

"Egypt's Compromises"

Exodus 8,10

May 23, 2010

The education of Egypt was underway. God had hardened Pharaoh's wicked heart so that no matter how marvelous and unusual the signs and wonder were, Pharaoh and His people would not hearken to the command of Jehovah to let the people of Israel go. The rod of Moses had become a serpent when thrown down before Pharaoh and his court and had eaten up the other serpents that the court sorcerers had produced. Then Moses had shown himself to Pharaoh as he performed his morning rituals at the river. Moses had smitten the waters of the river, turning them to blood. For seven days the people of Egypt were hard pressed to find water, for all the water from the Nile, including that in the aqueducts and pools and ponds had been turned into blood. This was the first of the great plagues that would destroy the power of Egypt and leave her weak and helpless for more than a generation.

You must understand that Pharaoh's world view was one of humanism which always involves sorcery and syncretism. By harnessing of the powers of the world and concentrating them, all of human problems could be solved. The king stood at the point of power where the powers of the world and the powers of the heavens came together, where death and hell merge with life and peace. He was the god-man, the chief sorcerer of the realm and all religions and powers were merged in his person. All of the world was a single continuum, the gods were the same as we are, but only they had found the secret of life and immortality and were willing to share that with us if we are devoted to them and do their will. The gods, however, will also conform to our wills if we find the secrets of the powers in nature and use them correctly. St. Augustine records the story of the Egyptian who ascended a mount and uttered such horrible curses against the gods that they were frightened and so answered their prayers. He had the spiritual power to move the gods.

Jesus spoke against this theology of sorcery when He said. Matt. 6:5 "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to

pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”

These various powers were concentrated in the gods of Egypt, chiefly the gods of the River, and the forces of nature. This is the reason that Pharaoh continued in his folly. He simply did not believe that Moses was any different from him and his sorcery. He thought that Moses was just using some powers as yet unknown to him, but which he could use for his own purposes, or at least could be neutralized by his own powers. He, of course, could never be persuaded to the idea that there is one Living God, who had chosen Israel for His own, and was putting into place the plan of redemption for the world, a plan that would not be revealed for many centuries. A concept like that was beyond the darkened mind of Pharaoh, although the promise of that redemption had been given to the world from the beginning.

And so the plagues were not only upon the Egyptians, they were also directed against the religion and the world view of Egypt. The folly of seeking to control nature would be revealed. The true God controls nature and nature cannot control itself, nor can man use the forces of nature to control nature. You cannot build a tower tall enough to escape the floods of God, or build dams or levees strong enough. You cannot harness the wind, for God has his way in the whirlwind. You cannot build strong enough houses to withstand the earthquake, nor inoculate to stop the plague. You cannot recruit armies powerful enough to hold back the savage forces of those employed in the service of God when He rises to judge the earth. You cannot build schools effective enough to enlighten those whose minds are darkened by the judgment of God.

Those who put their trust in science rather than in God are doomed when God rises to judge the sorcerers.

But the plagues and judgment upon Egypt was also a test to Moses and Aaron and to the people of Israel, God’s elect people. Pharaoh was a formidable opponent and clever in the arts of the world and the government

of people. After the plague of the frogs, two other plagues would come very quickly. After the blood and the frogs came the lice. The dust of the land became lice. The magicians were powerless this time and could not produce lice with their enchantments. They were forced to confess: "This is the finger of God," but Pharaoh would not hear.

Following the lice, Pharaoh was found by Moses again at the river bank and announce that the land would be filled with swarms of flies. "Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are." (Ex 8:21) And so it was. It was at this time that God said to Pharaoh through Moses and Aaron: "22 And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. 23 And I will put a division between my people and thy people: tomorrow shall this sign be." (Ex 8:22-23) He would have Pharaoh know that even the evil things of the earth, like swarms of flies, are in His hands and He does with them as He pleases. God has good purposes for bad things, and controls the bad things so that they do no more than what He wills for them.

"I am the Lord in the midst of the earth."

It was after the swarms of flies that Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and offered them the first of the famous four compromises of Egypt. We want to look at these compromises this morning; these things are written for our admonition. We should be reminded of the admonition of the writer of Hebrews: "1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Only the faith of Moses and Aaron enabled them to have the wisdom to see the nature of the compromises and how deadly they would be to the people of God.

These compromises are but variations of the first one: "Sacrifice in the land."

I. First Compromise. "Sacrifice in the land." Vs. 25.

A. We like you Moses. There is room for your religion in Egypt. We have many religions. We like religions. We like you. Become one of us, and live under the great umbrella of brotherhood. “And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.” (Ex 8:25)

B. It is interesting that this compromise is offered at the precise point when God emphasizes the difference between the Egyptians and the elect of God. Pharaoh tries to keep close what God has put apart.

