

Plagues that Preach Part 4

Text: Exodus 9:1-35

Introduction:

1. We have studied 7 plagues so far as follows:
 - The Nile River turned to blood (Ex. 7:14-25).
 - The plague of frogs (Ex. 8:1-15)
 - The plague of lice (Ex. 8:16-19)
 - The plague of flies (Ex. 8:20-32)
 - The plague upon livestock (Ex. 9:1-7)
 - The plague of boils (Ex. 9:8-12)
 - The plague of hail (Ex. 9:13-35)
2. We will now study plagues 8 and 9 as recorded in Exodus 10 and the lessons they teach us.

I. THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS (VS. 1-20)

A. The Purpose of the Plague (Vs. 1-2)

God again instructs Moses to confront Pharaoh with the Word of the Living God. God also provides further revelation concerning the Sovereign purposes behind what He was doing. Note the three “that” statements. God was working in order to:

1. Multiply His Signs before Pharaoh – “**that** I might shew these my signs before him.” (Vs. 1b) God was demonstrating Who He was to Pharaoh.
2. Minister to the next Generation – “**that** thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son’s son, what things I have wrought in Egypt” (Vs. 2a)
 - a. Here we see the heart of God to see the knowledge of God passed on to the next generation. God was working His wonders that the faith might be passed on to their children and grandchildren. Implied in all of this is the responsibility of parents and grandparents to teach the next generation the knowledge of God and seek to lead them to living faith in God through Christ.
 - b. The Exodus was Israel’s salvation story. It told them who God was and who they were as His chosen people. It told them where they came from (Egyptian bondage) and where they were going (Promises land). In like manner, we have a responsibility to pass on the salvation message typified in the Exodus. We have been set free from the bondage of sin and Satan. We have experienced the wonder working power of God in salvation and our children need us to teach them of it.
 - c. “The Exodus story was not just any old story; it was the story that shaped the Israelites into the people of God. It was the story of their salvation. It was a true story, a story based on the facts of history. It explained who they were: the people of God, delivered from slavery. It explained who God was: the Lord God of Israel, the God of all power and glory. It explained

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where they came from: out of Egypt. It told them where they were going: into the land of promise.” (Ryken)

- d. Their story of salvation became the song of salvation. Many of the Psalms refer to the Exodus – E.g., Psalm 78:42-51 and Psalm 105:26-36
3. Magnify Himself before His People – “**that** ye may know how that I am the LORD” (Vs. 2b) It was not just important that Pharaoh and Egypt come to know who God is, it was also important for the children of Israel to know it as well.

B. The Prophecy of the Plague (Vs. 3-6)

1. The Admonition to Pharaoh (Vs. 3)
 - a. Moses and Aaron come before Pharaoh and boldly challenge him concerning his prideful, stubborn refusal to let the people go – “How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?”
 - b. This goes to the heart of the whole situation. Pharaoh would not humble himself before God over his sin. Pride is what keeps many from salvation. The first step to getting saved is to admit your sinfulness and your inability to save yourself. Then you must accept God’s free gift by grace alone through faith alone. The whole plan of salvation requires humility!
 - c. C.H. Spurgeon “Forget Pharaoh, and only think of yourself; let the Lord Jesus Christ himself, with the thorn-crowned head and the pierced hand, stand by your pew, and looking right down into your soul, say in his matchless tone of music, - the music of the heart of love, - “How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?”
2. The Description of the Plague (Vs. 4-6)

The plague of locusts would be a frightful thing in its:

 - a. Pervasiveness – The locust swarm would be so numerous you would not be able to even see the ground (Vs. 5a). There would be so many they would also fill the houses (Vs. 6a)
 - b. Destructiveness – the hail had already destroyed so much of Egypt’s vegetation but whatever remained would be stripped bare by the locusts (Vs. 5b) “Scientists report that the daily consumption of a locust equals its own weight. That may not sound like much but a full-scale swarm covers several hundred square miles, with between one hundred and two hundred million locusts per mile.” (Ryken) John Davis writes, “The locust is perhaps nature’s most awesome example of the collective destructive power of a species. An adult locust weighs at a maximum two grams and its combined destructive force can leave thousands of people with famine for years.”
 - c. Uniqueness – it would be the most destructive locust plague in Egypt’s history (Vs. 6b)
 - d. Note: “The Egyptians worshiped Min, the patron of the crops. Min-worshipers held an annual harvest festival, which may well have coincided with the eighth plague. The Egyptians also worshiped Isis (the goddess of life, who prepared flax for clothing), Nepri (the god of grain), Anubis (the guardian of the

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fields), and Senehem (the Divine protector against pests).”
(Ryken)

C. The Proposition before the Plague (Vs. 7-11)

We now have what amounts to a third offer of compromise from Pharaoh. The devil can't stop you getting saved but once your saved, compromise is one of his chief weapons he uses to try and stop you from being useful and effective for the Lord.

