

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PLAGUES (What Do They Mean for Us Today?)

PART NINE

THE NINTH PLAGUE UPON EGYPT

Exodus 10: 21-23:

21- And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.

22 - And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:

23 - They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

The ninth plague is told in Exodus 10:21-29; however we have only cited three verses here. The remaining verses speak of Pharaoh telling Moses to leave Egypt. Once more Pharaoh changes his mind; the Lord having hardened his heart yet again.

God hardens the heart of Pharaoh no doubt to show man's natural state of evilness. Why does God command Moses to plead with Pharaoh only to harden Pharaoh's heart later? A very good question but we must remember that God's ways are higher than our ways.

Isaiah 55:9 - For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Jeremiah 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

In hardening Pharaoh's heart, God is unveiling the wickedness in all of mankind. God is also bringing forth a great truth as the process of the judgmental plagues continue upon ancient Egypt.

God is inflicting upon Egypt yet another judgment as Pharaoh once more declines to allow the children of Israel to depart. This judgment - the ninth plague - is a judgment of:

(A) darkness. It is a thick darkness upon the land of Egypt that lasts for (B) three days while at the same time (C) the Children of Israel have light in their dwellings there in Egypt. God tells us that for the Egyptians...they (D) could neither see one another due to the darkness nor could they conduct business for they could not even arise "any from his place." This darkness was so thick (verse 22) that it could even be

(E) felt (verse 21). The fact that it could be felt is a difficult verse to explain. Some may parallel this statement to the modern phrase..."the fog was so thick you could cut it with a knife."

In any case God seems to be revealing the fact that the plague of thick

darkness is depicting great spiritual deception upon the world toward the end of the age while at the same time bringing forth thick physical darkness upon the literal land of ancient Egypt. This land, as a symbolic portrait of the world, had its own spiritual darkness in those days, no doubt. However, in compliance with the first eight plagues we see that this plague continues to carry its final fulfillment for the days immediately preceding Christ's Second Coming.

THICK DARKNESS

Where else does Scripture speak of thick darkness?

Isaiah 9:18 - For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke.

The fulfillment of the above verse transpired in one sense with Old Testament Israel; however it is still relevant for us today. Christ says in Matthew 13:30 to let the wheat and the tares grow together until harvest, which is the end of the world and Judgment Day. We know that the worldly global church will be overflowing with the unsaved at the end of the age. These posing or masquerading Christians are the tares in Matthew 13 and also the briers and thorns of Isaiah 9. They are to dwell within the church, which sometimes is termed as the "thickets of the forest" or just plain "forest."

Isaiah 32:15 - Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

Isaiah 9 is saying that the wickedness of the briers and thorns within the church will one day burn as a fire...so much so that these false Christians shall mount up AS the lifting up of smoke. The symbolic smoke is nothing less than a symbolic representation of the spiritual wickedness of many of those within God's corporate church of these last days. They are the THICK DARKNESS that overtakes the apostate church at the end of the Church Age. This seems to parallel the darkness created by the loosing of Satan and/or the opening of the bottom pit in Revelation 9:2.

Let us look at the Hebrew word that is translated as thick in Exodus 10:22. It is # 653 in Strong's Hebrew; feminine of # 651; *duskiness*, figuratively *misfortune*; concretely *concealment*: - dark, darkness, gloominess X thick.

THICK (darkness) as rendered in Exodus 10:22 carries the following explanations:

Joel 2:1-2

1 - ¶ Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;
2 - A day of darkness and of gloominess [*same Hebrew word as THICK in our Exodus study*], a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.

Zephaniah 1:14-15

14 ¶The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and **gloominess** [*same Hebrew word as THICK in our Exodus study*], a day of clouds and thick darkness,

Proverbs 4:14-19

14 - ¶Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

15 - Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

16 - For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

17 - For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

18 - But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

19 - The way of the wicked is as **darkness** [*same Hebrew word as THICK in our Exodus study*]: they know not at what they stumble.

Proverbs 7:6-9

6 - ¶For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,

7- And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding,

8 - Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house,

9 - In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and **dark** [*same Hebrew word as THICK in our Exodus study*] night:

Deuteronomy 28:29

And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in **darkness** [*same Hebrew word as THICK in our Exodus study*], and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.

Isaiah 8:16-22

16 - ¶Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

17 - And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

18 -Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

19 - And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

20 - To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

21 - And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.

22 - And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to **darkness**. [*same Hebrew word as THICK in our Exodus study.*

NOTE: The first usage of darkness in this verse is a different Hebrew word.]

Isaiah 58:10 - And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise

in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: [*same Hebrew word as THICK in our Exodus study*]:

Isaiah 59:9 -

¶Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness [*same Hebrew word as THICK in our Exodus study*]:

The above passages that we have cited give some indication as to the nature of this THICK evil that was upon ancient Egypt. Yes, it was thick literal darkness, nevertheless it seems quite clear that God is displaying this natural and physical phenomenon in order to demonstrate the wickedness and ongoing darkness of fallen man's heart. Once God completed His Word to mankind - the Bible - we can now have an overview of what took God centuries to complete. He certainly could have completed it within any earthly time span but God chose to write His Word throughout the centuries of mankind. We now have the precious Word of God at our disposal and as God's Spirit leads us, there is no end nor depth of knowledge that we are limited with. We have an endless well of living water with which to draw on God's wisdom.

