

The Battle of the Gods

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For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. (Exodus 12:12)

It was the Sunday after V-J Day (the day, you will recall, that was supposed to have ended World War II). I was then a pastor, and I chose for my subject “The War Is Not Over.” The message was truer than I possibly could have dreamed it would be. However, I was not speaking of a conflict between two armies wearing two different uniforms. I was not speaking at all of a physical conflict but of a spiritual conflict, a conflict about which Paul writes:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12)

And he expressed it in his second letter to the Corinthians:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. (2 Corinthians 10:3)

A spiritual struggle is going on today, a struggle that is behind every physical struggle. It is that which was actually responsible for World War II. It was responsible for the Korean conflict. It was responsible for the conflict in Vietnam. And it has been the cause for every war from the day that Abraham went down to deliver his nephew Lot from the cities of the plain. It is responsible for that which is now labeled race riots in America, in England, in South Africa, and in many other countries of the world — which, actually, are not a conflict between black and white or between civil rights and civil wrongs. There is a spiritual conflict behind every physical conflict today. And this spiritual conflict is between light and darkness, between good and evil, between heaven and hell. It ultimately is between God and Satan. It began before man was ever created; it will continue here on this earth even after the church is removed. It is more far-reaching than man can comprehend; it is deeper and wider than this earth. It's super-colossal; it is hyper-cosmic; it's extra-mundane. It is titanic, gigantic, and volcanic, if you please.

In the Scriptures, every now and then, it surfaces. It comes into sharp focus in the Word of God, and you can see it plainly. You can see it in the Garden of Eden when the conflict was first joined there as far as man is concerned. Then you see it in the lives of two men who were twins, Jacob and Esau. You see it again taking place in the soul of that man Job as he fought his battle. You see it when God said, “...the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation” (Exodus 17:16). There would be no peace; there would have to be a surrender. You see it in the conflict between Saul and David and between David and Goliath. You see it joined yonder on the top of Mount Carmel when Elijah met the prophets of Baal. You see it in the temptation of the Lord Jesus yonder in the wilderness. It is that of which Paul wrote:

For the flesh lusteth [warreth] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.... (Galatians 5:17)

Paul again mentions it in telling of the great things that were happening in Ephesus:

For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries. (1 Corinthians 16:9)

One of the outstanding examples of this conflict was between Moses and Pharaoh. It had to do with the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The deliverance of Israel from the land and from the hand of Pharaoh is one of the great episodes recorded in the Word of God. The family of Jacob, numbering seventy, went down into the land of Egypt. They were welcome in Egypt because there was a friendly Pharaoh on the throne, probably one of the Hyksos kings (bedouins who had come from the desert, of the same background as old Jacob). Afterward that dynasty was overthrown, and the Egyptians came back into power. The Egyptians saw the people of Israel (who had become a multitude in the land of Egypt, probably 1 ½ million) as potential enemies, and they reduced them to slavery. For 430 years they were down there in the land of Egypt. God was silent. Seemingly He had put them down there, then went off and left them. But at the appointed time God returned to them. He remembered His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.... (Exodus 3:7, 8)

God came back to deliver them. After forty years' absence from Egypt, Moses appeared back in the land. God had trained him to be the leader. God was ready. Moses was to assemble the elders of Israel, and all together they were to go to Pharaoh. Pharaoh's refusal would open the struggle. And the struggle, my beloved, was not to be just between two men, Pharaoh and Moses. Pharaoh was the representative of the gods of Egypt, and the battle was joined there. Notice the language of Exodus 12:12: "...against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD." In these plagues that God brought onto Egypt He was executing judgment against the gods of Egypt, against the idolatry of the land.

Why the Plagues?

That leads me to say that there is actually a fourfold reason why God brought the judgments upon the land of Egypt.

Against All the Gods of Egypt

The first, as I've already indicated, is that Egypt was dominated by idolatry. Egypt had thousands of temples and millions of idols. Memphis was the ancient capital of Egypt. It, at one time, shared honors with Thebes in the upper Nile, but Memphis is the longtime capital. It was a mass of huge temples. It was a city eight miles long, four miles wide — a large city for that day, one of the largest of the ancient cities. It had a tremendous population and had more temples and idols than any other place has had on top side of this earth.