1. The Context of the Proposition (Vs. 7-9)

- a. Pharaoh's royal advisers speak up and encourage Pharaoh to let the men of Israel go, highlighting that Egypt had been destroyed (Vs. 7). They had enough wisdom to see that if this continued, there would be further disasters for Egypt.
- b. Pharaoh summons Moses and Aaron to come back into his presence and tells them they can go and serve their God (Vs. 8). However, he adds the question “but who are they that shall go?”, clearly indicating his continued reluctance to let all of God's people leave.
- c. Moses makes it clear that all the people and possessions of Israel would be departing Egypt (Vs. 9). The complete separation of the people of God from Egypt was the plan of God.

2. The Compromise of the Proposition (Vs. 10-11)

Let's briefly review the first two offers of compromise, then we will consider the 3rd and fourth offer of compromise we find in this chapter.

a. Compromise offer # 1: Stay in Egypt and sacrifice to God in the land (Ex. 8:25-27)

b. Compromise offer # 2: You can leave but don't go too far away (Ex. 8:28)

c. Compromise offer # 3: The men can go but leave the women and children (Ex. 10:11)

- i. Pharaoh responds with a sneering sarcasm. It's like he says, “sure thing, you can all go” but the sick grin on his face says otherwise.
- ii. This is Pharaoh's 3rd major offer of compromise. He was saying that the men could go and serve God but not the children. Pharaoh was saying “leave your children here with me in Egypt”!
- iii. Again, we see Pharaoh typifies the devil who wants to destroy the next generation. If he can't stop the parents from following God, he will try and get to the children and get them all wrapped up in the world. He will try and get you to leave your children in the world for him to influence and train. Sadly, some parents fall for this ploy. Even if in theory they want their children to follow the Lord, in practice they leave them under Egypt's direct influence. Think carefully before you hand your children in their prime, formative years to the colleges of Egypt to train!

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- iv. “Behind Pharaoh the Adversary still worked. His wives with Pharaoh are still those used today. If he could keep a generation away from salvation, he would severely weaken the testimony. How important it is to ensure that children are brought up to know the gospel.” (J. Grant)
- d. **Compromise offer # 4: The people can go but leave the resources behind (Ex. 10:24-26)**
 - i. This time Pharaoh says the people can all go but they would need to leave their livestock behind. Moses’ answer was unequivocal. All they had must be placed at God’s disposal (Vs. 25-26).
 - ii. Again, we see another tactic of the devil. He will tolerate you following God out of Egypt if he has to, just so long as your resources are all invested in Egypt. Just so long as your time, talents and treasure are not fully surrendered to the Lord for Him to use as He sees fit!
 - iii. “The fourth and final compromise proposal by Pharaoh had to do with Israel’s possessions being taken with them to worship. Here is another tactic of Satan; namely, allow people to worship but convince them to not give of their possessions in worship.” (Butler)
 - iv. Pharaoh knew that if all their resources were left in Egypt, it wouldn’t be too long till they drifted back to Egypt! So it is with Christians who have their time, talents and treasure invested in the world. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt. 6:21, Lk. 12:34).
 - v. Moses response was clear and uncompromising. Not a hoof would be left behind! (Vs. 25-26)
 - vi. “Moses attitude was that everything must be available for the Lord to use, if he deemed it necessary (Vs. 26). The phrase “Until we come thither” also indicated that **the will of God regarding Israel’s service would be revealed when they got in the wilderness**. God had revealed to Israel that they must go into the wilderness to worship. Once they did that, they would then be further instructed as to what they were to do. This is the usual way God works. If you want to know more of God’s will, you have to first take a step of faith in obedience to what He has already revealed. Once you do that, He will reveal more of His will!” (Butler)
- e. Note: **All the compromise attempts have one common theme – avoid a complete and total separation from Egypt.** Stay connected to Egypt in some way! Stay within the reach of its influence! C.H. Mackintosh writes, “With what perseverance did Satan dispute every inch of Israel’s way out of the land of Egypt! He first sought to keep them in the land, then to keep them near the land, next to keep part of themselves in the land,

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and finally, when he could not succeed in any of these three, he sought to send them forth without the ability to serve the Lord. If he could not keep the servants, he would seek to keep their ability to serve, which would answer much the same end. If he could not induce them to sacrifice in the land, he would send them out of the land without sacrifices.”

