

Exodus 8 & 10 • Four Compromises

Introduction

Pharaoh is a prominent scriptural parallel not just of Satan, but of the Antichrist. He was someone deified as the god of Egypt, exerted power as a ruler over the world, and in addition to being a liar and murderer, kept people in bondage and, in particular, hated both the Word and people of God. While he is not above outright persecution of believers, Pharaoh mimics one of Satan's primary spiritual attacks by offering alternatives which will fundamentally undermine the faith and relationship to God of His people. It is worth noting that in our best English translations of the Bible (e.g., NASB, ESV, KJV, NKJV), the word "compromise" is never found. Satan loves to offer the road to compromise because he knows that if it is followed, it leads away from God and directly back to him.

²⁰Now the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh, as he comes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ²¹For if you do not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and on your servants and on your people and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians will be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they dwell. ²²But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of flies will be there, in order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land. ²³I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign will occur.'"

²⁴Then the LORD did so. And there came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and the houses of his servants and the land was laid waste because of the swarms of flies in all the land of Egypt.

²⁵Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land."

²⁶But Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we will sacrifice to the LORD our God what is an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice what is an abomination to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not then stone us? ²⁷We must go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He commands us."

[Read 8:20-27]

Q: What is the purpose which God repeatedly states as the reason He wants Pharaoh to "Let My people go"?

A: It is stated by God six times in the Exodus Narrative, "that they may serve Me". (Ex. 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3)

Q: Why would this be a particularly confrontational and direct affront to Pharaoh personally?

A: He is both the ruler and recognized god of Egypt whom the Israelites, along with the rest of his subjects, serve. In the Israelites' case, they are a source of forced labor.

Application: How well do you recognize that your calling to Christ is a calling to serve Him? If you are not in His full-time employ, then who or what are you actually serving? How is this different than merely "believing in" Him?

Q: What is the stated purpose of the plague of the flies?

A: As was likewise stated with the other plagues, "in order that you may know that I, the Lord, am in the midst of the land". (v.22)

Q: How is this again confronting Pharaoh directly?

A: It not only challenges his earthly authority, but his proclaimed deity.

Q: But what is different beginning with this plague from the previous three?

A: "I will put a division between My people and your people". (v.23) God is going to make a distinction between those who serve the god of this world and the One True God.

Q: What is the compromise which Pharaoh offers?

A: "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land". (v.25) Instead of letting the people completely go as requested, Pharaoh attempts to retain local control.

Q: Why would such a sacrifice be "an abomination to the Egyptians"?

A: The very animals Israelite would sacrifice were worshiped by the Egyptians. The worship of the followers of Pharaoh, a type of Satan, is completely contrary to that of the followers of God.

Application: To serve God is completely incompatible with serving the god of this world.

[Continued on the next page.]

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said,

"I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM;

AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord.

"AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN;

And I will welcome you.

And I will be a father to you,

And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,"

Says the Lord Almighty. (2 Co. 6:14–18)

Application: *Believers must come out and be separate. They must not serve the One True God the way non-believers serve the god of this world.*

²⁸Pharaoh 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. Make supplication for me."

²⁹Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you, and I shall make supplication to the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people tomorrow; only do not let Pharaoh deal deceitfully again in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD."

³⁰So Moses went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the LORD. ³¹The LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people; not one remained. ³²But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.

[Read 8:28-32]

Q: How is this second offer of compromise differ from the first?

A: Previously they were told they could go out as long as they stayed "within the land" (v.25), but here they are offered the opportunity to go "in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away". (v.28)

Point: *Satan never fully lets go of the leash; he always wants at least the minimum of control and influence. He will allow "religion" within his sphere of influence.*

Q: What might be significant about the kind of prayer which Pharaoh requests, and which Moses employs? How is this different from generic "prayer"?

A: He asks for and receives "supplication". This is seeking something earnestly yet humbly, but still approaching something approaching someone almost begging.

Q: How is this different from a prayer of petition?

A: Whereas a prayer of petition is praying on behalf of others, the prayer of supplication is a request made by the person praying.

Point: *Pharaoh is not asking for prayer for himself or in any sense submitting to God, but rather asking Moses to make his own, independent request to change the circumstances.*

Q: How does Moses describe Pharaoh's behavior to this point? What is his ultimate response?

A: As dealing "deceitfully". (v.29) His sinful behavior results in a hardened heart, something completely unresponsive either to God's Word or any kind of personal prayer.

Application: *Believers must not be borderline Christians attempting to stay close to both the world and the Lord at the same time. A complete and total separation is required.*

^{10:1}Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, ²and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed My signs among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.”

³Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ⁴For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. ⁵They shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the land. They will also eat the rest of what has escaped—what is left to you from the hail—and they will eat every tree which sprouts for you out of the field. ⁶Then your houses shall be filled and the houses of all your servants and the houses of all the Egyptians, something which neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day that they came upon the earth until this day.’” And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

⁷Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?”

⁸So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, “Go, serve the LORD your God! Who are the ones that are going?”

⁹Moses said, “We shall go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we shall go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD.”

¹⁰Then he said to them, “Thus may the LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Take heed, for evil is in your mind. ¹¹Not so! Go now, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desire.” So they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence.

¹²Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may

[Read 10:1-20]

Q: What has been added to the explanation of God’s purpose in his working?

A: Whereas previously it was along the lines of “*that you may know that I am the LORD*”, here is added the benefit of this testimony being handed down to one’s family—“*that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson...*” (v.2)

Q: What is further revealed about Pharaoh’s personal spiritual condition?

A: He refuses to humble himself (v.3), the very nature of the god of this world whose chief defining characteristic is pride.

