

Today's Sermon
God's Mission and Your Heart (Exodus 9-10)

Phil Layton, GCBC, Dec. 11, 2022

Please turn to Ex 10 and I want to turn back to an Egyptian poem written near Moses' time.

- The official records of Pharaohs didn't record their defeats,
- but an Egyptian citizen Ipuwer wrote to someone he calls 'the Lord of all'
- this is some of what's recorded in this Ipuwer Papyrus:
 'There's blood everywhere...to the river is blood...one thirsts for water' (p. 151).

[Ex 7]

'Lo, many dead are buried' (p. 152). [in Ex 9:19 hail kills men in fields, Ex 11 the sons]
 'Lo, trees are felled, branches stripped' (p. 153) [in Ex 9:25 hail breaks trees, branches]
 'Birds find neither fruit nor herbs' (p. 154). [hail kills trees/plants, Ex 10 locusts eat rest]
 'Lo, grain is lacking on all sides' (p. 155). [in Ex 9-10 grain is struck down all around]
 'All is ruin!' (p. 152). [look at Ex 10:7, Egyptians tell Pharaoh all of Egypt is ruined!]¹
 This is true history, but what's the purpose of it all, why, so that what?

9:13 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, **that they may serve me.** ¹⁴ For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, **so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.** ¹⁵ For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. ¹⁶ **But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.** ¹⁷ You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go. ¹⁸ Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. ¹⁹ Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for **every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them.**" ' ' ²⁰ Then whoever feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, ²¹ but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the LORD left his slaves and his livestock in the field. ²² Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man and beast and every plant of the field, in the land of Egypt." ²³ Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. ²⁴ There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵ The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field. ²⁶ Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail. ²⁷ Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, "This time I have sinned; the LORD [Yahweh] is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸ Plead with the LORD [beg Yahweh] for there has been enough of God's thunder and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer." ²⁹ Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the LORD. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, **so that you may know that the earth is the LORD's.** ³⁰ But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God." ³¹ (The flax and the barley were struck down, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. ³² But the wheat and the emmer were not struck down, for they are late in coming up.) ³³ So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and stretched out his hands to the LORD, and the thunder and the hail ceased,

and the rain no longer poured upon the earth. ³⁴ But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. ³⁵ So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

10:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, **that I may show these signs** of mine among them, ² and **that you may tell** in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, **that you may know that I am the LORD.**” ³ So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. ⁴ For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, ⁵ and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land. And they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat every tree of yours that grows in the field, ⁶ and they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.’” Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh. ⁷ Then Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?”

Laura Ingalls Wilder tells a true story of their prairie house ruin, On the Banks of Plum Creek

They came thudding down like hail. The cloud was hailing grasshoppers. The cloud was grasshoppers. Their bodies hid the sun and made darkness...with the noise of a hailstorm.

Laura tried to beat them off. Their claws clung to her skin and her dress...

Mary ran screaming into the house. Grasshoppers covered the ground, there was not one bare bit to step on. Laura had to step on grasshoppers and they smashed squirming and slimy under her feet. They ate all the wheat and the oats...all the garden and all the prairie grass...Not a green thing in sight

...Pa headed back east to find work. He had to walk hundreds of miles, and he was gone for months. But during those difficult days, Ma continued to read the family Bible.

One Sunday she read to them about the plague of locusts, long ago in Bible times...

Ma read [Exodus 10 of the plague] “through all the land of Egypt.” Laura knew how true that was. When she repeated those verses she thought, “through all the land of Minnesota.”

Then Ma read the promise that God made...The Ingalls family claimed that promise, praying that God would deliver them.¹² God did, she never forgot it

STORY - my experience with locusts on cross country trip

2001 London Times:³ ‘Plagues of locusts are devastating crops from...Asia to the American Mid-West...Not since the Egyptians incurred the wrath of God have so many locusts had their day...sending farmers to the book of Exodus for salvation.’ Storms, acts of God, point to Him.

God is on a mission and His mission statement for the plagues (and purpose for the planet) is

- so that His name would be proclaimed in all the earth.
 - o Everyone on earth needs to know there’s no one like Him in all the earth
 - o and all the earth is the LORD’s.
 - o From the land and its livestock to locust and lightning in the sky
 - o to life in the river or little bugs, He’s creator and controller of all

He’s judge of all the earth and Savior of all who humbly truly repent

Acts of God should turn our attention to God. God later told Israel ‘*I struck you...with hail, yet you did not turn to me....When I...command **locusts** to devour the land or send a **plague** among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, **will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways**, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin...*’⁴ Joel 2 tells Israel: ‘*I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten...everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.*’⁵

God’s mission is to humble hearts of His people to turn from sin to Him

My title is God’s Mission and Your Heart because God says to Pharaoh in 9:14: *I will send all my plagues on you yourself* [ESV f.n. ‘on your heart’, NKJV ‘to your very heart’].

