

**The Gospel According to Moses**  
**The Plagues Begin**  
**Exodus 7:14-25**  
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We are working our way through the Old Testament book of Exodus in a Sermon Series called the Gospel According to Moses. Today we are looking at the second half of chapter seven, 7:14-25, as we begin looking at plagues. The plagues follow the same general pattern: God warns of a coming plague, Pharaoh ignores God's word, and the result is some form of suffering. My big idea today is that everyone must bend their knee to God or face the consequences. As we read this morning, I want you to see the flow of this passage this way. First, I want you to see the task God gave to Moses and Aaron (14-19); then I want you to see Moses obedience to the task (20-21); and finally, I want you to see the result of the task (22-25).

**The Task God Gave to Moses (14-19)**

The Lord reminds Moses that Pharaoh's hard heart is the reason he refuses to let Israel go. We have looked at this issue a few times already but let me review. God said he would harden Pharaoh's heart, then Scripture tells us that his heart was hardened just as the Lord said (7:13). That is a promise and fulfillment theme. But remember, it is not as though his heart was not already hard. I believe Paul explains this hardening in Romans 1:24-28. Every human heart is naturally sinful and suppresses the truth about God so that we refuse to believe, which leads to more suppression, darkness, and foolishness. Consequently, Paul describes three ways God turns people over to their sinfulness. God gave them up to their sinful desires or sinful ways of thinking so they become more and more set in their thoughts and desires and then shaped by those thoughts and desires. Yet he does it in a way that humanity, including Pharaoh, are still responsible for their sinful choices (James 1:13-16). God reminds Moses of Pharaoh's hard heart to prepare him for a long and difficult task. God never promises that following him in discipleship nor the tasks he calls us to are going to be easy. Is God calling you to some task that you are avoiding because you know it is going to be difficult? Or maybe God is calling you to love, to reach out to someone who is difficult?

God instructs Moses to take a stand at the Nile with his staff, the symbol of God's power and authority (15). The staff that already defeated Pharaoh by swallowing up his magicians' staffs. Why did God choose the Nile River for his first sign? The Nile was the symbol of Egypt's power. It was associated with three different Egyptian gods who provided life and fertility to Egypt. Every spring it overflowed its banks, enriching the land with nutrients and making it fertile. It was their source of water for drinking and irrigation. It also provided Egypt with food. Striking the Nile, God makes it completely unfit for use and deadly to life (18). Yahweh is showing Pharaoh who is the Lord, warning Pharaoh to bend a knee to God or face the consequences (Phil 2:10-11). God is god and Pharaoh is not.

Moses demanding that Pharaoh let God's people go (16) points us back to God's covenant promise to Abraham that he would make him into a great nation and bless them so that be a blessing to the nations and that he would curse those who curse his people. So, the Exodus is God faithfully fulfilling his promise to Abraham. God is freeing Israel to serve or worship him as his people fully devoted to him so they would be a light to the nations. They are to follow Yahweh and his ways that he will give them at Mount Sinai. God frees us from sin and Satan to serve or worship him. He is not just describing knowing about God but knowing God.

God is warning Pharaoh, bend your knee to me or I will turn the Nile into blood, striking your source of life and power (17-18). The plagues are signs of judgement upon Egypt (7:4). Signs and wonders or miracles always have a twofold purpose. They confirm faith in some and hardens others. Egypt will know the Lord in judgement while Israel will know the Lord in mercy. This was true in Jesus' ministry too. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, some Jews believed while the religious leaders decided to kill him (John 11:35-48). So first, we have looked at the task God gave to Moses and Aaron, turn the Nile to blood (14-19), now we see the fulfillment or obedience to that task (20-21).

### **Moses Obedience to the Task (20-21)**

God instructs Moses to have Aaron stretch out his staff over all the waters in Egypt so that they become blood. Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded (19-20). The goal of discipleship is to glorify God by a life of obedience to Jesus. Discipleship is the process of being formed by Jesus, to become like Jesus. You only become like Jesus by being with Jesus and his people. As we work our way through Exodus, you will get a taste of Moses' relationship with the Lord. Now all of Egypt is affected by Pharaoh's hard heart (21). Resisting God and his word always affects others.

We have looked at the task God gave to Moses and Aaron (14-19), we just looked at Moses' obedience to that task (20-21); and now let's look at the result of Moses' obedience (22-25).

### **The Result of Moses' Obedience (22-25)**

Pharaoh's magicians imitate the miracle by demonic powers on some water that had not turned to blood. The magicians cannot reverse the sign but only imitate God's powers on a smaller scale. Now look at your bible and read v22-23 with me. Pharaoh's heart remained hard, and he would not listen/obey and he left unmoved by the sign or the suffering of his people. A hard heart often ignores the obvious. Some of the most disheartening moments in ministry have been when I have had a conversation with someone whose heart is hard, who are resisting God with outright rebellion and I am warning them from God's word and they remained unphased, numb to God's word. Don't leave here unphased by this passage.

God turning the Nile to blood foreshadows a future sign in Revelation 16:3-7, which describes symbolically God's judgement by turning water into blood. God warned that he would turn the Nile into blood is a warning of future judgment and an invitation to repent. God is gracious to warn us like he did Pharaoh. Will you remain hard like Pharaoh or will you repent and bow your knee to King Jesus. There is a scene from the life of Jesus I want to point you to in us to in John, Jesus is at a wedding at Cana and they run out of wine (2:1-3). So, Jesus turned water into wine. God, who is just to judge, is also the God who is merciful who extends grace to the undeserving. Will you welcome him, will you feast on him and with him by repenting, bending your knee to Jesus as Merciful Lord. underestimate

### **Life Group Questions:**

1. Summarize the big idea of Exodus 7:1-13 in your own words.
2. How was God making himself known to Pharaoh by turning the Nile to blood?
3. What was God wanting from Pharaoh?
4. Why did God start with the Nile?
5. How does God harden Pharaoh's heart yet he still be responsible for his sin?
6. How does Romans 1:24-28 help us understand the hardening of Pharaoh's heart?
7. Why do signs and wonders both confirm faith and harden hearts?
8. Do you fear your own heart becoming hard?
9. How do you talk to someone whose heart is hard?
10. How does this passage encourage you in your faith?
11. What does this teach us about following Jesus in discipleship?
12. How is God asking you to respond to this passage?

