

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church,
10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 8

EXODUS

CHAPTERS 9-10

INTRODUCTION

These two chapters record five great and terrible plagues. Through these plagues, God clearly demonstrated His infinite power and sovereignty over the entire earth. It is important to God that people know who He is. In these plagues, God shows who He is — the ever-present and active LORD, no one, none is like unto the LORD in all the earth, and the entire earth is the LORD'S. It is of paramount importance that we know the LORD our God, who is the same God of Moses and Aaron and the children of Israel. A low view of God, as many of us sadly hold, will affect our thoughts, attitude and actions for bad rather than for good in the sight of God. God in these plagues demonstrated who He is, not only to the Egyptians but also to the Israelites. God places great importance on having a proper knowledge of Him. There is no other knowledge that is more precious and profitable than the knowledge of God. Know thy God.

OUTLINE

**A. THE FIFTH & SIXTH PLAGUE:
LIVESTOCK DISEASED &
BOILS ON MAN AND BEASTS
(9:1-12)**

1. The fifth plague: the affliction of murrain on the livestock of the Egyptians (9:1-7)
 - a. Moses approached Pharaoh to make the same request (v.1)
 - b. Moses warned of the disease that would afflict all the animals of the Egyptians (vv.2-4)
 - c. God sent the judgement upon both the Egyptians and their animals (vv.5-7)
2. The sixth plague: the affliction of boils on man and beasts (9:8-12)
 - a. The people were afflicted with boils on both man and animal, except the Hebrews and their animals were spared (vv.8-10)
 - b. The magicians could not stand before Moses (v.11)
 - c. The LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart (v.12)

**B. THE SEVENTH PLAGUE: HAIL
FELL FROM HEAVEN (9:13-26)**

1. Moses warned Pharaoh (9:13-21)
 - a. Moses warned Pharaoh of the next judgement that would afflict him and his subjects (vv.13-15)

- b. God revealed His purpose of raising Pharaoh (v.16)
 - c. Pharaoh's heart would be hardened (v.17)
 - d. The LORD instructed the Hebrews to keep their flocks under cover (vv.18-19)
 - e. For those who obeyed, their livestock would be spared (vv.20-21)
2. The LORD smote Egypt with the plague (9:22-26)
- a. God sent thunder, hail and fire (vv.22-24)
 - b. The hail destroyed man, animals, and vegetation which were in the open fields (vv.25-26)

C. PHARAOH RELENTE (9:27-35)

- 1. Pharaoh relented and promised to let the people go (9:27-28)
- 2. Moses delayed the removing of the plague because Pharaoh was not truly repentant (9:29-32)
- 3. The plague was removed (9:33)
- 4. Pharaoh hardened his heart (9:34-35)

D. THE EIGHTH PLAGUE: THE LOCUSTS (10:1-20)

- 1. The LORD purposed to show that "I am the LORD" (10:1-2)
- 2. Moses and Aaron approached Pharaoh and warned him of the plague of locusts (10:3-6)

- 3. Pharaoh again refused to let all the people go and drove Moses and Aaron out of his presence (10:7-11)
- 4. The LORD judged Pharaoh with the locusts (10:12-15)
- 5. Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron to intercede on his behalf to remove the plague (10:16-19)
- 6. The LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the people go (10:20)

E. THE NINTH PLAGUE: DARKNESS COVERED THE LAND OF EGYPT (10:21-29)

- 1. The LORD smote the land Egypt with darkness without warning Pharaoh (10:21-23)
- 2. Pharaoh put a condition for the people to go (10:24)
- 3. Moses rejected the condition (10:25-26)
- 4. The LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh drove Moses away (10:27-29)

COMMENTARY

The LORD Appointed A Set Time

The LORD instructed Moses to approach Pharaoh again and make the same demand — to let the children of Israel go that they may serve the LORD. Once again, the judgement came with a warning. If Pharaoh still refused to let the children of Israel go, a very severe pestilence would afflict the "cattle in the

field, the horses, the asses, the camels, the oxen, and the sheep” (9:3). Moreover, the LORD would spare the livestock of the children of Israel (9:4). God gave Pharaoh twenty-four hours to repent and let the children of Israel go. But his heart was hardened. The plague came as the LORD had said that He would do. The “all” of the Egyptian cattle must not be understood as absolute, for earlier it was stated that the cattle in the field would be the ones affected. Another evidence in support of this understanding is that in a later plague there were still cattle that were alive and were destroyed by hailstones (v.19).

