

## Exodus 9:13-21

### Plague 7: Hail

I want you to think back to when you embraced Christ

- Think of the circumstances that God used to bring you to Himself
- Go back even earlier, before your conversion, and think about the number of times that you rejected Christ

What did God have to do in order to get your attention?

- Did He take away something special to you?
- Did He give you something you didn't want?

As we interact with each other and share our testimonies, listen for the ways in which God acted to bring His people to Himself

- Because we are rebels at heart, God has to overcome our pride, rebellion, and arrogance

He certainly has the power, ability, and authority to bring us to Himself instantaneously

- But He chooses to work alongside us, overcoming our unbelief in mysterious ways

We return this morning to our study of Exodus

- We will be studying the seventh plague

God has been gradually showing Himself to Pharaoh

- But Pharaoh has remained hard-hearted

### Let's read Exodus 9:13-21

#### I. The LORD's revelation (9:13-21)

13 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh

Verse 13 is the beginning of the third cycle of plagues

- As we discussed a few weeks ago, the first nine plagues occur in three cycles of three

This morning, we will investigate the 7<sup>th</sup> plague

- This is the first plague of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle

As we have seen in plagues 1 & 4 (the first plague in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cycles, respectively), Moses is commanded to meet Pharaoh early in the morning

- The early morning appointment is what ties the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> plagues together<sup>1</sup>

This is precisely what we are told in verse 13

- The LORD told Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh"

The missing element here that was present in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> plagues is the Nile River

- We are not told specifically that Pharaoh was at the Nile<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Exodus*, 361.

The word for “stand” means to hold one’s ground<sup>3</sup>

- It is a word that denotes direct confrontation
- The word was actually used of an army taking up position for battle<sup>4</sup>

Yet once again, Moses’ stance is not a casual, haphazard one

- Rather, it is a stance of confrontation

Pharaoh has pitted himself against Yahweh

- There is a battle raging!

Plague 7 is the longest of the plagues

- Part of that is due to the fact that this plague has a lengthy theological introduction<sup>5</sup>

Pharaoh needs to understand the “why” as well as the “what” of Israel’s release

- This isn’t a trite matter

and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews,

Moses is instructed to tell Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews”

This has become a familiar refrain throughout the plague accounts

- It was repeated in plagues 1, 2, 4 and 5

The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> plagues were without warning

- So it is natural for there not to be a “thus says the LORD” to Pharaoh

The phrase “the God of the Hebrews” was mentioned back in the very first plague

- It is repeated here in the seventh plague

Yahweh was not a local god delegated to the land of Israel

- He was the Sovereign God of all the Earth

Back in Exodus 5:2, Pharaoh made the statement, “Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go.”

- Pharaoh admitted that he was ignorant when it comes to knowing Yahweh

What we see through the various plagues is Yahweh teaching Pharaoh who He is

Here in verse 13, Pharaoh is reminded that Yahweh is “the God of the Hebrews”

- They are His people

We have seen God shelter His people from some of the plagues

- No flies (4<sup>th</sup> plague)
- No death of their livestock (5<sup>th</sup> plague)
- No boils (6<sup>th</sup> plague)

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<sup>2</sup> John L. Mackay, *A Mentor Commentary, Exodus*, 169.

<sup>3</sup> John D. Currid, *An EP Study Commentary, Exodus, Vol 1*, 184.

<sup>4</sup> John L. Mackay, *A Mentor Commentary, Exodus*, 158.

<sup>5</sup> R. Alan Cole, *Tyndale OT Commentary, Exodus*, 97.

We will continue to see God protecting His people in the 7<sup>th</sup> plague

- Goshen will be spared (9:26)

“Let My people go, that they may serve Me.

This phrase is also becoming very familiar

- It was mentioned in plagues 1, 2, 4, & 5

Because plagues 3 & 6 were unannounced, without warning, there would be no reason for including this phrase

Through these repeated instructions, Yahweh tells Pharaoh, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me”

- Israel is “My people” – they belong to Yahweh
- “let them go” – they don’t belong in Egypt
- “that they may serve Me” – Israel was designed to worship and serve Yahweh, not Pharaoh

Up until this point, however, Pharaoh has not obeyed Yahweh

- Pharaoh wants Israel to be his people
- Pharaoh refuses to let Israel leave Egypt
- Pharaoh wants Israel to serve him

Again, we see that Pharaoh is actively setting himself up against Yahweh

- Pharaoh is acting as if he is Israel’s god!

14 or this time I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people.

