

"Educating the Egyptians"

Exodus 7:1-14

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- 1 And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.
- 2 Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.
- 3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.
- 4 But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.
- 5 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.
- 6 And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they.
- 7 And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.
- 8 And the LORD spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,
- 9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.
- 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: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.
- 13 And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.
- 14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. -- Exodus 7:1-14

We have seen from chapter 6 that God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt was not because God felt sorry for them above all the miserable captives in the history of the world. It was not because of the worthiness of Israel's faith and trust in God, for they had very little. It was not because of the worthiness of Moses and Aaron, for they often stumbled and faltered. What was the reason? "God's own glory and power." There are two things to be emphasized, and some applications.

I. We must note the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Much has been said to try to elevate man's corrupted moral sense and corrupt doctrine of God over the plain words of Scripture. The attempt shows more man's ingenuity to avoid the truth than it does to shine any light upon the Scripture.

A. An attempt is made to soften the blow of Scripture by translating these passages in the Old Testament, "Pharaoh's heart was hardened." Some have said it could mean "Pharaoh's heart was emboldened" or "Pharaoh's heart was stiffened" or some such thing.

B. Some suppose that Pharaoh hardened his heart first, and then God hardened it later, ignoring the clear statements that God made to Moses when Moses was still in Midian, that God would harden Pharaoh's heart, and God would do great signs and wonders against Pharaoh and the land of Egypt. They say, this language must not be applied to men as far as their personal standing before the Lord is concerned, especially in such things as being saved and escaping hell and damnation.

C. These attempts and other like them are an attempt to build a case against God in terms of man's sense of justice and equity. It doesn't seem fair to sinful man, that God would raise up a man like Pharaoh, harden his heart for the purpose of showing His power in the world, that the people might know that the Lord, He is God.

D. But the language is clear. Even though men dispute the words of Exodus, Paul's interpretation in Romans 9 is perfectly clear. God shows mercy to whom He will and hardens whom he will.

E. Pharaoh was not treated unjustly. He was born with a hard heart, just as all the sons of Adam are. The hard heart with which you and I are born is the just penalty that God brings upon men because of Adam's sin. If men are not condemned for the sin of Adam, then neither are they redeemed by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for the two ideas hang together as Paul says in Romans 5.

F. Pharaoh and all men are born with hard hearts, alienated from God, under the curse of God. God restrains the sinfulness and wickedness of men because He would not abandon the government of the world to descend into chaos. "He makes the wrath of men to praise Him; the remainder of wrath he restrains."

G. But, when it suits His purpose, God removes the restraints that He puts upon the wickedness of men and their hearts are hardened in deed. God does this on purpose for His own glory, so it is correct to say that He hardens men's hearts; but He does not harden the hearts of good men who have soft hearts, for there are none of those until He makes them so by His grace. So we have three reasons for the hardness of men's hearts:

1. The glory of God, to show Himself to be God against the vanity of men's rage and wrath against Him.
2. The just punishment for the children of men because of Adam's sin and rebellion against God.
3. The fitting and proper punishment for men who are spiritually at war with God. Their sins are in their hearts and souls, and it is fitting that the punishment itself be in their hearts and souls.

II. The turning of Moses' Rod into a serpent.

A. Aaron, as Moses' spokesman, threw down the rod, the shepherd's rod that Moses had thrown down at the Burning Bush, that became a serpent from which Moses fled. It is the same one that Moses and Aaron had used to demonstrate the power of God.

B. As I said when we discussed the Burning Bush, This demonstration was an assault upon the very foundation of Pharaoh's throne, which was symbolized by the serpent, or dragon, or sea monster, even the crocodile.

C. Beloved, is it a strange thing to believe the Bible? All sorts of things are devised to remove the absolute power of God from these events, to remove the supernatural. Ie. Snakes can be made to be paralyzed and stiffened into rod-like creatures, if you hold them in such a way. This not only explained Moses' miracle, but the actions of the magicians.

D. Not so, it is the inscripturated word that is inspired of God, and we must deal with the very words of Scripture. The words do not admit than interpretation.

