

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF MOSES

Taught in Ambassador's Class of Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, California

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Lesson #12, Exodus 9:8-35, March 23, 1980, 6th & 7th Plagues, Boils & Hail

This morning, beginning in Exodus 9, verse 8, we are looking at plague #6. The Lord is dealing with both Israel and Egypt in these plagues. He is trying to present Himself to Egypt as Yahweh, the God of Israel, the God of the Covenant and also the God of Creation, the God Almighty so the people will have a choice. Israel has been in idolatry along with Egypt. They are no different. So He is demonstrating not only to His people but also to the Gentile world out there, and He is doing it by degrees.

We have a God who is very gracious. If you look at these plagues and see only a vicious and cruel God who is destroying a nation because of their unbelief, you have missed the message of Exodus. God, we see in this passage, could destroy that nation, all of it, at anytime. As a matter of fact, He could wipe out our world just like that, if He wanted to, but He hasn't.

One of the common questions unbelievers ask in home Bible classes is, "If there is a God up there and if, indeed, He is righteous (The implication being He is not), why doesn't He do something about sin?" It is also asked many times by Christians who are disturbed by what's going on in the world. "Where is this God of the Bible that allows things like the wiping out of 6,000,000 Jews?" We forget that 2,000 years ago the same question was asked, "Where is the promise of His coming?...all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." [II Peter] It is forgotten that God did come to this world in the days of Noah and destroyed the earth in a cataclysmic judgment. And, He has promised to destroy the earth again, this time by fire. However, with God one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as one day. He is an eternal being and not locked into 120 years in this day and age or 60 years of our life span. "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." But, remember, if He is going to judge sin and be righteous about it, He must judge ALL sin. Well, that includes any of our loved ones outside of Christ. They may even be good clean American citizens who go to church, don't beat their kids, don't steal, have a good job, support the Community Chest, give at the office, but without Christ they are lost. If God comes as a judge and judges sin and judges a Stalin or Hitler or unscrupulous politicians, robbers, murders, He must also judge Joe Smith and Bob Roe and any of our loved ones who are outside of Christ. I've got news for you. I'm not in that much of a hurry for Him to come in judgment. I am just grateful that He is putting up with all the nonsense going on down here, the blasphemy and unbelief and that He hasn't "come that quickly" because he is God, and He plays no favorites.

So if you wish God would come down and stamp out everything, remember it is EVERYTHING! That also means sin in our Christian lives, sin that we haven't dealt with. We're talking ALL sin here. Then you begin to realize, "Hey, I'm just as thankful that God has not yet come as a Monarch to reign in Judgment." A lot of people are going to be lost in that day, and I'm very glad He is long suffering.

That is what is going on here. God is taking anywhere from 7 to 10 months to destroy Egypt. He could do it overnight if He wanted to. These plagues are natural processes with natural consequences and they happen in Egypt all the time, but here they are being intensified and turned on and off at God's command.

The Hebrew mind did not look upon miracles as anything extraordinary or out of this world. To the Hebrew mind

Yahweh was God of everything. There was no secular life in the Hebrew society. Yahweh controlled everything from the most intimate of family relationships to, and including, business transactions. There were rules about how grain could be sold. Grain alongside the walk could not be cut because a stranger should be able to reach in and get a little bit. When gleaning the fields, some grain must be left for the poor. God regulated the most minute part of business as well as the entire universe. So the Jews didn't view God as coming out of space and out of time and interjecting Himself into the universe when He did a miracle. They simply saw God doing His thing, on His schedule, according to His will. So these plagues were natural things that occurred, but there was a God who was saying, "Hey, I am God the Creator. I control natural things, and they not only do My will but they do My will right on My schedule."

So He is taking 7 to 10 months, somewhere between June and August, the flooding season and the Passover which was in April. He is giving Egypt a great expanse of time as He slowly but surely devastates their country. He is giving them a chance to repent, and a great number of them do. A "mixed multitude", Scripture says, goes out with the Israelites, and God does accomplish His purpose. He does call out people for His name among the Egyptians and also starts the Jews on their way to Canaan. So let's look at these plagues from that angle.

Starting now in verse 8 of chapter 9, we see the next plague. This is plague number 6. Remember every third plague God "spans" Pharaoh. He doesn't announce it ahead of time. He just whacks him. Moses does not go into Pharaoh's presence with, "Thus saith Yahweh, 'I am going to do this to you,'" but every third plague God just lets Pharaoh have it. He does that with this one.

