

Fourth Plague - Swarms

By Mark E. Benjamin

Worshipping the Creator

Have you ever been to a Creation Festival? I've had the privilege to partake in about ten so far. If you haven't been to one, you need to try to get there. It is an experience you will not soon forget. For those that do not know what it is I will try my best to describe it. Although, it should be known that words cannot do it justice. I will also say that for some reason they have seemed to have changed over the last three decades. I do have a theory as to why that is that I will mention later.

First envision if you can, short rolling hills with mostly open fields covering them. Only a few groves of trees here and there and one large wooded area that covers the top of a bigger and steeper slope. At the bottom of this large slope is a enormous stage with two jumbo-trons and flanked by sound speakers about as tall as a four story building. In front of the stage is a vast open field with concession stands along the sides and back. During the day blankets and beach chairs so completely cover the field that none of the grass can be seen.

Further out from the stage area is a vast sea of tents. In the daytime a constant movement of people is throughout the entire area. At night the sound of acoustic guitars, singing, and laughter is heard. Cooking fires sprinkle the hills; and the smells of many kinds of food forever waft by. Giant icee drinks, sunburn, a sausage sandwich or two, your Bible, and more friends than you ever knew you had are the order of the next few days.

About 50 different musical bands, two dozen subject speakers, puppets, crafts, and around 75,000 people all come together for one purpose. That purpose is to learn about, enjoy the presence of, and to worship the creator God.

With the way the Creation Festival is set up it is not too difficult to imagine a similar scene about 3,500 years earlier. The Hebrew nation must have looked very much like this during the Exodus from Egypt. Their encampment would have been very similar; row after row of tents, hordes of people, cooking fires, song and dance; worshipping the creator of the universe. And in the middle of it all is the tabernacle of God –the focal point of their being there. Obviously there are some differences too. One of them would have been that the Hebrews outnumbered the Creation Festival participants by many times over. Another one would be that the Creation Festival only lasts five days and not forty years.

Storms That Come Our Way

Some time ago there was yet another similarity of the Creation Festival and the Hebrews led by Moses. During one of the times that my wife and I had our church youth group there, they stopped one of the performances to make an announcement. One that had never been made before or since. A huge and violent storm was fast approaching. Tornadoes had been reported to be accompanying the destructive tempest. We were told that it was up to us if we wanted to stay or head out to find better cover than our nylon tents could provide. Although at the time we could not see much – if any – signs of the danger; we were assured that it was real and that it was on its way.

Starting in **Exodus 8:21**, we can see an event like the one me and thousands of others were experiencing. The foretelling of a great and terrible storm was fast approaching. In Exodus it was not a storm of atmospheric origin but one of Spiritual. It did not contain rain and lightning. In Exodus its element was swarms, the sound of which must have been greater than any storm even witnessed. Although our tents would not give us much protection from the tempest; not even the strong stone and brick houses were going to save the Egyptians from what came their way. In both cases, God was doing something of the same thing – showing His awesome and mighty power.

As in **Exodus 8:22 (KJV)** **And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. 23 And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be.** God put a division between His people and those that were not His. Moses and the Hebrews saw surrounding them the plague of swarms and they saw that their own people did not fall prey to this plague. At the Creation Festival, we partook in nothing less than the same. For when the storm came down upon us, the miracle happened. The storm split in two and passed us on

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the north and south and came back together on the other side of us. Literally surrounded us on all sides, but those of us at the camp stayed safe. There was a division made between us and the storm. We were severed from the horror that came upon the rest of the area.

Several questions come to mind when you are part of something like this. First off, why would God do this? To make me and those with me safe from what all others were going through? Why did he make the Hebrews safe from the swarms of **Exodus 8:21**? There might be different answers to these questions. But one answer is paramount. ... **thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth.** To know He is LORD of all – what could be more important than that?

God's Word tells us that the swarms completely destroyed the Egyptian land. The word used is *Shachath*. It is the same word used in **Genesis 19:29 (KJV)** **And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain...** It is hard to fathom the truly intensity of this plague that **throughout Egypt the land was ruined** by this swam. By this, the Egyptians knew that He was LORD – but unfortunately for them, they were too stubborn and refused to listen and accept this fact. Whereas the Hebrews had a front row seat to the destruction and were spared the pain of it. Also through this, they too knew that God was in the midst of the earth... but they took it to heart.

Conclusions

With the storm that caused destruction at the Creation Festival, those of us that stood in the midst of it and were safe knew that the LORD was there with us. We knew that He put a separation between us and those that were not with us. I don't know if those that suffered the power of that storm stopped to think and to know that He is LORD, but I certainly hope that at least some of them did. I hope and pray that not all of them were stubborn like the Egyptians that went through all that and yet still refused to accept who God is. For whether or not you accept it, God is still God.

Destruction, troubles and all kinds of situations will come our way – for that is part of what life is made of. And when those troubles and hard times come our way, we will be in one of two groups – and we will have one of two conclusions. We do not have any control over which group we will be in, that is for God to decide. We do, however, have the ability to choose which conclusion we are going to have controlling us.

We will either be in the group that must weather the storm and face the destructive power; or be in the group that has been separated from it all, yet will still witness it completely. Certainly I am not saying that if you find yourself in the midst of the troubles, that you are not “one of God's people” – not in the least. Just look at the previous three plagues of Egypt – the Hebrews suffered each of them along with those that were not God's own. So do not be disheartened when these storms come upon you; this is not what determines if you are or are not one of God's people. Likewise, the opposite is also true. It doesn't mean that those that are spared from the troubles of others are one of His chosen ones. For ...**He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Mat 5:45)** When storms come, it is not which group you are a part of that matters. It is what conclusion you will make from what others are going through or going through yourself.

In this, I hope that you will only ever find yourself with one of the two conclusions of the situation. I hope that you do not act as the Egyptians did; with eyes too blind to see what needed to be seen and hearts that were too hard to feel what needed to be felt. Like with the Creation Festival seeming to be different now than it was back in 1983 when I went to my first one; I think it is my conclusion of the event that has changed and not the event itself. Back in the early years I was too hard hearted to have the proper conclusion. I was too much like the Egyptians.

When situation come your way, I hope and pray that you conclude as the Hebrews did...

And know that He is LORD!