“Against All The Gods Of Egypt”

God vs. Pharaoh & Egypt’s Pantheon of gods

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday August 25th, 2019

Text: Exodus 12:12

### Intro

1. God told Isaiah, “Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me” *(Is. 46:9).*
   1. *I Tim. 2:5-6:* Paul declared, “There is one God.”
2. One of the “former things long past” God was reminding Judah of in the time of Isaiah was the power He displayed in bringing Israel out of Egypt.
   1. A Pharaoh rose up that “did not know Joseph” (Ex. 1:8).
   2. He enslaved the Israelites living in the land from the days of Joseph.
   3. This was to fulfill God’s word to Abraham – *Gen. 15:13-16*
3. Egypt worshiped a pantheon of gods, in many cases multiple gods for the same thing.
4. The Ten Plagues of Egypt are well known, and were not random but direct insults, challenges, and judgments from God on the gods of Egypt, and on Pharaoh himself, for even he was worshiped by the Egyptians as a god!
   1. Ex. 7:4; 10:2: God would make “mockery” of the Egyptians.
   2. Ex. 12:12: “Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments – I am the Lord.”
5. The plagues affected the Egyptians’ physical senses as well as their hearts with constant reminders that God *(YHWH: “I AM” – Ex. 3:14)* was far superior to any of their gods!
6. God exercised power over their people and nation at will while the Egyptian gods remained helpless against Him! *(Is. 46:9: I am God, and there is no other!)*
7. Moses was chosen to lead God’s people out of Egypt, but it was the power of God that demonstrated to all the people that there is one God!
8. God executed judgment against all the gods of Egypt!

#### 1st Plague: Water Changed To Blood

* 1. Ex. 7:14-25 (Ps. 105:29)
     1. The Nile was the heartbeat, lifeline of Egypt; considered to be the very source of Egypt’s power.
     2. Not only the Nile affected, but any water drawn or stored for use in jars.
     3. Turning the water to blood killed the aquatic life as well as threatened the crops, and it smelled so bad no one could drink it.
     4. This judgment lasted 7 days (a week!).
  2. It was a judgment on the gods worshiped in association to the Nile:
     1. Khnum – “Guardian of the Nile.” Form of a man with a curly-horned ram’s head (sometimes a bull’s). One of the earliest Egyptian deities, worshiped till 2nd or 3rd c. A.D. Said to be god that created human body. Created children on a potter’s wheel.
     2. Hapy – The “spirit of the Nile” (It’s “dynamic sense”). Hapy was the god of the annual Nile flooding, and called “Lord of the fishes, birds, and marshes.” Form: man with a large belly and feminine chest (often as Twin genies).
     3. Taweret – The “goddess of the river,” demon wife of Apep (the god of evil). Form: a bipedal female hippopotamus with feline attributes, and the back of a Nile crocodile. She commonly bears the epithets “Lady of Heaven” & “Mistress of the Horizon.” A goddess of motherhood & protector of pregnancy.
     4. Nu – The “god of the rivers and the abyss.” Form: bearded, blue-green man (blue-green for water), or a man with a frog’s head, or just a frog, or snake-headed woman named Naunet. “Nu” = Abyss
     5. Osiris – The “giver of life.” Form: a crowned man. Green-skinned to represent rebirth. Nile is his bloodstream! He is god of the dead, and husband to Isis.
  3. These false gods had no power to overturn the judgment by God (lasted a week!).
     1. Ex. 7:22: Pharaoh’s magi duplicated turning water to blood with their tricks, but notice they couldn’t cure it! *(Pharaoh didn’t need more blood!)*
  4. Despite all this, Pharaoh hardened his heart and the next plague began…

