

Exodus 9:13-35 | Then the Lord said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. ¹⁴ For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. ¹⁵ For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. ¹⁶ But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. ¹⁷ You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go. ¹⁸ Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. ¹⁹ Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them.” ’ ’” ²⁰ Then whoever feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, ²¹ but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the Lord left his slaves and his livestock in the field. ²² Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man and beast and every plant of the field, in the land of Egypt.” ²³ Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. ²⁴ There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵ The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field. ²⁶ Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail. ²⁷ Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, “This time I have sinned; the Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸ Plead with the Lord, for there has been enough of God’s thunder and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.” ²⁹ Moses said to him, “As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the Lord. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the Lord’s. ³⁰ But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God.” ³¹ (The flax and the barley were struck down, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. ³² But the wheat and the emmer were not struck down, for they are late in coming up.) ³³ So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and stretched out his hands to the Lord, and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured upon the earth. ³⁴ But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. ³⁵ So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people of Israel go, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses.

Exodus 9.13-35 | Hail

The 7th plague is a plague of Hail. The drama is building and the reluctance of Pharaoh to free the Israelites is looking more and more absurd. There seems to be no depth to which he will not go in order to maintain his control over the people of Israel.

1. Warning & Plague

As with the beginning of the first two cycles Moses is instructed to meet Pharaoh in the morning, and warn him that the God of the Hebrews commands him to let his people go that they may serve him. But in this warning to Pharaoh God explains what he will do, what he could have done, and why he is doing all of this to Pharaoh. And even gives the Egyptians an opportunity to avoid the consequences of the plague if they would only heed his warning.

Exodus 9:14 | For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.

The warning is stark the Lord says he will send all his plagues onto Pharaoh. That means there will be a total consequence of these coming plagues. **God explains why**, so that Pharaoh will know that there is no one like God in all the earth. God is showing that he is singular. This is one of the basic truths that the Israelites understood about their God, Hear oh Israel the Lord your God the Lord is one. His being one is a monotheistic claim but of course what does that mean? It means there is no one like God, he is the only one worthy of the title god. All other beings, all else in creation, is under him as the one God. Now this is always a radical claim because it always means and especially means to Pharaoh, you are not God. God likewise explains what he could have done.

Exodus 9:15 | For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth.

See how the patience of the Lord is shown. Consider Pharaoh's first plague.

Exodus 9:16-17 | But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. ¹⁷ You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go.

Pharaoh is exalting himself against the Lord's people. But God explains that he is the one who has raised Pharaoh up and this is the purpose. So that the Lord's name would be known. God says, he could have destroyed Pharaoh and he would have been unknown. But here he makes plain, all of Pharaoh's resistance is only for this end, that the name of the Lord will be worshipped in all the earth. We are as weird of a place imaginable to be worshipping the name of the Lord for the Exodus. But here we are. The Lord describes that the hail is coming. But then gives another gracious warning, one which by his mercy will begin to tear apart Egypt at its seams.

Exodus 9:19 | Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them." ' "

The Lord tells him once again to send, this time totally in Pharaoh's self interest. But Pharaoh still refuses. However many among the Egyptians heed the word of the Lord and bring in their people and their livestock so that they might be protected from the hail. It was a sign that said clearly, our allegiance is not to Pharaoh but to the Lord.

2. The Plague

Exodus 9:23-24 ... the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. ²⁴ There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

Egypt was one of the first united kingdoms in the ancient near east, and had been a united nation for 1800 years at this point. Never in all that time had anything like this been seen. The scriptures describe a total destruction of whatever was in the field, all the crops, the trees the livestock and people that were exposed to the hail were destroyed. The ancients described the waters above and the waters below and between was the firmament. One way to think of the hail is a shattering of the firmament, the heavens are crashing into the earth. Another aspect worth noting is the adjective very heavy used to describe the plague, it is the same word used to describe the hardness of Pharaoh's heart. The plague is proportional.

Pharaoh does not summon his magicians, they do not replicate the plague, and he does not send to see how Goshen fared. Instead Pharaoh turns to Moses and Aaron to make it stop, and this time it is not tomorrow.

3. False Repentance

Exodus 9:27-28 | Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, "This time I have sinned; the Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸ Plead with the Lord, for there has been enough of God's thunder and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer."

Doesn't it sound like we got him? I mean those seem like perfect words to use. The Lord is righteous me and my people have sinned. Plead with the Lord. Look more closely and you'll see the qualifications. "This time" you see Pharaoh limits his repentance. He sees this time as one time in which he was wrong, but none of the other times. He might say I have lost this battle but the war will still be mine. And then another aspect which is a bit more opaque is that rather than, you shall no longer stay, he is saying you shall no longer stand. As in they shall no longer stand in his presence. But it is Pharaoh who will no longer stand, it is Pharaoh's magicians who could not stand in the presence of Moses and Aaron. Paul warns Timothy against this type of repentance. He describes them:

2 Timothy 3:5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.
Avoid such people.

There is a way of making a mere appearance of godliness but ultimately being in denial of the power of God. This must be the case because if you consider that you can outwit God and deceive him the way you might deceive another you are obviously denying the power of God. Paul as always is practical and pastoral in this particular warning.

2 Timothy 3:6–7 | For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

It think these are so relevant together, because you can see the necessity of their creeping into households to capture weak women by their lies and deception, they are feigning an appearance of godliness but at its core there is a fundamental denial of God's reality and power. That is why they must be ever learning but never arriving at a knowledge of the truth. To finally arrive is to admit that God is God, he is the truth and therefore you are not in control of the truth. And this last connection is direct.

2 Timothy 3:8–9 | Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

Jannes and Jambres were the names given to pharaoh's magicians who opposed Moses. But there is a hope, you see this practice buys a little time, as even here it buys a little time from Moses when Pharaoh offers his false repentance. But it will not get them very far. And Moses sees right through it.

Exodus 9:29-30 | Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the Lord. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the Lord's. ³⁰ But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God."

Moses is not fooled, and he is not fooled for a very practical reason that the text explains in a parentheses.

Exodus 9:31-32 | (The flax and the barley were struck down, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. ³² But the wheat and the emmer were not struck down, for they are late in coming up.)

As long as Pharaoh thought there was not total destruction, he would resist the Lord. This will not get him far. The truth is there is one God. Over all. There is no rescue from him only in him.