

Exodus 024
Apathetic Toward God
Exodus 7:20-25
November 16, 2025
Dr. Andy Woods

Let us take our Bibles this morning and open them to Exodus 7:20. We will be looking, this morning, Lord willing, at Exodus 7:20-25. The title of our message this morning is "Apathetic Toward God," which is a dangerous place to be in, as we will see.

We are studying the Book of Exodus, where God is in the process of redeeming a nation. We are now to the point in the Book of Exodus where God has raised up Moses. He has prepared Moses; He has trained Moses; He has reassured Moses; He has encouraged Moses; He has instructed Moses. Now the rubber hits the road where Moses now performs, under God's power, his first major miracle.

We are watching now, the Nile turned to blood. Then following that, as we will see, the nine other miracles will follow, culminating in the death of the firstborn all over Egypt. We are dealing now with a specific plague (Exodus 7:14-25). Pharaoh is in a condition that I really would not wish on anybody. His own heart, as we will see, is set against God.

God instructs Moses (Exodus 7:15-19). Now we see Moses' obedience (Exodus 7:20-25). Here is an outline that we can follow as we navigate our way through Exodus 7:20-25 this morning:

- III. The Plagues (Exodus 7:14-25)
 - A. Pharaoh's condition (14)
 - B. God's instruction (15-19)
 - C. Moses' obedience (20-25)
 - 1. Nile to blood (20-21)
 - 2. Pharaoh's miracle (22a)
 - 3. Pharaoh's hardness (22b-23)
 - 4. Lasting results (24)
 - 5. Duration (25)

The Nile becomes blood. Notice, if you will, Exodus 7:20, which says:

"So Moses and Aaron did even as the Lord had commanded" (Exodus 7:20).

They are obedient. God said, "Here is how it is going to work. Here is what you need to do." They are smart people. They did exactly what God told them to do.

Jesus in John 13:17 says:

"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (John 13:17).

The blessing in the Christian life comes not just from knowledge or knowing things about God, but the blessing comes from obeying what we know.

"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (James 1:22).

One of the dangers of being connected with a Bible church like this, that places such an emphasis on Bible teaching, is Christians can get the misunderstanding that spirituality can be measured in terms of what you know. Now, do not get me wrong, knowing things is very significant and very important, but spiritual maturity comes from not just the knowing, but the doing, obeying what it is we do know.

We may look at the Bible and not know everything about the Bible, but there are things in all of our lives that we do know that we are not doing. If you do not think you fall into that category, just ask the Lord. He is really good at showing you. Have you noticed that?

It is very interesting to me that this blessing, this miracle that is about to happen, this judgment on Egypt, came because Moses and Aaron did exactly what God told them to do. Jesus' own mother said to the wine stewards, *"Whatever He says to you, do it"* (John 2:5), and *"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice"* (1 Samuel 15:22).

Moses has been on a journey. Look at the first 40 years of his life. He does not look like the most obedient person you can find in the Bible. He is the one that murdered the Egyptian and then he fled into Midian for the next 40 years of his life, from age 40 to about age 80, where as we like to say, God gave him his B.D. degree—backside of the desert degree. That is where he learned obedience. He learned submission as he was reduced to menial activity, shepherding the sheep of his father-in-law, Jethro.

After that middle phase of his life, age 40 to age 80, now he is in a position where he is willing to do exactly what God said. His character was molded and shaped the way it needs to be shaped. This is a trajectory that God wants us all on. He has things that He wants to give us. He has things that He wants to entrust to us. A lot of times we are just not ready because we are not in that place of obedience. Sometimes it takes a while to get there.

With Moses it has been a long time coming. His character has been shaped and molded. He is not sinless, but he is sinning less. Praise the Lord. Now he is ready for big things. He is about to see a massive miracle. That miracle is described in Exodus 7:20-21:

"And he lifted up the staff and struck the water that was in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile was turned to blood. The fish that were in the Nile died, and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt" (Exodus 7:20-21).

What you are seeing here is a fulfillment of a short-term prophecy. If you back up to Exodus 7:17-19, God made a prediction. "Here is what you are to do with the staff. Once you do such and such with the staff, then this is the miracle that will happen." Now the prophecy is fulfilled a short time later. One of the things to understand about God's predictions, short-term or long-term, is that they always happen. It is just a matter of time. When they happen, they happen exactly like God said.

