

The Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Plagues of God's Judgment on Egypt

Exodus 9

Exodus 9 – *“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.*

The Fifth Plague: Livestock Diseased

2 For if you refuse to let them go, and still hold them, **3** 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. **4** 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.”” **5** Then the Lord appointed a set time, saying, “Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land.” **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. **7** 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.

The Sixth Plague: Boils

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. **9** 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.” **10** 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. **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. **12** But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the Lord had spoken to Moses.

The Seventh Plague: Hail

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, **14** 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. **15** 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. **16** 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. **17** As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go. **18** 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. 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.

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.

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.” 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.

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, and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses.”

Background Notes

In the fifth plague a severe pestilence came upon the livestock of Egypt— on the cattle, on the camels, on the sheep, on the goats, and on the highly prized imported horses in Egypt! A word of explanation is needed for the word “**all**” in verse 6: “*So the Lord did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died.*” Well, if **all** the livestock in Egypt died, why was any livestock left for the seventh plague (v19)? And what about the livestock mentioned in the tenth plague (12:29)? Well, there are several possibilities to explain **all** the livestock of Exodus 9:6.

The plagues did not all happen on the same day. It seems that the plagues were spread out over the course of about a year, and it appears that there were some time gaps between the plagues. During these gaps Pharaoh hardened his heart. So possibly the Egyptians acquired more livestock during the periods between plagues.

Where would they get more livestock? Look again at verse 7: *“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.”* Why did Pharaoh send his servants to check on the Israeli cattle – just out of curiosity, or for “other” reasons?

No warning was given before the sixth plague. Moses and Aaron were to take handfuls of ashes from a furnace and throw the ashes up in the air before Pharaoh. The winds scattered the fine dust throughout all the land of Egypt, and it caused boils and sores to break out on the Egyptians and their animals. The fact that the sores were on all the **Egyptians** (v11) may be an indication that God preserved the Israelites from this plague. The magicians could not even try to duplicate this plague, because the magicians were incapacitated by the sores and boils!

These boils and sores made the Egyptian priests unclean and unfit to function, according to their own pagan religious standards. And what may be significant here is that the dust or ashes from the furnace may have come from one of the Egyptian furnace altars where the Egyptian priests burned the sacrifices offered to their pagan deities. How ironic that it may have been these very ashes that caused everyone to be diseased and unclean.

Doctrinal Points

1.The plagues on Egypt revealed the eternal attributes of God.

Think of all the attributes of God that are revealed in the plagues on Egypt!

- We see God’s **omnipotence**. He is an all-powerful God.

- We see His **sovereignty**. God was in complete control of the plagues, including when they came and when they were taken away. God was in control of dividing between Egyptians and Hebrews, because only the Egyptians were affected by some of the plagues. Notice God’s sovereign control of the plagues for His own divine purposes (v15-16). Verse 16 is quoted in Romans 9, a well-known passage of Scripture emphasizing God’s sovereignty.

- We see the attributes of God’s **holiness** and **justice** revealed in these plagues on Egypt.

- We even see the attributes of God’s **patience** and **longsuffering** and **mercy** revealed in these plagues. In verse 15 God said that He limited the plagues, otherwise Egypt would have been wiped out. In verse 19 notice that God sent a merciful warning before the seventh plague: *“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.”* Some Egyptians heeded the warning (v.20): *“He who feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses.”* Exodus 12 tells us that some of these God-fearing Egyptians joined the Israelites in the Exodus from Egypt.

- Look at **mercy** God displayed in verses 31-32: *“Now the flax and the barley were struck. For the barley was in the head, and the flax was in bud. But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they are late crops.”* God did not destroy the whole food supply of Egypt. God is a merciful God. God’s patience and long-suffering are revealed by the fact that there were ten plagues. God didn’t just wipe Egypt off the map in one fell swoop. He gave Egypt and Pharaoh many opportunities to let the Israelites leave before the terrible tenth plague came upon them.

The plagues on Egypt revealed the eternal attributes of God.

2. The plagues on Egypt foreshadowed the future judgments of God.

From prophetic Scripture, we know that a great tribulation will come upon this earth during the end times. During that time there will be a number of plagues of judgment on mankind, according to the book of Revelation. All these plagues on Egypt foreshadow the judgments of the Tribulation Period.

For example, listen to a description of part of the seventh Bowl Judgment in Revelation 16:21: *“And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent [or a hundred pounds]. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.”* Wow! Those are big hailstones! The seventh plague of hail on Egypt foreshadowed the seventh Bowl Judgment in the coming Tribulation. All of the plagues on Egypt in some way foreshadowed the future judgments of God during the Tribulation Period.

Practical Application

Are you more of a believer than Pharaoh?

Verse 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.”*

Well, what do you know? Pharaoh became a believer after all! True? NO -- false! We know through the rest of the biblical record that Pharaoh did **not** become a believer. True saving faith is more than just acknowledging that God is righteous and that you are a sinner—even a wicked sinner. Pharaoh acknowledged all of that, but he was not a believer.

So the question once again: Are you more of a believer than Pharaoh? **Saving faith** involves **commitment**—commitment of your lost soul to God for salvation. God can save you because Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins. He died as your substitute.

Have you done more than just acknowledge that God is righteous and that you are a sinner? Have you committed your life to the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? Are you more of a believer than Pharaoh?

