

EXODUS 8: FALSE REPENTANCE, COMPROMISE, AND STILL MORE GRACE

Chaos is the enemy of civilization. Society is based on law and order. When these break down, no one flourishes. Egypt was the pinnacle of order and wealth in that day. America holds the same position in our modern day, though we hold onto that spot tenuously.

But society is made up of individuals. Most empires fall by a grass-roots rebellion. But here in Exodus, we see things coming apart from the top down. So, even though we are watching an entire empire collapse, we are really watching, at the core, a man who refuses to bow to a superior power. Pride won't let him yield. And an entire nation will suffer because of him.

Let's look at societal collapse on a grand scale from the microcosm of the life of one man.

1 And the Lord spoke to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: "Let My

people go, that they may serve Me. 2 But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs. 3 So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. 4 And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants.” ’ ”

5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.’ ” 6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. 7 And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, “Entreat the Lord that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the Lord.”

9 And Moses said to Pharaoh, “Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for

your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, that they may remain in the river only.”

10 So he said, “Tomorrow.” And he said, “Let it be according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God. 11

And the frogs shall depart from you, from your houses, from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only.”

12 Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses cried out to the Lord concerning the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. 13 So the Lord did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields. 14 They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. 15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the Lord had said.

- Another attack on the “maat.”
- Heket – goddess of fertility – frog’s head and a woman’s body. As the consort of Khnum – the creator, she assisted in the creation of infants.
- There is nothing but chaos – the enemy of

civilization.

- The magicians only compounded the problem once again.
- Verse 8: “Entreat for me.” = “intercede for me.” Pharaoh has come to realize who is really in control and asks Moses to intercede on his behalf to YHWH.
- But even though he wants relief, he still doesn’t want to bow to the one true God.

The Third Plague: Lice

16 So the Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so 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 struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 18 Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. 19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the Lord had said.

The Fourth Plague: Flies

20 And the Lord said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 21 Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. 22 And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the land. 23 I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be." ' "

24 And the Lord did so. Thick swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies.

- Lice = most likely mosquitoes.
- This is another attack on the maat, but not necessarily on a specific deity. It is more of an

- attack on the religious world in general.
- Egyptian priests shaved their entire bodies every other day. (Herodotus) They were rendered unclean and therefore unable to do their priestly duties. The entire religious structure has been taken down. They can no longer entreat the gods to protect Egypt.
 - The Khartumin/ Lector priests were the heavy hitters in the Egyptian religious worldview and they are now totally powerless. They can't even duplicate this event.
 - "The finger of God." They are forced to concede to Pharaoh that they are now totally powerless.
 - Pharaoh hardens his heart.
 - Flies = stinging flies or sand fleas?
 - Verse 24: The whole land was corrupted or laid waste. Just as in the third plague the priests were rendered unclean, now the whole land is unclean. Their land, their sacred space was now unclean and they were powerless to do anything about it.
 - What is worse, it is only their (the Egyptians) portion of the land that is unclean because,

“God has made a difference between His people and Pharaoh’s people.

- This difference is supposed to be here today. We are to be seen as different from the world, not affected or infected with the plagues sin brings. The world-ling is to be able to look and see light in a land of darkness.

25 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God in the land.”

26 And Moses said, “It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? 27 We will go three days’ journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as He will command us.”

28 So Pharaoh said, “I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me.”

29 Then Moses said, “Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the Lord, that the swarms of flies may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his

people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.”

30 So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the Lord. 31 And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. 32 But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.

- Pharaoh knows he is beaten. He has no way to fight, so he asks for mercy. “Please intercede for me.” Moses even gives him the option of what day the plague will cease.
- Go and sacrifice to your God, but do it here.
- Moses points out that the sacrifices of the Israelites will be an abomination to the Egyptians and they will stone them.
- Pharaoh then states that they may go, but only a short distance.
- Moses agrees to intercede but states that they will leave the country to do so, or they won’t sacrifice at all.
- The plagues won’t cease until they are free to

- go.
- Pharaoh hardened his heart.

What we are seeing here is downward spiral not only of an empire but also of Pharaoh as an individual. And we are all susceptible to the same plight.

Pharaoh is powerless to withstand the assault on the maat – the order of the country for which he is in charge. His world, his empire is crumbling around him. He is powerless and his priesthood is powerless. But he still can't bring himself to truly repent and yield to God. Instead, he offers a compromise. The Israelites can worship there in Egypt. And when Moses vetoes that, then he offers to let them go a short distance but they must stay within the borders of Egypt.

Sacred space was important to God and to the Israelites. They could not be in the world and still truly worship God in obedience.

And the same is true for us today. In our hearts, we still want to be the Pharaoh of our own little empires. And those empires tend to relate to the

world in some way. And when we begin to see this and move to leave the world behind us, then the enemy comes in with a compromise.

“Don’t get too religious! You don’t have to give God your whole heart. You can dip your toe into the water. You don’t have to take the plunge. Just show up to church every now and then and you will be fine.”

There are ads on television that state, “Ok is not ok.”

That is true, “Just ok is not sufficient.”

God wants Israel to be able to leave the world behind and worship Him in Spirit and in truth, with their whole hearts. And He wants the same for us.

The difference for us is that the enemy has no power over us unless we give it to him. Pharaoh has been defeated. Satan has been defeated. That victory was accomplished on the cross and with Jesus’ resurrection.

We are reading of the downfall of a man and his

empire. We can all put ourselves in Pharaoh's shoes. If we refuse to yield to God then we will end up like him.

But the good news is that even Pharaoh was shown mercy and grace. God came back to him time and again. And God visits us wherever we are, time and again in order that we have a chance to repent. The God of the universe wants you and your heart that much! If it seems that He has put things on hold, it may be because He has put everything on hold for you. Even in our trials He is reaching out to us.

Closing prayer:

Father:

11 I pray always for this body of believers that You God would count us worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of Your goodness and the work of faith with power, 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in us, and we in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Finally, brethren, I pray for all of us, that the

word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified,
2 and that we may be delivered from
unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have
faith.

3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish us and
guard us from the evil one. 4 And I have
confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that
we do and will do the things commanded of us.
5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the
love of God and into the patience of Christ.