Exodus 9:8:

Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of soot from a kiln, [Literally a brick kiln which was an ironic touch of God since He had the Jews in slavery building bricks. So He tells Moses, "Go to a brick kiln where the Jews have been in slavery and grab a handful of soot] **and let Moses throw it toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh.** [When Pharaoh walks down toward the Nile for his morning worship and ablutions, throw the soot up in the air] **And it will become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and will become boils** [literally inflamed areas] **breaking out with sores** [blisters] **on man and beast through all the land of Egypt."** [It was probably something like poison ivy] **So they took soot from a kiln, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses threw it toward the sky, and it became boils breaking out with sores on man and beast. And the magicians** [These were the wise men, the ones who were opposing Moses] **could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians. And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.**

This is the first place where it says God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Up to now Pharaoh has been hardening his own heart, but here God hardens Pharaoh's heart. He does it because Pharaoh has been given many chances to repent but continues to harden his heart. So God, in His judicial wrath, Himself hardens Pharaoh's heart. But let me point something out to you. This does not say that Pharaoh can no longer make choices. It does not say that Pharaoh is lost beyond recall. We are going to see that in a minute. God does not go around willy-nilly hardening people. You can never ever blame God for your sin. If Pharaoh could not repent, Pharaoh could then blame God, "I couldn't repent because You wouldn't let me." But we can never pass the buck that way!

There are two paradoxes that run all the way through Scripture. One is the sovereignty of God and the other is the moral responsibility of man. Both are clearly taught in passage after passage from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. They are in seeming conflict. Here is a God who is absolutely sovereign. He does what He chooses and no one can stop His will. On the other hand, here is man who is held accountable for his choices. Now he cannot be held accountable for his choices if he cannot make choices. Even our own system of law, in this flawed and fallen land, recognizes that. There is a plea "Not Guilty By Reason of Insanity," and it holds that if you cannot make a rational choice you cannot be held for a crime. You can be held for your mental illness but not for the crime. Our law recognizes incapability of sinning if you can't be rational about it. Therefore, we have all the way through Scripture the sovereignty of God clearly taught. God runs this universe by His own will and on His own time schedule, and nothing you and I can do will ever stop it, impede it, slow it up, or change it. He is sovereign. He makes no bones about it, "... it *does* not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy," Paul says in Romans 9. On the other hand, it also says, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3. Then

John 6, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him:" Same Book, same Author. Both clearly taught.

Man's responsibility is also clearly taught. That doesn't in any way affect the sovereignty of God. The sovereignty of God says "Only some are chosen, and only they can receive the Lord." He makes no bones about it. Read Romans 9, 10 & 11. It hits you like a ton of bricks. But don't try to hide behind the sovereignty of God. That is my point. These are paradoxes. These are truths that are clearly taught, and they are both true. Now, my peanut brain cannot comprehend that, but that doesn't make it false, and it doesn't give me an excuse. I am to believe what God has said because God has said it, and there is no way you can make sovereignty of God and responsibility of man mesh in the Scripture. It doesn't do it anywhere. God doesn't do it for you.

This is another question that always comes up in home Bible classes and one of the things I always tell the people is "Hey! I don't know. I know they are both true. I also know my problem is not God's sovereignty. It is man's responsibility." One of the first things I am going to ask when I get upstairs with my Lord is that very question, "Lord, I've been approached with this paradox in home Bible classes for 20 some years, and I would sure like to have an answer for a change."

Class comment: Where does that point of no return come? Where do you get to that point?

Bob's response: I don't know. (Great laugh from class) Here it happens in verse 12 of Exodus 9.

Class comment: I mean this is your own doing? You put yourself to the point where you get so far you can't come back?

Bob's response: But you see you can. That is my point. I have changed my opinion on that. I used to say you couldn't come back. I don't believe that anymore. I just watched the courtiers change their minds, and they had been hardened by God. We'd like to explain the two paradoxes so they make a nice little package. We don't like things that are not wrapped up in a neat little bundle. Loose things bother us, and God has loose things all through the Bible. He doesn't care if it bothers us. Do you know that? I use to think, "Lord, you need to justify that statement." He says, "Yeah?" No, He doesn't have to justify anything. He is God. When He makes a statement, that's it. I can accept it or reject it, but I don't have any right to question the truthfulness or falseness of it. So that really hit me when I was studying this passage.

There are a lot of other problems in the Scriptures. How do you explain the Trinity, which is clearly taught in the Old Testament. I'll give you the microphone if you want to try.