If you think that there was no power in idolatry I wonder if you have examined the evidence. There was power in this false religion. It is the thing to which Paul calls our attention in his letter to Timothy:

Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. (2 Timothy 3:8)

The magicians of Egypt were able to duplicate the first three miracles that Moses and Aaron performed. When Moses threw down his rod in the presence of Pharaoh and it became a serpent, the magicians of Egypt did it also. When Moses turned the Nile into blood, they duplicated it. And when he brought the frogs up, they duplicated that. But after that, they could do no more and admitted, “This is the finger of God” (Exodus 8:19). However, in their heathen religion there was power, satanic power. Satan, I believe, gave power to all the pagan, heathen religions of the past. This is what I mean: The Greeks were a highly civilized people. You cannot read anything that comes out of that 100 years of the Periclean Age, with its culture and its achievements, without realizing that those men were men of great ability. Yet those men worshiped gods, and they made trips to the Oracle of Delphi, and they got information. Do you think they got accurate information? I do not believe they would have been fooled by a fake. I believe that many times they got accurate information. How did they get it? May I say to you that Satan has been behind idolatry, as he is behind false cults today. When someone says to me, “Oh, false cults are meaningless; they have nothing in them,” he just thinks they don’t. They have tremendous power in them, but it is satanic power, my beloved.

We need to recognize today that there are two great spiritual forces in this world — that of God and that of Satan. Satan’s power is tremendous in this world. The plagues which God sent upon Egypt were leveled at the false gods of Egypt. They were a telling blow against the satanic deception of the Egyptian people.

That the Egyptian People Might Know God

There was another reason that God brought the plagues on Egypt. Listen to this language:

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.
(Exodus 7:5)

The plagues were to reveal the power of Almighty God to the Egyptian people. Why was it necessary to send ten plagues, and why did He drag them out? Because, my beloved, even in the time of judgment God was prepared to extend mercy. Every time Pharaoh would seem to repent, immediately God called off the plague. Why? Because God was prepared to extend mercy. He gave them ten plagues, yes, but don’t miss the fact that those ten plagues were ten opportunities for the people of Egypt to turn to God. And when we get to the Book of Numbers, we find that many of them did turn to God. Also, it is interesting to note that when the gospel first started out in the early Christian era, the center of gospel preaching was not Asia nor Europe, it was North Africa. Four of the greatest men the church has produced came out of North Africa: Augustine, Tertullian, Origen, and Athanasius. These men were in a land that had a long history of God’s judgment upon idolatry. God says, “I’ll convince the Egyptians.” And, believe me, He did it.

That Pharaoh Might Know Him

Then there is a third reason for the plagues. We are told that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. For some reason, that has caused more controversy than anything else in this particular narrative. I have heard more people weep over "poor Pharaoh" and try to exonerate him because God hardened his heart. If you think of Pharaoh as a tenderhearted fellow who wanted to learn of God and was delighted to release the people of Israel from slavery, then it was mean of God to harden his heart. But if this is your feeling, you are not reading the record accurately. The hardening is a figurative word which can mean twisting, as with a rope. It means that God twisted the heart of Pharaoh to force him to do the thing he really wanted to do. Have you noted how vacillating Pharaoh was? He would agree to let Israel go, then he would change his mind.

There are certain men who have to be taken into court before they will do what they have already agreed to do. God is doing that to Pharaoh. He is bringing him into court and saying, "You are going to reveal the thing that is actually in your heart. You cannot say one thing and do something else." (By the way, that is exactly what God is going to do to every individual who will someday come into His presence. You will be seen as you really are. There will be no more camouflage. This is rather frightening, is it not?)

Let me illustrate in another way. The sun shining down on this earth today will melt wax and it will harden clay. Are you going to say that the business of the sun is to soften substances? Then why does it harden clay? If you say the business of the sun is to harden substances, then why does it melt wax? Does the sun have a special built-in hardener and a built-in softener? No. The difference is due to the element that is put under its heat. All God was doing to Pharaoh was bringing out into the open that which was in his heart. The Lord Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). Then in Matthew 15:19 He names some of the things that come out of the heart, and I can't find a nice thing in the lot.

The Old Testament had already said that. Jeremiah wrote:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

God was bringing out that which was in Pharaoh's heart. This is one purpose of the judgments.

That God's Own Might Acknowledge Him

Now there is a fourth and final reason for the plagues. It was to demonstrate to Israel that He was the Almighty God, their deliverer.

And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD. (Exodus 10:2)

God must demonstrate to His own people that He could deliver them. Remember that they had been born in the brickyards of Egypt. They were idolaters. In the wilderness, when Moses was away from them, they immediately made a golden calf and worshiped it.

