PICKING PHARAOH’S POCKET

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**TEXT: Exodus 9:1-7**

**INTRODUCTION**

Isn't it amazing how those who claim to be knowledgeable and wise, always end up making fools of themselves?

Scientists proclaim we evolved from amoeba's and monkeys, yet continue to act just like them

Politicians proclaim their allegiance to our children by spending money on education and passing laws to imprison child molesters,

Yet, they pass laws allowing children to be murdered in abortion clinics

God has stated very clearly that He created Heaven and earth and that murder is wrong

Especially innocent blood

**Psalm 106:38 – *“And (they) shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood”***

Yet, men don't get the message

Pharaoh didn't get the message either

Why? Because he was proud, arrogant, and cocky

He has no use for Moses’ God in his life

In fact, the king considers himself a god …

Therefore, wasn’t going to let the Hebrew God push him around

The LORD has been patiently trying to show Pharaoh that he is not a god

In **v. 1** we see God's instructions again to the king is to Let His People Go

This commission given Moses is substantially the same one that has been given him repeatedly

**Exodus 5:1; 7:16; 8:1; & 8:20** and now again here

That's pretty simple and clear

You would think he would have gotten the message and submitted to the LORD by now

He has dealt with water turning into blood, an invasion of frogs, an onslaught of stinging gnats or ticks, and an infestation of flies

Pharaoh is one stubborn cuss

He is getting harder and more stubborn after each plague

He is determined to have his own way

So, the LORD turns up the heat once again

This is a showdown of power or a test of wills

This Plague is going to hit Pharaoh and the Egyptians were it often hurts most …

The Pocket Book

So, let’s look at how God Picked Pharaoh’s Pocket

That’s what I want to preach on …

**“PICKING PHARAOH’S POCKET”**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

First, let’s look at …

**I. GOD’S “COMMAND” – vs. 1-3**

Pharaoh is fortunate that God has not abolished, demolished, or polished him off

God in His mercy gives him another opportunity to obey

… Even though he has been Faithless and Disobedient

Forgiveness and Blessing are available if he will let God's people go

God gives us new opportunities every day to serve and submit to Him,

But, like Pharaoh, many choose not to

Let me say that the day will come when the opportunities will end

If you do not know the Lord as your Saviour, you need to put your faith in Him NOW!

If you know Him, yet are not serving Him, it would be a good thing to start today

God as provided many ways to get involved in His Ministry

**A. The ‘Caution’ – v. 2**

.. Is … *don’t do it*

***“For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still …”***

Notice the little phrase ***“For if” …***

God’s about to tell Pharaoh what’s going to happen next

And the word ***“if”*** goes a long way in doing that

The word ***‘if’*** is interesting

The word ***“If”*** is conditional

It is one of the most important words in the Bible because it speaks directly to our responsibility to God

Most promises in the Bible have Conditions and the word ***‘if’*** speaks to those conditions

Our responses to God’s commands affect our relationship with Him and determine our receiving from Him

Jesus used the word ***‘if’*** all the time

Of the 602 occurrences in the New Testament, 247 are in the four Gospels (over a 1/3 of them)

Jesus always put the ***‘if’*** on man’s side and never on God’s side

The following are a few of the uses of the word ***‘if’*** in the Bible

**1.** The word ***‘If’*** and Hearing

**Job 34:16 – *“If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words”***

If you have Understanding it’s because you are a listener

The Bible tells us to get Understanding

**Proverbs 4:7 –*“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding”***

To do this we need to Hear and Hearken

Hearken means *to regard and to respond and do*

**Psalm 81:8 – *“Hear, O My people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto Me;”***

There are those who Do and those who Don’t!

