

We Need a Saviour

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[0 : 0 0] Now as we come to this seventh chapter in the book of Exodus, we could perhaps say it's speculation to an extent, but not unreasonable to attempt to calculate roughly how long it is since Moses now came back into Egypt.

And if we see here that in 7 verse 1, the Lord said unto Moses, see I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. It's reasonable to calculate, or speculate you might say, that this is taking place roughly within a fortnight of Moses' arrival back in Egypt. Now let's look briefly at the timeline. If we go back to chapter 4 verse 29, where Moses and Aaron gather the elders of Israel together, that is almost certainly happening within three days of their arrival back in Egypt.

It wouldn't be the day they arrived at the end of their journey, and it would take a day probably to send the word round and to gather everyone together and to give them the message. So within three days, let's say, of arriving back in Egypt, they speak to the elders. And then in chapter 5 verse 1, we have the first audience with Pharaoh, and that is almost certainly the next day.

[1 : 1 7] The next day is the most likely time, so that's within four days of Moses' arrival. And this is where Pharaoh gives the negative response and tells them they have to now make bricks without straw and so on.

And it takes two or three days for that law to filter out. And so we read at verse 14 of chapter 5, the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters set over them, were beaten, and demanded, wherefore have you not fulfilled your task in making brick, both yesterday and today, as here to fore?

That implies that it's the two days in a row, at least, that the new room has been in place. So it's three or four days since it was issued. So it's within three days that this conversation is taking place. So let's say within two further days, the officers of the Israelites come to Pharaoh, and they plead their cause and say, look, this isn't fair. How can we possibly do it without straw and so on? So that's a further two days. In other words, within nine days of Moses' arrival back in Egypt, the Israelite officers have their audience with Pharaoh.

[2 : 2 5] And then when they come out, they say to Moses and Aaron, who are standing there, at verse 20 of chapter 5, they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth and there, and said, let the Lord look upon you and judge, because ye have made our savor to be a horde in the eyes of Pharaoh, in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

And verses 22 and 23, Moses returned unto the Lord and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil and shaltest his people? How soon after that would he do it? He'd do it right away. If he's had this kind of response from the Israelites after what they're being put through, he would go straight to the Lord.

So that's like the same day he would go to the Lord and pour out his complaint or his situation before the Lord. So it's still within nine days of his arrival.

In chapter 6, then, you've got the Lord explaining to Moses how he is now going to deliver Israel and how he has planned this rejection and the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

And then you've got the list of the Levites and their descendants down to Moses and Aaron to sort of set the scene and give the pedigree of Moses and Aaron. And in chapter 7, then, we've got the Lord now speaking to Moses.

[3 : 3 7] And then you have, at verse 10, his second audience with Pharaoh. Within, at most, two further days after the response of the Israelites saying, you know, the Lord judge between you and me and so on.

And then Moses goes straight to the Lord with it. At most, you're looking at two days later now that he has his second audience with Pharaoh. So that's like 11 days since he's arrived back in Egypt. And this is the occasion when the rods are turned into serpents and so on. If we were to carry on through the chapter, it would be the next day again that Pharaoh is going to the river, either to wash or to pay his devotions, because remember, they regarded the river as a god.

So that's where Moses meets him. That's the next day, 12 days after arriving in Egypt. And then you've got the water turning into blood. And that lasts, we're told at verse 25, seven days were fulfilled after the Lord had smitten the river.

So even at the end of chapter 7, we're looking at maximum within three weeks of Moses' arrival in Egypt. So it's all, to use the modern phrase, it's all kicking off.

[4 : 48] It's all happening within a comparatively short, compact space of time. That, you know, speaking to the Israelites, speaking to Pharaoh, negative reaction of Pharaoh, negative reaction of the Israelites.

And then you've got the confrontation again with Pharaoh at the riverbank and seven days of blood in the river. So three weeks or less than altogether. So things are really, you know, moving along. The sort of momentum is really gathering now as the Lord intends to bring his people out of Egypt. But he is working that which will be for his glory.

