

## Exodus 9 - Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008

- Four plagues have come upon Egypt now, and Pharaoh has continued to harden his heart against the Lord and not let His people go!
- In so doing, Pharaoh has brought unspeakable horror and suffering upon himself and the Egyptians, and it's about to get even worse.
- We now begin chapter nine with the fifth plague, and it's hard to imagine, but the effects of the first four plagues are still being felt.

**9:1** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me.<sup>2</sup> For if you refuse to let them go, and still hold them,<sup>3</sup> behold, the hand of the LORD will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep -- a very severe pestilence. <sup>4</sup> And the LORD will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel.'"<sup>5</sup> Then the LORD appointed a set time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land."

- Here again, God in His mercy is giving Pharaoh this unearned warning and in His grace is even giving him an undeserved chance.
- Again, we would be grossly remiss were we not to keep in mind that these plagues have a compounding effect, one on top of the other.
- Be that as it may, Pharaoh won't obey God, and will once again harden his heart towards God, as we'll see in the next two verses.

- At first read we could miss a detail that's given to us with regards to this plague. It says that this plague came upon the ones in the field.
- The reason this is important is because livestock is mentioned again, which would mean that those not in the field must have survived.
- It's also important to note that this particular plague was directed at their many gods who were supposed to protect their livestock.

- The Egyptian's livestock could be likened unto our stock market. The decimating effect of this plague would be like the market crashing.
- You would think that at this point they would wake up and smell the humus realizing that they can no longer put their hope in their gods.

**6** So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died.<sup>7</sup> Then Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go.

- Once again we have no recorded response from Pharaoh to this warning from God. We're only told that his heart became hard.
- Notice also, that nothing happens to the livestock of the Israelites. Not even one of them is dead, only ones belonging to Egyptians.
- I wonder what the Israelite's are thinking about now. They must know that they're getting out, especially when God is protecting them.

- As with the previous plagues, God brings this upon another one of their Egyptian god's, "Hathor." You might say they had sacred cows.
- Hathor was thought to be a mother goddess in the form of a cow, and was considered to be another symbol of fertility and prosperity.
- God is showing Pharaoh and all of Egypt, that He alone is God, and there is no other. Cows are not holy, and they are not gods.

**8** So the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh.<sup>9</sup> And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt."<sup>10</sup> Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered them toward heaven. And they caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast.

- Again, this is the second set of three plagues, which means that as the third plague, there is no warning as there was with the last two.
- We're told that the boils and sores came upon both man and whatever livestock remains from the ashes that were scattered.
- Notice that these ashes come from a furnace. Some scholars believe this was the actual furnace Egypt used for human sacrifices.

- It's believed this furnace was the god Typhoon where humans were sacrificed in order to keep boils and sores away from the people.

**11** And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians.<sup>12</sup> But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

- It's interesting to note that we're told how these boils came upon the Pharaoh's magicians and on all the Egyptians as well.
- Perhaps this plague was for them to know that the God of the Hebrew slaves is more powerful than the magician's medicine god.

- One thought is that this plague was probably directed against the Egyptian god "Imhotep," who was believed to be the god of medicine.

**13** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me,<sup>14</sup> for at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that there is none like Me in all the earth.<sup>15</sup> Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth.<sup>16</sup> But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.<sup>17</sup> As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go.<sup>18</sup> Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now.

- Moses now warns Pharaoh about the next plague of hailstones raining down on Egypt, the likes of which have never been seen before.
- It's interesting to note that there's something different about this warning. God tells Pharaoh that He's showing him His power.
- God is saying that He didn't really have to do it this way, and if it weren't for showing Pharaoh His power, He would have just ended it!

One commentator said it this way: "God goes so far as to demonstrate to Pharaoh that even his resistance is being used for God's glory; that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. If Pharaoh thinks he is accomplishing anything with his resistance against God, he is dead wrong; all his stubborn rebellion will merely glorify the Lord more in the end."

19 Therefore send now and gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is found in the field and is not brought home; and they shall die." 20 He who feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. 21 But he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.

- Something else makes this warning different than the previous ones. God gives the time of the plague and what can be done about it.
- Notice that those who "feared the Word of the Lord," gathered their livestock to protect them, but not those disregarding God's Word.

