

The Battle of the Gods: Part 2

Message 11

3.22.2020

First Online only due to Corona

Introduction:

A. Before we engage our text today, I want to share a few pastoral words.

1. These are most unusual days we are living in.
2. As I bring this message, this large room is empty except for 10 people.
 - a. There are no kids playing, no babies crying, no trips for coffee.
 - b. You are at home because I have asked you to stay home upon the recommendation of our president, Governor, and Assembly of God leadership.
 - c. I have asked you to stay home because I hope to protect you from this modern-day plague.

B. If you are new to Licking Assembly of God, you may think it is weird that I am preaching from Exodus.

1. Maybe you think that I am trying to capitalize on the situation, but I'm not.
2. In fact, I have been announcing this sermon series for many months, way back in our Mark series.
3. And the way I prepare and preach messages is by preaching through a book and trusting God that the timing and message will be applicable.
4. Last week, as this began to hit around us, we started the section in Exodus about the 10 plagues.

C. What I want you to notice is that God's timing is perfect.

1. He knew what we would be facing in this time and so He was already preparing us to hear what He wants us to hear.
2. And so, although you are at home, wearing pajamas (I hope you are wearing clothes at least), God wants to speak into your living room.
3. I will do my best to preach my best through the medium of technology, but I can't wait for us to come back together.

Let's look at Exodus 8:1-15 today.

Exodus 8 (CSB)

THE SECOND PLAGUE: FROGS

8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him: This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. ²But if you refuse to let them go, then I will plague all your territory with frogs. ³The Nile will swarm with frogs; they will come up and go into your palace, into your bedroom and on your bed, into the houses of your officials and your people, and into your ovens and kneading bowls. ⁴The frogs will come up on you, your people, and all your officials."

⁵The LORD then said to Moses, "Tell Aaron: Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, canals, and ponds, and cause the frogs to come up onto the land of Egypt." ⁶When Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. ⁷But the magicians did the same thing by their occult practices and brought frogs up onto the land of Egypt.

⁸Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Appeal to the LORD to remove the frogs from me and my people. Then I will let the people go and they can sacrifice to the LORD."

⁹Moses said to Pharaoh, "You may have the honor of choosing. When should I appeal on behalf of you, your officials, and your people, that the frogs be taken away from you and your houses, and remain only in the Nile?"

¹⁰“Tomorrow,” he answered.

Moses replied, “As you have said, so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God, ¹¹the frogs will go away from you, your houses, your officials, and your people. The frogs will remain only in the Nile.” ¹²After Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the LORD for help concerning the frogs that he had brought against Pharaoh. ¹³The LORD did as Moses had said: the frogs in the houses, courtyards, and fields died. ¹⁴They piled them in countless heaps, and there was a terrible odor in the land. ¹⁵But when Pharaoh saw there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

1. And God said, let there be frogs.

A. If you were in the room, I would ask how many of you like frog-legs? (Post online if you do).

1. Then some of you would yell, with mustard...weirdo.
2. But what can be so bad about a plague of frogs?

B. Too much of a good thing is a bad thing.

1. When God sent frogs, he sent an infestation.
2. Frogs were in their kitchens, bedrooms, in their bowls.
3. Everywhere the Egyptians turned, there were frogs.

- a. They couldn't step without crushing one.
- b. They couldn't sleep without them croaking (imagine the sound of a million frogs going off at once).
- c. The presence of the frogs would have been maddening.

C. The presence of frogs had a couple of theological purposes.

As with the first plague, the relevance of frogs is usually thought to reflect a polemic (attack) against Egyptian religion. Heqet (also spelled Heqt, Hekt, Heket, or Heqat), a goddess of childbirth, is depicted in Egyptian art with the head of a frog. Although perhaps we cannot make a direct connection between all ten plagues and the specific gods of the Egyptian pantheon, such a connection seems justified here. A plague of frogs can be understood as an

attack on the Egyptian fertility goddess for the Egyptians' previous attempt at eradicating the Israelites' male infant population (Ex. 1). Furthermore, note that the frogs come from the Nile and its associated waters (8:5; cf. 7:19). The Nile, therefore, is the source of the first two plagues, which is fitting retribution to Pharaoh for attempting to use the Nile against the Israelites. In light of this, it is best not to think of this plague as presenting merely a "nuisance and annoyance" to the Egyptians. It is, like the first plague, a pointed theological statement: Yahweh is bigger than the gods of Egypt and will unleash the forces of creation to drive this point home.¹

1. Not only was God attacking the false gods of Egypt.
2. God was bringing judgment upon Egypt for allowing their leadership to kill the previous generations of God's people by drowning them in the Nile.

2. The plagues are a battle between YHWH and the gods of Egypt.

A. Last chapter, we saw that the sorcerers of Egypt matched the miracles that Aaron performed.

1. Jannes and Jambres were able to copy or counterfeit the same miracles that Aaron had performed.
2. This time, they do it again.
3. Picture this: God, through Moses and Aaron, send millions of frogs upon Egypt.
4. Pharaoh, not wanting to back down or to be outdone, has his magicians do the same.
5. Amazingly, they are able to do the same thing.

B. We aren't told how they did this.

1. But we, as believers, need to realize that Satan can counterfeit the genuine.
2. Dark magic and sorcery are very real.

¹ Peter Enns, [Exodus](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 205.

3. And I'm not talking about Harry Potter and that kind of stuff, but very dark places with very powerful dark-forces working around us.