#### 2nd Plague: Frogs

* 1. Ex. 8:1-15 (Ps. 105:30)
     1. Frogs were not uncommon to Egypt, particularly near the Nile.
     2. But they didn’t normally “cover the land of Egypt” (8:6).
     3. Egyptians held frogs as sacred and helped conserve frogs.
  2. This was judgment on the false god Heqet, whose form was that of a frog:
     1. Heqet – A “goddess of life and fertility,” a daughter of Ra. Form: a frog, or a frog- headed woman.
     2. She was considered the goddess of the Nile flooding, not the flood itself (Hapy), but the life it brought, thus she was a fertility goddess, and assisted women in child-birth (imagine the frogs jumping on people’s beds – 8:3).
     3. Because of her and her form frogs were sacred. Even the involuntary slaughter of a frog was punishable by death!
     4. Now imagine the Egyptians having to gather the dead bodies of frogs and throw them in heaps – Ex. 8:13-14 (Something sacred to something foul).
  3. The false god Heqet had no power to overturn God’s judgment.
     1. Pharaoh’s magi duplicated trick (8:7) but could not cure it! *(Pharaoh didn’t need more frogs!)*
  4. Pharaoh recognized who had the power to stop it (Not his magi)!
     1. Ex. 8:8: Pharaoh did not pray to Heqet to remove the frogs but entreated God through Moses and Aaron! (Imagine being a priest/priestess of Heqet)
     2. God gave Pharaoh the honor to name the time to end the plague (8:9-10).
  5. Despite all this, Pharaoh hardened his heart and the next plague began…

#### 3rd Plague: Gnats/Lice

* 1. Ex. 8:16-19 (Ps. 105:31)
     1. *Hebrew ken (H3654):* “to dig” and refers to lice or gnats (plural).
     2. This word is translated as “gnats” (ESV/NASB) or “lice” (KJV/NKJ)
     3. The gnats/lice came up from the dust of the earth.
  2. This was judgment on the false god Geb:
     1. Geb – The “great god of the earth.” He was considered the god of the dust of the earth! Form: bearded man, or a snake-head.
     2. He is the god of earth fertility and usually depicted as one half of a circle with his wife Nut forming the other half (under her arch).
        1. Myths: Laid a cosmic goose egg from which sprang the sun and the whole world.
        2. Though the goose was associated as his holy symbol, it was not considered generally sacred or holy.
        3. The Nile Goose deity was given the name Nggwr, which means “The Great Honker.”
     3. His priests had to shave their heads every day, and their bodies every other day, lest they get lice. *(The goose was his sacred animal, often seen on his head)*
        1. His priests wore simple, earthy tunics, without embroidery, lest there be a place bugs could hide!
     4. Imagine the horror of being covered in lice despite their precautions!
  3. This was judgment that the false god Geb could not overturn!
     1. Ex. 8:18-19: The magi could not duplicate and admitted, “This is the finger of God” but Pharaoh did not listen!
  4. Despite all this, Pharaoh hardened his heart and the next plague began…

#### 4th Plague: Flies

* 1. Ex. 8:20-32 (Ps. 105:31)
     1. *Hebrew arob (H6157):* “swarms; all manner of swarms of flies, mosquitoes.”
     2. This one was different – Goshen where Israelites lived would be unaffected.
     3. 1st time God demonstrating His powers of distinction of Israelites & Egyptians
  2. This was judgment against Amun-Ra:
     1. Amun-Ra – The “great god and creator of all,” “The sun god.” Form: sometimes depicted as a crowned man, or a man with a falcon’s head. *(Later called Zeus)*
        1. Myths: Self-created (like Atum, a sun god). With Osiris, he is most widely recorded Egyptian deity.
        2. He is also the god of mercy, to which people suffering due to their own mistakes or mistakes of others called to for mercy and deliverance.
     2. He was also pictured as a scarab pushing the sun across the sky (scarabs are dung beetles and push great amounts of dung in front of them).
     3. Therefore, the scarab (in all its forms, even flies) was sacred! (Used in everything from funerals, weddings, to religious ceremonies, and in art)
  3. This was judgment against Khepri, whose form was of a scarab:
     1. Khepri – “Come into being” (“Create”). Form: a scarab-faced god, or depicted jut as a scarab, or a scarab with a human male head coming forth from the shell
     2. The scarab amulets that the Egyptians used as jewelry and as seals represent Khepri.
     3. He represents the rising or morning sun. By extension, he can also represent creation and the renewal of life.
     4. Khepri and another solar deity, Atum, were seen as aspects of Ra: Khepri was the morning sun, Ra was the midday sun, and Atum was the sun in the evening.
  4. The false god Amun-Ra & Khepri (though both worshiped as creator gods) couldn’t stop or overturn the judgment!
     1. Ex. 8:25, 31: Pharaoh did not appeal to Ra or Khepri, but to God!
     2. He also broke for 1st time saying Israelites could leave (8:25-28), then changed his mind.