Jesus spoke these words to the disciples in the Upper Room just prior the week prior to his death, Passion Week:

"From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He" (John 13:19).

"Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe" (John 14:29).

Notice the expression, "I am." That is a divine title. Jesus is telling His eleven disciples in the Upper Room (Judas, the only unbeliever having left), "I am going to make some predictions. Those predictions are going to come to pass this week involving My death, burial, and resurrection and later on, My ascension. You are going to watch these things happen in real time. When they happen in real time, right down to who is going to betray Me, you are going to know exactly who I am, because only I am the one who can reveal the end from the beginning."

This, of course, is one of the great proofs of Scripture that I like to talk about constantly. It is the only holy book that I am aware of that does this kind of thing. It makes predictions in advance—history before it happens. One of my favorite books on this is a book by Dr. John Walvoord called "Every Prophecy of the Bible." As you work through that book, as he is working through the Scripture, you see this pattern of God. What He says happens.

"You are going to go into the 70-year captivity," God through the prophet Jeremiah tells Judah. That is exactly what happened. Jesus is going to show up on a particular day, on Palm Sunday, 483 years after a decree given by Artaxerxes in Nehemiah 2. That is exactly what happened. Jesus is going to be born from the Tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10). That is exactly what happened. Jesus is going to be born not in Jerusalem, but in a little city nearby Jerusalem called Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). That is exactly what happened.

Seven hundred years in advance, Isaiah says, "When the Messiah comes, He is going to be pierced" (Isaiah 53:5). Zechariah 12:10, 500 years in advance, says, "The Messiah is going to be pierced." Psalm 22:16-18, roughly a thousand years in advance, says, "When the Messiah comes, His hands and His feet are going to be pierced." That is exactly what happened.

Since the Bible does this over and over again, the prophecies that are yet to come—which is an area that we call eschatology—prophecies unfulfilled things about the Rapture, a seven-year Tribulation Period, the Millennial Kingdom, the Great White Throne Judgment, the dissolving of this world by fire, the replacing of our current cosmos with a new heavens and new earth, I have absolute assurance that all of that is going to happen, just like God said, because He has a track record.

It is like me standing at the free throw line and making nine free throws in a row. Let us just pretend I am making nine in a row. Then I say to you, "Can I make the 10th?" You say, "Of course, because I see a track record." That is what you have in the Bible.

That is another example of a short-term prophecy. "You are going to put your staff out, the water is going to become blood, and everything in the water is going to die and it is even going to stink. It is going to smell." Everything that God said happened.

It is interesting that God is attacking here, the Nile. That is the first miracle of judgment that is taking place here. One of the reasons for that is that the Egyptians worshiped the Nile. Dr. Ed Hindson writes:

"The purpose was to demonstrate the Lord's superiority over Egypt's voluminous number of false gods (12:12; 18:11). There were some eighty ancient-Egyptian gods, each one the personification of an animal or object. In addition, Pharaoh himself was considered to be the incarnation of the god Horus, with court magicians serving as his priests. Each of the ten plagues was designed to challenge a specific god or gods within the Egyptian pantheon and ultimately to topple the credibility of Pharaoh's own divinity as well."¹

"This plague, as were all of them, was meant to demonstrate the Lord's superiority over Pharaoh and his gods. The Nile River was considered sacred, the very bloodstream of the god Osiris. Other deities challenged by this particular plague were Khnum, the guardian of the Nile; Hopi, the spirit of the Nile; and Sepek, the crocodile god."²

One of the interesting things about God, the true God, is that He hates idols. Look at the first two commandments in the Decalogue. The first one is: Do not have any other gods

¹ Hindson, E. E., & Mitchell, D. R., eds. (2010). *King James Version Bible Commentary for Today: The Most Up-to-Date Commentary on the Time-Honored Text of the King James Version* (p. 90). Thomas Nelson.

² Ibid., 91.

before me (Exodus 20:3). The other is: No graven images (Exodus 20:4). You look at those two commandments and you say to yourself, "I guess God really hates idols."

What is an idol? An idol is anything that we put above and beyond God in terms of giving us security, giving us a sense of meaning, giving us a sense of satisfaction. It is anything that we worship above and beyond God. An idol is not necessarily a graven image or statue. It could be a retirement account; it could be a career; it could be a talent or an ability that someone may possess; something that we are trusting in, or have confidence in, other than the Giver of those gifts, God Himself.

I am here to tell you from personal experience that if you have an idol in your life like that, God is out to take it out. He just is. He does not tolerate this.

*"I am the Lord, that is My name;
I will not give My glory to another,
Nor My praise to graven images" (Isaiah 42:8).*

It stands to reason that God, in this first miracle of judgment, would lay siege to the Nile, because that is what the Egyptians worshiped. We have made reference to this also. Charles Ryrie writes:

"The reflection of the sun on the river might give the water a red appearance temporarily but would not cause the fish to die and the water to become unusable. Nor would red silting, not uncommon to the Nile, do this. This was a supernatural judgment. The water was turned to blood in terms of appearance (taste, smell and texture)."³

Many so-called television presentations on this will give you the impression that it was the sun and the reflection that made it look like blood. It was just silting in the water. It really was not an actual miracle. The unbelieving mind does this over and over again to try to dismiss the miraculous character of the Bible, the miraculous character of God.

I heard of one young person in a denominational Sunday School that was told, "When Jesus performed the multiplication of the fish and the loaves, that really was not an actual miracle. It was that everybody came loaded to bear for a picnic, so they had all kinds of bread and things under their garments, and they all just pulled it out and ate." This man was told this at a young age. He actually heard this, rejected what they were saying, and became one of the greatest apologists in Christianity, a man by the name of John Warwick Montgomery.

People do this thing all the time where they try to take the miracles of the Bible and try to make it sound like it is less than a miracle. As Charles Ryrie points out here, this is not some kind of reflection from the sun, because everything in the Nile died to the point where it stunk. How can the reflection of the sun or silting and all of these kinds of

³ Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible*, 100.

things change that? You do not have to come up with a naturalistic explanation for this. This is an actual judgment of God.

Now, what is interesting as you go to the second part of Exodus 7:22 is that we learn that Pharaoh's magicians are in the miracle business also:

"But the magicians of Egypt did the same thing with their magic arts" (Exodus 7:22).

God does a miracle, and now Pharaoh's magicians do the same thing. By the way, this is not front-page news because we talked about this a couple of Sundays ago. If you go back to Exodus 7:11-12, this has to do with the staff becoming a serpent:

"Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same thing with their secret arts. For each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs" (Exodus 7:11-12).

You will notice that within the kingdom of darkness, there is a reservoir of miracle-working abilities. This is a chart I have shared with you before:

Satanic/Demonic Miracles		
1. Exod. 7-8		7. Acts 8:9; 16:16
2. Deut. 13:1-3		8. Gal. 1:6-9
3. Job 1:12-19; 2:7-8		9. 2 Thess. 2:9
4. 1 Sam. 28?		10. 2 Cor. 11:14
5. Matt. 7:21-23; 24:24		11. Rev. 13:3, 13, 15; 16:13-14
6. Luke 4:5		

It is an example of every single miracle in the Bible that I could find—there are at least 11 instances of this—where a miracle is happening and God is not the author of the miracle, which shows me that the kingdom of darkness itself has the ability to perform signs and wonders.

Can the kingdom of darkness perform signs and wonders on equal par with God? No. As we are going to see as we work through this, Pharaoh's magicians were able to imitate many of the miracles wrought by Moses and Aaron up to a point, but at a certain point, they said, "You know what? We cannot reproduce this. This must be the hand of God. This must be the finger of God."

One of the greatest mistakes you could ever make is assigning Satan too little power or too much power. If you do not think that the world of the occult, the fallen demonic realm, the fallen angelic realm, Lucifer himself, now Satan have the power to perform signs and wonders, you have not read the Bible. Lucifer's ability with his demons, fallen angels, to perform signs and wonders is very real in the Bible.

A mistake people make is to think Satan is powerless, which is not so, but the other mistake we make is we assign him too much power, and we make it look like Satan is just as powerful as God. That is not true either. Pharaoh's magicians could imitate the miracles to a point. After all, it was Aaron's rod that became a serpent that swallowed up the serpent's wrought by being brought into existence by Pharaoh's magicians.

