THE HARDENING OF THE HEART

PART 2

 **DATE:**

**TEXT: Exodus 7:6-13**

**INTRODUCTION**

It’s been a while since we looked at the Life of Moses

If you remember we said that …

**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

Now God has commanded Moses and his brother to go again in unto Pharaoh **– v. 6**

In the first half of this message, we looked at 3 thoughts in **vs. 1-5**

**THE “EXALTATION” OF MOSES – v. 1**

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

**THE “EMBITTERED” HEART – vs. 3-5**

We pickup in **v. 6** as we look at the last 2 thoughts of our message

**v. 5** tells us that God would squeeze Pharaoh

God squeezed Pharaoh to demonstrate His power and the fact that He is God, and not Pharaoh

The result would be that the Egyptians would know that the Lord is God and believe

Did some of the Egyptians believe?

I believe the answer to that is Yes

They were called the ***“mixed multitude”*** that departed from Egypt with Israel – **Ex. 12:38**

***“And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle”***

Let’s stand and read **vs. 6-13** and then pray to begin thissecond half of the Messageon …

**“The Hardening of the Heart”**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**IV. THE “ELDERLY” SERVANTS – vs. 6-9**

One of the things we learn in this section is of the faithfulness of Moses and Aaron in fulfilling their God-given assignments

It is worthy to note that from here on, throughout the exodus of Israel from Egypt …

The obedience of Moses and Aaron was impeccable

No longer is there any resistance on their part to God's orders

They will indeed do ***“as the Lord commanded them”***

**A. Obeying God**

Moses and Aaron did exactly what God told them to do

They were obedient to the Lord **– v. 6**

***“And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they”***

It may seem difficult at times to obey the Lord

But we need to just Go ahead and obey God

**I Samuel 15:22 –** ***“And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”***

Why is Obedience so important to God?

**1.** Obedience to God proves our Love for Him

**I John 5:2, 3 – *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments” “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous”***

**2.** Demonstrates our Faithfulness to Him

**I John 2:3-6 *– “And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments” “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” “But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him” “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked”***

**3.** Glorifies Him to the World

**I Peter 2:12 *– “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation”***

**4.** Opens avenues of Blessing for us

**John 13:17 *– “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them”***

We need to Obey Him in baptism, tithing, faithfulness, witnessing, and standing for Christ

**B. Senior Saints – v. 7**

Do you notice that after God is done commanding His servant that He states their age? (Interesting)

***“And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh”***

Why do you think that is?

You know, I read, that you might be a senior if …

-- You sing along with elevator music

-- You remember when gasoline was 26 cents a gallon

-- You’re proud of your lawnmower

-- When you are with your friends, all you talk about are your doctor’s visits

-- You stop holding your stomach in, no matter who comes into the room

-- You have more hair in your ears than on your head

We find Moses is 80 and his brother Aaron is 83

The lesson here is … don't let your age become an excuse for not serving God

They both still had 40 years left to serve the Lord

Moses died at the age of 120

**Deuteronomy 34:7 *– “And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated”***

And Aaron at 123

**Numbers 33:38, 39 – *“And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month” “And Aaron was an hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor”***

We can’t use our age as an excuse for doing nothing

**Quote:** Someone once said – *“The world stands aside, to let anyone pass who knows where he is going.”*

This applies to those, who learn where they are going late in life as well as for the young

-- Margaret Thatcher became Britain's first female prime minister at age 53

-- Francis Chichester sailed alone around the world in a 53’ sailboat at the age of 64

-- Golda Meir became prime minister of Israel at age 72

-- Winston Churchill became British prime minister for the first time and started the epic struggle against Hitler at age 65

-- Ed Delano of California, bicycled 3100 miles in 33 days to attend his 50th college reunion in Worcester, Massachusetts at age 75

-- Grandma Moses started painting in her late 70’s

-- Benjamin Franklin skillfully mediated between disagreeing factions at the U.S. Constitutional Convention at age 81

-- Winston Churchill returned to the House of Commons as a member of parliament at age 80

-- George C. Selbach scored a 110-yard hole-in-one at Indian River, Michigan at age 96

-- On his 100th birthday, pianist Eubie Blake exclaimed, *“If I'd known I was going to live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself”*

Beloved, serve the Lord until you drop

What part do Senior’s play in the Church?

