



Ten Plagues: Saved Through Judgment

Part 2: Exodus 7-11

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Revelation in the Ten Plagues

Let's go to Exodus 7 as we begin part two of what we started last week. We had two big themes that the plagues revealed:

1. God is Lord Over Pharaoh

From God hardening Pharaoh's heart, He got glory over him.

2. God is Merciful and Just

God was merciful in rescuing the Israelites, but He was also just in giving the Egyptians exactly what they deserved. We saw that ultimately the cross

is the same way. Both justice and mercy falls on the cross, and we hope that you are on the side of mercy.

This is part two, and we will have some more themes from nine of the plagues.

This weekend I got to do two of my favorite things in the world. That is camping and hiking. I love both of those things. If you ask my wife and kids, they know I love going camping and hiking. There is nothing better than sleeping in a tent in the middle of the woods. It just doesn't get any better than that. So I took two of my boys, Finley and Crider, to an Adventure Boys Campout for their school, New Covenant Christian Academy. We head to Fern Cliff in Illinois in the Jeep. It is loaded down, completely packed with all our gear. It is about an hour and fifteen or twenty minute road trip, which is a pretty good span of time for two boys to be in a Jeep. One of the things we do when going on a longer trip is to let the boys play with the iPad or iPhone. We don't want them to play with them very much. It is pretty much just for long road trips, so they get really exciting on road trips because they get to play the games they like. There are two games they play, Star Wars Legos, and Star Wars Angry Birds. Those are the only two games on their radar. They were back there playing and I started listening to their conversation, and it is hilarious hearing them play and talk about what levels they are beating while showing each other what they are doing. They just get excited about the birds taking down the pigs! All of a sudden, I hear Finley, my five-year-old, say, "Go me, go me, go me!" I looked in the rearview mirror, and not only is he saying go me, he is doing a little dance! I said, "Finley, what are you doing?" He blushed a little and smiled and said, "Dad, I'm just doing what you do!" I said, "What? I have never done that before!" He said, "Dad, you do it all the time when you play basketball against us." Now, I am not very good at basketball, but I am pretty good against my two boys...I can dunk and they can't. So I guess, unknowingly, when I have made a really good slam-dunk, I might have done a little dance and said some things. So I told Finley, "Just because Daddy does that doesn't mean we should do it. The reason is because we don't want to bring glory to ourselves or brag on ourselves, and Daddy shouldn't do that either. You don't want to say things

like that because you don't want to be self-centered. You want to be others-centered. You want to give glory to something else, not you."

We all instinctively know that. We know that we shouldn't praise ourselves and get everyone around us to praise us. I mean this is March Madness, so if you are a basketball fan, you have been in front of a TV for a long time watching game after game. One of the things March Madness does is to show all this glory to players who do crazy dunks, or save the game by half court shots. All these things happen during March Madness. It is really interesting when you see the MVP of the game, (the player who scored thirty, who has dunked and assisted, who really do deserve a handclap) and the ESPN guy to puts a microphone in their face, what do they always say? They never say, "I am awesome. Did you see that? I am the greatest!" They hardly ever say that. They say things like, "I just want to give glory to my team. I just want to thank my teammates. I want to thank the coach who put together a good plan." They are always deflecting glory from themselves. They don't want to say, "I am the greatest, check me out," even though that is what we are doing because they are awesome! They naturally deflect glory because we teach that as a culture. It is a good thing to deflect glory. You don't want like to be all about you. In fact, you know people who think life is all about them. You know people who are self-centered, and you tend not to want to be around those people. You don't want to hang out with them because everything is about them. They are always upping you because of how much better they are, and they always draw attention to themselves.

We know that self-centeredness is not a good quality. Although we are self-centered a lot of the times, none of us wants to be self-centered. We don't teach our kids to be self-centered. We try to go against self-centeredness, we try to be humble, we try to draw attention to others, and we try to draw attention to God. We don't want to be self-centered at all. But I want to note that as you read the Bible, you begin to find out that God is very self-centered. I know that might shock you a little bit, but it is absolutely true. God is radically self-centered. He is self-exalting. In fact, the God of the Bible does all things for the sake of His own glory! In the New Testament, He actually tells us that He wants us to, whether we eat

or drink, do all things for His glory. So God wants us to do everything for His glory. If you notice in the Bible, God does everything for His own glory. He is very self-centered; He is very self-exalting. Of course, the obvious question is how is it ok for God to be self-centered, (and not only ok, but good for God to be self-centered) and why is it so bad and not ok for us to be self-centered? What is the difference here? As we continue from last week with the third theme, we will see why that is the case.

- **God's Glory Among the Nations**

When it comes to the ten plagues, we will notice that they reveal God's glory among the nations. The reason God did the ten plagues was to draw attention to Himself, to glorify Himself, and to show His power, not just in Egypt or in Israel, but to the nations. So this event was a self-centered, self-exalting event that God did so that everyone would see Him. If you gave the mic to God, He would not say, "I just want to thank the Israelites and My teammates. They did a really good job in the Exodus." No, He would say, "Yeah, I did it. This was all Me, and it was for My glory. Go ahead and give Me another round of applause." That is what God says in His Word. So why is that good; when for us, that is not good?

We are going to answer that question, but first I want to read a Scripture we left out last week. Exodus 7:5 says:

Scripture

"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."

This verse tells us that the plagues were not just about rescue and judgment; they were also about revelation. They were about knowledge. God was showing Himself off to the nations. God said He was doing these things so that we may know that He is God. This is not just one verse. This repeated phrase happens eight times in chapters 7-11. This idea of 'that you may know.' So He does these plagues, and here's the purpose:

1. That you may know I am God
2. That you may know I am exalted

3. That you may know I am the only God
4. That you may know the earth belongs to Me
5. That you may know the truth about Me
6. That you would see Me
7. That all eyes would be on Me
8. So that My name may be proclaimed in all of the earth

- **He is the Treasure of the Universe**

Imagine if I asked you why you go to work and you said, "I go to work so that my name might be glorified in all the earth." We would look at you funny; you need a reality check! But God says it over and over again, "I am doing everything so that My name and fame can go throughout all of the earth." This is one of the biggest themes in the entire Bible; that God does everything for His own glory and renown, so that everyone would see that the spotlight is on Him, that He is the center of the universe. This brings us to the obvious question, why is it good for God to do that, but it is not good for us to do that? The reason is very plain and simple. The reason it is good for God to be self-centered is because God really is the center of the universe. He really is the treasure of the universe. He really is the greatest good in all of the universe. The reason it is not ok for us to be self-centered is because we are not the center of the universe. We are not the treasure and we are not the greatest good in the universe. So when we are self-centered, we are stealing glory from that which is greater than us, which is God. So if you live your life about yourself and your glory, you are harming those around you because they ultimately see you rather than seeing God. But if God were to do that, if God were to make the reasons He does stuff for yours or someone else's glory, He would be robbing you because you would get less than the best, because the best is Himself. So if God points you to anything other than Himself, He is not giving you His best. He is the best; He is the treasure of the universe for which your heart was made.

Just imagine if God said the reason He was doing the ten plagues was so that Moses would be glorified, and his name would be made famous in all the world. There would be a big problem with that, because all these

people would go to Moses as this amazing hero, and what would Moses do? He would let them down because he is not the greatest treasure. He made all sorts of mistakes. So if their happiness were wrapped up in Moses, he would let them down. Imagine if God said that He was doing all those plagues for the renown of Israel, so that all people would look to Israel and have their hopes, dreams, and ambitions wrapped up in Israel; that they would be their god. If you watch Israel's history, it is like a rollercoaster ride. So if their happiness were bound up in Israel's glory, they would be miserable people. You see, if God points to anything else in all creation and says go after that, look at that, get pleasure from that, He is giving you less than His best. That is why God never glorifies another, never does something for another, but does all things for His own glory because you desperately need Him. You need Him above all other things. He is the great treasure of the universe. So God orchestrated the plagues and all the events in history, ultimately to point to His greatness, to show His power, to show His renown, so that you would find joy and happiness in Him, not something less than Him.

