

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.” Rom. 9:17.

Technically, it was not *“the scripture”* that spoke to Pharaoh, but the Lord – THROUGH MOSES – bearing the message of Pharaoh’s doom by the everlasting decree of damnation from an Almighty God – i.e., REPROBATION ! In other words, God’s clear message to Pharaoh was, YOU ARE GOING TO HELL ! And it is pursuant to an irreversible decree by an infinitely powerful Sovereign – delivered by a stuttering nobody from the backside of the desert, employed by his father-in-law as a lowly sheep- herder; to wit:

“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.” (Ex. 3:1)

Upon being told that God had selected him to confront the mighty Pharaoh with a VERY unpopular message, Moses was anything but anxious to preach such a message to such a man; to wit:

“Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (Ex. 3:10,11)

Beloved, the message of reprobation is beautiful to God’s Elect – exceeding sweet to the taste and wholesome to the tongue, health to the navel and marrow to the bones; – BUT, to the reprobate – to the soul that hears the message that he is bound for Hell – irreversibly – by a divine decree of predestination – I say, to THAT soul, THAT message is anything but welcome, and is in fact, a savor of death unto death. Look at each word of our text again; to wit: ***“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.” Rom. 9:17.*** Where does the Scripture say that? Just exactly where does the Holy Spirit, -- the Holy Author of the Bible, – record those words in the Old Testament? The answer is, **Exodus 9:16.**

Let us consider those awesome words, in their context. God had already smitten Egypt with six exceedingly great, fearsome, and painful plagues – (rivers turned to blood, swarms of frogs, swarms of lice, swarms of flies, death of cattle, and boils with blains) – ***“And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had spoken unto Moses.” Ex. 9:11,12.*** Moses was poised to call down the 7th plague – HAIL ; to wit:

“Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.” (Ex. 9:18)

And, Moses knew that there was worse and more of it on the way if Pharaoh kept his present stubborn course. It was at this point that the Lord commanded Moses to deliver to Pharaoh the red hot sermon about Pharaoh’s plight as an irreversibly-Hell-bound REPROBATE; to wit:

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed FOR THIS CAUSE have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?” (Ex. 9:13-17)

A new and more horrific level of pain is announced by the Lord to this great monarch through the lips of Moses – (and Moses appears to be gaining strength and holy audacity as the contest proceeds) – to wit: *“For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people.”* Ex. 9:14(a). The Lord our God absolutely controls the hearts and minds and thought processes of all mankind – and Moses appears here to be warning Pharaoh that God can cause him and all his people to lose their nerve and crumble into frightened, terrorized masses of cowardly wimps; i.e., *“I will at this time send all my plagues UPON THINE HEART.”* Ex. 9:14.

“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.” (Prov. 21:1)

Indeed, Egypt seems to be peculiarly susceptible to such psychological warfare; to wit:

“The burden of Egypt. Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and THE HEART OF EGYPT SHALL MELT IN THE MIDST OF IT.” (Isa. 19:1)

As long as the heart of the king and his people is strong, they can wage war, endure any hardship, and fight on – never giving up. But when the heart melts – all is lost. And therefore Moses is looking Pharaoh in the face and plainly and boldly announcing to him that God is going to smite the Egyptians – from Pharaoh on down – with cowardice and confusion.

“And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother...And THE SPIRIT OF EGYPT SHALL FAIL in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.” (Isa. 19:2,3)

You see in these things how it is that God’s decrees of predestination work in the MEANS as well as the ENDS in bringing the reprobate to total and eternal destruction and damnation in Hell. Pharaoh’s and Egypt’s total addiction to IDOLS and to WIZARDRY (including PSEUDO-WISDOM) were among the predestinated MEANS leading to the predestinated END – i.e., PHARAOH’S REPROBATION. Paul took special note of Egypt’s addiction to wizardry being the stuff of which antichristic folly is made; to wit:

“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as JANNES and JAMBRES withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, REPROBATE concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.” (2 Tim. 3:7-9)

