

Showdown - Exodus 7:8-25

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Preacher: Pastor Jared Bromka

[0 : 0 0] turn to Exodus chapter 7. We will pick up this morning. We've come as far. Last week, we only got through six verses because we spent most of our time in Romans chapter 9, looking at the process by which God selects and elects those who are part of his chosen people and those that he rejects. And it's according to his choice, according to his selection process, which is according to mercy, right? God chooses according to mercy and all those who would receive his mercy become part of God's chosen. It's not that hard to figure out if we just, you know, read the word or tell us what it says. Let's get into God's word, shall we? So Moses and Aaron have, they've been going through this process that God's been taking them through, where Moses, if you remember way back when he's in the wilderness, begins this process of God kind of working Moses through his doubts, through his fears and through his insecurities, where he's at a place where he's willing now to step forward in faith and obey God, despite of nothing changing essentially in his own personal condition. He's still got as many faults and failures as insecurities. But God's solution to that is to continue to reveal himself, right? He said to Moses that by my name, Al-Shaddai, the Almighty, have I been known by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but I will now be known by Jehovah, or God is, or the all-existing one, the one who shall become, the I am. We know then Jehovah by another name, don't we? We say the name Jesus, Yeshua, which is Jehovah is salvation, as God begins to continue to reveal through the scripture, through the word, the continued revelation of who he is. We now are on this side of the cross, where Moses and all of Israel were on the other side, looking forward to that hope, but they come by the same way we do, through faith. Abraham believed God and was counted him for righteousness. We own the same faith. As we believe what God has done, Abraham was believing what God would do in the Messiah, in Jesus. But as we approach the scriptures, you know, we've been looking at all these amazing types and shadows throughout the scripture, in Genesis and Exodus, as we go through it, we see pictures of Jesus. We see that shadow. And now we're on this side of the cross, and we're looking back. And we talked about, like, with a shadow, you can only get so much information from it. So if I was to see your shadow, and it was a really bright, crisp day, and I had a good outline, and maybe even turned to the side, and I had a profile, like, wow. And then I saw you in person,

I may be able to match you up with your shadow, right? If you're a really tall person, I'm not going to match you up with a small shadow. But I see the shadow, and I get what information I can. But when the real person comes, you gain so much more information. You see the eye color, the hair color. You see, oh, I didn't know you were male or female or whatever. There's things you can tell from the substance, the actual person, that you can't tell from a shadow.

Now, if I was to see your shadow, and then I was to see you, and I'm not, and I was like, that's great. The two have come together, but I spent all my time still focusing on your shadow. Wouldn't that be kind of silly? Like, if you're right there, and I'm talking to your shadow, and it's like, well, how are you doing? And you know, what color shirt are you wearing today?

And he's like, well, if you would just look at me, you could tell. It'd be kind of silly, right? So the foreshadowing of Jesus in the Old Testament, they gain so much more substance when we view them through the reality of Jesus in the New Testament. If we were to just ignore the New Testament and the revelation of who Jesus is, and just study God's word in the Old Testament, just looking at types and shadows without seeing Jesus, well, that'd be about as silly as looking at someone's shadow when they're right there, trying to understand it. We can understand so much more what God's word says, because we're looking at the person. We're looking at the substance. We have Jesus. So when we come to God's word, we're not trying to allegorize it or super spiritualize it. We're trying to see what is already there in it and contained in it. Just as they were looking forward to Jesus, we look back through the filter of Jesus, and then we can see these shadows and these typologies in here. And today's a good one. There's some pretty cool shadows, foreshadowing of Jesus. Who's the deliverer? Well, Jesus, right? Jesus is the deliverer. He's the word made flesh. So any picture of God's deliverance, it's going to look like Jesus.

It's not going to look like something else. Moses is a foreshadowing of Jesus. He would even say, there's going to be another prophet who's going to come like me someday. The Pharisees said to Jesus, are you that prophet? Are you Elijah? Or are you the prophet that Moses spoke of? They thought, well, maybe that's it. Because they knew to look forward to this person, this other, the substance and the shadow. So that's how we approach the scripture. That is your lesson for today in hermeneutics, which is just the process by which we study God's word. As we study the Old Testament, we never do it devoid, divorced, removed from the New Testament. Always want to look in light of the New Testament. So backing up into verse one of Exodus chapter seven, we're just going to read these first five verses that we covered last week to give some context. And the Lord said unto Moses, see, I have made you a God to Pharaoh. It doesn't mean that God as in like all powerful, but as in Pharaoh is going to recognize something divine working through Moses. And Aaron, your brother, shall be your prophet, your spokesman. And you shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron, your brother shall speak unto Pharaoh that he send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you that I may lay my hand upon Egypt and bring forth mine armies and my people, the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that

[5 : 42] I am the Lord when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them. And so we looked last week at God will harden Pharaoh's heart, but only after Pharaoh hardens his heart. And as we go through this, you're going to see his response continually to the things of God.

