

Study Notes: Exodus 9:13-35
October 4, 2026: “Hail!”
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Then the LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go.

- The seventh plague of hail is one of the longer accounts among all the plagues. It begins like the other plagues, with Moses confronting Pharaoh. He brought the message that Pharaoh was to let the people go so they could worship YHWH. If Pharaoh refused, YHWH would send His full force of plagues against the land of Egypt so they would know no one is like Him.
- YHWH then told Pharaoh some of His reasoning behind the plagues, saying that He could have easily wiped Pharaoh and the Egyptians off the earth.
 - The Faithlife Study Bible explains that this is a way that YHWH shows His mercy, “Through Moses, Yahweh tells Pharaoh that the only reason he and his people are still alive is because of Yahweh’s patience. Yahweh is not done teaching Pharaoh the lesson he needs to be taught.”
- Pharaoh’s disobedience and refusal to obey were being used by God to display His power and majesty. The New American Commentary gives some theological insight into what was happening, “The irony of God’s upbraiding of Pharaoh in v. 17 is that Pharaoh could not help himself (any longer) and yet well deserved the criticism he received. It was both his natural inclination to keep the Israelites suppressed and localized (cf. 1:9–10) and the attitude subsequently fixed in him by God as a humiliation and punishment. Pharaoh’s behavior mirrors the phenomenon described by Paul in Rom 1:18–32, that of people being fixed by God in the sinful behavior patterns that would eventually bring about their destruction as a punishment for those very behavior patterns. In other words, one of the ways God punishes sin is to allow the sin to continue and therefore to allow it to take its natural, destructive course. Behind this is the biblical truth that people cannot rescue themselves from their own sin; they always need help to break the patterns of sin in their lives. If God withholds that help, they become fixed in those patterns, will see the harmful effects increasingly during their lives, and will die in those sins.”

Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now. Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every person and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die.”

- Because of Pharaoh’s stubborn disobedience and refusal to let the people go, YHWH would now send judgment in the form of a hailstorm. This storm would be the most destructive storm ever seen in Egypt, causing death and destruction to every person and animal that remained outside.

- The New American Commentary explains the significance of the phrase, “from the day it was founded,” “The Egyptians were enormously proud of their long history as a nation and thought of all other peoples as newcomers, johnny-come-latelys—automatically inferior to themselves, whom they viewed as the original and central civilization of the earth. Accordingly, when God spoke through Moses here about the severity of the coming plague, using an expression well known and commonly used by the Egyptians (and certainly well known to Moses) that would have meant to the average Egyptian something like ‘since the beginning of time,’ he was powerfully emphasizing what a terrible plague it would indeed be.”
- YHWH warned Pharaoh and his officials to give an order to bring the livestock and people into a place of shelter. This was God’s mercy shown to Pharaoh, offering him the opportunity to prepare for what was coming.

Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. But those who ignored the word of the LORD left their slaves and livestock in the field.

- Some of Pharaoh’s officials feared the word of YHWH. They heeded His word and took their slaves and livestock inside. Their actions did not mean that they came to faith, only that they were smart enough to know that when YHWH promised judgment, it was wise to heed that warning.
- Other officials simply ignored the word of YHWH. They made no provisions and reaped the consequences for their inaction.

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt—on people and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt.” When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. So the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt; hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields—both people and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree. The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were.

- After issuing the warning, the next day YHWH called Moses to stretch out his hands, which caused thunder and hail to fall on the land of Egypt. This storm was said to be the worst storm in the history of Egypt. The hail struck people, animals, and everything growing in the fields (later a side note indicates which crops were affected).
- Much like some of the earlier plagues, the hail storm did not impact the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived.
- The sound of thunder was often thought to represent the voice of God. Here, the thunder represents the voice of God speaking in judgment over Egypt.

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. Pray to the LORD, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don’t have to stay any longer.” Moses replied, “When I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to the LORD.

The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may know that the earth is the LORD's. But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the LORD God.

- As the storms continued to rage, Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh confessed that he had sinned in not letting the people go. He asked Moses to pray on his behalf, and stated that he would let the people go. However, Pharaoh's words were not to be taken as a full confession and change of heart. The New American Commentary explains, "nothing in what Pharaoh said needs to lead us to believe that he actually was sorry for his sins and seeking forgiveness from the God of Israel. Rather, he was, at most, admitting to being wrong for having treated the Israelites as he had—and doing so temporarily under the pressure of the worst, most damaging plague he and the Egyptians had yet encountered."
- Moses told Pharaoh he would pray, and that the storm would be stilled so that Pharaoh would know that the earth belonged to YHWH.
- Moses also realized that while Pharaoh and his officials admitted they were in the wrong, they still did not fear YHWH. This would be proven true, when Pharaoh and his official sinned again by hardening their hearts after they experienced relief from this plague.

(The flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom. The wheat and spelt, however, were not destroyed, because they ripen later.)

- This side note helps identify when the plague took place, but also sets up the story for the plague that would follow.
- While the land experienced major destruction from the hail, Pharaoh and the Egyptians still had something to fall back on, which may have led to their continued disobedience that is described in the verses that follow. The Faithlife Study Bible notes, "This parenthetical note also explains why Pharaoh has not yet surrendered. While the destruction of flax—which produced fiber for linen garments—disrupted an important part of Egypt's economy, the survival of wheat and spelt meant that Egypt continued to have a food supply. Pharaoh thus assumed that the nation could endure the hardships already sent."

Then Moses left Pharaoh and went out of the city. He spread out his hands toward the LORD; the thunder and hail stopped, and the rain no longer poured down on the land. When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. So Pharaoh's heart was hard, and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

- Moses left the city and prayed. When Moses prayed, the storms stopped. Rather than keeping his word, Pharaoh sinned again by hardening his heart. Things were just as YHWH said they would be.