Q: What is offered in the course of this plague which addresses the very issue of Pharaoh’s refusal to submit to God?

1. No one will be able to see the land which Pharaoh is purported to be the god of (v.5)
2. This plague will consume what little was left behind by the previous plagues. (v.5)
3. Something unprecedented will take place. (v.6)

Q: What is indicated in v.7 which reveals that the Egyptians are not learning the right lesson from all that has happened?

A: They make no acknowledgement of God, but rather attribute to Moses, “*How long will this man be a snare to us?*”

Q: What is the latest compromise suggested? What does Pharaoh do?

A: “*Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God*”. (v.7) After being told by Moses and Aaron that their whole families and the entirety of their possessions must go to serve the Lord, Pharaoh offers, “*Go now, the men among you*”. (v.11)

Q: What is both the accusation and the misrepresentation which Pharaoh makes in the process?

A: He falsely accuses them, “*for evil is in your mind*” (v.10) and misrepresents what they desire as going out with only the men. (v.11)

Point: Like Satan, Pharaoh makes a desperate attempt to redefine the terms and conditions to appear there is a way to fulfill God’s Word and ways which in reality falls far short.

Q: Why is it important to note, “So they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence”?

A: Pharaoh issues a command which is contrary to God’s, and then forces them out, assuming they will then follow through on that command.

Q: How do these things fit in with God’s opening qualifications of His greater purpose?

A: The conflict is going to be centered on families, and God’s working is going to become a heritage of His working to those very families.

Q: What was probably the most devastating aspect of this 8th plague?

A: “*Thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt*”. (v.15) This would be a complete devastation not only of their personal food supply, but that by which they would keep their animals and livestock alive.

come up on the land of Egypt and eat every plant of the land, even all that the hail has left.”

¹³So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD directed an east wind on the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. ¹⁴The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled in all the territory of Egypt; they were very numerous. There had never been so many locusts, nor would there be so many again. ¹⁵For they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt.

¹⁶Then Pharaoh hurriedly called for Moses and Aaron, and he said, “I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. ¹⁷Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and make supplication to the LORD your God, that He would only remove this death from me.”

¹⁸He went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the LORD. ¹⁹So the LORD shifted the wind to a very strong west wind which took up the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not one locust was left in all the territory of Egypt. ²⁰But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.

²¹Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt.”

²²So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. ²³They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings.

²⁴Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, “Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you.”

Q: Of what is this a greater spiritual representation?

A: Biblically, food is the repeated symbol of God’s Word. Their steadfast spiritual rejection of God has a parallel in what happened to them literally in their refusal to accept His Word. This is a lesson Israel itself would learn in the Wilderness.

“He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. (Dt. 8:3)

Q: Is this the first time Pharaoh has admitted to sin?

A: Previously because of the hail Pharaoh confessed, “I have sinned this time; the Lord is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones”. (9:27)

Q: What was a parallel consequence of the hail which might be found in the locusts?

A: Destruction of the food supply. The hail killed the cattle/animals, the locusts the plants/crops.

Q: But what is different about Pharaoh’s second confession of sin?

A: It is solely confined to Pharaoh alone: “I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you...please forgive my sin only this once...” (v.16-17)

Q: But what was the actual result when circumstances returned to normal?

A: “But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go”. (v.20)

Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” (Acts 2:38–40)

Application: Faith involves the whole family. Various spiritual-sounding things which divide families, or create superficial restrictions or requirements, are Satan’s inventions to separate us from true service to the Lord.

[Read 10:21-29]

Q: What is different about the way this plague was carried out and Pharaoh’s reaction to it?

A: God does not send Moses and Aaron to pre-announce what is about to happen. In this case Pharaoh understands on his own that God is the source of the plague, and therefore when he calls them in to his presence, already knows what they are seeking. Pharaoh has a 4th compromise already prepared.

Q: What is the 4th compromise?

A: “Go, serve the LORD, only let your flocks and your herds be detained Even your little ones may go with you”. (v.24) Their possessions must stay behind to ensure that they will come back to the god of this world.

²⁵But Moses said, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice them to the LORD our God. ²⁶Therefore, our livestock too shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we shall take some of them to serve the LORD our God. And until we arrive there, we ourselves do not know with what we shall serve the LORD." ²⁷But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to let them go.

²⁸Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Beware, do not see my face again, for in the day you see my face you shall die!"

²⁹Moses said, "You are right; I shall never see your face again!"

Q: What has been the overall pattern in this sequence of offered compromises?

1. OK, you can serve God as long as you don't actually leave.
2. OK, you can serve God as long as you stay close.
3. OK, just the men can go and serve God, but your families must remain here.
4. OK, you can serve God, but your possessions must stay behind.

Q: What do all these schemes of compromise have in common?

A: To retain some sort of foothold to ensure that they never completely leave and will therefore return to the old life and the old god.

Q: What is Moses' final word to Pharaoh? How is it actually the ultimate and only real solution to what we have studied to this point?

A: "I shall never see your face again!" (v.29) The only solution is complete and total separation.

Q: How would this be finally accomplished by God's people at that time, and how is it then accomplished by God's people now?

A: They would literally accomplish it by the blood of the Passover lamb and the crossing of the Red Sea in pursuit of the Promised Land, which were precursors of how we now accomplish it respectively through the blood of Christ the Lamb on the cross and baptism in our pursuit of Heaven.

Application: *It takes complete separation from the world and uncompromising commitment to the Lord everything in our possession, both spiritual and physical. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". (Mt. 6:21)*

Overall Application

Discuss how this lesson applies to the following for you personally:

And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. (Lk. 9:23)

"If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. (Jn. 12:26)

Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (Mt. 19:21)