THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH’S HEART


LESSON 52 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I God’s Reassurance to Moses and Israel

1. God reassures Moses, telling him again that Israel will be miraculously delivered from Egypt, Exodus 6:1.
2. God reveals Himself under the name of Jehovah, Exodus 6:2, 3;
   Exodus 3:14
   And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.
3. God renews the covenant promised to Moses, having heard the prayers of oppressed Israel, Exodus 6:4, 5;
   Exodus 2:23-25
   And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;
   Exodus 4:30, 31
   And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.
   And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.
4. God commands Moses to repeat His promises to Israel, Exodus 6:6-8;

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 6:1-13
1 Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.
2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD:
3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.
4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.
5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.
6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:
7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.
8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the
LORD.
9 And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.
10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
11 Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.
12 And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?
13 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

Exodus 7:1-13
1 And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

II The Renewal of the Command to Moses and Aaron
1. God renews His charge to Moses, Exodus 6:13;
Acts 7:35
2. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

Isaiah 49:13-16
13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.
14 But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.
15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.
16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy name is continued before me.

2. Aaron is made the spokesman for Moses, as God promised, Exodus 7:1, 2,
Exodus 4:14-16
14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.
15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.
16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

3. God tells Moses again what Pharaoh's attitude will be, Exodus 7:3, 4;
Exodus 3:19, 20
19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.
20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

4. God tells Moses that because of Pharaoh's attitude all the Egyptians will know about the God of Israel, Exodus 7:4, 5.

III The Appearance before Pharaoh and Supremacy of Israel's God
1. Moses and Aaron obey God's command, Exodus 7:6, 7.
2. A proof is given to convince Pharaoh of God's power, Exodus 7:8-10.
3. Satan uses his emissaries, Jannes and Jambres, to confuse the Egyptians, but Israel's God is supreme, Exodus 7:11, 12;
II Timothy 3:8, 9
8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do...
old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.

8 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.

10 And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods.

13 And he hardened Pharaoh’s heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.
But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

Exodus 14:8, 17, 18

8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

17 And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

Proverbs 28:14

14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

Proverbs 29:1

1 He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Hebrews 3:13

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

NOTES:

God had a purpose for the manner in which He delivered Israel from Egypt and its bondage. The captivity had been a long one and very severe, and it finally caused the Israelites to groan and cry to God for deliverance. When their prayers reached God He answered, sending Moses to lead them to Canaan. We can say then that the hard and difficult captivity was good for the Israelites because it drew them nearer to God. The miracles and plagues were to show to Israel, and to the world, the great power of the Almighty God and His concern and care for His people.

God, in renewing His charge to Moses, instructed him to tell Israel that they were to be a special people to the Lord Jehovah, with Him as their God. This extraordinary privilege was given because of the covenant with Abraham, and because God had chosen Israel as a nation through which He would give His law to the world at large; and, in addition, through whom He might send His Son, the Messiah, Who would complete the plan of redemption for all mankind.

The deliverance from Egypt was to take place in such a way that no man would receive glory and honour for it. By a high and mighty hand God was going to deliver Israel in His own way which would be a testimonial of the power of God, not only to the Israelites, but to the whole world as well.

One of the steps in the unfolding of God’s revelation of Himself and His power to the Israelites at this time was a more complete manifestation of His sacred name. God had been known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the world at large, as God Almighty and as God the Creator; but here He revealed Himself to Moses and the Israelites as Jehovah, which is a name more expressive of His moral attributes than any other of the many names by which He is known in Scripture.

There is great significance in the names of God and the manner in which they are used. And here, as is the case with all Scripture, there is no detail that is handled carelessly or inserted without cause. The deliberate way in which God’s different names are used shows a divine plan and purpose, the depths of which we shall never be able to explore fully, but each excursion we make into that field gives us richer blessings and a deeper conception of the great love of our God. By the way the divine
names are used, it is also easy to see the unity of authorship of the numerous books of the Bible.

The first use of the name of God in the Bible occurs in the first verse of Genesis. "In the beginning God . . . " This is translated from the Hebrew word Elohim which is used 2,570 times in the Old Testament. It is in the plural form, thereby proving the doctrine of the Trinity but its use with singular verbs and adjectives displays a unity of action in the plural personality. (Read I John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.) Its significance is that of greatness, might and strength. It further signifies the glory of God, showing creative and governing power, omnipotence, and sovereignty, and the power and ability to make and sustain a covenant relationship.

El Shaddai is the next name by which God was known to the world, and this is translated God Almighty. This is the name used in the first portion of Exodus 6:3, the name by which God was known to the patriarchs. It does not necessarily signify the omnipotence of God as it might seem, for the name Elohim does that; but rather, it signifies the One Who sheds forth and pours out sustenance and blessing, the all-sufficient One and the all-bountiful One. It shows the inexhaustible stores of His bounty, the riches and fullness of His grace, and the God from Whom comes every good and perfect gift.

