

A Sign of Things to Come

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[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

What a day when we're all gathered in the throne room of God and every nation and tribe and tongue is, I mean, you sound okay, but listen, listen, I mean, you sound all right, but what a roar it will be to hear everyone sing how great thou art.

Whether it's that song or not, I don't know, but I can assure you the theme of whatever song it is will be the greatness and the holiness of God. Well, if you got your Bible and you're in Exodus 7 now, we're continuing in our series called Through the Wilderness, A Journey to Freedom.

This is our study of the book of Exodus, and we are now in chapter 7, I think roughly 11 weeks in, and what a captivating story this has been.

[1 : 50] I mean, you probably knew the story somewhat, but my hope is you've learned some new things as we've studied along, and there's so much of this story we relate to.

We've looked at Israel and their 400 years of slavery and the suffering that they're going through, and while we have not been in slavery like the nation of Israel, we know what it's like to suffer and go through hardships and difficulties and wonder where God is.

And then there's Moses. He kills a man and flees to Midian. For 40 years, he's just a shepherd with his father-in-law, and at age 80, God comes to him and says, yeah, of all the people that I could use, I'm going to use you, old boy.

Let's go. And Moses is reluctant to go back and see his people because he'd been hurt before, and he just, there's so many questions and so many doubts that he has, and we resonate with that, right, because this walking with God is sometimes a very confusing thing.

And there's a lot of questions and a lot of unknown, and so we've worked through all the things with Moses, the three steps forward and two steps back, and it's been quite the journey.

[3 : 10] And then there's God who's just faithfully there, amen, because he just is. He's repeatedly reminding his people of his promises, of who he is and what he's going to do.

Has it not been a captivating story? Heather's not been so many things that you've been able to relate to and connect with, and now the time has come. We're right on the verge.

We're right on the cusp of what we know the exodus to be. And so as we enter into chapter seven, we get to this point where Israel is about to be set free.

It's about to go down. And so Exodus chapter seven and verse one, if you are able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's word.

Exodus seven and verse one says, the Lord said to Moses, see, I have made you like God to Pharaoh and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.

[4 : 20] You shall speak all that I command you and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out from his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart.

And though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you. And I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my host, 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.

Moses and Aaron did so. They did just as the Lord commanded them. Now Moses was 80 years old and Aaron 83 years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, when Pharaoh says to you, prove yourselves by working a miracle, then you shall say to Aaron, take your staff, cast it down before Pharaoh that it may become a serpent.

[5 : 32] And so Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and they 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. There's so much there.

Let's pray and ask God to teach us and talk to us tonight. Lord, help us understand your word.

Thank you for taking us on this journey through this book to understand the gospel of the Old Testament.

[6 : 44] And I pray once more that you would come tonight as we look at these words and help us understand them, speak to us through them. And Lord, may we just be deeply in our soul encouraged with the truth that is found in this text.

We pray to the glory of Jesus' name and God's people said, amen. Amen. You can be seated.

Michael Spinks was at the height of his professional boxing career.

His record was 31 and zero. That included 21 knockouts. And in those 31 fights, he had not been knocked down a single time.

Not only that, Spinks was the first ever light heavyweight champion to move up in class and go on to win the heavyweight championship.

He did that when he beat the heavyweight champion at the time, a man by the name of Larry Holmes. These are some of the reasons and others why so many people in the boxing world, so many experts in boxing believed that Spinks was the true and legitimate champion of the world.

[8 : 08] In fact, some even went as far as to say that he was the heir to Muhammad Ali's throne. But that all changed.

One night on June the 27th, 1988, the scene was the Atlantic City Convention Center in New Jersey. The arena was jam-packed with A-list celebrities in attendance.

Oh, they were everywhere. And Spinks' opponent that night was a man that was known in the boxing world. He even held a championship belt of his own. But no one, no one thought he would be any ultimate match for someone as great as Michael Spinks.

In fact, Muhammad Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard even predicted that Spinks would be the victor that night. No one.

Not the boxing experts or anyone else was prepared for what was about to go down that night.

