

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



April 14, 2013

Greater Than All the Gods

When pompous men rise up in rebellion against God, He will humor them for awhile. But eventually He will subdue their pride in a manner that highlights His superiority.

“And Jethro said, ‘Blessed be the Lord, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them’” (Ex. 18:10-11).

Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was himself a priest of God (Ex. 3:1), so he recognized the significance of what had happened in Egypt. The plagues were not random acts of nature; they were weapons of God, unleashed in a terrible judgment against a nation who had dared to defy Him. Not surprisingly, God won.

But to Jethro, there was more here than a mere contest of wills. He noticed that God’s victory was achieved “in the very thing in which they behaved proudly.” That is, the plagues were designed not merely to defeat the Egyptians, but to humiliate them precisely in those areas where they considered themselves the experts. The Egyptians were pagans whose lives were intricately connected

to a pantheon of gods, so God promised, “against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment” (Ex. 12:12). With the plagues, He made good on that threat.

For example, the Egyptians worshipped *Hapi*, the god of the Nile River, due to its life-giving properties. So God turned the water to blood. *Heqet* was the Egyptian god of fertility (with the head of a frog), so God sent so many frogs upon the land that the people loathed their sacred creatures. *Isis*, the goddess of health, was impotent against the boils that smote every person. At the top of the Egyptian pantheon was *Ra*, the sun god. God sent a deep darkness over all the land for three days, showing that even mighty Ra could not stand up to the God of the Hebrews.

The final plague, the death of the firstborn, touched the one god who most directly impacted the lives of the Egyptians: Pharaoh himself. Pharaoh was powerless to save the firstborn even in his own house. By the time the devastation was over, there could be no doubt: God was truly “greater than all the gods.”

I often think back to that historical event as I ponder the future of our own nation. It’s discouraging to witness the rising tide of godlessness that threatens to overwhelm our culture. Starting with our most educated and powerful people, growing numbers of our population scoff at God and flout His standard of morality. They do not merely ignore God; they defy Him to stop them in their headlong rush into nihilism. Every day that passes with no response from God only strengthens their contempt for Him.

But the day will come when God will finally move to squash the rebellion. His targets will be the very institutions that have been the foundation of our strength: our financial system, our military power, our industrial might. The devastation will be horrendous, but inevitable. God will win “in the very thing in which they behaved proudly.”

How will this affect us personally? Recall that God delivered a remnant through the plagues of Egypt—and He will do so again. Our task is to remain loyal to Him, whatever happens. God will win, and will preserve His own.

– David King