



Exodus 7-9

Shall we turn in our Bibles to Exodus as we continue our journey through the Scriptures; tonight, chapters 7, 8, and 9.

Moses came to the Pharaoh with the demand that JEHOVAH had commanded that the Pharaoh allow the children of Israel to go free. The Pharaoh answered, *“Who is Jehovah, that I should obey Him? I do not know Jehovah, and neither will I release the people.”* So, in the answer to the Pharaoh’s question, ‘Who is Jehovah’, he’s about to be introduced to Him in a series of events that are going to plague the Egyptians, as Jehovah manifests Himself to the Pharaoh in order to convince the Pharaoh that he should release the children of Israel from their captivity. So, in chapter 7,

The LORD said to Moses, I have made you as god to Pharaoh: and Aaron your brother will be your prophet. And you shall speak all that I command you: and Aaron your brother shall speak to Pharaoh, that he must send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

Now when the LORD declares that He’s going to harden the Pharaoh’s heart, we’re going to be reading in the next few chapters concerning the Pharaoh, how that several times it will tell us that *“Pharaoh hardened his heart against the LORD,”* and then it says, *“The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh.”*

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 “hardened” into English, but the one Hebrew word infers “a stubbornness, an act of rebellion;” and that is the word that is used for the Pharaoh. He hardened his heart in stubborn rebellion against God.

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

A lot of people, you see, have difficulty with this when it says, *“And God hardened the heart of Pharaoh;”* and then He whacked him one for a hard heart. They say, “Well man, if God hardened his heart, then why would God punish him? You know, I mean, it doesn’t seem fair that God would harden the guy’s heart and then, you know, beat him for having a hard heart.”

So the Hebrew word employed for “hardened” here is, God “made firm.” In other words, the Pharaoh had set his heart, hardened his heart against God; and God just came along and said, “Okay, if that’s the position you want;” and He strengthened him in that position.

Now, that is an awesome thing that we need to realize: that God often will just strengthen us in that position that we have taken. And if you want to take a position against God, it is really a tragedy when God just says, “Okay, if that’s what you want, I’ll just strengthen you in that position that you have taken.” And such was the case of Pharaoh: he hardened his heart against God, God came along and stiffened, or made hard, the position that he had taken and chosen.

So Moses is commanded to go forth before the Pharaoh; he would be as god, Aaron would be as his prophet: he’s to tell the Pharaoh all that he is to do.

But Pharaoh-- and God is, in commissioning Moses, He is telling him, "You're not going to have a successful mission at first"--Pharaoh will not heed, 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.

So: "You're to go forth, you're to tell him, but he's not going to listen to you: and the purpose of that is that I might bring my judgments upon the land."

And the Egyptians shall know that I am JEHOVAH, when I stretch out my hand on Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

"Who is Jehovah, that I should obey Him?" The Egyptians will come to know who Jehovah is when He is finished with them.

Then Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them, so they did. And Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron was eighty-three, when they spoke to Pharaoh. So, Aaron, the older brother of Moses: some three years older. And these men went into Pharaoh. Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 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. 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. But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, he did not heed them; as the LORD had said.

There has been, and up to the present day, there still exists a sect in Egypt of snake charmers. And this group of people who were involved in the snake charming declare that even to the present day they are able to make snakes -- rods. And that is because, through their snake charming, they can cause a snake to become very stiff like a stick, and it appears as though it is just dead, it doesn't move, but it becomes just as stiff as a stick. And so, they say that they are able to make the serpents sticks, or rods, by their enchantment, or by their snake charming.

In the earlier years of this cult, back at the time of Moses, they were able to go one step further; they were able to make their rods serpents, which is really a greater trick than making a serpent stiff like a stick. And so I believe, that with the magicians, the sorcerers: there were demon powers, the magic arts, the occult, from which all of your magic arts today find their origin. If you get involved at all in the study of magic, your study will eventually lead you to the magical arts of the Egyptians; and there you get into the deepest area of the study of the magical arts, when you get into the magical arts of the ancient Egyptians. And there are several different books on this subject which I highly advise you not even read.

I had a professor of ancient history and the history of Egypt, who gave me some of the books. And he said, "This is for information; read them and then burn them. Don't leave them around for anybody else to pick up and read. Burn them." I burned them without reading them. I figured, as the Bible said, "*Be ignorant concerning evil,*" and I would just as soon be ignorant concerning evil.

But the Egyptians were skilled: they had highly developed the magical arts to the extent that when Moses performed this miracle, they were able to duplicate that miracle. Throwing their rods down, they became serpents. But the LORD showed His superiority, in that, Aaron's serpent went around and swallowed up all of the other serpents. It didn't do anything to the Pharaoh at all. His magicians were able to duplicate it; why should he be impressed? And so he hardened his heart and would not heed their word.

So the LORD said to Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hard, he refuses to let the people go. So go to Pharaoh in the morning; when he goes to the water; 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. 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. Thus says the LORD, By this you shall know that I am JEHOVAH: "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey him?" By this you will know that I am JEHOVAH: 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. And the fish that are in the river shall die, the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink the water of the river. 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 river, over their ponds, and over all the pools of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in the vessels of wood, and the vessels of stone. 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 the Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all of the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. The fish that were in the river died; the river stank, the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river; so there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. 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.

So Moses is now commanded to go down in the morning, as the Pharaoh went down to the river. He was going down to the river, no doubt, to worship the god of the river. The Nile River was one of the chief gods of the Egyptians. And so, this next plague was directed against the god of the Egyptians, the chief god. As we go along, the other gods of the Egyptians--and they had many, they were polytheistic--will be challenged by Jehovah. *"Who is Jehovah, that I should obey him?"* 'I don't know Jehovah, I don't know that God.' He worshipped the god of the Nile, he worshipped the sun, he worshipped the moon, he worshipped frogs, and the apes, and the crocodiles, and many different gods; but Jehovah, he would not worship.

And so, as he went down to the river to worship, early in the morning to begin the day in the worship of their god, Moses and Aaron met them, and challenged them-- *"in order that you might come to know Jehovah, I'm going to turn the river into blood;"* --and he stretched out his rod over the river, and it became a bloody red.

Not that it chemically changed to actual blood, but it became a bloody red, and probably depleted the oxygen in the water. And as the result, the fish died and there was a tremendous smell. But it not only affected the Nile River, but the tributaries, the streams that fed into the Nile; it also affected the pools of water, the reservoirs, the pond, and even the water that they had gathered for their houses -- that is, the water that was in the wooden vessels and the stone vessels that were gathered for their houses. So the Egyptians were forced to dig wells around the river in order to get potable water.

Now, there are several suggested natural phenomena that may have been the cause of the water turning, as it were, to blood. In the book, *Worlds in Collision*, by Emanuel Vilikovsky, in the second chapter of that book, he describes many of the plagues in Egypt; seeks to show that there were corresponding events taking place in other parts of the world at that same time that duplicated the plagues of Egypt: that is, the water turning to blood, the hail; which he said was not ice hail, but stones; the darkness, as the earth was stopped in its rotation; and the period of about three days or so of the darkness.

And it is his theory that the earth, when it began its rotation again, began to rotate in the opposite direction than it previously rotated. His book is very interesting. His theory is very interesting. His theory

is that it was at this point that a large comet almost impacted the earth, and that at this particular point the earth began to pass into the tail of the comet, and that the ferrous iron oxide dust, falling into the river, turned it this bloody red. That, later on, this hail that was mingled with the fire and all, was a hail of stones as the earth passed deeper into the tail of this comet; and then finally stopping because of the near collision: the stopping of the earth's rotation on its axis; and thus, the three days of darkness. Very interesting theory. As far as I'm concerned, it's nothing more than speculation - but it's interesting.

There is another theory that has been advanced: and that is, that there was in the chain of Greek islands, the island of Thereon: that at this particular time of history, it was a volcano, and that it erupted and collapsed. But the eruption of Thereon was actually more violent than Karcatus, which erupted in the Pacific; and that through the eruption of this volcano, which, as you go to the island today, you climb the steps 900 feet to the city, the steep cliff there in the Greek isles of this island which is a tourist stop now; but they say that in the explosion of this volcano, that it shot the debris, the dust and all - much as Mt. St. Helen's did into the air. And that, as it settled down in Egypt, it turned the river a bloody red.

And the darkness is accountable, like it was dark in Washington when Mt. St. Helen's erupted: and at noon time it was dark because of all of the ash and the dust from that eruption of Mt. St. Helen's. So the darkness was attributed to this eruption of this volcano of the present day, island of Thereon. And they have found a layer of ash in Egypt in the strata formations, and that ash is of similar composition to the dust that is there on the island of Thereon. And thus, they are seeking to prove that this is what happened: and in carbon dating the soil around the ash, it dates back to about 3,500 years; so it brings it about the time of the Exodus.

So, those are theories by which men have sought to give an explanation of these plagues through natural phenomena. Now, it is very possible that these plagues are explainable in natural phenomena. As far as the water turning to blood, this is something that takes place periodically; the Nile periodically does turn a bloody red color.

We have a phenomena here which we occasionally observe along the beach which we call the red tide: as the plankton multiplies in the water, and the water becomes smelly, and it's horrible for surfing, (and it is) but whenever the red tide runs, I always go down to the beach at night and watch it. I sit there and watch it. I love it: because this plankton which has formed the red tide has enough phosphorus in it, that when the waves break at night during the red tide, they light up like a neon tube. And it's gorgeous to see the waves just lighting up like neon tubes as the waves break and all; and I love to go down and watch it at night. But it is a phenomena where the water turns a reddish color, and the plankton taking the oxygen out of the water, does kill the fish. So there are natural ways to explain the phenomena that took place.

But try as we may to explain the water turning to blood by natural phenomena, it's awfully hard to explain how by throwing a stick down it could become a serpent. And how that his serpent would swallow up the others. Also, what is interesting is that Moses evidently had a tremendous understanding of physics and what was going on, because he was able to predict the time that these things would start and stop. So, you can't really eliminate completely the miraculous from this account; and as I read it, as I say, it is quite possible that God used natural type of phenomena, but it was certainly produced by God in conjunction with the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt. How God did it, I don't know; that God did it, I am assured.

And I really don't need an explanation of the island or the volcano of Thereon exploding and disintegrating; nor do I need the planet Venus being introduced to our solar system, making the first pass as a comet, and then later on being established at the time of Joshua in its orbit around the sun, and becoming a part of our planetary system as is the theory of Emanuel Vilikovsky.

As I say, a very fascinating theory; I enjoy reading the man, and I enjoy his research, and his, really, what I call the verifying of the accuracy of the Scriptures: in describing phenomena that has long been the basis of Biblical criticism by the skeptics; and yet, he shows historically where these events, [the long day of Joshua,] actually did happen. It isn't just recorded in the Bible, it's recorded in the records of the Inca Indians, it's recorded in the ancient Chinese records, in the Indian records, and around the world he traces it. If it's a long afternoon over there, it would be a long night here. And, of course, if it was three days of darkness there, it would be three days without the sun going down over here; and he is able to collaborate this historically in the accounts and in the records of the ancients from around the world.

And he does a very interesting, masterful, scholarly job at this; which, for people who are naturally skeptic of the Bible and the Bible stories, and are prone to look at them as pure mythology, he sort of destroys that concept: proving that these things actually did take place, though they are phenomena that we cannot explain just by the natural sciences as we understand them today.

So, however God did it: as Moses stretched out his rod, the water turned to blood.

And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh hardened his heart, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.

Now, this is something that the magicians were able to duplicate; but as they began to duplicate it, if I were the Pharaoh, I would have bonked them one. I mean, this isn't something that I really want them to duplicate. But, their capacity to duplicate it, again, caused Pharaoh not to be impressed; and thus, he did not heed, he only hardened his heart because his magicians were able to duplicate the same thing.

So Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither was his heart moved by this. So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink; because they could not drink the water of the river. And seven days passed, after the LORD had struck the river.

So, there is a seven day interval between this plague and the next plague.

CHAPTER 8

So the LORD spoke to Moses, Go to Pharaoh, and say to him, Thus says the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. [So he comes back with the same original demand from JEHOVAH.] But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs: so the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedchamber, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, all over your people, into your ovens, into the kneading bowls: And the frogs shall come up on you, and your people, and all of your servants. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, Say to Aaron, Stretch out your hand with the rod over the streams, and over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause the frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.

Now, it is possible, again, by explanation of natural phenomena, that with the waters turning this bloody red, that the frogs finally had their fill of it and decided to leave the river. But, again, it is interesting that Moses was able to predict in advance what was going to take place, and it happened at the stretching forth of Aaron's rod over the waters. Try as you may, you cannot remove the miraculous from the story.

And so Aaron stretched out his hand; the frogs came up, they covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and they brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

Well, again - enough is enough; why would you want your magicians to duplicate that feat? But though the magicians could bring the frogs up, they couldn't put them back, they couldn't get rid of them.

So the Pharaoh called to Moses, and he said, Pray to the LORD, [Or, to JEHOVAH. "Who is JEHOVAH, that I should obey Him?" Now, he's saying,-- "Pray to JEHOVAH for me"] that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they might sacrifice to the LORD.

And so, here's the first sign of the relenting of the Pharaoh from his hardened position. "Ask God to get rid of these frogs: if He'll get rid of these frogs, I'll let the people go."

And so Moses said to Pharaoh, Accept the honor: of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, that they may remain in the river only? So he said, [Moses said,] Tomorrow. And he said, Let it be according to your word: that you may know that there is no one like JEHOVAH our God.

Again, it all goes back to when Moses first came in and said, "JEHOVAH demands that you let the people go." "Who is JEHOVAH, that I should obey him? I don't know JEHOVAH." "That you may know that He is GOD, tomorrow the frogs will all go back into the river."

They'll depart from you, and from your houses, and your servants, and your people; and they will remain in the river only. Then Moses and Aaron went out from the Pharaoh: and Moses cried out to the LORD concerning the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. So the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the court yard, and out of the fields. And they gathered them together in heaps: and they stunk. But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart, and did not heed them; as the LORD had said.

You know, God is so patient in dealing with us. The Bible talks about God being long-suffering, and patient: and He, indeed, is. And there are many people, who like the Pharaoh, in a time of trouble or distress, will make a promise or a vow to God, "God, if you'll just get me out of this mess, I'll serve You. God, if you'll just help me now: I'll do this, I'll do that." And you know, when relief comes, they forget their vows. David, one time said, "I will pay the vows that I made to thee in the day of trouble." And it's always interesting to me that it's in the day of trouble that we're prone to make vows to God: "Oh, God, I promise-- I'll do anything-- just get me out of here," you know. And in the day of trouble we make the vows, but then, when the day of trouble is over, so often we forget the vows. And so David is saying, "LORD, I'll pay those vows that I made to You in the day of trouble."

We are told in the Scriptures that it is better not to vow at all, then to vow and break it; that God takes seriously the promises or the vows that we make to Him, and it's really better not to vow at all.

Now, it is not necessary to take a vow to get God to respond to our needs. In the earlier years of my own Christian experience, I was often times making vows with God, which were really sort of deals or bargains that I was working out with God - or trying to anyhow: "God, if You'll do this for me, this is what I'm going to do for You. You just get me, Lord, this sharp little car: and I'll pick up kids and take them to church with me every Sunday; use it for You, Lord. Sunday mornings. [No use parking it the rest of the week, I'll use it for myself, you know] --but Sunday, Lord, You'll have it for awhile." You know - making these promises or deals with GOD: "Lord, you do this for me, and this is what I'm going to do for You."

But as I have developed, and matured, and grown in my Christian experience, I really don't make vows anymore. Because I have found, number 1: that it isn't necessary. God doesn't require that I make a vow.

Number 2: I discover that in making a vow, it is really sort of trusting in my flesh that I'll do this, and I'll do that. In reality, I can't do anything worthwhile for God in my flesh. And I found that, like so many others, I was guilty of making promises, but then not keeping them. When the Lord helped me to get out of the mess, then I quickly forgot all of those promises that I had made, the things that I'd promised I would do. So, knowing that my flesh is weak, knowing that I am prone to fail, I just don't make vows anymore.

And I find that it isn't necessary. I trust in the grace of God. It isn't in working a deal with God, because that sort of puts the thing -- "If I do this, then You'll do that,--" or visa versa. And it's looking to God to reward me, or for me to reward God for what He does for me, and that isn't necessary. God bestows His grace upon me. The Lord is gracious and merciful, and He doesn't require vows on my part - to respond to my need, and to help.

So, the Pharaoh, when he had relief, hardened his heart, did not heed them, as the LORD had said. Notice that each time it said, "*As the Lord had said.*" Remember back in the beginning, the LORD said to Moses, "*Go in - and he's not going to heed what you say.*" So, as the LORD had said, he's not heeding.

So the LORD said to Moses, Say to Aaron, Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with the rod, and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man, and beast; and all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: for there were lice on man, and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, ['Hey, you better listen to these guys. They've gone beyond us now.'] This is the finger of God: [This is the work of God.] but Pharaoh's heart grew hard, he did not heed them; just as the LORD had said.

Now the lice, evidently, came upon the Pharaoh without forewarning. The first two of the plagues that the Pharaoh experienced, he was warned in advance. Now this one is just sent. And, interestingly enough, those who propound the theory of the explosion of the volcano, or those who propound the theory of the comet, -which ultimately became the planet Venus,- don't seem to have any explanations for dust becoming lice and the magicians unable to duplicate this. Because, you see, now you have the creation of life in the changing of dust to lice. The frogs out of the river, the enchantments, rods to snakes: they did this by enchantments. But creating the lice out of the dust, they're unable to do. And they recognize that they have more than met their match.

Now, these two magicians that were withstanding Moses were Jannes and Jambres, we are told by Paul in his letter to Timothy - in case you were interested in their names.

And the LORD said to Moses, Rise early in the morning, and stand before the Pharaoh; as he comes out to the water; and say to him, Thus says the LORD, [thus says JEHOVAH,] Let my people go, that they may serve me. Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies [or gnats,] on you, and your servants, and on your people, and into your houses: the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; in order that you may know that I am JEHOVAH in the midst of the land. And I will make a difference between my people and your people: tomorrow this sign shall be.

So he's giving him now the time: "Tomorrow, the land is going to be covered with these pesky little gnats." Now, these particular gnats, when enraged, begin to settle on the eyelids and begin to bite them, and cause an inflammation. They're going to be covered with these little gnats, and also the land will be covered. But at this plague, and from now on, God is going to make a distinction between the Egyptians and

His people. So that, though the Egyptians are plagued by the gnats, by these flies, the Israelites will not be plagued by them. And GOD is going to prove in the midst of the nation that He is there, and He is able to make a division between the Pharaoh's people and between His people.

So the LORD did so; and thick swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: and the land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and he said, Go, sacrifice to God in the land. [Now, this is the first of the compromises that were offered by the Pharaoh to Moses.]

Now, the history of the children of Israel and their deliverance out of Egypt is typical history. Egypt is a type of the life in sin, which is a life of oppression and bondage; the life of the flesh. Pharaoh is a type of Satan, who seeks to hold those in the life of bondage. The Red Sea is a type of baptism. The wilderness is a type of the new experience in relationship with God, still walking after the flesh, but a renewed spirit. I've been born again, I have a renewed spirit, but I'm still walking after the flesh; Romans chapter 7.

The Jordan River is a type of that death to the old man, to the old nature. In our hymnology, Jordan has become a type of physical death. That is wrong. "Swing low sweet chariot, coming for' to carry me home. I looked over Jordan, what did I see, a band of angels coming after me, coming forth to carry me home..." And it's in our hymnology as a type of physical death, but that is not so. Because then the promise land would be a type of heaven. But in the promise land they still had battles, they were defeated; you're not going to have anymore battles when you get to heaven, there'll be no defeat there. It's a type of that reckoning my old man, the old nature, to be dead. It is recognizing that I was crucified with Christ; and it is the death to the self life, a position that I take by faith, knowing that my old nature was crucified with Christ, and beginning now the full walk in the Spirit as I come into the land of promise. And, as I then begin to appropriate the land that God has promised to me, every place I put my step, it's mine: God has given it to me; and I begin to claim that full, rich, complete life that is mine in Jesus Christ: the appropriation by faith of God's work in my behalf.

The rock in the wilderness from which the water of life flowed is Jesus Christ. He was that rock. And so, we find the typology.

But Pharaoh, the type of Satan, is offering to Moses the first compromise; as Satan often offers to us a position of compromise: anything other than a total, full, complete commitment to God. You decide you're going to give your life to Jesus Christ, you're going to start to serve the Lord, and Satan says, "Well, all right, if you insist, go ahead and serve God, but stay in the land." You know, continue to live in the world, don't change your lifestyle, just add to your lifestyle church once in awhile, Bible study, occasional prayer. You know, a little bit won't hurt anybody. But remain in the land; don't make a real separation from the world. But God said, "*Come ye apart; be ye separate, saith the LORD. Touch not the unclean thing, and I will be Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters.*" Again, it says in I John, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For he who has the love of the world in his heart, has not the love of the Father in him.*" So Satan, offering the compromise, as Pharaoh offered the first compromise, "*Go; I'll allow you to serve God, but serve Him in the land.*"

Moses said, It's not right to do; for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians.

You see, the bull was another one of the chief gods of the Egyptians. In fact, they worshipped the bull, they had a temple built for the bull, and when they would die, they would embalm them. Now, if they saw the Israelites offering the bulls as sacrifices, it would be an abomination to the Egyptians because that was their god. They also worshipped the cow. And so, Moses said, "No, we can't do it in the land; it would be an abomination, and the people would stone us if they saw how we were worshipping our God;" sacrificing,

actually, the bulls unto God.

We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to JEHOVAH our God as He commanded us. And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to JEHOVAH your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away; and pray for me.

The second compromise. "OK, you can go, but don't go very far." And so, when Satan sees that you're determined to serve the Lord, he offers often the second compromise, "OK, you know, you want to go ahead and go, but don't go overboard. Don't go very far, don't become a fanatic. Don't get carried away with this stuff, you know. So many people become so fanatical with religion. You don't want to do that." You become a fanatic at a basketball game, nobody cares; become a fanatic at a football game, nobody cares; put on a monkey suit, put on a colored wig, put on a chicken outfit, nobody cares. They'll all cheer and laugh and say, "What a great sport, what a fan, what a fan." If we would do anything, anything at all that would simulate what's done at the football stadium as far as showing excitement or enthusiasm, man, would we be branded as a bunch of fanatics. "You don't know what happened, you know that those people actually stand up and they shout, and they hug one another, and they get all excited, and beat each other over the head with the song books, you know. Fanatics..." Oh, all of that is acceptable behavior at a football game. You know, we see the wild displays--a fellow makes a touch down and his whole team come jumping in on top of him, you know. And they're jumping up and down, they're doing their little dances and all; if we'd do anything like that when God gave us a great victory, if we'd get together and go----- "a bunch of nuts, they're fanatics," you know. You're not supposed to get excited about God; about the victories that God brings into our life, though they are eternal victories. "Go, but don't go very far; don't get too deeply involved; don't become a fanatic."

Then Moses said, Indeed, I'm going out from you, and I will entreat the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, and from his servants, and from his people; but let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to JEHOVAH. So Moses sent out from Pharaoh, and he entreated the LORD. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from the people; and not one remained. [Better off then they were before it ever happened.] But Pharaoh hardened his heart, [notice Pharaoh hardened his heart,] at this time also, and neither would he let the people go.

CHAPTER 9

Then the LORD said to Moses, Go into Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus says JEHOVAH God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For if you refuse to let them go, and still hold them, behold, the hand of the LORD will be on your cattle in the field, on your horses, and on the donkeys, and on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep: there will be a very severe pestilence. And the LORD will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt: so nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel. Then the LORD appointed a set time, saying, Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land. [So now this pestilence that is to come upon the livestock.] So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all of the livestock of Egypt died: but the livestock of the children of Israel - not one died. And Pharaoh sent, and, indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead.

Now at this point he began to examine: "Hey, I want to see if it really happened that, you know, their livestock is still OK." And so he sent to find out the condition of the livestock of the children of Israel, and he found out that it was true - not one was dead.

But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go. So the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from the furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man, and beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And then they took the ashes from the furnace, and stood before the Pharaoh; and Moses scattered them toward heaven; and they caused boils to break out in sores on man, and beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; [Even they were afflicted now with the boils. They couldn't help themselves] for the boils were on the magicians, and on all of the Egyptians. But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, [He made stiff the heart of Pharaoh,] and he did not heed them; just as the LORD had spoken to Moses. So the LORD said to Moses, Rise early in the morning, and stand before the Pharaoh, and say to him, [now notice again, there was really not much of a warning for this last plague. Moses just threw the dust in the air in the sight of the Pharaoh, but he had no warning of that one. Now again, God warns him] Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For at this time, I will send all my plagues to your very heart, and on your servants, and on your people; that ye may know that there is none like me in all the earth. ["Who is JEHOVAH that I should obey Him?" Well, you're finding out Pharaoh. There's none like Him in all the earth.] Now, if I had stretched out my hand, and struck you and your people with pestilence; then you would have been cut off from the earth. [God had the capacity to totally cut him off.] But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you; and that my name may be declared in all the earth.

Now, Paul uses this in the 9th chapter of the book of Romans in his study on the sovereignty of God: a characteristic of God with which we often have difficulty - the fact that God is sovereign over His creation. And God said, *"I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will harden those whom I will harden."* God is sovereign in His grace. God is sovereign in His mercy. It's not the will of him who runs, but of God. So many times we put so much emphasis upon man, and man's responsibilities and all. But in reality, it's of God. He is the one that is sovereign. *"It is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."* It is God who placed it upon your heart to receive Jesus Christ. *"All that the Father has given me,"* Jesus said, *"will come to me."* It is that work of God within your heart to show mercy, or to harden, and He can do that to whomever He will. And I have no right to say to God, "Well, that isn't fair." Who am I to tell God He's not fair?

And so, God said to the Pharaoh, *"For this cause I have raised you up, that I might show my power."* For this cause God hardened the heart of the Pharaoh. That is, as we pointed out earlier, He confirmed the position that the Pharaoh had taken. The Pharaoh hardened his heart, and God made it stiff. God came along and confirmed it; or made firm the position. And so, for this purpose, God had raised up the Pharaoh; that He might show His power in the earth, and that His name might be declared in all the earth.

As yet you exalt yourself against my people, in that you will not let them go? Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause a very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since it's founding until now.

Now, Emanuel Vilikovsky, in his book, *World's in Collision*, points out that this word translated "hail" is not the usual Hebrew word for hail; that it is a different word. And that actually, this was a hail of stones as the earth moved deeper into the tail of the comet, and there were these stones, actually, actual stones that rained down upon the Egyptians. Whether that be so or not, I do not know; but it's an interesting theory. The heavy hail.

Now, it is interesting that in the book of Revelation, as it describes the judgment of God upon the earth in the last days, in that period of Great Tribulation, there's going to be a hailstorm that will strike the earth,

and each of the hailstones will weigh about 90 pounds. Now, can you imagine the devastation from such a hailstorm?

We had a freak hailstorm here a few years ago that put dents in my Chevy. That doesn't say much for the metal that they use in those automobiles, I guess; but it dimpled my back lid and my hood. I was in Fort Collins in Colorado. We were going through the army base there, and they were showing us around the base when a hail storm hit. And the hail were the size of marbles, and they began to pelt us, and we ran for the nearest APC, and we took cover in with all of the soldiers that had also taken cover in there and waited out that hailstorm. And in just a few minutes, about six inches of these big hailstones were on the ground all around us. It was quite an experience. And I mean, they hurt when they hit. God is going to send, in the Great Tribulation, this devastating hailstorm that will, --well, this building won't hold up under those kind of hailstorms falling. I mean, it'll pulverize this roof. Fortunately, I won't be here.

But God promises now, *"I'm going to send a hailstorm on Egypt, such as has never been from the beginning until now."* Now, God is giving mercy to the Egyptians who will believe.

Therefore send now, and gather your livestock, and all that you have in the field; for the hail shall come down on every man and every beast which is found in the field, and is not brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. [And so, the warning to get your animals, and all the people out of the fields tomorrow: "keep them in the barns, because if they're out in the fields, they'll die."] *And so he who feared the word of JEHOVAH among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and livestock to flee to the houses: but he who did not regard the word of JEHOVAH left his servants and his livestock in the field. Then the LORD said to Moses, Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man, on beast, on every vegetable of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground; and the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy, that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt and all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field, and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said, I have sinned this time: [and so, now the confession of sin] JEHOVAH is righteous, and my people and I are wicked. [An interesting confession: "I've sinned: God is righteous, the people and I - we're wicked."]* *Intreat the LORD that there may be no more mighty thundering and hail; (for it is enough) I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer. And Moses said to him, as soon as I have gone out of the city, I'll spread out my hands to JEHOVAH; the thunder will cease, there'll be no more hail; that you may know that the earth is JEHOVAH'S. ["Who is JEHOVAH, that I should obey Him? - I've sinned: He's righteous, I'm wicked."]* *But as for you and your servants, [he said,] I know that you will not yet fear JEHOVAH God. Now the flax and the barley were struck: for the barley was in the head, and the flax was in the bud.*

Which indicates that this plague took place in the month of February. So, in just a little over a month, the final plague will take place on the 14th of April: the Passover, the final plague. So, at this time, because the barley and the flax were in the process of ripening, we know that it was the month of February. Now, the wheat was not bothered by it, nor the spelt, because they are later crops. They are not harvested until June. But the barley is an earlier crop, and so the barley was destroyed and the flax - the month of February.

How long the whole series lasted, we don't know for sure. There are some who believe that the first plague took place in June; but that is only speculation because it is in the month of June that phenomena of the Nile River turning a bloody red takes place. And so, because that phenomena also takes place in the

month of June, they believe that the plagues started in June, and that it was about nine months duration during the time of the plagues. But that is attributing the water into blood to a natural phenomena, which we are not really authorized to do. So that, just the length, the total length of the plagues, is something of which we are uncertain.

It is only at this point that we know the time of the year that the plague took place. And so, the final plagues are going to take place now within the next month, because from the middle of February to the middle of April, we're going, of course, actually two months, going through March. So, the final plagues are on their way now in these last two months.

So Moses sent out of the city from Pharaoh, spread out his hands to JEHOVAH: then the thunder and the hail ceased, the rain was not poured on the earth. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more, ["I have sinned, I am wicked," he said. "But he sinned yet more"] and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hard, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as JEHOVAH had spoken by Moses.

So, next week we will wipe him out completely as we see God working in setting them free. I guess it'll be the week following. As we get into chapter 10, we'll find the Pharaoh offering two more compromises. "Go, but don't take your children." "If you want to make your commitment to the LORD, if you want to be a religious fanatic, fine, but don't make your children follow along. Don't involve your children in your experience or relationship." And then, finally, "Go, but leave your flocks, your herds." "Commit yourself to God, but withhold from Him your substance." Moses refused, as we will discover - any compromise. It was all, or nothing at all. And so it should be. Serving the Lord with all of our hearts, with all of our mind, with all of our strength.

May the Lord be with you, and bless, and keep you in His love. May He watch over you, and give you a beautiful week; a week that is devoted to the consciousness and awareness of His goodness, so that we are giving thanksgiving unto Him: not just on Thursday, but all week long. Giving thanks to the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever. God bless you, in Jesus' name.