And I think as we get to the move through Exodus, I don't think any of us after going through it are going to look back and go, yep, God just decided to harden Pharaoh's heart. You're going to see, wow, this guy, his response to God's word, his response to the witness of God is pretty hard by his own choice. But there's two things here. God's going to use Pharaoh to do two things. One, to let his people go and to judge Egypt through that process. And then two, to show the people of Egypt that he is God. So God is going to judge them because of what they've done to his people. But he's also, because God's judgment's always mixed with mercy, he's also going to reveal himself to them.

And then we pick up in verse six, and this is where we are this week. And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them. So did they. And Moses was four score years old, says my King James, depends on what you're reading. He's 80 years old. And Aaron was 83 years old when they spoke under Pharaoh. So Moses and Aaron did as they were commanded. They did that in the face of rejection, in the face of a lack of success, in the face of their own doubts, they did what God commanded. Because faithful is God who calls us who also will do it. And then it tells us their age, 80 years old and 83. I mean, how many of you are planning on a 40-year ministry at 80 years old, right? Probably not. Now, God doesn't tell Moses this. By the way, Moses, you're going to deliver the people from Egypt. You're going to bring them back to this mountain. Remember the Mount of God where he said you'll bring them to worship. And then we're going to wander for 40 years. He didn't tell them that. God just reveals enough to us of what we need to know at the time. But age is never a barrier to obedience. It wasn't like, well, no, God, I'm too old for that. I can't, I can't do that.

That my age is a barrier. It's not. It's not a barrier to obedience. What is the barrier to obedience? Understanding. A child of eight or an adult of 80, they both can obey. Their age is never a barrier.

The barrier is your understanding and then your belief. It's not that it's a barrier. So Moses, at 80 years old, God didn't do what he did to Abraham and kind of rejuvenated him. He said, I'm going to use you as you are. And off they went. And the Lord spake unto Moses in verse 8 and unto Aaron saying, when Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, show a miracle for you. In other words, well, if you think you're, you say you're from God, show me, prove it. Then you shall take, you shall say unto Aaron, take the rod and cast it before Pharaoh and it shall become a serpent. And so God's kind of giving Moses some instructions here ahead of time. But what he's telling him is Pharaoh's going to seek evidence because the world seeks evidence of God through power. He's not going to seek it through God's word. He's not going to seek it through relationship. He's going to seek it through power. Well, if you're of God, show me, show me something exciting. The Pharisees said the same thing to Jesus, didn't they? So we'll show us a sign, give us a sign. How do we know you're from God?

[8 : 50] He said, no sign will be given you except the prophet of Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, the son of man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. But he tells them that a wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. Why?

Because if they're seeking a sign, they've already rejected God's word. They've already said God's word isn't enough. I need something else to prove this. Do signs change hearts? Did the Pharisees after and the people who had rejected Jesus before his crucifixion, when they saw that sign come to pass, three days and three nights, did all of Israel repent? No, it didn't. Because a sign doesn't change our heart. God's word is what validates God's call, not the signs. But Pharaoh is going to ask for a sign and God's going to give him a sign. And yet that sign is not going to change Pharaoh's heart. And Moses and Aaron, they went in unto Pharaoh. So now they're going in, they're going back into Pharaoh's palace, whatever that would be. And they just march in and they did so as the Lord had commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh. And I picture it like, because, you know, Aaron's the spokesman, but Moses is the power behind that and God's power behind Moses.

So I'm sure they're walking in and Moses takes his rod and hands it to Aaron. And Aaron takes it and says what he's supposed to say and then cast it down at his feet. And so in a sense, Moses seems like the God to Pharaoh. This is the way he would understand this, that, well, he's the true power. And Moses and Aaron did so and they cast down the rod before Pharaoh. Now, did they have any capacity to bring about God's word? Did they have any capacity to turn this rod into a serpent? Well, this, God's given me power. God's given me a gift. God's given me a calling.

But who's the one who has to make that come to pass? I have the gift of healing. I'll be healed. I'll heal you. You know, I have the gift of whatever I have. Well, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, but they're his gifts given to us to be used according to his plan and his word. So they throw it down and their obedience was not based upon their ability. It wasn't based upon, well, can I bring this to pass? Do I have the capacity to do that? It was based upon God's word.

God said he would do it. And so they threw down the rod. They didn't hesitate either. You know, they didn't say, Moses, I'm standing here with the rod. I don't feel it wiggling. Nothing's happening. You know, I don't feel any warmth. I don't feel a vibration.

[11 : 14] You should just throw it down. No hesitation. Faith does not hesitate. Remember when Jesus was, the disciples had just come back from being sent out to heal the sick and cast out demons and preach the gospel of the kingdom. And they're all excited that they come back. And Jesus says, let's go apart into a desert place a while. And he takes them apart for a little pastor's conference.