Call it, THE FOLLY OF WIZARDRY. It is the curse of God – if I may so say – this messing with the minds of the non-elect – i.e., the REPROBATE – as a predestinated MEANS of their doom; to wit:

“Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish...Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the Lord of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt. The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof.” – (Now note! God’s foreordained providences; to wit) – “THE LORD HATH MINGLED A PERVERSE SPIRIT IN THE MIDST THEREOF: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit. Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do. In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear because of the SHAKING OF THE HAND OF THE LORD OF HOSTS, which he shaketh over it.” (Isa. 19:11-16)

This “*shaking of the hands of the Lord of hosts,*” refers to the mighty, intervening activities of the dispensations of God in the direct controlling of all events whatsoever. For an example of such “*shaking,*” consider that somewhat obscure passage in connection with the glorious events beginning with the eve of the first Passover, and culminating in the passing through the Red Sea by the ragtag Jewish throng, followed by the drowning of the mighty Egyptian armies, and Pharaoh himself. The obscure part of a verse to which I refer is at the end of Ex. 12:12; to wit:

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; AND AGAINST ALL THE GODS OF EGYPT I WILL EXECUTE JUDGMENT: I am the Lord.”
(Ex. 12:12)

I have read that passage of Scripture many times, Beloved; and I cannot recall ever having noticed that passage before – let alone having expounded it. In addition to having managed the bloody work of slaying the multiplied millions of the firstborn of man and beast in Egypt that night, the Lord our God literally smashed all the millions of idols and the associated properties, real and personal, and probably including the millions of priests and other millions of employed functionaries associated therewith. Gill says:

“This is rather to be understood literally of the idols of the Egyptians, their images of gold and silver, or of whatever they were made of; the Targum of Jonathan is, ‘on all the idols of the Egyptians I will exercise four judgments; the molten idols shall be melted, the idols of stone shall be cut asunder, the idols of earth shall be broke to pieces, and the idols of wood shall become ashes;’ see Numb. 33:4. Isa. 19:1. And there are some traces of this in heathen writings; Artapanus says, that by an earthquake most of the temples in Egypt fell; and Justin reports, that Moses, being the leader of the exile Israelites, stole away the sacred things of the Egyptians, i.e., their gods, which they endeavored to regain by force of arms; I am the Lord; God Almighty, faithful and true, and therefore what was threatened should certainly be performed, and thereby the Egyptians and all others might know that he was Jehovah alone, and that there is no God beside him.”

What an amazing thing. Read the short sentence again; to wit; ***“And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment.”*** Ex. 12:12(bb). Someone has said that ancient Egypt had more gods than there are days in the year. Important gods. Each with huge treasuries and holdings of real estate and personality. Each with hordes of so-called vestal virgins and similar votaries of male and female prostitutes to service vast regular and faithful memberships. Think, Roman Catholicism – worldwide. Now take another look at our text; to wit:

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE DECLARED THROUGHOUT ALL THE EARTH.”(Rom. 9:17)

Among the items reflecting the might and power of Pharaoh was his position as the de facto great high priest of all Egypt’s gods and religions; so that, when the earthquake and the almighty power of the almighty Jehovah reduced ***“all the gods of Egypt”*** to smithereens – in the very same night that He was – simultaneously – killing the firstborn of every man and beast in Egypt – I say, THAT, Beloved, is most certainly guaranteed to cause HIS NAME TO ***“BE DECLARED THROUGHOUT THE EARTH !”*** Think of it.

Egypt was world famous – and is yet to this day, historically famous – for the grand multiplicity of her gods, and idols, and magnificent shrines and temples, and religious statues, and icons, and pictorial masterpieces on the walls of tombs, and religious schools, and seminaries, and priests (led by Jannes and Jambres – i.e., John and Ambrose, English forms of Egyptian names – **2 Tim. 3:8**) and theologians, and temple prostitutes (male and female), and relics, many of which survive to this day in museums in modern Egypt and around the world.