We now see that (God was known to the nations of the world by these two names, but at this time particularly He began to call His people apart and pour upon them special manifestations of His favour. He does this by showing them more of Himself and by revealing to them more of His eternal and moral qualities. It is significant to notice that this is done, not at times of great blessing and apparent spiritual or temporal prosperity, but at a time of adversity and oppression, on the eve of that awesome and terrifying manifestation of God's power and holiness on Mount Sinai. It is not on flowery beds of ease that we are "carried to the skies"; but instead, it is through the toils of the road and the pain and stress of battle that God draws nearer to us.

The name Jehovah, which is translated LORD in the Old Testament (all letters capitalized, as distinguished from the Hebrew name Adonai), is the name which God revealed to Moses at this time of Israel's great trial in Egypt. It was given specifically and exclusively at that time for Israel's benefit. This name is used 6,823 times in the Old Testament and signifies the One Who is self-existent, possessing in Himself essential life and eternal existence. It expresses the personality or person of God -- and Him alone -- and is the proper name of the true God; but it is never used with the word true, as in the case of Elohim, for Jehovah is never used for any but the true God, the one and only God. All the moral and spiritual attributes of God are expressed as belonging to Jehovah.

The name was considered so sacred and holy by the Jews that they feared to pronounce it, and to this day the name Jehovah is never read in the synagogue nor uttered by them. The name Adonai, or another Hebrew word meaning simply The Name, was substituted for Jehovah in their services. Thus the original pronunciation of the name we call Jehovah was lost, and orthodox Jewry regard as a sign of Messiahship the one who can truly pronounce it.

The other principal name of God in the Old Testament is Adonai, translated Lord (in small letters). It is used 300 times in the Old Testament and appears mostly in plural form because of the plurality of the Godhead. It signifies complete ownership or mastership in the one to whom it is applied, and implies willing
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obedience and submission in the one using it. A few times in the Old Testament it is used in singular form; and these, too, are valuable proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity. Psalm 110:1 is a striking example of this usage. "The LORD [Jehovah] said unto my Lord [Adonai]." In Matthew 22:44 and Hebrews 1:13 we read that Jesus is the One to Whom the LORD Jehovah is speaking. Here the word Adonai is used in the singular form since it refers, not to the Trinity, but to Jesus Christ Himself as an individual.

Elohim, El-Shaddai, and Jehovah relate particularly to the person of God. In Elohim it is to the power and glory of His Being. In El-Shaddai it is as the beneficent and bountiful Bestower of powers, gifts, blessings, and fruitfulness for service. In Jehovah it is of Himself as a God of righteousness, holiness, love, and redemption. But Adonai takes up another phase of our relationship with God and makes or demands a definite claim upon our obedience and service more than any of the others.

It is interesting -- and soul-thrilling -- to note the deliberate use of the two names Elohim and Jehovah throughout other portions of the Old Testament beyond Exodus 6:3. The strong theocratic and historical books which are addressed particularly to Israel, such as Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, use chiefly Jehovah. The universalistic books, such as Ecclesiastes, Daniel, and Jonah, use Elohim almost exclusively. Psalms 42 through 84 almost exclusively use Elohim, while the other Psalms use, for the most part, Jehovah. This is absolutely a matter of diction and not merely the result of the styles of different authors, for the Psalms in both of the above sections are ascribed to David. It is a difference of divine purpose and plan.

God's purpose in all His dealings with mankind is to draw each one to Himself. He reveals Himself in various ways to accomplish devious ends and win the hearts of even the most sinful and degenerate. God's purpose in both the giving of the plagues and their removal, was to cause Pharaoh to repent, Israel to draw near to God, and the whole world to know that He was a God of power -- the only True God!

God performed miracles through Moses to demonstrate His power to the Egyptians. The magicians of Egypt, too, showed they had supernatural power -- though it was not of, or from, God. But God was supreme, for the serpent that sprung from Aaron's rod swallowed up all the others before it was changed back to the rod again. There remained no excuse for doubting the power of God or His ability to work in and through men, but Pharaoh hardened his heart against the God of Israel. If a man rejects mercy he becomes hardened. The same Sun of Righteousness that melts the icy heart, which has not previously felt the warmth of its cheering rays, will harden the heart of clay and make it as hard as stone. Such was the case with Pharaoh, who hardened his heart against God so many times that even the wonderful, far-reaching, and boundless mercies of Almighty God could not reach him.

QUESTIONS
1. By what name was God known to Abraham?
2. What name did God give by which He was to be known to Israel?
3. Had God heard the prayers of the Israelites?
4. Had God forgotten His covenant with Abraham?
5. Why did God want to deliver Israel Himself and not give credit to man for doing it?
6. Why was Israel slow in responding to the words Moses spoke to them?
7. What miracle did God perform through Moses before Pharaoh?
8. What was the purpose of this miracle?
9. What happened when the miracle was performed?
10. What was Pharaoh's attitude toward this miracle?