So if we go back to verse 1 here, we see that Moses is now sent back to Pharaoh no longer as a suppliant or as a troublesome subject. Not even as a former prince of Egypt, but rather we read as a god.

I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Now, we have to note here and recognize. The Lord does not create or set up false gods or lesser gods or other gods.

[5 : 57] But what he does do is he does deal with people where they are. Not as ideally they should be. He deals with them where they are.

Now, that's part of the good news of the gospel for us. The Lord doesn't wait until we're righteous. He doesn't wait until we're perfect or sinless or have turned from our evil ways. He deals with us where we are.

In the midst of our need. In the midst of our ignorance. Perhaps in the midst of our false religion or idolatry. If we're following a religion other than that of Christ. But whatever it may be, the Lord deals with us where we are.

Just as he dealt with Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. As he was with all his baggage that he brought with him. And he does this also with Pharaoh. He deals with them where he is.

And in the state and condition in which they begin. That's where Pharaoh is. The condition in which he is. Now, remember that Moses is not being turned into a god.

[6 : 57] But he is only, as the Bible says, a god to Pharaoh. As far as Pharaoh is concerned, he is being regarded as a god. Small g.

Pharaoh who lived and moved in a world of multifaceted idolatry. Believing in scores of gods. Including that the river Nile was a god.

As we've mentioned. That he, Pharaoh, was also a god himself. And since Pharaoh believed in many gods. Including gods in human form.

Such as himself. And he would not accept the god of the Hebrews. Whom he, you know, he couldn't see. So we know that. Chapter 5, of course.

Verse 2. Who is the Lord? Then I should obey his voice. To let Israel go. I know not the Lord.

Neither will I let Israel go. He would not accept the god of the Hebrews.

[7 : 52] Whom he could not see. So he must deal with Moses. He must deal with Moses as a god. As the representative of the ultimate god of Israel. The god of the Hebrews.

And what would follow them. Would become not a series of political demands. From a disgruntled workforce. Of course. But rather a battle.

And contest. Between the gods of Egypt. In other words. Powerless statues. On the one hand. And the god of Israel. The living and true god. Or as far.

Or to Pharaoh. Moses. Who had been made. As we say. A god to Pharaoh. It's between Moses and Pharaoh. We might say. If it's in that sense. But ultimately. It's between the false gods of Egypt.

The dead statues. It's the lifeless statues. That they worship. And the things that they call gods. Like the river. And so on. And the living and true god. On the other hand. Or. Any battle between false

gods.

[8 : 49] And the true god. Is ultimately a battle. Between the lord. And the devil. The forces of light. And of darkness. And that's what we've got here. We've got the forces of idolatry.

Darkness. False gods. Oppression. Bloodshed. Slavery. Which is what you've got here. In Egypt. You know. When they're trying to keep down. The population. Of the Hebrews.

What do they do? Kill all the male children. Throw them into the river. Where the crocodiles. Will feast on them. And so on. So that's the situation. We have here. And Moses now.

In the eyes of Pharaoh. Has been elevated. To the status of one. Who represents a divine power. A god. Small g. To Pharaoh. The lord said unto Moses.

See. I have made thee a god. To Pharaoh. And Aaron thy brother. Shall be thy prophet. That he deals with Pharaoh. Where he is. It would be much better. If Pharaoh recognize.

[9 : 42] There's only one god. The living god. The true god. The god of Israel. That's great. But Pharaoh does not recognize that. I know not the lord. And I will not let Israel go. So. You want to deal with lots of gods.

Here's lots of gods. And here's one god. Who's going to be a god to you. Moses. Whom you will now. Have to deal with. Thou shalt speak. All that I command thee.

And Aaron my brother. Shalt speak unto Pharaoh. And that he send the children of Israel. Out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart. And multiply my signs and wonders.

In the land of Egypt. This is the purpose. Of all that would follow. Why is Pharaoh not letting him go right away? Because God intends to demonstrate his power. I will harden Pharaoh's heart.