There are two Hebrew words for "one" in the Old Testament. One of them is the "united one" and one of them is the "absolute one," and God is always the "united one." He is never the "absolute one." We get that "absolute one" out of the Jewish prayer book not out of the Jewish Old Testament. Moses Ben Maimon was an extraordinary Jewish philosopher in the 13th century A.D. He decided one day, "I am going to make Judaism respectable." And what was respectable in those days? Greek philosophy. Aristotle's philosophy said God was an absolute one. So Moses Ben Maimon changed the Hebrew in the Jewish prayer book to God is an "absolute one" in direct violation of Deuteronomy 6:4 which says God is the "united one." He was trying to placate philosophy. In trying to make Judaism respectable, he led it down the garden path. The Jewish Old Testament says God is a "united one", not an "absolute one."

How can three Gods be one? I don't know. I know it is clearly taught. Each God, each Person of the Godhead is taught as being absolutely God, doing everything that God does as if He did it alone. Yet God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." He uses plural pronouns and singular verbs. Well, that may be bad grammar, but it is Yahweh talking.

So, I don't know. All I am suggesting is God hardened Pharaoh's heart, but Pharaoh was still able to make a choice. I'm backing away from the prior position I held. I think it is wrong. I think we are talking the grace of God again. The sovereignty of God, yes. Pharaoh is locked in because he has had chance after chance after chance, and he has hardened his own heart. But for the love of Jesus Christ he is not beyond salvation because God hardened the hearts of both the courtiers and Pharaoh, and the courtiers repent. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the

gander. Ergo Pharaoh could also repent.

So, God hardens Pharaoh's heart and, from the side of sovereignty, Pharaoh has had it. But from the side of accountability, Pharaoh can still repent and so can his courtiers. God hardened Pharaoh's heart and God hardened the courtiers hearts. Pharaoh does not repent but the courtiers do even though God has hardened the hearts of both. Don't ever blame God for your sin.

We have a beautiful picture here. God hardens Pharaoh's heart. Now, from that point on, from the standpoint of the sovereignty of God, Pharaoh is going to remain obdurate, yet from the standpoint of the grace of God, he can change his mind. At this point, I have an RST (Roe Sanctified Theory) Very intriguing. 2 Timothy 3:8 mentions Jannes and Jambres as opposing Moses. Jannes is probably a corruption of John which is a short form of Johanan, which is "Yahweh is gracious." Jambres is a direct translation of "He who opposes." So what do you get? "God is gracious even if He opposes." According to Jewish tradition, those are the names of two of Pharaoh's magicians who were leaders at this time. We don't know for certain if that is true, but we do know that was the Jewish tradition at the time of Paul, and he cites it as tradition.

Class comment: Bob, to backup a minute, I have a problem where it says in verse 12 "The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh and he did not listen to them." The word "them," does that mean the Trinity of God or what?

Bob's response: It refers to Moses and Aaron. Remember God always sent Moses and Aaron out together before, but now He has shifted to **Moses. Aaron tags along now as a kind of junior representative. He is no longer using Aaron directly. He uses Moses from now on.**

Class comment: Isn't Pharaoh considered by his people to be a god, so if he ever accepts Yahweh then the whole nation would have to come over.

Bob's response: They would have to do some rethinking of their theology.

Think for a minute about what's happening to Moses' faith during all this? As Pharaoh is being hardened by the evidence, what is happening to Moses' faith? God tells Moses, "Grab a handful of soot and throw it up in the air in front of Pharaoh," which will blow it all over Pharaoh. Do you remember what the Egyptian priests emphasized? Physical purity! They shaved off all their hair. All the hair on the body was shaved off. They were circumcised. They bathed all the time. They wore these beautiful linen garments to prevent sweating. Physical purity was the prime thrust of the theology of Egypt, which would include, of course, a god like Pharaoh. So here is a man out there doing his ablutions, doing the sacred vow, getting all nice and pure when up walks a fellow with a hand full of soot, throws it up in the air, and whoosh, it's all over Pharaoh. Oh boy! something has sure changed since back at the burning bush when Moses said, "Send anybody but me." The same evidence that is hardening the heart of one man is strengthening the faith of another. What is the difference between the two men? What is determining why one is being hardened and one is being strengthened?

Class comment: One believes and the other doesn't.