Spinks was about to step into the ring with a young boxer by the name of Mike Tyson.

[9 : 29] And Tyson would not only win the fight, it would only take him 90 seconds to show the world who the true champion was.

Afraid, as we expected. And Spinks, ready to mix it up with him. Tyson along the ropes, doing damage. Michael Spinks' hands keep moving because every shot... Uppercut landed inside and Spinks went down.

It was the left uppercut. I was surprised there was a body shot that put him to the canvas. And that is the first time Michael Spinks has ever been down in a professional fight. And he's down again and in serious trouble.

He is in serious trouble indeed. Faith family, it was considered one of the most lopsided fights in boxing history. Spinks went into the night thinking that he was the ultimate champion of the world. But he was no match for Mike Tyson. Have you ever been in a situation where you had absolutely no chance of winning?

[10 : 45] You were way overmatched. I don't mean that you felt defeated. I mean there was no other alternative but defeat.

The debt that you were in was just simply too much. The mountain that you were going to climb was simply too high. The disease that you were fighting was far too advanced.

The relationship that you were in was simply way beyond repair. The expectations you were under were way too high. The score of the game was simply too lopsided.

And as much as you didn't want to admit it, as much as you did everything you could to deny it, defeat was unavoidable. Because whatever or whoever you were up against was too much for you to overtake.

Oh, faith family, when you come to Exodus chapter 7, that is exactly the situation that Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt are in.

[11:51] As we come to this passage, remember Moses and Aaron has just received the reassurance of God's call on their life to lead this mission, to lead the Exodus.

You remember when things got worse for Israel in chapter 5, Israel turned on Moses and Aaron. And they voiced their complaint to them.

And then they, Moses and Aaron, took their frustration out on God. Remember in chapter 5, verse 22. Then Moses turned to the Lord and said, Oh Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he's done evil to this people. And you, God, you have not delivered your people at all.

And God responds to Moses' complaint by reaffirming his promise to Israel. And remember when God reaffirms his promise to Israel and to Moses and Aaron, Moses ain't buying it.

[12:52] Been there? Done that? God, I've already been to Pharaoh and he didn't listen, even though God told you he wasn't going to listen. And now the people of Israel are broken of spirit and they won't listen.

And Moses feels like he's so disqualified, doesn't belong here at all. Chapter 6, verse 12. Moses says to the Lord, listen, Behold, the people of Israel, they've not listened to me.

And how then shall Pharaoh listen to me? Because I'm uncircumcised of lips. That is, I don't even belong here. I am unqualified for this mission.

And then what seemed to be a random genealogy out of nowhere in the middle of chapter 6, but it serves to remind Moses that even in his weakness, he is qualified not because of his strength, but because of the bloodline of the people of God.

Amen? And now chapter 7. Oh man, chapter 7. Moses and Aaron, do you feel the intensity, the suspense? Like Moses and Aaron approach Pharaoh for the second time.

[14:08] And what happens in these verses, in these 13 verses, it's a prelude of what's about to come in the plagues. This is the appetizer before the main dish.

It's the foreshadowing of what is about to go down. And this whole passage of the first 13 verses centers around, revolves around one single sign.

Look at it in verse 8 of chapter 7. Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, when Pharaoh says to you, prove yourselves by working a miracle, then you're going to say to Aaron, take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.

And so Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, and they did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent.

Now that's the sign this whole passage revolves around, and it is so important. In fact, I struggle. Do I go on in chapter 7 this week, or do I just stick with the sign?

[15:12] And I felt like by God's Spirit saying, no, this sign is so important, you need to just stop here and understand it. You with me? Now, if you've been following along, if you've been following the story, you know this is not the first time we've encountered a staff turning into a snake.

And I would remember it because I hate snakes. And so anytime we come across a passage with a snake, I'm like, next chapter. Okay? So we've encountered this before. This is not the first time we've seen this.

But do you remember, for those of you that have been with us, do you remember why in Exodus chapter 4 the snake was so important, the serpent was so significant?

