

Exodus
April 29, 2007
Chapter 9

I. Plague #5: Death of Livestock

Ex 9:1-7

9:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: "Let my people go, so that they may worship me." 2 If you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them back, 3 the hand of the LORD will bring a terrible plague on your livestock in the field — on your horses and donkeys and camels and on your cattle and 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.'"

5 The LORD set a time and said, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this in the land." 6 And the next day the LORD did it: All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one animal belonging to the Israelites died. 7 Pharaoh sent men to investigate and found that not even one of the animals of the Israelites had died. Yet his heart was unyielding and he would not let the people go. NIV

- Verse 3 The Apis bull was considered as sacred to the god Ptah. Four different Delta provinces had a bull or cow as its symbol. A bull necropolis was found near Memphis. Hathor, the goddess of beauty and the like, was represented as a woman with cow horns.
- Verse 4 The word used for “distinction” in this verse means difference and is not the same word as in Ex. 8:23.
- Verse 5 Pharaoh had specified when an earlier plague would end. Like that one, the one before this one ended “tomorrow.” Yet, he continues to renege. Now, God sets the same time frame of tomorrow for the next plague.
- Verse 6 The Hebrew word translated “*kol*” here can be translated “all kinds of” or “from all places” or “all over the place.” Clearly as later portions of Exodus tell us, there were many Egyptian animals that survive, not just the Hebrew ones.

II. Plague #6: Boils

Ex 9:8-12

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 men and animals throughout the land."

10 So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh. Moses tossed it into the air, and festering boils broke out on men and animals. 11 The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians. 12 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said to Moses. NIV

- Verse 8 For the first time words are not used to herald the plague, but only a demonstration is to be given.
- Verse 10 Some people think that the fifth and sixth plagues were a result of anthrax. If so, it was still a miracle from God given the timing and the proclamation that it is from God. The theory goes that anthrax was growing in the dead fish from the Nile; it spread to the frogs that took it with them in the second plague and then died from it.
- Verse 10 The disease is not identified that caused the boils. It might be an existing disease or one specially created for this situation.
- Verse 11 Rather ironic, the magicians cannot stand before Moses because they have been affected.

III. A Warning + Plague #7: Hailstorm

Ex 9:13-19

13 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, 14 or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. 15 For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. 16 But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. 17 You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go. 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 man and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die.'" NIV

- Verse 18 This plague is the first one in which the death of men are included. Indirectly the earlier ones might also have caused death, but if so, the text does not state it.
- Verse 18 This is the longest of the plague narratives, especially when the warnings from God that immediately precede this verse and when the response of the officials to it is included.

Verse 19 This is the only plague where the LORD identifies precautions that can be taken by the Egyptians. Strangely, Pharaoh is willing to allow the warning to be given.

IV. Response by the Officials

Ex 9:20-26

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.

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt — on men and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt." **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 men 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.

NIV

Verse 20 Interestingly, they feared the “word of the Lord” but apparently not the Lord. In other words, this was not a true belief, but rather fear prompted by the earlier plagues. One might wonder how Pharaoh felt about people following Moses’ warning, especially since they explicitly indicated that they did not feel that Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt could protect them.

Verse 21 While some did heed the warning, some did not showing that all in Egypt did not yet have the message.

Verse 25 The verse orders the importance of those destroyed. Men were the most important, animals were next, and plants were last.

V. More Negotiations, Broken Promises, and Heart Hardening

Ex 9:27-36

27 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he said to them. "The LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. **28** Pray to the LORD, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don't have to stay any longer."

29 Moses replied, "When I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to the LORD. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may know that the earth is the LORD's. **30** But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the LORD God."

31(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.)

33 Then Moses left Pharaoh and went out of the city. He spread out his hands toward the LORD; the thunder and hail stopped, and the rain no longer poured down on the land. 34 When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. 35 So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses. NIV

- Verse 27 At first glance, it appears that Pharaoh is giving up.
- Verse 27 Does anyone think that Pharaoh was repentant of his sin? Why does He say this?
- Verse 28 What Pharaoh wants is for the hail to stop. At this point, he would do or agree to anything to get it to stop.
- Verse 29 The killer storm is still raging; hail is everywhere. Yet, Moses can come and go at will without fear of any of it. Do you think that Pharaoh noticed?
- Verse 30 Pharaoh's demeanor does not fool the LORD and Moses. Yet they follow through by stopping the hail. Why?
- Verse 30 Do you think that Pharaoh has had sufficient warnings?
- Verse 31 Flax and barley are harvested in Egypt in February/March. Wheat and spelt were ready a month later and was probably too small to be destroyed.
- Verse 32 Spelt was an inferior kind of wheat, planted as an after crop.
- Verse 34 Why do you think that Pharaoh is willing to sin again? Are we ever like Pharaoh? Do we have sin in our life that we obstinately keep despite the ills that it offers us?
- Verse 34 For the first time, we see the hearts of the officials being hardened. Why is this important?

Pharaoh and the Egyptians refuse to follow God despite the horrible punishment that they are receiving.

Will the Israelites follow God voluntarily? When the plagues are done, they will have no choice but to leave. We are still building up to that point.

By now, we are wearied by simply reading of the plagues. What would it have been like to live through them?