

Covid-19 and 10 Plagues of Egypt

Introduction

Happy Sabbath to everyone!

Good afternoon to all of you watching this Bible Study on webcast from the comfort and security of your homes. Hope everyone is well and in good health.

Today is the Bible Study day. This afternoon, we will talk about Covid-19 and the 10 plagues of Egypt. It is a timely topic. Firstly, timely in the sense that the Covid-19 virus is raging across the world affecting billions of lives. Secondly, we are a few weeks away from the Passover festival.

For those who are not familiar with the Passover festival, this is the season when the 10 plagues of Egypt happened and God led the Israelites out of Egypt. This too was the precise season of the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus died exactly at the hour when the Passover lamb was sacrificed in every Israel household.

Thus, the scripture says in 1 Corinthians 5: 7 Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. **For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.**

We have read the 10 plagues of Egypt many times in the past. But, not fully realize the gravity of their impact on the Egyptian people and economy. The plagues were so horrifying and terrifying that the Israelites had to be driven off the land.

Coming from the coronavirus crisis as a personal experience, we may have a better appreciation of the intense agony and suffering inflicted on Egyptian lives. And, in the midst of the catastrophic disaster, there was this Pharaoh whose heart was so hardened to defy the living God. He brought untold suffering to the Egyptian people until it hit home with the death of his very own firstborn son.

In this presentation, I need you to vividly imagine the physiological, psychological and emotional impact of each of the plagues that visited Egypt.

A Personal Experience

We will draw this message from our personal experience from the on-going Covid-19 global pandemic that is gripping the world. I am sure we are worried, anxious, even fearful of the disease that has caused many deaths.

Many countries across the world are in lockdown; including the Philippines. It has been three (3) weeks since the lockdown in NCR and now almost across the country.

Are you enjoying the lockdown? Not too bad, right? Catch up on house chores; watch Netflix, surf the net, connect with friends on social media, rekindle romance with your spouse, spend bonding time with your children and some are getting paid while doing all these stuffs at home.

There is relative safety and comfort in the house. Now, we know what a house arrest feels like.

There is water, power, food and even entertainment in the house. Yet, there is this sense of fearful feeling and panic that we all experience during this time of pandemic. The plagues that gripped Egypt were a 100 times more devastating than Covid-19 and they brought a mighty nation to her knees.

The Plagues

1. Blood Everywhere

When Aaron raised his staff over the Nile River, the water became blood, and the first plague began.

Exodus 7

19 The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and **stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt**—over the streams and canals, over the ponds and all the reservoirs—and they will **turn to blood.**' **Blood will be everywhere in Egypt, even in vessels of wood and stone.**"

20 Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood.

21 The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the **Egyptians could not drink its water.** **Blood was everywhere in Egypt.**

24 And all the Egyptians **dug along the Nile to get drinking water**, because they could not drink the water of the river.

25 **Seven days** passed after the LORD struck the Nile.

We are in quarantine for 3 weeks now. But, we have the comfort and convenience of flowing water every time we open the faucet. We have water to wash our hands, water to drink, water to take a bath and even water to do laundry. We are not very mindful of the misery of the Egyptians when the Nile water turned to blood.

In one moment the Nile water turned to blood. The water just got cut-off. They had to find new sources of potable water. They dug wells near the Nile River. The water from the well was limited, and rationed. Not every family could dig a well. The little water they got from the well may not even be enough to quench their thirst. Imagine seven (7) days of severe water shortage.

For seven (7) days, everywhere they turn was stinking blood. And, not even of potable water to quench the thirst.

The Israelites settled in the country of Goshen. Genesis 47: 31 Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and speak to Pharaoh and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were living in the land of Canaan, have come to me. 32 The men are shepherds; they tend livestock, and they have brought along their flocks and herds and everything they own.' 33 When Pharaoh calls you in and asks, 'What is your occupation?' 34 you should answer, 'Your servants have tended livestock from our boyhood on, just as our fathers did.' Then you will be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen, **for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians.**"

The verse suggests Goshen may have been situated separately from Egypt. In fact, Goshen was situated at Lower Egypt where the Nile River branches into arteries that emptied into the Mediterranean Sea.

Goshen is described as the best land in Egypt, suitable for both crops and raising livestock. In Goshen, it was thought that the Israelites traditionally dug wells as source of water. Thus, not affected by the Nile water turning into blood.

2. Frogs Invade Egyptian Homes

The second plague brought millions of frogs into Egyptian homes.

Exodus 8:2 If you refuse to let them go, I will send a plague of frogs on your whole country. 3 The Nile will teem with frogs. They will come up into your palace and your bedroom and **onto your bed**, into the houses of your officials and **on your people**, and into **your ovens and kneading troughs**. 6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land.