It was a symbol, if you remember, a symbol of Pharaoh's authority. In fact, the very headdress of Pharaoh was that of a serpent, that of a snake.

Now, why is that such a big deal? Oh, it's a big deal. Because listen, like if you've zoned, how would you zone out already this early in the sermon? But if that's happened, zone back in. Because when Aaron throws down the staff and it turns into a serpent, here's what you need to understand.

[16:26] This is more than a miracle. It is meant and is even seen as a declaration of war. Oh, listen, listen, listen, listen.

This staff turning into a serpent is not meant to impress Pharaoh. It is meant to invite Pharaoh into the ring.

It is a challenge on behalf of God to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh even sees it as much. Because notice his response to the staff turning into a serpent, verse 11.

Pharaoh then summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, that is the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts.

Each man cast down his staff as they became, and they became serpents. So you see here, Pharaoh understands what this means, okay?

[17:34] You understand this is a challenge from God. It's a duel, if you will. This is a showdown in the desert. I love that sound effect.

Anyways, I think that scene is like the longest scene ever in the history of movies, all right? But that's the idea here. That's the imagery I want you to have here. This is a challenge. This is a duel. This is a showdown. And it is not just a showdown between Moses and Aaron and Pharaoh. Oh, there are other very significant things in the passage here, of which I don't have time to fully explain this week, so you've got to come back.

But I want to give you a taste of what's going down. I hope you'd come back anyways, okay? But there's more going down here than just a showdown between Moses and Aaron and Pharaoh. Look back at chapter 7, verse 1.

This, at first, seems so strange. The Lord says to Moses, See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh.

[18:55] Does that strike you as odd? That God would make Moses like God to Pharaoh? What does this mean?

Because if we've learned anything, and I mean anything in the book of Exodus, is that Moses is not a God. I mean, he's anything but God. He's as weak as you can possibly be.

But the point here isn't about Moses. The point here is about Pharaoh. And here's what I mean.

Everybody with me? If you understand the context, Pharaoh, both he viewed himself as, and everybody in Egypt viewed him as a God.

Pharaoh thought he was divine. He believed that he was God-like. And everybody looked to the Pharaoh like they would look to a God. In fact, that phrase, I've made you like God to Pharaoh, could be understood like this.

I will show Pharaoh who is God. In other words, Moses, I have put you in a position where I'm going to show the guy who thinks he's God who is God.

[20:07] I've made you like God to Pharaoh. Now add to that. It gets deeper. It gets even more significant. Add to that verse 11.

Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, that is the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts.

Now who are these num-nums? Who are these sorcerers? Who are these magicians? Well, first of all, don't thank David Blaine or Copperfield or Houdini.

We're not doing illusions here or magic tricks with cards. That's not what these magicians were.

These guys, this is so important, it's so important, they were associated with the Egyptian gods.

These magicians, these sorcerers, were associated with the gods of Egypt. Let me tell you what one historian writes. Quote, magic was a main element in the Egyptian religion at this time.

[21:16] And those who mastered these powers were held in high esteem. The priest, belonging to the highest officials of Pharaoh, possessed secret knowledge and were skilled in all sorts of mysterious rites.

By casting spells, they could allegedly overpower humans and control gods and thereby obtain dominion over the world of nature and the world of the gods.

Listen to this, last phrase. Through magical formulas, the magicians claim to exercise the power of the gods.

Now put it all together. Put it all together and what do you have? I'm going to make you like God to Pharaoh. These magicians and sorcerers come on behalf of the gods of Egypt.

You put all this together and you realize, oh, fate, family, and again, you got to come back next time because it's going to be even more than this. This is not just Moses and Aaron versus Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

[22:31] This is a showdown between Yahweh and the gods of Egypt. Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt are about to step inside the ring with Yahweh.

And you're going to see this. I keep the sermons a sign of things to come and I keep giving you a sign of things to come, all right? Because I wanted to even get into it tonight, but I don't have time this weekend.

But when we look at the plagues, you're going to see some things about the plagues you never understood was actually going on. We're going to peel back the curtain and we're going to see not the little story of what's going down but the big story of what's going down and it ain't Moses and Aaron and it ain't Pharaoh.

