THE HARDENING

OF THE HEART

PART 1

**DATE: 12/10/2017 pm**

**TEXT: Exodus 7:1-5; Psalms 75, 82**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Exodus 7** begins the 3rd Division of this book

-- Chapters 1, 2 dealt with the Birth of Moses

-- Chapters 3-6 dealt with the Call of Moses

The first six chapters deal with The Person of the Moses

Chapters 7-10 will deal with the Conflict with Pharaoh as God frees His people from bondage

This section begins the first great concentrated period of biblical miracles

The second great period would come during the days of Elijah and Elisha

The third period was during the time of Jesus and the apostles

Chapter 7 and onward will reveal a marked change in Moses

Something has happened to this guy

He is no longer Timid, Hesitant, and Discouraged

That is how we left him

Let’s look at Why

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE “EXALTATION” OF MOSES – v. 1**

***“And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet”***

Moses has gone from Excuses to Exaltation

This verse instructs us plainly that God does not rank men as mankind does

Moses has been so concerned about his reputation and failure,

But we see God taking care of his petty excuses

He will take care of ours as well

We need to just obey Him and do His will

Be concerned about what God thinks of your life

We need to stop worrying about our prestige, prominence, and popularity

In so doing, we will develop Godly Boldness

This statement is ironic because Pharaoh was looked upon as a god in Egypt and he considered himself to be God,

The Lord was popping the king's balloon

He is ranked lowest on the totem pole of Moses, Aaron, and Pharaoh

**Psalm 75:5, 7 - *“… Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck” “… (for) God is the Judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another”***

When the Psalmist says not to lift up the ***“horn”***

He’s talking about *defiance, strutting, or self-confidence*

This horn is not talking about a musical instrument like a trumpet

It’s referring to the horn of an animal like a bull

We use the phrase *stubborn as a bull*

We are not to be defiant toward God ordained authorities

We are not to speak with a ***“stiff neck”*** which means *stubborn rebellion or pride* against God / His Authority

**Proverbs 29:1 *– “He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”***

First, we see …

**A. The Lord made Moses like a god – v. 1 a**

***“And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh:”***

That’s a strange statement, don’t you think?

What exactly does that mean?

I think I have an answer

Let’s start with a look at **Psalm 82**, the psalm that Jesus quotes in **John 10:34**

**John 10:34 –** ***“Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?”***

**Psalm 82:6 –** ***“I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High”***

The Hebrew word translated ***“gods”*** in **Psalm 82:6**

 is *Elohim*

It usually refers to the one true God, but it does have other uses

**Psalm 82:1 –** ***“God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; He judgeth among the gods”***

It is clear from the next three verses that the word ***“gods”*** refers to Magistrates, Judges, and other people who hold positions of authority and rule

The Hebrew word *Elohim* is translated ***“judges”*** in **Exodus 21:6** and **22:8, 9**, and **28**

Calling a human magistrate a ***“god”*** indicates 3 things:

**1.** He has authority over other human beings

**2.** The power he exercises as a civil authority is to be feared

**3.** He derives his power and authority from God Himself

**Romans 13:1 *– “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God”***

God is pictured as judging the whole earth in **v. 8**

**Psalm 82:8 –** ***“Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations”***  
The use of the word ***“gods”*** to refer to humans is rare …

But it is found elsewhere in the Old Testament

As seen in our text

This simply means that Moses, as the messenger of God, was speaking God’s Words and would therefore be God’s representative to the king

The whole point of **Psalm 82** is that earthly judges must act with impartiality and true justice, because even judges must stand someday before the Great Judge

**Psalm 82: 6 & 7** warn human magistrates that they, too, must be judged

***“I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are …***

***… children of the most High” “But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes”***

This passage is saying that God has appointed men to positions of authority in which they are considered as gods among the people

They are to remember that, even though they are representing God in this world, they are mortal and must eventually give an account to God for how they used that authority  
  
Now, let’s look at how Jesus uses this passage

Jesus had just claimed to be the Son of God in **John 10:25-30**

The unbelieving Jews respond by charging Jesus with blasphemy, since He claimed to be God **– v. 33**

Jesus then quotes **Psalm 82:6**, reminding the Jews that the Law is referring to mere men …

… Albeit men of authority and prestige as ***“gods”***

Jesus’ point is this: you charge Me with blasphemy based on My use of the title ***“Son of God”***

Yet the Scriptures apply the same term to magistrates in general (to them)

