruction to Moses is part of the reason why here at Wayside, we teach verse by verse through the Bible. When we teach through the Bible, we get the whole counsel of God. Rather than a series on <i>“How to reach your full potential,”</i> we keep to the text of Scripture. If we stay in the Bible, and you come regularly, then over time, we will cover every topic that is important to God and important for us. We will get it in its context, and we will get it with a Biblical worldview and emphasis.</p> <p>Moses was not to edit what God said, or relate it to the latest movie. He was not to say, <i>“Well, this is sort of what it means to me, Pharaoh, I sort of take it this way...”</i>. No. Straight up. Verbatim. What God says to Moses, Moses is to tell Pharaoh. Moses is to be like God to Pharaoh.</p> <p>And you know what? You and I today are in exactly the same role as Moses. This idea carries over into the New Testament, where God says his people represent him on this earth. That is a very challenging thing. The Apostle Paul puts it this way in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians:</p>
4	2 Cor. 3:2-3	<p><sup>2</sup> You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. <sup>3</sup> And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.</p>
		<p>Paul says that we believers are like letters written by Jesus so that the whole world can read them. Do you realize what that says to you and me?</p>

		<p>It means that people who won't look to God, will look to us. People that won't read a Bible, will read our lives. I find that daunting.</p> <p>Because I realized, to understate it slightly, I am not a perfect representation of God...and neither are you. There is something within me, and probably within you, that says, <i>"Don't look at me! Look to Jesus!"</i></p> <p>Don't read my life. Read the Bible. That's a good message for us to give to people. People <b>should</b> look to Jesus directly. People <b>should</b> read the Bible for themselves. But you know what? Often times, they just won't. They refuse to think it's real until they see it's real in your life.</p> <p>Brothers and Sisters, people are reading your life. And that begs the question: <i>Is your life a good translation of the Bible?</i> You may know that there are a lot of Bible translations that have been published, and this confuses people. They wonder, <i>"Is this a good translation? What is a bad translation?"</i> There are many good Bible translations out there. Some are better than others. Some Christians are living their lives as a poor paraphrase of God's Word. He wants us to be faithful examples of how the Word transforms a Christian life.</p>
		<p>Now, back to Exodus Chapter 7. God tells Moses, in verse 2, <i>"You shall speak all that I command you."</i> Get back in the game, Moses, go there and do it. Now, beginning in verse 3, God does not want Moses to be under any misconception, so He says:</p>
5 (1)	Exodus 7:3-5	<p><sup>3</sup>But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, <sup>4</sup>Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. <sup>5</sup>The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them."</p>
		<p>Did you notice what God said in verse 3? God said very plainly, very straightforwardly: <b>"I will harden Pharaoh's heart."</b> This is not the first time we are told this in the Book of Exodus. Back in Exodus 4:21, we remember that God also said he would harden Pharaoh's heart. We dealt with the idea of what it means when God hardens a person's heart. We are at this intersection of God's sovereignty and human responsibility.</p> <p>Do you know what it means when the Bible says God hardened Pharaoh's heart? <b>It means that God hardened Pharaoh's heart.</b> That is something we need to be aware of. God may actually do this in a person's life. The important principle to remember is that God did not harden Pharaoh's heart against Pharaoh's will. It's not as if Pharaoh's heart was overflowing with love and kindness toward the people of Israel, and God somehow hardened a heart that was soft and tender. No. Pharaoh's heart was already filled with hatred and bitterness towards Israel. It's as if God is saying, <i>"Pharaoh, If that's the way you are going to be, then fine. I'll confirm you in that. I'll harden your heart right along with what you desire."</i></p>

