

EXODUS 7:8-13 (THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART)

Introduction: Every time I type up another sermon, I think "there's a lot of difficult stuff here for people to listen to." And then, almost immediately, I also think, "Thank You Lord for the people who come to hear these sermons. I am so grateful for people who are willing to sit through difficulty in order to know You more."

Today is no different. It's just six verses which are necessary to understand the logical progression of what is happening in Egypt, why it happened, and what the result of those steps will be. Two of those results are 1) the redemption of Israel, and 2) God receiving the glory He is due from His creatures.

In order for those things to come about, we are told that the Lord hardens Pharaoh's heart. Some questions which then arise may be, How can this be fair? Is the hardening of one to save another morally right? And why is God due glory at all? Is God a narcissist as so many over the ages have claimed?

In order to understand the truth of these questions, we have to carefully evaluate the passage and we need to thoughtfully consider what it means to harden one's heart or to harden another's heart. To misunderstand this concept will lead one down an entirely different path.

For the non-believer, they will come to see God as overbearing, unrighteous, and morally faulted. For the believer, misunderstanding the hardening of Pharaoh's heart will lead to a completely different theological perspective on the nature of God and His relationship with man.

The misanalysis of just a few words can have an enormous bearing on how we perceive our relationship with God.

Text Verse: "And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works." 2 Corinthians 11:14, 15

Satan is behind all deception, including the dismissal or distortion of God's word, and the Lord's intent for the people of the world. Today, we'll see actions which Satan took to deceive Pharaoh through his magicians. The fact that the Lord knew this would occur doesn't show either a manipulating or an uncaring God.

Rather, by properly seeing what occurs, it will show that God understands the human heart. He works within the framework of that understanding to accomplish His sovereign purposes. This is the glory of God as is revealed in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Show Me a Miracle (verses 8-10)

Today we arrive at 6 verses which come after the Lord's assurances that He was ready to act on events which will lead to the exodus of the Israelites and which come before the first plague on Egypt. Everything which is coming will occur in a methodical way which is designed to increasingly harden the heart of Pharaoh in order to bring maximum judgment upon him and upon Egypt.

This first account is given as an introduction to the plagues. It is a chance for Pharaoh to see what the Lord could do in comparison to Pharaoh's wise men and sorcerers. Even if Pharaoh doesn't see the truth of what will occur, they will. But they will fail to counsel him on the matter.

By the time they actually begin to advise Pharaoh that he needs to respond, it will be too late. His heart will be too hardened to respond. Thus, this failure of his advisors leads to his own hardening. This is not unique in the Bible. An account which occurs after the death of Solomon is comparable to it.

In 1 Kings 12 after Solomon's death, the people of Israel came to his son Rehoboam and asked that the burdens which Solomon had placed on them be lightened. He told them to return in 3 days and he would give his answer to them. He first consulted the elders of Israel who served under Solomon. Their answer was -

“If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.” 1 Kings 12:7

Sadly, the next words of the Bible say -

"But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him." 1 King 12:8

Their advice was just the opposite of the elders -

“Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us’—thus you shall say to them: ‘My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s waist! 11 And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!’” 1 Kings 12:10, 11

By not listening to his elder advisors, the people of Israel rebelled against Rehoboam and the kingdom was, from that time forward, divided. The two kingdoms became known as Israel to the north and Judah to the south.

However, even this was anticipated by God. That is recorded in minute detail in 1 Kings 11:26-40. Read that passage today and you will see that God knew in advance the outcome of the situation. He even directed the events to ensure they would transpire as they did.

The hardening of Rehoboam served God's purposes for Israel and the nations of the world, just as the hardening of Pharaoh's heart did. The Lord could have told Rehoboam in advance concerning what he should do, but He didn't. Thus, His plans came out in the intended way.

Because these verses lead directly into the plagues on Egypt, before getting into them, now is the time to see some of the patterns which are to be found in the coming plagues. You don't necessarily need to remember these patterns, but if you simply comprehend them as I read them, you will be able to more clearly see that there is design and purpose to how they occur.

The entire account, from this miracle, to the final hardening of Pharaoh's heart, goes from Exodus 7:8 until Exodus 11:10. After that, the final plague will come upon Egypt, and Israel will be freed. Within the nine first plagues is an arrangement which shows groups of threes.