You like frogs?

You want to play with frogs?

Now, try living with frogs!

Slimy, slippery frogs invade Egyptian homes. Frogs croaking, jumping, and hopping all over the house from courtyard, to bedroom, to the bed, to dining room, to kitchen and into the oven - sliming everywhere they went, even jumping unto your lap. The Egyptians can't cook, can't eat, can't sleep and can't even go to the comfort room.

The Bible didn't say how long the plagues lasted. Could have been a good three (3) days (day one: the frogs invaded the homes, day two: Pharaoh summoned Moses and day 3: the frogs died).

But, the wretchedness didn't stop there. Exodus 8:13 And the LORD did what Moses asked. The **frogs died in the houses**, in the courtyards and in the fields. 14 They were piled into heaps, and the **land stunk because of them**.

It may take no less than a week to dispose of all the dead frogs. The menace of the dead frogs may be worst than the live ones.

3. Gnats or Lice Infestation

The gnat infestation was on every man and animal.

Exodus 8:16 16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the ground,' and throughout the land of Egypt the dust will become gnats." 17 They did this, and when Aaron stretched out his hand with the staff and struck the dust of the ground, **gnats came on people and animals**. All the dust throughout the land of Egypt became gnats. 18 But when the magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, they could not. Since the gnats were on people and animals everywhere, 19 the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God."

Bible scholars cannot agree on what this gnat was. It could be mosquitoes or lice (kuto). I think it was lice because it was described as it came on people and animals.

Lice are blood suckers. Lice are tiny parasitic insects that come on the skin to feed on blood. The type of lice that we are most familiar with is the hair lice (kuto). How about bed lice? What are they called in tagalog; surot?

What happens to you if you have lice? Yes, intense itching. No one can stand this plague. Can anyone stand the itch? The intense itching was all over the body from the head to the sole of the feet. Lice covered the entire body. A day of this is torture enough. The Bible didn't say how many days the plague lasted.

I don't want to even imagine it. It will cause me anxiety and panic attack. It was an unbearable plague.

4. Flies Swarm into Houses

Ah, flies. The fourth plague affected only the lands of Egypt and not Goshen, where the Hebrews lived.

Exodus 8:22 " 'But on that day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that

I, the LORD, am in this land. 23 I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This sign will occur tomorrow.' ” 24 And the LORD did this. **Dense swarms of flies poured into** Pharaoh's palace and into the houses of his officials; **throughout Egypt the land was ruined by the flies.**

Flies – langaw! Sometimes, there is a langaw (buzzzzz) that flies around the house and over the dining table. OH, how irritable they are! Imagine a dense swarm of flies poured into the houses. Not one fly, but thousands of flies swarm into the homes. You'll may get a spat to kill them and they just kept coming. It can drive you insane.

It was described as the land was ruined. The Hebrew word for “ruined” is TISHAKHET. The word is progressive imperfect meaning the land is being ruined. The verse describes utter destruction. The flies brought havoc and despair in Egypt.

5. Disease on Livestock

The fifth plague sent a deadly disease through the livestock. It destroyed the livestock and flocks, but those of the Hebrews remained untouched.

Exodus 9:3 the hand of the LORD will bring a **terrible plague on your livestock in the field**—on your horses, donkeys and camels and on your cattle, sheep and goats. 4 But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will die.' ”

How many are pet lovers here? Do you have pet dogs or cats at home? They are just pets and not for livelihood. What if you have 3 pets and 2 died? That was what happened to the Egyptian livestock - massive death of horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep and goats. This was magnified by the financial loss.

Rubbing salt on injury was that none of the Hebrew livestock died. Piercing sadness and despondency was upon the Egyptians.

6. Boils on Everyone

Boils brought excruciating pain

Exodus 9:8 Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and have Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. 9 It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and **festering boils will break out on people** and animals throughout the land.”

What is a boil in tagalog, pigma! Have you experienced a pigma on your arm, feet, butt or under the armpit? The word “festering” was used to describe the boils. “Festering” means rotting, decaying and decomposing boils.

This is no longer itch, but both itch and pain. People had boils from head to toes. Some portion will be extremely itchy and other portion severely painful. I can see the Egyptians scrapping their body with a broken pottery to relieve the agony.

7. Hail Storm From Heaven

The 7th plague brought hail, grievous rain and thunder that killed people, animals and crops in the fields

In Exodus 9:18 Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the **worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt**, from the day it was founded till now. 19 Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every person and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die.’ ” 20 **Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD** hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. 21 But those who ignored the word of the LORD left their slaves and livestock in the field.

Exodus 9:23 When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. So the **LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt**; 24 hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. 25 Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields—**both people and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree**. 26 The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were.