As we read through the books of the Bible and concentrate on the different meanings or definitions of the word darkness we find that it is usually in reference to ourselves! Yes, unsaved man is wicked beyond all things and there is absolutely nothing of any profit in us before we are converted to Christ. As the world continues down its destructive path, Scripture seems to indicate clearly that man's wickedness

will increase and intensify. Near the end of time or the end of this present earthly age...shortly before God judges the world and creates a new heaven and a new earth...man's darkened heart will have reached its peak. This will transpire shortly before the spiritual fulfillment of the tenth plague upon ancient Egypt. Yes, certainly man's intense darkness will have increased by this time. It seems most certain that God will judge this earth in fulfillment of the tenth Egyptian plague.

THREE DAYS OF DARKNESS

Exodus 10:22-23

22 - And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:

23 - They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

This ninth plague seems to have been so severe that no Egyptians could even function normally. The darkness was so intense that the Egyptians could not even see one another. We wonder or suppose that there may have been situations where they were able to blindly light a fire in many areas and wait out the plague; however God has told us that "they saw not one another, neither rose **ANY** from his place for three days." They were confined and imprisoned in utter darkness which more than likely prefigures the Great Tribulation or the days following.

As this plague engulfed Egypt, yet there was light in the land of Goshen where the children of Israel dwelled while in Egypt. God's grace was upon the Israelites, but why? Were they all

born-again Christians? Were all the Jews in good favor with God? Were they perfect in God's sight? The answer is no to these questions. God reveals the rebellion of the Children of Israel later on in Scripture during their wanderings in the wilderness. But why did God not darken the dwelling place of the Hebrews?

God was teaching spiritual truth through the use of this true and historical parable and this truth would be understood by His Bride once the Bible was completed.

This truth is the grand fact that God's elect (every true believer of the Old and New Testament eras) will remain in God's eternal light regardless of the darkness that surrounds them. This was true during the time of the ancient plagues and will remain a truth right up until the last day of this earth's existence. Thus God was revealing this spiritual truth when He allowed His light to shine forth upon the Hebrews, who were, for the most part, a symbol only of God's eternal Bride.

Matthew 27:45-46

45 - Now from the sixth hour there was **darkness** over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 - And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Literal **darkness** covered the land (probably the land of Israel or a portion of it) at the crucifixion of Christ for a period of **three** hours. This was in essence a judgment day upon the earth.

Matthew 27:54 -

Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

John 2:19-22

19 - Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in **three days** I will raise it up.

20 - Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in **three days**?

21 - But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 - When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

We see some parallels to the crucifixion of Christ and the darkness upon the land of Egypt. Darkness engulfed the land; for Egypt it was **three days** while it was **three hours** at the crucifixion. However Christ was in the grave for **three days**. Perhaps this pictured the church being silenced at the end of time for a period of three and a half symbolical days when spiritual darkness engulfs the earth. The crucifixion of Christ may have prefigured the death of the corporate church during the Great Tribulation.

Revelation 11:9 - And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies **three days** and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

Revelation 11:11 - And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

As it was in ancient Egypt, darkness prevailed upon the land for three days while the children of Israel lived in light. Likewise, at the end of time great spiritual wickedness - thick darkness - will prevail upon the earth while the true children of spiritual Israel (God's Elect) are held safely in God's grip.

We have studied the first nine plagues of ancient Egypt told in the Book of Exodus. In each case the plagues represented the silencing of God's Gospel of Salvation. These plagues were told in different symbolic ways but ultimately all have the same theme in view.

In reviewing these plagues, we saw the **first** as the fish dying as the waters, rivers, streams, ponds and pools of Egypt became poisoned.

The **second** plague brought forth frogs from amid the waters, streams, ponds, etc. into all of Egypt. These frogs invaded all dwellings, including the ovens where the bread is baked.

In the **third** plague the dust of the earth was turned into lice.

The **fourth** plague brought forth swarms of flies upon the Egyptians while the Children of Israel dwelt safely in Egypt in the land of Goshen.

The cattle of the Egyptians were stricken in the **fifth** plague by a

grievous murrain; the horses, asses, camels, oxen, and sheep. Yet for the cattle belonging to the Children of Israel, not one was stricken.

The **sixth** plague sees Moses following God's command to turn the ashes of the furnace into dust. It then blows throughout the land of Egypt and brings about boils with blains upon man and beast throughout Egypt.

In the **seventh** plague God smites the people of Egypt with a severe pestilence. God rains down hail upon all of the herbs in the fields of Egypt. The hail smote every herb of the fields and every tree of the field, Exodus 9:25.

God brings about great locusts into all of Egypt in the **eighth** plague. So great were they that they entered into all the houses of the Egyptians. The land was darkened by these locusts and they ate every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees. Not any green thing remained in the trees throughout Egypt.

God, as we have just studied, brings thick darkness upon the land of Egypt with the **ninth** plague. Each plague has many metaphors and symbols all pointing to the final days before Christ returns to judge the earth. It is not clear whether each plague increases in intensity; some say they do while others are not sure. The overall theme of these ancient plagues should be understood as spiritual judgment upon the unbelieving earth while the true believers in Christ are depicted as the Children of Israel living in the land of Goshen there in Egypt (a figure of the unsaved world). These plagues foretell

of God's own shutting up of heaven or the silencing of the Gospel of Christ at the end of time. When the tenth plague upon Egypt is revealed it is time for the gathering in of God's wheat and the harvesting of souls.

Revelation 10:7- But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

END OF STUDY