

## BY THIS YOU SHALL KNOW: Part I - Exodus 7:14-25

### Introduction:

We left off in the fall having covered chapters 1-7 of the book of Exodus, and return now to finish looking at the end of Chapter 7.

### Recap:

The book of Exodus opened with the remnant of 'seventy', the family of Jacob, which had 'providentially' arrived in Egypt, and were 'preserved' in Egypt through circumstances in Joseph's life. We looked at all the events that brought them to this point. They had 'multiplied' rapidly, and were 'preserved', even under Pharaoh's 'oppression', even under the government order of execution, that all Hebrew male babies were to be killed upon birth. We learned that the Hebrew midwives chose to obey and fear God more than man. We saw that it was the 'sovereignty' of God, of GOD ALONE, that orchestrated all of this happening. It was His 'might', His 'sovereignty', His 'providence' that raised up a 'deliverer', not just to keep them, not just to 'preserve' them, but to 'deliver' them.

'Delivery' starts with a baby 'spared', the infant Moses. Remember the 'faith of his parents' as declared in the book of Hebrews, where 'by faith' the parents of Moses hid their newborn for three months, and 'by faith' then released him on the water, released to be 'providentially' found by Pharaoh's daughter. 'Providentially', Moses is raised for forty years in Pharaoh's court, then choosing reproach and exile, and turning his back on Egypt and his life of privilege, opulence, and luxury, Moses flees from Egypt.

#### Hebrews 11:23-27

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.”

At the age of forty Moses seeks refuge in Midian, finds a wife and makes a home, and lives out another forty years. And then, Moses's quiet idyllic lifestyle in Midian, living as a shepherd, was 'divinely' interrupted by God's 'call' on Moses. God appears to Moses in a 'burning bush', on the mountain of God. This was God 'coming down' with a 'revelation' of two things. Let us first consider them by way of recap.

### 1. FULFILLMENT OF A PROMISE:

We look back and consider what God has said in the opening chapters. He tells Moses that He has come down 'to deliver' His people to the 'promised land', to the land which HE PROMISED.

#### Exodus 3:8

“And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.”

The 'promise' of God came hundreds of years prior, to Abraham, a forefather of Moses. The Hebrew people have been 'sojourners' in a foreign land, a land not their own, for four hundred years.

Genesis 15:13-14,16

“Then the LORD said to Abram, ‘Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ... And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.’”

This was a summary, in three verses, of God's 'promise' with much detail. Abraham was given promise, by God, of entry into a 'promised land'.

## 2. THE GREAT NAME OF GOD REVEALED.

Moses questions of God: What name should I give them? Who shall I say sent me?

God gives the mission: "I AM WHO I AM". 'I AM' has sent you.

'I AM', the verb of being. It is the word of 'existence'. 'I AM' WHO 'I AM', AND Israel knows Me.

This is how you know ME, Moses. 'I AM' the God of your fathers. 'I AM' the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 'I AM' your God! I am not a new god. I am not a foreign deity like you have seen. I am not a coming deity. 'I AM' your God, and 'I AM' the continuing 'eternal' God.

Following this 'call' on the mount, we meet the Moses of 'protest'. Moses has many excuses for why he cannot heed God's 'call'. But it is not Moses's will that this is about. Whether he wants to or not, it is not about Moses's will. This is about God's Will, 'GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL'. And as we have learned, 'God's 'sovereign will' cannot be thwarted. His Will, will be done. So, after pruning, prepping, and patience, Moses is ready at last, ready to stand before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

Some Necessary Reminders:

i) Initially, Moses faced rejection:

Initially it went badly for Moses, first with Pharaoh, and then with his own people. Pharaoh was straight forward, “But Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.’” Even the overseers complain and are upset. Getting nowhere with Pharaoh they lay their complaint with Moses.

Exodus 5:20-21

“They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them, as they came out from Pharaoh; and they said to them, ‘The LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.’”

Feeling the sting of this rejection, Moses proceeds to have a pity party. He despairs and asks, "Why, Lord?"

Exodus 5:22

“Then Moses turned to the LORD and said, ‘O LORD, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me?’”

ii) Rejection by Pharaoh was predicted by God over and over:

Exodus 4:21

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.’”

God stated, many times over, that Pharaoh's heart would be hardened. It was, in fact, a pattern to be seen, over and over, for the prophets would also be told the same message: I call you for a mission, but 'they will not listen'.