- **His Glory is Exalted**

I love what John Piper says about the self-centeredness of God. He said, "God is the one being in the universe for whom self-exaltation is not the act of a needy ego, but an act of infinite giving. The reason God seeks our praise is not because He won't be fully God until He gets it, but because we won't be happy until we give it." I love that quote! God is not saying come to Him and praise Him because He is needy and needs His ego scratched. He is not lacking in His God-ness when we don't praise Him. He doesn't need our praise. He is full in Himself. The reason why God invites us to worship Him and the reason He exalts Himself before us is because God is saying that you won't be happy until we put Him as Lord and God. Until you worship, exalt, praise, and make your whole life about Him, you won't be happy. The reason is because you will find happiness in something else, a relationship, a job, a sport, a hobby, whatever it is, and your joy will come from that and it will ultimately let you down. Then you won't be full of joy because only God can fill you with Himself. That is why,

in the plagues, He does it all for His own glory, because you desperately need Him, the treasure of the universe.

It is not only in the plagues. Ultimately, we see it in the cross. God works out the cross for His own renown and glory. The death, burial, and resurrection is not just about you being saved; it is about Christ being glorified and exalted, and His name being put above every name on the planet. It is about the exultation of Christ. And Jesus says based on this knowledge, it is not just about you, but now go take it to the whole world because My glory is for the nations, not just for you; so take it and spread it. That is why the cross event is supposed to be an all-encompassing, earth-shattering event. We are supposed to take that news all throughout the earth so the glory of Christ would go throughout the earth. When people aren't caught up in the glory of Christ, they are lacking the best thing in the universe, which is ultimately Christ.

Since God is radically self-centered and about His own renown and glory, it makes sense that His followers would also be about His renown and glory. So if you are a believer, I want to ask you a question. As a follower of Jesus, is your life about His glory? Do you live your life in a way that shows glory to Christ, or is it all about you and what you want, and what you do? Is it about drawing attention to yourself? If your life is about you and drawing attention to yourself, then you are actually robbing something from all the people you are around, everyone that you impact, because you aren't giving them the best. But if you would make your life about Christ and His glory, so that everything you do ultimately points to Jesus, then you will do the people around you a favor. You will point them to the one thing they desperately need, and that is Christ. You see, not only is God self-centered, but we should be centered around God. We should be giving Him glory in everything we do because people desperately need to see Him. So we should be living for His renown and His glory.

- **He is the Only God**

The next thing we see through the plagues is that God is the only God. It is made very clear throughout the plagues that God is the only God. He does it by executing judgement on all of the gods of Egypt. So the plagues

weren't just about judging Egypt and rescuing Israel, it was also about executing judgment on the gods of Egypt. We see this in Exodus 12:12. It says, *"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."* It specially referred to the last plague, which we will get to next week. But notice it is "judgments," plural. So I think it is talking about all of the plagues, and they were about not only the judgment of Egypt, but of all of Egypt's gods. At that time, Egypt worshipped about eighty different gods. God is saying that they are all false. None is responsible for the things you think they are responsible for, they are all a false hope, and God would prove it to them by the ten plagues. How does God do this?

We will take a trip through the plagues and God's execution of judgment on Egypt's gods:

Plague

Egyptian God

1. Water changing into blood in the Nile

Hapi

The Egyptians worshipped the Nile. The reason Pharaoh went to the Nile in the morning was to do his spiritual devotion. He gave worship to the god of the Nile. This god of the Nile is who they believe provides life and water to Egypt, and all of a sudden, there is blood and death in the Nile. Fish are stinking in the Nile. It is an execution of the god of the Nile, to show that there is no god in the Nile. There is only one God who created the Nile, and His name is Yahweh.

2. Frogs

Heqt

Heqt was the goddess of birth and fertility. She was represented by a frog's head. This is a frog-headed god. So what does God do? If you want fertility, I will show you fertility! He sent more frogs than you could imagine, frogs out of their cereal bowls jumping everywhere, so much so that the people cried for them to be killed. So God kills the frogs, and then they pile them in huge heaps and set them on fire, burning the dead

bodies, showing that their fertility god, who is a frog, has been slain. She is no more. Again, God executes judgment on the gods of Egypt.