If those who hold a divinely appointed office can be considered ***“gods,”***

How much more can the One whom God has chosen and sent? **– vs. 34-36**  
In contrast, we have the serpent’s lie to Eve in the Garden

His statement in **Genesis 3:5 -** ***“your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”***

… Was only a half-truth

Their eyes were opened – **v. 7**

**Genesis 3:7 *– “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons”***

But they did not become like God

In fact, they lost their authority, rather than gain it

Satan deceived Eve about her ability to become like the one true God, and so led her into a lie

Jesus defended His claim to be the Son of God on biblical grounds

There is a sense in which influential men can be thought of as *gods*; therefore, the Messiah could rightly apply the term to Himself

Human beings are not ***“gods”*** or ***“little gods”***

We are not God

God is God, and we who know Christ are His children

**B. The Lord Made Aaron the Prophet**

***“ … and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet”***

Aaron was to be Moses’ mouth piece

God was Promoting Aaron

Let’s look again at **Psalm 75**

**v. 6 - *“For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south”***

Let’s look carefully at this verse

Read it with me again …

God is giving us a wonderful truth here, let’s not miss it

What point of the compass is left out? North, right?

What is this verse saying?

It is saying that Promotion or Approval or Salvation comes from Heaven, God’s throne room, from God

Where is Heaven?

Have you ever thought about it?

This verse is one of the Bible Clues

Whenever you ask a child – “*Where is Heaven?”*

They will usually point straight up

Twelve hours later if they were still pointing upward, they would be pointing in a totally different direction

Because the earth is turning on its axis constantly, the direction (when you point upward) is constantly changing

So then, where is Heaven?

Doesn't the Bible give us some more specific clues?

It appears from a study of the Scriptures that Heaven is located in the North in our universe

For Example

**1.** The Offering of Sacrifices

When they would offer the sacrifices in the Old Testament they would offer them northward toward the Lord

Notice what Moses said in **Leviticus 1:11 *– “And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar”***

The implication is clear that the Lord is in the north

***“Northward before the Lord”*** says God's Word

North is always the same direction from this planet no matter what time of day

If you were to point to the north in the morning, twelve hours later you would still be pointing in the same direction

No matter where the earth is in its orbit about the sun, north is always the same direction in relationship to the earth

So no matter what time of day or what time of year, north is always the same direction

**2.** 3500 years ago in the book of Job …

God gave us 2 amazing scientific facts in one verse

**Job 26:7 b** says – ***“He … hangeth the earth upon nothing”***

One scientific fact is that the earth is hung in space upon nothing

History tells us that man didn’t know this,

What man did believe about the earth was scientifically in error

The Egyptians, for example, believed that the earth was a saucer held up by four pillars with a ring of mountains around the edge to keep the water from running off

The Greeks believed that the earth rested upon the back of Atlas

Because this theory was so popular and widespread, we still see its effects today

For example, when you obtain a book of maps it is called an Atlas

The Hindus believed that the earth was carried on an elephant's back and that the elephant was standing on a turtle swimming in a cosmic sea

Amazingly the Bible does not include any of these myths and fairy tales

But simply stated that the earth was hung upon nothing

Science cannot give us a better description than this

If you ask a scientist what holds the earth in place, he will say gravity

If you ask him what gravity is, he will answer it’s what holds the earth in place

Actually, they have no better answer than the one God gave us 3,500 years ago in the book of Job

**Job 26:7 a** also says – ***“He stretcheth out the north over the empty place,”***

Here is another amazing scientific fact

There is an empty place or void in the north of our universe

It was first discovered with the 200” telescope on Mount Palomar, California, and is now being studied by three separate observatories across the country

This empty place has been found to be so large that it could contain 2,000 milky ways

The Milky Way is 100,000 light years across

That would mean that light traveling at 186,000 miles per second would take 100,000 years to travel from one end of the Milky Way to the other

Many believe that heaven is located in that void in the north of our universe

Isaiah when speaking about Lucifer’s (Satan) rebellion (when he tried to overthrow God) spoke of this void in the north

**Isaiah 14:13** tells us – ***“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:***

This seems to refer to this empty corridor in the north where there are no stars

Heaven is said to be there

Another fascinating passage is found in **Psalm 48:1, 2**

***Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness” “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King”***

Without a doubt, this is a reference to the New Jerusalem and not to the earthly Jerusalem

**Hebrews 12:22 – *“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels”***

When the Bible says - ***“Beautiful for situation,”*** as the verse continues to explain, it is a reference to the fact that the city is located in the north of our universe

