

EXODUS 9:13-10:29 HARDENING OF A HEART III
THE THIRD SERIES OF THE PLAGUES 7-9

We come to the third set of plagues that God sends to Pharaoh and all of Egypt. This narrative reaches a higher plateau than the previous plagues. The heavens are unloaded on Egypt causing extreme devastation. God demonstrates His frightening power that you would think would convince anyone, even the hard hearted to at least let the Israelites go. But as usual, the Pharaoh cannot and will not release the captives, the main reason being that God is going to go through all ten plagues and harden the heart of Pharaoh so that He will be known by the whole world. Pharaoh was putty in God's hand as he was serving God's purpose. Pharaoh is involved in something much bigger than he would ever know. God's whole plan involves more than Israel, Egypt, Moses and Pharaoh. The scope is the world as a whole. He used this leader to spread the Word everywhere that He was God. God lifted Pharaoh up to be the leader and then brought him down to show the sovereign power of God.

It is hard to imagine how Pharaoh defiantly avoided submitting to the authority of God. He could not surrender to Him for he was so bent in keeping his own authority he thought he had. To ignore God's will is blatantly evil and that is easy to see in this account but can we relate to that in our own lives? Do we sometimes ignore the will of God for our own selfish reasons? Do we take His will seriously, only when it is convenient and comfortable? Do we see Him truly as sovereign over our lives in every detail? Do we really believe God or not? These are some questions we need to think about as we deal with this portion of scripture.

1. THE PLAGUE OF HAIL 9:13-35

We have covered the first six plagues, and now we pick up on the seventh plague. This one is significant, being that it is hail, and often that means God's judgment. Many times weather is something God uses to show that he is present. Included in this plague is thunder and lightning and fire. The plagues are intensifying and will continue as more plagues appear.

A. GOD'S WARNING 13-21

1. God declares His wrath against Pharaoh 13-15

The discipline is more severe

This is the longest warning, so far, because it is the most destructive plague so far.

Plague 1 and 4, and now # 7 mention Moses is to confront Pharaoh early in the morning. Moses is to tell him that God is going to send the full force of His

plagues, for Pharaoh had become harder, so God's punishment had to become more severe.

2. The purpose of the plagues 16-17

God could have wiped out the Egyptians at anytime He wanted, but God held back His hand. He used Pharaoh to spread the word throughout the world. He was to remain in history, a standing memorial of the justice and power of God's wrath. God will humble and bring down the proudest of His enemies. Everything happened to show that God's name (His sovereignty power and justice) might be declared throughout all the earth through all ages. God sometimes raises up very bad men to power and sustains them there for a long time, and then suffers them to grow obstinate, so that He be that much more glorified.

Pharaoh would never have been King in the first place had God not given him that position.

Romans 9:17 The justice and mercy of God was put on display through this whole ordeal.

B. GOD'S PREDICTION OF THE HAIL 18-21

Rain was something that was almost foreign to them. Average rainfall for a year was an inch. Now they are going to get what they least expected. The sun god Re who came up everyday, was to be defeated as God did not let the sun come out for three days. Once again God defeats the false gods of Egypt. Another god was Isis, the goddess of the air. This was directed against her.

1. When It was to happen on the next day. It would be the worst storm ever in Egypt.

2. Directions The people were to gather in a safe place, all the cattle that had not been in the fields and had survived the fifth plague.

3. Responses This is the first time that protection is offered by God. Even some of Pharaoh's servants believed God's Word and obeyed it, but the king continued to harden his heart. It is interesting that some Egyptians took God seriously.

C. GOD'S WRATH IS UNLEASHED 22-25

Hail is often used for judgment Isa 28:2, 30:31

Ezek 13:11-13, 38:22-23 Hag 2:17 Rev 8:7, 11:19

Rev 16:21

Any person or animal that wasn't under cover was killed and plants and trees in the fields were destroyed.

It stripped bark right off trees and shattered many altogether.

Think of all the insurance claims on all the chariots.

In 1995 there was a supercell hailstorm putting out softball size hail, up to four inches in diameter.

D. GOD'S GRACE IS DISPLAYED 26

God's sovereignty in the act of judgment Once again, the Lord protected His people in the land of Goshen and the plague didn't touch them.

E. PHARAOH'S CONSTERNATION 27-35

1. Insincere confession

Seeing the devastation of the land, Pharaoh got a hold of Moses and Aaron as in 8:8. This time he acknowledged the justice of God and admitted he sinned! But the problem was that he did not repent.

All he really wanted was for the hail to stop. He says one thing and does another.

Compare Saul to David 1 Sam 15:24-25 Psalm 51

2. Intercession 1 Sam 12:23

Moses was not fooled but yet still prayed to God to stop.

God answered Moses' prayer and stopped the plague.

F. HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART 36-37

As usual, Pharaoh backs up on his end of the promise and did not let Israel go. There is self hardening here and also a passive hardening. Pharaoh's stubbornness is by design of God.

2. THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS 10:1-20

This is another long account. These last three plagues take us to a higher level than before in intensity. There is not a chance that Pharaoh will change his heart. Right in verse 1 we are told God hardened Pharaoh's heart. He is a puppet in the hand of God and he is absolutely helpless. This plague is similar to the plague of hail. Both destroy humans, animals, and crops.

A. THE REASON FOR THE PLAGUES 1-2

God has hardened Pharaoh's heart. There is no more discussion.

He is not given a chance to respond. He still wants to rule his own life but the end is inevitable. He can't change his course.

God's actions in Egypt are meant to not be kept a secret. They will be remembered in future generations. It is also for ones who had not even been born yet as well as the ones witnessing all the events.

B. GOD'S WARNING 3-6

The shift has certainly happened with Moses now obviously in control of the situation Moses now puts forth an ultimatum. He states it and then leaves. Locusts would be coming.

Moses had asked him how long it would take for him to humble himself. Moses told the king he was prideful.

C. MAN BARGAINING WITH GOD 7-10

Pharaoh starts to lose his support from his own. Things are crashing.

The hail caused the breach. Things had gotten to them. How much is one man's ego worth? They suggested that Pharaoh had been wrong in not letting the Israelites go. They would never had been this bold before but now they are in a desperate condition.

Pharaoh asks another question about who all were going.. Of course Moses knows all will go and with all the animals.

Pharaoh, who really has no bargaining power, does not get it, for he

offers to let only the men go on the journey. This was a compromise that Moses would not be a part of. Moses is bold and he now is trusting God fully.

Pharaoh became very upset as Moses seems to be pulling a fast one on him. All along the sacrifice seems to him no more than a ploy. But we are starting to see the ultimate purpose of God getting Israel out of Egypt, never to return again. God's intentions are being made known to Pharaoh and this contributes to the hardening of the heart which is what God has in mind all along. He is trapped by God because this is ordained by God to happen.

Pharaoh responds by blaspheming God by saying in the name of God, I will not let you take your children with you. He is seeing that they want to escape their bondage. If they all go, why would they come back? As far as Pharaoh was concerned, he was finished with Moses and Aaron. But God had something else in mind.

D. GOD'S WRATH 11-15

Locusts Joel 1-2 Judges 6:5, 7:12, Isa 33:4, Jere 46:23

Just to emphasize again that the plagues are intensifying we need to really get a picture of what is happening here. This is a natural disaster times ten. Nothing like this had ever happened to a nation since the flood. Locusts fly in formation. Years ago there was a swarm 1200 miles wide over the ocean traveling from West Africa toward Great Britain. They brought great devastation on Britain. From an airplane, you couldn't see any open ground. It was completely black with locusts in an area of 2000 miles square. Egypt would never see any thing like this again. This brought on starvation. Their food has been attacked all through the plagues. The fish had been killed, livestock perished, and now the locusts stripped every tree and crop. Every green thing was stripped and consumed and nothing was left. Could anything be worse?

E. PHARAOH'S CONSTERNATION 16-19

1. Insincere confession

Pharaoh now admitted that he not only sinned against God but also Moses and Aaron

2. Intercession

He is up to his same tricks as he asks for another chance but he never fulfills his promise.

Moses prays for him but He also knows God will carry out His plan. The locusts stopped.

F, HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART 20

Once again God hardens His heart after the locusts are gone.

3. THE PLAGUE OF DARKNESS 10:21-29

No announcement is mentioned here. The sun is absent. This makes you think about the sun god, Re. He would be a powerful god to them, but God defeats him overwhelmingly as the light is absent.

A. DARKNESS ON EGYPT 21-23

This was unlike anything. This was darker than midnight. You could feel it. The darkness could not be penetrated, not even by a lantern. This went on for three days. It must have felt like blindness or death.

B. GRACE TO ISRAEL Jn 3:19-21 1 Jn 1:5-10 24-26

There was light in Goshen but not in Egypt. What a message.

Pharaoh made one more offer to Moses. All the Jews could go worship but they couldn't take the livestock. He wanted that livestock for Egypt lost all theirs. Moses was not going to buy this. There was to be no compromise.

C. HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART 27-29

How sad. Pharaoh was beaten but could not admit it.

He threatened Moses that he would kill him if he saw him again.

They will meet again, and that is at the Red Sea where Pharaoh's army is killed but not Moses.

A human heart will become harder and harder the longer it resists God's truth. God's affliction will only provoke more disobedience. Those people will continue in their sins, but will not repent. They behold God's judgments and still not repent. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Heb 10:31