

Hymns: 11 How Great Thou Art
Scripture:

55 Redeemed How I Love to Proclaim It

As a child, I remember being fascinated by magic. Whether the magician pulled a rabbit out of a hat, sawed a woman in half, or pulled a quarter from a boy's ear, I was left in awe of what I had just seen. The question that came to mind after each of these illusions was "How'd he do that?" I suppose that was the most interesting part of all to me.

Today, we're going back in time, way back – to a time **before** the four great Gentile nations described in the Book of Daniel (Rome, Greece, Medo-Persia, Babylon) – a time about 3500 years ago when Ancient Egypt dominated the world stage and when magicians dared to vie against God.

Review

This is the fourth in our series of key Bible topics. Each demonstrates the redeeming power of our God. We'll take just a few excerpts from our key passages and then move directly to the events as first recorded in the book of Exodus.

1. Nehemiah 9

[9] And [the LORD] didst

*see the **affliction** of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red sea;*

*[10] And shewedst **signs and wonders** upon*

Pharoah,

*and on **all his servants,***

*and on **all the people** of his land:*

*for **thou** knewest that they dealt proudly against them. **So didst thou get thee a name,** as it is this day.*

These mighty acts were designed to **demonstrate** that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was the mighty God over all.

2. Acts 7

*[34] ...I [the Lord] have seen the **affliction of my people** which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee [speaking of Moses] into Egypt.*

*[36] He [Moses] brought them out, after that he had shewed **wonders and signs** in the land of Egypt,...*

Moses was God's instrument in this grand display. What were these wonders and signs?

While the next two key passages enumerates most of these, we'll skip them here and just pull a few interesting phrases given about the context.

3. Psalm 78:43-51

[51] *And [the LORD's death angel]*

[10] *smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham:*

We'll note that reference to Ham and revisit it after the next two verses.

4. Psalm 105:26-37

[26] *He [the LORD] sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen.*

[27] *They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.*

You remember Shem, Ham, and Japheth – Noah's sons. Ham was the one whom God cursed. The land of Egypt is where his descendants lived.

With that brief summary, lets press on and look at these miracles and judgments from Exodus chapters 7-12.

First, we have God commissioning Moses and Aaron. The Lord explained that he would perform signs and wonders through them and before Pharaoh that

Exodus 7

[5] *...the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD,*

How?

when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt,

and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

[6] *And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they.*

God commanded, and they obeyed. The stage is set. The actors have been chosen. We're about to witness the greatest slave revolt in the history of the world.

First Miracle

[10] *And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.*

[11] *Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.*

[12] *For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents:*

The magicians could do that trick. Pharaoh and his boys would appear to have not been bested. But wait. What happened next?

but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

God's man won the trick! Nevertheless:

[13] And he [the LORD] hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them [that is, to let the Israelites go]; as the LORD had said.

1. Blood – Hapi: god of the Nile; Isis: goddess of the Nile

Next, God told Moses to use his rod in the sight of Pharaoh to turn the water into blood because Pharaoh would not let Israel go. Notice as we go through this battle of wits how God focused on things associated with Egyptian gods. In this case it was Hapi, the god of the River Nile and Isis the goddess of the Nile.

Exodus 7

[20] And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.

[21] And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

Could Pharaoh's men duplicate this one? Let's see:

[22] And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.

Pharaoh seemingly had again won a measure of victory, but he was still left with rotting water. Note that Pharaoh's magicians were powerless to **reverse** any of God's judgments.

Exodus 8

2. Frogs – Hequet: frog-headed goddess

The Egyptians also had a frog-headed goddess. The next calamity that God brought was a plague of frogs. Aaron stretched forth his hand over the waters of Egypt and frogs covered the land. But this time also, Pharaoh's magicians duplicated it. Pharaoh pleaded with Moses to have God remove the judgment. Moses agreed giving the reason:

[10] ... that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God.

Moses asked God to remove the plague of frogs, and He did.

3. Lice

The next plague was of lice. Pharaoh's magicians tried to duplicate it but could not.

[19] Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart

was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

4. Flies

God had Moses warn Pharaoh to let His people go or be faced with a plague of flies **only on the Egyptian lands**. From this point on, God spared His people from the effects of the plagues that He executed on Egypt.

[23] And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be.

*[24] And the LORD did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into **all the land of Egypt**: ...*

Pharaoh asked Moses to remove the plague of flies, and he would let his people go. Moses prayed, and the LORD took them away. But Pharaoh didn't let the Israelites go.