It took God only one night to get the Israelites out of Egypt, but it took Him forty years to get Egypt out of them. Likewise with us, God saves us instantly, but it takes Him a long time to get the world out of us — and some of us are still in the process.

God moved in and so demonstrated His power in delivering the Israelites that the memory of it would be passed down from generation to generation. It was as if God said, “You’ll be able to tell your sons, and then when your grandson comes along, you can put him on your knee and say, ‘Look, this is what God did for us when we were slaves down in the land of Egypt. I had worked all day in the brickyards, and when I got home, weary and tired because I didn’t have straw for the bricks, Moses said to be ready, that we were going out that very night. Do you think we could escape that tremendous army of Pharaoh? Of course we couldn’t! But we had already seen evidences of God’s hand, and that night God led us out. And we went across the Red Sea on dry land and on into that wilderness. We still were a stiff-necked people, but our God was faithful to us.’” God was demonstrating to His people, who had fallen into the idolatry of Egypt, that He was their God.

It was a definite, deliberate, designed attack upon idolatry which would have a message for Pharaoh; it would have a message for the Egyptians; it would have a message for the Israelites; and it would have a message for you and me.

The Plagues

Now let’s run through these plagues one by one and see their purpose and order. This came to my attention years ago as a student in college and did more to lift my faith at that time than anything else. I had always felt that the plagues were haphazard, that whatever came to the mind of the Lord, He threw in. But it wasn’t that at all.

Blood

The first plague: The Nile River was turned to blood.

And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. (Exodus 7:20)

As Dr. Adams said, “Egypt is the Nile,” and without the Nile that country would be right back in the Libyan Desert, not even fit for human habitation. Because of the Nile, Egypt has been the bread basket of the world. God made it that way. But instead of the blessing God had intended, the Nile became that which these people worshiped. It is interesting to note that there were four sources of religion in the land of Egypt, and all four can be traced back to monotheism — that there is one living and true God. But there came a day when, though “they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Romans 1:21). They began to serve the thing created rather than the Creator. They began to worship the Nile River.

The Nile was sacred to Osiris. I’m sure you have seen in a great deal of the paintings of Egypt, especially found in the tombs, that all-seeing eye with rays radiating from it. That is the eye of Osiris, and the Nile River was sacred to Osiris. The Egyptians depicted the Nile as Hopi, a

fat man with the breasts of a woman, which indicated the powers of fertility and nourishment. There was a hymn they sang in the temple to this god which went something like this:

*Thou waterest the fields which Ra created...
Thou art the bringer of food...
creator of all good things.
Thou fillest the storehouses...
Thou hast care for the poor and needy.*

The fertility of the land depended upon the River Nile and its overflowing every year. But when the Nile was turned to blood, that which was fertility became sterility. That which was life became death. At the very beginning God struck at that which was the very life blood of Egypt and turned it to blood.

Although this first plague had its effect, it didn't change Pharaoh.

Frogs

The second plague was frogs.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: and the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs. (Exodus 8:1-3)

One of the most beautiful temples that was in Memphis was the temple to Heqet, the frog-headed goddess. Have you ever seen a beautiful idol? Have you noted mankind's conception of God apart from revelation? He is not thought of as being beautiful or wonderful or glorious, but absolutely hideous. That is the way they have made images of Him. All idols are that way. And in Egypt they worshiped the ugly frog-headed goddess Heqet. Also Hopi was depicted as holding a frog out of whose mouth flowed a stream of nourishment. This indicates the close relationship between the god of the Nile and the frog goddess, one of the oldest and the mother of goddesses. She was the goddess of fertility and rebirth, the patroness of midwives. One Egyptian picture shows Heqet reciting spells to effect the resurrection of Osiris. Also a carving shows her kneeling before the queen and superintending at the birth of Hatshepsut.

Frogs, naturally, were sacred to Heqet, and it was an offense in Egypt ever to kill a frog. All along the Nile there were frogs, but nobody killed them. They were sacred to Heqet. Imagine, my friend, having frogs in your living room, frogs in your bedroom (and in your *bed*), frogs in the kitchen and in your food — and not being able to kill them! God has a sense of humor. God must have smiled at this particular case. Frogs everywhere — and no one dared harm one. They got all they wanted of the frog-headed goddess Heqet. No wonder Pharaoh called Moses to get rid of them — *he* could touch them; they could not.

