

There Is a Point of No Return
Exodus 10:21-29

We are honored to be with you today. Each moment we have is a gift from God, and we trust He will bless you as you spend these moments with us.

Now turn to Exodus, and we will continue our journey through this wonderful book. We hope you will be blessed by this teaching, now here is Bible teacher J. Mark Horst

The Niagara River in the United States joins two of the five Great Lakes in the northern part of the country. I've seen the water pouring over these huge falls, millions of gallons of water every minute! I'm told that on the Niagara River, there is a certain point above the waterfall that marks the point of no return. If you are in the water or on it and you get beyond that point, there is no hope of escape. You will go over the falls. But as long as you stay above that point, there is still a possibility of returning. Very few people have gone over the falls and survived.

In a sense, life is like that; there is also a point of no return. After you have gone beyond that point, it is impossible to return. The choices you have made cannot be changed. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, demonstrates that for us. His repeated refusal to let God's people go and the continual hardening of his heart led him unwaveringly to that point of no return. Eventually, it would cost him his family, his armies, and his kingdom.

In the contest between Moses and Pharaoh, the battle of the gods is about over. It is the battle between the true God, Jehovah, and the idols of Egypt. Moses was speaking for the true God, and Pharaoh was speaking for the idols. We've been tracing these events from the book of Exodus, and it has been thrilling to see how the hand of God was upon this pagan king and his people. We must learn the lessons recorded, or we are doomed to make the same mistakes.

Pharaoh learned that THERE IS A POINT OF NO RETURN. There is a point beyond which change is impossible. Pharaoh said to Moses, "Get away from me, take heed to yourself, see my face no more; for if you see my face, you shall die." This was the outcome of a continual refusal on Pharaoh's part found in Exodus 10:21-29.

21. And the LORD said unto Moses, stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.

22. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:

23. They saw not one another neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

24. And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let you little ones also go with you.

25. And Moses said, thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God.

26. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither.

27. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.

28. And Pharaoh said unto him, get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die.

29. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.

In this text, we find the INDICATORS which should help us locate that point of no return.

The first indicator was:

The Darkness in the Land.

The Lord told Moses to stretch out his hand toward heaven, and a deep darkness would cover the land of Egypt. It would be so dense it could be felt. I have never been in that kind of darkness. Years ago, I visited an old coal mine with my family. We went down hundreds of meters into the mine. At one point, the tour guide turned out all the lights, and it was dark. It was so dark that when I put my finger on my nose, I still couldn't see my hand. We would say it was "pitch black." But that darkness was nothing like this.

Here was a dense darkness which the Bible says could be felt, and the oppressive darkness spread over the land of Egypt. Nothing like it had ever happened like this before. This thick darkness over the land of Egypt lasted for three days. The Bible tells us that for 72 hours, nobody was able to move. No one rose from his place. This was not natural darkness. No way. This was an act of God. This was an indicator that Pharaoh was approaching the point of no return.

Notice that this darkness engulfed the Egyptians but that the Israelites had light in their dwellings. There was a clear division between the people of Egypt and the people of God. This division shouldn't surprise us. Remember, at creation, God separated the light from the darkness. So, there's no reason why He couldn't do it again; and He did.

God's miracle of darkness for Egypt must have been symbolic. I have been impressed in my travels in various parts of the world to feel the spiritual darkness, not physical darkness. It is oppressive; it is very uncomfortable. This was real physical darkness by a miracle of God, but it was also a symbolic darkness. The land of the rebellious ones was covered with darkness. Rejection of the truth always leads to spiritual darkness, so God brought this physical darkness to cover the land of Egypt as an indicator that there is a point of no return.

The next indicator was:

The Darkness of the Mind.

So, this intense darkness came. After it had lifted, Pharaoh said to Moses, "All of you can go now, but you leave your flocks behind." He had offered several previous compromises, which Moses refused to accept. So, this is now the darkness of his mind showing again. 'Do a partial obedience.' This is often the counsel of a darkened mind. "All the people may go," Pharaoh said, "just leave your flocks behind." Don't go quite all the way in obeying your God.