It is Yahweh and the gods behind the nation of Egypt. That's what's going down. That's the showdown. That is who has stepped into the ring.

But that's for later. For now, what's the sign of things to come? What's the significance of this sign? [23 : 50] Verse 12. Each man cast down his staff and they became serpents. Oh my.

But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. That's significant.

Oh, that is seriously significant. That is a beat down. The likes of which these Egyptian magicians have never known.

I have no doubt they were shocked. They were confused. They were in awe because they're the ones with all the powers of the gods and they just watched their staff get swallowed by Aaron's staff.

They came in like Spinks thinking, well, we're the legitimate champions of the world. But they were no match for Aaron's staff.

[24 : 57] You see the significance of this, don't you? It's a sign of what's to come. And it's not just a sign of what's to come in the plagues.

Does that phrase swallowed up sound familiar to anyone who maybe has read Exodus before?

Listen to the redemption song.

This is Exodus 15. The redemption song of Exodus 15 after they have been freed from Egypt after they have been set free from these Egyptian authorities.

Look at verse 10 in chapter 15. You blew with your wind, the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. Who is like you, Yahweh, among the gods?

Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? You stretched out your right hand and y'all gotta just say this with me.

[26 : 01] The earth swallowed them. Huh! In other words, this staff swallowing all the other staffs of these Egyptian magicians is a sign of the rescue of Israel.

That the sea, the earth, is about to swallow up the Egyptian armies and what God has promised will come to pass. Y'all with me?

You see, like Sphinx, Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods are about to meet their match. Now, why? Why does God do this sign?

What the sign means, it's a sign of things to come. It's a sign of God's authority over the Egyptian gods. Now, but why does God do that? Look at verse 3.

But I will harden Pharaoh's heart and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my host, my people, the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment.

[27 : 08] And here's why. The Egyptians shall know I am. The Egyptians shall know I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring them, bring out the people of Israel from among them.

So the purpose here is clear. The purpose is to show that there is no God greater than Yahweh. Amen? Like, I can just notice this on the screen.

Here it is. Listen, listen, listen. We're going to unpack this more later. There are other created gods. We've talked about that. There are other created gods, but there's only one creator God, and he is I am.

Oh, that's what this sign shows. It is a foreshadowing of what God is going to do as he makes it known to everybody. I am. And that has been God's goal from the beginning, has it not?

I mean, all throughout Exodus thus far, God has been revealing his name and revealing himself when Moses was sent to Israel and he asked, well, who do I tell them that sent me?

[28 : 27] Look at Exodus 3, 13. Moses said to God, if I come to the people of Israel and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they asked, what's his name?

What am I going to tell them? And God said, I am, has sent you. I am who I am. Look, and when Moses complains to God about his timing, about how God is bringing all this to pass, this is God's response to Moses, chapter 6, verse 2.

God spoke to Moses and said to him, I am the Lord. And when Moses thinks that he's not qualified to continue in this mission, this is God's revelation to Moses in Exodus 6, 28.

On the day when the Lord spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, the Lord said to Moses, I am the Lord. You think God likes to keep reminding people, I am who I am.

I am God. And now, what is his purpose in judging Egypt? Chapter 7, verse 2, 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.

[29 : 40] Listen, the purpose of God's calling Moses, the purpose of God's redeeming Israel, the purpose of God's judging Egypt is all the same purpose, namely, to display to all he is.

God's, there are no other gods before me. And I want to be very clear and very serious.

I want you to understand and know beyond a shadow of a doubt this, that whether it is through redemption like Israel or whether it is through judgment like Egypt, God, we will all one day know that he is God.

If you don't believe that now, oh, one day you will because God by his power will bring you to your knees.

knees. And so I plead, oh, I plead with you, know that he is God through redemption, not through eternal judgment.

[31 : 20] But what will be known in the Exodus is what will be known forever and ever and ever and ever there is no one like our God. It is over and over again and what this sign of a staff swallowing up other staffs means is that God is going to prove there are no other gods before him.