**1.** First and foremost as Pray Warriors

Senior saints that are retired have a little more time in their schedules

They need to be taking a little more time to be praying for the needs of others

**Luke 2:36, 37 *– “And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;” “And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day”***

**II Corinthians 4:16 – *“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day”***

**2.** As Mentors to the next Generation

The Bible calls it Discipleship

**Titus 2:1-8 …**

**Psalms 71:18 – *“Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed Thy strength unto this generation, and Thy power to every one that is to come”***

**3.** As Encouragers

**Job 12:12 – *“With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding”*
Luke 2:25-38 – *“And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him”***

**Psalms 92:14 – *“They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;”*
Isaiah 46:4 – *“And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you”***

**Psalms 91:16 – *“With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him My salvation”*

Psalms 37:25 – *“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”***

**THE “ELDERLY” SERVANTS**

**V. THE “ENCOUNTER” WITH PHARAOH – vs. 10-13 …**

Moses and Aaron now go to Pharaoh the second time,

This time with a changed message which demands more than a time to worship in the desert … but a demand for total freedom from Egypt

The demand is accompanied this time by the rendering of two miracles involving Sticks, Snakes and Sorcerers

To study these miracles, let’s look at a few things

**A. The ‘Stick’ – v. 10 a**

***“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”***

The Bible calls this Stick a ***“rod”***

Aaron obeyed God, cast down his Rod before the king

What was the significance of Aaron’s rod?

Aaron’s rod, or staff, played in important part in God’s plan to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promised Land

In ancient Israelite culture, a rod was a symbol of authority

Shepherds used rods to guide and correct their flocks

**Psalm 23:4 –** ***“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me”***

When God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt,

He demonstrated His power by performing miracles using Moses’ rod

**Exodus 4:1–5 …**

**Numbers 20:11 *– “And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water***

***… came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also”***

God also used Aaron to perform miracles with his rod

In **Exodus 7:19** we see this happening ***– “And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone”***

The most famous story of Aaron’s rod begins with a few of the Levites becoming disgruntled with Moses and Aaron authority

In **Numbers 16**, Korah, who was also a Levite, joined with two others, Dathan and Abarim, to incite a rebellion against Moses and Aaron

In **v. 3** Korah tells Moses – ***“… Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?”***

Because of this defiance of the Lord’s authority, God caused the earth to open up and swallow these three men and their families (**vs. 28–33**)

However, rather than submit to the Lord, the other leaders continued the revolt

**Numbers 16:41** says - ***“But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD”***

The Lord was not happy and wanted to wipe out the whole bunch of them

But Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and pleaded with God not to

God relented and, instead, sent a plague throughout the company of rebellious Israel;

**v. 49** tells us that the plague killed 14,700 of them

To put an end to the unrest, God once again used Aaron’s rod for a miracle

God commanded Moses to have the leader of each tribe of Israel bring his rod or staff to the tent of meeting, with Aaron’s rod representing the tribe of Levi

Each of the twelve leaders was to have his name inscribed on his rod

The Lord told Moses in **Numbers 17:5 –** ***“And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from Me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you”***

They left their rods before the Lord, and in the morning **v. 8** tells us …

***“And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds”***

Aaron’s rod didn’t just sprout buds; it brought forth flowers and fruit, a clear demonstration of the power of the One who gives life

**v. 10** says – ***“And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from Me, that they die not”***

**Hebrews 9:4** tells us that Aaron’s rod remained in the Ark of the Covenant as a testimony of God’s choice of Aaron and Moses to lead His people

Aaron’s rod was also a reminder that God does not put up with the rebellious

Against Himself or His chosen representatives on earth

**I Corinthians 10:10 *– “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer”***

Those who murmur, complain, and cause division within the Body of Christ are to be rebuked

**James 5:9 –** ***“Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door”***

**I Timothy 5:20 *– “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear”***

**II Timothy 2:23 –*“But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes”***

God’s plans on earth are far beyond any single human being

He desires that we work together, in one accord, to obey Him and reflect His glory

According to His Word, not what we think or feel!

**B. The ‘Snakes’ – v. 10 b**

**“… *and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent”***

The word ***“serpent”*** here means *dragon or crocodile*

They occupied a large place in the worship and religion of Egypt

Egyptians worshiped all kinds of creatures, birds, insects, etc.

**Romans 1:22, 23 – “… *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,” “And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things”***

In Egypt, Sebak was the deity of evil with a crocodile head

He represented their creator god

Apepi was the enemy of the sun god and had a crocodile form

He was attributed to stirring up lightning, thunder, and storms, filling the skies with blackness and fog

What does the Bible say about Snakes or Serpents?

