

Title: **AN EXPLOSION OF MIRACLES**
Text: Exodus 7:1-10:29
Subject: *The Plagues Upon Egypt*
Date: Tuesday Evening — April 10, 2007
Tape # Exodus 46
 Auditorium: Revelation 17:1-18:2

Introduction:

Tonight we are going to look at five of the most remarkable chapters in the entire Bible. I say that these are five of the most remarkable chapters in the Word of God, because they set before us an explosion of miracles performed by Moses and Aaron against Pharaoh and the Egyptians. They begin with Aaron's rod becoming a serpent and proceed to describe the first nine plagues that God unleashed on Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. Let's read the opening verses of chapter seven and the last verses of chapter ten.

(Exodus 7:1-6) "And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. (2) Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. (3) And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. (4) 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. (5) And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. (6) And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they."

(Exodus 10:27-29) "But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. (28) And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in *that* day thou seest my face thou shalt die. (29) And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more."

The whole land of Egypt was made to tremble beneath the successive strokes of God's rod. Everyone, from the Pharaoh on his throne to the servant in the field, was made to feel the terrible weight of divine judgment (Psalm 105:26-35).

(Psalms 105:26-35) "He sent Moses his servant; *and* Aaron whom

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he had chosen. (27) They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. (28) He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word. (29) He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish. (30) Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. (31) He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, *and* lice in all their coasts. (32) He gave them hail for rain, *and* flaming fire in their land. (33) He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts. (34) He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number, (35) And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.”

That is an explosion of miracles. Yet, Pharaoh, in his arrogance of heart and enmity against God defied the Most high God. And, as a just consequence of his rebellion, he was given over to judicial blindness and hardness of heart (Exodus 9:12-16).

(Exodus 9:12-16) “And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses. (13) And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (14) For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that *there is* none like me in all the earth. (15) For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. (16) And in very deed for this *cause* have I raised thee up, for to show *in* thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.”

What shall we learn from the things recorded in these five chapters?

SALVATION SURE

The first thing that comes to my mind, as I read these chapters, is the fact that the salvation of God’s elect is sure. As I read these chapters, I am reminded of the inspiring visions given to John in the Book of Revelation. In that blessed book, we see the last proud oppressor of Christ’s people bringing down upon himself and upon all who follow him the seven vials of the wrath of the Almighty.

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It is God's purpose to save his Israel. All who dare oppose the purpose of God and set themselves against his church shall be taken out of the way. Divine grace must find its object. All who stand in the way shall be taken out of the way. Whether it be Egypt, Babylon, or "*the beast that was, is not, and shall be present,*" all shall be taken out of the way. God's providence clears the path for his grace. His enemies and ours shall reap, throughout the everlasting course of ages, the bitter fruit of having exalted themselves against "*the Lord God of the Hebrews.*" He has promised his chosen, "*no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper,*" and his infallible faithfulness will assuredly make good what his infinite grace hath promised. — Every chosen redeemed sinner shall be saved. Every saved sinner shall be kept and brought at last into his heavenly glory to possess his predestined inheritance with Christ.

Thus, in Pharaoh's case, when he persisted in holding, with an iron grasp, the Israel of God, the vials of divine wrath were poured forth upon him. The land of Egypt was covered, throughout its entire length and breadth, with darkness, disease, desolation and death. So will it be, with the man of sin, that last great oppressor who has emerged from the bottomless pit, armed with satanic power, to crush beneath his "*foot of pride*" the favored objects of Jehovah's love. Satan and the man of sin shall be overturned, his kingdom devastated by the seven last plagues, and, finally, he himself plunged, not in the Red Sea, but "*in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.*" And all whose names are found in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world shall be found with Christ in his glory (Revelation 17: 8; 20: 10).

Not one jot or one tittle of what God has promised shall fail. He will accomplish all. Notwithstanding all that has been, is and shall be said and done to the contrary, God remembers his promises, and he will fulfil them. They are all "*yea and amen in Christ Jesus.*" No power of earth or hell can ever thwart, reverse, or even hinder God's purpose of grace. The eternal God has sworn, and the blood of the everlasting covenant has ratified the covenant. Who, then, shall make it void? Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's eternal word of predestination and promise shall never pass away. — Truly, "*there is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellence on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms, and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel*

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then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places” (Deuteronomy 33:26-29).

MIRACLES AND REVELATION

Whenever we read about men performing miracles in the Word of God the question arises, — “Should we expect such miracles today?”

