

MAY 15, 2022

While there is a lot that happens in the Book of Exodus, two primary things that people know are the ten plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians and the passing through the midst of the Red Sea. While we will get to the second of these, those ten plagues need to be reflected upon a little more deeply for this week.

In order, the ten plagues inflicted by God upon the Egyptians are as follows: turning the water to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, pestilence of livestock, boils, hail, locusts, three days of darkness, and then the death of the first born sons in all of Egypt. To be fair, these are all pretty dynamic events and certainly left their mark on Egypt for quite a while.

But what I only just learned this year was the 'Why?' to these ten plagues: Why these particular things? Egypt is surrounded by a desert, why not a massive sandstorm as one of the plagues?

The insight I picked up was that these ten plagues were all associated with false gods that the Egyptians worshiped: the sun god, gods of frogs and gnats, and fertility, etc. God chose these ten plagues to show His power and dominion over the false gods of the Egyptians. And by doing so, he formed the people to be set free and begin their movement to the Promised Land.

But as they journeyed, the people of Israel, who had seen the Lord God do all these things, kept longing to go back to Egypt, back to those false gods who brought them nothing.

As I read and prayed over these passages, I was struck by how many false gods we continue to worship in our day and age: false gods of convenience and comfort, false gods surrounding sports and leisure, false gods of food and drink, TV and entertainment. Sadly, these false gods are often a part of the Church, too: desiring a convenient Mass time; desiring good homilies and powerful music; false gods of only having events at my particular parish instead of a willingness to travel to experience something new.

What I learned in doing the ascetical practices of Exodus 90 is that these false gods, whom we constantly worship, can be so powerful and can dominate our lives in really crazy and dynamic ways. But when we remove them, when we sacrifice them, that can open our hearts to receive the Lord God in an entirely new and profound way, even as the false gods keep calling to us from the corners and the outskirts, trying to lure us back in.

In moving forward with the implementation of this new Family of Parishes, I am confident that we will be forced to sacrifice some of our current false gods, and I will certainly be included in that process as well! I am also confident that this process will be painful and will seemingly hinder progress on moving forward with establishing this new identity; just as the Israelites kept wanting to go back to Egypt. But there is a promise at the end and there is freedom at the end. So when those false gods rear their ugly heads, let us confidently slay them so that we can be free to love the One True God in a deeper and more profound way.

In Christ,
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Pastor