And multiply my signs and wonders. In the land of Egypt. That is the purpose. Of all that would follow. And it is also further.

[10 : 37] To glorify the lord's name. Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you. That I may lay my hand upon Egypt. And bring forth my armies. And my people.

The children of Israel. Out of the land of Egypt. By great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know. That I am the lord. When I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt. And bring out the children of Israel. From among them. Now we tend of course. To think in terms of Egypt. As one country. Amongst many countries. In the ancient world. Which is one country. Why are they being picked on in this way?

Remember that Egypt. Ancient Egypt. In those days. In that time and culture. Was not simply a country. Or a state. It was a superpower. It was the most powerful kingdom.

Kingdom. In the known world. At that time. It had a civilization. And a sophistication. That was unrivaled. At that time. It was powerful.

[11 : 34] It was wealthy. It had everything going for it. That other countries did not. And this is the nation. The sort of pinnacle. Of human achievement. And power.

And pomp. And grandeur. This is what the lord. Intends to lay low. This is what the lord. Intends to bring down. Not out of spite.

Or cruelty. But rather to demonstrate. That he alone. Is the living god. And those whom he chooses. To save and redeem. Though they be nothing more.

Than a bunch of helpless. Powerless slaves. Under the hands. Or under the boot. Of the oppressing. All powerful Egyptians. The lord. Can bring them out.

By his own means. By his stretch. And there is no one. There able to help them. Just the lord. Alone. All the power.

[12 : 29] And pomp. Of human nature. And life. And achievement. All summed up. In the presence. Of the state. The kingdom of Egypt. And the power of the lord. On the other hand.

The unseen god. This is the contest. That is taking place. This is the demonstration. Which is not only. For the benefit. Of the Egyptians. All the Egyptians.

Shall know. That I am the lord. Yep. That's great. But the Israelites. Also. Would be compelled. To know. That he was the god. Who had visited. The Egyptians.

With such plagues. And such power. And would not hesitate. To do the same. To them. If they rebelled. Against him. Chapter 6. Verse 7.

And I will take you. To me. For a people. And I will be to you. For a god. And ye. That is the Israelites. Ye shall know. That I am the lord. Your god. Which bringeth you out.

[13 : 23] From under the burdens. Of the Egyptians. So the Israelites. Had had to know it. And learn it. And they would still. Have to learn it. And the Egyptians. Would learn it. Likewise. The

Egyptians.

Verse 5. Shall know. That I am the lord. And you see. The point here. Is that God. Is glorified. Both. In those.

Whom he. Overcomes. And destroys. And judges. And in those. Whom he delivers. And glorifies. We've seen. The way the Hebrews. Reacted. To Moses and Aaron.

There's nothing. spiritually virtuous about them. It's because of the reaction of the Hebrews to Moses that he had had to run for his life in the first place. You know, remember how they'd said to him at the outset, and they said, you know, who made you a prince or a judge over us?

You intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday? Instead of saying, thank you for killing the Egyptian taskmaster that was about to kill one of ours, probably you shouldn't have killed him, but we appreciate that you delivered one of our own.

[14:26] We appreciate that you're looking out for us. We appreciate that you're just trying to separate brethren who are at odds with each other, but instead it's, who made you a prince and a judge over us?

This is their response. They're quite happy to have the promise of deliverance, the end of chapter four there, but the minute it begins to cost something, they're not so ready for it.

There's no great virtue, no great devout attitude on the part of the Israelites. They are not being delivered because they are worthy. They're being delivered because the Lord has laid his hand on them and chosen them.

But he is glorified, both in the deliverance and redemption of those whom he saves, as well as he is glorified in the judgment and bringing down of those who resist it.

This is what we read, of course, in the mouth of Mary, the mother of our Lord, in Luke chapter one, where she says, he hath showed strength with his arm. He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

[15:28] He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away.