Lice

The third plague was lice.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. (Exodus 8:16)

The Egyptians worshiped the earth-god, Geb. And lice, it was thought, were made out of the dust of the earth. The root word for lice means “to cover” or “nip” or “pinch,” which is a good description of lice as we know them. A leading zoologist has said that the mites form an enormous order whose leading function, to a large extent, is to play the scavenger. You can well imagine, with the land stinking with frogs, that there were crowds of lice. The lice might eventually rid the land of the dead frogs and could, therefore, become a blessing as well as a curse.

However, in recent years, one man writes about his experience with them in Egypt: “I noticed that the sand appeared to be in motion. Close...inspection revealed...that the surface of the ground was a moving mass of minute ticks, thousands of which were crawling up my legs. I beat a hasty retreat, pondering the words of the Scriptures, ‘the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.’”

The plague of lice could not be duplicated by the Egyptian magicians. God was beginning to level His judgment against life itself in the land of Egypt.

Flies

The fourth plague brought swarms of flies — more accurately, beetles, or as we have thought of them in connection with the Egyptians, the scarab.

And the LORD did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies. (Exodus 8:24)

You have seen, I am sure, pictures of the gold scarabs that have been found in the tombs of Egypt. Old King Tut was a third-rate king, but even he had gold scarabs in his tomb. They were sacred to Ra, the sun god. The disc that symbolized him has been found in the tombs and in many places in that land. He was one of the main gods that they worshiped. And Khepri was the beetle-god. They believed that in that beetle there was eternal life, which is the reason they put gold scarabs in the tombs. It was evidence that they were going to live forever.

Well, beetles in your tomb wouldn't bother you, but imagine them in bed with you! There is a certain amount of humor in these judgments. This most sacred beetle became a curse to the people and a plague upon the land.

Murrain

The next plague affected the cattle of Egypt.

And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. (Exodus 9:6)

Egypt has been called the land of zoolatry. With a tour group, I made a trip out to the pyramids. When we got back, one of the men who knew the area said, “Did you see the mummies of the bulls?”

We said, “No.”

“Well,” he said, “you missed the most important thing.” So several who were in our group went back out there to get pictures of them. Well, I was not interested in going twelve miles in all that heat to see mummies of bulls! But they are there — literally hundreds of them, reverently entombed in sarcophagi. Archaeologists had just begun to unearth them. What does it mean? It means simply that Apis, the black bull, was worshiped in Egypt. The second largest temple that Egypt ever built was located in Memphis and was for the worship of the black bull, Apis.

Apis was supposed to be an embodiment of Ptah of Memphis. Apis, thought to be engendered by a moon-beam, was distinguished by several characteristics. A new Apis was always believed to be born upon the death of the old. The dead bull was embalmed and buried in Memphis, and his soul was thought to pass to the world beyond as Osorapis.

You might say that what the Egyptians had at this time was the worship of a sick cow — literally, a diseased and dying bull! God must have smiled at this. He is leveling His judgments against the awful, frightful institution of idolatry that had such a hold upon the Egyptian people as well as on the Israelites. You recall that when Moses was gone from them for a while in the wilderness, they made for themselves a golden calf.

Boils

God now closes in on them personally.

And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains [ulcers] upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. (Exodus 9:8, 9)

For the first time God is touching man as well as beast with judgment. He is afflicting man’s physical body. The priests who served in the Egyptian temples had to be clean, without any type of breaking out or sickness. Suddenly this plague of boils comes upon them and they are unclean, unfit to serve in the temples. This brings to a halt all of the false worship of Egypt!

On a trip to Egypt, I walked over part of the ruins of the city of Memphis. The ruins are practically all gone now, but archaeologists know something of the extent of that great city. Up one thoroughfare and down the other was temple after temple. There were over one thousand temples in Memphis, and priests served in all of them. You can imagine what this plague of boils did to the services in these temples. Everything slowed to a standstill. All the bright lights went off and the doors closed.

Even though Pharaoh himself was afflicted with boils, he refused to let Israel leave the land. His heart was hard.

Hail

God begins now to demonstrate His power even further as He moves in with this judgment — “...that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth” (Exodus 9:14).

Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.
(Exodus 9:18)

Egypt was a land of no rain. In Cairo I asked a man how much rainfall they had. He said, “We had an inch last year.”

“Is that normal?”

“Yes.”

“Well, that’s not much rain!”

He said, “You ought to go up the Nile; rain up there is a phenomenon. They just don’t have rain at all.”

