

Message #15

Exodus 9:1-35

In the book of Joshua, when the two spies went to Jericho and hid in the harlot Rahab's house, she said to them: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt..." (Joshua 2:9-10). Then she went on to say, "...for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath" (Joshua 2:11). What Rahab's statement tells us is that people all over the world came to realize that there is only one God of the heavens and earth and this God was Israel's God. What caused people to realize this was the plagues found in the book of Exodus.

When we go through the book of Exodus, we discover God had some very specific reasons for these sign/miracle/plague judgments:

(Reason #1) - God wanted to multiply His signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. 7:3

The things God did in Egypt pointed to Him and should cause people to stand in awe of Him.

(Reason #2) - God performed these things to force the Egyptians to let the Israelites go. 7:4

This was God's will and it would end up happening. These plagues would break these people.

(Reason #3) - God wanted the Egyptians and the world to know He is the sovereign I AM LORD. 7:5, 17

God is the self-existing God who can do what He wants and has a covenant connection to Israel.

(Reason #4) - God wanted the Egyptians and the world to know there is no God like Him. 8:10; **9:14**

No created being can do what God does in these sign/miracle/plagues. They cannot be duplicated.

(Reason #5) - God performed these things so that His name would be proclaimed throughout all the earth. **9:16**

Even the most godless people in the world have heard of these Egyptian plagues.

(Reason #6) - God performed these things so God's own people would tell the future generations about His great sovereign power. 10:1-2

It is the responsibility of God's own people to pass on truth about the sovereignty of God. He can harden a heart or He can soften a heart. He is the Sovereign God.

Now somehow in this politically correct world of ours, everyone wants to talk about a lovey-dovey God who would never do anything negative to anyone. Obviously such a belief is not Biblical and it does not come from the book of Exodus.

We are in the section of Exodus where God is doing many negative things. He is actually hardening Pharaoh's heart so that He may display just how powerful and sovereign a God He actually is. He is performing His sign/miracle/plague judgments so that all people will come to understand that there is only one true sovereign God. He has a judgment side, a wrath side, and wise are people who want to be on His good side and not His bad side. God's sovereign will, will be done. His goal was to bring Israel out of Egypt and no satanic force or political or military force could stop Him. His will, will be done.

We may remember that starting with the insect plague (8:21-22), a unique feature is that God only sovereignly targets the Egyptians and keeps His own people immune from the plague (9:4). **God does not treat all people equally.** Those who obey God will be treated differently by God than those who don't. Those who are in God's family will be treated differently by God than those who aren't. This is not only true in this life, but certain in eternity.

SIGN MIRACLE #6 – God causes the Egyptian cattle to die by pestilence. **9:1-7**
(**PLAGUE #5**)

In **verses 1-5**, God tells Moses to go to Pharaoh and warn him that if he does not let His people go, He will send a pestilence on the Egyptian livestock. This will include their horses, donkeys, camels, herds, and flocks. He also is to tell him that the Israelite animals will not be touched at all.

Now the words “very severe pestilence” in **verse 3** literally in Hebrew means “terrible plague.” The adjective “severe” refers to something that is very strong and very heavy in magnitude. This word refers to something that is at an abundant and enormous level (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 381). The word “pestilence” is a Hebrew word that has to do with a plague that features terrible destruction and death (*Ibid.*, p. 188).

We don't know exactly what this plague was, but it would kill an animal faster than some chronic waste disease or equine encephalitis. I find it intriguing that one of the main diseases that kills horses today is actually named “the West Nile virus.” Whatever this pestilence was, it would kill all Egyptian livestock that lived in the Nile region.

Now one thing Moses was specifically told to add to this warning in **verse 3** is that this enormous death plague will come directly upon you by “the hand of the LORD.” None of the previous plagues were announced as plagues by the hand of the LORD, but this one was.

Prior to this the magicians said that the insect plague was the “finger of God” (8:19), but in this plague God Himself says this will be by My hand. **God specifically wanted Pharaoh to understand that this death plague was coming directly from Him. God wanted all to know the death penalty comes directly from Me.**

Now domesticated animals like horses, donkeys, camels, and herds of flocks were more than just pets in Biblical times. We all treasure our pets, but they treasured their animals even more and depended on them. They were valuable assets. Most of our pets are welfare cases in that they don't work or do much of anything except to bring us happiness. This was not that way in Biblical times.

Prior to the invention of farming equipment, animals were the machines that enabled people to plant and harvest crops. They were means of travel; they were means of clothing and food. Furthermore, the Egyptians actually worshipped some of these animals.

Now in **verse 5** God tells Pharaoh that if he does not let His people go, He will kill these animals tomorrow. This is interesting because when a person is right with God, Jesus taught we don't have to worry about tomorrow (Matt. 6:34). But if a person is not right with God, one had better worry about tomorrow. If a person is not right with God, one better worry about the next hour because you may not be around to even see tomorrow.

Now obviously Pharaoh did not listen to Moses. This shows you how arrogant a man he was. He did not care if all the Egyptian animals were dead; he was not about to submit to the Word of God or will of God.

According to **verse 6**, the next day God killed all of the Egyptian animals and not one of the Israelite animals died. According to **verse 7**, Pharaoh sent investigators out to check up on this. He sent several Egyptian people into the land to see what had happened, and he discovered that not even one of the livestock of Israel died. All of the Egyptian animals died, but not one of the Israelite animals died.

This would have constituted a major economic disaster, and this would have also been a threat against the support of the Egyptian people. His arrogant rebellion had not only cost him, but it cost the people of his kingdom. One political leader in rebellion against God does affect the entire nation. One political leader who is righteous before God also does the same.

But notice the end of **verse 7**, "But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened." The Hebrew does not indicate here whether Pharaoh is hardening his own heart or whether God is hardening his heart. Probably it is a combination of both. The text simply says "his heart was hardened."

Now again we learn something about how to recognize a heart God has hardened. A hardened heart does not think or react in rational, logical ways. A hardened heart is a heart that thinks and acts in ways that are illogical. The logical thing to do when you have just seen this plague would be to say - we need to let these people go. But a hardened heart does not think rationally or logically.

SIGN MIRACLE #7 – God causes boils to break out on Egyptian people and beasts.
9:8-12 (PLAGUE #6)

Now Pharaoh is not warned about this plague. Just like plague #3 (insects); God is just going to do this without any warning.

In **plague 1**, blood water killed fish, and we may assume there was a large number of rotting fish along the banks of the river. In **plague 2**, dead frogs and the bacteria from a huge number of frogs would have also rotted in the sun. **Plagues 3-4** feature gnats and flies that have swarmed the land having been on rotted carcasses of fish and frogs. Then in **plague 5** you have all of these dead animals in the Egyptian world. Just think for a moment of the stench and the disease this all caused.

This sixth plague is another miraculous and amazing plague. **God once again is going to transform one substance into another substance.**

In **verses 8-9**, God tells Moses to take handfuls of soot taken from a furnace and throw it into the air in the sight of Pharaoh; and God will turn that into fine dust that will spread out through all the land of Egypt, and cause boils to break out on both humans and animals. This would totally humiliate the Egyptians who were known for their cleanliness and bathing.

Now the “beasts” refer to any animal that wasn’t killed in the previous plague. This can refer to a couple of things. Undoubtedly many Egyptians went to the Hebrews and purchased some of their animals, which would explain why they had more. Also, this is a different Hebrew word than “livestock” in **verse 3**. This would include the wild beasts such as lions, alligators, hippopotamus (*Ibid.*, p. 105).

According to **verse 10**, both Aaron and Moses stood before Pharaoh; and Moses threw the ashes toward the sky, and immediately boils broke out on man and beast. Apparently these boils were so numerous and painful that the magicians could not even walk to where Moses was and stand before him (**verse 11**).

Now in **verse 12**, it is flat out stated that the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart so that he would not listen to Moses. Every human would be wise to pray to God and ask that He never harden your heart so you would not listen to the Word of God. Because God can and will do this.

SIGN MIRACLE #8 – God sends hail against every one and thing in Egypt. **9:13-35**
(**PLAGUE #7**)

Now before God sends this plague against Egypt, He wants Moses to give nine messages to Pharaoh:

Message #1 - He was to tell Pharaoh that He was the God of the Hebrews . **9:13a**

Message #2 - He was to tell Pharaoh that he must let His people go to serve Him. **9:13b**

Message #3 - He was to tell Pharaoh that God would send all remaining plagues on him and his people. **9:14** The result is Pharaoh will know there is no one like God in all the earth.

Message #4 - He was to tell Pharaoh that if God would have struck you with pestilence, you and all of the Egyptians would be dead and cut off from the earth. **9:15**

Message #5 - He was to tell Pharaoh that the only reason God has permitted them to live was because He wants to show His power and He wants His name proclaimed in all the earth. **9:16**

Message #6 - He was to tell Pharaoh that he still exalts himself against His people by not letting them go. **9:17**

Carefully observe from **verses 14-16** that three times it is stated God is the God of the earth or whole world. This is something God wants people to understand. There is only one God of the entire universe and it is the God of the nation Israel and it is the God of the Bible.

Message #7 - He was to tell Pharaoh that tomorrow God was going to send a ferocious hailstorm on the entire Egyptian world. **9:18**

Message #8 - He was to tell Pharaoh that any livestock which they may have purchased from the Israelites, any man or beast that is out in the field, will die. **9:19**

Message #9 - He was to tell Pharaoh that the one who fears the LORD and goes into shelter will live and those who do not, will die. **9:20-21**

In **verses 22-23**, the LORD told Moses to stretch out his hand toward the sky, and when he did thunder and hail and lightning hit on all the land of Egypt. It was so severe that nothing like this had ever been seen in the land (**verse 24**).

This hail struck all the men, beasts, plants, and trees that were specifically in the land of Egypt (**verse 25**). It did not touch the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived.

In **verse 27**, Pharaoh called for Moses and admitted that he had sinned. He admitted that the LORD was the righteous one and that he and his Egyptian people were wicked. He asked Moses to pray and ask God to stop the plague and he would let them go (**verse 28**).

Moses said, as soon as I leave your presence and get out of the city I will petition God and it will stop (**verse 29**); but then he says, I know that you still do not fear God (**verse 30**).

Now according to **verses 31-32**, the flax and barley were all ruined, but the wheat and spelt were not ruined because it had not ripened yet and was not standing. So God had even graciously permitted these people to have some food to eat.

According to **verse 33**, Moses went out and prayed and the thunder and hail and rain stopped.

But you know the story - when Pharaoh saw the storm was gone, he hardened his heart and he sinned again and he would not let the people go (**verses 34-35**).