God is glorified in demonstrating that he alone has power over all the affairs of men. He can kill and he can make alive.

He can deliver and he can reduce to slavery. He has the power of life and death, of deliverance and blessing and condemnation.

And he is glorified in both. If God will be glorified, both in the judgment of the wicked, just as much as in the redemption of the redeemed.

So we move on to verses six and seven. Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them, so did they. And Moses was four score years old and Aaron four score and three years old when they spake unto Pharaoh.

[16:24] So they're both old men, with apologies to anybody who may be of that age just now here. But the fact is that as far as deliverance is concerned, the work they're about to embark on, the 40 years in the desert, they're starting at quite a senior age.

And as far as the Israelites would be concerned, they were old men. Neither rash nor hasty with the vigor of youth or the angry reaction of angry young men, how dare they oppress us and so on.

This is the measured dignity of age. They are neither hasty nor rash nor likely to be seeking glory for themselves. Also, no doubt, because of their age, they would have the appearance of being more feeble, of not seeming to have great strength or power or personality that would draw great crowds to them themselves.

There is, in other words, nothing in and of themselves that is going to make the Israelites say, yeah, we're following these guys. Oh, what charismatic leaders Moses and Aaron are.

There is nothing in themselves. They are already old men by the time this story really begins. They would have the appearance of having no strength.

[17:41] They would have the appearance of being feeble so that all the glory of that which follows is seen to be of the Lord rather than of them.

So they appear, the four Pharaoh, and they cast down the rod and it turns into a serpent and then, of course, the Egyptians attempt to do the same. Verse 11, Pharaoh called the wise men and sorcerers.

Now, the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. And we know from the New Testament that the two senior or the two most leading of the magicians or sorcerers

of the Egyptians were called Janus and Jambres.

2 Timothy, chapter 3, and verse 8, Now as Janus and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth. Men of corrupt minds recorbit, concern the faith, and so on.

So they imitated what Moses and Aaron did. They threw down their rods and they turned into serpents. Now, it has apparently, I don't know all these things from personal experience, but simply from what one reads, that it is possible amongst Egyptian snake charmers and others, even to this day, if you hold the snake in a certain way at the nape of its neck, then it becomes rigid and straight.

[19 : 01] If that were the case, then it would, of course, be perfectly possible to wrap the rigid snake in some kind of either cloth or in a tube and then with a puff of smoke or whatever, then release it from that and then it becomes live and wiggling again.

And that may be perfectly possible to do. We can't speculate, of course, we can't speculate and can't say for certain as to exactly which the Egyptians did, whether it was just trickery and sleight of hand or whether they were enabled by some dark, demonic power to actually change their rods into serpents or not.

it doesn't really matter because the demonstration of Aaron's superiority or the superiority of his rod or his serpent as he gobbled up the other serpents and demonstrated his power, his victory over them, it is clear that the Lord's representatives won the day that Pharaoh's heart is hardened because he has seen his own magicians do something very similar to the miracle that Moses and Aaron appeared to do.

It is possible, of course, it is possible even if the Egyptian sorcerers were genuinely turning the rods into serpents, genuinely producing blood out of the water, which is unlikely later on in verse 22.

It is self-evident even if that were the case that the devil who's the ultimate dark power behind such works if they were genuinely able to do them, he may be, what he can do is somewhat increase or worsen or imitate those plagues or those things which are happening.

[20 : 47] You know, oh, look, the water's turned into blood. Look, we can turn it into blood as well. Big deal. It would be really impressive if you could actually reverse it if the Lord was doing one thing and the devil or the magician say, no, look, we're turning it back into water.

Ha, look how powerful we are. But they're not able to do that. Look, Moses, allegedly, Moses the Lord has turned the water into blood. Look, we too can turn water into blood whether they used some trickery or whatever or whether they actually did it.

It's no big deal just to make the situation worse, just to actually increase or worsen or imitate these plagues which are already happening. Even the devil with all his demonic spiritual power can clearly do nothing to remove or to reverse the plagues that are actually happening or to stop the power of Aaron's now serpent that the rod has beat.

