

## "Enough of God's Thunder"

### FROM LAST WEEK:

WHAT TO KNOW: 1) God is entirely in control of all the people in the world.

This entire control we see dramatically and profoundly and controversially demonstrated in God's interaction with Pharaoh: the bad man's hard-heartedness perpetuated! Here's the executive summary:

#### 19 "Exodus" references to *Pharaoh's hardened heart*

3 times God says he will harden Pharaoh's heart

4:21, 7:3; 14:4

7 times, we are told that "Pharaoh's heart was hardened"

7:13; 7:14,22; 8:19; 9:7,35; 14:5

3 times, we read that Pharaoh [himself] hardened his [own] heart

8:15,32; 9:34

6 times, we read that God hardened Pharaoh's heart

9:12; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:8

### WHAT TO KNOW:

1) God has his reasons for exercising control over all the people of the world.

e.g. His reasons for keeping Pharaoh's heart hardened

**Reason #1** that Egypt would know that God is the LORD

**Exodus 7:5** "The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them." By "*great acts of judgment*" → water turned to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, death to livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, death to the firstborn

**Reason #2** that Pharaoh would know that the LORD is unique

**Reason #3** that God's name would be proclaimed in all the earth

**Exodus 9:13-16** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, **so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.** For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, **so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.**"

Three specific purposes. Or you can call it one purpose: *making known the existence and the character of God.*

Interestingly, this "one thing" is actually OUR job as the people of Christ. **1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. So perhaps we should be expecting the same sort of "divine intervention" to be occurring in our lives as he sets us up to make known that God is the LORD, that he is unique in all the earth, and among all the gods. (Can you see some hearts being hardened among your acquaintances? Can you see how this sets you up to make known the existence and character of God?)

**THE REAL QUESTION** → *God has his reasons but does he have the right?*

2) God has the absolute right to exercise control over all the people of the world.

A LITTLE CONTEXT:

**GOD HAS THE RIGHT** (to exercise control over all the people of the world):

i) Because he has created all people

**Psalms 100:3** Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. *Do sheep have rights? Or are all the rights the shepherd's?*

**Romans 9:17-21** For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy on whomever he

wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

**Jeremiah 18:1-6** ... “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. *Does clay have rights? Or all the rights the potter’s?*

And in fact all human beings are like clay in the hand of the potter:

**Acts 17:28** ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed his offspring.” This is the one explicit explanation of God’s right to rule. There are three more implicitly set out in the Bible.

## ii) **Because he sustains all people**

We have seen this already... **Exodus 4:11** Then the Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?”

**Job 12:10** In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.

**Job 34:14-15** If he should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.

Life is a mystery that God is managing... **Colossians 1:16-17** ...—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

## iii) **Because of his perfect righteousness**

“*The Song of Moses*”: **Deuteronomy 32:1-4** “Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and like showers upon the herb. For I will proclaim the name of the Lord; ascribe greatness to our God! The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.

**Isaiah 40:13-14** Who has measured the Spirit of the Lord, or what man shows him his counsel? Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? **Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?** Every true thing we know about justice we learned from him, so shall we now point out to God that on some levels he hasn’t got it quite right?

## iv) **Because of his complete knowledge**

**Psalms 139:1-6** O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. Why do we feel that we know what is really going on? We don’t know very much at all. So who is to say what treatment any particular bad man deserves?

## WHAT TO DO:

- a) **Seek to understand God’s reasons for ruling as he does** as much as any human can!

e.g. After the plague of hail, (Plague # 7 of a total of 10!),

**Exodus 9:27,28** Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, “This time I have sinned; the Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Plead with the Lord, for **there has been enough of God’s thunder and hail.** I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.” **Apparently, God did not agree.** From

God's perspective, there had NOT been enough plagues, for from his point of view their purposes had not been fully accomplished.

**b) Leave to God the people who are causing your suffering.**

**Romans 12:19** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." This doesn't at all mean that we should let criminals get away with their crimes. Check the context. Romans 13 follows.

**c) Acknowledge God's right to rule**

**Proverbs 3:5-6** Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

And let this be a part of your worship. **1 Samuel 2:1-8** And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. "There is none holy like the Lord; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world.

**Psalms 98:1-9** Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises! Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody! With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord! Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it! Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord, **for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.**

**NEXT WEEK:** (November 1): ***"The LORD Makes A Distinction"*** [Exodus 11:1-12:32]