

## 6. Hardened heart, bloody result

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A group of scientists studied a native tribe in South America whose people have been dying prematurely for generations. After thorough investigation, the cause of premature death was found.

The disease was transmitted by insects that live in the walls of their adobe homes.

This new information presented several options:

- 1) They could move to another area where such insects don't exist.
- 2) Tear down their homes and rebuild them.
- 3) Use insecticide to rid of the bugs.
- 4) Continue as they have and die early.

Surprisingly, these people have opted to remain where they are and do nothing about their problem.

Many of us behave similarly. To have less problems with God, we all know what we must do. Instead, some of us opt to remain unchanged. They dug their own grave because they were STUBBORN!!!

The Pharaoh of Egypt whom we are going to meet is one of those who had such a stubborn bullhead that he drove the entire nation to ground, because he chose to fight against God.

In last chapter, Pharaoh defiantly said to Moses, "Who is the Lord?" Now, he is going to start to face the bloody result of his arrogant defiance to the Lord. God would fulfill His promise in Gen. 12:3 to judge the nations that persecute the Jews. The Lord would reveal His power, His wrath and His greatness, showing that the gods of Egypt were false gods, and that He alone is the true God.

### A. BACK TO THE PHARAOH'S COURT, MOSES

*Exodus 7:1-7 So the Lord said to Moses: "See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. 2 You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall speak to Pharaoh to 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 will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My 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 out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them." 6 Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the Lord commanded them, so they did. 7 And Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.*

God would now deal with Pharaoh through Moses. This lets Moses know that when Pharaoh rejects him, he really rejects God. And Moses shouldn't take it so personally. In the same way, when the people we encounter harden their hearts against the Lord and reject our evangelism, we shouldn't take it personally, because they reject God ultimately, not us.

When Saul that was the former name of apostle Paul was hot after the first century Christians, the Lord Jesus took it personally and knocked Saul off from his high horse on the way to Damascus.

From reading v3, it sounds like God is a sadistic person who made the life of Pharaoh difficult just for a fun of it; God hardens Pharaoh's heart and when he does wrong, He punishes him. No, it is not like that at all.

Allow me to explain it to you a little more in details. It is important to know, in order to properly understand, that there are two Hebrew words involved in the one word "hardened." They are both translated into English as "hardened," but the one Hebrew word implies "a stubbornness, an act of rebellion." And that is the word that is used for the behavior of Pharaoh.

The other Hebrew word indicates "to make firm," like you would put a piece of clay in the fire to harden the clay and that is the Hebrew word employed for what God did to Pharaoh. So the Pharaoh stubbornly rebelled against God with his hardened heart, and then God came along and firmed up his decision.

God can do the same today. In our rebellion, we may reach the place where God will strengthen us in the evil we desire and affirm our decision.

*Romans 1:24-25 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

*Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.*

## **B. GOD'S SERPENT vs. PHARAOH'S SERPENTS**

*Exodus 7:8-13 Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 9 "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent.'" 10 So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the Lord commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. 11 But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12 For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. 13 And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the Lord had said.*

Aaron's rod was to be the badge of authority from God Almighty.

It is not difficult for Christians to believe God changing a rod to a serpent. But how did the magicians of Egypt do this with their enchantments? Apparently, this wasn't mere magic. This was demonic power showing itself in truly supernatural miracles.

One of satan's arsenal is performing miracles.

*2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved..*

This means that miracles can prove that something is supernatural, but they cannot prove that something is true and it is from God every time.

These Egyptian magicians were intelligent and learned men. But they lacked the wisdom of God.

*2 Timothy 3:7-9 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.*

I don't care what kind of excuses people come up with for this. But the bottom line is that they harden their hearts against God because of their own selfish reasons. Here are a few:

### **1) People harden their hearts against the exclusive way of salvation through Jesus Christ.**

They realize that if they admit that they need Jesus as their Savior and Lord, they first have to admit that they are sinners. Their pride and hardened hearts get in the way of their eternal salvation.

### **2) People harden their hearts to continue in their sins.**

Many people have their own pet sins. They range from gossip, jealousy, outburst of anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, drinking, pornography, gambling, flirting with someone other than their spouses and even flat out adultery. They'd rather enjoy their pet sins which give them pleasure for a short time while they ignore God's invitation to come to Him with repented hearts.

If you are a backslidden Christian, take this as a warning from God to return to Him. Do not harden your heart today.

### **3) People harden their hearts to ignore the truth of God.**

Many intelligent people put their pride and credentials before the truth of God, especially in the Creation facts. So they'd rather choose the evolution theory over the Creator of the universe because of their pride and hardened hearts.