#### Despite all this, Pharaoh hardened his heart and the next plague began…

#### 5th Plague: Livestock Die

* 1. Ex. 9:1-7
     1. The “livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks” would die (Ex. 9:3).
     2. Except: “but of the livestock of the sons of Israel, not one died” (Ex. 9:6).
  2. This was judgment on the false gods of Egypt that were over life of the animals:
     1. Hathor – The goddess of “love, motherhood and joy.” Form: a cow, or a woman with cow’s horns holding up a sun disk. More festivals were given in her honor than any other deity, and more children named after her than any other. Men and women both could become priests.
        1. Myths: Along with Nut, she was “goddess of the Milky Way.”
        2. She was goddess of joy, and was revered by women for her multifaceted roles: Wife, lover, mother.
        3. Wife of Amun-Ra (according to some mythology stories)
     2. Apis – The “bull-god,” “the renewal of life,” son of Hathor. His horns also held up a sun disk. A funerary god with much importance to peasants and royalty alike. When the Apis bull died, the land mourned. *(May have been influence for Golden Calf – Ex. 32)*
        1. Myths: Cow deities represented a king (pharaoh) who became a deity after death.
        2. After an Apis Bull died, another one was searched out: it had to be a black bull calf with a white triangle on its forehead, with a white crescent moon on its right flank, a scarab mark under its tongue, and double hairs on its tail.
        3. Once selected, brought to the temple of Ptah (given a window-room), given a harem of cows and worshiped.
        4. It had a healing breath – people lined up to be breathed on!
        5. On certain holidays it was paraded down streets bedecked with jewelry!
        6. Apis would have been killed, and all his possible successors! Imagine the strain on the people’s psyche to not be able to replace the Apis bull!
  3. These gods could not stop the slaughter of all the livestock in Egypt.
     1. Ex. 9:7: Pharaoh even sent to make sure what God said was so, that the Israelites livestock were unharmed!
  4. Despite all this, Pharaoh hardened his heart and the next plague began…

#### 6th Plague: Boils

* 1. Ex. 9:8-12
     1. This affliction affected man and beast alike.
     2. 1st plague to affect the human body directly! Again, God made a distinction between the Israelites and Egyptians!
        1. Note: During the “Black Death” that swept through Europe & Near East that killed an est. 75-200 million people from A.D. 1346-1353, one of the first symptoms noted with it was severe boils covering the body!
        2. The skin turned red, purple and black, decayed and smelled foul, accompanied with high fever & delirium.
        3. Death occurred within 5-7 days.
  2. This was judgment against the false gods of healing:
     1. Isis – The “goddess of fertility, and life.” She was also a goddess of health. Form: a throne-crowned woman. Her maternal aid was invoked in healing spells to benefit ordinary people, not just royalty, making her very popular.
        1. Myths: The goddess Isis (the mother of Horus) was the first daughter of Geb, god of the Earth, and Nut, the goddess of the Overarching Sky.
        2. At some time Isis and Hathor had the same headdress.
     2. Imhotep – The “god of medicine/healing.” He was an advisor to Pharaoh Djoser (3rd Dynasty), and one of the earliest names found in ancient Egypt, and because of his advances in engineering, architecture, and medicine, was later deified.
     3. Thoth – The “healer of the gods.” Form: a man with the head of an ibis (a curved-bill bird) or a baboon, depending on the artists’ intent.
  3. These false gods could not heal or overturn God’s judgment!
     1. Ex. 9:11: Even the magi could not come before Pharaoh because of the boils!
  4. Despite all this, Pharaoh hardened his heart and the next plague began…

