

April 2nd, 2023
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Delivered: Rescued from Bondage
Sermon #12 Title: The Devourer Released
Sermon #12 Text: (Exodus 10:1-20)

One of our most favorite promises that God gave to Israel to look forward to is when He said in Malachi 3:11 - "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, And he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground;..."

- There is hardly any better news for an agricultural society than the divine promise of coming success...
- We often reference this promise from the prophet when we start looking forward to the time the Lord will bring an end to the curse... what a day that will be!

But.... In our passage this morning we come to the reminder that the same God that can "rebuke the devourer" is the same God that can "release" him.

Moving along in our study of God's deliverance of Israel and destruction of Egypt, we now move to the 8th plague of judgment that the Lord brought upon Egypt.

I hope you have noticed, that with each plague, with each trouble, the Lord's judgments have gradually gotten worse. There is no reason at all to think that this plague will be less than the previous one, so as we move forward with chapter 10, we notice 5 things about this 8th encounter Pharaoh has with Moses.

Before we get into the outline of the message we need to take up a front door issue with verse 1.

Exodus 10:1 - *"And the Lord said unto Moses: Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him."*

- Question - Could God not have shown him those signs without hardening his heart? Why did God continue to harden Pharaoh's heart? Could He not have left Pharaoh's heart alone, and still shown these his signs? The answer is No! - why?

#1 - These signs are demonstrations of God's judging power. The world is living on and by His creative power, and if there is anything men must see about God it is the fact that he is accountable to God, and that God will bring judgment upon him.

#2 - God will not send signs of judgment on someone not worthy of that judgment!

*Note - God was not going to "pour out His judgment on a man or a nation" who was not clearly worthy of that judgment and guilty before Him." - When He divinely hardened Pharaoh's heart, He was using the "wickedness of Pharaoh" to thoroughly and repeatedly exhibit His authority over man, and His ability over nature.

*Note - Now lest someone say - "God can't do that...He can't use the wicked to show His righteous power!"

- Proverbs 16:4 - *"The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."*

- Paul spelled it out in Romans 9:22 – *“What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:”*

(When Paul writes of “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction” – he structures it in the language as vessels that “fitted themselves to destruction.”)

- Know this . . . God is so Sovereign, that He can use Pharaoh’s wickedness without getting any of it on Himself.

- That being said, there is a Sovereign Purpose behind all that God is doing. – There is no wasted work with the Lord.

Now we note 5 things about this 8th plague. -

I. The Expanded Work for the Plagues – vs 1-3

*Note – We are given more and more details about these plagues as they grow. The new things that the Lord has Moses write, are things worthy of our extra attention.

- Pharaoh is going to get the same sermon he has been given 7 times in a row. “Let my people go that they may serve me.” – the Lord never changes His tune.

- But this time, He has expanded His song.

A. Into the House of Royalty – “and the heart of his servants.”

*Note – This is the first time the Lord has spoken about hardening the hearts of those who are serving in Pharaoh’s court.

1.) the Magicians have already been convinced, and appear to have left the building.

2.) the servants have always had to endure the plagues that came, but there has been no comment from the Lord toward them.

3.) In the previous plague though something changed.

- they were offered a mercy of shelter

- some took it.

- some did not.

*Note – After all that these servants had witnessed, having seen both the Judgment of God, AND the mercy of God, to reject the God of the Hebrews brought them under the same treatment God gave to Pharaoh.

- If you want what Pharaoh gets – follow him – but as Pharaoh goes, so goes you!

B. Into the History of Israel – “that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son’s son, what things I have wrought in Egypt...”

*Note – God is making memories! Literally.

1.) The first reason was that Egypt may know that “the earth is the Lord’s” and that God is God alone!

2.) But now God is adding reason upon reason!

a.) To give Israel a lasting testimony for every generation of Jews.

b.) To emphasize God’s work in their History!

*Note- Here is a side note – The Historical Work of God is to be Venerated, not Evacuated. The idea that each generation

brings something new and better in order to replace the old an dusty, is an outright lie from hell!

- History is not to be re-written, it is to be retold over and over and over again in the ears of every generation.

This is the fundamental work of the Family, and has been in the lives of Jews who are holding on to the Old Testament.

- It is captured in Song in the 78th Psalm – vs 5-7 – *“For he established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which he commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to their children: (6) That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; Who should arise and declare them to their children: (7) That they might set their hope in God, And not forget the works of God, But keep his commandments.”*

- Every year the Jews celebrate Passover, it is more than just a reminder of the night the death angel passed over them; it is a reminder of all the things that God did to bring them out of Egypt.

