

### Intro – Exodus series so far:

- The last three weeks, we've grasped some important truths about Knowing God:
  - God is still working
  - God hears and responds
  - God is in control
- Today is going to be a bit different, we're going to be looking at a huge chunk of scripture. However – we're not going to cover every verse. We're going to more skip along the surface to get the main things from the story, which will show us this: **God reigns!** **\*\*PRAY\*\***

### #1 → God Reigns – there's only one God and He reigns!

- In the last couple chapters of Exodus, we heard God telling Moses to go Pharaoh to tell him to let his people go! He went one and Pharaoh refused. Now, things are getting taken up a notch.  
<sup>8</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, <sup>9</sup> "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Prove yourselves by working a miracle,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.'" <sup>10</sup> So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. <sup>11</sup> Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. <sup>12</sup> For each man cast down his staff, and they became serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. <sup>13</sup> Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.
- Aaron throws down the walking staff he had and it becomes a snake!  
Then the Egyptian magicians do the same thing – whoa! We see your trick and call it.  
But did you hear what vs12 said – Aaron's snake ate the snakes of the Egyptians!
- Two things this shows that are both huge:
  - **God's power was greater than anything Egypt could throw at him!** One resource states, "When Moses' snake swallowed the Egyptians' snakes, the even predicted disaster for the Pharaoh. A representative snake from Israel's God had defeated one of Egypt's national symbols – the serpent, an animal that would have been considered sacred in this part of Egypt."
  - **Moses staff represents God's authority and power.** This is explained in Exodus 3; God called Moses, gave Moses authority to represent God and speak for him. And here that symbol of God's call and authority just took out Pharaoh's. Notice it says the staffs were swallowed up.
  - **This is a throw down the gauntlet moment!** This is God saying, I am the only God Pharaoh – you will bow to me, not me to you! Because one thing we must realize is that during Exodus, the Egyptians saw Pharaoh as a god. Not like a god, but he was deity in their midst. But here God is calling him out; here God is saying...there's only one God!
- This truth is as real today as it was then – there is only God and He reigns!
  - Our God is not an option amongst many, he is the only option. God is the creator, the all-powerful, all-knowing, magnificent one – and He is the one who reigns.
  - **God later commands His people:** "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me. Ex 20:2–3
  - **Jesus says this:** No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. Matthew 6:24
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### #2 → God Reigns – He is greater than anything in the culture!

- Things happen quickly after the throw down the gauntlet moment:  
Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water. Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent. And you shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to

you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness." But so far, you have not obeyed. Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD: Exodus 7:14–17

- In Exodus 7-12, we then between see 10 plagues come to Egypt: water turning to blood, frogs, lice, flies, livestock pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness and the killing of firstborn children.
- Remember that this wasn't written in America 2023, but Egypt a couple thousand years BC. Different culture, different time. And in the Egyptian culture, their gods were everything.
  - LITERALLY! They believed there was a god of the Nile, a god of livestock, a god over crops, that the sun was a god. They had tons of gods and everything was a god.
  - **So, when the plagues started happening, their gods didn't show up!** Hapi, the god of the Nile didn't stop it from turning to blood. Amon Re, their main god and of the sun, didn't show up when things went to darkness. None of their gods did anything!
  - Each plague was an opportunity for the Egyptian gods to show up – and they didn't. They weren't there. They weren't real and didn't do what they said they would do.
- And that was the point! Across all 9 of the plagues, statements like these are made:
  - "by this you will know that I am the Lord." – 7:17
  - "that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God." – 8:10
  - "that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth." – 8:22
  - "the lord will make a distinction between Israel & Egypt's livestock" – 9:4
  - "that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth." – 9:14
  - "that you may know that I am the LORD." – 10:2
  - Each of the plagues is a judgement on the Egyptian religious system. The Egyptians needed to know that their gods weren't real, that they didn't do what they said, they weren't providing or protecting anything at all! They need to know what was true!
  - The God of Israel is the only God; He is the all-powerful, all-knowing, majestic one – and no one else can compare to Him because there is no other God than Him!
- In our culture, different gods are worshipped which aren't exactly gods, but we can treat like they are: The god of money, pleasure, control, politics, sexuality, etc.
  - And we can say, "but that's not really a god – it's just an important part of life." But when something becomes our consuming focus, it is like a god in our life. When we feel like our life is shattering without it, it takes the place of a god in our heart.
  - None of those things are bad, they just weren't meant to be God or more importantly – they weren't meant to have the place God is supposed have in your heart.
  - They all offer something, but none deliver. They say they'll be there, but none show up.
- STORY: Instagram ad for wooden lap desk; ordered it and received a flimsy piece of plastic
  - What was promised in the ad looked AMAZING! It seemed so promising and helpful!
  - What we got was disappointing and useless. Sure, could figure out something for it, it didn't live up to its promise.
- Jesus is offering something counter to our culture. He is inviting us to a Kingdom, not a fairytale. He is offering us real life, not a con-man's pitch.
  - The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. 1 Jn 2:17
  - All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever." 1 Peter 1:24–25
  - I don't think the pandemic was a plague – but look what happened during it – people found out the things they held dear weren't certain, and many turned to church.
  - What are the false gods in your life? Are you striving after something or someone that offers everything, but really there's no one behind the curtain?
  - Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6

