

EXODUS: The Person, Promise, and Power of God

Exodus 7: The God Who Hardens

“Like God” – The Voice of the Prophet: 7:1-2; 6-7

7 And the Lord said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. ² **You shall speak all that I command you**, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land.

⁶ **Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the Lord commanded them.** ⁷ Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

What a prophet does ...

The responsibility of the prophet of God ...

God’s shocking promise: 7:3-5

³ **But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart**, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, ⁴ Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. ⁵ The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.”

Exodus refers to the “hardening of Pharaoh’s heart” ____X, so that he does not let the people go.

Sometimes the hardening is described as _____ hardening; other times _____ hardening; and still other times with a _____ verb that does not specify who did the hardening (e.g. “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened”):

God’s hardening	Being hardened	Self-hardening
4:21	7:13	8:15
7:3	7:14	8:32
9:12	7:22	9:34
10:1	8:19	
10:20	9:7	
10:27	9:35	
11:10		
14:4		
14:8		
14:17		

Before Moses even arrives in Egypt to confront Pharaoh with God's command that he let Israel go, God's _____ was to harden Pharaoh's heart!

²¹ And the Lord said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. (4:21)

“God did not send Moses to Egypt wondering how many plagues it would take to bring Pharaoh to his knees. The plan from the beginning was to “multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt” (7:3). God said this *before* leveling the first plague.” (Piper, *Providence*, p. 437)

Why did God harden Pharaoh’s heart?

10 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, ² and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the Lord.” (10:1-2)

⁹ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.” (11:9)

“The purpose of the hardening is linked to the purpose of the wonders of the exodus itself in the future history of Israel and of the world.” (Piper)

God hardens Pharaoh so that ...

1. He may multiply His _____ ...
He multiplies His wonders to
2. Put _____ in his place,
3. Show the Egyptians that He is absolute _____,
4. Establish himself as the center of Israel’s _____ for generations,
5. Make a _____ for Himself in all the earth (9:15-16)

(Piper, *Providence*, p. 437)

Critical point:

God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart was not a mere _____ to Pharaoh's self-hardening. It was his plan from the _____.

BEFORE the encounters with Pharaoh begin, God said to Moses, “I will harden his heart.”

Also remember this key phrase: “as the LORD had said” ...

¹³ Still Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. (7:13)

²² But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh’s heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. (7:22)

¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. (8:15)

¹⁹ Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. (8:19)

“In each case, the hardening is happening as the Lord had said. And what he had said was, “I will harden Pharaoh's heart”. This means that behind the self-hardening and behind the “being hardened” were the plan and purpose of God to harden. God hardening is not described as a response. What Pharaoh does is the other way around. What Pharaoh does - his self hardening - is described as the effect of what God does.” (Piper, *Providence*, p. 439)

Why this matters to us: Romans 9:17-18

¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." ¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

- 1) Paul uses the example of Pharaoh to express the principle of _____ in showing mercy.
- 2) Both the acts of showing mercy and of hardening are _____.
God is not constrained by anything outside himself.
- 3) Surely all human beings _____ are unworthy of being shown mercy and deserve judgment, but that is not the question.
The question is, "Why do *some* receive mercy?"
The answer is in the _____ will of God.
- 4) Our ultimate conclusion can only be this: _____ is of the Lord!

These points _____ a mystery; they do not _____ it.

¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" ²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? (Romans 9:19-20a)

God v. Pharaoh – 7:8-13

⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹ "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Prove yourselves by working a miracle,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.'" ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. ¹¹ Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. ¹² For each man cast down his staff, and they became serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. ¹³ Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

Why a venomous snake as the first sign?

How were the sorcerers able to duplicate it?

What is the significance of Aaron's staff swallowing up theirs'?

The First Plague: Water to Blood – 7:14-25

¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water. Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent. ¹⁶ And you shall say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness." But so far, you have not obeyed. ¹⁷ Thus says the Lord, "By this you shall know that I am the Lord: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. ¹⁸ The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile." ' ' ¹⁹ And the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.' "

²⁰ Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. ²¹ And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

²² But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. ²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart. ²⁴ And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.

²⁵ Seven full days passed after the Lord had struck the Nile.

Consider what these plagues **accomplished**:

- 1) They demonstrated God's mighty _____.
- 2) They were displays of _____, commingled with _____. (9:15)
- 3) They were judgments from God upon the _____ of Egypt.
- 4) They demonstrated the _____ of Jehovah God above all other gods.
- 5) They were a solemn _____ to the nations.
- 6) They were a _____ to Israel for the sake of their _____.

"In order to understand these plagues we need to understand that they were directed against the gods and goddesses of Egypt and were intended to show the superiority of the God of Israel to the Egyptian gods. There were about eighty major deities in Egypt, all clustered about the three great natural forces of Egyptian life: the Nile river, the land, and the sky. It does not surprise us, therefore, that the plagues God sent against Egypt in this historic battle follow this three-force pattern. The first two plagues were against the gods of the Nile. The next four were against the land gods. The final four plagues were against the gods of the sky, culminating in the death of the firstborn."

(James Montgomery Boice, Psalms: An Expository Commentary; Volume 2: Psalms 42–106, pp. 849, 850.)

Plague #1: The Nile

Moses is instructed to stand on the bank of the Nile and await Pharaoh's coming. Why?

What does God demand from Pharaoh?

What is God demonstrating in this sign?

Natural or supernatural occurrence?

Notice ...

- 1) The profound _____ of the sign ...
- 2) The _____ of the magicians' power ...
- 3) A *cause* given to Pharaoh's hardening ...
- 4) 7 days is an indication of _____ ...