I bring these things to your attention because the Bible brings these things to your attention, but one of the main reasons I bring these things to your attention is that I want us to understand that truth is not determined by an experience. Many people think that if they have had an experience, it must be of God. That cannot be so, because the devil himself can give experiences. You are watching it happen here in real time.

An experience in and of itself does not mean something is true. All experiences have to be tested by the Word of God.

"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you have received, he is to be accursed!" (Galatians 1:6-9).

If an angel materializes at your bedside in the middle of the night, and it is a very real experience, but that angel simultaneously contradicts the Scripture or contradicts the true gospel of grace, as taught by Paul, that angel is to be accursed, not embraced. If there was a man named Muhammad that knew anything about Scripture, had he tested the spirits, Islam would have never gotten off the ground. He did have what I believe was a real angelic manifestation. They believe that the angel Gabriel contacted him, and gave him the doctrines of Islam. Yet had he been a believer, had he understood the Scripture—which obviously he did not—he could have stopped Islam from ever penetrating the human race simply by saying, "That is not a true angel. That is a demon."

Satan comes as an angel of light because the doctrine that came out of the angel's mouth contradicts Scripture. Had Joseph Smith done this, Mormonism, with all of its tentacles everywhere, could have been stopped because Joseph Smith is a very young person, had an angelic encounter from an angel named Moroni, giving him the tenets of Mormonism which contradict Scripture. He could have said, "You know what? That is

not true." It is a real experience, but it comes from another source, because Satan has this capacity to give signs and wonders and experiences and liver quivers and visions and dreams. All such experiences must be tested by the Word of God.

This is what the Bereans did in Acts 17:11:

"Now these [Bereans] were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

They were not callous people that did not want to hear anything spiritual. They received it from Paul, but they examined the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. Paul showed up there in Berea on the second missionary journey, and he told them apostolic truth. The Bereans said, "Not so fast. We want to hear what you have to say, but we are going to test it by what has already been revealed to us in Scripture."

The Bereans are not condemned here for being close-minded. They are praised as being more noble-minded than the Thessalonians that did not follow this same practice.

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

We are called, in fact, we are commanded here, to test the spirits. I hope you are testing me right now. I hope you are not believing me because I am up here and you are there. I hope you are running everything through the grid of Scripture to see if these things are so. That is how you handle any experience.

When you get into the whole subject of the Emergent Church, they are trying to put reason, experience, and tradition on the same level as Scripture. They say there are four things you have to work through, not just Scripture, but reason, tradition, and experience, when actually what the Bible is saying is that Scripture is preeminent. Everything else, whether it is reason, tradition, experience, you test it by what God says.

I am not even sure many times if I can trust my own sense of logic or reason, because the Bible says,

"There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6).*

Even the mind itself can be deceptive. It can lead me in the wrong direction. My emotions can lead me in the wrong direction. Tradition can lead me in the wrong direction. I am always in the business of discerning and trying to figure out if the things that are coming my direction align with the Bible.

If you do not know anything about the Bible—many people are in that condition or position—then you are a sitting duck for deception. Any experience, any angelic manifestation, any dream, or any vision you will believe. Yet the Bible says, "Do not be that way. Do not do that, because the devil himself gives miracles and experiences that are very real." Moses and Aaron do the first miracle, and here come the magicians of Pharaoh, using their secret arts, tapped into the dark side, doing the same kind of thing.

I remember watching the Montel Williams Show. Has anybody ever watched that? If you did, do not put your hand up. He had this necromancer, I guess I could call her, that would come on. Her name was Sylvia Brown. It is interesting that when you go to Barnes and Noble and you go to the religious section, all of her books are everywhere. I am not even sure if she is still alive.

I remember watching very carefully The Montel Williams Show, and Sylvia Browne was on the stage in front of a studio audience. She was hearing voices of deceased relatives. Someone would come to the microphone, they would come up front and say, "What is my deceased great Aunt Sally or whatever saying? What are my grandma and grandpa saying? What are my mother and father that passed away saying from the other side?"

Sylvia would listen for a minute and she would tell the people what their parents or their deceased loved ones were saying.