The smiting of these animals had economic consequences on Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Oxen were depended upon for heavy agriculture work. Camels, horses and asses were used largely for transportation. Cattle provided milk and meat for the people. The plague of “boils,” like the third plague of flies, came without warning. The LORD told Moses to take handfuls of ashes and symbolically cast them into the air heavenwards. The ashes multiplied and tiny dust fell upon man and beast and afflicted their skins with burns and sores, like the ones Job was afflicted.¹

Apart from the economic consequence, there is a religious consequence of the plague. In the

Egyptian religion, there was sanctity of some animals. Some of the animals symbolise their gods. The bull was worshipped as the god Apis, who gave life and fertility. Another deity was Hathor, the goddess of love, beauty and joy, which was represented by the cow. This goddess has the body of a woman, the head of a cow with two horns holding a sun disc between them.

God demonstrated to them His sovereign powers and will that there is none other God but He is the LORD. God also makes a distinction between His people and those who are not. He spared His people from these plagues. The magicians were present. These Egyptian magicians were held with great respect by the people for their powers. At first, they could duplicate the plagues wrought by Moses. Then they could not do so with regard to the plagues of lice and flies. Now they not only could not duplicate the plagues, they became victims of the plagues too. From now onwards, they disappeared from the scene. The LORD God is great and almighty (9:11).

“And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh” (9:12). Although, the LORD earlier had told Moses that He would harden Pharaoh’s heart, this is the first time that it is mentioned that the LORD directly hardened Pharaoh’s heart. One may object that Pharaoh was not given a chance at all to repent had he wanted to do so. This is an erroneous understanding of the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart. In the

¹Job 2:7-8 - So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

light of Romans 1:21-24, Pharaoh's heart in the first place was already darkened by his own pride and conceit. The LORD gave him up to his rebellious and arrogant character.² This act of God should not be considered as an unjust and capricious act. People must remember that it is the prerogative of an infinitely holy and righteous God to deal with sinners in any way He so chooses. If God blesses the sinner with any good, it is purely an act of mercy and grace. What we sinners really and rightly deserve is death.³ This applies to the plagues that afflicted the animals.

The Earth Is The LORD'S

The LORD called Moses to stand before Pharaoh and make the same demand to let the children of Israel go to serve Him. The LORD declared that He would send all His plagues, the ones that were coming, not just simply upon Pharaoh's people, but upon his heart so that he might know that there is none like the LORD, *YAHWEH*, on earth (9:14). God had raised Pharaoh and preserved him for the purpose of showing that He is LORD of the whole earth, yea, that the earth is the LORD'S (9:29). If the LORD had not this

intention, Pharaoh should have met his end much earlier. Pharaoh is no accident in history. He is God's means of demonstrating His infinite power and sovereignty and that He purposed to deliver His people Israel.

These subsequent plagues were greater in intensity. The effects were upon the land, animals, and its people. Hailstones and fire rained in all the land of Egypt, upon man and beasts, and every herb of the field (9:22). This is the first time the effect on vegetation is mentioned. The weather was also affected. But the land of Goshen was not affected. God protected and preserved His people. This clearly indicates that these plagues cannot be explained as natural occurrences, as some scholars would have us to believe. They are the work of the LORD God Almighty who performed these signs and wonders as He chooses for His purposes.

Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and confessed that he had sinned. He even acknowledged that "the LORD is righteous" and he and his people were wicked. Pharaoh called on Moses to entreat the LORD to remove the thunder, hailstones and fire; and he would let the children of Israel go. Moses did so. But when Pharaoh saw that there was no more rain, hail and thunders, he sinned yet further and hardened his heart, including his servants (9:34).

² Romans 1:21-24 - Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

³ John J. Davis, p. 116.