Well, all these people show up who weren't invited. And Jesus begins to teach them. And the disciples a little disgruntled about this. And so they use this kind of pretext and they say, well, Lord, it's late in the day. Send them away. They can find food. And he said, well, you give them something to eat. And that's where the feeding of the 5,000 takes place. And afterwards, it says, Jesus said to the apostles, he constrained them. He compelled them, get in the boat and go to the other side of Galilee and I'll meet you there. Well, he dispersed the crowds. I think it was, he knew their hearts. He wasn't going to have them there dispersing the crowds. All right, all you get out of here, get out of here, get out of here. It's my time with Jesus. So he disperses the crowds. Then he goes up into a mountain and prays. And in the meantime, they're in the midst of the sea rowing and rowing and a storm comes. And they continue to obey Jesus. They continue to obey his word and row and row, but they're making no progress. And it says, then Jesus goes to them walking on the water. That's where we get Jesus walking on the water. They think he's a ghost. They cry out. And he says, hey, it's not, don't fear. It's me. And Peter in this moment with no hesitation in faith, we pick it up in Matthew 14, verse 28, Peter says to him, Lord, if it's you, bid me come onto the water. No hesitation.

And he said, come. And Peter said, all right, guys, hand me the wetsuit, hand me the life jacket, tie a rope around me and I'm going in. And Peter, when he was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid. And beginning to sink, he cried saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him and said unto him, oh, thou of little faith, wherefore did you doubt? Did Peter need bigger faith? No.

Jesus is saying, Peter, your faith was big enough that you just walked down water, bro. You just hopped out of that boat with no hesitation. What was the problem? You doubted. You feared. The thing that will most undermine our faith is doubt. Moses and Aaron, it's really easy to hear the Lord say, okay, Aaron, here's the plan. We're going to go in there. We're going to throw down the rod.

But in the moment when you're standing there and all of the Egyptian court, whatever that looked like, is there and Pharaoh's there. And he's like, all right, prove it. And now all of a sudden, the thing that you're holding in your hand might not look so mighty. It might look kind of small.

[13 : 40] But faith doesn't hesitate because faith keeps his focus upon the object, which is Jesus, just like Peter here. So Moses and Aaron, they're faithful to do exactly what God called them to do because they were trusting God to do his part. They were looking at God and his ability and not themselves. And Pharaoh now, he called the wise men, the skillful men. And he says, well, okay, you wise men, you come and see if you can do this. Aaron casts down the rod and becomes a serpent.

And Pharaoh called the wise men. That means men of skill. And it's almost like mechanical skill is the idea. And the sorcerers, that's those who like cast spells. And so you get this idea here that they're these men that have made magic or delving into the dark arts of the spiritual world where we should not be. They've kind of like codified it and got a system going. They've got their own technology. Now the magicians, and that means diviners or engravers, like those who've made a system and they have packaged this system. I'm sure you could buy the Egyptian system of sorcery for 1995. So the magicians of Egypt, that would be, that includes the wise men and the sorcerers, the skillful men and the spell weavers. They're all included in the magicians.

They also did like manner with their enchantments or with their magic. Now the idea here is literally like a flame, like a false flame, like those who can control the elements. And so they figured it out.

They said, hey, we have a way. We've got a system. We've written it down. We've got instructions and plans. We know how to work with the elements in a way to do the same thing. Now just look to them. Maybe it was just the technology of Egypt, but behind it was those who are practicing and practices that God had forbidden. So who are these men? We actually are told their names. Paul will write about them in 2 Timothy. He says in 2 Timothy chapter 3, he says, now as Janus, his name means vexed, and Jambres, which means healer, withstood Moses.

So you have this man who's a vexer and one who's a false healer. They withstood Moses, so do these also. Now these that he's speaking of are false prophets, false teachers. They also resist the truth. They're men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, but they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men as theirs, as Janus and Jambres also was. So Paul's writing and saying there's false prophets who are like these magicians. These two guys who seem to be like the head of this troop of magicians.

[16:19] What were they like? They had corrupt minds. They were reprobate concerning the faith. They were foolish. And yet God said it shall go no further. There's a word in there that we probably don't use today. Reprobate. You are being very reprobate. We don't usually say that.

Reprobate just means to be unfit or proved worthy. So it says that they're reprobate concerning the faith. They've been proved unfit for the faith, unworthy, worthless. Like, wow. I mean, there's people out there that God looks at and just says, you're worthless for the faith. You're unfit for the faith. Yes, but not because God made them so, right? What did we just read there?

That they resisted the truth. They corrupted their minds through resisting the truth. When you resist the truth, yes, it makes you unfit for faith. Because now you're resisting the truth, you're not going to have faith in the truth. So these men now, this is their, it's not just that they're coming and saying, hey, I wonder if we can do that too. They're specifically trying to resist resist God's truth and resist what God is doing. They're standing withstanding Moses.

