

The Battle Between the Gods

Exodus 7-10

Introduction

Please turn to the book of Exodus, where we will continue our study in the life of Moses. Exodus, chapter 7, is where we left off in our last discussion and where our story continues.

We come to a showdown between the God we know as Yahweh and the gods of Egypt. There is a lot of material in this sermon; a lot of things to cover; a lot of facts because we are going to cover nine of ten plagues.

The First Nine Plagues – And the Defeated “god”

Look at Exodus, chapter 7, verses 1 through 3a.

Then the Lord said to Moses, “See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart . . .”

Now we could stop here and preach a sermon on all of the thoughts and ideas related to the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart. I think it could be best explained by a simple understanding of the meaning of the Hebrew word “harden”. This Hebrew word means, “to twist,” or to literally, “wring out”. God is going to bring Pharaoh to a place where He will “wring out” of Pharaoh’s heart what is already in there.

In chapter 7, verse 14, that we will get to in a moment, God says to Moses,

. . . “Pharaoh’s heart is stubborn . . .”

“ . . . so I will wring it out; I will bring out of his heart what is residing there; that is, a stubborn pride.”

God continues to speak in verses 3b through 7.

“ . . . that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt, and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord

[Yahweh], when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst.” So Moses and Aaron did it; as the Lord commanded them, thus they did. Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty three, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

Now note what happens in verses 8 and 9.

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Work a miracle,’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.””

In other words, Moses and Aaron are to perform this sign when Pharaoh says, “Prove it. Prove this Yahweh of the slaves is literally, the Yahweh of the heavens.”

It is interesting that the Hebrew word for “serpent,” in verse 9, is “tanniyn”. It is not the same word that was used earlier. This literally means “crocodile”.

As we know, the servant of the Nile god was the crocodile. There is the thought, and many expositors believe, that the staff literally became a crocodile.

Note what happens, in verses 10 and 11,

So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus they did just as the Lord had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent [“tanniyn,” a crocodile]. Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts.

The magicians may have used slight of hand or perhaps, this was a demon energized activity.

Continue to verse 12.

For each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents [“tanniyn,” crocodiles]. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs.

Perhaps there, in the floor of Pharaoh’s court, was a deadly battle between these crocodiles. Finally, the

one that had come from the staff of Aaron was victorious. I wish I could have been there to see that.

Look at verse 13.

Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

Now we will discuss nine of the ten plagues today, and I want to give you the god of Egypt that is confounded in each of these plagues. It is interesting, as the archaeologists uncover so many things and we discover so much of ancient Egypt's history, we have discovered that each of these plagues, though the text does not tell us, actually confounds one of Egypt's key gods. God has specifically chosen ten plagues to confound the Egyptian; to prove that He is the God of gods, the King of kings. He has also done this so that Pharaoh's heart, in rebellion, will be wrung out that God may judge him and that the Israelites will be allowed to go.

The Nile is turned to blood – the god is Osiris

1. The first plague is the Nile being turned to blood.

Look at verses 14 and 19.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go." . . . Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt [the Nile], over their rivers, over their streams [that feed the Nile], and over their pools, and over all their reservoirs of water, that they may become blood; and there will be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.'"

Now the liberal critics would say that there was simply the explosion of some type of algae that was red and was known in the land of Egypt, and somehow, by the slight of hand, the waters turned blood red. However, there is no way around the literal interpretation of this passage that the water became blood. Even water that had been stored in pots and jars was also instantly turned to blood.

Hoping, perhaps, that Pharaoh would respond, Moses comes back and Pharaoh's heart is hardened. Look at verses 23 through 25a.

Then Pharaoh turned and went into his house with no concern even for this. So all the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water

to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the Nile. Seven days passed . . .

The key god that is confounded by this plague is the god Osiris. This was the god represented by a symbol in a triangle of the all-seeing god. If you look at an American dollar bill, this same Egyptian symbol on our currency. It is a symbol taken from the paganism of Egypt that represents one of the key gods of Egypt. The meaning of the symbol is that this god is all-seeing; all-powerful. Supposedly, Osiris had the ability to turn death into life. Yet, because of this plague, life is turned into death. All of the fish, the inhabiting animals of the Nile, were killed (verse 21).

