

Additional notes for teachers:

Many of the notes comprise deeper matters which have arisen in the course of preparation of the Students Notes. Other material has been appended for the purpose of providing background, explanations or interesting detail.

LESSON 19**1. PHARAOH HARDENED HIS HEART**

From the beginning God had said "I will harden his heart" (Exod. 4:21; 7:3-5). Exod. 7:22 notes the fact without saying who did the hardening, but it is evident it was in response to the magicians' enchantments. Pharaoh refused to acknowledge the supremacy of God because the Egyptians could duplicate these signs. So Pharaoh's mind was as the Lord had foreseen.

This suggests the identity of "he" in Exod. 7:13 also. Subsequent passages are more definite that, after each plague Pharaoh hardened his heart (Exod. 7:22; 8:15; 8:19; 8:32; 9:7). But from the 6th plague, "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart" (Exod. 9:12; 9:35; 10:20; 10:27).

Pharaoh's responsibility is seen in Exod. 9:27-30; 34-35; 10:3. (cf. I Sam. 6:6).

In actual fact, God's mercy was extended to Pharaoh. God could rightly have destroyed him for his obstinacy. Instead He gave him opportunity again and again for repentance (See Exod. 9:15-16 RSV). So the same opportunity was extended to Pharaoh's servants (Exod. 9:17-21; See also Rom. 9:15-18).

2. COMMENTS ON THE PLAGUES

- (1) The Egyptian sorcerers are usually identified with Jannes and Jambres (II Tim.3:8).
- (2) It may be questioned whether Israel did suffer from the first three plagues or whether God did from the beginning make a difference between Israel and Egypt. This distinction is clearly stated in relation to five plagues (4, 5, 7, 9, 10; see Exod. 8:22; 9:4; 9:26; 10:23; 11:5,7). In each of these places "all the land of Egypt" does not include Goshen. Thus the same expression in the other five plagues may possibly exclude Goshen too (Exod. 7:19-21; 8:5-6, 16-17; 9:9; 10:14-15).
- (3) Although "all the cattle of Egypt died" (Exod. 9:6) in the 5th plague, cattle appear again in Exod. 9:19; 9:25; 11:5. In the meantime the Egyptians may have purchased more e.g. from the Israelites, or as suggested by Bro. Roberts, only the cattle "in the field" (Exod. 9:3) were killed – any under shelter were not.
- (4) The "darkness" of the 9th plague may have further connotations. When Israel left Egypt a cloud moved between them and the pursuing Egyptians giving light to one and darkness to the other. This is similar to the cloud and pillar of fire which led them in the wilderness – which overshadowed the Tabernacle and filled the Temple. So we are led to consider it as a consistent manifestation. The Lord dwells in thick darkness (I Kings 8). Was it then this cloud of the glory of the Lord which overshadowed the whole land of Egypt (See Num 14:22) and as a result His firstborn "Son" was "Bought forth"? Consider also Luke 1:35; Mark 13:24 (darkness) and verses 26-27.

TEACHING METHODS

1. Tie this lesson to Egyptian history and idolatry rather than view it just as a series of isolated plagues.
2. Let the obstinacy, yet complete impotence of Pharaoh be brought out as a lesson to humble us before the mighty hand of God.
3. Allot time to each plague in turn; each has its points of interest.
4. Refer older scholars to Rom. 9:15-21 for an understanding of how God is the Creator and His will is sovereign.