Bob's comment: Yeah, but what's their belief in? They choose don't they? But let me ask you, "How much faith does it take to choose?" It's the strangest thing. I read in Hebrews "By faith he [Moses] left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen." [Heb 11:27] Yahweh never showed up and said, "Here I am Moses. Take a look." But when Yahweh was finished, the whole of Egypt was devastated. It was in ruins. Even I, Bob the slob, could walk by faith in that situation. What does God do? He doesn't say anything about that in Hebrews. "By faith Moses left Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is unseen." We are going to find out Moses was driven out of Egypt #1 by the king and #2 the whole land was devastated. In view of that, how much faith does God want out of us? Just about "that" much! He'll take that much and give you all the credit for it. What He wanted Moses to see was a God that really loves. While He is the "aroma of death unto death" for some, He is the aroma of "life unto life" for others. God does all the work and gives us all the credit. The New Covenant says, "Our adequacy is from God." We can do nothing. Elsewhere He says, "I am the vine and you are the branch...apart from Me you can do nothing." At the Judgment Seat of Christ we get our rewards. For what? We have been doing nothing. It has all been done by God. All we have done is say, "Here I am, Lord. I am available," Then God does it all through us and, believe it or not, gives us all the credit. All we do it make the choice to be available to God, just make the choice. That is the best deal I have every heard of anywhere. The

thing I want you to see is the grace of God through all of this.

Now Pharaoh is hardened. Let's look at plague #7 and watch how God operates with Pharaoh in plague #7.

Exodus 9:13:

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, [The God of the slaves] "Let My people go, that they may serve Me.

It is intriguing. Who does God identify with here? A bunch of slaves, and what kind of people are they? Are they dependable, gracious, loyal, loving, faithful people? No! They are a bunch of fat cats, aren't they. Apparently, according to Scripture, they were not oppressed for 430 years. During that time it wasn't too tough a deal. They were living in the best part of Egypt. Their daily quota of bricks was not too bad. They had a wonderful socialistic society. After they made a few bricks, they could lie in the sun with their six-pack and loaf of bread. They were slaves, true, but they didn't cry out to Yahweh until the Pharaoh of the oppression came along. Then at the time of Moses "... there arose another king over Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph" [Acts 7]. This is when it began to get tight and only then did they cry out to God.

But they were God's people. God chose them for Himself. "I didn't choose you because you are better than anybody else. I didn't choose you because you are bigger than anybody else. I chose you because I chose you." By the same token, why does God love us? Have you ever thought of that? What does Scripture say about why God loves us?

Class comment: Because He is a loving father.

Bob's response: Yeah! But why does He love us? What is there about us that He loves? The only reason in all Scripture that you can find is God loves us because He loves us, because we are His. That is amazing. And He loves us whether we believe in Him or reject Him. It does not in any way depend upon our performance. So He doesn't care about the Jews being slaves and only crying out when they start hurting. They are His and that is all that matters.

And now He begins a little trip, a beautiful thing, verse 14.

Exodus 9:14:

"For this time I will send all My plagues on you [Talking to Pharaoh. This is the climax, now Egyptians are going to start dying. Up to now animals have been dying, and plants have been dying and fish have been dying, but He says now Egyptians are going to start dying] and your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth.

What is He going to be nasty about? What does He want them to understand?

Class comment: That there is one God and He is it.

Bob's response: Yeah! If they want to choose a god of Egypt, they are choosing second best. They are not choosing the best. "There is no one like Me anywhere. When you make your choices, don't ever say you don't have enough light. When I get through, you will know who is the prime God. You will know who is first, who is best."

Exodus 9:15:

"For if by now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth."

Why did He give them 7 to 10 months? Because He was giving them time to repent, time to make the decision, the decision that says, "I want the best. I want the God who has demonstrated in my life that He is the true God, that He

is the best." So He is giving them 7 to 10 months to view the evidence and make the right decision.

Exodus 9:16:

"But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you [Pharaoh] My power, [And there are courtiers there, of course] and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth."

He wants to prove to Pharaoh and also to the Egyptians that He is "the best". To who else does He want to prove He is the best?

Class comment: The world.

