



What is the LORD showing about Himself in the plague of turning water to blood? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. Exodus 7:14–25 prepares us for the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these twelve verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that the LORD was exalting Himself over the idols of Egypt, judging Pharaoh with perfect justness, and displaying the effectiveness of His grace in Moses.

Wednesday, October 13, 2021 • Read Exodus 7:14–25

Questions from the Scripture text: What does Yahweh tell Moses in v14? To whom is Moses to go (v15)? When? Where? What should he take? Whom should he say sent him (v16)? What reason is he to give for letting the people go? Of what are they to accuse/charge him? In whose behalf is he supposed to speak again (v17)? What is He going to teach Pharaoh? How? What will happen to the fish (v18)? And the river? And the Egyptians? What does Yahweh tell Moses to do in v19? What is Aaron to do? Over what four things? What will happen to them? Where else will there be blood? How does v20 at first describe Moses's and Aaron's response? What detailed actions and what results? What happened to the fish (v21)? And to the river? And to the Egyptians? And to the land? Who else did similar (v22a)? With what results (v22b)? Why (v22c)? So how did Pharaoh ultimately respond (v23)? And what did the people have to do (v24)? For how long (v25)?

God is infinitely powerful and perfectly just. He displays that here by doing to Pharaoh and the Egyptians according to what Pharaoh had done in response to the initial demand to let them go to worship Yahweh. Pharaoh had refused to acknowledge Yahweh obediently (cf. 5:2), and had forced the Hebrews to make bricks without straw (cf. 5:6), which resulted in a mad scramble to gather stubble wherever they could (cf. 5:13). Now in our passage, Yahweh reverses this onto Pharaoh's head, because Pharaoh has refused to hear the demand (v16). So Yahweh forces the Egyptians to make life without water (v19), which results in a mad scramble to gather up whatever however they can (v24). In fact, even the mechanism by which Pharaoh's heart is hardened in v22 has a symmetry with chapter 5; there, Israelite taskmasters were forced to make things harder on the Israelites (cf. 5:15). And here, Egyptian magicians take from what little water Aaron hadn't stretched his hand toward, and in order to confirm Pharaoh in his rebellion, proceed to foul up that good water themselves, denying it to the Egyptians (v22). The symmetry declares not only the power, but the justness of Yahweh's sign.

God is making Himself known as the only true God. Various ancient texts even beyond the Bible attest that the Nile was viewed not only as the god Hapi, but as the one who gave birth to Egypt and nursed Egypt. By attacking the Nile, Yahweh is immediately humiliating Egypt at its (literal and metaphorical) core. Furthermore the "wood" and "stone" of v19 does not actually indicate buckets and pitchers as our English translation supplies; in Scripture (and in ancient Egypt), the combination of "wood and stone" is most often applied to idol images. According to one Jewish commentator, every morning the Egyptian priests washed the images of their gods; if so, the humiliation of Hapi had turned their ritual purification into humiliation and desecration (exactly the opposite, in this first plague, of when Jesus in His first miracle turns ritual purification into a covenantal substance of joy and blessing, cf. Jn 2:6–10). Pharaoh had refused to acknowledge Yahweh (5:2); now Yahweh is making Himself to be known (v17a).

God is showing us our need of His grace. The language used of Pharaoh's heart in v14 also attacks Egypt at its core. In v13, "hard" means "tough," the way we usually think of hardness. The word in v14 literally means "heavy"—probably an allusion to the Egyptian idea that when they died, their heart would be weighed against a mythological feather of truth and righteousness to see if they would go to the Egyptian afterlife or else be condemned and consumed by a devouring monster. This wicked superstition corresponds to a kernel of truth: it is appointed to man to die once and then after that the judgment (cf. Heb 9:27). But Pharaoh has no hope before the justice of God; his heart was already full of sin, and now God is giving him over to it and making it even heavier. This statement in v14 is not merely a description but a judgment. Let sinners know that left to themselves, their hearts will only become heavier with sin. If they are to find safety at the judgement, they must have atoning, regenerating, redeeming grace!

v20 is a reminder that Moses and Aaron are receiving that grace. They deserved to be given over to their sin, but instead they "did so, just as Yahweh had commanded." We continue to hear this refrain, in direct contrast to how Moses had begun in unbelief and resistance. God's grace had delivered them from the wrath they well deserved, and now God's power is bent not on destroying them but delivering them from their enemies. Such is true with all whom God saves by undeserved (anti-deserved) grace. Revelation 16:3–4 describes the general wrath of God in images borrowed from this first plague. For all who are brought by grace into belonging to Yahweh and submitting to Him are delivered from His wrath and find that He exercises it not against us but on our behalf.