Frogs irritate the Egyptians – the god is Heka

2. The second plague is a swarm of frogs that come upon the land to irritate the Egyptians.

Verse 2b, of chapter 8, tells us that God said,

". . . I will smite your whole territory with frogs."

Now the Egyptians had another key god called Heka. Heka was known as the frog god. This god was actually a goddess whose body was shaped like a woman, but whose head was shaped and fashioned like a frog. It was not a very attractive god. So the frogs, although they were considered unclean, were revered. This goddess was considered the goddess of fertility. She was supposedly the one that would aid women in childbirth.

It is interesting, as the text will tell us, that the Egyptian magicians also counterfeited this miracle. They, with slight of hand or perhaps with demonic energy, reproduce, in the courtroom before Pharaoh, frogs. So, not only does God inundate the land with frogs, but the Egyptian magicians create a few more frogs, or perhaps, with slight of hand, pull them out of a hat or from behind a curtain – we do not know.

The fascinating thing is that the Egyptians cannot get rid of them. They can create a few more, but they cannot get rid of any of these frogs.

I also think it is very ironic, from studying all that we know of Egypt, that because this god was, of course, revered, they were not allowed to even brush a frog aside, and they certainly could not kill them.

So the text tells us that, and I think Moses enjoyed writing this part, in verses 3 and 4,

The Nile will swarm with frogs, which will come up and go into your house and into

your bedroom and on your bed, and into the houses of your servants and on your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls. So the frogs will come up on you and your people and all your servants.

Get this picture – the land is swarming with frogs. A frog is in the kneading bowl as a woman is making bread, yet she cannot scurry it along; she cannot brush it aside because this is a representative of the goddess of fertility. A frog climbs into their bed and when they put their feet under the sheet, they hear a croak and feel something clammy – the frog jumps and so do they. They have to move because that frog is going to sleep in their bed.

I cannot imagine. There is no pain involved; there is just the awful irritation of these little things croaking all over Egypt.

I would imagine that Moses' credibility with the Israelites is decreasing with every croak as well. I am sure that he would tell the people, "Look, God is going to move in the heart of Pharaoh. And He's going to inundate the land with frogs."

Now, up to this point, the Israelites are also being plagued. It is not until after the third plague that the Israelites cease to be affected. I think because they also perhaps, had turned to the idolatry of Egypt; they also were impressed with the gods of Egypt, God would allow them to suffer as well.

Lice infest the land – the god is Geb

3. The third plague is lice infesting the land, or it may be translated as insects in your text. There is a new aspect to this plague.

Verse 16 of chapter 8 begins the story.

The god that is confounded by this plague is Geb, the earth god. He is the god that is supposedly blessing them with his presence – his earth. The dust of the earth is a blessing to the Egyptians. It is from this ground that comes nutrition and fruit and fiber and all of those things that help the Egyptians to live. But now, because of this plague, note what happens. Look at verses 16 and 17.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth [strike Geb, the earth god], that it may become gnats [or insects, translated "lice"] through all the land of Egypt.'" They did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and struck the dust of

the earth, and there were gnats [lice] on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats [lice] through all the land of Egypt.

This, according to the Egyptologists, was that little insect that would burrow into the ears and the nostrils of both humans and animals and bite. It was a tremendously irritating thing. These insects literally, swarmed. They were so numerous, in fact, that they are referred to as coming from the dust of the earth.

You would think, by now, the Egyptians would have had enough. In fact, in verse 19a, we are told,

Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." . . .

They said this because, according to verse 18,

The magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats [lice], but they could not . . .

The magicians had counterfeited the first two plagues, and those plagues had also affected the Israelites. Now, this third plague, the magicians cannot counterfeit; they cannot create the illusion. So they quit; they throw up their hands to Pharaoh and say, "This is the finger of Yahweh. This is done by someone more powerful than us. We're through. We can't do anything more. This is a more powerful God than ours."