**2.** The word ***‘if’*** and Listening

**Deuteronomy 15:5 – *“Only if thou carefully hearken (listen to) unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day”***

***1 Samuel 12:14,15 – “If ye will fear the LORD, and serve Him, and obey His voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God:” “But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers”***

**3.** The word ***‘if’*** and Obeying

**Exodus 19:5 – *“Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is mine:”***

**Exodus 23:22 –*“But if thou shalt indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries”***

**II Thessalonians 3:14 –*“And if any man obey Not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed”***

**The ‘Caution’**

**B. The ‘Consequences’ – v. 3**

… For not hearkening to the Voice of the LORD

***“Behold, the hand of the LORD (will be) upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain”***

If Pharaoh refused to obey (again) the hand of the LORD would be upon the cattle in the fields which would include their horses, donkeys, camels, oxen, and sheep

Murrain was an epidemic pestilence, possibly anthrax which was highly contagious and deadly

Murrain is a very contagious disease among cattle,

The symptoms of which are a hanging down and swelling of the head, abundance of junk in the eyes, rattling in the throat, difficulty breathing, palpitation of the heart, staggering, hot breath, and a shining tongue

Our English word murrain comes from a French word which means *to die*, or from the Greek word which means *to grow lean, and waste away*

With the pestilence of flies, it would be very easy to see how this disease was spread

The bacteria from feeding on dead frogs and fish would be easily spread by an infestation of biting flies

With each appeal, the LORD gets louder and more severe,

But after every demand there is a pause, an opportunity to ponder, to yield, or to forsake the path of judgment …

Or else experience further punishment

The heart of God does not want to punish

His desire is to bless, but His holiness demands a price for sin and disobedience

**II Peter 3:9 – *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”***

**1.** This Plague would be the Severest Plague thus far

Why? - Cattle were a large part of the wealth of the land

The wealth of a person was determined by the animals he possessed

God was targeting the pocketbooks of the Egyptians

They depended upon their livestock for everything

Food, dairy, produce, work animals

Imagine what would happen here in the United States if all the sheep, cows, pigs, and horses died

Our food bill and clothing would sky-rocket

Let me say right here that if someone is not willing to obey the Lord,

God may target our pocketbook as well, in order to get our attention

God was not only targeting Egypt’s finances, but …

**2.** God was also again targeting the Egyptian religious system

The religious implications of this plague are very interesting

A large number of bulls and cows were considered sacred in Egypt

In the central area of the Delta, four provinces chose as their emblems various types of bulls and cows

A cemetery called a necropolis of sacred bulls was discovered near Memphis, Egypt

-- Ptah and Apis

The Apis bull was considered the sacred animal of the god Ptah

Ptah was the creator and Apis represented fertility

There was at any one-time, only one sacred Apis bull

But as soon as it died another was chosen to take its place, an event that attracted a great deal of attention

This sacred bull was supposed to have been recognized by 28 distinctive marks that identified him as deity and indicated that he was the object of worship

When a bull died, the Egyptians mummified them and put them in tombs

The second largest Egyptian temple was built at Memphis and was for the purpose of worshiping bulls

-- Hathor

Would have been another deity affected by the impact of the Plague

This was the goddess of love, beauty, joy and was represented by the cow

The worship of this deity was centered mainly in the city of Denderah,

(Although its popularity was also witnessed by representations found in other parts of Egypt)

This goddess is often depicted as a cow suckling the king, giving him divine nourishment

In upper Egypt the goddess appears as a woman with the head of a cow

In another town—Hathor was a woman, but her head was adorned with two horns of a cow with a sun disc between them

Then a 3rd god that would have been affected by the Plague was …

-- Mnevis

This deity was another scared bull venerated at Heliopolis and associated with the Egyptian god Re

The death of the livestock would have demonstrated the inability of the Egyptian gods to protect these sacred animals

As material possessions of livestock were considered gods in Egypt,

Material possessions are almost considered as gods in the USA as well

Money may bring temporary fulfillment, but not eternal satisfaction

The Lord may allow trying circumstances in our life to show us that our possessions cannot satisfy us