Bob's response: The world, and who does that include? What kind of people, what particular people in this case? Filthy, dirty, rotten people. The Israelites are going to have to destroy, man, woman, child and "babies nursing at their mother's breasts" because these people are so filthy. We know from archeology that they were saturated with venereal disease. What nation does He want to know that He is the best? The Canaanites. How long has God been waiting for the Canaanites to repent? 600 years. He gave the land to Abraham and said, "Yours, but not yet because 'the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.' I am going to give them 600 years to change their minds and at the climax of the 600 years I am going to give them signs that they cannot deny. I am going to prove who is the true God not only to the Egyptians but to all the world." Did it work? Did it work for the Canaanites? For any of the Canaanites? Probably Rahab the harlot was the first fruit of quite a few of them. She risked her life because she knew that Jehovah was God of the Heavens above and the Earth below. How did she find out? She said herself because of what God did to the Egyptians back at the Red Sea and what God did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan. "I know that your God is God in heaven above and on earth beneath."

Rahab was not even a temple prostitute. She might have had some kind of theological knowledge, but she was a plain old street-walker. Hebrew word is very explicit. If a plain old street-walker could risk her life, there were probably a lot of plain old street-walkers in Canaan that would risk their lives. God has always had a remnant. He really doesn't want to kill the Canaanites. He is going to give them another 40 years after this before He has to do it. He really loves those people.

Exodus 9:17:

"Still you exalt yourself against My people by not letting them go."

The word exalt has the idea of "to dam," to build a dam to hold water back. God is saying "You are damming My people in. You are obstructing My people from their freedom." Just exactly what does God want Pharaoh to know? Basically He wants Pharaoh to know why He is doing what He is doing. There are to be no mistakes. He wants it to be totally clear in Pharaoh's mind. Now you would think God would just slam the door and say to heck with Pharaoh. There is an interesting verse in I Corinthians 10:13, "No testing or temptation [Same word] has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tested beyond what you are able, but with the testing [God] will provide the way of escape also that you may be able to endure it." Every time you are tested by God He will provide a way of escape for you that you might go through it and not around it. Pharaoh has to humble himself and accept Yahweh as at least the highest god. That is the test. And God gives him a chance to do that.

Exodus 9:18:

"Behold, about this time tomorrow, I will send a very heavy hail, such as has not been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. Now therefore send, bring your livestock and whatever you have in the field to safety. Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail comes down on them, will die." The one among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses; but he who paid no regard to the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.

The Egyptians kept their livestock out in the field between January and April because the weather wasn't so bad. This is somewhere between January and April, probably in January. When it got extremely hot they would bring the livestock in under shelter.

Pharaoh doesn't act from ignorance in this case. God had already given him a prior experience about animals in the field. He really wants Pharaoh to know that He means what He says. Remember plague 5, the pestilence. God took only what animals? Egyptian animals. And only what Egyptian animals did He take? Those that were in the field. Those that were in the barns were not touched. So before He gives this latest test, He has already given them an example of the fact that He means what He says. Now He says, "O.K., Pharaoh, I'll give you a chance. You do not have to have the devastation that is going to befall you if you don't want to, but you do have to do one thing [which Pharaoh won't do]," and what is that? What is the one thing that pleases God? Pharaoh is going to have to exercise faith in Yahweh instead of faith in RA, faith in himself. He has to believe God and act like what God says is true. It says some Egyptians did and some didn't.

Egypt, you know, is a long narrow valley along the Nile surrounded by desert. That creates a wind tunnel. Hail is quite common down that wind tunnel but nothing like this hail. They had never seen anything like this hail. We know from their records that a catastrophe was considered by the Egyptians to be the wrath of the gods and meant they were to clean up their act. They weren't being pious enough. They weren't being faithful enough to the rituals. They weren't living properly. So a number of them began to clean up their act and bring their servants, themselves and their livestock into safety. But who couldn't do that? Who had put himself in a position where he really couldn't do it? Pharaoh. And he is going to have an economic disaster. So some did as the Lord said and some didn't

Exodus 9:22:

Now the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that hail may fall on all the land of Egypt, on man and on beast and on every plant of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." And Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth [Literally the fire was "fire balls"]. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck all that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant of the field and shattered every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel *were, there was no hail.*

God has deliberately done what He said He would do. And now Egyptians are being destroyed.

Now here comes what I call a battlefield conversion.

Exodus 9:27:

Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time; the LORD is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones. Make supplication to the LORD, for there has been enough of God's thunder [literally "God's voices"] and hail; and I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer."

Do you think Pharaoh meant that?

Class comment: No!