But Moses' response was this: he said, "Our cattle shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind." All of us will go, and we will go all the way; we will obey God's command completely. Moses said we are not going to leave anything behind. Furthermore, we are going because we must go.

Pharaoh couldn't understand that because there was darkness in his mind. Pharaoh's mind lacked spiritual understanding. The Bible tells us in First Corinthians 2:14, "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The fleshly mind cannot understand the things of God. The proud mind is shrouded or veiled in darkness. Pharaoh's mind simply couldn't see the light because his mind was clouded with darkness.

It is the same today. Some very intelligent people in positions of leadership and responsibility are in spiritual darkness. Many of them are highly educated, but they are not wise. They reject the reality of God, His Word, and His authority. They think they know better than God does. Pharaoh is an indicator of this. His response to Moses is an indicator that you can get to the place where it is impossible for you to think clearly.

The final indicator was:

The Darkness of the Heart.

That is an awful truth, an unyielding truth. Pharaoh's constant refusal left him with only darkness. He kept hardening his heart. He kept saying, "No, I don't know the Lord, and I will not listen to Him," until the time came when God hardened his heart. You read it in verse 27, "But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.

Oh, the darkness of the heart. There is a point of no return, and Pharaoh spoke it out when he said, "Get away from me, take heed to yourself, see my face no more; for if you see my face you shall die." He said, "I am through with you, and I will not let the people go." Moses said, "As you say, I will never come back to you." Mark it. Mark it well. Pharaoh sealed his fate by his own decision. God left it up to him and he made the decision. The darkness of his heart brought him to the point of no return. He sealed the door of his return.

Many a person has turned away at a time which affected his future most seriously and sealed the door of return.

In Romans chapter one, we read these words; "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Therefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting..." They reach a point of no return.

As I have told you, there is a point of no return. How different life would have been for Pharaoh and the Egyptians if had he listened to the Lord. But he refused to hear God. We can talk about Pharaoh all we want. That's been centuries ago. But how is it with you? Have you listened to God in the past? Are

you still listening to Him today? Or have you turned a deaf ear to His voice? Learn the lesson from Pharaoh. Listen to the Lord now, or I assure you, you will one day regret your refusal to listen.

These are the indicators we find in Pharaoh's experience. God made it plain. There was the darkness of the land, the darkness of the mind, and the darkness of the heart, which led to the point of no return. My friend, I am speaking to you right there where you are. Refuse the LORD no longer. It is time now for you to listen to God. Don't pass the point of no return.

Thank you, J. Mark, for this teaching from Exodus, and we thank you for joining us. As Christians, it is a privilege to serve and trust our God. Our God who is above every nation. As His people, it is good for us to remember the important principle in Daniel 4:17. It says, "that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men, and gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men." This verse teaches our sovereign God is over the kingdoms on earth. What happens here among our leaders is known and directed by Him.

Our leaders may be powerful and important or minor and less known, but it is our God who has placed them there, and our God is using them to accomplish His will. I admit we don't always know how this can be, and when I don't, I usually tell God I don't know what this happening or why you are allowing this, but I trust you and pray that your people stay faithful. Be encouraged from this story from Exodus, that our God was in control, and the same God who was in control back then is still in control now.

Do you have any thoughts from today's teaching? If you want to share them with us, here are a few ways you can contact us. One of the best ways is via email. Our email is hope@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, no problem, our address is Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, PA 15533. Or you can connect with us on our website. Our website is heraldsofhope.org. While you are there, please check out the listen tab and listen to other teaching. Again, the website is www.heraldsofhope.org.

This brings us to the end of today's program. Thanks again for being there. Please join us next week for another lesson from Exodus. Go with God this week and know that He is big enough for your circumstance. Trust Him because "The Most High rules in the kingdoms of men."