So a reprobate, someone who would say is reprobate, they see God, he sees God as one to be resisted, not received. A reprobate uses his time, energy, and skill to combat God, just like these magicians spending all of their energy, their time, and their skill to come against God. And a reprobate desires the things forbidden by God. That's the, you say, how do you know if someone's a reprobate? Well, what are they doing when God's truth comes? Are they receiving that truth or are they resisting it?

Are they using their time, their energy, and skill to combat God? It's hard for us to understand that, that there are people out there who look at God's truth, oh, as a reason to fight against it. We look at it as like, who wouldn't want to accept that? Do you know what it's done for us? But there are people who look at the truth of God as a reason to combat it. But these men, they're doing something that looks very similar to what Moses is doing. Moses and Aaron are doing, according to the command of God, this miracle. They're throwing down their rod and it becomes a serpent. Well, these men did the same thing. How do you tell the difference? They look so similar. Paul tells us that even Satan can masquerade as an angel of light. And he says, so we should not be surprised when even his ministers, even his servants, look like ministers of the gospel. We're told in Matthew chapter 7, by Jesus, he warns, beginning in verse 15, he says, beware of the false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing. But man on the inside, they're ravening wolves. They look like sheep, but they don't eat like sheep. You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs from thistles?

[19 : 04] Even so, every good tree will bring forth good fruit, but every corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. Wherefore, therefore, by their fruits, you shall know them. What are they producing? Fruit.

This is not talking about salvation. Be careful. There are people out there that will say, well, you know, you're saved by your fruit. No, we don't know we're saved by our fruit. We know we're saved by our faith, not by our fruit. But by our fruit, by fruit, you can tell if someone is a false prophet or not. And they can look just like the real thing. It can look like an apple tree.

They can have a sign in front of it that says apples. But if it produces peaches, it doesn't matter how much you make it look like an apple tree. It's not an apple tree. And so the enemies of God here, they are able to do the same thing, which appears divine, but it's just a counterfeit. And so these men, they now cast down every man, his rod, and they become serpents. And then something interesting happens as all of them are there together, the serpents, and they're standing there looking at them. And Pharaoh's like, come on, guys. Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. I like how the word there says, it doesn't say Aaron's serpent. It changes it to rod. Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.

I mean, that's going to take a minute, right? I've never seen a snake just swallow it quick. So here, Aaron's rod goes over and starts to swallow down the first one. And Pharaoh's going, guys, come on. And you picture the magicians doing whatever, hand me that book, hand me the other book, you know, flipping through. This was the latest, this latest model rod I had. And I just, I'm using this wrong. And then it swallows down the other one and the other one, and they're gone.

And what does Aaron do? Just like God had told Moses before he grabs it by the tail and it becomes a staff. And there he's standing there. And imagine that moment as Aaron stands there with his staff, maybe hands it back to Moses. And all of a sudden, nobody else has any staffs. And they're just kind of like standing there with none. You know, you can imagine the expense report they turn in that week. You know, we need all brand new magic staffs in the magic department.

[21 : 06] Well, guys, we just got the latest model this past quarter. What's going on? Did you lose them? Well, not exactly. We know where they are, but we're not getting them back. But it's interesting how it was every man, Aaron throws down one rod, the enemy throws down many, and they all kind of look the same. How do you know what's what? How can you tell the difference?

The enemy always seeks to overwhelm the authentic with the counterfeit. Paul warns of this in 2 Timothy chapter 4. He says, The enemy always tries to overwhelm the truth with multitudes of counterfeits. Look over here.

Look over here. Look over here. Piling it on. But the truth is easily distinguished because the truth easily extinguishes the lie. It's not very hard. God's not like, what am I going to do now? I mean, it's just in a moment. Nobody was questioning after this. Where was the truth? Which was the true God?

Which was the true rod? The truth easily is distinguished because it easily extinguishes the lie. And now in verse 13, if you're reading the King James, it will say, And he hardened Pharaoh's heart. We're going to see that later on. I think in verse 22, we'll talk about Pharaoh's heart being hardened. It's the exact same wording.

It shouldn't say he hardened. It's just, and Pharaoh's heart was hardened. It's the condition of Pharaoh's heart at this moment being hardened. Now, is God hardening it? In a sense, yes, because it's through what God is doing in Pharaoh's life that Pharaoh's responding in hardness, but God is not reaching in an arbitrarily hardening Pharaoh's heart. Pharaoh has rejected the truth of God as God is exposing this lie in his life. It's interesting that Pharaoh's response to God's word, it only continues to confirm him in his position. God's word continues to come to Pharaoh, and his word just continues to confirm Pharaoh in a position that he's already in. Why? Because we said what a reprobate is. One who looks at the truth of God's word is something to be combated, something to be fought against as opposed to received. So now the Lord said unto Moses, after this fact, I'm assuming they leave and they go on out and Pharaoh, maybe he's like, all right, get out of here. That was interesting, whatever. And the Lord reveals to Moses what Pharaoh's heart is currently doing. He says, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, and he refuses to let the people go.

[23 : 42] The word there, refuse, is to be unyielding and unrelenting. Pharaoh's heart is hard because he will not relent, because he will not yield to what I am doing. He's continuing to harden his heart.

If you remember in the parable of the sower in Mark and Matthew and Mark, you have the four different types of soil where the seed falls. The soil is the heart, the seed is the word of God. It falls on the path, it falls among the thorns, it falls among the rocks, and it falls on good soil, and each one of those conditions of soil is a condition of the heart. Some people look at it and say, well, some are saved and some aren't. Maybe, but I can also find all those conditions at times in my own heart. There's times where God's word may hit my heart, and man, it is hard, and it's not going to have any effect because I've hardened my heart in that area. There's times where maybe the soil has got impurities in it, other things that are preventing growth or fruitfulness.

But the soil that's hard, the path, it says that the word of God is sown, and there's no effect because it hits that hard ground, and then Satan comes and takes it away. You and I, hopefully, we have hearts open to God's word. It's very hard for us to imagine someone just totally rejecting God's word when it's the truth that they would actually not respond to it, but that they would instead choose to be unyielding and unrelenting. In Hosea chapter 10, Hosea speaks of a hard ground, a hard heart, and he says, well, here's the solution. In verse 12, he says, You have plowed wickedness. You've reaped iniquity. You've eaten the fruit of lies. Why? And this is Pharaoh's issue. Because you did trust in your own way, in the multitude of your mighty men. And there is Pharaoh standing against the representation of what God wants to do in his life, the truth of God, and he's trusting in his own way, and he's trusting in his mighty men. And he will not allow his hard heart to be broken up. And so the Lord tells Moses, hey, Pharaoh's heart's hardened. He refuses to let the people go. Get you unto Pharaoh in the morning. Lo, he goes out under the water, and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come, and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. So now God's telling Moses, instead of going in and speaking to Pharaoh, he wants to go and have him meet Pharaoh. And he's going to have him meet him. I realize I never put this up.

My kind of title for the message. He's going to meet him for a showdown. This is the point where God steps in. God has prepared Moses, and he steps in. He's like, all right, we're going to have a showdown. Between what? Well, we're going to have 10 plagues. Those 10 plagues are each going to represent one of Egypt's gods, one of their 10 gods, their primary gods. The first plague is going to be the plague of blood. It's going to be the plague upon the Nile, and their god, Hopi, H-A-P-I. And after this plague, he's not going to be very Hopi. He's going to be quite sad. But that was the god of fertility, or the god of life, they thought. And then all of the other plagues, the first three plagues, the blood, the frog, and the lice, will be upon all of Egypt. The ones following that, God will separate out from his people and from the Egyptians. They will not be upon the Hebrews, but upon just the Egyptians. And so our first showdown isn't God, isn't Moses and Aaron in Pharaoh's court, they're throwing down their staff. God is going to begin now to have this showdown, to have this reckoning with the gods of Egypt. And if you remember, we looked at Ezekiel, and we won't turn there again, where Ezekiel tells us that at the time that God was removing the Hebrews out of Egypt, they had idolatry going on. They were following all of Egypt's gods. And in fact, if you keep reading in there in Ezekiel, he said, and I would have wiped them out, because they would not hearken unto me and turn from their gods. But for the sake of my name, I would not do that. He would not destroy his people for the sake of his name. Beautiful shadow of our delivered Jesus, isn't it? But at this time, you think like, the Israelites just want to get out of Egypt. Well, no. I think they want to get out from under Egypt's bondage. But I think they would have stayed in Egypt if the bondage had just been lifted. But their hearts also were turned towards these false gods. So God is showing them as well, hey, these gods are false. And my guess is, as he progressed and got to that third plague, their hearts are beginning then to turn, and then the rest are just upon Egypt.

But either way here, you shall go into Pharaoh in the morning. Why the morning and why at the water? He's going down to the Nile to bathe and to worship ceremonially. In the morning, the sun rises, and there's Pharaoh at his little, you know, where the red buoys are, and so that the crocodiles don't come in and get him. And he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's brink over against him. In other words, be there before he gets there. And the rod which was turned to a serpent, you shall have taken your hand. Look at that. The rod which was turned to a serpent. That thing that at one time God said to Moses, what's in your hand, Moses? Just a rod. Man, it's gaining a reputation, isn't it? Now it's the rod that was turned into a serpent. The everyday things that we turn over to God that he says, what's in your hand? Just give that to me. Turn that over to me. You know, just turn over what's in your hand. I think of like, you know, an iPad. Just turn it over to God. What can God do with it? What can he do with that? Man, they become legendary when they're placed in God's hands, aren't they? Legendary. You think of the plane that Nate Saint flew, that yellow Piper Cub plane that he flew to go into the Alka Indians when Jim Elliott and Nate Saint and Roger McCulley and whoever the other one was, I can never remember his name, when they went to take the gospel. And then they were murdered for the sake of the gospel. And that yellow iconic plane. So many other things. You think of how iconic it is that at one time people were building just by bricks and mortar in their homes, false rooms to hide the Jews, God's people. How iconic a home can become. Something legendary.

