

“The Plague of Hail – the Insanity of Unbelief”
Exodus 9:13-35
(Preached at Trinity, February 25, 2007)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. God has commanded Pharaoh, “Let My people go” but Pharaoh has continued in stiffnecked arrogance. Beginning in **Chapter 7** God began a series of ten plagues designed as an act of judgment upon Pharaoh’s rebellious heart and also to show the impotence of the Egyptian gods while demonstrating the power and glory of the one true God. So far we’ve seen plagues one through seven.
 - First God, working through His agents, Moses and Aaron, turned the Nile River into blood, a polluted stench that killed all of the fish and made it undrinkable.
 - After Pharaoh refused to heed this God sent a plague of frogs that covered the land. Still, Pharaoh would not let Israel go.
 - This was followed by a plague of lice that tormented the Egyptians – Still Pharaoh would not repent.
 - The lice were followed by a plague of flies but still Pharaoh remained stubborn

Chapter 8 ends:
Exodus 8:32 – “And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.”

 - As we’ve seen, **Chapter 9** records three more plagues:
The killing of the livestock, terrible boils, and hail
 - Last time we looked at the Seventh Plague – an unprecedented hail storm
2. Like the other plagues, this was a direct assault upon the Egyptian gods.
 - A. The Egyptians also worshipped gods of the sky.
 - There was Shu, the god of the atmosphere who held up the heavens
 - Tefnut was the goddess of moisture
 - Seth was the god present in the wind and storm
 - B. The Egyptians would have sought their gods but they would all prove impotent. With the plague of boils the magicians faded from the scene. Now they were all sinners in the hands of an angry God.
3. As we saw last time this was a hail storm of unprecedented magnitude. Huge balls of ice fell from the sky and crashed to the earth bringing devastation to the entire country side. In addition, lightning flashed like never before and the thunder was deafening. The storm went on and on with terrifying intensity.
4. Its no wonder that Pharaoh finally yielded before God. Finally, Pharaoh gave in and confessed his sin.

Exodus 9:27-28 – “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.”

5. We should rejoice in Pharaoh repenting and turning to God. He has confessed his sin. He has declared God to be the God of all righteousness. We would rejoice if it weren't for **Verses 34-35**
Exodus 9:34-35 – “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.”
6. Last time we looked at the danger of a counterfeit, temporary faith—a belief focusing more upon our self-interests than the interest of God. There is no desire to surrender the life and will to Him. There is no love for Him and a desire to honor Him. There is no hatred of sin. It is nothing more than a continuation of a sinful self-centered life. It is also a life completely void of a relationship with God. Notice Pharaoh asked Moses to pray for him—he was unable to pray for himself.
7. There were some in Egypt who were beginning to believe.
Exodus 9:20 – “He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses:”
 A. The word “fear” refers to reverence. There were some who were convinced of the mighty God of Israel.
 B. In every generation, including ours, there are some who are willing to follow God even when few others do. Christianity is always walking apart from the world. When Israel made their exodus many Egyptians accompanied them.
Exodus 12:38 And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, *even* very much cattle.
8. Most, however, continued in their unbelief.
 In spite of the terrible destruction, in spite of the terrible suffering **Verse 34** tells us that both Pharaoh and his servants hardened their hearts sinned even more.
Exodus 9:34 – “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.”
9. This is what is so amazing about the lost condition of man. In spite of the suffering and misery that sin brings he continues his rebellion against God. It is madness. It is insanity. It is beyond all logic and reason.
 God had just destroyed every crop and every animal left in the fields of Egypt but Pharaoh would not repent – in fact, he could not repent.
11. It is no different today. God's glorious Gospel is offered to every lost man, woman, and child. It is a promise of life; a promise of a fullness that make the pleasures of this life seem like wretchedness. It is the promise of a relationship with our Creator but most do not consider it worth their attention. They have become fools.
Romans 1:22 – “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”
12. Tonight I want to look at why this is such insanity.
- I. Rebelling against God is insane because of God's overwhelming power and authority
 A. Pharaoh thought he could resist the power and authority of God
Exodus 5:2 – “Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.”
 1. God was demonstrating in the plagues that His power is infinite
 2. Pharaoh actually believed he could resist such power
 3. It was insanity for Pharaoh to continue to resist such power