I remember watching the reaction of the people asking the question how they would immediately emotionally react to that. For them it was very emotional, because that is exactly what Grandma and Grandpa used to tell them. I looked at that and I saw the emotional reaction. I said, "This cannot be fake. This is real. Sylvia Browne is really hearing something." Coming at it from a biblical worldview, I started to conclude that she was not really hearing Grandma and Grandpa; she was hearing a demon pretending to be Grandma and Grandpa, because demons, fallen angels, do not die (Luke 20:35-36).

There were demons present when Grandma and Grandpa were alive that knew the speaking style and temperament and personality of Grandma and Grandpa. That is who Sylvia Browne was hearing, although Sylvia Browne herself thought that she was really talking to someone from the other side. What was happening is these people were having these experiences on the show, but they were not testing what they were hearing. They were not testing the the reality of the afterlife, which is that once you move into the afterlife, you cannot contact this world:

"And inasmuch as it is appointed for man to die once and after this comes judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

They were not testing the experience by the Word of God. They were testing it by what seemed real to them, and they were pulled into deception. That is the kind of deception that Satan foists on some people. If he can get you wrapped up in something like that and take your eyes off the cross, he will give you any experience that your heart is craving. That is why we as Christians need to put on the full armor of God. We need to be testing everything. Just because an experience happened to you does not mean it is of God. That is the point.

You have the Nile turn to blood. You have Pharaoh's miracle. Now that his magicians seem to do the same thing that Moses and Aaron did, Pharaoh says, "I guess I do not need God. Things are under control. You turned the Nile to blood, but so what? I have some guys that are able, apparently, to do the same thing."

You see Pharaoh's hardness setting in:

"...and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said. Then Pharaoh turned and went into his house with no concern even for this" (Exodus 7:22-23).

It is interesting to note that Pharaoh's hardening here was self-inflicted. It does not say that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. It does say towards the beginning of the book that God will harden Pharaoh's heart eventually, but long before God hardened Pharaoh's heart, Pharaoh repeatedly hardened his own heart against God.

Charles Ryrie says:

"Paul uses this as an example of the inscrutable will of God and of His mercy toward men (Rom. 9:14-18). Seven times Pharaoh hardened his own heart before God first hardened it, though the prediction that God would do it preceded all."⁴

Ed Hindson writes:

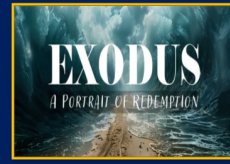
"For the initial five plagues, the text registers Pharaoh as the agent of hardening. Not until the sixth plague does God participate in the confirmation of Pharaoh's own volitional choices."⁵

⁴ Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible*, 96.

⁵ Hindson, E. E., & Mitchell, D. R., eds. (2010). *King James Version Bible Commentary for Today: The Most Up-to-Date Commentary on the Time-Honored Text of the King James Version* (p. 86). Thomas Nelson.

GOD HARDENING PHARAOH'S HEART

- The prediction of God hardening of Pharaoh (4:21)
- Pharaoh repeatedly hardening his own heart (7:13, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7)
- Not until the sixth plague did God harden Pharaoh's heart (Exod 9:12)



Here is a little list I put together. God, at the outset makes a prediction that He will harden Pharaoh's heart. Yet Pharaoh repeatedly hardened his own heart first. It was not until the sixth plague that God made a move to harden Pharaoh's heart.

Human beings are made in the image of God. Because we are made in the image of God, we have a power that is almost frightening. It is called free will, meaning that I can make a decision to accept God, or I can make a decision to reject God. Do you know what God does at the end of the day? He respects my choice. If that is the direction you want to go, go ahead. Certainly the Holy Spirit convicts; certainly the Holy Spirit agitates; certainly the Holy Spirit warns; but if you go a particular direction with free will, rejecting, rejecting, rejecting, rejecting, rejecting, you reach a point where God says, "I am not going to bother you anymore."

That is a frightening thing. I do not know if I really want that power. Yet if God were to override my free will, He would not be respecting how He has manufactured me as an image-bearer of God. You have a power as part of God's creation that I do not think any other aspect of creation shares. Maybe the angelic kingdom has this power, this ability to choose. The truth of the matter is, God does not send people to hell. People send themselves there through perpetual rejection of the things of God throughout their lives.