And the great pyramids of Giza survive – one of them (the Great Pyramid) is one of the wonders of the ancient world, “*perhaps the greatest single building ever erected by man*” (according to the Encyclopedia Britannica) – giving mute testimony to the religious opulence, grandeur, magnificence, and extravagance that was reduced to near-complete oblivion and rubble on that night of the first Passover so long ago (i.e. about 1491 B.C.).

“And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.” Ex. 9:16. With the firstborn of Pharaoh and all his people dead, and with all the gods of Egypt crushed to powder, Pharaoh finally relented; pursuant to the Lord’s prediction to Moses; to wit:

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely THRUST YOU OUT HENCE ALTOGETHER.”
(Ex. 11:1)

Get the picture, Beloved. A great but abominably filthy and idolatrous nation (with its king) has been virtually destroyed by the Lord, and the Name of the Lord has thereby been honored and glorified all over the world. But there is more, in this amazing contest between a powerful reprobate (non-elect) and his God and Creator. In Pharaoh, we learn the true nature of the REPROBATE – and his dominant attribute is clear; to wit: REBELLION AGAINST GOD. On the seventh day – the last day – of the Passover, Pharaoh changes his mind and leads his army in hot pursuit of the Jews, overtaking them on the banks of the Red Sea. Another scene of high drama is going to take place here that will glorify the Name of the Lord even more. We are all familiar with the supernatural parting of the waters to enable the Jews to pass through to safety on dry ground; to wit:

“By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.” (Heb. 11:29)

Beloved, we cannot read this story too much. The whole world knew it was transpiring at the time it was happening, due to the earthquakes, lightnings, thunderbolts out of the clouds, storms and tempests, pitch, fire and hailstones hurtling through the sky; and many other frightening convulsions of disturbed and violent nature. The gigantic parting and stacking up of the waters of the Red sea caused a humongous disruption of the earth’s eco-system, felt and seen worldwide. This thing, Beloved, was not done in a corner. (Neither are our own wars with the powers of darkness working in and through REPROBATE humans.)

“And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and TROUBLED THE HOST OF THE EGYPTIANS.” (Ex. 14:23,24)

Gill says that God was not looking at the Egyptian army, “in a friendly way, but as an enemy, with indignation and wrath. The Targum of Jonathan is, ‘he looked through the pillar of fire, to cast upon them coals of fire, and through the pillar of cloud, to cast upon them hailstones.’ The Jerusalem Targum is, ‘pitch, fire, and hailstones;’ and Josephus speaks of storms and tempests, of thunder and lightning, and of thunderbolts out of the clouds; and Antapanus of fire or lightning flashing out against them, by which many perished...The thunder and lightning no doubt frightened the horses, so that they broke their ranks, and horsemen and chariots might run foul on one another, and the hailstones scatter and destroy many; however, the whole must be terrible and distressing to them, especially it being in the night season.”

“And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.” (Ex. 14:25)

Gill thinks maybe the huge hailstones broke the wheels. Or, as Jarchi suggests, he burnt them, through the force of the fire or lightning; the wheels being off, the chariots must be dragged along by the horses by mere force, which must be heavy work. The miserable, doomed Egyptian soldiers rightly understood their situation – at long last; – To wit: “The Lord fighteth for them against us!” The deadly pyrotechnics – fire and hailstones, thunder and lightning – all the artillery of heaven turned against the hapless Egyptians.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen...And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; THERE REMAINED NOT SO MUCH AS ONE OF THEM.” (Ex. 14:26-28)

And so also perished Pharaoh, who, though a great and wise king in matters of the world that he lived and reigned in – did nevertheless live a reprobate, die a reprobate, and enter Hell a reprobate. As such, he typifies all REPROBATES; and Moses – in his contest with Pharaoh, – typifies us and all God’s elect. Look again at our text, and see plainly how we are to glorify and magnify the Lord our God – continually; to wit: “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.” Rom. 9:17, from Ex. 9:16.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, PHARAOH SHALL NOT HEARKEN UNTO YOU; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.” (Ex. 11:9)

Even so with us and America. Amen.