3. Gnats

Seb

Seb was the god of the earth, and the gnats came from the earth. They came from the dust. So the dust came up and became so many gnats that you could hardly see. I get really troubled when I have that one annoying gnat that just won't leave you alone. Imagine a billion of them at the same time! They cry out to stop the gnats from the earth. So this points to a destruction of their god of the earth.

4. Flies

Uatchit

They worshipped Uatchit, the fly god of Egypt, which was represented a fly's head. God sent so many flies it was as if darkness was on the land. These were biting flies. They bit the corners of their eyes and they would swell up so they couldn't see. These were painful flies. If you've been in the woods and been bitten by those biting flies, you know they are miserable. Imagine a billion of them all around you at the same time. They are crying for the death of their fly god at this point. Take the flies away!

5. Diseased Cattle

Hathor

Hathor was the goddess of love and beauty and joy. She was represented by a cow. She was predominately worshipped during this time, especially by this pharaoh during the Exodus. Most scholars agree that he was obsessed with cows and the cow goddess. So God executes all of the cows of Egypt, showing that she is no god; that He truly is God over all the other gods.

6. Boils

Serapis

Serapis was the god of healing. God gives them boils and they can't cry out to this god to heal them because nothing is working. They have to come to Yahweh, the true God to receive healing because this god is false.

7. Hail

Nut

Nut was the sky goddess. Hail came from the sky making havoc on crops, animals, and people. It was a direct connection to this goddess.

8. Locusts

Osiris

Osiris was the god of crops and fertility. This God was responsible for all their crops and their safety, so God sends swarms of locusts, which devour the crops and everything that has a green leaf on it. It was total destruction on the god of the crops and fertility.

9. Darkness

Re

Re was the sun god. Paintings, hieroglyphics, and carvings from that time period were all about the sun. The sun god was very important to them. So God makes it dark for three entire days, showing that Re is no god, and that He is the only true God and it is only through repentance that the light will shine once more.

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So we see that the ten plagues are not just judgment on Egypt; it is also judgment on their gods. God wants to make a statement: All the gods that you are worshipping and going after are all false; none of them will deliver what you think they will. I am the one true, living God who is responsible for all things. He wants to make that statement very clear. I think it is a good reminder for us that God is a jealous God who desires the worship of His creation. He is not ok when we give our worship to created things. Read Romans 1, it is very clear that God is not ok when we worship created things. But as people, we tend to gravitate to worship things rather than God. We take good things and make them God things. Like relationships, they are good things but we can make them into God things and make everything about a relationship. Then we crush it and it ends, and we are left wanting and God is robbed of glory because He should be at the center of the universe. It could be a device, or social media, all these things can become the one thing you live for, the one thing you couldn't live without. All of a sudden, it becomes a god in your life, and God is jealous of those things. He is about destroying idols. So if you are a

believer and you are holding a bunch of idols, just get ready because God will come after them to destroy them. So willingly let them go, willingly repent when something crowds your heart more than God does. Repent of it and worship the Lord God with all your heart, all your mind, and all your soul. Love Him first and foremost.

It also speaks to our culture. We are very polytheistic. There could be many gods. It's no big deal. Or there could be just one God but everyone is just worshipping Him in their own way, and God is ok with all of it. He is fine with whatever you want to do. You go to the ten plagues and you see that God is not ok with this people's false worship of a wrong god. The same is true today. God is not ok when we worship things that aren't gods. So what do we need to do? Instead of thinking that God is ok with everything, we need to go tell people who don't know the one true living God about Him. Then they can repent of their false religion, false god, or their false worship, and come to the Lord who is truly the One who is going to fill their hearts, truly makes them happy, and the One who deserves all of the glory. So God is the only God. There is no other, and God clearly reveals that throughout the ten plagues.

- **The Earth Belongs to Him**

The next thing we will look at is that God is Lord over all the earth, over every square inch of the planet and the universe. God is God over it. We see this pattern, and we will look at four verses on the statements there.