*"The pathetic thing is that we have scientists who are trying to prove evolution, which no scientist can ever prove." - Dr. Robert Millikan, Nobel Prize winner and eminent evolutionist*

*"There are only two possibilities as to how life arose. One is spontaneous generation arising to evolution; the other is a supernatural creative act of God. There is no third possibility. Spontaneous generation, that life arose from non-living matter was scientifically disproved 120 years ago by Louis Pasteur and others. That leaves us with the only possible conclusion that life arose as a supernatural creative act of God. I will not accept that philosophically because I do not want to believe in God therefore, I choose to believe in that which I know is scientifically impossible; spontaneous generation arising to evolution." - Dr. George Wall, professor emeritus of biology at Harvard University*

I have to wonder if Aaron's rod that turned to a serpent belched out loud after it swallowed up all the other serpents. I really believe God has a sense of humor to make this kind of things. Imagine the look on the faces of Pharaoh and the magicians when Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods!

## **C. GOD'S INSTRUCTION FOR THE FIRST PLAGUE**

*Exodus 7:14-18 So the Lord said to Moses: "Pharaoh's heart is hard; he refuses to let the people go. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to*

*the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. 16 And you shall say to him, 'The Lord God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness"; but indeed, until now you would not hear! 17 Thus says the Lord: "By this you shall know that I am the Lord. Behold, I will strike the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. 18 And the fish that are in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river."'"*

God did not plague Egypt because Pharaoh would not let the children of Israel go, but because Pharaoh refused to recognize and honor God.

God takes our disobedience to Him as rebellion. If we are continuously harden our heart against God, He will do whatever it takes to get our attention including turning our most precious thing into a pile of rubble and ashes. Why do we try to argue and fight with God when the end result is so obvious? It is so much easier and better for us to be obedient now than get punished later.

#### **D. THE FIRST PLAGUE AGAINST EGYPT - THE NILE TURNS TO BLOOD**

*Exodus 7:19-21 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.'" 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the Lord commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck 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 The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.*

Egyptians believed that the fertility of the land of Egypt depended upon the Nile River to bring both fertilizer and water. The god of Nile Osiris whose supposedly all-seeing eye is found in many Egyptian paintings. When the water was turned to blood by God, it brought death instead of life and it devastated them.

The plagues God brought against Egypt had a definite strategy and purpose. Each of them confronts and attacks prized Egyptian deities. Not only did they bring punishment against Egypt, the plagues also answered Pharaoh's original question: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?" The plagues show the Lord God to be greater than any of the deities of Egypt.

#### **E. MAKING THE MATTER WORSE**

*Exodus 7:22-25 Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the Lord had said. 23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. 24 So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. 25 And seven days passed after the Lord had struck the river.*

If I were Pharaoh, I would fire all of these magicians who turned whatever the remaining water into blood. Can you imagine the smell of blood everywhere you turn and you cannot drink water for seven days because there is no water except blood? I am sure vampires thought that they found a watering hole.

If the magicians of Egypt really wanted to do a miracle, why didn't they turn the bloody river clean again? Because it seems that satan cannot perform a constructive, cleansing miracle. He can bring supernatural destruction, but not goodness. All they did was making more bloody water.

Pharaoh hardened his heart instead of being obedient to God, so he got a major bloody mess, literally.

There are five signs that indicate we are being stubborn towards God:

- 1) **We chose to fix problems on our own rather than go to God with them.**
- 2) **We are willing to settle for less than the best that God has for us, because we refuse to trust God to provide for us.**
- 3) **We get angry rather than repent when God confronts us with the truth.**
- 4) **We don't want anything to do with God's people.**
- 5) **We refuse to call upon God when there are no other options available.**

If you can identify yourself with any of these signs, please it is the time for you to stop and make things right with God who loves you very much.

## **F. APPLICATION**

### **1) God takes our disobedience to Him as rebellion.**

If we are continuously harden our heart against God, He will do whatever it takes to get our attention including turning our most precious thing into a pile of rubble and ashes. Why do we try to argue and fight with God when the end result is so obvious? It is so much easier and better for us to be obedient now than get punished later.

*Hebrews 3:15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."*

### **2) Our stubbornness in rebellion and hardened hearts do not help us.**

We all have responsibility of how we live. We can believe however we want while we are alive on this earth. But after this life, before the presence of God, the way we live and the one we put our trust in will become our witness and judgement against us or for us.