

Exodus 7:1-7 | THE HARDENED HEART

LifeGroup Questions*

Then you will know...

Read Exodus 7:1-7

- i. How does God lay out what is about to happen (v 3-5)?
- ii. What is the purpose of the plagues (v 5)?

It is not only Israel who needs to know who God is. Egypt need to know he is the Lord too. The whole world does. It's worth asking the question: Why the first nine plagues? The tenth plague was the one that made the difference and saw God's people finally allowed to go. Why not skip straight to the tenth? Why all the bother and suffering of the first nine?

Read Exodus 9:14-16

- iii. What could God have done? Why didn't he, then?

The ten plagues are a demonstration of his power. In this sense, they are missional. Their aim is that God's name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

A hardened heart

Read Exodus 7:13-14; 7:22-23; 8:15-19; 10:1, 20

- i. What did you see happening to Pharaoh's heart? Who was in charge of it?
- ii. Read Exodus 1:8-16. What was Pharaoh's heart like before God hardened it?
- iii. Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart (Ex. 7:4)?

Three times we're told about Pharaoh's heart: that it "became hard", "was hard" and "was unyielding" (7:22; 8:19; 9:7). Three times we're told that Pharaoh "hardened his heart" (8:15, 32; 9:34). But it is also true that Pharaoh refused to listen because the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart (9:12; 10:20, 27). We have to take both these perspectives seriously. Pharaoh determined Pharaoh's actions, and God determined his actions. Pharaoh freely chose to do what God had freely chosen that he would do.

Our hearts

The hardening of our hearts overthrows reason. We find excuses for our sinful and proud desires. We find reasons for doing what we want to do. When it all unravels, we wade further into sin, rather than accepting our terrible mistake and backing away from it. That is what Pharaoh did. And that is why we need others to encourage us to fight sin, and expose for us the deceit of sin when we cannot see it for ourselves.

Read Hebrews 3:13

- i. Who are you doing this for?
- ii. Who do you have who you have asked to do it for you?

*adapted from Tim Chester 'Explore' Exodus Bible Study