		<p>If you remember, when we discussed this back in Exodus 4, there are two different Hebrew words used in the Book of Exodus concerning the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. One is focused on God's action. The other is focused on Pharaoh's action. Later in Exodus 8:15, Scripture will say that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. The Hebrew word used there is "Kabad". It means to make heavy, or unresponsive. Here in chapter 7, where God is acting, the Hebrew word is "Chazaq", which means to "fortify" or "strengthen". Put the two words together, and Pharaoh makes a choice to harden his heart. He "Kabads" his heart, chooses to make it unresponsive to God. Then God comes along and "Chazaqs" Pharaoh's heart. He confirms, fortifies and strengthens the decision Pharaoh has already made, then uses the hardness of Pharaoh's heart to fulfill his purposes.</p> <p>This is a powerful example of how God's sovereignty interacts with man's responsibility. God allows us to "set the course." To make a choice, either for him, or contrary to him. Then God comes along and confirms the choice that we make. And through it all, He will use both our decision and His confirmation to fulfill his ultimate intention.</p> <p>He is sovereignly in control, and within that sovereign control, he allows for human decisions to be made, but always to fulfill his intentions.</p>
		<p>So God says, that he will harden Pharaoh's heart, nevertheless, look at God's mercy. Right after he says he will harden Pharaoh's heart, he says, <b><i>"I will multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt."</i></b></p> <p>Even while Pharaoh's heart is being hardened, God is going to give Pharaoh and the people of Egypt reasons to believe. He is going to do astounding miracles right before their eyes.</p> <p>I believe that is the way God does it for you and me, too. God will give every person on earth a reason to believe. Don't you know that he does? Hasn't God done things in your life? In and around and through your life that gives you real reasons to believe? And he holds it out before you, and he says... <i>"Now you can do it, Now you can embrace it. Now you can believe."</i> That is exactly what he was doing for Pharaoh.</p> <p>Again, God is emphasizing it as he says to Moses and Aaron, <b><i>"You are going to go and appear before Pharaoh again, but he is not going to listen to you."</i></b> What is the result going to be? It's in verse 5:</p> <p><b>The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.</b></p> <p>God is going to send a spectacular series of plagues upon Egypt. We are just going to look at the first of them this morning. He is going to do it to convince the hard heart of Pharaoh to let his people go. He is also going to do it because he wants to declare himself to all of Egypt. God planned to do His works so that not only Pharaoh, but all of Egypt, could see that he is the LORD and believe. Or, to say it another way, one of the reasons God sent these specific plagues was that they targeted the Egyptian gods.</p>

		<p>And by challenging the authenticity of false gods, the Egyptians confidence in their polytheistic system would be shattered and they could believe on the one true God.</p> <p>And do you want to know the good news? Many Egyptians did. Many Egyptians repented and believed on the Lord God of Israel. How do we know this? Exodus 12:37-38</p>
6	Exodus 12:37-38	<p><b>And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds.</b></p>
		<p>Did you catch that? A mixed multitude means that not just Hebrews left Egypt. One of the reasons God sent the plagues was an act of mercy to deliver some of the Egyptians from the clutches of false gods to a place of Worship of the one true God. He sent the plagues to shatter their belief in the false deities of Egypt, that that they could trust in the God of the Bible. He said, <i>"You come out with my people as they leave the bondage of Egypt."</i> The deliverance of all people who will trust and obey is something God always wants to accomplish.</p>
		<p>So, God says to Moses, <i>"Get back in the game!"</i> And Moses obeys. Verse 6</p>
7 (1)	Exodus 7:6-7	<p><sup>6</sup><b>Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the LORD commanded them.</b>  <sup>7</sup><b>Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh.</b></p>
		<p>Now keep in mind, the author of Exodus is....Moses. This is quite an admission. He truly obeys God for the first time, and he is 80 years old. He is just getting started in the ministry God called him to. He spent his first 40 years being raised in Pharaoh's household, then fled to Midian where he tended sheep for another 40 years, and now at 80, its time to go to work for another 40 years. And Aaron, at 83 is his older brother by three years.</p> <p>There are many times in the Old Testament where God gives the ages of people just before an extraordinary event God calls them to. For example, Joseph, we were told, was 30 years of age when he became second in command over all of Egypt. In Genesis 16, Abram was 86 years old when Hagar gave birth to Ismael, and in Genesis 17, Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised. On birthday, Caleb says to Joshua, <i>"Behold, I am this day eighty-five years old. I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming. So now give me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day."</i> In the New Testament, Paul tells Timothy, <i>"Don't let anybody look down on you because you are young."</i></p> <p>Now here's the principle:  <b>You can be used by God at any age, old or young.</b></p>

		God puts Moses and Aaron to work:
8 (1)	Exodus 7:8-9	<sup>8</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, <sup>9</sup> “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.’”
		<p>No doubt that Pharaoh was going to ask for some credentials. <i>“You boys are making some pretty stiff demands here, ‘Let my people go!’ Prove that you really are representing this God that you talk about.”</i></p> <p>And so the rod (staff) that we saw earlier was to be thrown down and turned into a serpent. Now in Egypt, a serpent was considered to be wise and magical. Even Jesus said “Be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves”</p> <p>But, back in Egypt, there was this wise, magical air to the serpent. There was a goddess “Wajet” who was the patron goddess over southern Egypt, she was portrayed as a serpent for her wisdom.</p> <p>God is starting to take-on the false gods of Egypt.</p>
9 (1)	Exodus 7:10-13	<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. <sup>12</sup> For each man cast down his staff, and they became serpents. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. <sup>13</sup> Still Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.
		<p>Do you see what’s going on here? Pharaoh snaps his fingers, <i>“Bring me the magicians and enchanters.”</i> And they came in, and there was a long history of sorcery and enchantment, and association with the dark arts in the Egyptian culture. There is all kinds of evidence for this in writings of antiquity, the Egyptian hieroglyphics and other cultural references of the time. Oh yes, they knew the satanic and demonic sources of power.</p> <p>It should not surprise us at all if there were some people “so to speak” that were on the devil’s payroll, and they came out as Pharaoh’s sorcerers and enchanters, and they found that they could do the same thing with their secret arts.</p> <p>By the way, you might be interested to know that in 2 Timothy 3:8-9, Paul - teaching against false teachers in the New Testament Church, tells us the names of two of these sorcerers who opposed Moses and Aaron:</p>
10	2 Timothy 3:8-9	<b>Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.</b>
		So Jannes and Jambres and the other magicians come out and say, <i>“No problem, Pharaoh! We can do that, too!”</i> They throw down their staffs, and they became serpents as well. Isn’t that remarkable? You’ve got two sets of serpents here. You’ve got Aaron’s staff and you’ve got the serpents of the Pharaoh’s magicians. And then what happened?



		<p>Right in front of Pharaoh's eyes, the serpent Moses and Aaron cast down ate the serpents the Pharaoh's magicians cast down.</p> <p>We read this account and it makes us a little uncomfortable, doesn't it? It makes me uncomfortable. Oh, I'm completely comfortable with God doing a miracle of turning a staff into a serpent when Aaron throws it down. What a mighty God we serve. OK, God, you can do that. You're omnipotent.</p> <p>However, it bothers me more than just a little bit to think that such satanic power could be in the hands of men who did what Jannes and Jambres did in response.</p> <p>I realize there are some commentators who try to explain that these are not supernatural events at all. For instance, there is known to be a way to grab a certain species of cobra in a way that makes it go stiff like a stick, and people in the world who perform that trick even today. And those commentators claim that when the magicians of Pharaoh did this, they were doing a parlor trick. Some kind of "slight-of-hand" magic. I don't know how they did this. Magicians can do weird things. I'm not saying some naturalistic explanation is 100% impossible, but the text does not read that way to me.</p> <p>The text reads to me that there was some supernatural, dark, demonic thing going on at the hand of the Pharaoh's magicians. We should be aware that the Bible tells us that there is such a thing as satanic power. There is such a thing as genuine miracles from God, and "apparent" miracles that can be done by the powers of darkness. And this makes us a bit nervous, doesn't it?</p> <p>That's good. This passage should make us wary of trusting too much in the merely miraculous. Paul brought this point home in 2 Thessalonians:</p>
11	2 Thess. 2:9-10	<p><sup>9</sup> The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with <sup>10</sup> all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.</p>
		<p>Now the proper context of this passage is Paul speaking of a coming lawless one who has yet to appear on the world scene, this ultimate adversary and messenger of Satan, who will come against God and against his people. That is an event that is yet to come, but the same spirit that will be manifest in the future ultimate lawless one was back with these magicians in Egypt, granting them some kind of supernatural power.</p> <p>We must not think that it is beyond Satan's ability to bring counterfeit miracles. We have a Bonafide miracle of God through Moses and Aaron. We could either have slight-of hand or demonic miracles taking place with Pharaoh's advisors.</p> <p>Here is the takeaway from this: Miracles can prove that something is supernatural, but they don't necessarily prove that something is true. Keep that separated in your mind.</p>