Bob's response: I think he did. I really think he did. If you have ever been on a battlefield you will know. You are really scared. You already may be hurt, or you may be going to get hurt, or there is a chance you may get hurt, and you are scared, really scared. Therefore, out of your emotions you do make real promises which you really intend to keep. It is just that, when you get back to safety, the fact that those promises were based on your emotions and not on your will, as your emotions change, your commitment changes. Do you see why Satan always goes for the emotions? Remember we talked about this before. When Satan comes to you he will always go for the emotions. Watch your TV. It feels so good. You splash yourself with some exotic bath oil, or you wash your hair and flip it up in the air to see it shine and shimmer, or they show a fellow with a brand new Mercedes. He gives it to his wife

and she drives around and around and around until midnight. Poor old dad is out there with the kids in pajamas and she is still driving this thing around and around. Why? Because it feels so good. (When I get to heaven I'm going to have a Mercedes. That is some automobile.) What does that appeal to? My emotions. Then my emotions begin to gang up on my mind. "Now if I could mortgage Marylou, shoot the dog, make my son support me, I could probably, with a little luck, afford the down payment." I begin to rationalize in my mind what I desire in my emotions. Pretty soon my rationalized mind, stirred by my emotions, walks over and coerces by will. I dash down, give them a down payment on a Mercedes on which I cannot possibly keep up the payments. I, myself, have made battlefield vows which I sincerely meant at the time. Pharaoh is hurting. He has just been destroyed economically, and he has had it. He really means it. "If God will just stop this thing, O.K. I will let you go and say no more."

God, when He wants a commitment, will always appeal to the mind, to your reason. Beware of the appeal to your emotions. God doesn't work that way. If you think about it, the appeal to act is from God, and He knows what is best for you. He has promised in Scripture that He always has your best in mind even if it hurts. So you can make a deliberate choice to step out and obey God, to walk with Him. Even if you wind up with cancer, you can make a deliberate choice to accept it from God, thank Him for it, and you get peace. I had a friend who had cancer and then became a Christian. When I came back from a vacation he was all excited. He was going to get cured. He had been going to faith healers and all kinds of stuff, but he wasn't cured. So I asked him two questions #1. Have you ever thanked God for your cancer? #2. Do you believe Romans 8:28? He said, "Yeah, I have." So I asked more questions. Have you ever told God you are willing not to get well? He said, "No, I haven't, but I will." He did. And he got peace. Whether the cancer went into remission or not, the important thing was he had peace about it. That is the way God appeals to you, right to the mind while the emotions are crying to be healed at any cost. My friend was a young man too, with two young children at home and a fine career ahead of him. His whole being cried out, "I want life. I want to be around to raise my kids. I want to be around to send them to college. What is going to happen to my wife when I am gone?" All these emotions are normal to a human being, the head of a family. What about them? My Bible says, "My God will supply all of your needs in a glorious manner according to His riches in Christ Jesus." Now is God a liar? Well, I can act like He is a liar, but my Bible says, "All things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose." Not His actions, His PURPOSE! Well is God lying? I have to sit down & make a rational choice. I can believe my emotions or I can believe the Word of God. When I believe the Word of God and deliberately thank Him for my cancer, as my friend did, and deliberately tell God, "I am willing not to get well, if that is your will, because You know what is best for me [Romans 8:28]," I have made a choice of the will and my emotions will follow. Then I will have peace. Beware of any appeal to the emotions. Just beware of them. Test them with the Word of God. I believe Pharaoh really meant what he said at the time he said it. The tragedy was God took him up on his word.

Exodus 9:29:

And Moses said to him, "As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be hail no longer, that you may know that the earth is the LORD'S. But as for you and your servants, [your courtiers] I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God." (Now the flax and the barley were ruined, [Flax was what they used to make the linen cloth out of and the barley was grain they used to feed the cattle] for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud.[That means it is about January or February in Egypt] But the wheat [that's their main export crop where they made all the money] and the spelt [that is a form of wheat that they used to feed the poor of Egypt. So the basic crops the cash crop and the survival crops had not been damaged] were not ruined, for they ripen late.) So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread out his hands to the LORD; and the thunder and the hail ceased, and rain no longer poured on the earth. But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. And Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not let the sons of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

The fish were probably back in the Nile. Pharaoh still had the cattle the Egyptians had put in the barns. He still had all the crops and the cattle of Israel, which he is going to demand later on. He still had the cash crops. He still had the food to feed the poor. God didn't wipe him out. He still had a chance to repent. Trouble was Moses could spot that battlefield conversion and that there was still no repentance. I think the word that tipped him off was, "I have sinned this time" [verse 27] This time it hurts so much I will agree with you that this is wrong. The other times were not. They were just peccadilloes."