1. "I am the Lord in the midst of the earth."
2. "There is none like Me in all the earth."
3. "I want My name to be proclaimed in all the earth."
4. "So that you may know the earth is the Lord's."

During the plagues, God is saying that He is the God in the midst of the earth, He rules over the earth, He owns the earth, and He wants everyone to know His name among the earth. God is saying that every square inch of the universe belongs to Him, and He wants His glory to cover it. What does that tell us? That every space we walk in, God's glory should be dominant in that space. We kind of relegate spaces. For the people then, they thought Goshen was God's, and Israel was the God of Goshen and

Israel. God was saying no, I am the God of Egypt, I am the God of the whole world, and everyone needs to know that. Some of you think God is God on Sunday. In that compartment of your life, you go to church, He is God, and you worship Him. But when you leave and go in your bedroom to your computer, it is a different story; you have a different god. God is not Lord over that area of your life. Or when you go to work the next day, you can be different at work because that is your workspace, and you also have a hobby space, a religious space. God is not a God of spaces. He is a God who covers all space. So every inch, area, and compartment of your life should be ruled by the lordship of Christ, His honor, and His glory. Everywhere you go, whether it is a student, or at work, or at home, or at church, or just going into a coffee shop, or walking somewhere, going into Walmart, getting groceries, whatever you are doing, know that you are supposed to be carrying the glory of God into that space. He owns and rules it all, and He wants everyone to know that wherever you are at, see who He is because He rules the world. God wants you to be a person who does that, a person who takes His glory to all places.

- **He Distinguished Between His People and Others**

The next thing I saw as a theme of the ten plagues is that God makes distinction between Israel and Egypt. It is a little hard for us to swallow, but we will see between two groups of people in this text, the Egyptians and the Israelites. He makes the distinction that one group is His and one is not, and they have different outcomes. We see this in chapter 8:22-23. It says, "*But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth. Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.*" Then, in the four plagues that follow, He makes distinction. And then in the darkness, Egypt is in dark, but Goshen has a light. There is distinction, God's people and those who are not His people. God is acting differently towards those who are His and those who are not His. One gets grace and mercy, the other gets judgment and wrath, and ultimately death. There is a division. There is a distinction between who are His, and who are not His.

As people, we do the same thing. Honestly, I love my kids more than I love your kids. I just do. My kids are awesome! When I saw my kids on stage with the other kids for Baby Blessings, I know they were beside other kids, but I didn't see them; I only saw mine! If you are grandparents, you didn't see the other kids either; you only saw your grandkids. There was a distinction. Your eyes were on them; your iPhone was on them. You weren't taking pictures of everyone; you were only taking pictures of the one person you came for because they are yours. They are your own, and you have made a distinction between them. You show them a different kind of love. My office is at the downtown campus and it has a lot of windows. New Covenant Christian Academy is also at our downtown campus, and boys and girls pass my office all the time. They are always making faces and waving. I see a lot of kids walk by, and I like all of those kids. But there are two boys, Crider and Finley, that when they walk by they have a different affection from me. They catch my eye differently. I look at them differently. I usually go out of my office and give them a hug and a kiss. I look to see if their shirt is tucked in, if they have anything on their face, or if their hair is ok. I don't just look at them, I protect them, provide for them, I want their good. There is a difference; they are mine. Yes, I like all of the kids, but if there is something wrong with these kids, I come to the rescue.

God does the same thing with His people. Yes, it is true that God loves the world. He loved the world so much that He gave His own Son to die for the world on a cross. So you can't say that God doesn't love sinners. He loves sinners. Christ died on a cross for them, but for those who accept Christ there is a whole different kind of love. There is a covenant kind of love, an eternal life kind of love where God loves you more. And He loves you forever because you are His own child. If you are on the wrong side of the cross, if you haven't accepted Christ, you might be thinking you know God and He is a God of love. He is all love, all the time because that is what culture tells you, so it doesn't really matter what you do with Christ. I am telling you that is not true. There is a division between those who are His and those who are not His. The plagues reveal that so clearly, and so does the end of time. Jesus says when all people come before Him, there will be sheep, and there will be goats. The sheep are His and He will love them

forevermore, and the goats are not His and He will cast them into outer darkness forevermore. There is a distinction.