[29 : 42] Something that you just, you don't think, well, what is this? God says, you give it to me? And man, you won't have any idea what I can do with that. Becomes a legend. And here is this staff. And you know, as he walks up, they walk up with their staff and here comes Pharaoh and all his guys, all his staff. And they got their new latest model staff, magic staffs. They're kind of like, you know, just kind of like, oh man, this is embarrassing. Oh, but anyway, Pharaoh was going to worship, but there's no escaping or standing in the way of God's will, is there? Moses was going to be there. God's putting him right in front of him. Pharaoh, you're going to have to deal with this.

You're not going to escape this. It's time for a showdown. And you shall say unto him, in verse 16, the Lord God of the Hebrews has sent me unto you, saying, let my people go. God's not ashamed to call these slaves Hebrews, these Hebrews, his people. He's not ashamed to be identified with his people in their bondage. Let my people go. Why wouldn't God be ashamed to identify with his people in bondage? Because he knows they're not going to stay that way. He's going to identify with them in bondage so he can bring them out to identify with him in deliverance.

Let them go that they may serve me in the wilderness and behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear. He says, the Lord God of the Hebrews has said, let me go. But up until this point, Pharaoh, you wouldn't hear. Not that he couldn't hear it, but that he wouldn't respond in obedience.

God will remove all hindrances between his people and himself. Nothing will stand in the way of God delivering his people. You know, we talked last time about God's long suffering with Pharaoh and how the long suffering of God is salvation. And then the goodness of God leads a man to salvation. He could have just snuffed out Pharaoh in a moment, but he didn't.

For 10 plagues and for however long this takes, I don't know how many months this is, God is dealing with this man. This man who's rejected him, who's a reprobate. God continues to speak to him through judgment, continues to show him that he is God and that he is in control.

[31 : 43] So God doesn't hate Pharaoh. God loves Pharaoh, but Pharaoh continues to reject God. Pharaoh is sinning against revealed truth. And where it says that Pharaoh's response here to God's word that says, for he has hitherto until now, you would not hear. Up until now, Pharaoh, you're just continuing to prove that you are a reprobate, a worthless one, one who is not worthy to receive the things of God. And that is not because God said you're worthy, you're not worthy.

Remember we talked about that. He's not worthy to receive the things of God because he won't look at God as worthy and he's rejected it. Thus says the Lord, verse 17, in this, you shall know, Pharaoh, that I am the Lord. This is not a question. I hope Pharaoh gets this. No, Pharaoh, you're going to know I'm the Lord. Behold, I will smite the rod that is in my hand. This is the Lord speaking through Moses, speaking through Aaron. Look at what he says. I will smite the rod that's in whose hand? In my hand. The Lord is taking ownership of this. That rod is in my hand.

And I will smite the waters which are in the river and they shall be turned to blood. God personally owns what we do for him according to his will. He owns it as his. We go out and do it.

He says, that's me. That's me doing that. That's my body. That's my hand. Because God's work done in God's way is done in God's name. So we go and we speak in the name of Jesus. We preach in the name of Jesus. We minister in the name of Jesus. What's the name of Jesus? Well, it's just doing God's work in God's way, doing it according to his will and according to his word. And when we do that, God personally owns that. He says, that's mine. That's as if I was doing it. Paul would say that he beseeches us as ambassadors of Christ. He says, I beseech you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God as if Jesus was here himself.

Zachariah 4.6 says, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. And the Lord is the one taking ownership here. And Pharaoh, I will smite the river and they shall be turned to blood.

[33 : 49] The waters which are in the river and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish, verse 18, that is in the river shall die. And the river shall stink. And the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river. The source of life would become a source of death. But wasn't it already a source of death? What have they been doing with this river? What have the Egyptians done with this river for how many years? They've taken all the baby boys from the Hebrews. On the surface, everything looked good. Everything looked great. Things are going fine. But beneath the surface, it was already a river of death. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying to Aaron, take your rod and stretch out your hand upon the waters of Egypt. Now listen to this. Upon their streams, upon their rivers, upon their ponds, upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood. There will be no place untouched by blood. There will be no place untouched by judgment. All of them. And that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so as the Lord commanded. And he lifted up the rod and he smote the waters that were in the river.

There's going to be no questioning here who was doing this. This isn't, oh, maybe it was a natural phenomenon. There was going to be no mistake where the source of judgment was coming from.

As Aaron strikes the water, he smote the waters. And in the sight of Pharaoh, in the sight of his servants, and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. No place untouched by judgment.

No place untouched by blood. So if you want to lift up your pot that was boiling on your stove, well, all of a sudden it's blood. If you go out to the watering trough or your donkey or whatever, it's blood. If you go to the stream, a different stream, or you go to the irrigation dishes, that's what Egypt was known for, bringing irrigation into the land. It was all blood, blood, blood, blood everywhere. God would bring Egypt face to face with the blood that they have spread over that whole land through the way they've treated the newborn. Numbers.

