

Exodus 7:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

Analysis

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. This verse declares God's ultimate purpose in the plagues: His self-revelation to Egypt. The phrase **shall know that I am the LORD** (וַיֵּדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה, veyad'u mitzrayim ki-ani Yahweh) uses yada (יָדַע), meaning to know experientially, not merely intellectually. Egypt will encounter Yahweh's reality through His powerful acts, forcing recognition of His supremacy over their gods.

The divine name **Yahweh** (יהוה, often rendered LORD) appears emphatically. This is the covenant name revealed to Moses at the burning bush (3:14-15)—"I AM THAT I AM." When God acts in history, He reveals His character and name. The Egyptians worshiped countless deities—Ra (sun), Osiris (underworld), Isis (magic), Hapi (Nile), etc.—but Yahweh alone is God. The plagues systematically demonstrated each Egyptian god's impotence, establishing Yahweh's absolute sovereignty.

When I stretch forth mine hand (בְּנִתְּתִי אֶת־יָדִי, bin'toti et-yadi) depicts God's active intervention. The outstretched hand symbolizes divine power executing judgment and salvation—the same hand that later wrote the Law on stone tablets (Deuteronomy 9:10). This anthropomorphic language makes God's invisible power visible and comprehensible. The phrase **bring out the children of Israel from among them** emphasizes the exodus as separation—God distinguishes His covenant people from Egypt, foreshadowing the church's calling to be separate

from the world (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Theologically, this verse reveals that God's judgments serve missional purposes—even in wrath, God makes Himself known. The plagues weren't arbitrary displays of power but targeted revelations of Yahweh's character and supremacy. This anticipates the gospel age where God's judgment on sin at Calvary reveals both His justice and mercy, calling all nations to know Him (Romans 1:16-17).

Historical Context

The phrase "know that I am Yahweh" appears repeatedly in Exodus (6:7, 7:17, 8:22, 10:2, 14:4, 14:18, 16:12, 29:46) and throughout Scripture, especially in Ezekiel (over 70 times). This "recognition formula" establishes that God's mighty acts force acknowledgment of His reality and character. Ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts similarly emphasized that military victories demonstrated which god was supreme. However, Exodus differs—Yahweh reveals Himself not merely as stronger than other gods but as the only true God, with all others being false (Isaiah 44:6-8).

Egypt's polytheism was deeply embedded in their civilization—religion permeated government, agriculture, architecture, and daily life. For Egyptians to "know Yahweh" meant recognizing their entire worldview was false. This knowledge came through judgment: the Nile turned to blood (attacking Hapi and Osiris), darkness covered the land (attacking Ra), and the firstborn died (attacking Pharaoh's supposed divinity and the goddess Isis). Each plague was pedagogical—teaching through demonstration.

The exodus became the paradigm for how God makes Himself known: through redemptive judgment that saves His people while judging idolatry. This pattern repeats throughout biblical history—God acts, His name is made known, people respond in faith or hardness. The ultimate fulfillment comes in Christ, where God's name is revealed most fully (John 17:6, 26), and through the cross God demonstrates both justice and mercy, making Himself known to all nations (Romans 3:25-26; Philippians 2:9-11).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's purpose to make Himself known through judgment inform how we understand suffering and evil in the world?
2. What does Egypt's forced recognition of Yahweh teach about humanity's ultimate accountability to acknowledge the true God?

Interlinear Text

יָדָעוּ	וְהַמִּצְרִיִּם	כִּי	אֲנִי	יְהוָה	בְּנִטּוֹתַי
shall know	And the Egyptians			that I am the LORD	when I stretch forth
H3045	H4714	H3588	H589	H3068	H5186
אֶת	יָדִי	עַל	וְהוֹצֵאתִי	אֶת	בְּנֵי
H853	mine hand	H5921	and bring out	H853	the children
	H3027	H4714	H3318		H1121
לְ	מִתּוֹכָם:				
of Israel	from among				
H3478	H8432				

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 14:18 (References Lord): And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

Exodus 7:17 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.

Exodus 8:22 (References Lord): And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth.

Exodus 3:20 (References Egypt): And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

Exodus 14:4 (References Lord): And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.

Exodus 8:10 (References Lord): And he said, To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God.

Ezekiel 39:7 (References Lord): So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.

Ezekiel 39:22 (References Lord): So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward.