

EXODUS: The Person, Promise, and Power of God

Exodus 9: The Plagues Continue

“Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.” (Exod. 7:4–5).

Both the Egyptians and the Israelites saw God’s glory revealed through these plagues. These plagues were not simply natural occurrences. They were miraculous. Each plague was the direct result of God’s hand. They were done in God’s timing, at God’s instigation, by God’s power, and through God’s chosen messengers.

THE FIFTH PLAGUE: EGYPTIAN LIVESTOCK DIE (Exod. 9:1-7)

John J. Davis explains, “Such a plague would have had grave economic consequences in the land of Egypt. Oxen were depended upon for heavy labor in agriculture. Camels, donkeys and horses were used largely for transportation. Cattle not only provided milk but were very much an integral part of worship in the land of Egypt. The economic losses on this occasion must have affected Pharaoh greatly because he kept large numbers of cattle under his control.”

This suggests that the plagues gradually _____ in their _____. Whereas the plague of gnats was attributed merely to “the finger of God” (Exod. 8:19), the plague on livestock was sent by “the hand of the Lord” (Exod. 9:3). Not only was the fifth plague the first to bring _____, but it was also the first to destroy Pharaoh’s _____.

Some Egyptian animals were considered to be _____. As these sacred animals dropped dead, it was as great challenge to Egyptian religious beliefs. God was proving his power over Pharaoh’s false gods.

Six Lessons From the 5th Plague

Most of these lessons were introduced in the earlier plagues; but they’re worth repeating. First, the 5th plague teaches us the meaning of _____. The exodus from Egypt prepared the way for the coming of Jesus Christ and the true exodus. Through the Cross, Jesus broke the power of sin and released sinners from its captivity.

Second, the 5th plague teaches us the purpose of _____, which is to _____. The Israelites were saved for God’s glory. Jesus Christ has set us free from sin and death so that we can serve the living God and glorify Him.

Third, the 5th plague teaches us the folly of _____. Pharaoh was such a proud man that in order to humble him, God had to humiliate his gods one by one. With the plague on livestock, God humiliated Egypt’s sacred cows.

Fourth, we learn the superiority of _____. In the plague on livestock God differentiated between the Israelites and the Egyptians. Just as protection from pestilence was only for those who trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so now the free gift of eternal life is only for those who trust in his Son, Jesus Christ.

The superiority of faith is proved by a fifth lesson, which is the consequence of _____. Pharaoh was given every opportunity to meet God's demand. Yet he deliberately refused to let God's people go, choosing instead to keep Israel in bondage, thus rebelling against God's revealed will. Such defiance always brings divine judgment. Eventually everyone who rebels against God will suffer his holy wrath.

The sixth and final lesson is the necessity of an _____. Pharaoh was a hardened skeptic. No matter how many miracles he saw, Pharaoh always found a way to ignore God's claim on his life. Even Christians must be careful to avoid the danger of hard-heartedness. The writer to the Hebrews warns, "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God" (Heb. 3:12; cf. 1 Sam. 6:6).

THE SIXTH PLAGUE: BOILS (Exod. 9:8-12)

For the first time a plague has a direct _____ on the Egyptians themselves. This showed that the God of Israel had power over their bodies, and it should have warned them that their very lives were in danger.

The plague of boils was miraculous in its _____. It came unannounced—a disaster without warning. The plague was miraculous in its _____ (See Exod. 9:9). The plague was also miraculous in its _____ (See Exod. 9:11) Egypt was plagued, while Israel was protected.

The sixth plague had three of the same results the first 5 plagues had. First, Pharaoh's _____ were humiliated. Second, Pharaoh's _____ were humiliated. Third, Pharaoh's _____ was _____. After each of the first five plagues, the Scripture says "Pharaoh's heart became hard" (Exod. 7:22), or he "hardened his heart" (Exod. 8:15), or "his heart was unyielding" (Exod. 9:7). But, this time it says explicitly that Pharaoh's heart was hard because _____ made it hard.

THE SEVENTH PLAGUE: HAIL (Exod. 9:13-35)

God informed Pharaoh of something that should have been obvious to him already: The God of Israel had the power to wipe Egypt off the face of the earth. One of the miraculous things about the plagues is that they became increasingly more _____.

Why the first nine plagues? The tenth plague was the one that made the difference. Why not skip straight to the tenth? In a general sense, God was punishing Egypt for Pharaoh's

disobedience, and God was delivering His people for His glory. Exodus 9 tells us more specifically why God is plaguing the Egyptians.

First, God sent the plagues to demonstrate the uniqueness of his _____ (Exod. 9:14) Second, God wanted to show _____ (Exod. 9:15-16) Third, the plagues emphasized God's unlimited _____ (Exod. 9:29) God accomplished these same purposes through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The demonstration of God's power always demands a response. In order to show how Pharaoh would respond, God devised a test. Moses said to Pharaoh, "Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them." (Exod. 9:19) This is, in effect, a call to act in faith, believing the truth of what God said he would do. If the warning was taken seriously, the effects of the hailstorm would be mitigated.

Even while Pharaoh rebelled against God, some of his servants heeded the warning (Exod. 9:20), but not most of them (Exod. 9:21-25). By the time the hail storm was finished, the land was totally ruined. Everything was destroyed. But, the Israelites were spared from this devastating storm (Exod. 9:26). When Pharaoh saw that the hail was destroying his country, he called for Moses and Aaron. Not only did he ask them to pray for him, but he also began to confess his sins (Exod. 9:27-28)

Despite his delusions of deity, Pharaoh confessed that he was a sinner. Pharaoh's confession sounds good, but upon further review, it proves to be a false confession that falls short of true repentance.

First, Pharaoh did not _____. Second, Pharaoh did not confess _____. Third, Pharaoh did not _____. (Exod. 9:33-35) The best way to tell if repentance is genuine is to see what happens _____ a person confess his sins. God hears the genuine prayer of repentance, but He can see through false repentance. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

CONCLUSION

The plagues were signs of both God's judgment and salvation. They had terrible consequences, but through them, God judged Egypt and saved His people. For us, the plagues point to something even more glorious...the cross of Christ! The Cross of Christ is the ultimate sign of judgment and salvation.