#### 7th Plague: Hail & Fire

* 1. Ex. 9:13-35 (v. 23-24: Hail fell & fire flashed continually in the hail – Ps. 105:32-33)
     1. Ex. 9:14: God’s judgments were to show He is the One, true God!
     2. God gave warning, and the ones who believed Him were spared (9:20-21)
     3. Land of Goshen would be spared, but Egypt’s crops were destroyed (9:31-32: Flax and barley blossom in Feb.-Mar. in Egypt).
     4. This plague affected the agriculture of the land as well as their livestock.
  2. This was judgment against the false gods of the sky and crops:
     1. Nut – The “sky goddess” and one of the oldest of Egypt’s pantheon. Form: a woman arched over the earth, and sometimes as a cow (like Hathor). Usually depicted as one half of a circle with her husband Geb forming the other half (arched over him)
        1. Myths: She was wife and sister of Geb, mother of Osiris and Isis.
        2. She was considered protector of the dead as they traveled to afterlife.
     2. Shu – The “god of air and wind.” Form: a crowned man; father of Geb (Earth) & Nut (Sky).
     3. Horus – The “god of the Sky, god of War and god of Protection.” Form: a hawk-headed man or just a hawk. ***He couldn’t protect the crops!***
        1. Myths: He was a son of Osiris & Isis.
        2. He was god of Lower Egypt, and defeated Set (Seth).
        3. He was called to for protection in times of great distress.
        4. In some texts he was referred to as husband of Hathor instead of Ra.
  3. These false gods could not protect the land or animals or overturn God’s judgment!
     1. Ex. 9:27-28: Pharaoh confessed sin and asked for God to stop the hail!
     2. He said he would let the Israelites go but changed his mind!
  4. Despite all this, Pharaoh hardened his heart and the next plague began…

#### 8th Plague: Locusts

* 1. Ex. 10:1-20 (Ps. 105:34-35)
     1. Ex. 10:4-6: The locusts will be something never seen before!
     2. Ex. 10:7: Pharaoh’s servants said, “Egypt is destroyed.”
     3. This plague would be one for the history books: it would be told to the Israelites for generations, reminding them of God’s power! (10:1-2)
     4. This plague would be unlike anything the Egyptians had ever seen! (10:6)
  2. This was judgment against their false gods of grain and harvest:
     1. Renenutet – The “goddess of nourishment & harvest.” Form: as a cobra, or as a woman with the head of a cobra. She was a “nurse” who took care of the pharaoh from birth to death.
        1. Myths: Her son is Nepri, who is depicted to “suckle” for sustenance.
        2. She was “goddess of nourishment.”
        3. Sometimes depicted as a wife of Geb, in addition to Nut (Geb’s wife).
     2. Neper/Nepri – The “god of grain,” “Lord of the mouth.” Form: nursing child, son of Renenutet; dotted to represent grain! Represented the annual harvest.
     3. Seth – The “god of the desert” and “protector of crops,” a son of Nut. Form: a made-up creature, having many characteristics of different animal heads.
  3. These false gods could not stop or overturn God’s judgment!
     1. Ex. 10:8-11: Pharaoh offered a compromise: Moses could take the men, but not the women and children.
     2. Ex. 10:16-17: Pharaoh “hurriedly” called for Moses, confessed sin, and told them they could go worship God, but changed his mind when plague stopped.
  4. Despite all this, Pharaoh hardened his heart and the next plague began…