- “that thou mayest tell in the ear of thy son, and of thy son’s son.”

- just another subtle note – The Lord emphasis here not just “reading it” but “saying it.”

- you read with the eyes – but you hear with the ears, and the Lord said, “I am making memories for you to show and tell.”

C. Into the Habit of Pharaoh – “How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?”

*Note – Notice the precision of the question. He did not ask Pharaoh how long will it be before you “confess” me... or How long will it be before you “admit I’m right.”

- All the right things had come from Pharaoh’s mouth in three of the previous plagues...

- The question has to do with his “willingness to humble himself.”

1.) His rebellion was an “act of the will” – “how long wilt thou refuse?”

*Note – The problem was not that Pharaoh “could not” humble himself, Pharaoh “would not” humble himself.

2.) His refusal was to get rid of his pride – the idea that he was “SOMETHING” and ‘the God of the Hebrews is going to acknowledge that!’

3.) The lack of a rational answer –

(a) give one good reason to “strive with your Maker, and keep on striving.”

*Note – Now here’s the point – The Lord had Moses write all of that down to show us that His plagues were much more than just to make Egypt miserable. – He wrote these “new aspects” of these encounters for you and me to notice, to study, and to heed!

- #1 - “The Expanded Work of the Plagues”

II. The Promised Wasteland for Egypt – vs 4-6

*Note – A recurring Mercy of God is seen in the fact that with several of these plagues, the Lord warned Pharaoh about exactly what was coming.

*Note – We cannot help but wonder exactly how much is left after the hail storm?

(Well, remember in 9:32 – “the wheat and the rye were not smitten; for they were not grown up.”

- they tell us that there was about 3 weeks difference between the time the between the “barley” and the “wheat.”

*Note – It is not unreasonable to think that this plague came within the month of the hailstorm, and most likely had time for the wheat and the rye to grow...

*Note – Here is a picture, that I believe could be painted. The Egyptians have examined the damage from the hailstorm.

- The barley has been destroyed – there will be no harvest.

- The flax has been destroyed – there will be no harvest.

But – after a deep breath and a sigh, “at least we still have the wheat and the rye!”

- That is until the Devourer is Released...

A. The Devourer to Come – “behold, tomorrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast.”

*Note – The locust is the most dreaded insect in that part of the world for its sheer ability to consume all of the vegetation from an entire continent!

To get some idea about this, we need only to look back to 2020 for a sample of what happened in Egypt. While we were pining away in our homes from Covid, there was another pestilence moving across the continent of Africa like a thunderstorm across a prairie.

- While we were so focused on the bug in our bodies, there was a bug in the air, commonly referred to as the “teeth of the wind.”

- The largest swarm of locusts seen on any continent in modern recorded times swept in and destroyed billions of dollars’ worth of food in the global supply. Some estimates have said that up to 10% of the global grain production was lost...

According to an article with the BBC, dated August 6th, 2020 – written by David Njagi - he writes:

(these) “insects are able to multiply 20-fold in three months and reach densities of 80 million per square kilometre. Each can consume 2g of vegetation every day – combined, a swarm of 80 million can consume food equivalent to that eaten by 35,000 people a day.

In February 2020, local media reported that a swarm covering 2,400 sq km (930 sq miles) was recorded in northern Kenya and could have been the largest on record in Kenya.} – An article by the BBC - By David Njagi 6th August 2020

*note – Now that being said, we might want to familiarize ourselves with locusts, because they are part of the pestilence that is increase upon the earth during the last days.

Here are some fast facts:

- 12,000 locust species known to the world
- The “Desert Locust” is considered the most harmful for mankind. – Here’s why:

- It has an incredible ability to “Metamorphize” - several different faces, several different kinds of lives “what they originally thought were different species, turns out to be one that can change color, and change behavior.”

These Migratory locusts are gentle, harmless, and typically solitary insects. What is not known by scientists is what sparks them to congregate en masse, change color, change form, and change behavior. As one scientist put it, they have yet to determine how “Dr Jekyll, becomes Mr. Hyde.” In these locusts.

- What is harmless in the solitary, becomes monstrous in hordes.

According to an interview done with NPR in June of 2020 –
– “The creatures undergo a remarkable transformation. “They change their physiology. Their brain changes, their coloration changes, their body size changes,”.... “Instead of repelling one another, they become attracted to one another — and if those conditions persist in the environment, they start to march together in coordinated formations across the landscape, which is what we're seeing in eastern Africa.”

To this day, scientists have no idea what turns these mild-mannered grasshoppers living individual and solitary lives, to all of a sudden “change color, shape, form, and mood,” gather like an army and destroy an entire nations’ vegetation:

- But we do know.