		<p>When Aaron's staff swallowed up the Magician's staffs, as it says in verses 12 &amp; 13, the message was clear. It was God saying, "No matter what you do, Satan... I AM more powerful."</p> <p>Yes, Pharaoh's enchanters can do some things, and whether they do them as parlor tricks or as supernatural occurrences, it doesn't really matter, because God's power is greater.</p> <p>And the lesson for us today is something to grab onto. Nobody here should doubt the power of God.</p> <p>I can just imagine. Somebody is absolutely bound by the power of Satan. I don't know if you would describe it as being demon-possessed, or not. But whatever way you describe it, there is a person bound by the power of Satan. They are bound in their habits. They are bound their personality, or they are bound in their addictions. However you want to understand it. They are bound by the power of Satan.</p> <p>I'll tell you what, even though that person is in despair, and they feel that the power of Satan is so powerful that there is no escape, the great news of the Bible is that Jesus Christ can swallow up that serpent.</p> <p>There is nothing mightier than the power of Jesus. And I think sometimes people get deceived on that point. Because, they see the impressive power of Satan. And indeed, the devil is powerful. He is. There is no doubt about it. But don't despair for a moment, because Jesus Christ, the Messiah of the world, is far more powerful than even satanic power.</p> <p>But this was a message that Pharaoh ignored, hardening his heart in face of the great power of God.</p>
12	Exodus 7:14-15	<p><sup>14</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. <sup>15</sup>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.</p>
		<p>And so, we come to the first of the ten plagues in the Book of Exodus. We are going to only cover the first one today. These plagues will grow. Each one is greater in intensity and severity. The plagues will serve two purposes: 1) To reveal God's person. 2) to reveal God's power.</p> <p>First, Pharaoh asked the question, "<i>Who is God, that I should obey Him?</i>" God is going to powerfully answer that question through signs and wonders of the plagues. That is why in verse 3 of this Chapter God says, "<i>I am going to <b>multiply</b> signs and wonders.</i>"</p> <p>Secondly, God will reveal his power through a series of judgements. These plagues are not random. They are targeted. They are targeted at specific gods and goddesses in Egypt. Whether it is the god of the Nile as we will see today, or a god the worship in the form of a frog, we will learn those identities as we come to them.</p>

		<p>Though there were about 3,000 gods and goddesses in thousands of temples around the land of Egypt, the chief gods and goddesses in the Egyptian pantheon are the ones that are targeted during these ten plagues.</p> <p>It would seem that Pharaoh, on a daily basis walked out to the river, because God says, <i>“When he goes out to the river...”</i>. A very predictable event. Pharaoh would go down to the river, and offer up praise to the god of the Nile river, and the other gods that also oversee the Nile River. Historical records indicate that songs of thanksgiving were often sung to the Nile River. So it was a standard ritual, particularly during flood times. There are several gods that are associated with the river. The god “Hapi” ‘Isis” is another god of the Nile River, and “Khnum”. Those three gods were associated with supervising the Nile River.</p> <p>Now, Hapi was depicted as a big fat man, with the breasts of a woman, which was to speak of fertility and nurturing. I don’t think anybody would be too Hapi with that kind of a set-up. That is how he was depicted in the Egyptian mythology.</p>
		<p>Also, they celebrated the yearly miraculous rebirth of “Osiris” He was the god of the earth and the vegetation, and when the Nile was at seasonal flood stage, they would worship Osiris at the banks of the Nile.</p> <p>The Egyptians said that the Nile River was the very “bloodstream” of the god Osiris. The bloodstream of Osiris.</p> <p>So, it is no coincidence that in this first plague, The Nile River, the bloodstream of Osiris was turned to blood.</p> <p>And, by the way, the Egyptians hated blood. That’s why they did not believe in blood sacrifices. They hated the idea of literal blood. It was foreign to them.</p>
13	Exodus 7:16-18	<p><sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.”</p>
		<p>The Nile was not unlike the river and irrigation system in Phoenix. The Salt River flows through Phoenix, and there are numerous canals that distribute water throughout the City. These canals have been part of the Phoenix infrastructure since the first indigenous people built canals in the area a thousand years ago. The Nile had similar systems in ancient Egypt. They cut canals out of the river and they irrigated agricultural fields and filled pools for drinking water and bathing. It is that system of Rivers and canals and pools that scripture describes next.</p>

14	Exodus 7:19-21	<p><sup>19</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.’”</p> <p><sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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.</p>
		<p>I wonder if God isn’t saying to the Egyptians, “<i>Your religion stinks.</i>” All of your gods and all of your goddesses can’t quench your thirst. Can’t satisfy your basic needs. Can’t fix this problem. This stinks.</p> <p>It did literally, and it also did spiritually.</p> <p>They look to the Nile as their source of refreshment and life.</p> <p>Now contrast this with what Jesus said,</p>
15	John 7:37-38	<p>Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”</p>
		<p>The Old Testament Scriptures he is quoting are Jeremiah 17:13 and Song of Songs 4:15. - Just to tie in today’s text with the Book we are studying with Pastor Paul.</p> <p>And Jesus said to the woman at the well:</p>
16	John 4:13-14	<p>Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”</p>
		<p>Now all the Egyptians are inconvenienced and can’t drink water, or bathe in the Nile River.</p> <p>I will say this: Commentators love to give supernatural events described in the Bible some practical, naturalistic explanation. For instance, some commentators say that the redness comes from a microscopic fungi that could have been present in the Nile River. Or, from red vegetable matter that gave it that red tint. Still others say a tiny insect of a reddish hue gave it that color. We know here in Sedona, that Oak Creek can turn red after a heavy monsoon rain.</p> <p>But the text says it turned to blood, not just turned red. And those explanations do not explain the suddenness of the change when the Moses and Aaron’s staff touched the water.</p> <p>All of those explanations require time. This was a sudden event, and the extensiveness of its vast impact and the death of the fish can only be explained by miraculous intervention.</p>