4. Because, wherever there is genuine power there is also a counterfeit of that power.

C. But the result was not deliverance from what God had done, but a duplication of it.

1. **The gods of Egypt did not have the power to undo what God had done, but only to further what God had done.**

2. *Our enemy cannot undo what God has done in our life.*

3. He cannot reverse God's decrees.

4. **The enemy is only successful when he blesses what God blesses and curses what God curses.** (Somebody type, AMEN).

5. In your free-time, look up the story of Balaam and you will see this truth displayed in a dramatic way.

D. The Magicians did not have the power to save.

1. Here, God shows His power.

2. The significance of this miracle is not in the number of frogs, but that only God could take them away.

3. Currently we are facing a crazy pandemic.

a. In my opinion, I don't really believe this is a judgment from God.

b. Because, I believe that when God's judgment comes (like we read about in Revelation) everyone will know it is from God.

c. You see, if this was a judgment from God, there would be no vaccine, nor safety measure we could take to make this stop.

d. What God initiates, only God can stop.

4. If you remember, there is a lot of creation language in Exodus.

a. Here, we see God reversing the “goodness of creation”.

b. When God’s order is reversed, chaos is the result.

c. What God initiates or creates, only God has the authority to stop.

5. Egypt found out this truth first hand.

3. When Pharaoh was ready to relent, Moses gave Pharaoh a choice.

A. Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and asked them to appeal (pray) to God for it to stop.

1. God was open to this.

2. God didn’t refuse the petition or reject Pharaoh.

B. Moses gives Pharaoh a choice, “When should I ask God to remove this plague?”

1. And what happens is one of the craziest responses in Scripture.

2. Pharaoh responds, “Tomorrow”.

3. Tomorrow????

4. Why would anyone want God’s judgment to last any longer than necessary?

C. The text does not give us any clues as to why Pharaoh wants to spend an extra night with the frogs.

1. Perhaps it reveals Pharaoh’s skepticism.

2. Perhaps Pharaoh wants to prove this isn’t a trick.

3. Whatever the case, Pharaoh’s people got to spend one extra night tormented by the frogs.

D. Yet, how often might God give us the opportunity for Him to act immediately and we push Him off?

1. I wonder how many times God was willing to move, heal, empower, or deliver in the moment but we weren't ready or willing yet?
2. The frogs didn't leave until Moses "appealed" or "entreated" God.
3. The frogs didn't leave because Pharaoh asked them to leave but because Moses prayed.
4. *I believe we put up with more than we should because we wait for things to happen instead of praying for things to happen.*
 - a. So stop putting up with stuff in your life that God has promised to defeat.
 - b. James says that the prayers of a righteous person availeth much.
 - c. Today is the time to pray for God to move, not tomorrow.

How do we apply this message?

4. The main point is: When your heart is not right, miracles won't convince you.

A. Throughout the plagues, Pharaoh is not convinced.

1. This time he was close.
2. But as soon as God relented, "when Pharaoh saw relief", he hardened his heart against God again.
3. Sometimes what you need is not a miraculous sign but a new heart.
 - a. You need God to do an inner work, not an outer.

b. We may claim, "God if you would only do this, then I'll get right with you..."

c. But the history of humanity says that this is not the way.

d. **Unless the heart is changed, the miracle is wasted.**

1. As we pray for our country, what we need most is not a miracle of circumstances but a miracle of the heart.

2. As the old song says, "Change my heart, Oh God."

3. David wrote, "Create in me a clean heart oh God."

4. We must have our hearts changed or we will return to our old ways.

B. Relief does not give us permission to turn from God.

1. I'm not worried about our current situation pushing us away from God.

2. Actually, I think that many of us are praying, serving others, and loving God more now than ever.

3. What I am concerned with is that, when this is over, we will quickly go back to our previous state of mind and relationship.

a. We will, again, pursue our own thing.

b. We will, again, be more interested in our own desires than what God desires for us.

C. It is in the nature of humanity to return to our old-self when the crises is over.

1. Of all the things we can afford to do, returning to our old-self is not one of them.

2. Many of you watching today are not the same person you were a year or even a month ago.

a. You are, today, more like Jesus than ever before.

b. You aren't perfect, but you are saved and being transformed into the image of Jesus.

3. I submit to you that the greatest opportunity before each of us is the opportunity for our hearts to be changed by God.

a. We don't have to suffer another night with the frogs.

b. We don't have to continue to be that:

1. Angry person we've always been.

2. Overwhelmed person.

3. Hateful person.

c. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we all have the opportunity to be changed by God's love.

Close:

A. As I close our time together, I want to pray for all of you who are watching that your heart will be changed by God during this time.

1. Crises always changes us, but it is up to us whether we allow the change to drive us closer to God or further away.

2. You are, in this very moment, being changed.

3. Let God change your heart in such a way that He can use you!

B. As we close together in a word of prayer, would you pray for those around us who are greatly affected by our present situation?

1. Pray for several of my Assembly of God colleagues who are currently fighting for their life in Mercy Hospital with this Corona Virus.

2. Pray for our neighbors who are working extraordinary hours to make sure America keeps running.

3. Pray for our neighbors who are losing work and opportunity due to the mandates and slow-down.

4. Pray for our leadership, including local school leaders, who are doing their very best to lead and govern well.

5. Pray for our nation to return to a position of health soon.

Let's Pray.