### #3 → God Reigns – He has won the victory which gives us salvation and life!

- After the final plague comes to Egypt, Pharaoh finally lets the Israelites go. Moses leads them out and they eventually get to Red Sea. In chapter 14, we read this:

<sup>5</sup> When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" <sup>6</sup> So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, <sup>7</sup> and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. <sup>9</sup> The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon. <sup>10</sup> When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. Exodus 14:5–10

- Pharaoh has a change of heart and pursues the Israelites. Vs 10 – they are TERRIFIED! Which seems like a normal response, right? When the army of your captures comes barreling down on you, I'm sure that's a little unsettling.
- It is actually more than that when we think about something really important to the Egyptian mindset at that time – it's called Ma'at.
  - An American summarizing life: "the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." If you asked an ancient Egyptian to explain life they would give you one word: Ma'at.
  - That's not an Egyptian applesauce. They didn't walk around saying, "I got the ma'at."
  - Ma'at was what was true, just, and right in their minds. Ma'at was the deep reality of harmony, order, stability, & security in the universe.
  - It is the idea of universal order – so, the opposite of Ma'at is chaos. Egyptians did everything possible to maintain Ma'at. It wasn't just some theory that they thought was neat – it was their model for behavior, it was the basis by which they lived.
  - This is why Pharaoh becomes important to them –
    - Pharaoh was the physical representation of ma'at in the Egyptian world!
    - Remember how we said each of the plagues was a god? In their mind, Pharaoh was the personification of Ma'at! When they looked at Pharaoh they were looking at ma'at walking in their midst!
    - Pharaoh's main job: secure and maintain ma'at throughout his reign/kingdom.
  - This can't be underestimated because it explains what is happening in Ex 14
    - Egypt was in chaos when Israel left! Ma'at was turned on its head! Pharaoh's job is to restore order, bring back ma'at. This is why he changed his mind!
    - So, in 14:10 the Israelites weren't terrified simply because of the armies. It was because Pharaoh was coming to clean house! They lived in that culture for 400 years, they knew about Ma'at. All of the other gods were disproved by the plagues, buy oh man – here's comes Pharaoh! Maybe this is where we lose!

And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. <sup>11</sup> They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? <sup>12</sup> Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." <sup>13</sup> And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. <sup>14</sup> The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." Exodus 14:10–14

- Not a fight between you & Pharaoh, it's between God & Pharaoh. Be quiet and watch!
- Why did God bring them to this dead-end? Because enough is enough!
- Why did he guide Pharaoh down to the sea? Because it's time for Pharaoh to understand whom the real God is. **God is calling Pharaoh out!** Listen to God's words:
  - 14:16-18: Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen."
  - The Egyptians are going to learn something today – this isn't just a lesson for Israel.

- How is God going to gain glory through Pharaoh? Because he is about to show everyone that Pharaoh is worthy of no glory...that Pharaoh is NOTHING!
- The Egyptians see Pharaoh as their savior and the Israelites see him as their doom – and God says, “NOPE!” They are going to learn that Pharaoh is NO god, he’s a bum!
- Moses stretches his staff out across the sea – the waters part and the Israelites cross.  
Exodus 14:29-30: But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1–2

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:56–57

7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. 8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. 9 And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation. 10 For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. 11 So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God. Romans 5:7–11