Exodus 9

5. Livestock Plague – Hathor: goddess with a cow head

The Egyptian goddess, Hathor, had the head of a cow. You may have seen a picture of her. God's next plague struck the Egyptian cattle with fatal illness, but spared all cattle of the Israelites.

6. Boils – Isis: goddess of healing

Next, God sent a plague of boils upon men and beasts. This may relate to Isis as goddess of healing.

*[11] And the magicians **could not stand** before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.*

I suppose God was laughing at this scene. Egypt's finest magicians were reduced to being unable **to even stand before God's man, Moses**.

[12] And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

Why?

*[14] For I [the LORD] will at this time send **all my plagues** upon **thine heart** [speaking to Pharaoh], and upon **thy servants**, and upon **thy people**; that thou mayest know that **there is none like me in all the earth**.*

[15] For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.

*[16] And in very deed **for this cause have I raised thee up**, for to shew in thee my power; and **that my name may be declared throughout all the earth**.*

7. Hail

Moses warned Pharaoh to protect himself and his livestock from the coming hail. Those who did, escaped the judgment. Those who ignored God's warning had their cattle and themselves smashed. As before, this hail did not fall where the Israelites lived.

At this point, Pharaoh verbally repented and declared the LORD righteous. Moses asked the LORD to stop the hail, and the LORD stopped it. Then Pharaoh changed his mind and decided not to let the Israelites go.

Exodus 10

[1] And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him:

Why?

[2] And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them;

that ye may know how that I am the LORD.

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and told him to let his people go or face a plague of locusts.

*[7] And Pharaoh's **servants** said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: **knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?***

Pharaoh proposed a **compromise** that he would let them go to worship but would not let them take their children or livestock. Moses rejected it.

8. Locusts

Therefore, Moses brought a plague of locusts to devour whatever vegetation was left after the hail smashed everything.

*[16] Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron **in haste**; and he said, **I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you.***

Pharaoh asked Moses to have the LORD remove the latest plague. The LORD sent a west wind that blew all of the locusts into the Red Sea. But then Pharaoh did not let the Israelites go.

9. Darkness – Re: sun god

*[22] And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt **three days**:*

*[23] They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for **three days**: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. [Note the symbolism of light and darkness here.]*

The Egyptians had a sun god named Re. Where was he now when they needed him?

Pharaoh called for Moses but again proposed a compromise – telling Moses to leave his livestock behind. Moses rejected the offer. Pharaoh refused to let them go and said he would see Moses no more.

Exodus 12

Time Marked By This Day (Passover)

Then God explained how the death angel would *pass over* each house that had its doorway marked by the blood of the Passover lamb.

*[7] And they shall take of the blood, and **strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses**, [where they ate the passover meal] wherein they shall eat it.*

Here's the clear picture of the Lamb of God shedding His blood on the cross that we might escape death.

[8] And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

*[11]...it is the LORD's **passover**.*

*[12] For I will **pass through** the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and **against all the gods of Egypt** I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.*

In case there were any doubt, God set his hand “**against all the gods of Egypt.**” This lends weight to the argument that through these plagues, God was picking off Egypt's false gods, including Pharaoh's son, and exposing them as powerless.

*[13] And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will **pass over** you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*

[14] And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

And the LORD set this most significant event to start the Hebrew new year.

[28] And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

10. Death of Firstborn – Pharaoh's son was deemed a god

[29] ...the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, ... and all the firstborn of cattle.

*[30] And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was **a great cry in Egypt**; ... [it says there was death in every house]*

[31] And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said.

[32] Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.

*[33] And the Egyptians were **urgent** upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, **We be all dead men.***

Wow, what a turn of events this has been! A few days before, the Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians. Now Egypt and its people have been decimated by God. But there's more. The Israelites were instructed by God to ask the Egyptians for silver, gold, and clothing.

*[36] And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they [gave them whatever they requested] **lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.***

The wealth of Egypt was plundered – all without the Israelites doing anything to fight their enemy. God fought their battle, and won the victory and the spoils for them.

[41] And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

No magic, no mighty armies, just the power of the Almighty God made the impossible possible.

Application

What are you depending on today? Is it the trickery of some magician or other shrewd person? Is it your own skill, strength, or cleverness? Is it a job, wealth, or pension? Is it modern medicine? God says He wants to be number one. All of these routes are futile when compared to the Almighty God.

What's troubling you right now? What's holding you captive? As was the case with Israel, no kingdom, no ruler, and no gods can compare to our Lord. Let's depend on Him and let Him win the victory.

Benediction

*Let the words of my mouth,
and the meditation of my heart,
be acceptable in thy sight,
O LORD,
my strength,
and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)*