From ***“the sides of the north”*** God has a beautiful overview of the entire universe and of the whole earth

One day this New Jerusalem will come down from heaven to the new earth according to **Rev. 21:1, 2**

***“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”***

Believers have a home in heaven waiting for us in this heavenly city, the New Jerusalem

Jesus tells us **John 14:2, 3 – *“In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also”***

Another interesting fact about North is the whole universe of stars rotates around the North Star

**THE “EXALTATION” OF MOSES**

**II. THE “ENTIRETY” OF THE MESSAGE – v. 2**

Notice what God tells Moses next …

***“Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land”***

God expects 100% obedience from us

Moses was to speak all that God commanded

This is easier said, than done

For some, they find that God's message is difficult to deliver

Because it’s Controversial, Conflicting, and Convicting

People do not like to be told they are sinners, condemned to Hell, and that Christ is the ONLY way to Heaven

They don't like it when their lifestyle is condemned and labeled as sinful

Paul offered a warning about these kinds of responses

**II Timothy 4:3-5 – “*... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;” “And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry”***

When we are more concerned about the Lord's opinion of us, then delivering His message will be a lot easier

In my ministry, I have found that preaching expository, verse-by-verse messages through a book in the Bible act as a shield against the accusations and anger of people who may claim I am picking on them

Folks know what topics are coming up in the weeks ahead when you preach through a book

They know I am not picking on anyone when I deal with certain sins

If a sensitive issue arises, I deal with it because it's there in the verse

When we go verse by verse, we cover everything God covers in His Word

This kind of preaching helps people to learn what the Bible says about a large variety of topics

Here, we find that God's message is not popular

Israel was to be sent out of the land

If you are going to deliver difficult messages and go from Coldness to Boldness, you must be committed to obeying the Lord

As believers we need to Heed the Word of God

**Matthew 4:4 –** ***“But Jesus answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”***

**THE “EXALTATION” OF MOSES**

**THE “ENTIRETY” OF THE MESSAGE**

**III. THE “EMBITTERED” HEART – vs. 3-5**

***“And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt” “But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments”***

God said that He would harden the heart of the king

And again warns Moses that Pharaoh is not going to listen to him

**Exodus 3:19 *– “And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand”***

**A. The ‘Details’ – v. 3**

God gives us 2 Details of His Divine Dealings with Egypt

They are the hardening of the heart and the multiplying of the miracles

**1.** The Hardening of the Heart

***“I will harden Pharaoh's heart”***

Did God harden Pharaoh’s Heart or did Pharaoh harden his own heart?

What does the word ***“harden”*** mean?

It is a figurative word which means *twisting as with a rope*

God was twisting the heart of the king of Egypt

He was going to squeeze out what was in his heart like a man who squeezes a wet towel

The Lord was forcing Pharaoh to do what was already in his heart

He would Expose Pharaoh for what he truly was

God in His wonderful grace and longsuffering, gave Pharaoh every opportunity to obey

But he refused to listen to the Lord and obey Him

Few forms of judgment in this life are as severe upon mankind as the judgment in which God lets you have your own (sinful) way

If you want a hard heart and persist in a hard heart,

God will see to it that your request is granted

If you insist upon doing something or getting something which God forbids,

The Lord in His judgment may go ahead and let you do or get what you want,

But it will not be long before you will loath the day you ever wanted your own way because of the misery you will have created for yourself

Beloved, God NEVER compels a man to be an unbeliever

His grace is for all men, not a select few,

But His grace can be resisted because men have been given the ability to choose for themselves

God's grace is extended to all men,

But His grace can be resisted to the point where you won't listen anymore

The Holy Spirit can be grieved

This issue of a hard heart is dealt with all throughout the Bible

**Proverbs 28:14 – “*Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief”***

The word ***“hardeneth”*** here carries the idea of something *severe, harsh, stubborn, obstinate, difficult or stiff*

This same word is used to describe severe labor pains of a mother giving birth

The person who has a stubborn, harsh heart will fall

The word ***“fall”*** is a very strong word

It means *to cast or throw down violently or to be knocked out*

The hard hearted will fall into ***“mischief”*** which means *evil, distress, misery, injury, or calamity*

This is what eventually happens to Pharaoh and Egypt

**Proverbs 29:1 – “*He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”***

Whoever stubbornly refuses to accept correction will suddenly be destroyed beyond recovery