- 10x already the story has Pharaoh’s heart hardened by himself or God, more on that later
- now judgment comes on his heart.
- 7:23 says after the Nile turned to blood, ‘*he did not take even this to heart.*’

Now 9:21 judgment on all who don’t take the warning to heart but mercy to those who do, v. 20

Even as Pharaoh is judged, some of his servants will be spared as their hearts fear God

7:5 ‘*the Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring them out...*’

- Walt Kaiser wrote if knowing God’s name is His mission, ‘the Ten Plagues would also have an evangelistic purpose.’⁶
- A book The Missionary Heart of Exodus adds ‘if Israel’s liberation was the controlling issue, the narrative might have quickly moved from [ch 5-14, but ch 7-9 show] ‘a fundamental *mission orientation* to the entire plague cycle.’⁷

9:16: ‘*for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.*’

**Outline: 1. The Mission is About God’s Worship
 2. The Mission Depends on Sovereign Mercy
 3. The Mission is to Proclaim His Name**

1st, the mission is about worship for His glory, 9:16 says His name proclaimed in all the earth.

Piper: ‘Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.’⁸

Worship is that important to God. Is it important to you? To spread to others?

God keeps saying in Exodus ‘let my people go to serve/worship me.’ It’s His mission for all.

10:9 *Moses said, “We will go with our young and our old. We will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the LORD.”*¹⁰ *But he said to them, “The*

LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind. ¹¹ No! Go, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you are asking.” And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence.

He wants to keep the kids from worship, hostage for dads to return, or for future slaves?

But worship isn’t just for men.

- It’s for boys and girls, little ones Jesus welcomed and wanted to praise Him.
- You kids here are a part of that mission and can be missionaries (Erin, Seth, STM).

Why are we in California doing an offering for Congo?

- So Christ’s name will be proclaimed in churches and to children around the world.
- Why are Alan and Amanda and Charlene at Ponte Palmero right now, and why does Sean go to Placerville Pines and others witness? Same mission: to proclaim His name to all!
- Why do Mike and Becky do a jail ministry and why do you share with people you know?
- Why did Cliff and Sue go to Dominican Republic to minister to the disabled?
- Why will my parents go to the Philippines in February?
- Why do we have invitation cards at the table to invite people to our worship services here this month?

To fulfill God’s mission in Ex 9:14, to proclaim His name among nations and neighborhoods.

What can you do to pursue the mission this month, to invite others to worship?

Israel’s problem was they became like their Egyptian neighbors in idolatry

- and they weren’t worshipping God rightly or fulfilling their mission.

Ezekiel 20 explains God was, in His words *‘making myself known to them, in the land of Egypt; I swore to them...that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into...I said to them, ‘Cast away...and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.’ But they rebelled against me and were not willing to listen to me...nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. “Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made myself known to them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt. So I led them out of the land of Egypt...’⁹*

- So my name will be proclaimed not profaned in all the earth
- The nation of Israel wasn’t better, it was about the name of God that’s greater than all

It’s for the glory of His name that He’ll deliver Israel who’s still worshipping Egypt’s idol gods.

The locusts show Anubis, guardian of the fields or other gods of crops aren’t to be worshipped.

- The LORD is the true God of thunder, and He’s bringing down the hammer
 - o and hail on Egypt’s supposed sky goddess or storm god.
 - o Fire and lightning kill man and beast and break every tree.

- But Ex 9:26 says in Goshen, no storm where Israel lived, so Israel would worship.

Missions is to save from gods of materialism or Mormonism, idols from Catholicism to cultural Marxism, behaviorism or Buddhism, Hinduism or humanism, racist nationalism or regular narcissism.

And moralism doesn't save any more than Muslim prayers

Not man's religion or decision. So a 2nd point: the mission depends on sovereign mercy

Turn to Rom 9 and let's see how the NT applies this.

- Mercy is not getting what we deserve. Sovereign means God chooses who gets mercy.
- Moses deserved death, too, in Ex 4 God was about to put him to death
- But God chose to be merciful (to not give him death as his wife intervened).
- It wasn't Moses' choice to seek God, his choice: flee God. But God chose and rescued.