Look at the last half of verse 19.

But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

Flies or beetles swarm into Egypt – the gods of Beelzebub or Keparah

4. The next plague is the plague of flies or beetles that swarm into Egypt. There is a new aspect to this plague as well.

This is a difficult one to translate because the Hebrew word could be used in a number of different ways. Most would agree that it could be referring to either the fly or the beetle.

I will tell how God would confound both of these gods.

The god of the flies, according to the Egyptians, was Beelzebub. That is a term that refers to Satan, but in that day, Beelzebub was the fly god. This type of fly was literally the dog fly; the fly that bit. It was the large fly that the people feared; that bit and plagued them as they went about. Beelzebub was

supposedly the protector against this particular kind of fly. It was by worshiping him that Egypt would never be invaded by this fly; this pest. So what happens? These flies come in swarms.

If this is referring to the god of the beetles, it is perhaps, even more fascinating. The god of the beetles was Keparah. The beetle, or the scarab, was something that they worshiped. In fact, it represented eternal life. This beetle would be found in Egyptian tombs encased in gold or silver. They obviously thought so much of this god that they would make idols that literally, covered the land. So God gives them what they want. He covers the land with this insect.

Now, the new aspect with this plague is that Goshen, where the Israelites are living, is unaffected. Look at chapter 8, verses 22 and 23.

But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of insects will be there, in order that you may know that I, the Lord, am in the midst of the land. I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall occur.

In other words, “If you are still wondering, Israel, if I am the God behind these plagues, now you will know because it will affect all of the land except Goshen. There will be a divine protection about your place of habitation; the plagues will no longer touch you. You are My people.”

An epidemic destroys the cattle – the god is Apis

5. The fifth plague, as I think the plagues become more severe, is an epidemic that destroys the cattle.

This plague is confounding the god Apis. Look at chapter 9, verses 1 through 3.

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and speak to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me. For if you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them, behold, the hand of the Lord [Yahweh] will come with a very severe pestilence [or epidemic] on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks.’”

Skip to verse 6.

So the Lord did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the sons of Israel, not one died.

It has been said that the second largest temple in Egypt was dedicated to the black bull Apis. They worshiped him and considered him to be a very powerful god. They believed that by worshiping the black bull, their cattle would be preserved and protected.

So God, in a sense, strikes a blow at their god the black bull. In fact, you could translate the word “plague,” as “strike,” or “stroke,” or “blow”. These are blows, and we will look at nine of them, leveled at the feet of the false gods of Egypt’s pantheon – and Yahweh will come out on top.

Boils break out on man and beast – an attack on the entire religious system

6. The sixth plague is boils breaking out on man and beast. This must have been most irritating.

I believe this plague was an attack on the entire religious system because in that day, to worship or to serve as a priest in the temple, you could not have a blemish. If a male was blemished or had a mole or a mark or anything on his body, he could not be a priest. They would also constantly look after their sacred goats and their sacred bulls to make sure that they were without blemish as well. If the animals had any blemishes, they would not worship them. The particular unblemished sacred goat or bull would be taken into the temples and the unblemished males would reverently wash them and lead the people in worship.

Now, imagine a sign posted on the temple door, “Closed because of boils.” All the priests were blemished. All the cattle were blemished. They all had severe boils.

The type of boil referred to in this plague, was one which would leave a scar.

It is also ironic that in that day, we learn, the Egyptian priests would scatter ashes from the furnace where they had sacrifices. They believed that by scattering the ash into the air, the spread of evil would be stopped or checked. Now notice how this plague begins. Look at chapter 9, verses 8 through 10.

Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take for yourselves handfuls of soot from a

kiln [that is, take the ashes from one of their altars], 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.” So they took soot from a kiln, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses threw it toward the sky, and it became boils breaking out with sores on man and beast.

“Is this what you believe will check the spread of evil?”