- B. God is Omnipotent – all powerful – His power knows no end, no boundaries.
1. God rules the earth with His great power
God’s dominion is boundless, universal, absolute
 2. Foolish, vain human beings insist on ruling their own lives.
In reality God rules all things and we must submit
 3. Who would be so foolish to actually believe they can stand against God’s almighty power – yet people do it every day
- C. Do you understand how insane it is to battle against God?
1. Do you understand that all sin is raising up to war against God?
 2. Who will be able to stand against God on the day of judgment?
 3. God commands all men to repent and believe the Gospel – it is insanity to resist this command.
- II. Rebelling against God is insane because it’s a complete disregard of God’s goodness
- A. Pharaoh failed to take into account all of God’s goodness
1. Egypt existed by the goodness of God
Acts 17:26 – “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;”
 2. Pharaoh existed by the goodness of God
Acts 17:28 – “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”
 3. Every ray of sunshine, every drop of water, every morsel of food, even the air Pharaoh breathed came from God.
 4. This is what makes our wickedness so vile and so completely insane
What man in his right mind would fail to give thanks if someone gave him a gift of immeasurable value – but wicked humanity will not give thanks.
Romans 1:21 – “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.”
- B. All of God’s goodness should lead a reasonable man to repent and serve God
1. His goodness is meant to lead us to repentance
Romans 2:4-5 – “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? ⁵ But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;”
 2. When the lost man continues in rebellion and hatred of this good and merciful God he is demonstrating that he is not in his right mind – he is insane.
- III. Rebelling against God is insane because it forfeits the rich blessings of God’s grace
- A. By His continued rebellion Pharaoh was forfeiting God’s blessings of grace

1. God warned Pharaoh of the coming hail storm – that was an offer of mercy.
Exodus 9:19 – “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.”
 2. By trusting in the Egyptian gods instead of the one true God he was demonstrating his insane blindness. He was turning his back upon God’s mercy
 3. There are blessings that accompany obedience
 - a. God words to Israel speak to all
Deuteronomy 11:26-28 – “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; ²⁷ A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: ²⁸ And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.”
 - b. Pharaoh says,
Exodus 5:2 – “Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?”
 - c. I’m not talking about a covenant of works
Lost humanity cannot appease the anger of God through their works and self-effort.
I’m talking about the obedience of the Gospel – to repent and believe. All of God’s blessings ultimately come through Christ.
- B. God promises the richest of blessings to those who obey Him in Christ
1. Jesus gives us a fullness of life
John 10:10 – “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.”
 - a. He gives us the peace of forgiveness and reconciliation
 - b. He gives us the comfort of His presence
 - c. He gives us the joy of a relationship with Him
 - d. He gives us the privilege of adoption
 2. God promises to all of His people that He works His purposes for their good
 3. To continue in rebellion is to forfeit God’s blessings in Christ.
- IV. Rebelling against God is insane because it is self-destructive
- A. Because of Pharaoh’s sinful rebellion Egypt was being destroyed
1. Their crops were gone, their livestock were gone
 2. Their bodies were covered with boils
 3. The hail storm had left Egypt desolate, yet the text says Pharaoh and Egypt continued to sin all the more.
Exodus 9:34 – “. . . he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.”
Is this not insane?

- B. Sin is always self-destructive
1. Look at the demon possessed man at the Gadarene tombs
Mark 5:5 – “And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.”
 2. Look at the child who disobeys knowing that he will be spanked.
 3. Look at the things sin causes people to do to themselves
 - a. Alcoholics lose their families, their jobs, their homes – often on the streets but still drinking – is that not insane?
 - b. People go to casinos that are designed to take your money – they do it because of their lust for money. They are willing to lose all that they have in the vain belief they can win – is that not insane?
 - c. Young people begin smoking. They think it makes them look cool. It makes them fit in with their friends. Yet it slowly consumes their body. It speeds aging, destroys the cardio-vascular system, causes cancer – is this not insane? I once saw a man in bed dying from lung cancer with a cigarette in his hand. Is that not insane
 - d. Millions are dying from AIDS because they refuse to submit to God’s purpose for human sexuality – is that not insane?
- C. All of this demonstrates how self-destructive sin is but none of these examples can compare with the judgment to come
1. We were created to live in harmony with God, to enjoy Him, to bring Him glory.
 2. Hell is a place created for rebels. Jesus said it is created for the devil and his angels.
Matthew 25:41 – “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”
 3. People are willing to forsake an eternity of abundant joy in the presence of Christ for a few the brief few moments of the pleasures of sin.
Isn’t this the height of the self-destructive nature of sin?
Is it not the height of insanity?

Conclusion:

1. God created us with marvelous minds. Adam gave names (classifications) for all the animals. We were created as rational creatures with the ability to relate to God, with the ability to enjoy God, to have a holy relationship with God. We were able to understand God. Sin has thrown us into a gulf of darkness.
2. Like brute beasts we now wander about seeking whatever pleases us. We flee from our Creator and pretend there is no God. This is insanity.
Psalm 14:1 – “The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.* They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is none that doeth good.*”
3. We need God to give us a new heart, a renewed mind. That is the only cure for our insanity.