Isaiah 6:9-10

“And he said, ‘Go, and say to this people:  
“Keep on hearing, but do not understand;  
keep on seeing, but do not perceive.”  
Make the heart of this people dull,  
and their ears heavy,  
and blind their eyes;  
lest they see with their eyes,  
and hear with their ears,  
and understand with their hearts,  
and turn and be healed.”

Jeremiah 1:19

“They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the LORD, to deliver you.”

Ezekiel 2:6-7

“And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house.”

Likewise, it was not to be any different for Moses. God warns and reminds Moses repeatedly that Pharaoh will not listen to him, that Pharaoh's heart will be hard, and that he will not let the people go.

Exodus 7:3

“But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt.”

But note, God has 'a plan' in place, programmed way back in Genesis, and this 'plan' has never changed. And God reminds Moses of this truth, reminds him of 'the promise', and the 'the plan'.

Exodus 7:4-5

“Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.”

It is clear that God is 'sovereign'. He is 'sovereign' over kingdoms, over kings, and over all creation. He controls the hearts of man, and He controls all the circumstances of Egypt. He is the One who 'moves' the hearts of men, and He is the One who 'opens' the hearts of men. It is GOD ALONE who is 'sovereign', and it is GOD ALONE who is completely 'sovereign', right down to the human heart.

Proverbs 21:1

“The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.”

If God says He will harden the heart of Pharaoh, then the result of Pharaoh's hardened heart should not be a surprise to us. But note also, there is not just 'rejection' due to a 'hardened heart'. No. There is something else going on in Pharaoh that needs to be kept in mind. Remember how Pharaoh responds to Moses from the very initial encounter.

Exodus 5:2

“But Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.’”

That Pharaoh confesses that he 'does not know the LORD', and 'will not let the people go' is paramount in understanding the sentiment of what is to come. Today you do not know the Lord, Pharaoh; 'Oh, but you will, Pharaoh!' The point is, Pharaoh, by this encounter and experience with the LORD, you shall know Him.

Exodus 7:17

“Thus says the LORD, ‘By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood.’”

Yes, Pharaoh, you do not know Me, so as a result, this is the consequence of not knowing God.

At the beginning of the plagues, God makes it clear, that the purpose of the plagues, 'the signs and wonders', is so that Egypt and Pharaoh will know YHWH, the Great "I AM", so that the 'anti-God' will know, so that the 'hardhearted' will know, so that the 'stubborn and rebellious' will know, ultimately, who the great God of the Hebrew people is.

Now, by way of preview, we look ahead at what the following section will reveal to us.

A) The Encounter:

We may well have a 'picture' in our mind about the 'encounter' with Pharaoh, as designed by Hollywood, as depicted in film, or literature, for example. But this is not a showdown. This is not

Moses versus Pharaoh. This is not Israel versus Egypt. They are the players, but they are not the main ones. This encounter is between 'HOLY GOD' and the gods of Egypt. This is noted by God's own words further along, when He declares, that 'By this I am judging all the gods of Egypt.'

Exodus 12:12

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD.”

And so we have God's commentary on this 'encounter', and yet, it is not an 'encounter' at all. Why? It is not an encounter between 'the God' and the gods, because the 'gods' of Egypt are not 'gods' at all. The 'REAL' God demonstrates that He is GOD ALONE. Through the miraculous, 'the signs and wonders', the gods of Egypt, in showing what they could supposedly do, showed that they were 'unreal' gods, and quite 'limited' in what they could do. They were unable to do what GOD ALONE was able to do.

#### B) The Plagues:

The famously known 'plagues' of Egypt, are also referred to by other terms, depending on the Biblical translation, and the particular verse that is being identified. Addressed as a 'plague' in the ESV, NIV and NLT translations, for example, NASB has translated one 'plague' as a 'severe pestilence'.

Exodus 9:2-3

“For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, behold, the hand of the LORD will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock that are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks.” (ESV)

Exodus 9:2-3

"For if you refuse to let them go, and continue to hold them, behold, the hand of the LORD will come with a very severe pestilence on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks." (NASB)

Another 'plague' is referred to as 'miracles' in the ESV and NLT versions, and as 'wonders' in NIV and NASB.

Exodus 4:21

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.’”

Exodus 4:21

"And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go." (NASB)

The Lord Himself refers to them as His 'signs and wonders' here in chapter 7, and also calls them 'judgments'.

Exodus 7:3

“But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt.”

Exodus 7:4

“Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment.”