Snakes or serpents get plenty of attention in the Bible,

Which mentions them over 80 times

Snakes showed up also …

-- In the wilderness in **Numbers 21:5-9**

-- On the island of Malta - **Acts 28:3**

-- And, of course, in the Garden of Eden – **Gen. 3:1**

They are almost always pictured as loathsome creatures, associated with poison and craftiness

As amoral creatures, snakes are not “evil” in themselves

But they are a handy metaphor for evil in many passages

And that’s because of Satan’s use of one in the Garden

**Genesis 3:1 a –** ***“Now the serpent was more subtil …***

***… than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made”***

In some way, the serpent was used by Satan to lie to Eve and lead her into disobedience

Adam soon followed

As God was meting out punishments, He cursed the snake,

**v. 14 – *“And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:”***

Every time we see a snake slithering, limbless, on the ground, we have a reminder of the Fall of man and the Effects of sin

Ever since Satan spoke his lies through the serpent to Eve, the snake has been associated with sin

The snake, as a symbol of Satan, has wound its way around the human heart and filled ot with its poison

Try as we might, we cannot rid ourselves of its influence

In fact, by the time we get to the book of Revelation,

The serpent in the Garden has become a raging dragon bent on world domination

Following a battle in heaven in **Revelation 12:9** -

***“the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world”***

We need help in our battle against this ***“great dragon”***

Fortunately, from the very beginning, God had a plan

That Plan was The Saviour,

Speaking to the serpent in the Garden, God says –

**Genesis 3:15 *– “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”***

This is known as the *protoevangelium*, or *first gospel*

God promised that the Seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent

A prophecy that the virgin-born Son of God would win a decisive victory over the power of the devil

Jesus said that He had come to save us all from the serpent’s bite

**John 3:14, 15 *– “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:” “That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life”***

**John 12:32 –*“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me”***

-- The Lord Jesus is the serpent-crusher

-- He’s our dragon-slayer

-- He’s the head Buster

And one day, when He establishes His kingdom on this earth, all of creation will be restored to its original, harmless state - snakes included

**Isaiah 11:8, 9 *– “And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den” “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea”***

**The “Stick”**

**The “Snake”**

**C. The ‘Sorcerers’ – v. 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”***

The reason Pharaoh called the magicians was to hopefully obtain from them, a reason for rejecting the message the miracle of Aaron's rod gave

If Pharaoh can obtain an equal or superior miracle from his magicians, who represent the gods of Egypt,

Then he does not have to give respect to Moses and Aaron or to the God they claimed sent them

Which would mean Pharaoh would not have to grant their request to leave and worship

The wise men were the educated ones

They knew the occult arts

The sorcerers muttered magic spells and formulas

The magicians were the bearers of sacred words and the scribes of hieroglyphic writings

**D. The ‘Swallowing’ – v. 12**

***“For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods”***

These men duplicated the miracle of Moses, most likely through Satanic powers

This is possible

**II Timothy 3:8 – “*Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith”***

I’m not sure how Paul knows their names

Satan has the ability to imitate parts of God's work in order to lead others astray

He has the ability to offer all kinds of counterfeits, miracles, signs, and wonders to deceive mankind

Satan likes to simulate, to duplicate, to imitate Divine deeds and works

He does this in the spiritual realm in order to deceive mankind into rejecting God's truth and embracing error

Here, it was done to keep Pharaoh from believing God,

And Pharaoh took the bait and embraced his unbelief

Satan's counterfeiting of God's work is repeatedly seen and warned about in the Scriptures and in experience

The Apostle Paul speaks of this Simulating work of Satan in his epistles

**II Corinthians 11:13-15 – “…*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ” “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” “Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works”***

**II Thessalonians 2:9 – “*Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,”***

**Matthew 24:24 - “*For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect”***

*The fact that Aaron's rod swallowed up the magician's demonstrates the power of God is greater than Satan's power*

There is a great message here

God's power will totally swallow up and destroy Satan once and for all / Good riddens!

When Jesus arose, He conquered sin, self and Satan

It’s very encouraging to know that when God so pleases, He can swallow up any of His enemies

The enemies of God may put on a show and deceive many,

But God can take care of the best the enemy has to offer

**E. The ‘Sureness’ – v. 13**

***“And He hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said”***

What this means is Pharaoh's heart was too hard for the sign [miracles] to make much impression on it

The emphasis here is that the coldness of Pharaoh's heart kept him from letting the miracles influence him

Pharaoh's heart had become hard because of sin and a hard heart will not be receptive to God's revelations,

But will rebel against the decrees of the Lord

Pharaoh's heart hardened as God had said

The Lord knew this was going to happen

Pharaoh focused on the miracles, not the message

Matching miracles was a test of power and credentials

God's Word is to be the basis of faith, beloved, not miracles

This error that Pharaoh made is the same one that many are making today

Mark it down, if a miracle of God takes place, the miracle will not lead people to contradict or disobey God's Word

It will not rob God of His glory

We are not to be on a quest for supernatural miracles to get in touch with God

We have His supernatural Word that can speak to our heart if we will let it speak to us

God's Word can help us go from coldness to boldness

**CONCLUSION**