E. Pharaoh was not impressed with the miracle. His magicians could do as much. In those old times before the coming of Christ, there were wonders done by Satanic power, for God had suffered all the nations to walk in their own way. Satan has been bound by the coming of Christ, and he is not able to deceive as he once did. The advisers of Pharaoh are called magicians, wise men, and sorcerers. They manipulated the hidden power of the universe to deceive and corrupt the minds of men. Two of their names have come down to us, and preserved in the Bible: Paul warns Timothy of men like Jannes and Jambres, men of corrupt minds. Their names are also found in other works of antiquity.

F. This is a different word for "serpent" here before Pharaoh, other than the one used in Ex. 4 and 6. The word signifies a beast of the same species, a reptile, but a much more fierce and monstrous one: a dragon or a sea serpent, or such. Whatever it was, Pharaoh was not impressed and called his magicians and they did likewise. At this time Pharaoh imagined that Moses was just another magician

like the ones he had on his payroll.

G. But even though Pharaoh was not convinced and his heart hardened, there must have been a bit of uneasiness in his soul: the serpent that came from the rod of Moses ate up all the snakes that came from the rods of the magicians. Pharaoh should have paid attention.

H. The power of any state that sets itself against God and the Lord Jesus Christ is doomed before the rod of God.

III. Applications

A. It is a very deadly thing to harden your heart. Let me make a caveat first:

1. The elect of God cannot finally harden their hearts against God, for His irresistible grace overcomes their hearts of stone. A new heart is planted within them and sin cannot ultimately have power over them, for they are dead with Christ. God chastens and subdues them and humbles them.

2. This is why those who cannot forgive cannot be forgiven. Forgiveness of sins brings with it a new heart and the work of the Holy Spirit. A hard, leathery, and vicious heart is an unforgiven heart, for the new covenant includes not only forgiveness of sins, but a changed heart, a heart of flesh and not stone.

B. Having said that, however, it is possible for hearts to be hardened before the Lord and terrible earthly things to come because of this hardness. The church is warned against this hardness, which affected the children of Israel, also. Do not harden your heart. You cannot do it absolutely, but you can do it relatively. God will break and soften your heart; but a hard heart is a sign of a graceless heart. If you will not forgive....

1. See Hebrews Heb 3:15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. You do not have to war against your neighbor to get what you need or what your soul most earnestly desires: rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him.

2. Jas 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

3. The heart is hardened against the work of the Holy Spirit and this is a most serious thing, and God will chasten His people most severely for this sin, especially those who have the most light and grace. There are three escalating warnings in Scripture that are directed against those who name the name of Christ.

Another caveat: Election is not a huge snow shovel that I can use to flip over my back anything that convicts me in Scripture, pretending that it does not apply to me. The warnings of scripture are for the purpose who warning against those things which are not characteristics of the elect. The warnings are to be heeded as ways of proving election, not as means of procuring election. You cannot soften your hearts so as to be elect; but you can soften your hearts if you ARE elect, for the Holy Spirit does this work in you, and you do it because He does it first.

a) Do not grieve the Spirit. Grieve: By whom ye are sealed. “As God has sealed us by his Spirit, we grieve him when we do not follow his guidance, but pollute ourselves by wicked passions. No language can adequately express this solemn truth, that the Holy Spirit rejoices and is glad on our account, when we are obedient to him in all things, and neither think nor speak anything, but what is pure and holy; and, on the other hand, is grieved, when we admit anything into our minds that is unworthy of our calling.” Calvin Eph 4:30

b) Quench: Put out the fire. “Fire is not quenched” Quenched the violence of fire. Pouring water on the fire. Calvin: on 1Thess 5:19: connected to giving thanks for all things, and despising not prophesyings. Don’t shut off the lifegiving word of God; extinguishing the fire that God would light in your soul.

c) Resist: Stephen in Acts 7:51: Resist: Acts 7:51 To resist the Holy spirit was to stand against the prophets and the Scriptures God had provided for them. To war against them, to fight them. They contumaciously reject the words of the prophet.

It begins in the heart: “grieve”;

It then moves out to those near you “quench”;

Finally is directed against the ministers and the witness of the church: “Resist” Is the finish of rebellion.

Amen and Amen
God bless you.