Whichever term is used to identify these 'plagues', there is a 'supernatural' element about them, and their purpose, their point of occurring, is really to serve as 'acts of judgment'. Their origin is clear. They come from God with the purpose of 'judgment' on a nation, on a ruler, on the rebellious that deny Him. Therefore, these 'plagues' are not just mishaps, are not just demonstrations of power, were not just 'natural occurrences'. No. There are no scientific explanations for them. These 'plagues' are indeed, 'the finger of God', as the magicians from Egypt declare. There is no other explanation. This account leaves no room for any 'natural' explanation. These 'plagues' come from GOD ALONE.

Exodus 8:19

“Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, ‘This is the finger of God.’ But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.”

Let us not align liberal belief and liberal scholarship to rationalize away the TRUTH of this matter. The modern 'intellectual denial' of the 'miraculous', though common, is not Biblical, and is fundamentally a denial of God Himself.

### C) The Plague of Unbelief:

There is a 'plague' in the 'plague'. 'Underpinning the very spine of the 'plagues' happening, exists 'unbelief'. 'Unbelief' is foundational.

People will ask, 'Did this really happen?' 'Did frogs really fall from the sky?' 'Did hail really strike the land and everything in it?' Indeed, Pharaoh's heart is not the only heart that is in view here. As the 'plagues' intensify, will you slowly be tuning in, or tuning out? As the 'signs and wonders' develop, will your belief in God intensify or wane? Will your skepticism also develop? Let us learn from Pharaoh, who had a front row seat to see these powers and the might of God, who saw these 'signs and wonders' up front, yet still he had no belief, yet still he remained hardened toward God, even in the face of God's miraculously manifested power and superiority. But let us not marvel at Pharaoh's 'unbelief' while harbouring our own 'unbelief'.

Wherever you may be in your relationship with God, this study is given to 'you', so that "you" shall know GOD ALONE. This is not just an historical account, in and of itself. This is not just a matter of opinion. It is not just a crutch, and it is not just for a 'spiritual person'. No. Belief in God, and not knowing God, contrary to modern opinion, matters. God's 'reality' was undeniable, regardless of Pharaoh's belief, unbelief, or opinion. Even though Pharaoh, the great king of Egypt, denied God, and even though his very kingdom was turning upside down, it did not take away from GOD ALONE. It did not alter the reality of God. God's reality and truth are given for 'belief', and 'belief' for all time. Regardless of Pharaoh's belief, or lack of belief, the frogs still came, the cattle were dying, and all

kinds of judgment was falling around him. So while Pharaoh chose to harden his heart in 'denial', all this 'denial', this choosing to not know God, this hardening of the heart, this 'rejecting' God, was all to have consequences. 'Not knowing God', whether it is Pharaoh, or those like Pharaoh, is given a clear warning here, and with a description.

## I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NOT KNOWING GOD: EXODUS 7:14

Exodus 7:14

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Pharaoh’s heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go.’”

Pharaoh's heart is hardened. Pharaoh illustrates the 'common fist', defiance, the obvious characteristic of the heart prior to salvation. 'The hardened heart' aligns with the 'sons of disobedience'. It is a 'dead heart'. He does not listen. He hears the command 'to let God's people go', but he refuses to acknowledge the command. He will not let the people go.

Ephesians 2:1-2

“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.”

It is with this, a 'dead heart', that we refuse God, and align with disobedience. This fact is confirmed of Pharaoh by Lord when He tells Moses what to say to Pharaoh.

Exodus 7:16

“And you shall say to him (Pharaoh), ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, “Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness.” But so far, you have not obeyed.’”

A 'hardened heart' has action; it does not just 'sit hard'. No. It refuses to obey God.

Another characteristic of not knowing God is 'false worship'.

Exodus 7:15

“Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water. Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent.”

And this is key. The 'Nile' River was the focal point in Egypt (and maybe in the world, at that time). The Nile was like a 'spine of life' in an otherwise barren country. Its length and mighty size as a river made it 'preeminent'. (The mighty Nile was the place of God's choice for the first 'plague'.) The Nile was 'prized' in Egypt, even 'deified' in these ancient Egyptian days. And given that Egypt was 'polytheistic' in their belief system, where everything was a god, the Nile River proved right for their worship. Given that the Nile was a 'lifesource' for many, it therefore became a 'major god'. This was 'Hapi' the river god, referred to as the 'Spirit of the Nile'. 'Hapi' was worshipped religiously, especially by the leaders, and by Pharaoh, who looked to the gods for guidance and help. But this was 'false worship', for God Himself has declared that there are to be no other gods. He is GOD ALONE!

Isaiah 46:9

“Remember the former things of old;  
for I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is none like me.”

Pharaoh is therefore engaged in worshipping 'falsely'.

'False worship' is yet another characteristic of not knowing God. It was also evidence of having turned away from God. Elijah makes this clear in a conversation with King Ahab.

I Kings 18:18

“And he answered, ‘I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father’s house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals.’”

'False worship' can be visible and pathetic, as was with the prophets of Baal, cutting themselves and crying to their god who never answered.

I Kings 18:25-29

“Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, ‘Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it.’ And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, ‘O Baal, answer us!’ But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, ‘Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.’ And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.”

It can also be hidden worship, as was the case with Achan, who secretly stole some items that God had banned, and then hid them for his own use. His covetous deed angered God, and 'stopped the nation', and Israel was consequently defeated in battle at Ai. God knows the 'hearts' of men.

Joshua 6:17-18, 7:1, 10-12, 15, 19-22, 24-25

“And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it.”

“But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel.”

“The LORD said to Joshua, ‘Get up! Why have you fallen on your face? Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies,



because they have become devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you.”

“And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel.”

“Then Joshua said to Achan, ‘My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.’ And Achan answered Joshua, ‘Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath.’ So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath.”

“And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the cloak and the bar of gold, and his sons and daughters and his oxen and donkeys and sheep and his tent and all that he had. And they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. And Joshua said, ‘Why did you bring trouble on us? The LORD brings trouble on you today.’ And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones.”

In the New Testament we learn of Ananias and Sapphira who were also caught trying to deceive God. But God, in his omniscience, knows the 'heart' of man.

Acts 5:1-10

“But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife’s knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.’ When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, ‘Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.’ And she said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ But Peter said to her, ‘How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.’ Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.”

NOTE: 'Worshiping falsely', and the 'worship of false things', always comes with the 'denial' of 'truth', whether public or private.

God reminds Pharaoh, through Moses, of what truth he, Pharaoh, has 'denied'. 'THE REAL THING SWALLOWED UP THE FALSE'.

Exodus 7:10-13

“So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh summoned the

wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. For each man cast down his staff, and they became serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said."

Even though God has proven He is the mighty God, proven He is more powerful than Pharaoh's magicians, still Pharaoh 'denies' God.

It reminds us of another denial, in the story in Mark 3 of the man with the withered hand that needs healing. And Jesus sees the people standing there watching, and knows they have 'hardened hearts' and have no desire to acknowledge truth, to see truth. Jesus speaks to the question of the Sabbath Law, but they remain silent; they refuse to concede, refuse to even answer His question asked.

Mark 3:1-6

"Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, 'Come here.' And he said to them, 'Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?' But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him."

You would suppose that after witnessing the very 'finger of God' working such a miracle, a supernatural event, that the Pharisees would have been in awe, and would have cried out, 'You are the true God', but no, instead they gathered with the Herodians (whom they were not usually close to), and in enemy fashion, sought to destroy Christ.

The same was true with Pharaoh. He saw 'the finger of God' at work with His own eyes, yet was unmoved, except to 'harden his heart' more. Pharaoh was the picture of all these: disobedient heart, 'hardened heart', 'false worship', and 'denial'. These are THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NOT KNOWING GOD, and such characteristics are condemned.

## II. THE CONDEMNATION OF NOT KNOWING GOD: EXODUS 7:17

Exodus 7:17

"Thus says the LORD, 'By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood.'"

Pharaoh, because you don't know me, I will, with this same staff, strike your god, the Nile, and the water shall be turned to blood. By this you shall know that 'I AM' the LORD GOD. Thus is the divine gavel. God does not look at Pharaoh and say 'unknowing character', nor does He say 'It is not your fault.' 'It is just how you are, Pharaoh.' 'You are in Egypt, and I understand'. NO. Nor does God chuckle, and say 'Oh, Pharaoh'. No. No casual rhetoric from God. He does not look at Pharaoh's 'hardened heart', his 'disobedience', his 'denial', and his 'false worship' and rationalize it all away. No. We cannot rationalize like this. It is not a matter of smirking. THERE IS ALWAYS A CONSEQUENCE FOR NOT KNOWING GOD! By this text we learn how serious a matter it is. Not knowing God results in a

'condemnation' from God. It is not 'written off' as a personality quirk. It is not just a mere annoyance. It is not just a minor inconvenience. NO. God has taken specific notice, and He points a finger straight at Pharaoh and his kingdom, Egypt.