This plague was directed against Isis (sometimes represented as cow-headed), goddess of fertility and considered the goddess of the air. She is the mythical daughter of Geb and Nut, the sister and wife of Osiris and the mother of Horus. It is said that the tears of Isis falling into the Nile River caused it to overflow its banks and bring nourishment to the land. Isis was a prominent goddess in Egypt, and the plague of hail was directed against her. Their sky-goddess was powerless in her own domain.

From this point on, the land of Goshen is spared from the plagues coming upon the land of Egypt. God is striking at the Egyptians in an attempt to wake them up and shake them out of their false worship. Pharaoh, leader of the people, continued to harden his heart.

Locusts

Then there was the judgment of the locusts, and that was against the insect gods. The way Egyptians worshiped insects and birds is the most amazing thing. No people have been more given over to it. We sometimes think that only in the dark heart of Africa could this worship exist, but it is nothing compared to that in the land of Egypt. In fact, evidently it percolated down from the north of Africa to all the tribes of Africa, and that is where they got the idea of worshiping even insects — an awful thing.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. (Exodus 10:12)

There are several interesting things revealed in this judgment of locusts. Notice that they did not appear miraculously, as did some of the other plagues. An east wind brought them from another place, possibly from somewhere in Asia. Locusts were prominent in the Asian area. This wind had brought them over a broad expanse of desert, and they were pretty hungry when they arrived in the green Nile Valley. They absolutely stripped the land of vegetation.

The locust is used in Scripture as a picture of judgment. A plague of locusts is probably one of the worst things man has to face. The prophet Joel describes a plague of locusts in the

past, which is a matter of history, then predicts a judgment that is yet future for mankind. The Book of Revelation also mentions a great plague of locusts that will come upon the earth. These insects probably had a greater affect upon the land of Egypt than any of the previous plagues that had come upon the land.

Darkness

And then we come to the ninth judgment, which is judgment upon the sun-god, Ra. Darkness comes over the land of Egypt in the daytime. God moves in with darkness against the chief god that they worshiped. The sun disc is the most familiar symbol the Egyptians used; it is in all of their art. It honors the sun-god, Ra. The plague of darkness shows the utter helplessness of Ra.

And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.
(Exodus 10:22, 23)

At this time also Pharaoh is abandoned. He has had opportunity to repent; he has not. Apparently many of the Egyptian people repent and turn to God, and they are spared. But Pharaoh will not repent. From here on Moses will appear before him no more. “He, that being often reprov’d hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Proverbs 29:1).

Death of the Firstborn

The tenth judgment is the last. God announces to His people and to the Egyptians that this will be the last. “After this,” He said, “I’ll take my people out.” It is the death of the firstborn — not only the firstborn of man, but of every creature.

And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. (Exodus 11:4-6)

You will recall that God had said to His people that the firstborn belonged to Him. And that goes back to the Garden of Eden. In fact, that is the reason Eve named Cain — she said, “I’ve gotten the man, the deliverer. He’s God’s man.” And from that day on, the firstborn always belonged to God — they were given to the service of God. The firstborn in all pagan, heathen lands were set aside for the service of the gods.

Even as recently as probably a century ago, the firstborn son in an English family went to sea, the second son entered the army, the third son entered government service, and the fourth son entered the church. The first son went to sea, for England was a great sea power.

In the land of Egypt, God was reaching in and claiming that which was His own.

May I say to you, friend, there are many parents living today in our affluent society who hesitate giving their children to God. Many Christians do not want their children to go as missionaries. They do not want them to make a sacrifice that is a real sacrifice. It is a dangerous thing for a Christian to withhold his firstborn from God. God reaches in many times and takes that which is His own. He took mine, because I had not given her to Him. I know He does it that way.

That's what He did in the land of Egypt. He reached in and took that which was His own. That was His final word to the land of Egypt.

The Battle Continues

It was the battle of the gods. God demonstrated that He is the living and true God. The victory is His. Let me call your attention to one last verse:

And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. (Exodus 9:16)

The world heard it in that day, my friend. God won the victory then.

However, that battle has been going on from that day to this, and it is going on at this moment. And whether you like it or not, you are in it. You are either on Christ's side or you are on Satan's side. Jesus said, "If you're not for me, you are against me" (see Matthew 12:30). You must take sides.

Our victory is not one that we have won. I get a little tired of people talking of living the victorious life. We are not living it. The only victorious life that you and I are offered today is *His* life. He is the One who got the victory over the cross. He is the One who got the victory over death and over the grave. He's the One today who can give to you and to me a victory. And we can only say, "...We are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).