

**Surviving Pharaoh's Choices**  
*The Plagues of Egypt #6*  
*Ex 9:11-12; 9:18-20; 9:25-26; 10:4,7*

*But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.*

Have you ever noticed that the choices you made yesterday, and choices you made the day before yesterday, and the choices you made the week before yesterday, and the choices you made the month before yesterday, and the choices you made the year before yesterday, and choices you made the decade before yesterday, directly impact your life today? The day before yesterday, I made the decision to eat at Taco Bell. Today, I'm still feeling the consequences of that decision. A week ago, I made the decision to fill up all my gas cans. Today, I'm basking in the glory of that economical decision. A month ago, I made the ridiculously foolish decision to prune bamboo in hopes of controlling it. Today, I'm dealing with consequences of that decision. A year ago, I made the decision to buy drum muzzles for my son's drum kit. Today, my ears thank me for that decision. Ten years ago, on my office floor, I asked the Lord to make His will for my life very clear to me and give me the courage to follow him, wherever He leads. Today, your very presence in this room this morning is proof that choosing to follow Jesus where He leads – or choosing not to – directly impacts your life. The bottom line is this: life is indeed a matter of choices. And every choice that we make tends to define us in some way, shape, or form.

Pharaoh made the choice to subjugate God's people and enslave them, so the Nile turned to blood. The choices he made defined him. After it, Pharaoh still made the choice to subjugate God's people and enslave them, so God bugged Egypt with frogs, gnats, and flies. The choices Pharaoh made defined him. After them, Pharaoh made the choice to continue to subjugate God's people and enslave them, so God began crippling Egypt's economy by taking their livestock and sparing Israel's. The choices that Pharaoh not only effected Pharaoh, but now started effecting the livelihoods of Pharaoh's people. After it, Pharaoh made the choice to continue to subjugate God's people and enslave them, so God afflicted the whole land of Egypt with boils. The choice he made defined him and now caused his people great afflictions. But then something happens that you don't expect. It is this: God gave the Egyptian people a choice to make before he sent a storm of hail. He gave them a choice to survive Pharaoh's poor choices by not making the same choices as Pharaoh themselves. Just because Pharaoh defied the Word of the Lord by shaking his fist at him didn't mean they had to. Consequently, in those precise moments of warning, the Egyptians had a choice to make they could heed the Word of the Lord by corralling what was left of their livestock, seek shelter, and survive. Or they could defy the Word of the Lord, not seek shelter, leave their livestock in the field and perish. The choice was theirs. And the choice they would make on that day would define them the next day, and the days thereafter.

Here's why you should listen closely today: I've preached the Gospel for over 25 years in a lot of different contexts. But my eyes have never witnessed a time such as this: where BOTH those inside the covenant and outside the covenant have the exact same worries and fears. In the past two years, we've lived through the boils of Covid-19 and the political ramifications of it. And right this very moment, the worry for our livestock rises simultaneously with the price of diesel. Just this past week, I found myself wondering why some of the Pharaohs of the world can joke on Late Night Television in a way that makes light of the weight of the burdens of their Egyptians. But I want to tell you church this morning that the choices of Pharaoh's don't have to be your choices. It is indeed possible to Survive Pharaoh's Choices. But doing it requires some clarity from the Word of God. It comes by looking at the responses of the Pharaoh's officials to Pharaoh's choices because both their actions and/or their inactions have a lot to teach in such a time as this. But first, let us pray.

**Surviving Pharaoh's Choices Requires:**

**1. A Choice from Observation (Ex 9:11-12)**

- **The Natural Laws of Fireworks:** The next time a major holiday like July 4<sup>th</sup> or New Year's Eve rolls around and all the neighborhood decides to come together for fireworks, two laws of nature will instantly come into play: (1) Young kids tugging on the sleeves of their parents to ask them: "can I light one?" and (2) Super dad, who before lighting each and every one of them, does a scan of those present to make sure everyone is back at a reasonable distance because he knows what the kids don't: fire is something you don't mess with. That's exactly what Pharaoh's magicians learned, albeit the hard way.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** With boils on their bodies, Pharaoh's magicians had to make a choice: (a) to see their afflictions as precursors of greater afflictions to come if they continued to walk in Pharaoh's ways. Or (b) they could see them as the key to turn from Pharaoh's ways in order to thwart future afflictions.
- **Exodus 9:11-12:** <sup>11</sup> *The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians.* <sup>12</sup> *But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said to Moses.*
- **Teaching Emphasis: Standing Before Moses and Aaron:** (1) Magicians: Before the Plague of Boils, the magicians stood before Moses and Aaron in absolute defiance: emulated Nile to blood and the bringing forth of more frogs. Those plagues were precursors of much worse things to come. Now something changes: they (a) could not physically stand (because of the boils) and they (b) would not – they refused to act in defiance any longer. That's why you don't see them again. This plague was a key to say, "we've had enough." (2) Pharaoh: doesn't have the same attitude. The same defiance he showed at first is the same he has now.

- **App:** Tribulations can be precursors or keys in your life. It depends how you respond to them.

## 2. A Choice from Revelation (Ex 9:18-20)

- **The Road Rage Passengers:** (1) Have you ever been in a car with someone who is driving along just fine and then suddenly develops a very bad case of road rage? (2) It's not a fun experience, is it? (3) You are riding along looking at the flowers and reading the signs, but then Lead Foot Linda cuts your car off. When that happens, you slowly begin to recognize from the passenger seat that anything is in play at that moment. (3) So, you either shrink down in the seat or you stare straight ahead. (4) Even though you are a passenger riding on the bus of an about to be bad decision, you know that decision isn't yours.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** With boils still on their bodies and armed with the knowledge of hail to come, Pharaoh's officials had a choice to make: (a) Heed the Word Pharaoh and watch helplessly as what they value perishes along with them. Or (b) Heed the Word of the Lord and seek refuge from the storm sure to come upon the land.
- **Exodus 9:18-20** - <sup>18</sup> *Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now. <sup>19</sup> Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every person and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die.* <sup>20</sup> *Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. <sup>21</sup> But those who ignored the word of the Lord left their slaves and livestock in the field.*
- **Teaching Emphasis: The Missing Executive Order:** (1) In v19 – The Lord instructs Pharaoh to give an order; in v20 – the officials who feared the Word of the Lord responded. (2) But what's missing is the order from Pharaoh. The officials just reacted probably because they were within an earshot of hearing the message from Moses and Aaron. (3) Pharaoh's officials who heeded the Word of the Lord didn't want to follow in his neglect.
- **App:** Poor choices of leaders and people in authority don't have to be the choices of the people. The choice we make in our lives depends on whose word heeds greater authority.

## 3. A Choice from Preservation (Ex 9:25-26)

- **My House vs Guest's House** – (1) When I come into my house, the first thing I see is a shoe to the right of the door and a shoe to the left. (2) The next thing I see is Fruit Loops box on the kitchen counter and bowl with a spoon stuck to the bottom of it with hardened fruit loops on the side that's still on the coffee table in the living room. (3) But when we go to grandma's house, I never see shoes to the right or the left of the door, a Fruit Loops box on the kitchen counter, and an empty bowl with a spoon stuck to the bottom. (4) Grandma's house. Grandma's rules.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** To be spared from the hail, Egyptians had a choice to make: (a) go to place called Goshen in hopes of finding refuge and abide by the terms of God Almighty or (b) or remain outside Goshen and suffer the same fate as the rest of Egypt.
- **Exodus 9:25-26** - <sup>25</sup> *Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields—both people and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree. <sup>26</sup> The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were.*
- **Teaching Emphasis: The Place of Refuge in Egypt:** (1) Goshen was where the Israelites lived but it was a place in Egypt; (2) That meant it was an option for Egyptians to find refuge as well; (3) But the difference between the rest of land of Egypt and Goshen was this: God's spirit resided in Goshen with his people. (4) And to seek refuge there, you had to find refuge under the terms of the refuge maker himself: God Almighty.
- **App:** There is always an ark during a flood. And there is always a Goshen during a tribulation. But to find refuge there, you have to do it on God's terms.

## 4. A Choice from Realization (Ex 10:4, 7)

- **Bob Ross' Paint by Numbers:** (1) I got it for Christmas last year; (2) It's a dream for those limited in artistic ability; (3) You paint this numbered box this color; that box a different color and BAAM, you have intelligible picture that doesn't look like the one you made with fingerpaints in preschool. (4) Pharaoh's officials saw the boxes and painted them, and the picture became much clearer to them than Pharaoh: God's judgment was upon them, and they didn't want to be given over.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** Pharaoh's officials figured out something before Pharaoh: the deterioration of Egypt was in direct proportion to Pharaoh's hardness of heart.
- **Exodus 10:4, 7:** <sup>4</sup> *If you refuse to let them go, I will bring locusts into your country tomorrow. . . . <sup>7</sup> Pharaoh's officials said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the people go, so that they may worship the Lord their God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?"*
- **Teaching Emphasis: The Courageous Question:** (1) Publicly questioning a leader of Pharaoh's ilk in the Ancient World brought heavy consequences, even death. (2) But seeing the seriousness of the situation, the officials ask him a courageous question they had thought about much more than he had: "do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?" (3) The idea is they knew knocking of God when they saw it. But Pharaoh couldn't because God had already "given him over" so to speak.
- **App:** God's "giving over" of Pharaoh doesn't have apply to Pharaoh's people. We must choose who we serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Amen.