That's even if they were genuine. But the likelihood is that it has been mere trickery and slanted hand by the Egyptian sorcerers and magicians and so on.

You know, modern so-called magicians, the likes to appear on TV and all that, they will, let's say if they're being interviewed, they'll be the first to admit that all so-called magic is an illusion.

[22 : 11] It's trickery that's done to impress people, to make it look like, oh, wow, how do they do that? And of course the audience, including ourselves when we see something that looks really clever, we don't think, wow, he must have magic powers.

Look, he made that person disappear in that cabinet. Look, he sawed that person in half and now look, they're back together again. We don't think what magic powers they must have. What we do think is, that's really clever.

I wonder how he managed to do that trick. Our impressedness, or rather, our willingness to appreciate the skill of the magician is to say, how did he do that trick?

That's really clever how he gave that appearance. And we appreciate the skill and the cleverness, but we know that it is all trickery. We know it's all smoke and mirrors and an illusion.

It is not genuine spiritual magic. And I would suggest to you that what the Egyptians were actually doing, whether they were using red dye to give the appearance of turning water into blood, which was an extremely foolish thing to do when there was very little water left to be injured, to actually make more of it undrinkable.

[23 : 28] But whether they were actually appearing to turn their rods into snakes or whatever, it was an illusion. I would suggest to you it is most likely to be that rather than genuine demonic powers that are being used.

The reason for saying that is that if we look at the New Testament context where these men, Janas and Jambres, are quoted in 2 Timothy chapter 3. If you want to turn to that for a minute, 2 Timothy chapter 3.

The actual verse is in verse 8. As Janas and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth. Men of corrupt minds reprobate concerning the faith.

What is the context? The context is that the church is being played by cheap imitation false Christian leaders who don't actually have the power of the spirit, who don't have the Holy Ghost, who don't have genuine conversion, but who are giving the appearance of it.

Let's look for the example from verse 5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, from such turn away.

[24 : 43] For of this sort are they which creep into houses and be captive, silly women, laden with sins, led away with diverse lusts, ever learning, never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Now as Janice and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith, but they shall proceed no further, for their folly, foolishness, emptiness, shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was, as the magicians of Egypt, Janice and Jambres and all their acolytes, were shown to be false, empty, tricksters.

So these false apostles or false church leaders or false Christian leaders are shown to have nothing but a form, an appearance, an outward emptiness, and no power of the spirit, no truth of the Lord, no love of Christ, no spiritual strength in them, because they are imitation, they are fake.

Now, if that is the case, and that is the case in 2 Timothy, then that would suggest to us that the original Egyptian magicians who are being cited there, Janice and Jambres and the other sorcerers and so on, were likewise just tricksters, just those giving the illusion, the appearance of being able to do these things, but not actually having any spiritual power.

So, we read on, verse 13, he that is the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had said.

[26 : 30] Now, this business of the Lord hardening Pharaoh's heart, this gives some people real problems, because it makes them think, oh, it's not really fair, if God is hardening the heart of Pharaoh, if God is the one doing it, it's not fair, how does Pharaoh have a choice, if God is making his heart hard, as we'll see as we go through the different plagues of Egypt, there are times when the Lord explicitly hardens Pharaoh's heart, there are other times when we simply read almost neutrally that Pharaoh's heart simply was hardened, and there are other times when we read that Pharaoh hardened his heart, so God is not acting against the desires or the intentions of Pharaoh here, he may be, for example, simply creating the conditions to which Pharaoh will instinctively respond, you know, as they say, if you put clay and you put wax, and you put them out in the hot sun, the hot sun, the same sun will have a completely opposite effect on these two substances, the one it will harden, the clay it will harden, the wax it will melt, and yet it is the same sun being done in the book, it is the same Lord producing the same conditions which in the one produced a hardening of