What oppression do you see that God will surely repay with complete and perfect justice? How does it help you respond rightly to remember that He will respond that way? Who will be made to acknowledge that Yahweh is God, and that Jesus is Yahweh? What will happen to all other "gods"? In what growing obedience in your own life can you see displayed the conquering power of God's grace?

Sample prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, You are the one, true, and living God. We adore Your infinite power, and the wisdom in which You choose when and how to display it. Truly, Your justice is perfect, and every evil will be exactly answered. Forgive us for when we are hard-hearted toward You, or when we feel that evil is too powerful or allowed to go unanswered. Grant, by Your grace, that we would do just as You have told us, with confidence that You will make Your glory known, which we ask in Jesus's Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP2 "Why Do Gentile Nations Rage?" or TPH385 "The Lord Will Come and Not Be Slow"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Exodus chapter 7 versus 14 through 25. These are God's words. So you always said to Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hard. He refuses to let the people go to Pharaoh and the morning when he goes out to the water and you shall stand by the rivers bank, to meet him, and the rod which was turned to a serpent, you shall taken your hand and you shall say to him, you always God of the Hebrews has sent me to you saying, let my people go that they may serve me in the wilderness but indeed until now you would not hear thus says Yahweh by this, you shall know that.

I am Yahweh behold, I will strike the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand. And they shall be turned to blood and the fish that are in the reversal die. The river shall stink and the Egyptians will love to drink the water of the river.

Then you always spoke to Moses, say, then you always spoke to Moses. Say to Aaron. Take your rod, and stretch out your hand. Over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds over older pools of water that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood, and pictures of stone and Moses and Aaron did.

So just as Yahweh had commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river in the sight of Pharaoh, and then the side of his servants and all the waters that were in the river turned to blood, The fish that were in the river died.

The river stank and the Egyptians could not drink, the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt, then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments and Pharaoh's hearts, grew hard and he did not heed them as y'all I had said.

And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink because it could not drink the water of the river and seven days past after Yahweh had struck the river so far the reading of God's inspired and an errant word.

So two things that the Lord was doing here one. I think the more obvious one, he was showing the greatness of his power and justice, the perfection of his justice against the Egyptians first, the greatness of his power. The Nile was what made Egypt different than the other lands in the area.

The Nile provided fish, which was a, a great source of food. And of course, the Lord takes that away in verse 21 and also provided water. The Egyptians used the water from the Nile to irrigate much of the land of Egypt. And so they had much better agriculture. And of course, also water for drinking.

The Nile was also used for ritual, washing the Egyptians thought that they were very clean. This of course is always an illusion for man because we are filthy before God and our sin and the fact that Egypt came to stink that the river stank in verse 21 with the dead fish.

And that this was something that God specifically predicted in verse 18 that the fish would die in the river. Shall stink would be humiliating to the Egyptians, who thought they were powerful and who thought they were clean? And the what the Lord does is actually quite just he says until now you have not heard me.

Well, he's only really gone to him and asked him to do this once so far and Pharaoh said, no and what did Pharaoh do? He said, you are making the people lazy and so they had to have bricks without straw and the people weared themselves. Israelites, we read themselves looking for or trying to make bricks without straw.

Well here the Lord turns it about on Pharaoh's head. It tells us that the Egyptians were weary or would be weary in verse 18. The Egyptians will New King James says, love to drink, the water of the river. They will be weary in drinking the water of the river and we find out why it was so wearying in verse 24.

So, all the Egyptians dogged all around the river for water to drink, Pharaoh, in his heart-heartedness, refuses to repent, the Lord, lets his magicians. His sorcerers do a little water to blood stuff and Pharaoh Pharaoh's, heart is hardened. He turns and he goes back into his palace. Well, easy enough for him.

He doesn't have to get his own water. Other people have to dig for his water. What about all the Egyptians water? Is not something that you can live without. So just like the Hebrews because of Pharaoh's heart-heartedness had to have bricks without straw. Now, the Egyptians because of Pharaoh's heart-heartedness have to have life without water and they weary themselves out.

Digging God makes them stink with their smelly fish and he reduces them to manual labor like slaves. The whole land of Egypt, having to spend a large part of their life digging just so they have enough water to drink, just so they have enough water to survive. In fact, it's not just excuse me, it's not just the, the perfect symmetry of God's justice on the people.