This is the position that Pharaoh is in. Since I have this power to choose, what is the smartest thing I could ever do with my free will? Jesus role-modeled it for us, did He not? Did He not say: "'Yet not My will, but Yours be done'" (Luke 22:42)? That is wisdom.

"God, I am going to take my free will, and I am going to give it right back to you. I am going to start making decisions based on Your revealed will in Your word. You cannot really know His will unless you know His word, because in the word, His word, His will is revealed. "I am going to take my free will with decision after decision after decision, and I am going to hand it right back to You." the Lord says, "That is wisdom."

Most people, tragically, do not live like that, and God eventually reaches a point where they are given over to what they want to do.

*"A man who hardens his neck after much reproof
Will suddenly be broken beyond remedy" (Proverbs 29:1).*

That is the direction Pharaoh is moving in. That is the direction this blessed country founded on Judeo-Christian values and principles is moving in. You notice that a person, right out of the gate, is not suddenly broken beyond remedy. According to Proverbs 29:1, it comes after a man hardens his own neck. Long before God hardened Pharaoh, there was a lot of self hardening that went on. You are seeing it right here.

He was probably startled when the Nile turned to blood. Who would not be? But his own guys, I guess, are able to replicate it under their secret arts, magic arts. He just says to himself, "You know what? God is not so big after all. I have got it under control." He self hardened. Then he says something here that I have to tell you is also frightening to me.

"Then Pharaoh turned and went into his house with no concern even for this" (Exodus 7:23).

Here is a guy that is completely apathetic towards God and does not care.

Jesus told a parable in Luke 12:16-21:

"And he told them a parable, saying, 'The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, "What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will restore my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry'"'"' (Luke 12:16-19).

If the parable had stopped right there, America would hail this man as a success. He looks like he achieved the American dream to me; looks like he was going to live well in retirement. Probably we could put him on "Fortune Magazine" or "Forbes," and hail this man as a success. It is not until you get Luke 12:20 that you get God's perspective on it. It is interesting to me how God's perspective is so 180 degrees opposite from the world's.

"But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?" So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God'" (Luke 12:20-21).

I look at that and I say, "Lord, I want to be rich toward You." Worldly success, lack of worldly success—I guess it does not matter in the big picture if a person is not rich towards God. This is the danger that Pharaoh is in. This is the danger that your average American is in—a lack of concern for God. "I do not care about God."

When Belshazzar, the last reigning king of Neo-Babylonia, was confronted by Daniel—whose name was changed to Belteshazzar, you might remember in the Book of

Daniel—this is what Daniel said to Belshazzar, who took the instruments from the Jewish temple that Nebuchadnezzar had brought, as the nation, Judah in particular, went into the Babylonian captivity. They took out these vessels that are used for holy purposes, and they started consuming alcoholic beverages out of these vessels. They took what was holy, and they profaned it. They acted as if God did not even exist.

In fact, the archeology and everything that we know of the time shows that there were giant walls around Babylon. They never suspected that the Persians were outside the gates that very night. Probably, according to the chronology of my professor Harold Hohner, October 12th, 539 BC. How is that for specifics? It was a Saturday night, he said. They were enjoying themselves—"Life is great. We are invincible"—not understanding that the Persians had diverted the Euphrates River and they had gone under the walls, something the Babylonians were not expecting. They conquered Babylon without even a battle. The people that were having this party, did not even know they had been conquered. It is an amazing story.

That is when the handwriting on the wall appears and you know the story. That handwriting on the wall spelled judgment that night. This is what Daniel, Belteshazzar, said to Belshazzar:

"But you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified" (Daniel 5:23).

"You are totally unconcerned with God. You are profaning what God says is holy. You are living your life as if He did not exist. Yet you would not even have your next breath if God did not allow it. Your heart cannot even go through its next heartbeat palpitation rhythm if God did not allow it." That is the foolishness of being apathetic towards God and living as if God did not exist.