Pharaoh is given a stern, stiff warning here in verse 14

- Yahweh tells Pharaoh that if he doesn’t obey, “this time I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people”

Thus far, there have been six (6) plagues sent against Egypt

- The Nile turned to blood
- Frogs
- Gnats
- Flies
- Death of livestock
- Boils

But now Yahweh says that He will send “all My plagues”

- It is a word that denotes that which strikes and causes injury<sup>6</sup>
- It was a devastating blow struck by God<sup>7</sup>

Up until this point, the previous six plagues have been preliminary<sup>8</sup>

- Plagues 7-10 would truly impact Pharaoh and the Egyptians in a significant manner

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<sup>6</sup> Mackay, 170.

<sup>7</sup> John D. Currid, *An EP Study Commentary, Exodus, Vol 1*, 201.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas K. Stuart, *NAC, Exodus*, 231.

If Pharaoh did not send Israel out, then Yahweh would send His plagues on Egypt<sup>9</sup>

- It's the same root word

In other words, there is so much more that God could do

- And He will do it, if Pharaoh doesn't repent

Who would be the intended recipients of this plague?

- You
- Your servants
- Your people

The first audience is "you"

- Obviously, a direct reference to Pharaoh
- The king of Egypt

If you are using the King James or New King James, you read, "heart" instead of "you"

- The literal rendering of the Hebrew Text is "heart"

Do you see the difference?

- The LORD is saying, "Pharaoh, I am going to bring ALL My plagues and aim them right at your heart."

These plagues would strike a mortal wound to the king of Egypt<sup>10</sup>

- They didn't attack his body, per se
- They attacked his heart/mind

Attacking Egypt wasn't enough

- Attacking Egypt's people wasn't enough
- Attacking Egypt's gods wasn't enough
- Attacking Egypt's magicians wasn't enough
- Attacking Egypt's livestock wasn't enough

Some people need a severe wake-up call

- Pharaoh was one such person

But Pharaoh wasn't the only intended audience

- Yahweh was also bringing His plagues on "your servants and your people"

The battle lines were being drawn

- You were either for Yahweh
- Or you were against Yahweh

The Egyptian people would have an opportunity to show where their loyalty and allegiance were

- In verse 19, the Egyptian people would have an opportunity to fear the word of the LORD

Some did

- Others did not

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<sup>9</sup> Currid, 201.

<sup>10</sup> Calvin, quoted in C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, Exodus*, 318.

This shows the grace of God, doesn't it?

- Yahweh isn't just the God of the Hebrews

The vast majority of the people in this audience are Gentiles

- Yet we are the recipients of redemption
- Jesus is our Lord and Savior

so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth.

Why was the LORD bringing all of His plagues on Pharaoh, his servants, and his people?

- “so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth”

That's an incredible statement

- One that is so crystal clear

We can't skip over the significance of the word “know”

- Pharaoh admitted that he didn't know Yahweh (5:2)
- Before the plagues began – “And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst” (7:5)
- Plague 1 – “By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it shall be turned to blood” (7:17)
- Plague 2 – “that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God” (8:10)
- Plague 4 – “But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of insects will be there, in order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land” (8:22)

What would Pharaoh and the Egyptians learn from plagues 7-10?

- “that there is no one like Me in all the earth”

Yet again, the supremacy and sovereignty of God are stated in very clear terms

- Yahweh is not a small, local god over Israel
- He is the Lord of the universe!

The king of Egypt needed to understand that Yahweh is King of kings and Lord of lords<sup>11</sup>

- Yahweh is the supreme Creator
- Yahweh has unlimited dominion

In the words of Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the LORD's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.”

In Egypt, Pharaoh was sovereign

- Everything flowed down from him

But even Pharaoh was about to realize that he wasn't sovereign

- He, too, was submissive to the sovereignty of Yahweh

Verse 14 stresses the incomparable nature of Yahweh

- He is without equal
- There is no one else even remotely close to Him!

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<sup>11</sup> Mackay, 170.

15 For *if by* now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth.

As if verse 14 wasn't strong enough, verse 15 is given

- It, too, has some very strong, sobering language for Pharaoh to hear

“For *if by* now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth”

- Yahweh tells Pharaoh, “If I wanted to, I could have already wiped you off the face of this Earth!”

The Egyptians, along with Pharaoh, could have perished long ago

- But God was gracious

The verb for “**cut off**” means to be hidden

- If God wanted, He could have removed the Egyptians into obscurity<sup>12</sup>

Yet again, God's sovereignty is put on display

- Pharaoh is powerless before Him
- The magicians are impotent before Him
- The people are helpless before Him

It was way back at the end of plague 3 that the magicians realized, “**this is the finger of God**” (8:19)

- They bowed out of the competition

16 But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.

So why hasn't God taken Pharaoh out?

- Why has God tolerated Pharaoh's stubbornness and pride?

Clearly, it not a matter of God's ability to do so

- Verse 15 made it clear that God could have eliminated Pharaoh long ago

In verse 16, Yahweh gives two (2) reasons why He has tolerated Pharaoh

- Why He has not taken Pharaoh out of the picture yet

First, Yahweh would show His power to Pharaoh

- The plagues were certainly demonstrations of God's power and ability

This is yet another reason why we can't look at the plagues and interpret them merely as a natural occurrence

- They weren't just natural phenomena

The plagues were Divine, supernatural miracles

- There is no other satisfactory explanation

Pharaoh wouldn't see the full fury of God's power

- No one person could ever handle seeing such a demonstration

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<sup>12</sup> Currid, 202.

But Pharaoh would be shown much more of God's power than the common person

- Yet, he would continue to harden his heart
- He would continue to disobey

Second, Yahweh would proclaim His name through Pharaoh

- Does that strike you?

How in the world could an unbelieving, obstinate individual such as Pharaoh actually help to bring about the proclamation of God's name?

Notice how widespread the fame of God would be broadcasted through Pharaoh

- "through all the earth"

Not just in Egypt

- But the entire world!

Isn't it interesting that we are here in America talking about an Egyptian king who thought he was god?

- God was using him as an example

I mentioned earlier in our study of Exodus that the Egyptians never recorded anything that was negative against them

- No military losses
- No mention of the Exodus

But Egypt was not able to stop the spread of this story to other nations<sup>13</sup>

- "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt" (Joshua 2:10a)
- "Your servants have come from a very far country because of the fame of the LORD your God; for we have heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt" (Joshua 9:9)
- "Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness" (1 Sam 4:8)

Is it any wonder, then, that the apostle Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to cite this verse, Exodus 9:16, in Romans 9:17?

Listen to the near context of Romans 9

- "What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, 'I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION.' So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH.' So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. You will say to me then, 'Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?' On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And *He did so* to make known the riches

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<sup>13</sup> John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, 125.

of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, *even us*, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.” (Rom 9:14-24)

Paul used these words in Romans 9 toward the Jews

- To show them that God is free to show mercy or harden whom He wills

He is not obligated to save everyone

- Not even all the Jews!

It is easy to say, “God is sovereign.”

- It’s quite another thing to understand the sovereignty of God

He doesn’t have to show compassion on anyone

- There is no one worthy of His compassion
- There is no one worthy of His mercy
- There is no one worthy of His grace

In the words of Romans 9:18, “**So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.**”

- God is totally just in His actions

No one can criticize Him saying, “That’s not right!”

- We may not see His actions as being fair
- But that’s because our view of fair is “give everyone a chance, and start with me.”

### 17 Still you exalt yourself against My people by not letting them go.

In light of such a marvelous portrait of God’s universal glory, we have verse 17

- Pharaoh is a glory-robber
- Pharaoh steals the glory from God

God, who knows the heart of Pharaoh, says, “**still you exalt yourself against My people by not letting them go**”

The phrase “**exalt yourself**” is very picturesque

- It describes just how selfish he was

“**exalt yourself**”

- This word meant to oppose
- It is the thought of setting oneself up as a dam<sup>14</sup>

This word was used of constructing a highway by piling up materials above the level of the surrounding area<sup>15</sup>

Instead of being obedient, Pharaoh was actually acting like a roadblock<sup>16</sup>

- He was a blockade to Israel serving and worshipping Yahweh

This shows the hostility and presumption of Pharaoh

- He was literally standing in the way

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<sup>14</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, 318.

<sup>15</sup> Mackay, 172.

<sup>16</sup> Cornelis Houtman, *Historical Commentary on the Old Testament, Exodus, Vol 2*, 88.



Yahweh was about to remove that blockade from the path

- Israel belonged to God
- Israel would worship Yahweh

18 Behold, about this time tomorrow, I will send a very heavy hail, such as has not been *seen* in Egypt from the day it was founded until now.

The consequences for disobedience are given in verse 18

- A hailstorm would attack Egypt

This plague wouldn't happen "tomorrow"

- It would happen "about this time tomorrow"

Yahweh was showing precision in when He would bring the plagues

- Not at random
- But with tremendous accuracy

Yahweh would send "a very heavy hail"

- This would be no normal hailstorm

Yet again, we have Yahweh using "heavy"

- Pharaoh's heart is heavy (7:14)
- There were "heavy" swarms of flies (8:24)
- There was a very "heavy" pestilence on the livestock (9:3)

Pharaoh has proven himself to be a very hard-hearted individual

- So God will gradually increase the intensity of the plagues to match his hard-heart<sup>17</sup>

This time, in the seventh plague, God will use a very severe hailstorm

- Verse 18 tells us, "such as has not been *seen* in Egypt from the day it was founded until now"

Next month, the United States will celebrate its 234<sup>th</sup> birthday

- That's a long time!
- But in reality, that's a very short time

It's been over 2000 years since Christ

- America wasn't discovered then!

From what we know, Egypt has been around since ~3000 BC

- That's 5,000 years ago!

Egypt knew this as well

- They prided themselves as being an older, established civilization<sup>18</sup>

So when Moses wrote about this hailstorm of the seventh plague, he wrote, "such as has not been *seen* in Egypt from the day it was founded until now"

- They had never seen anything like this!

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<sup>17</sup> Currid, 203.

<sup>18</sup> Stuart, 233.

This storm was incomparable because it pointed to the incomparable God who had caused it<sup>19</sup>

19 Now therefore send, bring your livestock and whatever you have in the field to safety.

God shows His incredible grace here in verse 19

- He has already promised that a hailstorm will come upon Egypt on the next day

But God gives yet another opportunity for the Egyptians to avoid the devastation

- Yahweh invites the Egyptians to bring in their livestock and whatever else was in the field

The livestock would have been let out to pasture by this point

- The flooding would have decreased
- The animals were allowed out into the fields

Even in His wrath, God is gracious<sup>20</sup>

- Both toward mankind and animals

Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail comes down on them, will die.”””

But there is a grave warning associated with the seventh plague

- “Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail comes down on them, will die”

This is the first plague in which God promises the death of humans<sup>21</sup>

- Not just any humans
- But disobedient humans who don't heed His Word

The hail would be so severe that it would destroy everything in its path

- It would kill “man and beast”

Hailstorms were not that uncommon in Egypt

- They had seen hailstorms before

Perhaps this is the reason why Pharaoh and so many of his people chose not to do anything to avoid the hailstorm

- They had lived through many before
- This one would not be that bad, right?

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<sup>19</sup> Mackay, 172.

<sup>20</sup> Houtman, 90.

<sup>21</sup> John I. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Exodus*, 129.

20 The one among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses;

What we find, according to verse 20, is that some actually listened to Moses

- “The one among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses”

This is amazing

- There are actually people who heeded the message!

We aren't told how many

- We aren't told their names

But there were some “who feared the word of the LORD”

- This is far more than can be said of Pharaoh!

These individuals “made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses”

- These people were of some importance since they had servants

Why did these people take such drastic action?

- Because they “feared the word of the LORD”

Does this mean that they embraced Yahweh as their God?

- That may be going a bit too far
- At least for the moment

We do know that some Egyptians left with Israel after the Passover (cf. 12:38)

- No doubt, these Egyptians had embraced Yahweh

21 but he who paid no regard to the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.

As encouraging as verse 20 was, verse 21 is equally discouraging

- Some heeded the message
- Others did not

“but he who paid no regard to the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field”

- “Why bother?”<sup>22</sup>
- “What's the big deal? It's just a hailstorm. Have you never seen a hailstorm before?”

These individuals didn't take any steps toward protecting their servants or livestock

- They just went on their way, as if nothing would happen

It sounds foolish, doesn't it?

- Why would someone deliberately choose to disobey the Word of God for the sake of convenience?
- Why would someone undermine the imminent danger when God had already promised what would happen?

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<sup>22</sup> Stuart, 235.

Dear friend, we have all been guilty of the sin of Pharaoh and the Egyptians

- We have all deliberately disobeyed the Word of God
- We have all refused to obey the Word of God

Every time we sin, we are disobeying the Word of God

- When we sin, we throw our fist at God and say, "I refuse to obey."

But isn't God's grace and patience remarkable?

- 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

Why is God so gracious with sinners?

- Because He is wooing us toward repentance

We don't deserve God's patience

- We don't deserve His grace

Let's marvel this morning at God

- His long-suffering
- His awesome plan
- His amazing grace

Outside of God's grace, we would all be Pharaohs this morning

- Self-proclaimed rulers
- Hard-hearted rebels
- Glory-stealing humans

We are here as God's people

- Because of His grace
- And for His glory