God is speaking through Moses and Moses is speaking to Israel, kind of giving the nation their identity through how they are to live. And he says something interesting here about the land that they will go into. He said, so you shall not pollute the land wherein you are for blood. It defiles the land. Innocent blood defiles the land and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that it shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. So the blood is defiled, the land is defiled through blood. And while Egypt thought everything's good beneath the surface was a river of death, and now God is bringing them face to face with blood. And no source of water, no source of life giving water was untouched by the blood.

[36 : 36] And the fish, verse 21, that was in the river did die, and the river stank. And the Egyptians could not drink of the water thereof in the river, and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. So their false god, their god happy, wasn't very happy. It stunk. And that's what false religion does, right? It stinks and it kills. That was the ultimate end of this god of theirs.

No place untouched by blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt. Now the magicians come. They got their brand new models, their new upgraded staff, and the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments. And Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

Neither did he hearken unto them as the Lord had said. And that's the exact same wording we saw earlier. Pharaoh's heart was hardened. So the Egyptians come. I don't know where they found this water. There's a little bit of good water left because all the water's been turned to blood. And they said, hey, watch this. And they turned it to blood. Pharaoh's like, thanks, guys. That's really good.

Couldn't you do the opposite? Couldn't you like turn the blood to water? Can you do that? They can't. The enemy can mimic judgment, but he cannot mimic mercy. Romans 8.1 says, There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. The enemy can mimic judgment.

He can heap on you condemnation. He can bring the guilt and sins of your past and make you remember them. He can tell you your future is going to be miserable, but he cannot mimic mercy because he has no idea what it is. He has no idea what it is because he has rejected God's mercy when he fell, and there is no mercy open for him. In John 10.10, it tells us that the enemy, Jesus says, the thief, he comes not, or the only reason he comes, is to kill or to steal, to kill and destroy. But I am come that you might have life. You might have it more abundantly. Again, the truth and the counterfeit are easily distinguished between. The enemy comes but to steal, kill, and destroy. So Pharaoh here, he sees that, well, my guys are just as capable as your guys. My gods can do the same thing yours can. I mean, yeah, now I don't have a source of water and it stinks, but Pharaoh is rejecting the truth and all he's left with now is a lie. All he's got is the lie that these men are perpetrating. And the result, the result was a heart that became even more solidified, even more hard in its position to stand against God. And now look at verse 23. What an indictment against Pharaoh. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither did he set, literally to put or place. Neither did he put his heart. Neither did he place his heart to this also. Neither would he turn to this. Is God hardening

[39 : 17] Pharaoh's heart? Is God forcing Pharaoh to have a hard heart? God is hardening Pharaoh's heart. The same everyone's heart will be hardened through God's word, through the witness and word of God in this world and Pharaoh's response to it. Pharaoh turns away from God and he turns to his own home. He turns to what's familiar. He turns to what's comfortable and he turns to what he can control. But man, I'm going to go back to what I know. Turned away from the witness and the word of God. As we close with these last two verses, you know, we've talked about how blood, there was no place untouched by blood and no place untouched by judgment. And yet in the midst of judgment, God remembers mercy, doesn't he?

Verse 24, we kind of have now, this almost like little parentheses about what's happening in Egypt in response to this plague. And all the Egyptians dig round about the river for water to drink.

So no more surface water. It's all well water. But they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days were fulfilled after the Lord had smitten the river. So verse 25 tells us it didn't just stay blood.

It was seven days that God's judgment ended in mercy. God's judgment always ends in mercy. There's always mercy available to those who would receive it. Now, where did they have to come to receive this water? In the midst of this judgment, God opens a well of water. But where's it at?

Man, there's a well of living water, a new source of water, but it's at the place of death, blood, and judgment. They have to dig the well. And if they want to come and get that water, they have to come right next to that source of where the Nile is and the fish stink. Not only that, but there's probably hippopotamus and crocodiles and every other type of water creature that doesn't have to live in the water that's now very angry and along the side of this, what was, you know, the river Nile of water. God's mercy was displayed at the place of blood and judgment, wasn't it?

[41 : 12] Habakkuk 3.2 says, Oh Lord, revive your work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years, make known in wrath, remember mercy. God's judgment, God's wrath is always laced with mercy. At the place of death, the place of blood, alongside the river, a well was opened. A well of mercy was opened. And as Jesus hung upon the cross, the place of blood and of judgment, the place where all of humanity, the blood and the judgment covered everything. Everybody has come under blood and judgment.

At that place, there was a new well opened. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side and forthwith there came out blood and water. God's judgment mixed with mercy. That well is still open.