This is what Pharaoh is doing. He goes back into his house, not concerned about God whatsoever. It is really easy to dogpile on Pharaoh, but are we not a lot like that? We get wrapped up in life and its busyness, particularly this time of the year—relational, family, material things—who has time for all this Bible and prayer stuff? Yet we would not even have our next breath if God did not allow it. I do not want God to say at the end, "You fool. You were not rich towards Me." I want to be rich towards the Lord. How about you?

What are the lasting results of this?

"So all the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the Nile" (Exodus 7:24).

Ed Hindson, in his Exodus commentary writes this:.

"During this period, the sole source of fresh water throughout Egypt was the underground natural natural springs. The Egyptians now had to exert themselves. As the Hebrews had to gather their own straw, now the Egyptians were forced to dig 'round about the river' (v. 24) for their own water."⁶

How interesting that is, because when we were in Exodus 5 we saw that Moses had told Pharaoh, "Let My people go," as God is speaking through Moses. Pharaoh says, "I do not know the Lord. Get back to work. In fact, not only do you have to keep meeting your quota of bricks, but now you have to go gather the straw on your own." Straw and clay together strengthen the bricks. What happened to them in Exodus 5, not only was Pharaoh recalcitrant against God, but he made life difficult for the Hebrew slaves. Now the Egyptians are put in that same category as the Hebrews had gathered their own straw, now the Egyptians were forced to dig round about the river for their own water.

When God called the patriarch Abraham and told him to leave Ur of the Chaldeans and walk by faith, and he would make a great nation through him (Genesis 12:1-2). God knew that Satan would try to destroy this nation, and so he gave to the patriarch Abraham promises that are unconditional: land, great nation, personal blessing, great name, blessing to others, blessing to blessers. "You will be a blessing to the world. I will curse those who curse you."

*"And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed"* (Genesis 12:3).

How literal is that one there? All of them. Really? "The one who curses you, I will curse." How do you understand that? I will tell you how I understand it. I think it is exactly what it says.

It is interesting to me that of all of the ways God could have killed the Egyptian army in Exodus 14, which is coming in our study, God chose the mechanism of drowning. He drowned the Egyptians. Why did He drown them? The answer is in Exodus 1. What were the Egyptians doing to His people? Drowning them in the Nile, the male infants. Remember, Moses being set adrift escaped that.

Then you get to plague number ten, the death of the firstborn all over Egypt. Why did God kill all the firstborn all over Egypt? There are a lot of reasons for it. They worship the firstborn. We know God is going after the idols. The other thing to understand is that Israel is God's firstborn son (Exodus 4:22). What God is saying is, "If you mess around

⁶ Ibid., 91.

with My firstborn son through 400 years of Egyptian enslavement through a Pharaoh that knew not Joseph, I am coming after your firstborn." That is what this means.

"The one who curses you, I will curse" (Genesis 12:3). In other words, "You turned up the pressure on My people in terms of enslavement. Now, Egypt, I am turning up the pressure on you. You are going to have to dig and exert yourselves to survive, now that the Nile is blood red and stinks and is full of dead things."

I never thought I would see this in my lifetime, but I am seeing it. We are now in the middle of a national discussion. I miss the good old days when it was just the other party that said this stuff, but now it is coming from our supposed conservative podcasters and thought leaders—Candace Owens, Tucker Carlson. I am not afraid to mention names—Marjorie Taylor Greene, and the list goes on and on. People that I have liked, people that I have voted for, people that I have listened to. Now they are all saying, "You know what we should do with Israel? Let us just throw them away. We do not need to support Israel. We are America first."

I am thinking to myself, "That is what the Bible says." What happened when all nations would turn against Israel in the last days? I am here to tell you that they are tampering with something that they do not even understand what they are fooling with. The last time I checked, Genesis 12:3 says, *"The one who curses you, I will curse" (Genesis 12:3).*

Do you see a statute of limitations on that? Because they are all saying this does not apply anymore. That is the Old Testament. I do not see anything in here that says this is good until the New Testament arrives. I see God being completely and totally faithful to His promises, which are ironclad.

I am scared, not so much for Israel. Israel is going to be just fine. I am scared about the United States. I am fearful of the fact that this country will turn on Israel with all of this very overheated rhetoric that I am hearing, and that will put us on the wrong side of Genesis 12:3.