		By the way, just so you know, there is a significant mention of this event in secular history. There is a document of antiquity named the <b>Ipuwer Papyrus</b> . It is from the same period as our Biblical text, and it says in Chapter 2, Portion 10: “The Nile was blood and undrinkable.”
17	Ipuwer Papyrus	“The Nile was blood and undrinkable” Ipuwer Papyrus, Chapter 2, Portion 10
		<p>The same document also repeatedly mentions that servants left their masters in those days. And that is going to happen just a little later on in this narrative, isn’t it?</p> <p>It is a remarkable attestation from ancient history to this account in Exodus.</p> <p>Let’s look at what happened next.</p>
18	Exodus 7:22-25	<p><sup>22</sup>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. <sup>23</sup>Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart. <sup>24</sup>And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.</p> <p><sup>25</sup>Seven full days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile.</p>
		<p>Now, that’s a hoot! The magicians of Egypt did exactly the same thing that Moses and Aaron did. I mean if somebody curses your river, why would you go out there and curse it more? “<i>Moses turned it to blood? I can do that, watch this!</i>” If I were Pharaoh, I would have said to the magicians, “<i>No!, make it water again.</i>”</p> <p>Now, here’s a question. If Moses and Aaron struck the water and all of the River, and all of the ditches and all of rivulets and all of the ponds became blood, it sounds like there is not much water left. What water did these magicians have to replicate the miracle? Fair question?</p> <p>I believe the best answer comes to us in verse 24: “<i>And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink..</i>”</p> <p>In other words, around the Nile River, there were and are, some fresh water sources, some springs, not connected to the Nile itself, per se. They are few and far between, but they are there, and the Egyptians knew that they were there. And the Egyptians were able to dig for those wells to get fresh water...and then the magicians turned that new fresh water into blood.</p> <p>And I submit to you that what the magicians did is absolutely stupid. Keep the good water you’ve got, so you have something to drink.</p> <p>Do you see how absurd this “miracle” of the magicians is? If these enchantments were real, if they had real power, then what they really should have done was turn the bloody water pure again.</p> <p>But they didn’t.</p>

		<p>Do you know why? Because Satan has no power to do <b>real</b> good. He can do destructive things. He can take clean water and turn it to blood. But can he ever bring purity where there is filth? Never!</p> <p>Can Satan ever bring overcoming power where there is besetting weakness? Never!</p> <p>The power to do good. The power to redeem, the power to set free, that is in the hands of the one true God alone.</p>
		<p>So God brings this first terrible judgement upon Egypt. It should have woken them up. It should have changed their attitudes. But Pharaoh didn't listen. In verses 22 &amp; 23 tell us, <i>"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, <b>and he did not take even this to heart</b>"</i></p> <p>That's a sad statement, but it's a compelling statement. It's a good place for us to end this morning.</p> <p><b>What does it take to move your heart?</b></p> <p>Is there any way you are resisting God?</p> <p>Why don't you surrender?</p> <p>And I pray especially that this would be a wake-up call to anybody here this morning who somehow believes that things can get better in your life <b>without</b> the Lord.</p> <p>It is no problem to turn things into blood. It's no problem to mess things up. We all do pretty good at that in our lives. The real miracle that we need from God is to make things pure again.</p> <p>And the power to take something that is stained with sin that makes it crimson, and to redeem it, and make it white as snow again, that power is found in the work that Jesus Christ did at the cross.</p> <p>Moses could expose the problem. He could show that the blood that was all the way throughout the Nile.</p> <p>But is only Jesus who can come to that which is messed up and say,</p> <p><i>"I will make it whole."</i></p> <p><i>"I will make it pure."</i></p> <p><i>"I will make it clean again."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Guilty, vile and helpless we Spotless Lamb of God was He Full atonement! Can it be? Hallelujah! What a Savior!</i></p>