Exodus 7:18-19

“‘The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.’ And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to Aaron, “Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.”’”

Three consequences are to occur due to this 'plague'. The fish will die, the Nile will stink, and if taste and smell are not enough, you will grow weary of this Nile, weary of trying to find water from blood, for 'all' the water in Egypt shall be turned to blood.

God said it. God did it. It was not an idle threat. When God pronounces judgment, it comes to be. It will happen. God does it. A Holy God must do this.

Exodus 7:20-21

“Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.”

When we think about 'condemnation', anything less than full obedience to God, anything less than perfection and subjection to a Holy God, is cosmic treason, and therefore will be 'condemned'. This truth is not limited to just Pharaoh; it is the truth for anyone with a 'fallen character'. Anyone who has these characteristics, who 'doesn't believe', who 'denies' God, etcetera, are 'condemned already' because they do not believe in God. Many today do not believe, and do not know God. Yet God is not on a mission of 'condemnation'. No. He sent His Son Jesus to pay the cost for sin. Christ also is not on a mission of 'condemnation'.

John 3:16-18

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

Yes, the world needs saving. To not know God is a hard life, is a 'condemned' life, a weary 'condemned' life. One's greatest treasure becomes one's greatest 'plague'. What they 'worship' turns against them and becomes their rod of judgment. If you don't 'believe' you are 'condemned', and Pharaoh does not 'believe' so is 'condemned' already. Egypt worships the Nile, and God chooses the Nile as His rod of judgment. They will be forced to seek their water from blood.

This Godly 'vengeance' is just, the Apostle Paul explains. It is the evidence of 'righteous judgment'. God inflicts 'vengeance' on those who do not believe, who do not know God, who do not obey Him,

who fail to recognize Him. They will suffer punishment, eternal punishment, and hard life. There is a 'present' 'condemnation', to wake him up, and a future judgment.

II Thessalonians 1:5-8

“This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”

Pharaoh has no idea how bad things are to come. This first 'plague' is but a warning.

### III. CONFUSION FOR NOT KNOWING GOD: EXODUS 7:22-25

Exodus 7:22

“But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh’s heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.”

The court magicians serve as good illusionists, but are pale imitations beside Almighty God. They copy, but this is all they can do; they only can 'imitate'. They cannot 'initiate'. Even more, they cannot counteract what God does; they cannot fix the problem. True power would be to turn water into wine, not to make more water. True power would not make the problem worse, would not make 'more blood'. No. True power would do something to 'fix' the problem. True power would not turn water into more blood, would not make the situation even worse.

More of something harmful results in 'confusion'. It is like adding kerosene on a fire. It not only fails to address the real problem, but it adds more harm to it. It is staying with the problem, adding to the problem. With 'imitation' you stay where you are, in the problem, and the problem is not fixed. And how does Pharaoh respond to the situation? He buries his head in the sand, so to speak.

Exodus 7:23

“Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart.”

If he closes his eyes, maybe then it will all go away. This serves as 'confusion'. By choosing to ignore what is facing him, by ignoring the blood, it is someone else's problem to deal with. And so his people are left to try and find water. Like people do today, they 'went digging' for 'something' to help.

Exodus 7:24-25

“And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile. Seven full days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile.”

One week of misery, of blood for water. For their 'unbelief' they deserved a lifetime of judgement, but this was a 'warning', and so, in mercy to them, God limits the ordeal, and provides respite. Pharaoh is given 'clairity' in the 'confusion'. Make it go away. It is a warning. Your magicians cannot fix it.

Pharaoh, you have seen 'the finger of God'. Repent. Yield. Submit to God. Make it right. God is demonstrating His mercy. He is slow to anger. He is just. But Pharaoh refuses to submit. Pharaoh 'hardens' further. It should have been but ONE 'plague' and been over with, but instead God patiently shows TEN 'plagues', each progressively getting worse. This is the long-suffering and patient God.

We may see ourselves. My water stinks. I am scratching. I've turned my back on God. I am weary, confused. I play God. I am drowning. I don't know God.

But you can know God. CRY OUT TO THE LIVING GOD. PRAY. The LORD is gracious and merciful, and slow to anger. To all who call upon Him in TRUTH, He will uphold.

Psalm 145:8, 17-20

“The LORD is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.”

“The LORD is righteous in all his ways  
and kind in all his works.

The LORD is near to all who call on him,  
to all who call on him in truth.

He fulfills the desire of those who fear him;  
he also hears their cry and saves them.

The LORD preserves all who love him,  
but all the wicked he will destroy.”