The vast majority of people tell us that the miracles described in the Bible never took place at all, or that those things that appear to be miracles can be explained scientifically. Such people simply refuse to acknowledge that God really rules the universe. They may claim to be Christians and claim to believe in God; but their religion is a delusion. To deny that God rules the universe absolutely is to deny that God is. There is no difference between the denial of God’s absolute sovereignty and atheism.

There are others who do not hesitate to say we should always “expect a miracle.”. They tell us that if we do not see miracles, if preachers do not perform miracles, it is because we do not have sufficient faith and the preacher lacks the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

A careful reading of Holy Scripture shows that all the miracles in Scripture fall into four distinct periods. They were all performed either during...

1. Moses’ era.
2. the era of Elijah and Elisha
3. the time of the Babylonian captivity
4. or during the days of Christ and his apostles.

These were all times of crisis in which God was moving in a special way to further his cause. Put them all together and they represent a very small portion of all the years covered by the Bible. In a word, miracles took place intermittently. Those who get caught up with the performance of miracles always miss the spiritual truths and messages they were performed to portray. It was not the miracle that was important, but the message conveyed by the miracle.

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Having said that, let me be crystal clear in asserting that the apostolic age of miracles, signs and wonder, and speaking in tongues ceased with the fulfillment of divine revelation, with the full revelation of God given in Holy Scripture. Because we have the complete Revelation of God in his Word, we have no need for and must not expect the performance of miracles today. We have something far better than miracles (2 Peter 1:16-21).

(2 Peter 1:16-21) “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. (17) For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (18) And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. (19) We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: (20) Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. (21) For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.”

There have been none with the gift and ability to do those things by the Spirit of God since the days of the apostles. Those who yet pretend to possess such supernatural gifts are just pretenders. They are not the servants of Christ. The Holy Spirit tells us, with unmistakable clarity, that those who pretend to have prophetic and apostolic gifts today are not the servants of Christ, but of antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:7-10).

(2 Thessalonians 2:7-10) “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. (8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: (9) *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

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Now, let me show you what these wonders performed by Moses teach us about our God and his great salvation.

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

When Moses and Aaron made their second appearance before Pharaoh, “they were standing,” as Roger Ellsworth puts it, “on the front edge of one of history’s most dazzling displays of God’s sovereignty and glory.”

The Lord God first demonstrated his sovereignty when Pharaoh demanded that Moses give him a sign (7:10-13). When he did, Aaron did “*as the LORD had commanded.*” He threw his rod to the ground, and it immediately turned into a serpent. Pharaoh’s magicians in did the same thing with their rods by “*their enchantments.*” But Aaron’s serpent swallowed the serpents of Pharaoh’s magicians.

Remember, the serpent was the emblem of Pharaoh and his power. His head-dress featured a raised cobra. The fact that Aaron’s serpent devoured the other serpents amounted to nothing less than the Lord God declaring his supremacy over Pharaoh.

The ten plagues were God’s assertion of his supremacy over all the gods of Egypt. The first plague consisted of the water of the Nile turning to blood. The Egyptians worshipped the Nile. By turning its water to blood, God demonstrated his supremacy over the Nile and made their own god repugnant and repulsive to them.

One after another more plagues came — frogs, lice, flies, diseased livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness. With each plague the God of Israel declared himself to be the God of gods, in total control of the gods of Egypt, that are powerless before him.

The sovereign God who demonstrated his might over the gods of Egypt is the God with whom we have to do. We will either bow before him and worship him, or he will take us out of the way forever.

DIVINE JUSTICE

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The plagues God sent upon Egypt demonstrated more than his sovereignty. They were his just judgments upon the Egyptians for their cruel treatment of the Israelites and for their slaughter of male babies (Exodus 1:22).

(Exodus 1:22) “And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.”

Men commonly think that because God does not send judgment immediately he never will. How foolish!

(Psalms 10:11) “He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see *it*.”

(Psalms 10:13) “Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require *it*.”

(Psalms 59:7) “Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords *are* in their lips: for who, *say they*, doth hear?”

(Psalms 94:7) “Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard *it*.”

No one ever gets away with sin. God’s judgment will come. The wheels of justice grind slow; but they grind to powder!