D. The Pouring out of the Plague (Vs. 12-15)

1. The symbolic act in the plague (Vs. 12-13a). Moses was commanded by God to stretch out his hand over the land of Egypt in a symbolic act for the plague to be poured out.
2. The source of the plague (Vs. 13b). God used an east wind blowing for 24 hours (all day and all night) to bring the locusts.
3. The severity of the plague (Vs. 14-15). The severity of the locust plague was exactly as God had prophesied through Moses (Vs. 4-6).

E. The Penitence after the Plague (Vs. 16-20)

1. Pharaoh offers another hurried, superficial confession, similar to the one offered after the plague of hail (9:27-28). This confession went a bit further than the previous but the underlying heart attitude with Pharaoh was the same. It was not a confession that sprang from a truly repentant heart. It was remorse over the consequences of sin not repentance over the sinfulness of sin.
2. Confession that comes from the heart is what brings salvation. See Romans 10:9-10, 13.
3. Moses intreats the Lord to end the plague and the Lord sends a mighty west wind which cast the locusts into the Red Sea.
4. God again hardens Pharaoh’s heart so that he would not let the people go. Pharaoh, self-deceived, no doubt thought he was in command of his own destiny but in reality, he was under a Divine sentence from the high court of heaven.

II. THE PLAGUE OF DARKNESS (VS. 21-29)

A. The Description of the Plague (Vs. 21-23)

The darkness of the plague was:

1. A supernatural darkness (Vs. 21-22) – this was more than a natural event such as a sandstorm or an eclipse. It lasted three days and was a darkness that could be felt. So thick was this blanket of darkness that they could not see one another and did not leave their places for three days.
 - a. “For the Egyptians, the plague of darkness was a defeat for *Ra* the sun god who was believed to give light. In this intense darkness it was not possible to see one another or to move about; the land lay in dark unmoving silence as life came to a halt. God had withdrawn His gift of light and without it there was no enjoyment of life.” (Grant)
 - b. The Egyptians believed that Amon-Re was their creator. They sang hymns to this god! Every morning the rising of the sun in the east reaffirmed the life-giving power of Amon-Re. Pharaoh was not only a sun worshiper, he was regarded as the Son of

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Re, the personal embodiment of the solar deity. Many ancient texts identified Pharaoh with the gods of the sun. The Egyptians therefore worshiped Pharaoh as their god. The Egyptians ascribed all majesty and eternity to Pharaoh. He was their illuminator, the lord of their hearts. Pharaoh was an Antichrist! Essentially God saved Egypt's biggest deity until last (Ryken)

2. A segregated darkness (Vs. 23b) – the children of Israel were not affected by this plague. They walked in the light.
3. A symbolic darkness – what a picture of the sinner's spiritual state before salvation. In the darkness there is no life and liberty. The people of God enjoy true life in the light!
 - a. John 1:4 "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."
 - b. John 8:12 "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."
 - c. Praise God for the love, light, life and liberty we have in Christ!
 - d. Note: Those who refuse the light of the Gospel for spiritual darkness in this life, will spend eternity in "outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30) and "the blackness of darkness forever" in the next life (Jude 1:13).

B. The Negotiations after the Plague (Vs. 24-26)

1. We covered this final compromise offer of Pharaohs under the previous point. Pharaoh just didn't want to let go! How he pictures the devil who will do anything he can to keep the sin slave under his dominion.
2. "God commanded Moses to bring everyone and everything. This is what God always demands: everything we are and everything we have." (Ryken)

C. The Conclusion of the Plague (Vs. 27-29)

1. God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart (Vs. 27)
2. Pharaoh's threatening of Moses (Vs. 28-29)

Conclusion:

1. Will you humble yourself before God and receive His gift of salvation?
2. Where are you as a Christian in relation to the world? Are you falling for the devil's deceptive compromise offers?
3. Is everything you are and everything you have surrendered to the Lord for His service?
4. Are you following God yourself but leaving your family behind in Egypt?