

The Destructive Plague of Darkness (#30)

Ex 10:21-29; Gen 1:2; 15:12; Is 58:10; Acts 26:18; II Cor 4:6; Heb 12:18; I Pet 2:9; Jude 13; Rev 21:10-11, 23

Plague #9 brings us to a thunderous rebuke of Pharaoh's unbelief, which was made evident in his stubbornness and rebellion. This time, there are no warnings. God has spoken and spoken. Progressively, the heart of Pharaoh has become like a rock, and words have neither opportunity nor impact (Jeremiah 17:19-10; Zechariah 7:12-14; I Chronicles 29:17-19).

In such a severe state, darkness is at a maximum state. "And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days...even darkness which may be felt;" an awful darkness, darker than blackness, an absence of light that could be felt by the senses of man. This may be similar to the picture of the great darkness on the day Jesus died, when even the sun was darkened or when the universe was still in chaos after the angelic rebellion (Genesis 1:2-4; Matthew 27:45; Luke 23:44-45).

Even in this, when Pharaoh sent for Moses, the king still wanted to negotiate. He told Moses to "go", but to leave "your flocks and your herds". Is there anywhere in the scripture a photograph of the darkness and hardness of the unbelieving, human heart more serious than this? Even so, the biblical believer will see that the sin of his heart is identical to the behavior of sin which Pharaoh exercised as a mature lifestyle of sin in its most developed state in the mind and life of a maximum unbeliever. (Dare I consider in myself that my heart is better than Pharaoh's?)

We can not underestimate the fact of this plague, nor underestimate the symbolism and application which it exemplifies to all who resist God. When God is present, light Himself is there. When Satan is present, darkness is his content and covering. When men have the option to choose God but resist him, that in itself is the condemnation. (John 3:18; 8:12; Matthew 5:14; I Thessalonians 5:4-8; Romans 13:11-14; I John 1:5-7). Oh that we may love Light instead of darkness!

In this third group of three plagues, a great development has occurred. As one has written elsewhere, nature itself changed its function to accomplish the wrath and judgment of God on unbelief. In plague #7, instead of rain to water and nourish the earth, the God-created moisture was changed to ice to destroy the fruit of the earth. In plague #8, instead of refreshing winds that bring moisture and fresh air, the land was hot and sultry. Into that vacuum came locusts to devour all remaining produce of the land until the function of the land was destroyed. In plague #9, the shining of the sun is blocked out and replaced with utter darkness. Not since Genesis 1:2 was there such a situation on the face of the earth. How dark is that darkness!

For prayer, study, fellowship, and application:

1. Compare this plague to the preceding eight plagues. How is it the same or different?
2. What are the three groups of plagues, and the significance of each group's suffering?
3. Darkness was a calamity to Egypt. Compare that to the darkness of the human heart before the new birth; of the darkness of sin in a believer's life; with a walk in the light of the Lord. How is your "walk in the light" with Jesus today; how is it with others around you?

Next week: Ex. 10, the 10th plague - death of the firstborn/ (Aug. 2009/ R. Nelson/ Email: ran2042@comcast.net)