Pharaoh's heart, and the other produced a strengthening of the Israelites and Moses and Aaron, so the fact that the Lord hardens Pharaoh's heart should not be a moral problem for anyone or for any of us, we see for example in chapter 3, verse 9, the Lord has already predicted that this is going to happen, chapter 3, verse 9, now therefore behold the cry of the Egyptians, I think by verse 19, chapter 3, I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, no, not by a mighty hand, and I will stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst of that, he will let you go, I am sure the king of Egypt will not let you go, there's been the prediction of the hardening of his heart, there's been the promise in chapter 4, verse 21, the Lord said unto Moses, when thou goest to return to

Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I put in my hand, but I will harden his heart, there is the promise, I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go, and thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord, and so on, God intends that Pharaoh's heart will resist all the works and the power of the Lord, so that they can be ratcheted up, so that they can be increased, and with remorseless and relentless momentum, will show to Egypt and its power, and its monarchy, and its money, that there is no standing before the Lord God of Israel, so God hardened Pharaoh's heart, yes, chapter 7, verse 13, will back do it, and we read in the following verse, and the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, now, we should probably take that at verse 14 as being, it's still hard, it's still in the same condition it was the day before, when the

Lord hardened it, but it is the work of

God, in this first instance here, so the next day, Moses goes to Pharaoh at the river, where either he is going to wash, as his daughter was in the opening chapters, or perhaps he is going to worship, because remember as we said, they regarded the river as a god, so he's gone there either to wash, or to worship, but the Lord tells him what he is going to do, when the Lord is going to smite, when he is going to judge, he sends warning in advance, verses 16 to 18, the Lord God of the Hebrews said, let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness, and behold, hitherto thou it's not here, thus saith the Lord, in this thou shalt know that I am the Lord, behold, I will smack with the rod that is in my hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood, and the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink, and the Egyptians shall loathe the drink of the water of the river, so he gives warning in advance, the Lord warns before he wounds, he is going to do something that is going to be hardship for the

Egyptians, it's going to be a difficulty, it's going to be suffering for them, but before he does it, he warns them in advance that he's going to do it, and then of course, verse 20, we read, Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded, he lifted up the rod and smote the waters that were in the river in the sight of Pharaoh, in the sight of his servants, and all the waters that were in the river turned to blood, and so there we find that they smoked the river, the river was stained as it were, with the blood, which had been stained with the blood of the Hebrew children before in chapter one, when we saw that they were quite happy to throw the babies to the crocodiles and to stain the river as it were with the blood of innocence, now it has become blood, there is a certain poetic justice, and that which the Lord gets by way of judgment, as we've said in the past, we get from the Lord exactly what we desire from him, exactly what we consider appropriate, Revelation 16, when the judgments are finally being unleashed at the end of the world, we read in verse 4 of chapter 16, the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood, and I heard the angel of the waters say, thou art righteous,

[32 : 20] O Lord, which art and wast and shall be, because thou hast judged us, for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy, when there is an acceptance of blood shed, when blood is considered an acceptable price or means of gaining that which we desire or want in order to improve or to help our situation, as the Egyptians thought blood shed for the Hebrew babies wasn't a problem to them, chuck them in the river, let them die, it does make you wonder just what the judgments shall be on the nations of the world, not least on our own country, when you consider the blood of eight million unborn children who have been slain in the womb, simply for the sake of expediency, simply because they exist, and their existence of course is not of their doing, they didn't choose to be there, but the blood shed for which the Lord will require an account, it does make you tremble when you think what judgments may be visited on us, and indeed perhaps are in the process of being visited to us as a nation, as a country, and you could replicate that across so many countries of the world, ironically, those countries which consider themselves more developed, or sophisticated, or modern, are the ones most often guilty of this particular slaughter, it's regarded as progressive in this day and age, well the Lord will of course assess and judge what is progress, and what is mere and pure slaughter and sin, but here we have the river turned into blood, which would have been a huge inconvenience and suffering for the