Is it fair that He doesn't choose all? Rom 9:14 *What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, [that's 'sovereign mercy'] and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. [other versions 'God's choice does not depend on a person's will/we can't choose it'¹⁰]*

¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh [Ex 9], "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." ¹⁸ **So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.** [the context of Ex 9-10 says the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart]

Mercy=not getting what's deserved. Pharaoh got what he deserved, Israel didn't (mercy)

The context of Rom 9:11 is God's election before birth, before people do or choose anything, 2nd half of v. 11: *'in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls.'* [look at **8:30**] *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified [the called will be saved] ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?... ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?*

Answer: no one if you're His elect, His predestined, and called, you won't be lost, PTL!

Was it fair or just that Pharaoh was lost if God hardened him?

- Was Pharaoh a good guy seeking God?
- No, Rom 3:11 already said none is good and *'there is no one who seeks God.'*

But does he have an excuse if God hardened him?

- No, Rom 1 said as men *'suppress the truth...they are without excuse...God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts'* (v. 18, 20, 24 NIV).
- Pharaoh is a classic example of inexcusable suppressing truth and God gives him over to sinful desires in his heart.
- God is not the author of evil and doesn't create sin in him
 - this is a judicial hardening, strengthening¹¹ sin already in him.

- Pharaoh gets justice, hard question: why do some get mercy?

The hard truth: there is reprobation, God does judge by hardening. It's a warning to sinners

Good news: as we proclaim the good news, it doesn't depend on our persuasiveness

- it's God's undeserved graciousness that changes hearts.
- Sovereign mercy chooses not to give what's fair or deserved to all
 - and our job isn't to figure that out, it's to freely share from a heart for the lost,
 - and God will save some.

10:1: *Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved... ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*

As we do, pray to God to take away the hard heart of stone by sovereign mercy.

Which leads to the last point: The Mission is to Proclaim His Name (Ex 9:16

again: *But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.*)

Ever hear this, 'give the gospel and sometimes use words?

- The Bible's commands to *proclaim* mean use words.

Some say 'I just live it with my life,' but this word *proclaim* means using your lips,

- it's something you're saying out loud, it's praising or explaining His name and nature.¹²

Don't just think missionaries, think Lk 2 Christmas good news by shepherds, Anna, etc.

This is a mission for parents and grandparents. Look at 10:2 where Ex God tells Moses a reason He's doing all this: "...that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD."

NASB 'how I made a mockery of the Egyptians...' – lit. 'made sport of them, toyed with.'

- Boys and girls, the Bible says you need to hear this: God was playing toys with Egypt.
- He toys with them to show it's foolish to disobey God.
- It's silly Pharaoh thought he could stop God's plan.
- It looks ridiculous when you disobey God.
- You need to know God's power, He can't be stopped.

Never mock God, He'll make a fool out of you.

Parents, grandparents, there's a word here for you:

- Speak and teach your kids, grandkids this and the mighty works of God.
- Our sermon discussion guides can be help, or many helpful children's Bibles/devotionals
- Our family is doing an advent devotional right now after dinners,

- but it's also good to try to talk one on one things of the Lord.

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Eph 6:4 commands fathers to raise children in the instruction of the Lord, and moms can help.

The mission starts at home, then it should move out to others, proclaim the name this Christmas

We've a story to tell to the nations and next door

When 9:16 talks about proclaiming His name, it means His nature (holy judge, merciful, etc.).

- 9:15 gives an example, God's hand could and should strike down sinners to cut off their life if He didn't delay justice.
- But there's a warning in v. 17 if you keep exalting yourself instead of humbling yourself.
- A day of judgment is coming like v. 18 but there's mercy offered like v. 19,
 - for those who come under a shelter, so they don't perish.
 - In v. 19 some feared and were spared wrath. Zeph 2:3 applies that: '*seek humility...you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger*' (NIV).

Revelation talks about end times fire raining down and eternal fire and destruction

God says He's '*opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble...humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God...confess your sins.*'¹³

- We're to proclaim the name of the Lord Jesus, as the only name under heaven by which we can be saved from wrath to come.
- Rev 7 says the Lord will shelter His people, Jesus is our shelter in the time of storm.
- Humble believers in Christ are delivered from judgment.
 - But sinners, if you keep exalting self, there's a day of hellfire and brimstone.

Ex 10:3 asks 'how long will you refuse to humble yourself before' God?