The plagues God sent upon Egypt were miniature pictures of that which he will send upon unbelievers at the last day (Revelation 16). In that day people will cry for the rocks and mountains to cover them (Revelation 6:16); but there will be no escape. **Divine judgment is always a matter of strict justice. It is always judgment executed upon each according to that which he has done.**

We labor diligently, preaching the gospel, “*warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*” (Colossians 1:28), urging all to flee the wrath of God, urging all to flee to Christ the sinner’s only Refuge. But you stop your ears and harden your heart, just like Pharaoh. Soon, you will discover, to your everlasting peril, that “*the soul that sinneth, it shall die,*” that God “*will by no means clear the guilty.*”

(Romans 6:23) “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

SATAN’S COUNTERFEIT

The chapters before us also remind us of the reality that Satan ever counterfeits the work of God. This is evident when Pharaoh’s magicians turned their rods into serpents (Exodus 7:11). Satan is a powerful and clever foe. His servants perform signs and wonders by which they deceive many (2 Thessalonians 2:9). And they transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, teaching sinners to perform righteousness, rather than trust Christ for righteousness. This was a matter of great concern to Paul; and it should be a matter of great concern to us (2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15).

(2 Corinthians 11:3-4) “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (4) For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.”

(2 Corinthians 11:13-15) “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. (14) And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (15) Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

(Ephesians 6:10-20) “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. (11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. (13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; (15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith

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ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (18) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (19) And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, (20) For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

The most Satanic opposition to God’s gospel, is the imitation of it by a “*form of godliness,*” a form of godliness that denies “*the power thereof.*”

JANNES AND JAMBRES — Yet, we must not fail to remember the blessed assurance God has given us concerning Pharaoh’s magicians. The Spirit of God tells us their names in 2 Timothy, where Paul speaks of those perilous times that must come (2 Timothy 3:1-9).

(2 Timothy 3:1-9) “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. (2) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (3) Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, (4) Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; (5) Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (6) For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, (7) Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (8) Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. (9) But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all *men*, as theirs also was.”

HARDENED HEARTS

These successive miracles of the serpent and the plagues that followed display something else. They give us a vivid portrayal of the incredible hardness of the human heart.

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The hardness of Pharaoh's heart is described in three ways. In some places we are simply told that it "*was hardened,*" or grew hard (7:13, 22; 8:19; 9:7). In other places we are told that "*Pharaoh hardened his heart*" (8:15, 32; 9:24). And in other places we are told that "*the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart*" (9:12; 10:20, 27).

Putting them together we this is what we are taught these three things...

1. God has purposed all things, even the damnation of the wicked.
2. When people harden their hearts against Christ, God often judges them by hardening their hearts even more. And...
3. When sinners harden their hearts against him, they bring upon themselves the wrath of God.

God did not create the evil in Pharaoh. We dare not charge the holy Lord God with sin (James 1:13-16).

(James 1:13-16) "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: (14) But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. (15) Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (16) Do not err, my beloved brethren."

What a solemn warning this is to all who hear the gospel and harden their hearts against it (Proverbs 1:23-33; 2 Corinthians 2:14-16; 5:20-6:2).

(Proverbs 1:23-33) "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. (24) Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; (25) But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: (26) I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; (27) When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. (28) Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: (29) For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: (30) They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. (31) Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. (32) For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the

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prosperity of fools shall destroy them. (33) But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

(2 Corinthians 2:14-16) “Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. (15) For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: (16) To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?”

(2 Corinthians 5:20-21) “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

(2 Corinthians 6:1-2) “We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (2) (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)”

GOD’S GRACE

We should be grateful that the accounts of Aaron’s serpent and the plagues yield yet another truth. They show us that God is gracious, always gracious toward his elect.

Israel had been in such desperate conditions for such a long time that they must have often felt as if God had forsaken them and had forgotten them, that he did not care about them. As the plagues began to unfold, Israel began to see that God was showing himself strong on their behalf.

You and I often encounter the same feelings. Don’t we? How often we feel like crying, “*Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?*” (Psalm 77:8-9). When evil mounts up around us and troubles prevail over us, when our hearts are broken with heaviness and our souls are cast down, we want to cry out, “O Lord God, Where are you?” In

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such times, let us resist Satan's snare, remembering that our God is today exactly where he has always been — ON HIS THRONE!

(Psalms 115:1-3) “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake. (2) Wherefore should the heathen say, Where *is* now their God? (3) But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.”

(Psalms 135:6) “Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.”

He is doing us good in his good pleasure, working out his everlasting purpose of grace toward us in Christ (Romans 8:28-31).

(Romans 8:28-31) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (31) What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?”

Illustration: “*Where is your God now?*”

God never forgets his own. He will in his own time and way deliver us from all evil. It is not ours to figure God out. It is ours to trust him and serve him while we wait for that day when dark things will be made plain.

(Isaiah 40:28-31) “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. (29) He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. (30) Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: (31) But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.”

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Amen.