God said to take a handful of preserving ash and throw it into the sky – and immediately, boils broke out on mankind and beast.

God is obviously having His say. Yet, through all of this, the heart of Pharaoh was hardened and he refuses to hear; he refuses to let the people go.

A hail storm devastates the land – the god is Isis

7. Plague number seven comes in the form of a hail storm that will devastate the land.

This plague is a confounding of or a blow against the god Isis, who is literally, the sky goddess. This is the god who would protect them by bringing rain when it was supposed to rain; who would protect them from the hail or lightning or whatever may come from above. They believed this goddess overlooked them with a canopy of protection. Yet, the scriptures tell us that this plague is a storm that Egypt had never seen before or since.

Look at verse 23 of chapter 9.

Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt.

The reference to “fire” is perhaps, lightning. Continue to verses 24 and 25.

So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. The hail struck all that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant of the field and shattered every tree of the field.

Note the last phrase. Imagine hail large enough, like cannonballs, to shatter the trees; to rumble the

earth. I would imagine the Egyptians were so fearful that they were cowering under their beds. In fact, we are told in verses 27 and 28,

Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “I have sinned this time; the Lord is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones. Make supplication to the Lord, for there has been enough of God’s thunder and hail; and I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.”

However, notice Pharaoh’s insincere response. As soon as the plague is gone, we read in verse 34,

But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

Locusts ravage the crops of Egypt – the gods are all the insect gods

8. Let us move on to the eighth plague in which locusts will ravage the crops of Egypt.

I think all of the insect gods are taken on and confounded in this plague as the locusts come. Look at verses 3 and 4 of chapter 10.

Moses and Aaron went 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. For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory.’”

Just the sound of that word “locusts” would send terror and fear into all of the hearts of the Egyptians. They dreaded; they feared the locusts. The locusts would come and eat all of the remaining crops and literally, threaten their very existence. Yet, Pharaoh continues to be stubborn.

I want to take a moment to track the stubbornness of Pharaoh. Let us look briefly at the way he begins to compromise with Moses.

- The first time is back in chapter 8, verse 25. *Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.”*

Pharaoh says, “I’ll let you go and sacrifice to your God” – but note where – “within the land.”

In other words, he is saying, “I don’t want you to go outside the boundaries of Egypt.”

- The second time is in verse 28 of chapter 8.
Pharaoh said, “I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away.”
- The third compromise is in chapter 10, verses 8 through 11a. Note what Pharaoh says in verses 10 and 11a.

So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, “Go, serve the Lord your God! Who are the ones that are going?” Moses said, “We shall go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we shall go, for we must hold a feast to the Lord.” Then he said to them, “Thus may the Lord be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! . . . Go now, the men among you . . .”

Pharaoh is literally, saying, “I will admit that Yahweh is your God if I ever let the children go with you. I’m not totally convinced, Moses. Just the men go. That’s enough.”

He still fails to respond in obedience. And Moses holds tenaciously to the command that God had given him to relay to Pharaoh.

- The next compromise is in chapter 10, verse 24.
Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, “Go, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you.”

Pharaoh is slowly coming to the point where he is going to fully obey, but he really does not want to fully obey.

First, he says, “You may go just a little way away, but do not go too far away.”

Then, he says, “Leave your children here; just the men go.”

Next, he says, “You can go, but just leave your cattle.”

The stubbornness of this man is incredible. His country is being ravaged; it is being destroyed, yet he is hanging on by the stubbornness of his will. Pharaoh will not acknowledge Yahweh. Why?

Because he is god; he is the embodiment of the sun god, Ra.

Darkness covers Egypt – the god is Ra

9. That brings me to the ninth plague of darkness over the land.

This plague is confounding the god Ra. It is the crowning insult for Pharaoh. It is literally, leveled at his feet, who is the embodiment of the sun god Ra, because darkness comes over the land. Look at chapter 10, verse 21.

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

“You think, Pharaoh, that you are a god; you think you are the embodiment of the sun god Ra? God will cover the sun with the palm of his hand, as it were, and darkness will reign on the land. Yet, while it is dark in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, like a beam of light, it is like daytime.”

