
Magicians

“And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said” - Exodus 7:22

The Israelites had lived in Egypt for many generations, increasing in population from seventy people (Gen 46:27) to well over six hundred thousand men (Num 26:51), and God was now preparing them to leave their homeland for parts unknown. To convince the people to leave, God allowed them to be treated harshly at the hands of the Egyptians while it took ten plagues from God to convince Pharaoh to let them go. This account may seem to be relevant to the Old Testament only but, as we will see, it has profound implications to our lives today.

It was toward the end of their long stay in Egypt that Pharaoh began to treat the Israelites like slaves and, because of it, they cried out to God for deliverance, *“... and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage... And the Lord said I...have heard their cry...for I know their sorrows”* (Exodus 2:23; 3:7). Even today, God knows our sorrows and He will deliver us from our bondage of sin if we earnestly pray to Him for forgiveness. He hears such prayers. As it was in the Old Testament, any person who heard God’s call to repent and who willingly confessed his sin at the door of the tabernacle was forgiven by God. It was the burden of sin revealed by the Word that caused this person to confess his sin. Thus, we should be thankful for our God-given trials of life, rather than bristle at them, *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death”* (2 Corinthians 7:10). These trials test our faith in preparation for heaven.

Bondage and its resulting sorrow changed the Israelite heart, whereas each plague only further hardened Pharaoh’s heart. (God’s Word has the same effect today: it either draws one closer to Him or drives one away.) The more God talked to him the more Pharaoh embraced his own belief system, exalting himself in the process, *“As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?”* (Exodus 9:17). Pharaoh was especially emboldened when his magicians could reproduce Moses’ first two plagues. Thereafter the magicians could not compete with Moses and when the plagues started to only affect the

Egyptians and not the Israelites, the Egyptian people started to take note and to listen to God through Moses. Some but not all Egyptians hearkened onto Moses, such as with the plague of hail, *“He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field”* (Exodus 9:20-21). The plague of locusts finally caused the Egyptians to complain directly to Pharaoh, *“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?”* (Exodus 10:7). As a result, Pharaoh repented to Moses, *“...I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you... forgive, I pray thee, my sin...”* (Exodus 10:16-17). Pharaoh, however, returned to his old ways as soon as he saw that the immediate trial had passed: his repentance was one of convenience, *“...when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not...”* (Exodus 8:15).

Why were the magicians able to reproduce the first two plagues of Moses? One might think that God should have voided their magic because allowing them to perform only heightened Pharaoh’s resolve to deny God and further persecute the Israelites. It is the same today where false prophets are able to speak eloquently, to almost deceive the very elect: *“For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error”* (2 Peter 2:18). As with the magicians of old, false prophets today serve a purpose—to test our faith. We should not believe just anyone, no matter how well he performs, but we are to *“...try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”* (1 John 4:1).

The world today is experiencing many of God’s judgments as it did in Pharaoh’s day. Like Pharaoh, hearts today are being hardened, not wanting to listen to His word but preferring their own form of godliness. God had two simple requests of the people in Pharaoh’s day: *“...Let my people go that they may serve me”* (Exodus 9:1). He has two requests of us today: *“...repent ye, and believe the gospel”* (Mark 1:15). As already mentioned, Pharaoh repented out of convenience and not out of a humble and contrite heart that can only be made that way by God. Our heavenly Father wants no person to be

lost, so He calls each of us to repent of our sins. Have you been able to hear and believe that precious gospel message of forgiveness proclaimed to you by a servant of God? For “...*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Romans 10:17). Harden not your heart that God may hear your fervent cry and deliver you from your bondage of sin.

God’s Peace,
Charles Korhonen

Mar 3	Ken Storm	Holy Communion 11am
Mar 10	Jesse Mattson	
Mar 17	TBA	
Mar 24	Chad Kuivanen	Potluck Meal
Mar 31	Herb Jarvi	

Sunday School/Adult Bible Studay 10am
Church at 11:00am
Bible Study at 7pm on Wednesday.

Church Cleaning Tom and Ruth Mackrain

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