In plagues 1 and 2, 4 and 5, and 7 and 8, there is an announcement by Moses to Pharaoh of what is coming before it occurs. However, in plagues 3, 6, and 9, there is no announcement. Also, in plagues 1, 4, and 7 the announcement is given in the morning time.

Plagues 1 and 4 are announced by the Nile River because they deal with Nile's waters; the plagues come from it. However, the location at the announcement of plague 7 isn't given because it comes from the heavens.

In the sign of the rod becoming a snake, and for the two first plagues, the sorcerers of Egypt were able to copy what Moses and Aaron did, but by plague 3, they acknowledge that it is the finger of God.

In plague 6, they will be personally afflicted by boils so that they cannot even stand before Moses. And in plague 9, Pharaoh will break off any further negotiations with Moses and Aaron. Thus you again have the pattern 3, 6, & 9.

A distinction begins to be made between Egypt and the people of Israel in plagues 4 through 9. Egypt and the Egyptians are affected, but the Lord's people aren't. In each of plagues 5, 7 & 9, and only in those plagues, the term "the children of Israel" is used, and they are explicitly noted as being spared from the plagues which occur.

Throughout all of this, the term "king of Egypt" will never be used. Rather, only the term "Pharaoh" will be used, and it will be used 66 times. Not until after the exodus of Israel will he be called the "king of Egypt" again in verse 14:5. These 66 times Pharaoh is mentioned during the plagues of Egypt are a sign, and they are a precursor to mark of the best, which is 666.

The last plague is unique and set apart from the others. It is a direct action from the hand of God rather than a natural occurrence directed by God as the first nine plagues were. During these plagues, their severity slowly changes Pharaoh's mind about what he should do.

He eventually will agree to let the people go, but with conditions. Each time he does so, Moses counters by removing the conditions imposed by Pharaoh, or by stating more clearly what must be allowed when they do go.

Each time, Pharaoh weighs the information and rejects it, or he changes his mind once the plague is removed. He determines to ignore the advice of his highest counselors and even his own senses as the marvelous events, in which he personally becomes a participant, are ignored. And so his heart increasingly hardens to the amazing events which occur around him.

The Bible's progression through these plagues is a masterful work of patterns and logical design, but it is also a precise roadmap of how the human heart, which is opposed to God, will eventually work itself into a most stubborn and hard state.

If one reads the book of Revelation and wonders how such terrifying events, which were proclaimed in advance of their coming, will be ignored by the people of the world, all they need to do is come back to Exodus and see how it happened to Pharaoh.

8 Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,

Although there's seemingly not a lot to consider in this first verse, it is still a bit unusual. Normally when it says, "Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying..." it is followed in the same verse with what the Lord began to say. We will see this again and again in the coming verses before the exodus.

However, these words are separated as a stand alone verse. I personally believe in the divine inspiration of even the chapter and verse divisions. They exactly show patterns which permeate Scripture. For a specific reason, the Lord ensured that this would be a separate introductory verse to the short account.

And that reason may be to show the fulfillment of the previous section of seven verses. In them, the Lord once again showed that Moses was preferred above Aaron when it said,

"See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet." Exodus 7:1

This is despite the fact that Aaron is the elder of the two, which was explicitly noted in the very last verse, which was verse 7 -

"And Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh." Exodus 7:7

Despite being younger, Moses is the Lord's preferred instrument for the work set before them and so we are having our attention called to that fact by this introductory verse which notes that Yehovah speaks to Moses and Aaron rather than Aaron and Moses.

Further, it will become apparent that this is the case because in the next verse, Moses is told by the Lord to speak to Aaron. This then implies that the Lord is speaking to Moses directly and Aaron indirectly. Again, as we have already seen quite a few times in Exodus, this then makes a picture of divine inspiration.

The Lord speaks to some and then His word is transmitted to others. However, the weight and authority of the original words remains. The Lord spoke to and through Jeremiah the prophet and the people of Israel were expected to respond.

Likewise, the Lord spoke through the apostle Paul and we are expected to respond. The weight of divine authority rests upon the words of those He chooses

to speak through. Thus, when we disobey the words of the Bible, we disobey the One who spoke out the Bible through those He spoke through.

Let us never forget this as we read its words, consider its commands, and look in expectation to its promises. It is either all or nothing to God, and thus it should be "all in all to us." It is our divine source of knowing God, learning how to live, and understanding what we should do with that knowledge.

9 "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,'

It's obvious from this that during their previous encounter with Pharaoh, no sign was requested by him. They had asked for Israel to be allowed to go sacrifice to Yehovah and Pharaoh turned them down. There was no need to go further with the meeting because he held the upper hand.

However, with their return to Pharaoh now, the Lord knows that he will demand something more of them if he is going to even listen. If they can't demonstrate that they have the authority of Yehovah, then there will be one of two options to consider - 1) Either Yehovah doesn't really exist, or 2) that even if He does exist, they are not His messengers.

Thus, he will certainly request proof of their claimed authority. Further, if they can really support their claim through a miracle, he knew that his own sorcerers would be able to do one as well. And because they could, he then would have an immediate claim to dismiss their request.

The Hebrew word for "miracle" here is mophet which speaks of something out of the ordinary course of nature. It is an unusual phenomenon, either natural or supernatural, which cries out for an explanation. It is not the same word used when Moses presented his three signs to the people of Israel.

Those signs were meant to validate the office and authority of Moses to the people of Israel as a token of future deliverance. The difference between these words may seem difficult to grasp, but maybe the best way to do so is to see signs as proofs of something which is coming, and miracles as proofs of something that is.

God will give a sign in the sun's movement that spring is coming or that it has arrived, but He will give a wonder or miracle to show that He is currently engaged in an activity, such as turning water into blood. However, even a miracle such as that can also be a sign of something else.

I can ask for a sign that you will pay me back borrowed money by seeing your pay stubs. That would demonstrate to me that the future is assured by the job you are doing. Or I can ask for a different type of sign, call it a wonder, by asking you to run 2 miles in 10 minutes, thus proving you are physically capable of working and so able to pay me back.

There is a difference in the two, but they can overlap and they can end with the same basic result - Whoo hooo, I get repaid. In this, Pharaoh won't ask for a sign as if he is anticipating something from Yehovah. Rather, he asks for a miracle as if he is expecting Yehovah to simply prove Himself here and now.

The miracle is asked of the representatives of Yehovah to prove that they have the divine commission from Him. The miracle will stand as their validation.

9 (con't) then you shall say to Aaron,

As we can see here, the Lord speaking to Moses and Aaron in verse 8 was actually the Lord speaking directly to Moses and indirectly to Aaron. It is Moses who receives the word and passes it on, and it is Aaron who will act.

9 (con't) 'Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh,

Coming later in this chapter, we will read this -

"So the Lord said to Moses: 'Pharaoh's heart is hard; he refuses to let the people go. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and 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.'"

Exodus 7:14, 15

In this, we can see that the rod which is noted as Aaron's rod here is actually Moses' rod; the rod of God. This then reveals what was meant in Exodus 7:1, which said -

"See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet."

As the rod belongs to Moses and yet it is given to Aaron to perform the miracle, it will demonstrate that Moses has not only been granted power, but that he has been granted authority to delegate power. Thus Moses is "as God to Pharaoh." He has the divine authority and he has a designated representative of that authority.

9 (con't) and let it become a serpent.'"

The word here for "serpent" is not the same as the word used concerning the snake which Moses saw at the burning bush. That word was nakhash. This word is tannin. It is used 27 times in the Bible, but only three times in Exodus - 7:7, 7:9, & 7:12. It is used to signify any type of large reptile or even a sea monster.

It corresponds to the Egyptian word tanem, which according to Albert Barnes is "a synonym of the monster serpent which represents the principle of antagonism to light and life." The Greek translation of this word is drakon, from which we get our word "dragon."

This word, drakon, is used 13 times in the New Testament book of Revelation and is used as a metaphor for the devil, who is Satan. In Jeremiah 51, this same Hebrew word for serpent is used when speaking of Nebuchadnezzar, the oppressor and destroyer of Israel, when they were taken exile to Babylon -

"Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon
Has devoured me, he has crushed me;
He has made me an empty vessel,
He has swallowed me up like a monster;
He has filled his stomach with my delicacies,
He has spit me out." Jeremiah 51:34

10 So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the Lord commanded.

This verse is based on Exodus 7:2 which said -

"You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land." Exodus 7:2

Pharaoh didn't just ask for a sign as soon as they walked in. Rather, they were granted access before Pharaoh and they first spoke what they were instructed to speak. Only then were they asked for a miracle to prove themselves.

In obedience to the Lord, they told Pharaoh what Yehovah expected and so Pharaoh responded with His request, just as the Lord said would happen.

10 (con't) And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

Upon Pharaoh's request, Aaron produces his miracle. The rod becomes a reptile. Almost all Bibles interpret this as a serpent or a snake. But the Jubilee Bible denotes a daringly descriptive designation of "dragon," and Young's Literal Translation most meaningfully and marvelously mentions it as "monster."

I would carefully consider the correct case of this confusingly crazy conundrum to correlate it to a cobra. The cobra would be a direct challenge to Pharaoh. It was the snake which adorned the headdress of Pharaoh. If so, it would then represent Uraeus, which was the symbol of sovereignty, royalty, deity, and divine authority.

The reason why I believe it is a cobra rather than a crocodile is because later, in verse 15, the word used to describe what happens here in this verse will again say nakhsh instead of tannin. Therefore, it is a serpent. But why are both words used?

I believe it is because it is a picture of Christ. Christ came and was lifted up on the cross, just as the nakhsh, or snake, was placed on the pole in the wilderness. Jesus spoke about this in John 3. However, the significance of what He did was missed by His people. The word tannin here then shows that Pharaoh failed to accept this as a true sign. Instead He takes it as a false sign.

What type of a sign is it that you require of the Lord?

What is it that you would expect God to do?

Do you demand of Him more than His word?

Without even checking to see if His word is true?

Would you demand more of Him that He expects of you?

What He desires is faith, from an obedient heart

In this He will know you believe His word is true

And in faith comes life eternal; from God a brand new start

His word tells us of the giving of His Son

To die for sinners, He was nailed to a cross at Calvary

His word tells us that through Him everything is done

Eternal life awaits all who to Christ willingly bow the knee

II. An Angel of Light (verses 11-12)

11 But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers;

When Pharaoh saw what Aaron did, he called his own wise men and sorcerers. The wise men here are khakamim. They are men educated in both human and divine knowledge and are able to apply that knowledge in a wise way, thus the term "wise men."

The sorcerers are known as mekashshephim. These would be like charmers or those who utter magic words. Just as Moses instructed Aaron, Pharaoh would then set himself against Moses by calling in his own subordinates.

The question is, "Would the gods of Egypt be able to produce the same effects through his men as Yehovah could through Aaron?" And if so, would they do so in a manner as least as notable, if not greater than, Aaron?

11 (con't) so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

Here we have another category of people called "magicians." This is the word khartummim. It is thought to be either scribes or those who knew sacred words because it comes from the word kheret which means tool, such as an iron pen or a stylus.

Through their magic, which could be nothing more than a magic show which works by sleight of hand, all the way to true black magic which uses the power of the devil to effect its work, they did the same with their enchantments. The word here for enchantments is lehatim which equates to secret or hidden arts.

Whatever is to be said about their secret arts, they were enough to be convincing to Pharaoh, even if they were false. This is no different than what is coming in the future as well. In Revelation 16, there is a comparable occurrence which will deceive the world and it is certainly of satanic origin -

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:13, 14

This power is also spoken of concerning the antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10 where we read this -

"And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved." 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10

And lest we feel we're safe in this dispensation, before the coming of the antichrist, we should probably remember Paul's words of Ephesians 6 that tell us even now we are facing a spiritual battle against the forces of wickedness.

Only by covering ourselves with the implements of battle will we be able to stand unharmed against the devil's attacks. Take time to read that passage today and ensure you're prepared for this unseen and yet truly real battle that we are in.

12 For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents.

Sure enough, by deceit or by true satanic powers, they were able to accomplish a similar feat. The result was that there were real reptiles there on the ground before both Moses and Pharaoh. But, the fact that they were able to do this may another the reason why the word is different than the word which was used when the rod became a snake at the burning bush.

This second reason for using the word tannin instead of nakash may be that both produced reptiles, but they were different reptiles. Because tannin can mean a host of things, from a crocodile to a cobra, it may be that different reptiles were produced. The account doesn't say this, but the use of the word may imply it.

If so, then it would explain why the next event comes about...

12 (con't) But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

These reptiles, whatever they actually became, are noted as rods here, not tanninim. The matteh, or rod, is the symbol of the power which it displays. Thus, this is "the rod of God." It is a symbol of the power of Yehovah. The rods of the Egyptians symbolized the power they possessed.

Therefore, we are told the rod swallowed the rods, not the reptile swallowed the reptiles. One could ask why the Lord would choose this miracle before sending the plagues and why he chose it, knowing that Pharaoh's men would be able to reproduce the effect.

There are several reasons for this. One is that in order to clear Moses from appearing as a mere magician, this wonder was chosen first. If not, then whatever he did after this could also be considered mere magic.

But by defeating the false signs, the true sign would stand out more apparently. The dragon of Moses was of far greater power than that of Pharaoh's. What they considered a protector god, the cobra, was of no protection against the greater force which came against them.

A second reason would be to bolster the confidence of the Israelites. Word would come to them of what happened and they would have a renewed hope because even if this challenge is ignored by Pharaoh, their God had displayed that He was more powerful than the powers of Pharaoh.

And third, this miracle, along with the coming plagues, is given as a direct confrontation to the many gods of Egypt. Knowing that Yehovah defeats Egypt through the very objects which the Egyptians worshipped would be a sign to them that only Yehovah was worthy of their worship.

And sure enough, the miracles of Egypt are recorded in both the 78th and 105th psalms as a testimony to the people of the greatness of Yehovah and His superiority over the false gods of Egypt. Earlier I cited Albert Barnes concerning the Egyptian beast tanem to which tanin corresponds.

He said it is "a synonym of the monster serpent which represents the principle of antagonism to light and life." If this is so, then Yehovah has proven His Light and Life to be greater than the antagonist, Satan, who transforms himself into an angel of light and yet who thrives on darkness and death.

However, despite the victory of Yehovah over these workers of iniquity in this first miracle, we will see that Pharaoh has been coaxed into believing that he is still able to withstand the Force which has come against him.

Don't you be distracted by Satan's cunning lies

Don't allow his deceit to creep in and steal your heart away

On the Lord Jesus, there alone fix your eyes

Press on for the goal of Christ each and every day

Surely there is a glorious reward awaiting those of us

Who walk in this life with our gaze firmly fixed on Jesus

Though the devil has power, against it we can stand

Having the shield of faith to quench every fiery dart

And with the Bible always ready, always at hand

Let us press on towards the goal, with Jesus in our heart

III. The Hardening Heart (verse 13)

13 And Pharaoh's heart grew hard,

The words are v'yekhezaq lev parah. Some translations, such as the King James Version, incorrectly state "And he hardened Pharaoh's heart." This would be a mis-translation. The verb is neuter and intransitive, and 'Pharaoh's heart' is its nominative case. It should be translated as, "Pharaoh's heart hardened itself."

It is true that passively, it is the Lord who is acting upon Pharaoh to harden his heart, but it is an active measure of Pharaoh to respond to it. A child can passively make me angry by sticking his tongue out at me, but I am the one who actually gets angry.

Thus saying, "The child made Charlie angry" is sort of true, but it doesn't convey the whole matter. Rather, to properly identify what is going on, you would say, "Charlie allowed himself to get angry at the prodding of a little kid." I could have just ignored him or laughed him off, but instead, I allowed myself to get upset.

In the same way, Yehovah has purposefully chosen a path which has been favorable to Pharaoh's own arrogant demeanor, but Pharaoh is still fully responsible for his actions. God does not act in an arbitrary manner, ever.

He will only act to harden those who are disposed already to being hardened. And if He does so, it will be for His purposes. In this case, it is to lead ultimately to the redeeming of His people. But he could have done this at a time when a different Pharaoh would have responded differently, couldn't He have!

The fact that He didn't shows that He has a specific purpose for choosing this Pharaoh at this time. If he were to have done it for this same purpose at a different time, and yet expected the same results, then He would have to violate His own moral character, by actively hardening someone who would have let them go.

This Pharaoh, right from the beginning of Exodus, has proven to be a tyrant, self-willed, and obstinate. He has already hardened himself against God and therefore, the actions taken by the Lord now are in accord with His perfect moral character.

Any action by God in the hardening process is because this man has already hardened himself. Therefore, the punishments which will result in the chapters ahead will be just and they will be justly due, not arbitrary or vindictive. This is what sets Yehovah apart from all other gods.

He is infinite in His being, and His being is moral, just, righteous, and holy. He does nothing which is wrong, and He will never pervert justice in the sentencing of His creatures. In other words, when we receive penal judgment, we get what we deserve.

The cries of "foul" that ring out by the world against the God of the Bible are wholly unfounded and fail to take His perfect character into consideration. What we need is mercy - not getting what we do deserve. If God always gave us what we deserve, we would be swept away, just like Pharaoh.

In the end, whether Pharaoh actually believed that the reptiles were real, and that one really devoured the others, didn't matter to him. Instead, he looked at this miracle by the Lord as just a different degree of the same thing accomplished by his men.

He saw it as one type of work that happened to be a bit better coming from Moses. Thus he hardened his heart. Even though this was the Lord's intent, it was still Pharaoh's decision to act upon.

***13 (fin) and he did not heed them, as the Lord had said.**

ka'asher dibber Yehovah - "... as had said Yehovah." The Lord spoke because the Lord knew. He knew what Pharaoh would do when calling for his magicians, and He knew what Pharaoh would do when his magicians performed a miracle similar to Aaron's.

He allowed himself to be taken in by a lie. Satan had his hand in the situation, further deceiving Pharaoh who was already deceived. As Matthew Henry notes about what has transpired -

"None assist more in the destruction of sinners, than such as resist the truth by amusing men with a counterfeit resemblance of it. Satan is most to be dreaded when transformed into an angel of light." Henry

Those who practiced the devil's arts, though not on par with the hand of the Lord, were enough to seduce Pharaoh into believing he was on a sound path. All the while though, he is heading towards his own final doom.

Paul warns us of exactly the same thing in his second letter to Timothy. There in the third chapter, he actually cites two men by name. They are the magicians who faced off against Moses. Paul's warning stands as a testimony to us to watch out for false workers who masquerade behind their false works. Let me read you his sobering warning -

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was." 2 Timothy 3:1-9

The word of the Lord is filled with proof that it is what it claims to be. It is the divine authority to guide and regulate our lives. But if we willingly choose to neglect it, speak against it, or disobey it, then he may allow a snare to entangle us. Let us endeavor to not be so trapped, but to be willing, open, and obedient to His good word.

And of all of the things we need to be obedient to in that precious book, the first is to call on Christ as Lord. If we were to perfectly do every thing in the Bible that is demanded of us, we would still fall short of the glory of God. We can never attain to His perfection because we already have sin in our lives.

Only Christ Jesus can take away that sin. Only He can restore us to God. In fact, if we try to please God through our works without going through Christ, we actually make it worse. That becomes self-idolatry because we reject the Gift He has offered. Don't be obstinate like Pharaoh, but rather, yield to the Lord. Let me tell you how you can...

Closing Verse: Happy is the man who is always reverent,
But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity. Proverbs 28:14

Next Week: Exodus 7:14-25 (The Plague of Blood) (20th Exodus Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if a deep ocean lies ahead of You, He can part the waters and lead you through it on dry ground. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Hardening of the Heart

Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying

“When Pharaoh speaks to you, in this way

Saying, ‘Show a miracle for yourselves, I am praying

Then to Aaron you shall say

"Take your rod and before Pharaoh cast it

And let it become a serpent

As I instruct you, so you shall your actions commit

So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh

And just as the Lord commanded, they did so

And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh

And before his servants too

And it became a serpent as we now know

Just as the Lord told them, so it did do
But Pharaoh also called his men too
The wise men and the sorcerers in their assignments
So the magicians of Egypt they also it did do
In like manner with their enchantments

For every man down his rod threw
And they also became serpents too
But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods
And Pharaoh's heart, hard it grew
And he did not heed them, there were no favorable nods
As the Lord had said, just as the Lord already knew

Though Aaron performed a miracle with his rod
Pharaoh hardened his heart even more
He rejected the sign, though it was from God
Becoming stony to the core

We too have a miracle presented to us
One that is well documented and attested to
It is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus
It is a sign which offers life to me and you
If we soften our hearts and receive Jesus as Savior
We will be sealed with the Holy Spirit, a heavenly guarantee

And with His guidance, we can adjust our life's behavior
Becoming more like the Lord, as we follow obediently

So let us follow this, the right and holy path
And be saved by His blood shed on the cross of Calvary
In this we become God's children, saved from His wrath
And we are set on a heavenly course for all eternity
Thank You, O God, for this wonderful assurance
Thank You for what You have done for sinners like us
Give us O God continued endurance
Until the day we are called home, to be with Jesus

Yes, thank You O God, for our precious Lord Jesus

Hallelujah and Amen...