Know That He is the LORD

The LORD called Moses to go to Pharaoh again. From now onwards, the LORD spoke to Moses only and not to him and Aaron. Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh to warn him that if he refused to let God's people go to serve Him, God would judge Egypt with locusts (10:3-5). The plague of locusts would be very severe. Whatever escaped from the plague of hail would be consumed by the locusts, which would also eat up the trees. They would fill their houses. Pharaoh's servants pleaded with Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go for the land had been destroyed. Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh tried to make a bargain. He would let them go to serve the LORD provided the women and the children did not go (10:10-11). This would ensure that the men returned to Egypt each time they went to make sacrifices unto the LORD in the wilderness. Pharaoh was not sincere. He abruptly drove Moses and Aaron out of his sight.

As Moses had warned him, the LORD caused an east wind to bring a great number of locusts into the land. It was so great in number that the sky was covered and the land was darkened. They devoured the residue which the hail had left, until there were no more green trees or herbs in the field (10:15). In the Hebrew text the word "*kol*" which means "all" is used eleven times in chapter 10 verses 12 to 15. This strongly states that the devastation of the land by the locusts was extensive.

Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron to him. He again confessed that he had sinned against the LORD. He asked for forgiveness and requested that the locusts be removed. The LORD used a great and strong west wind to blow the locusts away into the Red Sea and not one locust remained (10:19)! But God once again worked on the heart of Pharaoh and hardened his heart so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

Without warning, the LORD told Moses to stretch out his hand toward heaven that a "thick darkness" would fall on Egypt. Visibility was so poor that the Egyptians could not see one another. They remained in their houses for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Pharaoh once again called for Moses. He again put up a compromise. The Israelites could go to worship the LORD but they must leave their livestock in Egypt. Moses, of course, rejected the offer. Moses explained that they needed the animals to offer sacrifices to the LORD. The LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart and he flatly refused to let the Israelites go (10:27). Pharaoh angrily told Moses to get out of his sight and never to see him again. The day Moses would see Pharaoh's face, Moses would be put to death (10:28). Moses said that Pharaoh had spoken well and that he would not see Pharaoh's face anymore.

This ninth plague that smote the land of Egypt with darkness was an attack on the sun god, Ra, of the

Egyptians. The sun-god is symbolised by a falcon head with a sun disc above its head. Eight other gods were linked with the sun-god, Ra, who was described as the creator of everything. Pharaoh was considered as the embodiment of this god. It is very significant that the nine plagues climax in the God of the Hebrews triumphing over the Pharaoh's sun-god. The LORD Almighty God of the Hebrews is the Creator of the Universe.

His Return. Even so, come Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

LIVING BY FAITH

We learn that the LORD, whose name is *Yahweh*, is sovereign, holy and righteous. He punishes the wicked and rebellious, but protects and provides for His own people. Echoing the words of Paul, "If God be for us who can be against us?" There is no one, indeed. If we are His children, we need not fear what man can do to us. The LORD our God sees, hears, knows and acts on our behalf. He had commissioned Moses to lead His people out of bondage. No man, not even Pharaoh, could stop His divine purpose. God's every plan and purpose, and His promises towards us will be accomplished in His set time. Two millennium of human history have passed since the first advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has promised to come back to take us to be with Him and it will be soon. Many of us will be caught by surprise. Let us fervently believe that He will come soon as He promised and live each day with joy and expectation of

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Exodus 9:1-12; Romans 1:20-32

TUESDAY: Exodus 9:13-26; Psalm 96

WEDNESDAY: Exodus 9:27-35; Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:7-12

THURSDAY: Exodus 10:1-20; Psalm 100

FRIDAY: Exodus 10:21-29; 1 Peter 2:1-12

Discussion Questions

1. What is the intensity and extent of these two plagues upon Egypt?

2. Why did Pharaoh check to see whether the Israelites were affected or not? Having seen, what effect had it on Pharaoh?

3. What does God want to reveal about Himself in the plagues that He is going to do?

4. What must the Egyptians do if they want to save their cattle?

5. What differences in Pharaoh do you see as compared to his words in earlier chapters?

6. Compare Pharaoh's words in verse 28 with that in verse 34. What practical guide for our life and spiritual insight can we draw from these verses?

8. Where did the locusts go after they finished devouring Egypt?

7. What does God want all to know through the things that He is going to do in verses 1-2?

9. God hardened Pharaoh's heart (10:1, 20, 27). Who is responsible? Compare with 7:22; 8:15).

10. Why is Moses so insistent? Would it not be prudent to compromise?

11. Write a sentence statement to describe these two chapters.