**Proverbs 9:10** "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. NIV

**Proverbs 22:3** A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it. NIV

- It's also interesting to note that some of the Egyptians were also among the ones who feared the Word of the Lord and were saved.
- Some believe that these are the same ones that made the exodus out of Egypt with the Israelites. They're called the "mixed multitudes."

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt -- on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." 23 And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.

- Notice that this plague of hail rains down on Egypt from heaven along with thunder, and it's even mingled with fire. These are fireballs.
- Also, they're not just coming down or even raining down, these fireballs are darting down to the ground much like missiles and bombs.

"It is a judgment indeed when the fountains of blessing become the channels of wrath, and the very rain is fire. Let the enemies of god beware."

Charles Spurgeon

- How terrifying is this? This is likely a "fire and brimstone," type of judgment coming down from God and directed at their sky goddess.

One thought is that Neith, this sky goddess, is among the oldest gods of Egypt, her veneration goes back to prehistoric times. The oldest portrayal in a sacred shrine of any god, represents her. Through Egyptian history, she would pass through many stages, having her powers redefined several times. She would, however, at all times be thought of as "Neith, the Great".

27 And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time. The LORD is righteous, and my people and I are wicked. 28 Entreat the LORD, that there may be no more mighty thundering and hail, for it is enough. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer."

- Pharaoh himself must have been terrified by all of this. It's evidenced by him calling Moses and telling him; "I have sinned this time."
- He sounds very sincere saying that he and his people are wicked and that the Lord is righteous and even asking for prayer.

One commentary said it best this way: "Pharaoh's words of repentance sound picture perfect; but this repentance hasn't worked its way into his heart. Pharaoh is grieved at the consequences of sin, but not the sin itself."

- Be that as it may, Moses is able to discern that Pharaoh won't actually let them go, as well see in the next couple of verses.
- This brings up an interesting question; how did Moses know that he had not really repented?
- Because God had told him in chapter 4:22-23 that He would "touch Pharaoh's firstborn," and that had not yet happened.

29 So Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth is the LORD's. 30 But as for you and your servants, I know that you will not yet fear the LORD God." 31 Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was in the head and the flax was in bud. 32 But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they are late crops.

- Moses tells Pharaoh that he will stretch out his hands to the Lord and the thunder will cease, but that he will not fear the LORD God.
- We're given an interesting detail about the barley and wheat that had not yet budded were not destroyed for when the locusts come.
- It's important to understand that these plagues take place over a period of time. Some believe it's about nine months to maybe a year.

33 So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and spread out his hands to the LORD; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth.34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants.35 So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

- Moses does what he told Pharaoh he would do, and the thunder and hail stop raining down upon the earth. There you go Pharaoh.
- When Pharaoh sees that the rain, hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned yet more, hardened his heart and wouldn't let them go.

Lessons I can learn from Exodus chapter nine:

1. Like with the Egyptians putting hope in their gods to protect their wealth, we too will experience the devastation when we lose it all.

**Proverbs 23:4-5** 4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. 5 Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle. NIV

2. Like with the Egyptian false gods not being able to stand, so too will none of our man made gods stand on that great and final day.

3. Like with Pharaoh, even as the most powerful man in the world, he becomes an example of what happens when we rebel against God.

4. Like with Egypt oppressing instead of blessing Israel, any nation that comes against Israel will have God come against them.

**Genesis 12:1-3** 1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." NIV

5. Like with God defending and delivering Israel as His people, so too will the Lord defend and deliver us when the world is against us.

6. Like with the pestilence of diseases coming upon the Egyptians; sometimes God will show us that He's God not modern medicine.

7. Like with God telling Pharaoh why He was bringing the plagues on Egypt, so too the Lord will choose a way that brings Him glory.

8. Like with those who feared the Lord escaping the judgment, so too will we escape unspeakable horror when we fear the Lord.

9. Like with Pharaoh admitting that he had sinned this time, we also can admit its sin without it being a sincere and true repentance.

**2 Corinthians 7:10** Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. NIV

10. Like with Moses knowing Pharaoh's confession was disingenuous; the Lord may give us a "word of knowledge" that's yet future.

11. Like with the plagues taking place over as long as a year, we also may experience difficulties for an elongated period of time.