Just like there's false religion, there's false repentance. In 9:27 Pharaoh tells Moses 'I've sinned this time, I'm in the wrong, the Lord is in the right.'

- That's better than many churchgoers.
- I know some in families here have never done an apology as good as that.
- If you never say that to your spouse or family, you're worse than Pharaoh!
- But you can say right things because of the consequences you want to get rid of and still have an unregenerate heart that stays hard (v. 34).
- Remember 9/11? People who only used God's name in vain before
 - now prayed to Him or went to church for a bit.
 - Many ignore God till a crisis, or when things get bad they call the minister.

After the locust, **10:16** *Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. ¹⁷ Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the LORD your God only to remove this death from me."* ¹⁸ So he went out from Pharaoh

and pleaded with the LORD. ¹⁹ And the LORD turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea. Not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. ²⁰ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart...

Good admission of sin, even asking for forgiveness (which many don't)

- but just this one time (and pray to remove this death).
- God drives the locusts into the Red Sea, a warning of what will happen to Egyptians.
- Pharaoh is a warning of how God can judge in hardening.
 - o Rom 2:5 says if you have a '*hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*'
 - o Heb 3 talks about Israel after the Exodus and says '*exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that **none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin...do not harden your hearts...***'
 - o Friend, today you hear His voice, today is the day of salvation.

Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon on Ex 9, Yield to God's Word, or be broken by His hand.¹⁴ He said of preaching the gospel, 'There are doubtless many here that have long resisted ... They have long enjoyed gracious counsels and warnings, and have been told of their peril... They have had the infinitely gracious offers and invitations of Christ, standing at their door. But yet they have not been moved. Thus some of you have refused to yield to the power of God's word. And how far are you from it at this day? Instead of complying, you are regardless—taking no care—going on in known ways of sin ... your heart is harder, and there is less hope that attends your circumstances. You have had the word of God, in the commands and warnings of it, much longer than Pharaoh. Your light, that you have lived under, has been vastly greater than his—there is no comparison—in many respects vastly greater motives have been set before you: eternal damnation has been represented more clearly, as well as God's great love, his greater offers and more glorious invitations... even the exhibition of the dying love of Christ: all are in evidence when God is graciously striving with you, as it were, if possible to prevail upon you by such great and infinitely important motives, but you stand it out. But consider how great is the folly of thus hardening yourself against God ...and know how foolish and how dreadful a thing it is for any to presume to contemn him and fight against him... as God is love, so also is he wrath...

That's a close quote, but let me close by quoting Jesus '*come to me... repent and believe the gospel.*'

- He can give you a new heart.
- Don't exalt yourself, exalt your Savior by grace through faith.
- How long will you not humble your heart?
- To adapt a Christmas carol, 'let humble hearts enthrone Him.'
- Look to the lowly manger where the humble Christ was born
 - o and brought us salvation that Christmas morn.
- And look to the cross where He suffered what He didn't deserve,
 - o so in His mercy you don't get what your sins deserve.

To us who claim His name, let's proclaim His name,

- and let's go tell it on the mountain, over hills, foothills, down the hill, everywhere.

¹ Anne Habermehl, “The Ipuwer Papyrus and the Exodus,”

https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=icc_proceedings

² Laura Ingalls Wilder, *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, rev. ed. (Harper Collins, 1953), 194-204, 216-17.

³ Philip Ryken, *Exodus* (Crossway, 2005), 299.

⁴ Haggai 2:17, 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 NIV.

⁵ Joel 2:25, 32.

⁶ Walter Kaiser, Jr., *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1990), 1:342.

⁷ W. Ross Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 28, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* (InterVarsity Press, 2012), 39–41.

⁸ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 11.

⁹ Ezekiel 20:5-11, see also v. 14, 22, 44, etc.

¹⁰ ISV, NLT ‘we can neither choose it nor work for it.’

¹¹ Several times in the Exodus narrative it says ‘Pharaoh hardened his heart’ and several times it speaks of God hardening his heart, using the Hebrew word for ‘strengthening’ Pharaoh’s heart.

¹² “The Hebrew verb for ‘**proclaimed**’ appears here in the Piel stem. In that stem, throughout the Old Testament, the verb means to give a laudatory recital, great praise and a recounting of the greatness of God. It is a word associated with worship.” - John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus: Exodus 1–18*, vol. 1, EP Study Commentary (Evangelical Press, 2000), 202–203.

¹³ 1 Peter 5:7, James 5:16.

¹⁴ Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758 (WJE Online Vol. 25)*, Ed. Wilson H. Kimnach.