C. It is the very uniqueness of Israel that is the main offense to the Egyptians. Why would the Egyptians think that sheep were unclean if it was not the work of the very devil himself to turn mankind away from the worship of the true God and the sacrament which pointed to redemption and salvation. From long time this superstition had prevailed in Egypt that sheep were unclean and abominable. Such sacrifices were well known in the ancient world, but Egypt was a cut above; sophisticated, and elitist.

D. Moses knew that the religion of the people of God could not fit the syncretism of Egypt. Every faithful Jew would be a witness against the idolatry and wickedness of the Egyptians. Israel could not stay in Egypt if they were to fulfill their destiny.

E. It would be a lose, lose situation for Israel. If they worshipped according to the promise of God, the Egyptians would so resent it that they would stone them. If they did not, but tailored their worship to satisfy the Egyptians, then it would not be glorifying to God, it would not be fit for them to do this.

F. Moses understood the implication and rejected the compromise.

II. Second Compromise. “Do not go very far away.” Vs. 28 This followed hard upon the other while the swarms of insects were still in the land.

A. Just go a little ways. Keep a foot in both worlds. Accept so much of Scripture that will ensure that you go to heaven, but keep enough of the world so that you can live comfortably in it. Don't be a fanatic.

B. This is syncretism on a higher level.

C. The first and great commandment is at war with this notion: “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all they heart, soul, strength, and mind.” God does not call us to go a little way, but as far as the Scripture goes.

D. How pious Pharaoh becomes as he is brushing the flies away: “Entreat for me.” I can use prayer, too. I am not opposed to your god—entreat him for me, too.

E. Moses delays the deliverance until the next day, and reproves Pharaoh for his deceit. He did not reply to this compromise, for it was beneath contempt. Neither does Moses reveal to Pharaoh how silly his compromise was.

III. Third Compromise: “Ye that are men, go.” This was after Moses announced the eighth plague, the plague of locusts. Ex. 10:7-10

A. Exodus 10:7-11

“7 And Pharaoh’s servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?
8 And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go? 9 And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD. 10 And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. 11 Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence.” (Ex 10:7-11)

B. All that a godly man has belongs to the Lord. His wife, his children, the little ones, the babes. They all belong to God and are to be devoted to the service of the Lord. They all attend the sacrifice; they all participate in the worship of the Lord.

C. I thank God I never went to junior church a day in my life. I learned to sit in church and participated and learned from it. Twice on Sunday and once on Wednesday night. Never hurt me a bit. Kids at school used to tease me. You always go to church, twice on Sunday, they would say, as if it was some kind of plague. I am not arguing for holy days, but for community of faith that includes the children and the wives and entire households. The whole congregation would stand before the Lord in Sinai and stand to the covenant, lift up their holy hands in worship and praise.

D. Note these passages:

1. "1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;" (1Co 10:1-3 AV)

2. "1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. 2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. 3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. 4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. 6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. 7 Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: 8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word: 9 Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: 10 Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: 11 Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: 12 Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: 13 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven. 14 He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD." (Ps 148:1-14 AV)

3. This is sobering: Our children are to go as far as we go. If

you sacrifice in the land, they will sacrifice in the land; if you don't go very far away, they will not go very far away.

E. You and I are to be consistent in our obedience to Scripture. There are many voices that call us to stay close to the world; to rear our children comfortable in the world; to stay close and comfortable.

IV. **Fourth Compromise:** "Leave your flocks and herds"

A. This compromise was offered after the Ninth Plague, the Darkness that covered the land.

B. "24 And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your 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 an 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." (Ex 10:24-26)

C. How profound is this statement: "We know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither." You and I do not decide how we are to serve the Lord and with what? It is He who will make the determination.

D. Jesus made a very sober point in His parable concerning the mammon of unrighteousness. I will close with this, for this is the ultimate point of this whole sermon:

"1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. 2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. 3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. 4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. 5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto

the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? 6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. 7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. 8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. 9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. 10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. 11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? 13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. 14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.” (Lu 16:1-14)

1. You cannot serve the Lord if your possessions are in Egypt.
2. Wealth and riches are only for a time: they are to be used in this time for the sake of eternity. “Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.” Means “take advantage of the opportunities you have, that God gives you, to use the things of the world, which belong to God, in a way that will bring eternal reward. The unjust steward was unjust, but he was smart this way: he looked ahead to when he would have no opportunity; and used his opportunity to make friends for himself.
3. If you cannot use the things of the world in a godly way; who is going to give you the true riches? Eh?
4. You cannot serve two masters. If your possessions are in

Egypt, then your heart will be in Egypt and you will have a divided heart, as James tells us.

Application: One point. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength, and all our mind. Nothing is to be withheld from him.

1. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Ro 12:1-2)

2. No human institution and no man has the right to make that demand of you. No church, no mission society, no civil or charitable mission, no political party. Only God has that sovereign right. But God does have the right to claim ownership of everything we are and have, and he expects us to use all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength in His service.

3. The world offers many compromises which would take us away from our obedience and duty and privilege to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

4. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (2Co 5:14-15)

Amen and Amen
God bless you.