

The Eighth and Ninth Plagues

Exodus 10

Exodus 10 – *“Now the Lord said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, ² and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son’s son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I am the Lord.” ³ So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, “Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ⁴ Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. ⁵ And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. ⁶ They shall fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians—which neither your fathers nor your fathers’ fathers have seen, since the day that they were on the earth to this day.’” And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.*

⁷ Then Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?” ⁸ So Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, “Go, serve the Lord your God. Who are the ones that are going?” ⁹ And Moses said, “We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the Lord.” ¹⁰ Then he said to them, “The Lord had better be with you when I let you and your little ones go! Beware, for evil is ahead of you. ¹¹ Not so! Go now, you who are men, and serve the Lord, for that is what you desired.” And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence.

¹² Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land—all that the hail has left.” ¹³ So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. ¹⁴ And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. ¹⁵ For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.

¹⁶ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, “I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. ¹⁷ Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that He may take away from me this death only.” ¹⁸ So he went out from Pharaoh and entreated the Lord. ¹⁹ And the Lord turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt. ²⁰ But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go. ²¹ Then the Lord said to

Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.” ²² So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. ²³ They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

²⁴ Then Pharaoh called to Moses and said, “Go, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back. Let your little ones also go with you.” ²⁵ But Moses said, “You must also give us sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. ²⁶ Our livestock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For we must take some of them to serve the Lord our God, and even we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there.” ²⁷ But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let them go. ²⁸ Then Pharaoh said to him, “Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!” ²⁹ So Moses said, “You have spoken well. I will never see your face again.”

Background Notes

Twice in this chapter we read that familiar phrase, “*the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart*” (v1, 20). The point to remember here is that God did not take away Pharaoh’s free will. No, God simply confirmed what Pharaoh had already chosen to do. Pharaoh chose to harden his own heart, a phrase that we also read many times in the account of the plagues, and God confirmed Pharaoh’s choice.

The same could be said of a person today. If you choose to harden your heart against God, God will confirm your choice, and harden your heart until you cannot repent. In other words, eventually you *cannot* repent because you *will not* repent. Admittedly, the doctrines of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility are beyond our finite comprehension to fully grasp and harmonize, but they do not logically contradict each other. Both are true.

In the eighth plague, the plague of locusts, every remnant of vegetation that had been left after the hailstorm of the seventh plague was now totally consumed. This locust plague was the worst that Egypt had ever seen in her history as a nation. Egypt’s economy was ruined, and her people were now in survival mode. Yet Pharaoh still refused to let the children of Israel go. Even when Pharaoh’s servants tried to talk sense into him (v7), Pharaoh would not listen. Now he tried another tactic to get Moses and the children of Israel to compromise in their request.

Doctrinal Points

1. Compromise in the area of family is a tactic of the enemy.

Pharaoh tried four tactics to keep Israel from leaving the land of Egypt. I’m reading segments from an essay I wrote some years ago on this subject entitled, “**Living Sacrifice.**”

“Pharaoh tried four different tactics to keep the people from leaving Egypt and sacrificing to the Lord their God. Satan uses the same four tactics today to dissuade Christians from their offer of themselves as living sacrifices to the Lord. In Exodus 8:25 Pharaoh says, “Go sacrifice to your God in the land.” Egypt represents the world, and this is where the enemy is king. The devil approves of sacrifice-- as long as we remain in the land of Egypt! Satan is king in this world. He is king even in the religious world – in fact, he encourages “religion”! True Christianity is not “religion.” It is a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

In Exodus 8:28 the second tactic of Pharaoh is employed: “I will let you go that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness, only you shall not go very far away.” If Satan cannot keep us “in the land,” he will try to keep us close to it. Here all the deceptions of the enemy are readily available to suck us back into this evil world system and destroy our testimony. A “borderline” Christian is not a living sacrifice. A student who fellowships and prays with Christians one night but parties with the world the next is not a holy and acceptable sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

The third tactic which Pharaoh used in his attempt to get the people of God to compromise is found in Exodus 10:11: “Go now, you that are men”—that is, the men can go and sacrifice, but they must leave the family behind. Pharaoh knew that if he held onto the wife and kids, dad wouldn’t be able to serve the Lord very efficiently for long. If Satan cannot get us personally to stay in his territory, His strategy is to get us tied in by our closest relationships.”

Many Christians have fallen short of all that they could do for the Lord because of compromise in the area of family relationships or family connections. Compromise in the area of family is a tactic of the enemy.

2. Compromise in the area of possessions is a tactic of the enemy.

In verse 21, what does the phrase “a darkness that could be felt” mean? It may be a descriptive way to say it was very dark, or it may mean darkness combined with a devastating sand storm. In any case, quite a miracle is involved in this plague, because the children of Israel had light in their dwellings (v23)! This plague was obviously not a natural solar eclipse. This plague was directed against one of Egypt’s chief deities—Ra, the sun god.

Pharaoh’s fourth tactic is found in verse 24. (Once again, I am reading from the devotional entitled, “**Living Sacrifice.**” You can read this entire devotional on our website,

Exodus 10:24 gives us Pharaoh’s final attempt to keep God’s people from total commitment. “Go serve the Lord, only let your flocks and your herds be detained.” How subtle! Leave your livelihood in Egypt! Satan knows that if our careers and other interests and things are left in his realm, he still has some control. We may think that we are strong and separated Christians, but if one of our deepest motives is to get ahead in this world on its terms, then our flocks and herds are still in Egypt. There is only one answer: “not a hoof shall be left behind” (v26).

Leaving Egypt completely in total commitment as a living sacrifice raises some nitty-gritty questions – questions that we must ask ourselves: Am I planning my career to get me ahead in this life, or have I presented it as part of my living

sacrifice to the Lord? Are my possessions – my guitar, my home, my car -- used to serve the Lord, or are they “hooves” that are still holding me in Egypt? Until the flocks and herds leave Egypt, there can be no sacrifice. Until then, Christian service is only song and talk.” Compromise in the area of possessions is a tactic of the enemy.

Practical Application

Don't forget to tell your grandchildren!

In verse 2 we see another reason for the plagues that the Lord brought upon Egypt: “...*that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and your son's son, the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them that you may know that I am the Lord.*”

The children of Israel were to tell their children and their grandchildren about the Lord's mighty acts against the Egyptians, and how the pagan Egyptian gods were overpowered in order to deliver God's people out from bondage in Egypt. We need to do the same. Don't forget to tell your children and grandchildren of the wonderful works of God that He has accomplished in overpowering the enemy and delivering His own people.

It's possible that many of you are believers because of the faithful witness of your parents and grandparents. Now, as parents and grandparents, you have a responsibility to carry on this great testimony of the Lord's wonderful works throughout human history—in the Bible stories, and in your own lives! Psalm 145:4 says, “*One generation shall praise your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts.*” Don't forget to tell your grandchildren!