

“The Livestock Smitten”
Exodus 9:1-9
(Preached at Trinity, February 4, 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. In **Chapter 5** we read that God commanded Pharaoh to release the Israelite slaves.
Exodus 5:1 – “And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.”
2. Pharaoh’s reply was that of stiffnecked arrogance.
Exodus 5:2 – “And Pharaoh said, 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.”
3. This led to a series of plagues designed to bring God’s judgment upon Pharaoh’s rebellious heart, to show the impotence of the Egyptian gods, and to demonstrate the power and glory of the one true God.
First God, working through His agents, Moses and Aaron, turned the Nile River into blood killing all of the fish.
After Pharaoh refused to heed this was followed by 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 – probably blood sucking dog-flies. The amazing thing was that no fly crossed into the land where the Israelites dwelled. The suffering of the Egyptians must have been great, yet still Pharaoh remained stubborn
4. **Chapter 8** ends:
Exodus 8:32 – “And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.”
5. **Chapter 9** records three more plagues—plagues five through seven:
The killing of the livestock, boils, and hail
The Fifth Plague was a terrible plague upon Egypt’s livestock.
Exodus 9:3 – “Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which *is* in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: *there shall be* a very grievous murrain.”
6. We’re not told the nature of this murrain. The word refers to a highly infectious disease of livestock. The Hebrew refers to destruction or great mortality.
7. Once again, like the plague of flies, this plague did not touch the Israelites. Not single one of the cattle of the Israelites died. It was a supernatural act of God.
8. There are always unbeliever who are quick to point out any suggestion of inconsistency in the Bible. This is one of their favorite passages.
Verse 6 says “all of the cattle in Egypt died.”
Verse 19 we find the Egyptians being commanded to bring their cattle in from the field. There are two suggested explanations:
 1. **Verse 3** seems to make a distinction between the cattle in the field and those in the barns. The livestock not in the field seems to have been spared.

2. As we sometimes see in the NT the word “all” can refer to some of all sort. None of their livestock went untouched
Instead of reading the Bible as God’s Word revealed they read it in unbelief and remain ignorant of its warnings. How tragic to miss the warnings of this passage.
9. This plague smote the Egyptians in several ways:
- They depended upon the oxen for their heavy labor in agriculture
 - They depended on camels, asses, and horses for their transportation
 - The cattle provided their milk
 - Cattle were also used as important part of their worship – there were many cults dedicated to the bull. This is where the Israelites came up with the idea of the golden calf. Once again we see God proving Himself all powerful in crushing Egypt’s idolatry.
Numbers 33:4 – “For the Egyptians buried all *their* firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.”
10. The Egyptian economy must have come to a halt. It would be like our dependence upon oil. If oil shuts down our economy shuts down. Pharaoh was particularly affected because there were large numbers of cattle under his control.
11. The plagues were increasing in severity. This was the first plague that resulted in death. If the lice were said to be the “finger of God” in **8:19** this was now the “hand of God.”
Exodus 9:3 – “Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle. . .”
12. Pharaoh continues to reveal much about the heart of man. He is not much different from every other human being in unbelief. Tonight as we continue to look at this passage I want us to look more at the nature of unbelief.
- I. The presence of God cannot be denied
- A. Our Creator has left an indelible mark of Himself upon His creation
1. You cannot fail to recognize His existence
 2. Every man can plainly see God – This doesn’t mean that all men acknowledge God. Pharaoh tried hard to deny the existence of God.
- B. There is also plain evidence of God’s governing creation
1. God is the cause and end of all things
 2. For example the seasons continue to cycle
The effects of the seasons upon the earth are consistent
 3. Every beast behaves according to its nature – Where do they get what we call instinct?
 4. The weather is carefully governed. Why do we still have enough fresh water? Why are natural disasters held in check? Why hasn’t a huge hurricane destroyed the coastal states? Why hasn’t a huge meteorite destroyed the earth?
 5. Although God is clearly revealed in His acts of providence many today refuse to see God’s hand in natural disasters (although we still refer to them as acts of God). Most people see no design behind hurricanes or earthquakes or plagues. The AIDS virus is simply a virus. We would rather worship “Mother Nature.”
 6. The Bible teaches God’s absolute sovereignty over His creation
B.B. Warfield – “All things without exception, indeed, are disposed by Him . . . and if calamity falls upon man it is the Lord that has done it.”

- C. Pharaoh has been brought to know the existence and power of God
1. At first he denied the existence of the Hebrew God
Exodus 5:2 – “And Pharaoh said, 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.”
 - a. In **Chapter 7** Aaron’s rod turned into a serpent but Pharaoh’s magicians easily copied the miracle and Pharaoh was unimpressed.
 - b. Then the Nile was turned to blood and again the magicians copied the miracle and again Pharaoh went home unimpressed
Exodus 7:23 – “And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also.”
 2. By the time God sent the frogs, however, Pharaoh had become convinced. The magicians were able to bring up frogs with their enchantments but Pharaoh knew they were no match for God.
Exodus 8:8 – “Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people;”
 3. Pharaoh could neither doubt the presence nor the power of God but these things were not sufficient to change his heart.

II. God’s presence creates curiosity

- A. Pharaoh sent messengers to Goshen to see if the Word of God was true
Exodus 9:7 – “And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead.”
1. Pharaoh was not interested in repenting
 He was merely gratifying his curiosity
 2. Upon hearing of the indisputable evidence he remain unchanged
Exodus 9:7 – “And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.”
- B. Millions of people are curious about God
1. This was Herod’s motive in receiving Christ – idle curiosity
Luke 23:8 – “And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long *season*, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.”
 2. Human beings are curious about God even in the midst of their rebellion. They investigate religion - They read books about God and then in their skepticism they seek to undermine God and His Word.
 3. Listen to the news media – they cannot help but speak of God.
 4. They are not interested in following Him, just investigating ways to discredit God and His people.
 5. Even those whose curiosity lead them to join churches have no desire to bow before Him.
2 Timothy 3:5-7 – “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ⁶ For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ⁷ Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

6. God isn't interested in our idle curiosity. He demands that we seek Him with our whole heart.
Psalm 111:1-4 – "Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation. ² The works of the LORD *are* great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. ³ His work *is* honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever. ⁴ He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion."

III. In spite of the overwhelming evidence man continues in unbelief

- A. Pharaoh would not surrender his will to God
Exodus 9:7 – "And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go."
 1. It wasn't for lack of being convinced that God existed
 2. It wasn't for lack of being convinced of God's overwhelming power
 3. Pharaoh knew absolutely that he could not stand against the mighty power of God. He simply could not be moved to surrender
- B. Salvation demands a supernatural work of God
 1. Mankind is naturally bent on sinning.
Romans 3:12-18 – "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. ¹³ Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: ¹⁴ Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: ¹⁵ Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: ¹⁶ Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: ¹⁷ And the way of peace have they not known: ¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes."
 2. No man will of his own will set aside self-will and give himself over to God – we are no different than Pharaoh. No, not with mighty signs and wonders.
 3. The heart must be changed and faith must be imparted. Once a person comes to an understanding that Jesus Christ is true the only thing keeping them from God is their hardness of heart.
Ephesians 4:18 – "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:"
 4. No matter how convincing our argument we are unable to change the heart of a lost sinner
Jeremiah 13:23 – "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *then* may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."
 5. Do you see how dependent we are upon God in evangelism? The modern idea that we can convince a sinner through carefully selected arguments is not proven by Scripture.

- C. Multitudes around us are convinced of the presence and power of God yet refuse to submit to Him.
1. People all across our land are convinced that there is a God
They call out to Him when they are in trouble
They use His name in vain
For some they are convinced enough to join a church
 2. But they are not convinced enough to bow before Him

Conclusion:

1. The plagues against Egypt are nothing less than God's wrath being revealed against ungodliness.
Romans 1:18 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”
2. Eventually everyone who rebels against God will suffer His wrath. It may come in many various ways but it will surely come even if it is delayed until the final judgment.
3. Men today are trying hard to ignore God—even though He makes Himself clearly seen. People today are trying to ignore His law. They are trying to ignore His authority.
4. But God will not be ignored. He will be loved and obeyed. He will be revered and served. Those who refuse will be crushed by God's overwhelming power.
There is no neutral ground with God. He demands our all.