

GOD vs. THE LAND GODS



Exodus 8:16-9:7, ESV – ¹⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt.’” ¹⁷ And they did so. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. ¹⁸ The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. ¹⁹ Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

²⁰ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and 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 and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. ²² But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. ²³ Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.”’” ²⁴ And the LORD did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants’ houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies.

²⁵ Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.” ²⁶ But Moses said, “It would not be right to do so, for the offerings we shall sacrifice to the LORD our God are an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us? ²⁷ We must go three days’ journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as he tells us.” ²⁸ So Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away. Plead for me.” ²⁹ Then Moses said, “Behold, I am going out from you and I will plead with the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.” ³⁰ So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. ³¹ And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained. ³² But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.

9 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. ² For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, ³ behold, the hand of the LORD will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock that are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. ⁴ But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that belongs to the people of Israel shall die.”’” ⁵ And the LORD set a time, saying, “Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land.” ⁶ And the next day the LORD did this thing. All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one of the livestock of the people of Israel died. ⁷ And Pharaoh sent, and behold, not one of the livestock of Israel was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

Notes:

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SERMON-BASED STUDY

For the week of January 26, 2020

Exodus 8:16-9:7

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

ENGAGE WITH THE MESSAGE

1 This weekend we were reminded that God is in control, regardless of the circumstances. Knowing this, why do people, including believers, become hard-hearted toward God?

2 In verses 25-28, Pharaoh tries to bargain with Moses to compromise on what Moses was asking of him. How have you tried to bargain with God? What was the result?

3 Moses does not compromise, and stays faithful to God's instructions. What does this say about Moses' faith (especially when we see that Pharaoh still does not let the Israelites go)? Do you have this kind of faith? Explain.

DIGGING DEEPER

A *Psalm 8:3-4, ESV* – ³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

Luke 11:20, ESV – ²⁰ But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

4 Looking at the passages above, what is the significance of “the finger of God”? Why would this phrase have meaning to Pharaoh and his magicians?

5 Describe a time in your life when the only explanation was God’s providence. How was this a testimony of God’s power to others?

B *Psalm 111:9 ESV* – ⁹ He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name!

Psalm 130:7-8 ESV – ⁷ O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. ⁸ And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

6 Looking at the passages above and Exodus 8:22-23, why does God choose to separate Israel (His people) from the Egyptians (other people)? How was this a testimony to the Egyptians?

7 How have you seen this truth play out in your life or in the life of the church? How was this a testimony to nonbelievers?

C *Ephesians 4:18-24, ESV* – ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!— ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

8 When reading passages about people's hardness of heart, we see that a hard heart leads to ignorance and being callous. How can a person keep themselves from falling into this trap?

9 How can a person be "renewed in the spirit of your mind"?

TAKING IT HOME

God desires for us to listen to Him and to follow through with the things He is telling us. Has God been telling you something that requires a greater level of faith and trust in Him? What is He telling you? What is He calling you to do? Share with your group or accountability partner and pray for a heart of surrender and obedience in regard to idols in your life.

PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUEST

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Genesis 46:34

Deuteronomy 9:10

Psalms 91:7

Isaiah 50:2