Egyptians, they drew their livelihood from the presence of the river, that's what meant Egypt was powerful, it was powerful because it was a land that never went short of food, other than the Egyptian famine for Joseph of course, that exceptional time, because there was plenty of water, because the Nile flooded and the silt and good soil spread out across the banks and they cultivated it, they dug canals and channels and they irrigated the fields and they made a profitable abundance of food because of the presence of the river, the Nile was their lifeblood, it was their livelihood, if the Nile turns into blood, what are you going to drink, what are you going to irritate your fields with, how is anybody going to survive, they had nothing, all the fish died, fish is a huge industry in Egypt, then and now, what would people live on, how would they feed themselves, how would they get the food they need from the river, all the fish died, the river stank, and it wouldn't just stink of course from the dead fish, but blood of course has a smell itself, we don't usually experience blood being shed in sufficient quantities to sense its smell, but some of you may be aware of the book that was written after the first world war, all quiet on the western front by

Eric Maria Remarque, and in one passage there he describes how after an attack with all the dead that are in no man's land, and all that the killing there has been, and then a breeze would come up

and blow toward the trenches, and it says that the breeze carries with it, brings with it the smell of blood, which is heavy and sweet.

I don't know how you would describe this novel, but it's not a wrong description, but it makes the air heavy, and there is a certain curious sweetness in the scent of blood shed in such quantities, it brings the stench of it towards the trenches.

Now the whole river would be smelling of blood, it would be smelling of the dead fish that couldn't live without the water. This is a disaster for the Egyptians, and it would be a judgment that Pharaoh could not be unaware of.

[36 : 40] He turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. All the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the river, and seven days were fulfilled after that the Lord had smitten the river.

We see also with this how remember that Moses is the prophet of the law, the giving of the law, and where the Lord visits with the law there is judgment, there is in a sense death, there is fear, because the law doesn't justify anyone, it points out where we are at fault, but it doesn't save anyone, whereas Christ in the gospel saves and redeems, one of Moses' first miracles is to turn water into blood and to bring death, Christ's first miracle is to turn water into wine, a symbol of joy and appreciation, Psalm 104 says, wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, it was a time of celebration, the wedding at Cana in Galilee, it was a celebration of life and blessing and goodness, and here is the contrast between the law on the one hand and the gospel on the other, friend, you will be under one or the other, you will at the end of the day be judged by the law, if we choose not the gospel, if we want the law, we want our life examined in all its minutiae, everywhere we have put a foot wrong, that will be highlighted, that will also be the case for those who are redeemed, but for them there is cover of another blood, the blood of Christ shed upon the cross, that water into wine that was a symbol of joy, also reminds us of as we partake at the Lord's supper of the wine and of the bread, the symbols of

Christ's blood and of his broken body, we are redeemed and saved by what he has done for us, this is the good news, this is the gospel that Christ has taken our punishment, has taken our place, there is the law on the one and there is the gospel on the other, you can choose, but we will be under one or the other in our life and in our death, seven days were fulfilled after that the Lord had smitten the river, now no doubt Pharaoh thought okay that was clever, that was a powerful work but that's that done, oh no, no, God is just getting started, if you think you can weather God's judgments if you think you can escape his judgment on sin, if you can somehow wriggle out from under his law, friend, you are mistaken, he's just getting started, the plagues of Egypt are as nothing compared to the judgments of God as we find in

Revelation, you and I, we need a saviour, we need a redeemer, we need one who is not only going to bring us out of the spiritual Egypt but who is going to take our place, in place of the wrath of God, and that we have only in Christ, that is one reason why it is so important for us to recognise the truth of God's law, because the gospel of grace is not merely the fulfilment of it all, it is the contrast with it all as well, we who cannot live under the yoke of the law, can live only by the grace of the gospel, we can live in Christ, or we can perish without him, and remember that we will receive from the Lord exactly what we choose, exactly what we desire, and if we didn't desire life in Christ, we won't have it, or perhaps if we just didn't desire it enough, to act while we still have time, let us pray.