So, what does the sign mean? It's God's power over the Egyptian gods. Why does he give this sign? Because he's going to show that he alone is God.

Now, how does this sign relate to us? I mean, what would be our walk away and application? What would be practical for us as it relates to this?

Let me ask a question. How do you respond when God reveals himself? How do you respond when God reveals himself to you?

Say, well, he doesn't reveal himself to me. Oh, oh, oh, listen. Oh, oh, oh, oh, he most certainly reveals himself to you. The problem is not his revealing.

[32 : 34] The problem is your seeing. It is not that God doesn't speak to you. It's that you are dull of hearing. He is all the time revealing himself to you.

He is all the time speaking to you. He is screaming to you from creation. He's screaming to you from this screaming preacher. He is whether it's from the word of God, reading it in your devotion, or the proclamation of God's word when you're at church, or walking around and looking at creation, or the signs of affirmation that happen throughout the day, or the counsel of a friend.

Notice it on the screen. The question is not whether God reveals himself to you. It's do you see it and how do you respond to it? Oh, God has revealed himself in so many ways just through his word.

And what I think this passage shows us is that God has repeatedly revealed himself to Moses and Aaron. Now he has revealed himself through this sign to Pharaoh and the magicians, but how do they respond and how do you?

the two responses we see here. The first is in verse 6. Moses and Aaron did so. They did just as the Lord commanded.

[34 : 05] Now look at verse 13. Here's the second response. Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he would not listen. He refused to see the sign as the Lord had said.

So just quickly, faith family, when God reveals himself to you, you can either respond in obedience or disobedience. You can respond by accepting it or you can explain it away.

You can either bow the knee or harden your heart. And we see with Moses and Aaron that as God has repeatedly revealed himself to them, they recognize the authority of God and they respond in obedience.

but if we have learned anything through Exodus Gnosis on the screen, it's that the path to obedience is not always a straight line. Moses and Aaron, as I said earlier, they go three steps forward and two steps back and doubt and resist and struggle and then go where they're supposed to go, but God just keeps revealing himself and Moses and Aaron eventually get it.

It's a lot like us. We don't always get it the first time, but God keeps revealing himself and moves us along. And I plead, I sincerely ask that in coming to church each week and having God reveal

himself through his word or throughout the week as he reveals himself through creation, I hope our hearts are soft and receptive to the revelation of God.

[35 : 47] Oh, I hope your eyes have not become blind and your heart become hard to God all around you. I think it's appropriate in this passage to think about how God is revealing himself and how some obey and are receptive, but then, then, then God speak to us, there's this Pharaoh, like tendency to harden our heart, to dismiss God's authority and hold on to our own kingdom.

That's what Pharaoh is doing here, right? Are y'all with me? Have you fallen asleep? Wake up. When Pharaoh is told to let Israel go, he doesn't want to let Israel go because there goes his kingdom.

he's benefiting so much from the oppression of Israel and, and oh, how we may not be on the throne of Pharaoh, but we have our own kingdom we want to protect.

And so, God speaks and God reveals and God talks to us and we're like, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. I resist that. I deny your authority.

And if we do that for very long, our hearts become hard towards God. You can sit in sermons and feel nothing.

[37 : 19] And you can sing songs and be completely unmoved. You're hardened.

because you've grown distant from receiving God's revelation of himself to you. It's a bit of an extreme example, but it really fits and it's the life of Ernest Hemingway.

You may not know this, but Hemingway was actually born to devout Christian parents. They tried everything they could to instill in him faith. Faith in the God of the Bible and he completely resisted. He wanted nothing to do with God at all. In fact, his famous quote is that all thinking men are atheists. He completely rejected God's revelation of himself.

He believed that religion was a hindrance to happiness and so he set out to live as wild as he could possibly live. His life was filled with crazy drinking, suicide attempts.

[38 : 28] he lived in constant paranoia. His life was completely out of control, so much so that his mother had to write him a letter. And in it she wrote, quote, unless you come to yourself and neglecting your duties to God, there is nothing for you but bankruptcy you have overdrawn.