Pharaoh said they had enough thunder and hail. What terror God sent on Egypt! The terrifying noise of the rain, thunder and hail beating the fields and roof tops, together with the shrieking of the livestock and screaming of men in the open field can drive anyone to madness. The mind cannot accept the fear and terror that had come upon the land.

8. Locusts Devour the Land

The locusts ate every green plants that were left by the hail storm.

Exodus 10:12 And the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over Egypt so that locusts swarm over the land and devour everything growing in the fields, everything left by the hail.” 13 So Moses stretched out his staff over Egypt, and the LORD made an east wind blow across the land all that day and all that night. By morning the wind had brought the locusts; 14 they invaded all Egypt and settled down in every area of the country in great numbers. Never before had there been such a plague of locusts, nor will there ever be again. 15 **They covered all the ground until it was black**. They devoured all that was left after the hail—

everything growing in the fields and the fruit on the trees. **Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt.**

During this three (3) weeks of lockdown period, there is still food security. People line-up for long hours at the grocers to buy food: meat, vegetables and basic necessities. The Egyptians, hopelessly saw the remaining vegetation left by the hail devoured by locusts.

The misery was multiplied by despair and desolation. I can't imagine how it felt. It is a psychological and emotional space that you don't want to be in.

9. Darkness Grips the Soul

Three days of absolute darkness.

Exodus 10:21 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness spreads over Egypt—**darkness that can be felt.**" 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. 23 No one could see anyone else or move about for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

Have you ever felt darkness? We know what darkness is but never felt it! This is the kind of darkness we have never experienced. A total, dense and absolutely darkness that can be felt!

When you stretch out your arm, you won't be able to see your hand. When you light a candle, the only thing you see is a flicker of light and everything else is pitch dark. When you switch on a flashlight, what you see is a just a spot of light at hits the wall. The light cannot penetrate the darkness.

Three (3) days of dense darkness. The feeling is as if you were blind for 3 days. The fright and dread gripped the soul – the inner being of the Egyptians.

10. Death of the First-Born

The final plague – death of the firstborn.

Exodus 11:5 Every **firstborn son in Egypt will die**, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the female slave, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. 6 There will be **loud wailing throughout Egypt**—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. 7 But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any person or animal.' Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

By this time, the Egyptians feared Moses. They had witnessed and experienced the power of the God of Israel. God delivered 100% on His words; 9 out of 9 plagues and their subsequent withdrawals.

Every Egyptian shivered in fear, especially those of the firstborn. I can only guess the stubbornness of Pharaoh's heart. He could very well be thinking about his firstborn son who sits on the throne.

Exodus 12:29 At midnight the **LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt**, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. 30 Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was **not a house without someone dead**.

Every house had at least one dead. Some house with multiple generations living together would have had several deaths. There was immense wailing in Egypt.

Exodus 12:31 During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. 32 Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me." 33 The Egyptians **urged the people to hurry and leave** the country. "For otherwise," they said, "**we will all die!**"

Fear, terror and dread fell upon Egypt and the Israelites were practically driven out by the Egyptians. Pharaoh was broken. In excruciating grief and loss he surrendered to let the Israelites go.

Egypt Ruined

Exodus 10:7 Pharaoh's officials said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the people go, so that they may worship the LORD their God. Do you not yet realize that **Egypt is ruined?**"

The might of Egypt was ruined by the series of plagues. The Nile River was the lifeline of ancient Egypt. The Nile River, the primary source of water and of aquatic life, was devastated. The livestock and vegetation destroyed. The wealth of Egypt wiped out. The firstborn and the host of Egyptian armies decimated. The chariots of Pharaoh, drowned in the sea.

Egypt was locked down for a few months. The Bible did not specify the exact period of the plagues. But, Exodus 9:31-32 seem to suggest a period of a few months within the grain harvest season. (The flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom. 32 The wheat and spelt, however, were not destroyed, because they ripen later.)

Egypt experienced a total collapse of her economy. Everything in Egypt was destroyed. Egypt never recovered from the devastation.

Summation

Covid-19 disease has disrupted our lives with strict quarantine lockdown in many cities across the world. The infectious rate and number of deaths have caused concern, anxiety and fear in our hearts. But, it is not without remedial measures. Personal hygiene and social distancing are weapons each person has the power to yield against the coronavirus.

Our experience with the Covid-19 virus provides us a lens to see the devastating plagues of Egypt with better perspective.

God protected His people from the terrifying plagues and diseases in Egypt. God will protect you from lesser and milder diseases; like Covid-19.

Deuteronomy 7:15 The LORD will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt.

Psalm 121

1 I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber; 4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD watches over you— the LORD is your shade at your right hand; 6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life; 8 the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.