

Series:

SERVING THE EGYPTIANS INSTEAD OF DYING IN THE WILDERNESS EXODUS 14

Text: Exodus 14:12

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¹² *Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to **serve the Egyptians**, than that we should **die in the wilderness**.*

Introduction:

Do you ever feel like you take 2 steps forward and 3 steps backward?

This morning I want us to look at a passage of scripture where the people of God were backing up when God said "Go Forward".

As believers, I think that we should always try our best to be going forward as a church, and personally in our relationship with God!

Note:

1. THE PEOPLE EXPELLED

After 400 years of slavery at the hands of the Egyptians, the children of God are finally free. God never forgot them, he never forgot his promises.

The Egyptians, like many pagan cultures, worshiped a wide variety of nature-gods.

When Moses approached Pharaoh, demanding that he let the people go, Pharaoh responded by saying, “Who is the Lord?”

Thus began the challenge to show whose God was more powerful.

- The First Plague – The Nile Turned to Blood

Exodus 7:17

¹⁷ Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.

This was a judgment against Apis, the god of the Nile, Isis, goddess of the Nile, and Khnum, guardian of the Nile.

- The Second Plague – Frogs From the Nile

Exodus 8:13-14

¹³ And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. ¹⁴ And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank.

This was a judgment against Heqet, the frog-headed goddess of birth.

Frogs were thought to be sacred and not to be killed.

God had the frogs invade every part of the homes of the Egyptians, and when they died, their stinking bodies were heaped up in piles all through the land.

- The Third Plague – The Dust Became Lice

Exodus 8:16-19

¹⁶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

¹⁷ And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

¹⁸ And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. ¹⁹ Then the magicians said

unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

This was a judgment on Set, the god of the desert. Unlike the previous plagues, the magicians were unable to duplicate this one, and declared to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God”

- The Forth Plague – Swarms of Flies

Exodus 8:20-24

²⁰ *And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.*

²¹ *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.* 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: to morrow shall this sign be. ²⁴ *And the LORD did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.*

This was a judgment on either Re or Uatchit, who were both depicted as flies.

In this plague, God clearly distinguished between the Israelites and the Egyptians, as no swarms of flies bothered the areas where the Israelites lived.

- The Fifth Plague – The Death of the Livestock

Exodus 9:1-7

¹ Then the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. ² For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, ³ Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain. ⁴ And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel. ⁵ And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land. ⁶ And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. ⁷ And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

This was a judgment on the goddess Hathor and the god Apis, who were both depicted as cattle.

As with the previous plague, God protected His people from the plague, while the cattle of the Egyptians all died. God was steadily destroying the economy of Egypt, while showing His ability to protect and provide for those who obeyed Him.

- The Sixth Plague – Boils

Exodus 9:8-11

⁸ And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

⁹ And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt.

¹⁰ And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast. ¹¹ And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

This was a judgment against several gods over health and disease. This time, the Bible says that the magicians “could not stand before Moses because of the boils.” Clearly, these religious leaders were powerless against the God of Israel.

- The Seventh Plague – Hail

Exodus 9:22-27

²² *And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.*

²³ *And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt.* ²⁴ *So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.*

²⁵ *And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.* ²⁶ *Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.* ²⁷ *And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.*

This was a judgment against the sky goddess, the crop fertility god, and the storm god.

This hail was unlike any that had been seen before. It was accompanied by a fire which ran along the ground, and everything left out in the open was devastated by the hail and fire. Again, the children of Israel were

miraculously protected, and no hail damaged anything in their lands.

- The Eighth Plague – Locust

Exodus 10:12-15

¹² And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. ¹³ And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. ¹⁴ And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. ¹⁵ For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

The later crops, wheat and rye, which had survived the hail, were now devoured by the swarms of locusts. There would be no harvest in Egypt that year.

- The Ninth Plague – Darkness

Exodus 10:21-23

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.*

This was a judgment at the sun god.

- The Tenth Plague – Death of the First Born

The tenth and last plague, the death of the firstborn males, was a judgment on Isis, the protector of children. In this plague, God was teaching the Israelites a deep spiritual lesson which pointed to Christ.

Unlike the other plagues, which the Israelites survived by virtue of their identity as God's people, this plague required an act of faith by them.

God commanded each family to take an unblemished male lamb and kill it. The blood of the lamb was to be smeared on the top and sides of their doorways, and the lamb was to be roasted and eaten that night. Any family that did not follow God's instructions would

suffer in the last plague. God described how He would send the death angel through the land of Egypt, with orders to slay the firstborn male in every household, whether human or animal. The only protection was the blood of the lamb on the door. When the angel saw the blood, he would pass over that house and leave it untouched.

While the Israelites found God's protection in their homes, every other home in the land of Egypt experienced God's wrath as their loved ones died.

This grievous event caused Pharaoh to finally release the Israelites.

By the time the Israelites left Egypt, they had a clear picture of God's power, God's protection, and God's plan for them. For those who were willing to believe, they had convincing evidence that they served the true and living God.

Note not only "The People Expelled" but also:

2. A Problem Encountered

I am told that there is a tribe in some part of Africa which does not say goodbye, but when leaving they say....."Go well, stay well."

I'm sure that the people of God after all these years were looking forward to things "staying well" for a while.

After all those years in Egypt, surely they had plans of going forward, and inheriting the place promised to them by God. Yet,

I want you to understand something that they didn't!

Though God had delivered them, and had promised to guide them day and night, and bring them to the Promised Land, he did not say that the journey would not have difficulties, and disappointments.

He did not promise that everything would always "go well, and stay well".

The same applies to believers today. God has not promised a trouble free existence here in our journey.

Let's notice the problem that the people of God encountered, and how they responded.

- The Sea Before Them
- The Soldiers Behind Them
- The Sovereign Between Them

Exodus 14:12

¹² Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

We see a pattern of behavior established by the people of God which will continue throughout their journey. They question, and they quarrel.

Their attitude is.....why you didn't just leave us alone in Egypt. We were better off there.

At least we were alive. Now we're going to all die here in the wilderness!

Note not only "The People Expelled" and the "Problem Experienced" but also:

3. THE PROGRESS ENCOURAGED

Exodus 14:15

*¹⁵ And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they **go forward**:*

In other words God was saying "Quit living in Egypt." "Quit talking about Egypt!" "Move forward!" The people of God were looking back when they should have been going forward ! Physically they were out of

Egypt, but spiritually and mentally they were still there. We will never be able to move forward until we quit looking back!

As a church, there are some areas in which we need to quit looking back, and move forward.

There is too much to lose by looking back, and so much to gain by going forward!

Note three principles that we need to apply to help us move forward personally and as a church.

1. Forsake the Past Which Oppresses You

Philippians 3:13

¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

- Forget Past Sins
- Forget Past Situations
- Forget Past Sorrows

2. Forgive the People Who Offended You

Illustration:

Strong Man Competition

Some of us are trying to move forward with huge amounts of weight on us. Grudges and Bitterness are heavy weights!

We will never be truly free until we learn to forgive.

3. Focus On the Promises He's Offered You

Philippians 3:13-14

¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Close:

May we not be content to dwell in Egypt, reminisce and reflect on the past, and may we go forward by faith.

