

**Exodus 9:13-26**

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**9:13** *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me.*

After the Egyptian population had endured a period of suffering from God's declared judgment of boils, He once again spoke to Moses, telling him to appear before Pharaoh. Moses was to tell Pharaoh that the God of the Hebrews commanded him to let God's people go.

This conversation had already happened several times. The wording of God's message to Pharaoh makes it clear that Moses was not the person who was making this demand. Rather, it was the command of the Lord Who was the God of the Hebrews. Pharaoh was not ignorant of the identity of the Person Who was commanding him to let God's people go. However, hearing the Name of the Lord only made Pharaoh grind his teeth in anger.

**9:14** *For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.*

Generally, it is assumed that Pharaoh suffered like everyone else during God's judgment. Whether that is an accurate assumption or not, Moses was to inform Pharaoh that this plague, and all following plagues were going to affect Pharaoh directly. He was going to personally feel the full impact of God's judgment. In fact, God was going to strike Pharaoh deliberately and effectively in every event that followed. If Pharaoh had any doubt about the One Who was orchestrating these events, all question would be wiped away in the events by which God

would let him know that there was no one on earth like the God of Israel.

**9:15** *For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth.*

The Lord continued to inform Moses about the message that he was to tell Pharaoh. The Lord wanted Pharaoh to realize that, despite the severity of God's judgments that he had already experienced, He was operating not from anger but in the context of His mercy. What Pharaoh had already witnessed should have convinced him that the Lord was his superior. His power was unassailable. It was invincible. In His mercy the Lord had not killed Pharaoh. He could have, but He did not. This awareness of God's mercy creates the environment in which Pharaoh should understand what was about to happen to him.

**9:16** *But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.*

Nevertheless, there was a reason for the display of God's power revealed in these judgments. Moses was to inform Pharaoh about this purpose. Pharaoh had been born, raised, educated, and lifted to the throne of Egypt for one primary reason—to witness God's power. In the display of God's unparalleled power, His Name would be proclaimed throughout the earth. The earth was populated by God's people as well as those who were not God's people. Neither group would be able to deny the evidence of God's power when they witnessed everything that He was doing in Egypt. Both the small and the great, whether God's people or not, everyone would hear of what the Lord had done—and they would tremble.

**9:17** *You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go.*

God told Pharaoh through Moses that the ruler was still placing himself in a position of superiority over God's people. He was not recognizing the power of God against which he was pitted in a losing confrontation. Pharaoh thought of himself in an exalted manner. In that self-acclaimed exaltation, he thought of the Hebrews, God's people, only as his slaves. To let them go, especially after a prolonged encounter with the God of Israel, would be an admission that he was unwilling to face. He would see himself, not in the eyes of his personal self-glorification, but in the context of God's superior power. He would be forced to realize that he was only a pawn in God's plan to set His people free.

**9:18** *Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now.*

Twenty-four hours! That is all the time Pharaoh had to prepare. There were no conditions in this message. There was no offer of reprieve if Pharaoh would let God's people go. There was only the decree of the Lord. Twenty-four hours after the message was delivered, God would send a hailstorm of such intensity and ferocity that there would be no comparison to any other storm in Egypt's entire history. The seventh plague was decreed, and the self-exalting Pharaoh was powerless to stop it.

**9:19** *Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them."*

God spoke to Moses, giving him the message that he was to deliver to Pharaoh (*Exodus 9:13*). The text does not indicate that

Moses went to Pharaoh and delivered the message. Rather, the text flows together, linking God's word to Moses in such a way that the message is delivered both to Moses and to Pharaoh at what appears to be the same time. When God told Pharaoh that this judgment would begin in twenty-four hours, He also told Pharaoh the intensity of the judgment. He warned Pharaoh to get his livestock under cover. If they were not under cover, they would die. Anyone not taking heed of God's warning would die. The warning also informed Pharaoh that their homes would be spared; they would not be destroyed in the coming hailstorm.