Do you want to know why this country is blessed? It is not that hard to figure out. It is because of a guy named George Washington who visited the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, the first Jewish synagogue built in the United States. He was invited there, and went through their ceremonies and things that they did there. He wrote them a letter in 1790. George Washington being the federal head of our country.

We know that God works through federal heads. The first Adam, the last Adam, etc. That is who George Washington was. What he said represented the character of our country. He wrote them a letter. It has actually been repeated in about four Supreme Court cases. He basically said in that letter, "The Jews will always be free to worship how they want in America." He even quotes Micah from their Bible, which we call Old Testament. He says, "You will be able to sit under your own vine and fig tree, and none shall make you afraid" (Micah 4:4).

He gave to the Jewish people something that they have never had in their 2,000 years of worldwide dispersion. "In America, you are going to be free from persecution." Do you know what God did? He reached His finger down from heaven, and He blessed America from sea to shining sea. That is my interpretation of American history.

It is troubling to watch these voices emerge challenging that whole theme. Be very careful how we treat the Jewish people. "Pastor, do you agree with everything Israel does?" Not necessarily; God did not. Read your Old Testament. However, it becomes a very dangerous thing when you treat Israel with one standard that you would never apply to any other country.

It is a very dangerous thing when we begin to defame Israel by saying all Jews are such and such that you would never say to any other racial group—all Jews have big noses, all Jews are controlling the banking industry, those kinds of statements. It is a very dangerous thing to say things that delegitimize Israel, to make it sound like the Jews living in that part of the world have no right to be there.

Criticism crosses the line, and I am wondering, once that line is crossed, where is America? Why do we not see America in Bible prophecy? I cannot find America in Bible prophecy. What happened? I do not know. I am wondering if this might have something to do with it.

The chapter ends with Exodus 7:25:

"Seven days passed after the Lord had struck the Nile" (Exodus 7:25).

You say, "What does seven days mean?" It means seven days. It is "yom," plural with a number. Every time "yom" plus a number, a numerical ordinal modifier is used, or cardinal modifier, it always refers to a literal 24-hour day. People go to Genesis 1 and they say, "Each day is a billion years." If each day is a billion years in Genesis 1, then seven billion years passed after the Lord struck the Nile. Do you see how silly you get with that? You pay a price in later Bible interpretation by not taking God at His word on the first page.

God did not do anything for seven days. Why is that? Because God is a God of grace. Judgment has come and He is giving Pharaoh, and He is giving Egypt, an opportunity for repentance. Jesus, speaking to the church at Thyatira in Revelation 2:20-21, says:

""But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality"" (Revelation 2:20-21).

That is why there is this pause for seven days. That is why you read in heaven, in the Book of Revelation, there was silence in heaven for a half hour. Do you know why there was silence in heaven for a half hour? Because God is giving us prophecy people a chance to readjust our prophecy charts, because we may not have drawn the perfect prophecy chart. God says, "Here is a half hour to readjust it." The pause for half an hour is giving the inhabitants of the earth an opportunity to repent.

That is why it keeps saying in the Book of Revelation they would not repent of their deeds, of their immorality. That is what is happening here with Pharaoh. It is an opportunity for grace. Whenever you are seeing the judgment of God in the Bible, you also will see right in the same context, grace. This is what God said before the Flood in Noah's day:

"My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years" (Genesis 6:3).

They had 120 years before the deluge came with the hope of repentance. "Egypt, you have seven days. No repentance, and the pressure gets turned up."

Having worked through that outline today, maybe today is your opportunity for grace and repentance. Maybe God has been holding up the show long enough to give you an opportunity. The Bible says that today is *"the day of salvation"* (2 Corinthians 6:2). I hope that today we would not presume upon His grace.

If you, in fact, are an unsaved person today, you can become a saved person by simply placing your trust in what Jesus did for you 2,000 years ago. That is it. If you are here today as a saved same person maybe have been experimenting with sin or things that God says are not right, now is your opportunity to say, "Lord, help me with this." God is very gracious, but we should not presume that His grace lasts forever. *"My Spirit shall not strive with man forever...his days shall be one hundred and twenty years"* (Exodus 6:3).

May the Lord help us today to receive His grace as an unsaved person, by trusting in the finished work of the Messiah, which you can do now, even as I am speaking.