True Peace and satisfaction are found only in the Lord

**Isaiah 26:3 – “*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee”***

**GOD’S “COMMAND” TO MOSES**

Next, let’s look at …

**II. PHARAOH’S “CHANCE” – vs. 4, 5**

The LORD is Longsuffering and Patience even with the vilest of sinners

Again, **II Peter 3:9** tells us that **– *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”***

We find the LORD doing just this with Pharaoh in these verses

**A. The ‘Care’ of the LORD – v. 4**

***“And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel”***

The miracle of sparing the livestock of Israel would be a demonstration again of the Power of God

The fulfilment of God's promise is seen in **v. 6** –

***“but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one”***

His promise is still the same for today

**John 6:39 – *“And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day”***

**John 10:28 – “*And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand”***

**B. A ‘Chance’ to Obey – v. 5**

***“And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, …***

***… To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land”***

God again demonstrated His Grace and Mercy

***“Tomorrow the Lord shall do this thing”***

The Lord gave an opportunity for those who believed this announcement to bring their animals out of the fields

All the cattle in the fields would and did die

Some did believe and their cattle survived

Look at **v. 20 - “*He that feared the Word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses:”***

This is the third time the word ***“tomorrow”*** is associated with Pharaoh

(previous mentioned in **8:10** & **29**)

But in each case Pharaoh Misused his ***“tomorrow”***

His opportunity to repent

He is not alone in that habit

Many are they in every age who misuse their ***“tomorrows”***

God gives them time to escape Divine judgment,

But they spurn His gracious ***“tomorrows”*** and suffer judgment instead

What fools!

**II Corinthians 6:2 – *“(For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”***

Tomorrow may be to late!

**GOD’S “COMMAND”**

**PHARAOH’S “CHANCE”**

Finally, let’s look at …

**III. THE “COMPLETION” – vs. 6, 7**

What God says will happen, happens!

His Word is sure and true

The cattle of Egypt died just as He said they would

**Matthew 5:18 – “*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled”***

**Luke 21:33 – “*Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away”***

**Psalm 111:7 – “*The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure”***

This was a miracle

By Schedule: It took place on the appointed day

By Severity: All the cattle in the fields of Egypt died

By Separation: The Egyptian cattle were the only ones that died

**A. The ‘Carnage’ – v. 6**

***“And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one”***

After each plague we think things couldn’t get any worse, but they do

The previous plagues have been very destructive

But the Carnage from this one is not to be outdone by what was done before

This plague was a ***“very grievous murrain”*** that destroyed the livestock

Specifically ***“all the cattle of Egypt died”***

The Carnage of this plague demonstrated how adversely the plague affected their Religion and their Resources

God’s been trying to get Pharaoh to let is people go Worship

If he won’t, Egypt won’t be able to worship either

**B. The Continued ‘Contempt’ – v. 7**

***“And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go”***

Pharaoh sent someone to check Israel's cattle

Sure enough, it was as God said

Pharaoh seems unmoved

He does not give in, show repentance, or cry "Uncle!"

Perhaps he rationalized that there were better lands, water, and air in Goshen or the Jews were better vets

The king knew that this murrain was from God

It came as predicted. Israel's cattle were protected

The king was hardened and embittered even more toward God

He was under conviction, but his conviction did not compel him to obedience

How many times have we been convicted, but we did nothing about it?

Don't rationalize away the Word of God as the Pharaoh of Egypt did

God warns us about our stubbornness and hardheartedness

**1.** The Deception of Sin hardens us

**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”***

**2.** We will be Disturbed by Sorrow and Suffering

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

**3.** Our Destruction will be Sudden

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

When we make the same mistake of ignoring God's cautions, we court disaster

People must face the consequences of refusing to learn from, and obey God

Unfortunately, for some, the consequences are eternal

**CONCLUSION**

**GOD’S “COMMAND”**

**PHARAOH’S “CHANCE”**

**THE “COMPLETION”**

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