

Death, Disease, Destruction
Exodus 9:1-35

September 12, 2021

HDBC

Exodus, the second book of the Bible, is named for the dominant event it describes; the **Exodus** of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. Through a series of ten supernatural acts, God broke the pride of Pharaoh & delivered his people.

We've looked at the first four. They were made the people uncomfortable, but were not deadly. This morning we'll examine three more, involving death, disease and destruction. First, some big picture reminders.

- 1) The **practical purpose** was to deliver the Hebrews from Pharaoh's grip.
- 2) The **theological purpose** was to show the power of the one true God.
- 3) The **historical purpose** was to leave a legacy for all generations to know.

1. Description of the plagues

1) Death of livestock (1-7)

God brought a disease to the livestock, quickly spreading through all the herds until the text says ***all the livestock of Egypt died***. That was a big time blow to their present situation and would impact their future.. Those animals not only were a source of labor but of milk, meat and money.

Note a couple of things. This disease did not affect the livestock belonging to the Hebrews. Once again, God made a distinction and protected His people. **Second**, the use of the phrase *all the livestock* is interesting. In later plagues livestock will be mentioned and impacted.

So, clearly not **all** the livestock were killed. How do we reconcile this? Note carefully the phrase in verse 3, *your livestock that are in the field*. Not all animals were killed. Only those out in the field at that time.

Imagine the scenes all over Egypt. As men scanned the fields around their homes, rather than seeing the movement of livestock grazing in the grass, they saw nothing. Eerie silence where there was once the sounds of animal life. Upon further examination they would find the carcasses of

dead animals all over the land. This plague would have long-lasting effects, as would most of the plagues going forward. Getting serious.

2) Boils on skin (8-12)

Moses threw soot from a kiln into the air and it led to boils breaking out on the skin of people and animals. Very possible that Pharaoh was the first to experience this since he was in the presence of Moses when it started.

The text uses the words **boils** and **sores**. The language describes these as **inflamed eruptions, breaking forth into skin pustules**. In other words, they were deep ulcers that broke open with pus that ran on the skin. They were painful, debilitating and unattractive. The text makes a point of indicating that the magicians also suffered these sores.

I had one when I was a sophomore. So painful that I tried to prop my leg up when I sat. Slightest touch was extremely painful. The core finally came out & I got relief. Lasted for weeks & left a scar that lasted years.

These sores were found on people and animals. Imagine the pain each person experienced. Imagine the sounds of the animals in pain, as well.

This was an attack on their health and comfort. They were not going to die from this, but life was going to get awfully uncomfortable. They were still dealing with the loss of livestock, probably trying to dispose of the dead carcasses, when they were suddenly hit with this.

3) Hailstones (13-35)

More space given to this one to any that preceded it. No need to go into too much detail. You get it. You know what hail can do, especially when it is large. We know. We've had it here in Jonesboro. Damages plants, animals, houses. This would be catastrophic for everything hit by the hail. People, animals, plants.

But it was not just hail. It was thunder and lightning. This was a catastrophic weather event. Note the phrase in verse 23 **the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt**. Describes a downpour or deluge.

Wow! They've moved from frogs and insects to death, disease and destruction. So, let me offer some observations about these three.

2. Observations from the plagues

1) They were progressive in their scope

Animals impacted	Death
Animals and people impacted	Boils
Animals, people and plants	Hail

2) They were progressive in their intensity

First would take their **possessions**.

Second would take their **health**.

Third could take their **lives**.

This thing was moving toward a conclusion.

3) They were instructive in understanding grace

It is interesting to note the different ways that grace was offered during these three plagues. Grace is found in this chapter, but **it's application is different with each plague**. Let me show you what I mean.

Death on livestock. There was the opportunity to avoid it. Pharaoh was once more confronted with a decision. Just do the right thing and all will be good. If Pharaoh simply said yes to God and let the people go, this plague would be completely avoided.

Complete grace, but was dependent upon obedience.

Boils. No conversation with Pharaoh. **No grace is offered.** This act of judgment was going to happen. This reminds me of the truth that one day judgement will fall on all unbelievers and the day of grace will be gone. Grace is free but not offered forever. **Grace comes with an expiration date.** There will come a time when grace is no longer available, only judgment. I think of words like, *depart from me, I never knew you*. That day is coming for some. They will hear words like that, and no grace will be available . . . then. But it is now!

Hailstorm. Limited grace. You can be somewhat protected. Judgment is coming, but I'm telling you **when it will come and what to do to avoid it**. Get inside and get your animals inside. Some protection. You could save your life and the lives of your animals, but there was nothing you could do about the crops or the trees or the buildings. There is some grace, but there is also some judgment.

What are we to make of that? Grace is never to be taken for granted. It is a gift that when offered, should be received, for it may not be offered again. **It's not like TV streaming service where you can get it on demand.** God's grace is offered on His terms, not ours. You can't put it in your pocket and decide to use it whenever you want. It remains in the hands of God, offered to sinners on His terms, not ours.

3. Things to learn from these plagues (applications)

1) Your present lifestyle is not guaranteed

The first plague was an attack on their status quo. We often have a false belief that the way things are is the way they will always be. We tend to assume that as things were yesterday, and today, so they will be tomorrow. This first plague is a stark reminder that this is not always true. Our present situation can be suddenly transformed in a very negative way. You may think things will rock along just as they are, but that is not always the case. The Egyptians learned this lesson.

2) Your personal comfort is not assured

They had been inconvenienced by the water to blood, the frogs and insects. They were economically devastated by the death of livestock. But the boils attacked **their personal comfort**. There was no way to get comfortable with those skin sores. Imagine them all over your body. **Under your arms, behind your knees, on your hands, bottoms of your feet.** It would have been impossible to get comfortable.

3) Your future security is fragile

The hailstorm impacted their longterm future. When the destruction of homes, trees, shrubs, and most importantly the crops, their future was in jeopardy. There would be no crop to harvest, no grain to sustain them. On top of the loss of livestock, suddenly the future looked bleak.

If you are trusting anything or anyone but God for your future, then your trust is in something very fragile.

In his book *Exodus and Revolution*, Michael Walzer shares three lessons we can all learn from the Exodus event of the Old Testament:

First, that wherever you live, it is probably Egypt.

Second, that there is a better place, a world more attractive, a promised land.

Third, that the way to the land is through the wilderness.

In big-picture terms he's absolutely right.

Wherever you are, is probably Egypt. We all live in a fallen, broken world where we fall under the oppressive and enslaving nature of sin and suffering.

There is a better place. Absolutely! Heaven. No doubt about it. We will only be there when we leave here.

The way to that land is through the wilderness. Along the way there will be bumps and bruises, setbacks and difficulties. We will not always make great choices and sometimes we will grieve the one who delivered us. But by His grace, He will indeed one day bring us into the promised land.

I can't disagree with him. But I'd like to offer my own additions to his thoughts.

- 1) We may be in Egypt, but this is not where we belong.
- 2) We may be helpless to escape, but we are not hopeless.
- 3) We may be unsure of the journey but we are certain of the destination.

All those are true because **we have a redeemer who will not leave us in Egypt.** He enables all who are willing to trust in Jesus to be delivered from the bondage of this world and to be brought to the freedom and blessing of Heaven.