The destruction from their hardness will be swift

The word ***“destroyed”*** means *to shatter, break in pieces, or to crush*

The damage from their decision is beyond repair,

Like a can that is crushed or a glass that is shattered

We needs to realize that everything we do as consequences (you reap what you sow)

Some things you won’t be able to fix

This is an adequate description of what happens to Pharaoh and the Egyptian army

**Hebrews 3:13 – “*But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”***

**Acts 28:27 – “*For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them”***

**Romans 1:28 – “*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;”***

**Ill.** A man was driving down a country road when he saw a bag of cement beside the road. It appeared to have fallen off a delivery truck as it hit one of the bumps in the road. Being a person who did not like to see anything wasted, the man stopped to pick up the lost bag of cement. When he reached down to pick up this heavy bag, to his surprise, he discovered it was not soft and limber, as he had expected, but had solidified into an immovable piece of cement.

Beloved, often our Lives are like that bag of cement

They take on shapes that were not intended and become hardened in that shape

That bag of cement was meant to become a part of a beautiful, useful structure

But, because it did not reach its place of service, because it was not used for its intended purpose,

It became a useless rock in the form of a bag of cement

God wants to make something beautiful of your life

Don't let His will and purpose be thwarted by spiritual neglect or a bump in the road of life

Don't let bitterness and anger toward the Lord, rob you of His wonderful blessings

When we resist the Lord, we become cold

As the sun can soften butter, it can also harden clay

God's Word can soften or harden you based on your response to it

Just as God was squeezing Pharaoh, revealing what was in his heart, He will do the same to us

When we are judged by the Lord, we will be seen as we really are with no camouflage

**II Corinthians 5:10 – “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”***

Our rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ will reveal our life and our works

Realizing that we will give an account of our lives one day should motivate us to be careful not to let our hearts get hard!

**2.** The Multiplying of the Miracles

***“I will... multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt”***

In a few words, the destruction of Egypt is predicted

Those signs and wonders spoke of the devastating plagues that would come upon Egypt over the next year or so and bring great destruction upon the land

One blow after another from God would make short work of Egypt

When men refuse to repent when judged

God simply brings another judgment

How often this happens in the world with individuals and with nations

They seem never to learn (The Book of Judges)

They rebel against God and live wicked lives

God sends judgment upon the nation in the form of storms or diseases or wars

Does the nation learn? / Seldom

Rather, they get up off the ground, where God's blow has laid them, and go right on sinning more

No genuine Repentance

**B. The ‘Design’ – vs. 4, 5**

The Designs of God's judgment upon Egypt had many purposes

God always has many reasons and objectives in mind when He does something

I’d like to look at 2

**1.** Deliverance – **v. 4**

***“That I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments”***

Egypt had for many years oppressed the Israelites

God had spoken to them through Moses to let the people go

But they paid no attention to the Word of God

Therefore, God had to resort to Judgment to cause Egypt to let Israel go

It is easy for us to see the folly of Egypt's stubborn rebellion,

But it is not so easy for us to see the same within ourselves

However, it is often there in our heart

God speaks to us to do something, but we ignore His gentle voice speaking to us

Then God speaks more earnestly and strongly

Yet, we continue to ignore Him

Finally God comes upon us with the strong arm of His judgments and smites us

And sometimes He must smite us again and again before we obey

Let’s be diligent to heed God when He first speaks to us so that we do not have to be smitten before we obey Him

Being smitten by God extracts a cost we cannot afford to pay

**2.** Discernment **– v. 5**

Another reason for the judgment upon Egypt is that

***“the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them”***

Back in chapter 6 we learned that Israel would come to know Jehovah God much better because of their deliverance from Egypt

**Exodus 6:7 *– “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”***

Here we learn that the Egyptians will also have their knowledge of Jehovah God increased

However, Egypt's learning about Jehovah God will be through judgment, not through emancipation

**CONCLUSION**

How much better to learn about God in redemption than in Judgment

When we are redeemed, our hearts and minds are illuminated regarding the knowledge of God

The Word of God ceases to be a closed book, and God opens our mind to perceive the things of God

This learning of God is a great blessing to our souls

But when men reject God, it is a different story

They will still eventually learn about God, …

… but not in a way that will rejoice their hearts

They will learn the hard way

They will find out at the judgment throne of God many truths about God, but it will all be to their sorrow

Which way will you learn about God?

**THE HARDENING OF THE HEART**

**THE “EXALTATION” OF MOSES**

**THE “ENTIRETY” OF THE MESSAGE**

**THE “EMBITTERED” HEART**