



# EXODUS

FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM

## BIBLE TEXT | EXODUS 9:8-12

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**8** And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Take handfuls of soot from the kiln, and let Moses throw them in the air in the sight of Pharaoh. **9** It shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." **10** So they took soot from the kiln and stood before Pharaoh. And Moses threw it in the air, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast. **11** And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils came upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians. **12** But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had spoken to Moses.

## DEVOTIONAL FOR EXODUS 9:8-12

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Ever since God called Abraham and his family back in Genesis 17:1-6, his purpose was to have a people who would be set apart for the Lord. Through Jesus, one of Abraham's descendants, this promise would be available to all nations.

God's purpose for the people of Israel was never to settle in Egypt, that wasn't the promised land he had intended. While in Egypt, they came to find themselves in a hopeless situation and needed the Lord to act on their behalf, so that His purposes could be fulfilled. Even though it makes a great story to think how a group of slave shepherds broke from the bondage of their oppressors, Exodus 2:23-25 helps us understand that it wasn't the Israelites who would break out from Egyptian bondage, it was the Lord who would rescue them from it. This is for their salvation, yes, but ultimately for His glory. The plagues represent the extent that He will go for both.

Today we are reading about the sixth plague: boils. As we do so, let's remember that the purpose of these plagues was for God's name to be known by all generations (Ex. 3:15). With this in mind, notice that in today's reading "The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh," as opposed to "Pharaoh hardened his heart" or "his heart was hardened."



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This got me thinking how even though God knew that Pharaoh would resist His will, He still gave him plenty of chances to humble himself and to do the right thing. To acknowledge the Lord as the God above all others. But Pharaoh's heart, being full of pride and evil, leads him to respond the way he did: mocking, disregarding, or plainly going against God's commands. Now we come to a point where there is so much evil in Pharaoh's heart that the "Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart" and uses him toward his redemptive purposes. We even see some of Pharaoh's servants trying to talk some sense into him but to no avail.

It is very unfortunate that, like Pharaoh, some people continue to abuse God's mercy (not getting what they deserve) by completely ignoring the loving admonitions He gives us through His Word and/or through His people. In Galatians 6:7 we read "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap." Just as in the case of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, we are given the opportunity to either be the object of God's mercy or His judgment.

We see similar examples of this throughout the Old and New Testaments. Think about how the people of Nineveh repented upon hearing the words of the prophet Jonah (Jonah 3). What about king Saul as he offered an unlawful sacrifice (1 Samuel 13:13-14), or when king David was rebuked by the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 12). In Acts 5, we read the story of Ananias and Sapphira trying to deceive the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11). In the gospels, we see many people, especially those within the religious elite, bringing all sorts of challenges to Jesus with the intention of mocking him or getting rid of him, rather than coming to him with a humble willingness to learn from him.

That brings us to you and me. Are we quick to heed the counsel of God's Word in all areas of our lives, or are we waiting just a little longer? When we're admonished by those we live in Biblical community with, do we have a humble heart that results in change, or are we easily offended and isolate ourselves? We are always presented with opportunities to be hardened or humbled. As with Pharaoh, it is up to us to choose how we will respond.

## Questions:

1. Is there an area in your life where you have been slow to obey God's word?
2. Is there something or someone that is taking God's place in your life?
3. Over the next couple of days, meditate on Exodus 34:6-7: "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."