And she was right. Hemingway eventually became so hardened and so lost that he attempted another suicide, this time successfully.

His was a life that after repeated pleading and pleading and pleading and pleading became so hard to God.

God. And we would be wrong to think that this is only the condition of an unbeliever. Because remember, Moses is writing Exodus for the Israelites.

Moses here is using Pharaoh to warn Israel in light of God's mercy to avoid the Pharaoh-like tendency of becoming hardened to the things of God.

[39 : 49] Oh, this is absolutely a warning to believers. Look at Psalm 95 verse 6. It says, Oh, come, let us worship.

So we're talking about believers here. Come, let's worship, let's bow down, let's kneel before the Lord, our maker. He's our God and we are his people of his pasture. We're the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as at Meribah, as on the day of Massa in the wilderness when your fathers put him to the test and put him to proof though they had seen God's work.

In fact, beloved, this is the very passage, Psalm 95 is the very passage that the writer of Hebrews uses to warn the believers of his day.

Don't harden your heart. Oh, yes, I'm completely convinced of security in God's justifying grace, security in God's adopting grace, security in the perfect life and substitutionary atonement of Jesus, but we must, we must pay attention to our hearts lest we be like Pharaoh and have God revealing himself right there in front of us and we feel nothing, but we just walk away and we do not listen.

[41 : 19] Are you with me? So we see what the sign is about. It's God's power over the Egyptian gods and why he does it because he wants them to see that there is no other God above him and what does that mean for us?

It means that when God reveals himself, we need to be more like Moses and Aaron listening, attentive, and responding obediently than like Pharaoh and tuning him out because we're going to run our own kingdom and we become so hardened that God brings judgment.

That's the warning that I believe Exodus 7 gives to us. Now, there's one other practical thing I take from this passage and then we'll close. That's your 30 minute warning.

There's a comfort here. There's a comfort in this sign, the sign of Aaron's staff swallowing up the other staffs. And the last many, several weeks on Tuesday nights, many of you have been a part of this.

We've been in the spiritual realm study. And if you didn't go through that, the videos are on our YouTube page and you can go through that. And we talked all about the reality of spiritual warfare, the reality of evil powers and spiritual beings.

[42 : 43] You do believe that, right? I mean, if you're a believer, you have to because it's all over the Bible. I mean, one of the verses that we quote, rightly so, but we quoted a lot, is Ephesians 6.12.

That we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against authorities, against cosmic powers over the present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Here's my point. Are you with me? We're almost done. If you think what happened in Exodus 7 only is happening in Exodus 7, you are foolish, my friend. The spiritual warfare of Exodus 7 is still happening today.

Just as this is about God and the gods of Egypt, we are also encountering real, spiritual, fallen, evil powers around us all the time.

Personally, nationally, relationally, it's everywhere. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood. We're wrestling against real spiritual forces.

[43 : 50] You with me? Now look back, look back at verse 12 and be encouraged. Verse 12, for each man cast down his staff and they became serpents.

Oh, but Aaron's staff and whose staff is Aaron's staff? God's staff swallowed up their staff.

That is good news to you because this sign reminds you practically and daily of the sovereignty of God over spiritual forces.

Your enemies are defeated foes. They are restrained by the Lord and they can do nothing apart from the permission of the Lord. Here is what we're going to discover next time.

We see the foreshadowing of it here. That is, Egyptian gods are not God. Other gods, other powers and principalities, other spiritual forces may be real, but they are not sovereign.

[45 : 01] No, it is Aaron's staff that swallows up all the other staffs because God alone is God and that's good news when you're frightened by evil things.

I am frightened by evil things. I don't think I'm alone. I am frightened by evil things, but I don't have to live in a continual state of fear because God reigns over all.

It's probably a too simple illustration, but it works. I used to run a lot. I don't run much anymore. I'm just old. Okay, that's the main reason. It hurts my feelings that you laughed at that, but whatever.