**9:20-21** *<sup>20</sup>Then whoever feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, <sup>21</sup>but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the LORD left his slaves and his livestock in the field.*

Twenty-four hours! Everyone who feared the Lord's warning scurried about getting the livestock into shelters. If they did not do this, the animals would be killed by the hail. Everyone was busy with the immediate task at hand. Of course, there were some who considered the word of the Hebrew God as meaningless. They continued to work in the fields, using the labor of their animals to get the job done.

**9:22** *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man and beast and every plant of the field, in the land of Egypt."*

The next day, the Lord gave Moses the instruction that would initiate God's judgment displayed by a hailstorm so intense that every man or beast caught outside without shelter would die. The crops in the fertile farmland along the Nile would also be destroyed.

**9:23** *Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt.*

Moses did what the Lord told him to do. He stretched his staff toward heaven and the Lord responded by sending a hailstorm that swept the land of Egypt. The hail was accompanied with numerous lightning strikes that struck the earth from heaven. God's judgment was expressed by the intensity of the storm. God was angry, and He let everyone know it.

**9:24** *There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.*

The text expands on the severity of the storm. The hail was heavy, indicating that the weight of the stones was enough to kill a man. If the hail was the size of a tennis ball, the stones would weigh about two pounds (.91 kg) each. A storm in which the hail fell so quickly created an effect similar to the biblical form of execution—stoning. One strike on the head would create a concussion. Many strikes would result in death. In the middle of the hail, numerous lightning bolts repeatedly struck the earth in a dazzling display. The noise generated by the storm was deafening. The people of Egypt watched and trembled in fear. Nothing like this had ever been recorded in the history of Egypt.

**9:25** *The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field.*

No living creature could survive the intensity of a storm of this size. It is likely that there were also high winds. All the vegetation was literally shredded by the combination of wind, hail, and lightning.

**9:26** *Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail.*

Miraculously, the land of Goshen was again spared. The people of Israel, God's chosen nation, did not suffer the effects of God's judgment upon Egypt. They experienced God's mercy while Egypt suffered under God's anger.

It is certain that there was no construction going on during this storm. The people of Israel simply rested from their labors as they looked at the horizon and saw the storm that was consuming the landscape that surrounded them. They had suffered the brutality of their Egyptian taskmasters for many years. Now the Lord had unleashed His anger and the Egyptians suffered for their offense against God's people. The land of the Hebrew slaves remained untouched.

### **Notes/Applications**

The devastation caused by this plague was incalculable. Animals and people killed where they stood. Crops were shredded by hail. Looking at the landscape, one could see only what appeared to be the result of a raging battle. And the nation of Egypt had lost. It would take years to rebuild the nation and its economy.

It is important to review the text of this passage.

<sup>20</sup>*Then whoever feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses,*

<sup>21</sup>*but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the LORD left his slaves and his livestock in the field. (Exodus 9:20–21)*

The word of the Lord was clearly stated. If you paid attention to what God said, you initiated those steps that would guarantee your survival. You would gather your animals, lead them into a sheltered space, and then sequester yourself in your house for the duration of the storm. That made perfect sense.

If you did not pay attention to what the Lord said, you just continued to go about your daily routines. You plowed your fields. You harvested your grain. You gathered your harvest into your barns. Life simply followed its daily routines. For those who did not take God seriously, this made perfect sense to them, too.

Either you paid attention to what the Lord said or decided that what He said did not matter. The consequences of that decision made all the difference in the world. Those who listened to the word of the Lord lived. Those who did not died.

This event, couched in the context of Pharaoh's contest with the God of the Hebrews, represents the outcome of God's promise to Abraham (*Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14*). The Apostle Paul makes the outcome clear. <sup>16</sup>*Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)*

The gospel message also is abundantly clear. In the midst of God's judgment on the obstinate rebellion of mankind, God offers a Shelter from the storm that is coming. That shelter is Jesus Christ, sacrificed on a Roman cross, to save people from God's wrath. To save them from the judgment they rightly deserve. To provide God's atonement for their sin.

If you take God at His word, you will find shelter from the storm in Jesus Christ. If you think that what God says does not matter, you will die. These are the only two possible outcomes. There are no others.

<sup>19</sup>*I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, <sup>20</sup>loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land*

*that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” (Deuteronomy 30:19–20)*