

Sent: Wednesday, November 11, 2020 1:41 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Session on Exodus 8:20-9:12

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance!" (Psalm 33:12)

Last week, we saw how the magicians of Egypt concluded that it must have been "the finger of God" that was responsible for turning the dust of the ground into gnats (the third plague)! Exodus 8:17 says "all the dust of the earth became gnats through all the land of Egypt--affecting all man and beast"! It was something the magicians of Egypt realized was so "off the charts" that they couldn't reverse it, or make it happen themselves, with all their "secret arts." And so, they reported to Pharaoh that it was the result of the "finger of God"--the God they did not know! But despite their report, and alarm, Pharaoh's heart was hardened once again, and he refused to listen to God's call to let His people go! (You might call this another case of Pharaoh's "hardening of his hearteries"!

All of which brings us to last nite's lesson on Exodus 8:20-9:12, and the second cycle of plagues!

The Lord told Moses to "rise up early in the morning and present himself before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water" (the Nile River), and there to command him once again to "let My people go that they may serve Me"! Or else, He (the LORD) would send "swarms of flies" on him and his servants and his people, and into their houses, but that He would "set apart the land of Goshen (where the children of Israel lived!), so that no swarms of flies would be there"! All this would happen the next day--"Tomorrow!" He declared! "In order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land"!

And it happened, just as the LORD said! Verse 24 says, "there came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and the houses of his servants, and the land was laid waste because of the swarms of flies in all the land of Egypt" (but not in the land of Goshen)!

This time Pharaoh relented (softened his heart?) and told Moses and Aaron to "go, sacrifice to your God (but) within the land"! A proposal which Pharaoh should have realized wouldn't work, since Israel's sacrifices of animals considered sacred to the Egyptians would be an "abomination" to Pharaoh's people. A "three-day journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to the LORD, as He commanded" was necessary, according to Moses, to which Pharaoh initially agreed--as long as they wouldn't go "very far away"! (When's he going to learn that you can't "bargain" with God!)

In another surprising show of "softening," however, Pharaoh actually asked Moses to "make supplication" for him! Moses did! And the Lord did, as Moses asked, in removing the flies from the land! But then, true to form, Pharaoh again "hardened his heart...and did not let the people go"! (Bad move!)

This led to the fifth plague! Exodus 9:3-7 says, "a very severe pestilence" on all the livestock "in the field" of Egypt--"on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds and on the flocks." And "all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the sons of Israel, not one died"! This led to Pharaoh sending out a servant to check on the livestock of the sons of Israel--

and finding, just as the LORD had promised, that "not even one the livestock of Israel died"! (God always keeps His promises!)

And yet, verse 7 says, "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go"!

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9, KJV)

Got a pattern going here! Plague #6 soon followed! Boils!

"Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of soot from a kiln (furnace), and let Moses throw it toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh. It will become fine dust over all the land of Egypt and will become boils breaking out with sores on man and beast through all the land of Egypt!"

And, of course, it happened--just as God said! And, interestingly, even the magicians who, supposedly, had replicated the first two plagues, couldn't protect themselves against the boils, and therefore (verse 11 says) couldn't even stand before Moses because of the plague! (How ironic that God would use the "soot from a kiln"--thus the remains from the very furnaces used by the Israelites to make brick for their Egyptian taskmasters--as the source of a painful health hazard inflicted on their oppressors!)

Something else resulted here! Verse 12 says, "The LORD (this time!) hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses"!

Constable notes that "if a person continues to harden his heart, God will then harden it further in judgment"! Which is what Romans 1:28 says: "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper!" Said another way, "When men consistently abandon God, He will abandon them!"

What a tragedy it is for one (man or woman) to close his or her heart to a sovereign God, who always keep His word--and become hardened! And "abandoned" by God! And how nonsensical to try to "bargain" with God! And how sad for a nation whose God isn't the LORD! And what a blessing to be "called" as "people of God"! And...

Go with God this week, men, and be a blessing!

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