

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

Feb. 2, 2016

- Exodus 4-6 – Moses and Pharaoh.
- John 1:19-34 – The witness of John the Baptist to Jesus.
- Song of Solomon 1:5-7 – The insecurity of the beloved.

Reflections:

1. Exodus 4-6. In this section we see both the training and ministry of Moses. In Exodus 4:21 we are told that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. The question arises as to why? Why didn’t God soften his heart? If God hardened his heart, how can Pharaoh be responsible? The solution is found in understanding the metaphysics of concurrence. In sum, God gives all beings and their activities existence every moment in accordance with their natures, whether it be an acorn or the free will of Pharaoh. The point is that God did not harden Pharaoh’s heart contrary to Pharaoh’s free choices but in accordance with his free will choices. The Scripture makes it very clear that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. It declares that Pharaoh’s heart grew hard (Ex. 7:13), that Pharaoh hardened his heart (Ex. 8:15), and that “Pharaoh’s heart grew hard” the more God worked on it (Ex. 8:19).

Moreover, when God sent the plague of flies, “Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also” (Ex. 8:32). This same or like phrase is repeated over and over (Ex 9:7, 34-35). In fact, with the exception of God’s prediction of what would happen in our passage. We see that Pharaoh hardened his own heart first (Ex 7:13; 8:15; 8:32), and then God hardened it later (Ex. 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27). If Pharaoh had been receptive to God’s warnings,

his heart would not have been hardened by God. But when God in grace gave Pharaoh a reprieve from the plagues, he took advantage of the situation: “But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them (Moses and Aaron), as the Lord had said (Ex. 8:15). Consider how God hardens and does not harden hearts:



GOD DOES NOT HARDEN HEARTS

- Initially
- Directly
- Against free choice
- As to their cause

GOD DOES HARDEN HEARTS

- Subsequently
- Indirectly
- Through free will
- As to their effect

2. John 1:19-34. John the Baptist's confession upon seeing Christ, that here was "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" is of great significance. The Jews used a lamb as a sacrifice for the Passover Feast, which celebrated Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt (Exod. 13:1-10; see John 13:1). Isaiah offered the idea of the Suffering Servant in terms of a sacrificial lamb (Isa. 53). John was declaring that Jesus was the true sacrificial lamb for the Passover; His death would now serve as the deliverance of God's people from their sins. As Paul wrote in his letter to the church at Corinth, "Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7). In verse 29 we have a powerful statement of unlimited atonement, the doctrine that teaches that Christ died for all people, not just believers, as indicated with the term "world" and the fact that sin is in the singular as if all sins were gathered into one concept.



3. Song of Solomon 1:5-7. The statement "the king (cf. Song 1:12; 3:9, 11; 7:5) has brought me into his chambers" is better rendered as a request: "May the king bring me into his chambers." In this sense she was expressing her desire for intimacy and marriage. This opening soliloquy suggests that physical desire is a characteristic of romantic love and that properly channeled the desire is good, not evil. The beloved's suntanned appearance ("dark am I") revealed that she worked in the fields. This made her feel insecure ("do not stare at me") among the city dwellers and in particular the women of Jerusalem. She compared her dark skin to the tents of Kedar, which were made of black goats' hair. Her explanation for her dark appearance was almost an apology. Because of hard outdoor work in the vineyards, required of her by her brothers, she was forced to neglect the cultivation of her own vineyard, that is, herself and her appearance (cf. Song 8:12). Her feelings of insecurity aroused in her a desire for her lover's presence. She addressed him as though he were a shepherd (a common epithet for a man in ancient Near Eastern love poetry).



On the Glory Road,

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