So what should you do if you aren't His? You don't ask why God doesn't love you like He loves those. No, the admonition is to repent and believe in the gospel and He will! It is those who are on the side of Christ who are in a covenant love, a special love, a rescuing love, and a love that will hold you forevermore and will never let you go. There is a division between His and those who are not His. So if you are not His, repent and believe in the gospel and become His. You will feel more love than you have ever felt in your whole life. You will have the love of God the Father spread abroad in your life.

- **There was a Kingdom Reversal**

Then lastly, I see in the ten plagues, from the beginning all the way to the end, is a kingdom reversal. Things aren't always as they appear right now. It is important to note that in your mind. I want to go to the very front of chapter 7. Verse 1 says, "*And the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet."*" I want you to notice how crazy of a statement that is. Who is Pharaoh? He is the king of the most powerful nation of the world. He is godlike among the earth, the most powerful man in the world. Who is Moses? He is a slave. He belongs to slave people who are serving as slaves under the most powerful man in the world. That is how the kingdom is rolling right now, how history is playing out. It seems like Pharaoh and the Egyptians will always be on top and always going to win, and it seems like the Hebrews are on the losing end. But God is about to reverse the kingdoms. Through ten plagues, God is about to take the kingdom that is exalted and powerful in the eyes of the earth, and He will bring it to its lowest. He will take those lowly people, the people of God, and He will exalt them. As we see in chapter 11, God tells Moses that as they leave Egypt, the Egyptians will give them treasure, they will praise them, and they will call them famous. They will now be over the Egyptians. There will be a kingdom reversal. Before this, things seemed like Pharaoh and Egypt would always be the superpower and always be in control. I think God wants to remind us that things aren't always as they appear.

As the church, we hear all the time in our culture, if you stick to the Bible, to truth, to morality, then you are on the wrong side of history. Everything is changing. Morality is changing, truth is changing; gender is changing. Everything is changing, and what the church needs to do is to get on the right side of history. We need to abandon the Bible, abandon Christ, or at least modify it greatly so that we will be on the right side of history, so that we will be with the group that wins in the end. But God wants to remind us that things aren't always as they appear right now. Christ wants to remind us that just like in the ten plagues, there will be an end of the age moment where the kingdoms will be reversed. For the kingdom of this earth that is exalting itself as the great superpower and is claiming to be on the right side of history, there will be a reversal where the kingdom of Christ, who is lowly and following Christ, believing in the truth of the gospel, will be brought high. At the close of the age, they will be on the right side of history because they are on the side of the cross. They are on the side of Christ. So I know as a people, as believers, it might seem like we are losing. It might seem like the next hundred years are not favorable for us and it would just be easier to join the Egyptians because they are the superpower. But God is saying hold on...things aren't always as they appear, and just wait, because He is going to do another thing at the closing of the age where the kingdoms will be reversed. Those who are found faithful in Christ will be the exalted ones, the ones who live forevermore. This is going to be another kingdom reversal.

The question is which kingdom are you living in and for? Are you walking like an Egyptian, living for relative truth, living for our culture? Are you changing with the culture because you want to make sure you are on the right side of history so that everyone thinks of you in the right light? Or are you walking like Christ, believing the gospel, believing the truth of the Scriptures? Even if it isn't popular, you believe your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, because you know in the end, there will be another kingdom reversal. The low will be brought high and the high will be brought low. You want to be on the right side of history, not just in history, but in the close of the age when all of the kingdom will be in its fullness.

In these plagues, we see the glory of God spread abroad among the nations. God loves His glory, and He knows that you ultimately need His glory. He is reversing the kingdoms, and those who are found in Him will live with Him forevermore. Are you in His kingdom, living for His renown because He is the only God? There is a distinction between His and those who are not His. If you aren't in the kingdom of Christ, if you haven't come to the cross, I pray that you see that you need Christ and that claim Him. You will feel more love than you could ever imagine from God the Father.