#### 9th Plague: Darkness

* 1. Ex. 10:21-29 (Ps. 105:28)
     1. The plague of darkness was an insult to Egypt’s religion and entire culture!
     2. Three days of complete “darkness which may be felt” (10:21).
     3. Israelites in Goshen had light in their dwellings (10:23)
  2. This was judgment against their false gods of the sun & moon:
     1. Amun-Ra – The “great god and creator of all.” Form: sometimes depicted as a crowned man, or a man with a falcon’s head. “The sun god.” Khepri was the morning sun, Ra was the midday sun, and Atum was the sun in the evening.
     2. Ptah – Said he “created the sun, moon, and earth.” Form: a mummified, bearded man with green skin for rebirth. Manifested in the Apis Bull.
     3. Atum – The “complete one.” Form: Pharaoh in depiction and carries the symbols for Upper and Lower Egypt, and a cross for eternal life. A sun-god. *Khepri was the morning sun, Ra was the midday sun, and Atum was the sun in the evening.*
        1. Myths: Self-created god (like Ra), said to have created the first humans.
        2. In some myths, he was 1st Egyptian god of the pantheon.
        3. He is considered a god of creation and the king (Pharaoh).
  3. These false gods could not overturn God’s judgment and bring back the light! God demonstrated His mighty power over Egypt’s most mightiest of gods – Ra the Sun god!
     1. Ex. 10:24-26: Pharaoh relented and told Moses to take everyone out of his land, even his little ones, but not their flocks! Moses said all of it was going.
     2. Ex. 10:28-29: Pharaoh told Moses to never see his face again or he would die.
  4. Despite all this, Pharaoh hardened his heart and the next plague began…

#### 10th Plague: Death of the Firstborn

* 1. Ex. 11:1-12:30 (Ps. 105:36)
     1. Not a childhood epidemic, only Egyptian and animals’ 1st born were killed.
     2. The Israelites *(by obedience – The Passover instituted in Ex. 12)* did not lose their firstborn.
     3. The loss of the firstborn of Egypt would cripple their families emotionally, and is perhaps the most devastating of the plagues!
     4. Pharaoh, in Exodus 1, ordered the deaths of all Israelite males, and now God will execute all the 1st born of Egypt!
  2. This was in judgment against their false gods! *(Too many to name them all)*
     1. Pharaoh – considered a god, manifestation of Atum, or Amun-Ra!
     2. Amun-Ra – The “great god and creator of all.” Form: sometimes depicted as a crowned man, or a man with a falcon’s head. “The sun god.”
     3. Osiris – The “giver of life.” Form: a crowned man.
     4. Isis – The “goddess of fertility, and life.” Form: a throne-crowned woman.
        1. Isis is also known as the goddess of simplicity, protector of the dead and goddess of children from whom *“all beginnings”* arose.
     5. Wadjet – “Protector of Pharaoh” goddess. Form: a snake-headed woman or a snake—usually an Egyptian cobra (later, a woman with the head of a vulture). Cobra, cobra on headdress (royal crown). Also, can be seen as a cobra with head of a woman, or woman with two snake heads.
     6. Khnum – “Guardian of the Nile.” Form of a man with a curly-horned ram’s head (sometimes a bull’s), called the “ram-god.” Created children on a potter’s wheel. Ram’s head vs. Passover Lamb! One couldn’t stop death of children, while the other saved children (from obedience to God, by the power of God!).
  3. These false gods could not save their children, even with advanced warning (11:1-10)!
     1. Ex. 12:29-33: Pharaoh and all the people of Egypt urged the Israelites to leave!
  4. Despite even this, Pharaoh hardened his heart, and the deliverance at the Red Sea *(Ex. 14)* was the final act that separated Israel from Egypt for good!

## Conclusion

1. Pharaoh told Moses, “I do not know the Lord!” (Ex. 5:2)
2. God told Pharaoh, “For this time I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth” (Ex. 9:14).
3. God showed him and all of Egypt there is none besides YHWH, God Almighty!
4. Psalm 105:37-38: Egypt was glad to see Israel go for they were filled with dread!
5. No matter what we believe or believe in, if it is not in God and in His truth, He can destroy it, for He has all control and authority over His creation (Phil. 2:9-11: Every knee will bow…).
6. Jesus is our Passover Lamb!
   1. Num. 3:13: In the 10th Plague, God sanctified all the firstborn of Israel, man and beast.
   2. I Cor. 5:7; Eph. 1:7: Christ is our Passover Lamb! In His blood we are redeemed and have forgiveness of sins! (Sanctified in His sacrifice – Heb. 10:10, 14)
7. Let us love and serve the One and only God, Creator of the heavens and the earth!
8. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Love God, repent and be baptized into His name!
9. If a Christian in error, don’t wait till it’s eternally too late. Love God, repent and be renewed!