It is even a judgment upon their gods. This is first of all, they treated the Nile like a God, the Egyptian hieroglyphics and later the historian Herodotus would record the same thing as the Egyptian saying it. They thought they had a belief that the Nile had created the land of Egypt for them and gave them their life and the Nile was personalized.

There was a god named. I think it's happy. Yes, I put it in the devotional hobby and are happy, but I think it's hoppy that that was the incarnation as it were or personal image of the of the Nile that they worshiped. And so the Nile is humiliated instead of being a source of life, it becomes a source of death, even worse.

There was something that all of the priests of all the other gods had to do every morning wash. The idols problem is what do they have for washing now blood and that's actually in your text in verse 19. It's a little concealed from us and the translation that we have because the word buckets and the word pitcher are supplied by our translators.

And you can see that many of you will have maybe all of you will have italics for buckets and pictures in verse 19. But it but the the threat here or with the declaration areas and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even on the wood and the stone.

Well on the Bible wouldn't stone together is usually a summary of the materials, out of which all of the fools who say in their heart that there is no God about the true and living God, make their idols. Out of idols are made out of wood and stone. So often you have that pair together and that was certainly true in Egypt.

So and they, when the priests got up every morning, the first thing they were going to do is a wash off their idols. Hey, to watch them with blood because even the the water digging efforts in verse 24 didn't produce enough water. The they were very they barely had enough to drink and so there was blood on the wood.

And on this tone God, humiliating Egypt and giving justice in the symmetry between what had happened to the Israelites. When Pharaoh's heart was hardened, the first time and now very similar thing reduced to manual. Labor made, distinct. And so forth. The Egyptians when Pharaoh's heart is hardened. Now, this second time, just as Yahweh had said.

So that's the first big thing. God showing that he's the one true God. God showing he's powerful overall of Egypt and Egypt's gods. God showing that his justices. Perfect. That. Even, by the way, that he's bringing this particular part of the judgment. He shows that it is exactly corresponding to what they deserve which is frightening for those who have sinned against the glory of God.

Because the justice of God punishes that exactly corresponding to what it deserves, which means that we needed an atonement. That was as big as the glory of God, which is why God the Son had to become a man to be the atonement for our sins. The second thing that we see in the middle of this passage about about Pharaoh's hard-heartedness is verse 20 and Moses and Aaron did.

So, just as Yahweh had commanded and the miracle of God's grace that here, you have Moses who had resisted, resisted resistant, the instructions and commands of God, and now multiple times, and will have multiple more throughout. This passage, it becomes a theme in the book of Exodus just as Yahweh had commanded.

Or just, as you always had commanded Moses, especially when we get to the building of the tabernacle, that's one of the great themes of that section and Exodus. And it reminds us that God's grace isn't just for the destruction of enemies. Exactly. Corresponding to what they deserve but God's grace is also for the conversion of those who had conducted in themselves as enemies because he had determined to take them for himself as his people and to love them as his own, very similar to what we saw, the Lord Jesus expressing on the cross, and the passage Lord say morning general.

Love for his enemies. Yes. But especially that love. That would take enemies and not show them a goodness that would condemn them in the last day, but a love that would atone for them by his blood on the cross. That love, that would convert them and bring them to faith in him very important for each of us because we have in our hearts and in our minds and our actions acted as the enemies of God.

But he is a God who has love for his enemies, all of them, he shows goodness to them, which has a sort of love and even to some upon him, he has set that special saving love from before the world began. He has that. Love that atones for us and converts us.

And even brings us by grace to like Moses and Aaron in verse 20, do just as your way and commanded. There's

God. Let us ask. Let us come to heaven prayer.

Our father in heaven. We Thank you. There is a fountain filled not with water, which cannot avail or return for us, but with the blood of Jesus, and that in his blood, for us is not death, but everlasting life, and that he himself. And his spirit are unto us living water.

We pray that you would remind us of your infinite power over those who seem to be exalted and powerful and of your perfect justice which exactly corresponds to what they do. So that no sin against you, no sin against your people will ever go and punished we can fast, Lord, we see a lot of sinning against your people in our world and they now our land.

Help us to entrust ourselves to you. And to be sure of that justness that we have seen. Even in this passage, we thank you that your justness provided the cross. So that for those who you have loved sparingly the wrath, that we deserved, has fallen upon yourself in the Lord Jesus, in your son, grant to us, the work of your spirit to stir up our faith and in a faith through which you have made him, ours, and us his and his righteousness, counted for us, and his payment counted against our sin, and grant that we would now by your spirit working faith in us and growing that faith in us, that we would walk by that.

Faith that we would love you and do according to what you have commanded. We ask these things in his name, even the name of Christ amen.