

Lessons From the 10 Plagues *(part 1: a hard heart)*

Purpose: to show what happens to those who harden their hearts and to encourage us not to do so.

In the next several weeks we will be looking at how God sent 10 plagues to the Egyptians in order to deliver the children of Israel from slavery.

You will see:

1. That the secret to success in battle is when we get out of the way and simply do whatever God says.
 - a. We saw how God prepared Moses for this task
 - b. From now on, you will see the phrase: "The LORD said to Moses..." (over 150 times).
2. That each plague showed that the God of the Hebrews was greater than their Gods.
3. That with each plague, the severity increased – things became worse and worse.
4. That each plague showed God's power over His creation
5. That each plague destroyed them economically
6. That each plague destroyed them physically
7. That each plague destroyed their belief systems
8. That by these plagues Pharaoh learned of the true God (Exodus 7:17)

However, before we begin, there is something very important in one verse:

Exo 7:14 - *So the LORD said to Moses: "Pharaoh's heart is hard; he refuses to let the people go.*

Hardness of heart: why was Pharaoh so stubborn, and what can we learn from him? What does it mean when the bible says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart?

God does not tempt man with evil:

Jas 1:13 - *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*

Jas 1:14 - *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.*

Jas 1:15 - *Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*

God's wrath comes to men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness:

- Men suppress the truth – (hinder the truth, keep down what is true, crush the truth, hide the truth)

Rom 1:18 - *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*

God has made it possible for men to know Him:

Rom 1:19 - *because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.*

Rom 1:20 - *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*

When men refuse God, their decision affects their ***mind*** and their ***heart***:

Rom 1:21 - because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Rom 1:22 - Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Rom 1:23 - and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

God's response: He gives them up (lets them go their own way; delivered them; gives them over). The hardening of their heart is what they get.

Rom 1:24 - Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,

Rom 1:25 - who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Rom 1:26 - For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.

Rom 1:27 - Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

Rom 1:28 - And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

Rom 1:29 - being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,

Rom 1:30 - backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

Rom 1:31 - undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

Rom 1:32 - who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Pharaoh and his people became “vessels of wrath”.

Rom 9:22 - What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

Moses and his people became “vessels of mercy”.

Rom 9:23 - and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,

Men who harden their hearts will suffer under the judgement of God.

God also warns believers not to harden their hearts and miss God's plan for their lives:

Heb 3:7 - Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE,

Heb 3:8 - DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION, IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS,

Heb 3:9 - WHERE YOUR FATHERS TESTED ME, TRIED ME, AND SAW MY WORKS
FORTY YEARS.

Heb 3:10 - THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THAT GENERATION, AND SAID,
'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN MY
WAYS.'

Heb 3:11 - SO I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.' "

Heb 3:12 - Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in
departing from the living God;

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

Pro 29:1 - He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be
destroyed, and that without remedy.

But, don't be discouraged:

Heb 6:9 - But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes,
things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.

Heb 6:10 - For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you
have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do
minister.

Heb 6:11 - And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full
assurance of hope until the end,

Heb 6:12 - that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith
and patience inherit the promises.

Conclusion

- Understand that God does punish those who harden their hearts
- Also understand that as a Christian you are a vessel of mercy!
- Don't become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises