

## LESSONS FROM A HARD HEART

I recently visited Tutankhamun's exhibition in Perth, Western Australia. <sup>1</sup> The story of archaeologist Howard Carter's many failed attempts to find the buried tomb of Tut is a remarkable tale of persistence and never say die attitude. But what a fabulous reward to finally unearth the undisturbed treasures of Egypt's fabled boy king. Many unsolved mysteries of "King Tut" remain to this day in spite of all that modern science has thrown at him. And it is simply impossible to take in the enormous wealth that Tut was buried with so he could transmigrate back into the world whence he originated.

The mummified king was buried inside four gold chests that fit together like Russian dolls. The suspense of the archaeologists as they "peeled" off each box must have been electric: At last the golden sarcophagus containing Tut was there for the world to see! In my own transliteration, the exhibition's plaque explained it this way: In Egyptian religion, the Pharaoh was considered to be the literal incarnation of the Sun God. The golden sun had beamed to earth his incarnated man! Now in death, the sun god's emanation would travel back whence he came ... the sun god Amun-Ra as "the Father" would receive back to himself his human incarnation in the pharaoh who was "his son" ... gold returns to gold!

In contrast, in the Hebrew Bible, God did not infuse Adam's body with a pre-existing, eternal soul. When God breathed into Adam "the breath of life" and "man became a living soul", we learn that men do not *have a soul, but rather are souls*. And when Adam dies, his soul dies; it does not transmigrate. Which is to say, the man in total disintegrates, returns to the dust, and is unconscious in death.

So you can see that Egyptian theology agreed with the Devil's original lie, "Ye shall not surely die!" Egyptian theology believed in the transmigration of the soul, and in the case of the pharaoh, the incarnated Son of Amun-Ra would return to his trinitarian fellowship. Egyptian religion expert Siegfried Morenz writes:

The trinity was a major preoccupation of Egyptian theologians ... Three gods combined and treated as a single being, addressed in the singular. <sup>2</sup>

The Greeks later adopted the Egyptian notions of God being Three and the concept of the transmigration of the soul:

The notion of a divine trinity is not found in Judaism, but it is prefigured by paganism. Aristotle writes of the Pythagorean doctrine that "the whole and everything in it is comprehended by the number three, for end, middle and beginning have the number of the whole, that is the trinity." Hundreds of years earlier, an ancient Egyptian text has God proclaim: "Being One I became Three." Another reads, "three are all the gods, Amon, Ra, Ptah; there are none like them. Hidden in his name Amon, he is Ra, his body is Ptah. He is manifested in Amon, with Ra and Ptah, the three united." <sup>3</sup>

Reformed theologian and Twentieth Century preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones expresses the modern [mis]understanding that Christianity alone has a trinity. Lloyd-Jones writes that:

No human being would have thought of the doctrine of the Trinity. It comes directly from the Bible ... we are simply meant to look at it with wonder, with awe and with worship, and be amazed at it ... [even though] no single explicit statement of this doctrine is made [in the Bible!] <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tutankhamun of the 18th Dynasty ruled in Egypt c. 1332 - 1323 BC during the period of the New Kingdom. His name means "Living image of Aten".

<sup>2</sup> Morenz, Siegfried. *Egyptian Religion*, Cornell, NY, 1992 [1973], p225

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Freke and Pete Gandy, *The Jesus Mysteries: Was the Original Jesus a Pagan God?* London, Harper Collins, 1999, pp100-101.

<sup>4</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God the Father, God the Son: Great Doctrines Series*, London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1996, pp84-85.

This is truly a staggering statement from a highly respected Christian theologian. Firstly, observe the daring contradiction: The Christian doctrine of the Trinity “comes directly from the Bible” even though “no single explicit statement of this doctrine is made”! Are you serious? No wonder “orthodox Christianity” threatens that if you don’t believe the Trinity you will lose your soul, but if you try to understand it you will lose your mind!

Secondly, Lloyd-Jones is ignorant of history --- and many modern Christian theologians, pastors and believers share his ignorance --- because the Egyptians thought of a trinity long before the Christians! The Greeks adopted the Egyptian idea and formulated their own Zeus-Persephone-Zagreus trinity and later Gnostics speculated that within the unitary essence of God there are three manifestations, or persons.<sup>5</sup> The Babylonians predated them all with their trinity of Ea-Damkina-Marduk. So what’s this about “no human being would have thought of the doctrine of the Trinity”, when it is historically demonstrated to be precisely a man-invented theology?

Keegan Chandler states that:

The ancient notion of the transmigrating soul [e.g. Tut’s return to Ra at death] unquestionably forms the metaphysical backbone of the present Trinitarian Christology; it is the philosophical framework which facilitates the doctrines of the dual natures, pre-existence, and the Incarnation. According to the ancient Greek historians, the genesis of this notion, which so characterized the Grecian worldview, was in Egyptian theology.<sup>6</sup>

The cornerstone of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is “the eternal Sonship” of Jesus and his coming to earth as the incarnate God. Who said Christianity’s doctrine of Jesus being “God in the flesh”, of Jesus being the “God-Man”, is uniquely “Christian”? Egypt had it’s own well-established doctrine of Incarnation long before the post-apostolic theologians of Roman “orthodoxy” worked it out in their many ecumenical councils! Standing before Tutankhamun’s gold sarcophagus drove these points home to me quite powerfully.

#### THE EXODUS: HISTORICAL DEMONSTRATION OF MONOTHEISM

Now here is the thing. The One God of the Bible has shown Himself implacably opposed to these pagan notions. He locked horns with Egypt and her polytheism in a great historical showdown. You know the story well. You were taught about the Ten Plagues that God unleashed upon a stubborn Pharaoh in order to bring the Jews out of Egypt. Of course this Pharaoh was not Tutankhamun, but the theology was the same.

Egypt was at this time the epicentre of world culture, military power and knowledge. But Egypt was about to learn that all creation is not ruled by a multiplicity of gods, and by extension Pharaoh the incarnate Son of Ra, but by the God of Moses, the God of Israel, the one God of all the universe. Egypt was about to learn that there is only One God. Egypt was about to learn about unitary monotheism. The world was about to learn Yahweh God has put a plague on the house of any system or anyone who countenances polytheism.<sup>7</sup>

So, why did God need to use the ten plagues? No doubt there might have been easier and quicker ways to get Israel out of Egypt, and to get the lesson that God is One Person across. There is for example, a case where God temporarily blinded a foreign army, so his prophet and servant(s) could escape unnoticed (2 Kings 6:14ff). Why not just temporarily strike Pharaoh and his army with blindness and have Israel walk out of the place unmolested?

Ah. But any easier and quicker exodus would have left Pharaoh and Egypt, and thus the world, without historical demonstration that there is one God to whom all creation belongs. Pharaoh begins to learn this truth after the seventh plague. Up to this point in time, Pharaoh’s magicians have been able to mimic the miracles of Moses. Could Moses turn water into blood? So can the gods of Pharaoh’s house. What about turning sticks into

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<sup>5</sup> For my fuller treatment of this theme see *They Never Told Me This in Church!* Second edition, pp74-77.

<sup>6</sup> Keegan Chandler *The God of Jesus in Light of Christian Dogma: The Recovery of new Testament Theology*. Restoration Fellowship, McDonough, Georgia, 2016, p57.

<sup>7</sup> I am indebted to Rabbi Fohrman for much of the following substance at [www.alephbeta.org](http://www.alephbeta.org) It’s a helpful discussion on the age-old question of whether God over-ruled Pharaoh’s free will when He “hardened his Pharaoh’s heart”.

serpents? Yep. The magicians could keep pace with that too. Well, how about making frogs appear? Sure thing. The gods of Egypt could keep pace with that.

Yes, the previous six plagues were horrible enough. But through all of them, Pharaoh was defiant, his gods seemingly equal to the task --- until the seventh plague of hail where he begins to admit: "I have sinned this time; the LORD is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones" (Exodus 9:27).

#### THE PLAGUE OF HAIL WITH FIRE

Up till the seventh plague Pharaoh has never talked in these terms. Don't forget he is a god on earth. But now he realizes what he's been doing ... fighting against the one true God of Israel. He confesses he is a sinner before Yahweh, and that's a big admission from the incarnate Son of Ra! So what was different about the hail that shocked Pharaoh? Why did the hail startle him towards a confession of monotheism, that YHWH is uniquely in control of the forces of nature? Clearly, this was no ordinary hail:

And Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck all that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant of the field and shattered every tree in the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel were, there was no hail (Exodus 9:23-26).

Some storm, this. It's clearly more than a bad storm with lightning and thunder and hail. Although this hail flattened trees and plants, it wasn't because the stones were as big as golf balls, or tennis balls, or even footballs. Indeed, nothing is said about the size of the hail. But clearly it's no ordinary hail. So, what is so startling about this hail?

The answer is:- It's composed of ice *and* fire! Fire encapsulated within ice! If it had been regular hail, Pharaoh might have said, "I guess the ice god doesn't like Egypt." If it was raining fire from heaven in the form of lightning Pharaoh might have said, "The fire god is not happy with Egypt." But an alliance between the ice god and the fire god? How do you get fire *inside* hail? The penny dropped. Only a singular God, the creator of both these opposite forces could bring ice and fire together in one combination.

For Pharaoh "the fire flashing continually in the midst of hail" was the greatest display of God's unitary oneness that could exist. The God who is smiting Egypt with fire burning in the midst of hail is not just a powerful polytheistic god. He now recognizes that the God of the Hebrews (upon whom the hail was not falling) is the One Creator God of the universe.

#### THE AGENDA

God's wise purpose in the plagues was to bring a polytheistic nation to the truth that there is only One God. Note that the sixth plague just before the hail was the plague of boils. After the plague of boils we are told Pharaoh's magicians "could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians" (Ex. 9:11). Pharaoh has lost his spiritual foot-soldiers. His polytheistic props are being knocked away. He's beginning to feel rather vulnerable, I imagine. The magicians' powers are beginning to abate and they are impotent to stand with Pharaoh before Moses. The polytheistic gods of Egypt are beginning to desert the incarnate Pharaoh.

Right at this moment our English Bibles read, "the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen ..." (Ex. 9:12). This is where Rabbi Fohrman is very helpful in pointing out that in the Hebrew text there are actually two different words that our translations read alike as "harden". One word *chazak* means to strengthen, to encourage. The other *kaved* carries the idea of being heavy, weighed down, stubborn, immovable.

Most of the time Pharaoh is exercising his own free will and being just plain stubborn (*kaved*). His own heart is heavy and impervious to resist God's miracles and message. But in one instance, and in only one instance, does

the Hebrew text use a different word and say that God acted on Pharaoh's heart to strengthen him, and make him courageous to follow his own desires (*chazak*). And it's this time in Exodus 9:12 where:

The LORD hardened [*chazak* --- strengthened and made courageous] Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen ..." (Ex.9:12).

As Rabbi Fohrman says, if anything, God is strengthening Pharaoh's free will by giving him more courage and determination to stick to his vision. God increases his will to continue his defiant mission. But why would God want Pharaoh to continue to defy Him? Well, it seems that Pharaoh's response to the plague of hail was not as genuinely repentant as he was trying to make out. If we may use a New Testament explanation, it is possible to have tears of regret --- "worldly sorrow" ---but not tears that lead to genuine heart turning to God so as to conform to His ideal will ( see 2 Corinthians 7:10).

It seems that Pharaoh, and by extension the magicians and Egyptians, were still not ready to let go of their gods and to love and follow Yahweh the one true God. They just wanted the pain to stop. Remember that at the beginning when God commissioned Moses to go and stand before Pharaoh that God wanted two things. First, God wanted to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt and into their own homeland: Command Pharaoh to let My people go. But the second explanation for the plagues is that "by great judgments ... the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD ..." (Exodus 7:1ff).

The great agenda behind the ten plagues is that the Israelites and the Egyptians and the world will know there is only one true God. The gods of polytheism are condemned. And although the hail encapsulating flashing fire brought Pharaoh to the precipice of this knowledge, his repentance was more of regret and fear, than genuine heart-turning to God.

Pharaoh was ready to give up his stubborn fight for all the wrong reasons. So God intervened and actually strengthened his resolve to fight on. God does not want Pharaoh to surrender for superficial reasons. God wants Pharaoh's vision radically transformed. Thus, if Pharaoh is not ready to deeply accept Yahweh at this point, God will give him the strength to carry on in his own determination.

When Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder [literally, the sounds] had ceased, he sinned again and hardened [*kaved*, made heavy and stubborn] his heart, he and his servants" (Exodus 9:34). Pharaoh's light bulb "aha" moment vanished all too quickly. He re-arms himself for further resistance. Idolatry dies hard. The gods of the Egyptians, including their trinity and incarnated son of Ra, are deeply entrenched. So:

Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and said to him: 'Thus saith the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: For how much longer are you going to refuse to be subjugated before Me? Let My people go, so they can serve Me. For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your border (Exodus 10:3-4 3)

Imagine these Hebrew slaves standing in the court of the Pharaoh and challenging him, "How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?" Wouldn't some diplomacy work better? More flies are caught with honey than vinegar! Moses and Aaron are dismissed from the court. But at once the servants of Pharaoh get in on the act. They can't believe Pharaoh is being so pig-headed. They point out to Pharaoh that his stubbornness has ruined Egypt:

How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed? (Exodus 10:7)

These servants take a huge risk in challenging their incarnated monarch. But Pharaoh buckles under this group pressure and "Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, 'Go, serve the LORD your God! Who are the ones that are going?'" (Ex. 10:8). Surely by now Pharaoh knows who will be going? But Moses rattles off the list ... "We'll go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go."

Pharaoh tries a bit of bargaining, “Not so! Go now, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desire.” So they were “driven out from Pharaoh’s presence (Ex. 10:11). Pharaoh will not let the Israelites go on God’s terms with their herds and cattle.

Now, put yourself in Moses’ shoes for a bit. For seven plagues so far, you’ve been trying to persuade Pharaoh to free your people. He’s been anything but compliant. Indeed he’s been, well, just plain stubborn. And now he comes to you with this proposal: “Hey Moses, you can go free but how about if you leave behind your animals?” If you’re Moses, how do you respond? Four hundred years of slavery can come to an end right now! All you have to do is say, “Okay, Pharaoh, we can meet you part way. You got yourself a deal.” But that’s not what Moses says. He seems to remain oddly oblivious to the stakes at hand, and goes even further:

Therefore, our livestock, too, will go with us; not a hoof will be left behind, for we shall serve the LORD (Ex. 10:26).

Moses assures Pharaoh not a single beast will be left behind. What’s he thinking? Doesn’t he realise the whole conflict can end right here, right now? Why not just get out without the cattle? Why not just end 400 years of slavery with a little compromise minus a few cattle? It seems the reason is that Moses understands Pharaoh’s confession that he has sinned against YHWH God is really superficial. Even though Pharaoh seems to have humbled himself, it has not led to a change in his behaviour. Godly sorrow must lead to heart-felt repentance, not superficial compromise, for God will be Lord of all, or not Lord at all.

And let’s try to understand Pharaoh’s mind so we can truly see why he acted so seemingly irrationally. After the plague of hail, Pharaoh finally admitted that God was the ultimate Creator and he, Pharaoh, was just a sinful creature, who needed to follow the dictates of his Creator. This is in stark contrast to the Egyptian view, in which Pharaoh was a deity within the pantheon of gods.

For someone who had thought himself a deity, to realize that he is just a mortal man before his Creator, and not superior to any other man, must have been a real step down. And therefore, though Pharaoh realized it, he couldn’t internalize it, couldn’t hold onto it. He admitted defeat, but then went back on his word a mere seven verses later. He simply cannot act on what his mind knows to be true. His inflated sense of self blocked him from applying it.

So, as we have observed, no sooner has the door shut behind them, than Pharaoh’s servants turn to him in exasperation:

“How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God; Don’t you know yet that Egypt is destroyed?” (Exodus 10:7)

Once ushered back into Pharaoh’s court, Moses and Aaron refuse any horse trading (or cow trading!) so Pharaoh can save some face. The LORD God will not compromise. So bring on the locusts.

And true to form, a man with an ego the size of Pharaoh’s won’t be able to resist this kind of goading, especially when you talk to him like that in front of his servants. He’ll become defensive, contrary, obstinate. And sure enough, in spite of threatened locusts, Pharaoh refuses to cave in, even though the locusts are going to eat up every single shred of greenery, every last crop. For an agrarian society like ancient Egypt, locusts are the economic atom bomb. The Hebrew slaves have spent these past several hundred years doing one thing: building storehouses for Egypt’s grain. The locusts are going to sweep in and destroy all of it. The entire enterprise of slavery is about to be undermined, in a single plague. Egypt, economically, will be leveled.

## A NEW PURPOSE

But Pharaoh’s ego still won’t let him give in, so Moses and Aaron turn and leave. From now on God Himself changes His stated purpose in bringing on the 3 remaining plagues. At the beginning God told Moses that He would bring these great judgments on Egypt so that “the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD” (Ex. 7:5). But now, God states a new purpose He will achieve through Pharaoh’s flinty heart:

And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened [strengthened, encouraged] his heart, and the heart of his servants, in order that I might show these signs of Mine in their midst; and in order that you will tell your son, and your son's son, how I have played with Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that you all may know that I am the LORD.' (Exodus 10:1-2).

When we contrast God's purpose at the beginning in Exodus 7:5 with what it now becomes in Exodus 10:1-2 we discover something interesting. In Exodus 7:5 God's original motivation in bringing about the plagues was not to terrorize the Egyptians, but to teach them a lesson. Pharaoh was at the center of that attempt, and through the plagues, God intended for him to learn that He was not just one god of many, but the Creator of the Universe. Pharaoh learned his lesson after the hail --- but he couldn't bring himself to internalize it.

But by the time we get to Exodus 10 God's focus has changed, precisely because Pharaoh has not changed. When a person is in such a state as Pharaoh --- where his ego won't allow him to face the truth --- education is no longer a possibility. He is blinding himself to reality. No amount of information can affect such a person. That's why the agenda shifts. The final three plagues aren't so much about teaching the Egyptians, for God has already given them enough empirical evidence to prove that He alone is the One true and living God. Instead, God shifts his focus to his own people, the Hebrews, to teach them a lesson, so they will come to appreciate the ultimate power of their Creator;

... in order that you will tell your son, and your son's son, how I have played with Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that you all may know that I am the LORD (Exodus 10:2).

So, it seems the Hebrews may have been even slower than the Egyptians to come to the realization that God alone is Sovereign over all creation! It seems the Hebrews needed the last three plagues so that God's greatness might be burned into their collective minds so as to be remembered by their descendants for all generations. The last three plagues are "in order that you may tell your son, and your son's son ... that you all may know that I am the LORD."

Pharaoh, who is stuck inside his ego, remains pigheaded - but it is crystal clear to his servants that he is acting stupidly. They see God's power and realize that they can't compete with it. They urge their leader to stop being so stubborn, to get outside of his own head. They understand that if he keeps on at this rate, they're going to meet total destruction.

#### WHAT WE LEARN

The entire time, the problem was Pharaoh's ego, and his inability to act on what was right in front of him. It's as if God is saying, "Pharaoh, since your inflated sense of self is leading you to deny me, then your inflated sense of self will be your downfall." As Rabbi Fohrman says, God isn't working any magic on Pharaoh. God isn't interfering with Pharaoh's free will. What we're seeing isn't a divine trick, it's the natural - albeit dysfunctional - reaction of a narcissist to provocation. It's this response which leads Pharaoh to refuse to cave in, in the face of ever growing threats; cataclysmic locusts, crippling darkness, and ultimately the death of every firstborn son throughout the land.

The whole account makes sense, and is revealed to be a more nuanced story than we might have first thought. Hopefully most of us don't have an ego quite as outsized as Pharaoh's. But still, the lesson is frightening. The Bible is teaching us about the danger of ego, which can make us blind to a truth which is staring us in the face - so blind that it can become our undoing. For people who put their faith in the intellect, in the idea that people always act rationally, this is devastating. Pharaoh holds onto his ego for dear life, posturing and trying to project an image of himself as strong, secure and unyielding. He thinks that it's a source of strength - but it's his greatest weakness.

It's Pharaoh's own unwillingness to repent which leads to his loss of political power. Even his servants turn against him. It leads to the ruination of his kingdom with the plague of locusts, the devastation of all of Egypt's grain. It finally leads to the death of his own son. Ultimately, it will lead to his own personal destruction. That's what these final three plagues are about, and it's what God wanted the Hebrews, and the world, to see.

#### APPLICATION

Sometimes, in spite of all the evidence, and against their own conscience, a man or a woman will stubbornly push back against God. Sin not only deceives and blinds, but the Bible says our continued disobedience actually causes a hardness of heart.

This hardening happened later to Israel nationally, just a few short years later in the wilderness, their own hard hearts provoked God to destroy that same generation! And there are repeated statements in the Scriptures to the effect that God became frustrated with Israel's hard and disobedient heart over many subsequent generations. It ended up by them committing the "unpardonable sin" and rejecting their Messiah, even to the point of claiming he was Satanic! Then they stoned the godly Stephen who charged them with being "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears and always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did" (Acts 7:51).

If I am not mistaken, I see this same hardening happening in our generation. For instance, In our rush to legalise same-sex marriage, to promote what God abhors, God may well be abandoning our society to its own foolish destruction. He has done it in the past. But have we learned from history? <sup>8</sup>

And of course, this hardening happens to individuals who refuse to listen to the gospel. God is lovingly, constantly inviting "whosoever will" to turn to Him, to hear the gospel His Son preached, and to believe it from the heart and to prepare for His coming reign on earth. God is waiting for the "obedience of faith" and for anybody who will to prepare for the coming Kingdom of God. And come it will, for God has given us the greatest miracle of all as the guarantee, in that He raised Jesus from the dead;

God now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead (Acts 17)

God mercifully invites us to bow the heart to the Lordship of His Son Jesus, to be baptized into His death so we may share in his resurrection. But alas. Even though God longingly, mercifully holds out His hands saying, "Today, if you will hear My voice. Today is the day of salvation. Come. Enter. Save yourself from this perverse generation. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." But alas, each time the message is not acted upon the conscience is calloused that little bit more, until the hardness leads to a "seared conscience" (see I Timothy 4:2).

When that point is reached, God can abandon such a person. It's not that He is not still speaking to them, it's just that they have so hardened themselves they become tone deaf. So God says, OK have it your own way. "Their foolish heart becomes darkened, so God "gives them over to the lusts of their hearts to impurity" (Rom. 1:21f).

Furthermore, do you know anybody who, like Pharaoh, stubbornly refuses to surrender their worldview in spite of all the evidence God has been pleased to provide? It takes a brave and humble person to acknowledge they have got things wrong. I know a number of pastors and Christian leaders who have been persuaded of the truth that the God of the Bible is a Single Self, a Single Person, and not a Being Who is Three Persons in One Essence. I have personally witnessed a number of Christian leaders who have come to see that modern Christianity has abandoned the simple and powerful creed that Jesus Himself confessed, namely that God the Father is the only true God (John 17:3). Yet, against their own consciences they have hardened their hearts to God's revealed truth. They fear the ostracism of men more than to obey God.

They continue to ignore John's stark warning: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (I John 5: 21). They continue to follow their man-made god of Gentile making, the so-called Trinity. They continue to proclaim, "We believe in One God, who exists as Three Persons, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit", even though we cannot provide *one verse* that says God is Three!

What a serious condition to be in. Against all sound Bible exegesis, against all the rules of logic and plain sense, to harden one's heart and so grieve the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of Truth. My prayer is that God may give us a heart to always love and honour Him, to be true to His beloved son, and "To hear Him". That's the only prophylactic for a healthy and soft heart towards the one true and only living God.

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<sup>8</sup> See my article *We'll Have a Gay Old Time!* for a fuller exposition of this particular subject.

Yes, standing before the sarcophagus of Tut that day, made me deeply ponder the battle between our own little egos that cling to our own little gods, and the One True God, Who never shares His unique glory with any rival gods or messengers.