That well of God's mercy that God would take upon himself, the blood and judgment that should be upon us, the blood and judgment that is upon all of us. And yet there's a way of mercy, isn't there? John 20 verse 27, when Thomas is doubting and said, I don't believe Jesus is alive. And he shows up to him and Thomas is like, whoa. He says to him, Thomas, reach your fingers here. Behold my hands and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side. And be not faithless, but believing. Put it in that side, put it in that well of mercy, which is still open. The fact that Jesus now has taken upon himself the blood and the judgment so that he might give us mercy. Galatians 3 22 says, the scripture is concluded all under sin. All of Egypt has come under blood and judgment. We've all come under that. All have been concluded under sin. Why? So that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. We have all come under blood and judgment so that we might all come under mercy. Anybody in Egypt could have gone to one of those wells and received water. God did not leave them without a source. But to do that, they would have to do that by coming to the place where God's blood, where the judgment, and where death was.

In John 7, Jesus, in the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, if any man thirsts, let him come and drink. Let him come unto me and drink. He that believes on me, as the scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. The place of blood and water, a new and living way was opened for all those who had come under the blood. What a beautiful picture.

What an amazing shadow foreshadowing. That blood covered the land. Judgment covered the land. And yet, right alongside that judgment, God opened up a new well of mercy. And it's the same for us.

[43 : 45] We, like Egypt today, have been brought face to face with the blood of our sin. God has concluded all under sin. We are brought face to face with our own deeds so that we might be brought face to face with the one who shed his blood for our sin. God concludes all under sin and all under blood and all under judgment so that we can come to the one who took away our sin, our blood, and our judgment, and we can receive from a source of living water. Hebrews chapter 10, speaking of Jesus as our high priest, speaking of Jesus who has took upon himself the judgment and the blood that should have been my blood and my judgment. It says, having therefore brethren, speaking to us, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, a way that was opened, a way that was opened through his flesh. The blood shed for us. Let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water, the blood and the water working together. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful, the promised. He's faithful that all of his judgments end in mercy for those who would receive mercy. Pharaoh, don't turn away. Don't go back into your house. Don't go back to what is comfortable and what you know. I know it stinks. I know it. Death stinks. Blood stinks. This is hard. The area that was most sacred to you, your home, is now covered in blood. Don't turn away, Pharaoh. Don't harden your heart. Don't look to a counterfeit. Man, God has made a way that you can come and receive a well of living water. And with Jesus, the fulfillment of the shadow, it's a well that springs up under everlasting life. I don't have to keep going back and back and back.

It's a continuous well. You know, there's another group of people here that we allude to throughout this whole narrative, but they don't have a lot of press. And that's the Hebrews. That's those that God has sent his deliverer to deliver. That's the one that he's having. Those are the people he's having a showdown with Pharaoh with the enemy over. And their houses too are filled with blood. And in that moment, they may be thinking, God, I thought you were going to deliver me. I thought you were going to help me. And it's just gotten worse. You're like punishing me. I'm under blood and I'm under judgment too. What's going on? And at the place of blood and judgment where Jesus hung on the cross, his disciples thought we, even afterwards, they said, we thought, we thought he was going to be the one to restore Israel. We thought so, but he wasn't. But little did they know what looked like death, blood, and judgment was just simply one more step on God's road of deliverance.

They had no idea at that moment, as Jesus hung on the cross, that God had just delivered the world from being under the curse of blood and judgment. And we don't know either what God is doing in our lives right now. That looks like, God, what are you doing? He's like, oh, you don't have any idea.

It's a showdown. And I'm going to come out victorious. He's not left them. He's not forsaken them. He's not going to leave or forsake us. And he battles for us. He battles on our behalf. He's the one with the showdown. He's the one who sent the deliverer, right? We just need to accept the fact that he's the one who's going to deliver, that his blood and judgment is on us. But what have we done with that? Have we responded to that? Unlike Pharaoh, we said, okay, God, I need a new source. Man, my old sources don't give me any living water anymore. I need a new source.

And so I'm going to come to the side that's been opened. And I'm going to come through the veil. I'm going to come with boldness. And I'm going to come because he's faithful. Like Moses and Aaron threw out the rod, faithfully did what God said. I don't know how it's going to work. I don't have the ability to do it. But I can faithfully come to the one who has delivered me through blood and water.

[47 : 43] Father, thank you so much, Lord, for your word. Thank you for the picture of Jesus, the love of Jesus, the one that would take upon himself all of my judgment so that I might be delivered. All of the blood that's guilty that's upon my hands has been washed by water. And now I can be pure and stand fresh and new before you. Thank you, Father, that the enemy, he can mimic judgment, but he can't mimic mercy. Thank you that there's no condemnation to them who in Christ Jesus. Thank you that this morning, the things in our lives that look like defeat, judgment, God, help us to remember that you have not forgotten mercy, that you are just moving us along that path of deliverance. Whatever it is in our lives that you are working us through, you will work us out of because you are the one, Lord, who fights on our behalf. Thank you, Jesus. Amen. He fights for us. I don't think there's any other way to end than just with that. May the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you. The Lord be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.