

EXODUS: The Person, Promise, and Power of God

Exodus 10: Locusts, Darkness, and Fatal Hardening

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."

The overarching purposes of God in the Exodus:

The display of _____

The renown of _____

The future faith of _____

The Eighth Plague: Locusts – 10:3-20

³ So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. ⁴ For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, ⁵ and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land. And they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat every tree of yours that grows in the field, ⁶ and they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.'"

God's demand to Pharaoh: _____ yourself and _____ to my command.

God's promise to Pharaoh: If you refuse, I will _____.

Pharaoh's response – a compromise:

¹⁰ But he said to them, "The Lord be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind. ¹¹ No! Go, the men among you, and serve the Lord, for that is what you are asking." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

Notice once again that _____ hardens Pharaoh's heart (v. 1) and Pharaoh continues his refusal to _____ himself before God. This is a demonstration of Divine Providence via **concurrence**:

Concurrence is the aspect of divine providence that describes how God works ____ and _____ all things, particularly the actions of God's creatures.

"... at the same time human agents are acting, God is acting in and through them. We are creatures with a will of our own. We make choices. Yet the causal power we exert is secondary. God's sovereign providence stands over and above our actions. He works out his will through the actions of human wills, without violating the freedom of the human will.

Concurrence means that at the same time human agents are acting, God is acting in and through them. God works everything out according to the counsel of his will but does it so that sin and evil are not morally chargeable to him but are always chargeable to the ones who actually commit the sins."

(Ken Erisman, *Grounded in the Faith*, p. 262-263)

“Concurrence” means that things that happen are, first and foremost, events that God causes to happen; yet God works through the distinctive properties of each created thing or individual, so that these things or individuals themselves bring about the results that we *see*.

Primary and secondary causes:

- The divine cause of each event works as an invisible, behind-the-scenes, directing cause and therefore can be called the “primary cause” that plans and initiates everything that happens.
- But the created thing brings about actions in ways consistent with the creature’s own properties ... These creaturely factors and properties can therefore be called the “secondary” causes of everything that happens, even though they are the causes that are evident to us by observation.

We see this clearly in the Scriptures:

“The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.” (Proverbs 16:9 ESV)

God is clearly working towards an ultimate purpose: The display of His _____ through the freedom of his _____ in the _____.

¹⁴ ... Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! ¹⁵For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. ¹⁷For 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.” ¹⁸So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. (Romans 9:14b-18)

Pharaoh/Egypt is never treated _____ than he/they deserve.

Israel is treated _____ than they deserve.

God is _____ to offer this grace to whomever He chooses.

The **significance** of the locusts:

¹² Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, so that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left.”

¹³ So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind had brought the locusts. ¹⁴ The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever will be again. ¹⁵ They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

¹⁶ Then Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. ¹⁷ Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the Lord your God only to remove this death from me.”

¹⁸ So he went out from Pharaoh and pleaded with the Lord. ¹⁹ And the Lord turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea. Not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt.

²⁰ But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go.

The locusts represent a significant _____ in God’s judgments of Egypt. Locusts in the Exodus are but a *foreshadowing* of the far more severe Trumpet Judgements of God on the earth

in Revelation 9. Those locusts do not devour plants, but instead torment everyone who does not belong to God.

It is beginning to be clear to Pharaoh that these plagues (judgements) are about far more than _____; they are bringers of _____.

“Paul made the same kind of assertion in Rom 6:23 with his words, “The wages of sin is death.” It is not that every sin leads instantly to death but rather that every sin does move the sinner further down the inevitable path to death; the ultimate punishment for sin in a universe created and sustained by a holy, omnipotent God is the extermination of evildoers. The king of Egypt, in his own limited way and according to the biases of his own culture and beliefs, was catching a glimpse of this truth.”¹

And yet Pharaoh’s response falls far short of true _____.

To want _____, _____, or _____ from sin’s effects is only natural. But to humble yourself before God and submit to His will is a different experience altogether. That’s _____.

The Ninth Plague: Darkness – 10:21-29

21 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.”

22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch 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 people of Israel had light where they lived.

24 Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, “Go, serve the Lord; your little ones also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind.”

25 But Moses said, “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. 26 Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the Lord our God, and 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 care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die.”

29 Moses said, “As you say! I will not see your face again.”

Imagine the effects of _____ darkness for three days – especially for an ancient people:

- _____ and _____ ...
- _____ and _____ ...
- _____ and _____ ...

Consider the _____ of this darkness: “a darkness to be felt”

Also consider the _____ nature of this darkness: God’s people have light and Pharaoh’s people do not. Apparently, the Egyptians could not even light lamps or candles to see, whereas the Hebrews could.

And worst of all, consider the utter decimation of their highest and greatest ‘god’ and a repudiation of his ‘power’ and that of his earthly representative or ‘son’:

¹ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, The New American Commentary, 253.

The Egyptians served Horus (the god of the sunrise), Aten (the god of the round, midday sun), and Atum (the god of the sunset). But the supreme deity in their national pantheon was Amon-Ra, who said, "I am the great god who came into being of himself, He who created his names ... he who has no opponent among the gods." The Egyptians believed that this solar deity was their creator. "Unique God," they would sing in their great Hymn to the Sun-disk, "there is none besides him. / You mould the earth to your wish, you and you alone – / All people, herds and flocks, / All on earth that walk on legs, / All on high that fly with their wings." Every morning the rising of the sun in the east reaffirmed the life-giving power of Amon-Ra. Sunset represented death and the underworld, but the rise of Amon-Ra offered the hope of resurrection. For the Egyptians, it was a matter of faith that the eternally rising sun could never be destroyed.

Like most Egyptians, Pharaoh was a sun worshiper. More than that, he was regarded as the Son of Ra, the personal embodiment of the solar deity. Egypt's king was Egypt's god, and as the incarnation of Amon-Ra, he maintained the cosmic order. Stephen Quirke writes: "At the kernel of the civilization stands a special relation between the divine father figure of the sun god, ruler of creation, and his solitary offspring on earth, the reigning king of Egypt.... This establishes the key relationship in creation, between the sun god as the elder partner in the sky and his issue on earth, the junior partner.... Within the reign of each king, he alone appears as the living representative of the sun god on earth, and enjoys a unique sovereignty in the practical exercise of power."²

_____ is truly the provider of light (not Ra!). It does not exist apart from him, and he bestows it upon whom he will.

Egypt's greatest _____ was cast down. And Pharaoh's last source of "hope" was gone.

Pharaoh's final concession: The _____ may go, but their _____ remain mine.

Moses' response: Only a _____ will suffice.

Notice now that Moses is commanding Pharaoh: "You must ...". Moses does not give an inch to the humiliated monarch: "not a hoof shall be left behind ..."

And finally, notice the sequence:

God hardens Pharaoh's heart and then the Egyptian king refuses to let the Hebrews leave.

God's _____ is being exercised.

It is not Pharaoh who is in control, but God's will that is done.

This plague is also a forerunner of a catastrophe that appears in Revelation 16:

¹⁰ The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish ¹¹ and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

The Exodus plague is terrible, but the coming one is devastating for those who refuse to repent.

Next week: God's initial prophecy to Moses will come to pass:

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. ²² Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, ²³ and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.'"

² Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, 303–304.