- Psalm 105:34 – “He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number.”

*Note – When the Lord releases the devourer, he comes!

B. The Devastation to Await – (vs 5-6)

1.) It will be Unrestrained

*Note – Note how the Lord details what is to come...“*they shall cover the face of the earth that one cannot be able to see the earth.*”

*Note - Egyptians were not strangers to swarms of locusts. This part of the world is accustomed to them. However – those swarms usually darken the sky. – These will be so thick as to darken the ground!

b.) They shall devour everything left (vs 5)

c.) They shall fill all the dwellings of the entire Egyptian population.

2.) It will be Unprecedented - “Neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers’ fathers have seen since the day they were upon the earth unto this day...”

*Note – Egyptians were careful historians. The Lord said to Pharaoh, go pour through your history – you’ll never find anything like this!

When the plague came, the Bible says the Lord blew them in from an East Wind; and when the Lord removed them, He blew them out with a west wind.

#1 – The Expanded Work of the Plagues

#2 – The Promised Wasteland of Egypt

III. The Foolish Wisdom of Pharaoh – vs 7-11

*Note – As we come down to verse 7 we are given a glimpse of those servants that the Lord had something to say about. Outside of commentary from the magicians, this is the first time anyone has sought to give Pharaoh advice!

A. His Angry Counsellors – vs 7 – We see their exasperation in two outbursts toward Pharaoh.

1.) “How long shall this man be a snare unto us?”

*Note – The irony here is that they ask Pharaoh the same question the Lord asked him, just with a different motive. – “How long is this going to go on?”

2.) “Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed!”

*Note – The punishments had bred impatience.

- Things are coming apart at the seams in Pharaoh’s court!
- Never would a servant raise his voice to Pharaoh
- Never would a servant rebuke, implore, or speak to Pharaoh in such a manner –
 - Until all decorum has collapsed –
 - Until fear of Pharaoh means nothing, compared to what this God can do.

*Note – Let me tell you something – “There will be panic in hell!” - There will be panic in the devil’s chambers. – His organized rebellion is smooth and subtle in the eyes of men, but when the Lord rises up, and reigns down, every knee is Satan’s army shakes with fear!

Paul writes in 2nd Corinthians 10:4 – “(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)”

- Pharaoh’s servants have realized they are fighting a losing battle and a fatal war, and they have become brave enough to rebuke their leader.

*Note -But now here is the folly of their demonic rage. – Rather than advise Pharaoh to surrender to the God that is;

they want to counsel him to compromise. They encourage him to negotiate!

B. His Empty Compromise – vs 8-11

1.) Let the men go, but leave the women and children here.

a.) this is actually the third of Pharaoh’s offered compromises.

b.) Previously he had offered:

(1.) Go worship in the land.

(2.) Go worship out of the land – but not far.

(3.) Go worship out of the land, but leave your people here so you’ll come back!

*Note – Let me be clear. You are never more like Pharaoh than when you refuse to do what you know God says; or when you would rather negotiate than surrender!

Satan conquers through compromise! – He doesn’t have to have “all your ground” – just some of it!

#1 – The Expanded Work of the Plagues

#2 – The Promised Wasteland of Egypt

#3 – The Foolish Wisdom of Pharaoh

IV. The Rigid Word from God – vs 12-15

A. Total Disregard for Pharaoh’s Word – “And the Lord said to Moses...”

*Note – The Lord will never acknowledge compromise! –I can’t think of anything more pathetic than a man trying to negotiate with God, like they are in equal footing. That’s like a Lobster trying to negotiate with boiling water!

1.) Abject Silence from God to Pharaoh – but
unrestrained command from God to Moses!

*Note – Know this and remember it well. No man has the right to be heard by God! He doesn't have to give you or me an ear. – Pharaoh has said nothing that the Lord wants to hear!

B. Absolute Fulfillment of what He Promise – “stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt...”

1.) The plague came.

a.) All things happened exactly as He said they would. To put it in New-Testament language we might say, “Not one jot, nor tittle of that warning failed.”

Conclusion: The Steady Will of God – vs 16-20

- To tolerate the lying tongue of Pharaoh's heart
- To demonstrate His total power over the earth
- To plant the seeds for His next judgment – “The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart...”

The Will of God marched on, and it marches on! – Now here is the crux of the matter to everyone in this building. – His will marches on with you, or without you! – Both ways His Word will happen to you!

- Here's His Word to You:

- You will either be Saved by Jesus – OR
- You will be Judged by Jesus –
There is no third way.