Now, if I had been Moses, when Pharaoh was compromising in all the different ways, and said, “Moses, you may go, but stay within the land,” I think I would have said, “Great! At least that’s three days of relief. I don’t mind. At least we’ll be able to relax.”

Moses, however, never says that. In fact, he never backs off.

If I had been Moses, when Pharaoh said, “Just don’t go very far away,” I think I would have told the people, “Listen, when we’re finally out of sight, we’ll run for it and then allow God to help us.”

I would have been gone, but Moses did not leave.

When Pharaoh said, “leave the children,” there is no question, I obviously would have refused. But when he says the fourth time to, “go, but leave your cattle,” after all of these plagues, I would not have cared about the cattle, I would have headed for the hills. I think this reveals something of Moses’ obedience that he never compromises with the compromising repentance of Pharaoh.

Application

Let us tie this up with several lessons by way of application.

Lessons learned from Pharaoh

I want to give two lessons that I have learned from studying the life of this very stubborn and rebellious Pharaoh.

Stubbornness deafens you to the word of God

1. First, I really believe from observing Pharaoh, that stubbornness deafens you to the word of God.

It is interesting that every time Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh they began with, "Thus says the Lord; this is what Yahweh says . . ." Yet, because of the stubbornness of his heart, he was deaf to the word of God.

Pride blinds you to the work of God

2. Secondly, I think pride blinds an individual to the work of God.

Chapter 10, verse 3, is a key verse, which says,

Moses and Aaron went 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? . . .'"

That is the key point. Do you know what Pharaoh's problem is? He is deity in his own eyes; he is caught up with himself. And because he sees only himself, he cannot observe the work of God; the power of Yahweh. And men, because of stubbornness and pride, still close their eyes to the work of God.

I read a magazine article which those who call themselves "scholars" have entitled, "The Biblical Exodus: Fact or Fiction?"

We can answer that question very quickly by just reading a chapter in Exodus. They, however, talked of a volcanic eruption that occurred. You can decide which explanation you like best.

Their explanation of the exodus is that because of a volcanic eruption, a tidal wave began. Let me read from their explanation.

The eruption sent a column of dust and ash and smoke into the air. Geologists note that this phenomena explains the ten plagues. The waters of Egypt may have turned red, killing the fish and driving frogs on shore. Ash in the skies could have plunged the land into darkness for three days and caused rain to fall as hailstones. High winds could have

carried in locusts that destroyed any remaining crops leaving the animals to starve. And insects, breeding in the rotting carcasses, might have brought disease to cattle and humans. Death could have been so rampant as to amount to the killing of the firstborn of every human and animal family in Pharaoh's flock In addition to accounting for the ten plagues, this eruption could have created the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

If you wonder how the Israelites got away from the Egyptians, this article says that they found a hill when they were running, and as they stationed themselves on the hill, the tidal wave finally caught up with them. As a result, all of the Egyptians were drowned.

That is fantastic! It is amazing how man, in his stubbornness and pride, is still deaf and blind to the words and work of God.

I read another fascinating article as well. In Messina, Italy, in 1908, this entire town was given to atheism. And they had just published, in the Christmas edition of their local magazine, the fact that they did not believe in God. Their unbelief was such that, as a threat to God, they said, "If there is a God, let Him visit our town with an earthquake."

It is interesting that three days later, December 28, 1908, an earthquake came to Messina, Italy. Almost before these magazines had reached the homes, 84,000 people had died.

Throughout history, if we could see it from God's vantage point, every once in awhile He pulls back the curtain on His judgment on mankind – mankind who by stubbornness and pride, raise their fist in the face of Yahweh.

I also think of Voltaire, the atheist, who said in reference to the apostle Paul, "You have seen what one little Jew did for the cause of Christianity. Now I will show you what one little Frenchman will do to destroy Christianity."

That well known, infamous, atheist would write in a way that discarded the truths of Christianity and shook his fist in the face of God. His biography records that, as he lay on his deathbed, he began to scream, "My feet are burning, pull me up." And over a period of an hour, he was heading, in his weak condition, toward the head of the bed.

It is even more ironic to me, ladies and gentlemen, that his very home, from which he printed all of his articles, is now being used by the Geneva Bible Printing Society to publish Scripture.

I do not intend to be overly dramatic concerning the shaking of your fist in the face of Yahweh, but ladies and gentlemen, whether you are judged now or later, I fear for any who have rejected Christ; who have hardened their hearts; who have refused, by stubbornness and pride, to acknowledge the word of God. His word says, “now is the day of salvation”; that He is “the Light of the world”; that He is “the giver of life”; that He is “sovereign”. I trust, even now, if you are an unbeliever, that God is at work in your heart and you will enjoy the joy of surrender.

Lessons learned from Moses

Let me give two lessons from the life of Moses.

Obeying God may not bring expected relief

1. First, obeying God may not bring expected relief.

Think of it, “Okay, God, I’ll obey You; I’ll go to Pharaoh.” And, as he goes, he is probably unaware of the fact that the first plagues will hit his own home. He will climb into bed and he will touch a clammy frog. He will sit down to eat and “plop,” one of these croakers will land in his bowl. He has received no relief. Obedience to God made his life more miserable, in terms of comfort.

I think sometimes, ladies and gentlemen, you and I have the idea that, if we simply obey God, all of life’s ways smooth out. Instead, however, obeying Him may literally, turn them in to choppy seas for awhile.

Serving God may not bring immediate results

2. Secondly, serving God may not bring immediate results.

I empathize with Moses. Perhaps you do too, if you have shared the gospel with those around you. It is interesting that he will continually go back to Pharaoh and Pharaoh will continually disregard the message. I think frustration would have reached a high point.

Look at chapter 8, verse 28.

Pharaoh said, “I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the

wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Make supplication for me.”

Continue to verse 29.

Then Moses said, “Behold, I am going out from you, and I shall make supplication to the Lord that the swarms of insects may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people tomorrow; only do not let Pharaoh deal deceitfully again in not letting the people go . . .”

By now, Moses is a little tired. He says, basically, “Now look, I’m going to go pray, but don’t change your mind again.”

He probably added, “Please, we’ll try to straighten this out, but don’t be deceitful again.”

In verses 30 and 31a,

So Moses went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the Lord. The Lord did as Moses asked . . .

I can hear Moses now perhaps, saying, if he were I, “God, he’s finally listened; he’s agreed; he’s going to let us go. Get rid of the insects.”

God then, with the snap of His finger, rids the land of insects.

So Moses goes running back to Egypt and we are told in verse 32,

But Pharaoh hardened his heart . . . and he did not let the people go.

Can you imagine having a mission like that in life – a mission in which you see absolutely no result from Pharaoh or from his servants? Perhaps you have shared Christ with a family member or a neighbor or someone you work with and you are frustrated because they seem to lean toward the gospel, but then, on another occasion, you know they are so far away. You think, “God, no results. Why do I bother? Why the agony? Why the burden? They don’t seem to hear.”

Understand, ladies and gentlemen, that the basic underlying motivation, the foundation upon which Moses obeys God and speaks for Him is not results, but to glorify God; to honor God. The reason that I live my life like I do, the reason that I share Jesus Christ is not necessarily so I can jot down all of the results. There is an underlying motivation in your life, as you serve Him, and that is to glorify and honor Him. We want to see people come to Christ. We want to see that family unit put back together. We

want to see others trust Him. We want to see change. But ultimately, the underlying motivation, when I get out of bed in the morning, when you get out of bed to face this world, is, “God, that I may honor and glorify You.”

Now, with that motivation, men and women, regardless of what happens, you and I will stay true.

I wonder, as we look into the mirror of scripture today, who represents us best? Pharaoh, with his stubbornness and his pride, or Moses, with his surrender and his obedience to God?