

JUDGMENTS OF HAIL, LOCUSTS, AND DARKNESS

BIBLE TEXT : Exodus 9:13-35; 10:1-29

LESSON 55 - Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (Exodus 9:16).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 9:13-35

¹³ And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

¹⁴ For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that *there is* none like me in all the earth.

¹⁵ For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.

¹⁶ And in very deed for this *cause* have I raised thee up, for to shew *in* thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

¹⁷ As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?

¹⁸ Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.

¹⁹ Send therefore now, *and* gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; *for upon* every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.

²⁰ He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses:

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Seventh Judgment: Thunder, Hail, and Fire

1. God warns Pharaoh of another pestilence to come upon Egypt if he would not let Israel go, Exodus 9:13-15.
2. A personal denunciation is given Pharaoh because of his pride, Exodus 9:16, 17;

Psalm 10:2

² The wicked in *his* pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

Psalm 119:21

²¹ Thou hast rebuked the proud *that are* cursed, which do err from thy commandments.

Proverbs 6:16-19

¹⁶ These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him:

¹⁷ A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

¹⁸ An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

¹⁹ A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Proverbs 16:18

¹⁸ Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

3. The warning includes a refuge for any who would accept it, Exodus 9:18-21;

Deuteronomy 33:27

²⁷ The eternal God *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy *them*.

Psalm 27:5

⁵ For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

Psalm 46:1-3

¹ (To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth.) God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

² Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

³ *Though* the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, *though* the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4. The grievous, life-destroying plague is sent, Exodus 9:22-25;

Revelation 8:7

⁷ The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

5. Israel is exempted from the plague, Exodus 9:26;

Exodus 8:22, 23

²² And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms *of flies* shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the earth.

²³ And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be.

²¹ And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field.

²² And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.

²³ And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt.

²⁴ So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

²⁵ And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.

²⁶ Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, was there no hail.

²⁷ And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD *is* righteous, and I and my people *are* wicked.

²⁸ Intreat the LORD (for *it is* enough) that there be no *more* mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.

²⁹ And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; *and* the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth *is* the LORD'S.

³⁰ But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God.

Exodus 9:4

⁴ And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all *that is* the children's of Israel.

6. Pharaoh repents, but Moses doubts the sincerity of his penitence, Exodus 9:27-30;

Psalms 34:18

¹⁸ The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Micah 7:18

¹⁸ Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy.

7. The plague is stopped, but Pharaoh continues to sin against God, Exodus 9:31-35;

Ecclesiastes 8:11

¹¹ Because sentence against an evil work *is* not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men *is* fully set in them to do evil.

II The Eighth Judgment: Locusts from the East

1. Pharaoh, by defying God, brings a greater judgment upon Egypt, which exalts God before both the Egyptians and Israelites, Exodus 10:1, 2;

Leviticus 26:23, 24

²³ And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me;

²⁴ Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.

Proverbs 1:24-27

²⁴ Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

²⁵ But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

²⁷ When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

2. Another warning is given Pharaoh with an opportunity to submit to God's commands, Exodus 10:3-6.
3. Pharaoh's servants, convinced in a measure of Moses' power with God and fearful for their own safety, plead Israel's cause, Exodus 10:7;

Exodus 7:5

⁵ And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

Exodus 8:19

¹⁹ Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This *is* the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

4. Pharaoh listens to their reasoning but desires a compromise, and with haughty spirit summarily dismisses Moses and Aaron, Exodus 10:8-11.

5. The locusts come from the east, Exodus 10:12-15;

Revelation 9:1-6

¹ And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

² And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

³ And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

⁴ And it was commanded them that they should not hurt

³¹ And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley *was* in the ear, and the flax *was* bolled.

³² But the wheat and the rie were not smitten: for they *were* not grown up.

³³ And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth.

³⁴ And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

³⁵ And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

Exodus 10:1-29

¹ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him:

² And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I *am* the LORD.

³ And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me.

⁴ Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast:

⁵ And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you

the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

⁵ And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

⁶ And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

6. Pharaoh repents again but his attitude is reversed when the plague is lifted, Exodus 10:16-20.

III The Ninth Judgment: Darkness That Could Be Felt

1. Darkness is sent for three days without a warning of its coming, Exodus 10:21-23;

Revelation 6:12

¹² And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

Revelation 16:10

¹⁰ And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

Joel 2:1, 2, 31

¹ Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for *it is nigh* at hand;

² A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, *even* to the years of many generations.

³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

Mark 13:24, 25

²⁴ But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,

²⁵ And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

2. Pharaoh again attempts a compromise, which is not accepted by Moses, Exodus 10:24-26.

3. Pharaoh hardens his heart and delivers a stern ultimatum to Moses, Exodus 10: 27-29.

NOTES:

Thunder, Hail, and Fire

Our third series of lessons on the judgment -- plagues against Egypt which were sent to convince them that the God of Israel was the only true God and that His Word should be honoured and obeyed, is opened with supernatural manifestations in the elements. This plague also was directed against the idol worship of the Egyptians, who worshiped nature and the physical elements as well as animals and insects. They thought that some of their gods had control over the operation of the forces of nature. The seventh judgment was sent to show them that the gods of Egypt had no power whatsoever and that all these things were controlled by the God of Israel, Whose existence Pharaoh and many of the Egyptians denied.

A warning was given in the announcement of this plague with the time for its appearance included. The message stated that those who were struck by the plague would die; so we can see that the fury of this judgment was greater than many of the others, which could be classified only as nuisance plagues instead of destroyers of life. Israel was exempt, as before, because they feared and honoured God.

out of the field:

⁶ And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.

⁷ And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?

⁸ And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: *but* who *are* they that shall go?

⁹ And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we *must hold* a feast unto the LORD.

¹⁰ And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look *to it*; for evil *is* before you.

¹¹ Not so: go now ye *that are* men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

¹² And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, *even* all that the hail hath left.

¹³ And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all *that* night; *and* when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

¹⁴ And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all

A God of Mercy

God's mercy is one of the greatest of His attributes. We have seen, in an earlier lesson, how it and the other moral attributes of God were made known to the world through the use of the name Jehovah in the revelation of God's will. The Lord was trying to teach these people that He existed, not only as a God of power and might, but that He also possessed attributes of infinite extent, which would bring comfort and assurance to the believer. It is true that He sought to show them His infinite power and wisdom by the miracles; but through it all, by His exemption of the Children of Israel from the plagues and by the warning preceding this plague of hail, He was also trying to show them His mercy and love.

God could have stricken the entire nation of Egypt from the face of the earth. He could do the same to the Christ-rejecting world today. But, instead, He chose to strive, deal kindly, and lead them with infinite patience and love. He has been listening through all the ages of the world's history for the penitent cry, "God, be merciful to me a sinner," so that He might reply, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven." His voice is not stilled today! He is still seeking the lost! He is still dealing in mercy with those who are outside the bounds of His limitless grace.

Insincere Repentance

But there came a time of final decision for the Egyptians when the plagues were being sent upon them. Those who refused God's mercy were lost. Eventually even the nation was defeated. God deals with each person to bring him to a place of repentance. Some yield -- others do not. And the judgments on Egypt are typical of the last judgments, which will be poured out upon the world in the time of the Great Tribulation. In that day, also men who have spurned God's pleadings will blaspheme and curse Him reject Him, and seal their doom forever by accepting the mark or the Antichrist.

Pharaoh repented when the plague was at its height, but it was evident to Moses that the penitence was not sincere. True repentance has, as its constituent elements, not only grief and hatred of sin but also an apprehension of the mercy of God. True repentance hates the existing sin and not simply the penalty it sees for that sin -- it hates the sin most of all because the penitent has discovered God's love. Pharaoh's repentance did not have these necessary qualifications. He repented simply to rid himself of sin's penalty and not because he chose to make himself an object of God's love and a subject of God's laws. Moses could see this lack, and he faithfully told the haughty monarch of his deficiency. A repentance that springs from fear alone is always transient.

Locusts from the East

The Egyptians were accustomed to believe that ordinary plagues of crop-destroying insects that visit every land were indications of the wrath of their gods. But God sent a plague of locusts that far exceeded any insect scourge they had ever witnessed. It came as predicted by Moses, so there was no doubt but that it was sent by Israel's God. Their gods had nothing to do with it. And since it was greater than any previous experience of this kind, they would have to admit that the God of Israel must be greater than the gods of Egypt.

Again we see an example of insincere repentance. Pharaoh asked Moses and Aaron to intercede for him, but his repentance was short-lived. After the plague's removal he turned his heart against God again -- hardening it more than ever -- and would not let Israel go. Pharaoh was more concerned that God should take away the plague than that he should become a loyal servant of

the coasts of Egypt: very grievous *were they*; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such.

¹⁵ For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

¹⁶ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you.

¹⁷ Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only.

¹⁸ And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD.

¹⁹ And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt.

²⁰ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

²¹ And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness *which* may be felt.

²² And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:

²³ They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

²⁴ And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also

God.

Darkness That Could Be Felt

The plague of darkness poured contempt upon the sun-god of Egypt. It was a figure of the darkness, which will engulf all who do not turn to God. Three days of groping in a blackness that could be felt, which excelled the most fanciful tales of mythologists, should have brought them to their knees in sincere repentance. Israel was exempt, for we read that "all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings."

But Pharaoh's heart was still hardened toward God; and to rid himself of this darkness he told the Children of Israel to go into the wilderness as they desired, but to leave their flocks and herds behind. Moses had the spirit every true Christian must have -- a spirit of fidelity that will not compromise any detail of God's command. God had said that they and their flocks were to go, and Moses stood upon that word. He said: "There shall not an hoof be left behind."

Moses' reply served to harden Pharaoh's heart still more, and Pharaoh's command that they see his face no more seemed to indicate the true condition of his heart -- a state of continual rebellion against God. It is not important for us to know if Moses had been told the fullness of the divine plan by God, or whether it was only the confidence of faith (**Hebrews 11:27** ²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.) that caused him to answer: "Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more." His pleadings with Pharaoh for the liberation of Israel were now at an end. What transpired from this point on was in the nature of divine compulsion rather than divine appeals.

Pharaoh had sinned away his day of grace and was in a more hardened condition. He had failed to accept the many opportunities God had given him to repent, and now there remained only the sending of the final judgment upon him and this nation of unbelievers.

A Leader That Could Be Led

Through this series of lessons on the judgments upon Egypt we have found many sublime truths. No doubt there remain many more in the passages we have perused that will be brought out to us as the Holy Spirit leads us farther. But one more great truth is present that we cannot pass by lightly.

Moses was a great leader, had a strong personality, and was an aggressive and forceful man; and he was, at the same time, the meekest man on the face of the earth. But Moses had one other great virtue of which we learn as we study his life. He was careful to follow God in every detail, with the exception of one sad instance, which cost him a tremendous price.

"We know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither." It might have been easy for Moses, as tired as he must have been from the irritating and soul-trying litigations he had been conducting with the God-hating Pharaoh, to have accepted a compromise. He could have felt, and rightly so, that they were fortunate to get out of Egypt even if their going out meant that they would lose all or a portion of their flocks and herds.

But Moses was following God, and God had told him that He would deliver Israel. God promised that the Israelites would take not only their own belongings but would receive from the hands of the Egyptians the wealth of Egypt also. For Moses to have accepted a compromise would have meant that he was limiting God. He did not know just how all this was to be brought about, but he was content to follow God, step by step, until God's will was consummated.

go with you.

²⁵ And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God.

²⁶ Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither.

²⁷ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.

²⁸ And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in *that* day thou seest my face thou shalt die.

²⁹ And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.

What a lesson there is for us in this one thing alone! Often, in our lives "we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither." But, sadly, so often we get ahead of the Lord and compromise when to have stood still a little longer would have brought us into the fullness of the blessing that God had for us. The life of every great man or woman of God shows us that same truth. If we would be great for God we must be willing to follow -- and not run ahead of -- the Captain of our Salvation. He alone knows the way! He alone knows just what is best for us! He alone knows all about us! And He loves us and is interested in us as no one else can ever be!

QUESTIONS

1. What was the seventh judgment -- plague upon Egypt?
2. Were they adequately warned of this plague's approach so that they could have escaped its fury?
3. What personal denunciation was given Pharaoh at this time?
4. Was this plague destructive to life?
5. What was Pharaoh's attitude, and what answer did Moses give him?
6. Describe the nature and extent of the eighth plague.
7. Did they have a warning of this plague, and how did it come?
8. What did Pharaoh's servants say to him when the fury of the plague struck them?
9. Describe the plague of darkness and the effect it had upon Israel.
10. What ultimatum did Pharaoh deliver to Moses, and what reply did Moses give?