I used to run a lot and what would happen when I would run a lot inevitably, and if you run or you walk or whatever in the one month we can do that in this state, you're out and you do that.

Inevitably, what's going to happen is you're going to be running down a neighborhood, running down a road, and this dog's going to come after you. You know what I'm talking about? Now, not one of those little fee-fee dogs that you can punt 30 yards.

[46 : 10] I ain't worried about that. Just bring it on, commit a little foo-foo. All right, field goal. That's not a problem. Not a problem. I'm talking about the real dogs. You know, the big dogs, and they look vicious, when they come after me, there's only two things I'm thinking about, only two things that matter, only two questions that really ultimately I care about.

Is it on a leash? And how long's the leash, right? How much distance do I have to be away from this thing before it makes me alpo?

You know, whatever. So, the knowing, and once you know, oh, okay, okay, okay, okay. That's a real dog, and it's really vicious, and it really wants to do damage, but it's on a leash.

It's contained. So, I don't have to live in fear, and I can keep running my race. That'll preach.

That'll preach. Because listen, faith family, what you need to know from the sign of Exodus 7, 12, is that all spiritual forces are on a leash.

[47 : 27] And God can swallow them up any moment he wants. wants. So, don't live in continual fear and run your race.

Run your race in the confidence and victory that is yours in Jesus Christ. Aren't you glad for Exodus 7, 1 through 13?

Oh, what is the sign about? It's the powers of God over the God of Egypt. relationships. Why does he give the sign to demonstrate that he is God alone?

How should we respond with obedience and worship, not rejection and hardness of heart, taking comfort in the fact that our God reigns?

It's a prelude of things to come. It's a sign of what's about to happen in the plagues. But listen to me. Lean in.

[48 : 34] Lean in. Exodus 7 is not only a prelude to what God will do in the Exodus here in a few chapters. It is the prelude of what God is going to do in the ultimate Exodus.

Oh, I'm not going to let you leave until I show you this. Come on. What do you think I am? Verse 12 again.

Verse 12. Verse 12. Each man cast down his staff and they became serpents, but Aaron's staff, what? Swallowed up their staffs.

Does that sound familiar? And you say, yeah, Exodus 15. When they're swallowed up by the earth, swallowed up by the sea. It's true.

But not just Exodus 15. First Corinthians 15. Where Paul is talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[49 : 40] and how the resurrection is a sign of things to come. Look at it.

First Corinthians 15. 51. Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we're going to all be changed in the moment of the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet.

For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. And when the perishable puts on imperishable and mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written.

Oh, there it is. Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh, death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin.

The power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[50 : 43] Oh, what happens? Yeah, yeah. You should be excited about that. Listen, what happens in Egypt is not the final time God does war with the gods of this world.

On the cross, Jesus stepped inside the ring with a serpent. And he faced the powers and principalities and the enemies of God that is of sin and death.

And on Friday, it looked like he lost the match, but death couldn't last three days. The serpent, the grave, and all the enemies of God were swallowed up by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And do you know why that's good news for you? Because it's a sign of what's to come. And all God's people said, Amen.

Let's pray. God, thank you so much for the sign of Exodus 7. how it demonstrates to us your power over all powers, even the powers that make us tremble.

[52 : 02] God, you alone are God. You alone are sovereign. Continue to reveal over and over, I am, I am, I am, I am.

Oh, and help us by your grace avoid the Pharaoh-like tendency of becoming hard. God, lacking any affection, no emotion whatsoever to the beauty and glory that is your name.

Oh, help us like Moses and Aaron who are not walking straight lines. We are three steps forward and two steps sideways and doing our best to walk on this path you've called us to.

Oh, help us, help us. Hear your word and see your name and respond in worship.

And really live practically and daily with that sense of victory that we would not fear anyone or anything in this world for we have God as our God.

[53 : 25] and we're going to take a moment now and reflect on how our Savior entered into the ring to defeat sin, to defeat death, to take on the very enemies of God and swallow them up.

So in this moment of communion may it be a beautiful time, not routine, not going through motions, but a moment of beautiful worship to our King.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen.