

Exodus Chapter 10

Exodus 10:1 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him:"

They too, had first hardened their own hearts (Exodus 9:34), and so deserved a penal hardening. A certain amount of responsibility rested on them. Had they allowed the miracles to have their full natural effect upon their minds, they would have been convinced that resistance was useless, and would have impressed their views upon the Pharaoh. Even in the most absolute governments, public opinion has weight. And the general sentiment of the Court almost always carries the sovereign with it.

"That I might shew these my signs": There is nothing derogatory to the Divine Nature in a penal hardening being, as it were. Utilized to increase the glory of God, and affect for good future generations of His people. The accumulation of plague upon plague, which the unyielding of Pharaoh and his subjects brought about, was of vast importance in presenting to Israel, and even to the surrounding nations, a manifestation of the tremendous power of God, calculated to impress them as nothing else would have done.

Everything that God does has a purpose and this was certainly no exception. God had hardened Pharaoh's heart so that through these great signs, God could reveal to Pharaoh the futility of worshipping his false gods. They have no power strong enough to come against God. God wanted Pharaoh to realize that Jehovah is the true God. Jehovah, Lord, God Almighty, the Everlasting One, or whatever you call Him, He is the God that does exist.

Exodus 10:2 "And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I [am] the LORD."

"That thou mayest tell ... that ye may know": The release from Egypt, accompanied by these great acts of God, was designed to become an important and indelible part in recounting the history of Israel to succeeding generations. It would tell just who their God was and what He had done.

"My signs which I have done": Literally "to deal harshly with" or "to make sport of," and describing an action by which shame and disgrace is brought upon its object.

Telling our children of God's miraculous deeds is an important means of keeping the memory of these deeds alive for future generations (12:26-27; 13:8, 14-15; Deut. 4:9; Psalms 77:11-20; 78:43-53; 105:26-38; 106:7-12; 114:1-3; 135:8-9; 136:10-15). Actually, the content of the message relates to the parent leading the child into a "belief" in the God of Israel.

Not only was this message for Pharaoh, but for all of humanity. God wants us to recognize who He is and also, to recognize that He is the only power that truly exists. He has total control of the universe. Not one star twinkles without permission from God. Not only would this struggle

between the one true God and the false gods of Egypt be remembered by Pharaoh, but would be forever remembered by the Israelites and also by the true believers in Jesus Christ.

This great struggle that took place here (with the world trying to hang on to its slaves and the Deliverer overcoming the world and taking those who were willing to be freed, to the Promised Land), is the story of the Christian's lives too. Jesus came to the world in the form of a man and after so great a struggle and the persecution of the cross, delivered whosoever will. He is going to come and take us to that eternal Promised Land (heaven).

Exodus 10:3 "And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me."

“How long wilt thou refuse”: the question asked of Pharaoh struck a contrast with the opening words of God to Moses (verse 1), “I have hardened his heart.” What God did cannot erase personal responsibility from Pharaoh to hear, repent, and submit. Under the cumulative weight of 7 plagues, the time had come to deliver a challenge to reconsider and obey. This is God’s grace operating parallel with His own sovereign purposes.

The real issue is expressed again by the Lord through Moses and Aaron as “How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?” “Else, if thou refuse ... tomorrow will I bring the locusts (verse 14; see verse 9:17 for the same idea).

Verses 4-6: The extent and intensity of the locust plague was such that it would be unique in Egyptian history. Nothing like any locust problem during the previous two generations, nor like any locust swarm in the future (verse 14). Locust invasions were feared in Egypt, to the point that the farmers often prayed to the locust god to ensure the safety of their crops. The humiliation of their god was total, as was the damage: “Nothing green was left” (verse 15).

Exodus 10:4 "Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast:"

The hail and locust combination was an unprecedented and utterly catastrophic attack on Egypt’s famed agriculture, with the “locusts eating the “residue” from the hail damage. Yahweh resists the proud (Psalms 18:27; 31:23; 101:5; 119:21; Prov. 6:12-19; 16:5; 1 Pet. 5:5); therefore, He denounced the pride of Pharaoh.

Exodus 10:5 "And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field:"

Moses was commissioned to renew the request, so often made and denied, with an assurance that an unfavorable answer would be followed on the morrow by an invasion of locusts. This species of insect resembles a large, spotted, red and black, double-winged grasshopper, about three

inches or less in length, with the two hind legs working like hinged springs of immense strength and elasticity.

Perhaps no more terrible scourge was ever brought on a land than those voracious insects. Which fly in such countless numbers as to darken the land which they infest. And on whatever place they alight, they convert it into a waste and barren desert, stripping the ground of its lush green vegetation. The trees of their leaves and bark, and producing in a few hours a degree of desolation which requires years to repair.

Exodus 10:6 "And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh."

"They shall run to and fro in the city," says the prophet Joel; "they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows, like a thief." Modern travelers bear abundant witness to the same effect.

"Which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen": Only one notice of locusts has been found in the native records.

"He turned himself, and went out": It seems to be meant that Moses did not on this occasion wait to see what effect his menace would have on Pharaoh. He "knew that Pharaoh would not yet fear the Lord" (Exodus 9:30).

The problem with Pharaoh, as with many other people, was that he was proud, self-centered, arrogant, and refused to humble himself before God. In Revelation, there is a punishment of locust very similar to this here. God was very kind during the punishment of the hail not to destroy the food these Egyptians had to have to live on. As we said earlier, every time Pharaoh refused to listen to God, the next punishment was more severe than the last.

These locusts were about the worst thing that could happen to a farmer. There were so many of these locusts that they made a locust blanket which completely covered the fields. In a matter of minutes they destroyed all the crops. If this were not enough, we read that they even went into the houses and ate all the food there. The Egyptians were going to be in terrible trouble without food.

Exodus 10:7 "And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?"

"How long shall this man": The first "How long?" question in this encounter dealt with the desired response from Pharaoh (verse 3), whereas this second "How long?" question pointed out their impatience at Pharaoh's unwillingness to change and listen. Their advice to give in was the best choice.

“Egypt is destroyed”: The advisers negatively evaluated the state of the country after 7 plagues, and suggested that Pharaoh was refusing to acknowledge how desperate the situation really was even before the agriculture was completely destroyed. Stubborn resistance did not necessarily rob them of all reason, and the better part of wisdom this time demanded acquiescence to Moses’ request.

The response of some of his servants indicates that all of this was due to the Pharaoh’s persistent and willful disobedience. His confession in verse 16 (“I have sinned”), again seems to come out of practical expediency, since he was interested in an immediate deliverance from a plague that was about to destroy his land.

We see here, the servants of Pharaoh who had been in total agreement with Pharaoh up until this time and even hardened their own hearts at one point. Now they were in fear of losing everything they had; their crops. These servants of Pharaoh had suddenly realized that Moses was activating God's power and they were afraid of him and what God might do because of his prayers. They were almost pleading with Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go before God totally destroyed the Egyptians. They had to be really frightened to come against Pharaoh.

Exodus 10:8 "And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: [but] who [are] they that shall go?"

“Who are they that shall go”: For the first time, Pharaoh tried to negotiate a deal before the threatened plague struck. Adroitly, he suggested in his question that only representatives of Israel, perhaps only the men (verse 11), need go out to worship.

Pharaoh was shrewd enough to understand that if only the “men” (verse 11), went to worship, they surely would return to their families and he would not risk losing his slave labor.

Here we see that Pharaoh had never even bothered to find out who wanted to go and worship, until now. He never had any intention of allowing them to go so it wasn't important to know who this exodus involved. Pharaoh could not fight all of his cabinet, his magicians (who had quit a long time ago), Moses and Aaron and more; so he told them they could go. Remember you could not trust him as he had no morals.

Exodus 10:9 "And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we [must hold] a feast unto the LORD."

The latter were necessary to guide, direct, and instruct in the business of sacrifice, and to perform it as heads of their respective families; and the former were to be present, that they might be trained up and accustomed to such religious services.

"With our sons and with our daughters": As with persons of every age, so of every sex, who had all a concern herein, especially as it was a solemn feast, which all were to partake of.

"With our flocks and with our herds will we go": Which were requisite for the sacrifices, not knowing which they were to sacrifice, and with which to serve God, till they came to the place where they were to sacrifice (see Exodus 10:26).

"For we must hold a feast unto the Lord": That required the presence of old and young, men, women and children, to join in it, and their flocks and their herds, out of which it was to be made.

Moses left no doubt who would go. All of the Hebrews would go, from the babies to the very old. They would also take their flocks with them. Some of the animals would be required for sacrifice. The national celebrations were attended by everyone. Even the Egyptians took children to celebrations.

Exodus 10:10 "And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look [to it]; for evil [is] before you."

"Let the Lord be so with you": Sarcastic threats demonstrated the unyielding and unreasonable obstinacy of Pharaoh. Egyptian women did accompany their men in religious celebration, but in Israel's case if the men went out then the women and children were in effect hostages bidding their return.

Pharaoh was telling them, if they took the little ones, he believed they were up to something. He said they were trying to steal his slave labor.

Exodus 10:11 "Not so: go now ye [that are] men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence."

"Driven out": For the first time, God's two spokesmen were angrily dismissed from the throne room.

Pharaoh said either take it or leave it, and that just the men could go to worship. Then Pharaoh got mad, and drove them out of his presence. Part of Pharaoh's anger was because he was suddenly aware that he was going to be forced to let them go.

Exodus 10:12 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, [even] all that the hail hath left."

"All that the hail hath left": This reminder of the previous plague in which God had graciously restrained the extent of agricultural damage appeared also in the warning of the plague given to Pharaoh and his advisers (verse 5), and in the description of the damage done by the locusts (verse 15).

Exodus 10:13 "And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all [that] night; [and] when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts."

“An east wind”: God used natural means, most probably the spring hot wind, or “sirocco,” to bring the locusts into the country from the Arabian Peninsula.

We see sudden judgment falling on this rebellious king and his people.

Exodus 10:14 "And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous [were they]; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such."

The rod of Moses was again raised, and the locusts came. They are natives of the desert and are only brought by an east wind into Egypt, where they sometimes come in sun-obscuring clouds, destroying in a few days every green blade in the track they traverse. Man, with all his contrivances, can do nothing to protect himself from the overwhelming invasion.

Egypt has often suffered from locusts. But the plague that followed the wave of the miraculous rod was altogether unexampled. Pharaoh, fearing irretrievable ruin to his country, sent in haste for Moses, and confessing his sin, implored the intercession of Moses, who entreated the Lord, and a "mighty strong west wind took away the locusts."

Exodus 10:15 "For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt."

Of the whole land of Egypt; and this seems to be the instance in which these locusts differed from all others, that had been or would be, even in their numbers. For though there might have been before, and have been since, such vast numbers of them together as to darken the air and the sun, and by lighting first on one spot, and then on another, have destroyed whole countries. Yet never was such an instance known as this, as that they should come in so large a body, and at once to light, and spread, and settle themselves over the whole country.

"So that the land was darkened": The proper color of the earth, and the green grass on it, could not be seen for them, they lay so thick upon it; and being perhaps of a brown color, as they often are, the land seemed dark with them.

"And they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees, which the hail had left": For though every herb of the field is said to be smitten, and every tree of the field to be broke with it (Exodus 9:25).

"And there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt": The like is said to befall the province of Carpitania, in the ninth year of Childibert, king of France. Which was so wasted by locusts, that not a tree, nor a vineyard, nor a forest, nor any sort of fruit, nor any other green thing remained.

Egypt is about 500 miles long and about 20 miles wide. It is a long, narrow land. These locusts had to be ordered by the Almighty God to exactly cover this land and not involve other joining

countries. Plagues of locusts do destroy everything in sight. In many places in the Bible locusts were used for demon spirits, but I do not believe that was the case here. I believe these were real locusts.

Exodus 10:16 "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you."

“Haste”: Recognition on the part of Pharaoh that his country now faced a crisis brought forth a hurried confession to Aaron and Moses, which again was merely an expedient course of action.

Here, Pharaoh never dreamed the total devastation this would bring. He was in a hurry to get Moses to pray to God for him. He had said once before that he had sinned. This time he added "the Lord your God", and even admitted, that he had done Moses wrong by lying to him.

Exodus 10:17 "Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only."

“Forgive, I pray thee, my sin”: Again, an attempt to sound earnest in his response, and again with an appeal for Moses to pray for removal of the plague. He referred to it this time as “this death,” or “deadly plague,” phrases which highlighted the severity of Egypt’s condition.

Pharaoh in saying "take away this death" was saying that many would die from the famine caused by the loss of their crops. His request for Moses to forgive him this once was just to get Moses to pray and ask God to take away the locusts. This reminds me so much of people now. God forgives us and then some go right back into their sins again. God is unbelievably patient.

Exodus 10:18 "And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the LORD."

Without the city, as he had been wont to do: and entreated the Lord; prayed to him that he would remove the plague of the locusts from the land.

Exodus 10:19 "And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt."

“West wind”: In answer to prayer, wind direction reversed as the Lord caused the locusts to be blown eastward out of the county. The completeness of their removal received emphasis. That none remained in the country was apparently something unusual, perhaps somewhat distinct from previously known locust invasions. The absence of locusts was a challenging reminder of the power of the Lord who had brought it all to pass.

Despite Pharaoh’s insincerely confession, the Lord in His mercy blew the locusts away with a “strong west wind”. Still Pharaoh would not let the people of Israel go.

"Entreated" just means that Moses prayed for Pharaoh. The Lord answered the prayer and reversed the wind that brought the locusts and the wind carried them back. Just as the legion of

demons was cast into the sea, when Jesus ordered them out of the man into the swine in Matthew 8, the locusts wound up in the sea. We see these locusts being removed by the Lord and sent to the Red sea to drown. As I said before, locusts are sometimes symbolic of demon spirits, but in this particular instance, I believe these were real locusts. It just tells us in the similarity, that demons and locusts must obey the voice of God and go wherever He sends them.

Exodus 10:20 "But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go."

Still Pharaoh stubbornly would not let his people go. As Pharaoh's persistence and his own will was to not let the people go, God allowed him to harden his own heart by allowing him to use his own will during these plagues for His own good purpose.

Exodus Chapter 10 Questions

1. Why had God hardened Pharaoh's, and Pharaoh's servants' hearts?
2. Who is Jehovah?
3. Is this the only name He is known by?
4. Whatever you call Him, He is the God that does _____.
5. Whose ears were this message to be told in?
6. What two things does God want us to know about Him?
7. Who was this struggle in Egypt truly between?
8. In verse 3, what had Pharaoh refused to do?
9. What additional damage, over what the hail did, will the locusts do?
10. What is about the worst thing that could happen to a farmer?
11. In verse 7, who spoke out against Pharaoh?
12. What did they tell Pharaoh to do?
13. What was Pharaoh's response?
14. What question did Pharaoh ask now, that should have been asked earlier?
15. Who did Moses say was to go to worship.
16. Why did Pharaoh not want the children to go?

17. In verse 11, how did Pharaoh further insult Moses and Aaron?
18. What did God, immediately without warning, do to Pharaoh?
19. How did the locusts come?
20. What did the locusts destroy?
21. About how big is Egypt?
22. Who did Pharaoh say, he had sinned against in verse 16?
23. What did Pharaoh call this invasion of locusts?
24. What is a good adjective describing God's patience with us?
25. What does "Entreat" mean?
26. Where did God send the locusts, when He drove them out of Egypt?
27. What did Pharaoh do in response?