

February 25

Scriptures: Read Exodus 9

Key Verse: “But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.” (Exodus 9:116)

Overview

Moses continues untiringly before Pharaoh – “let My people go”. Each plague was conditioned upon Pharaoh’s stubborn refusal. The plagues crippled the greatest nation on earth, but before most of them there came a warning, and for those who feared the God of the Israelites there was relief from the effects of the plague. The fifth plague was a severe and fatal disease targeted against the sacred bull and cow. It hit all the livestock of the Egyptians who did not heed the warning and who had left their livestock out “in the field” (9:3). When the Bible reads “all” it must be a general term for “most”, since later we see that those Egyptians who feared God and once again heeded the warning brought their livestock in from the field so that the plague of hail would not kill them (9:20, 21). The Lord set a time when the plague would come and He once again made a distinction between the Egyptian’s livestock and the Israelite’s. All this, Moses related to Pharaoh beforehand, so he could see for himself that it was the power of their God. Indeed not one of the Israelite’s livestock were killed or affected by this disease, yet Pharaoh continued to further harden his heart.

The sixth plague of boils came without warning as a sudden judgment upon the Egyptians and even their beasts. Pharaoh’s magicians were no exception. Their powers could not cure the boils and they came under the judgment of God for resisting the truth (see 2 Timothy 3:8, 9). Again we see the stubbornness and rebellion of Pharaoh which cause God to harden his heart.

Before the seventh plague God sent Moses to warn Pharaoh, saying, “Let my people go, so that they may worship Me, or this time I will send the full force of My plagues against you” (9:14, N.I.V.). God told Moses to tell Pharaoh that He could have killed him and his people in order to free Israel, but God preserved Pharaoh’s life so that he might experience Jehovah’s mighty wonders and as a result the Name of God and His mighty deeds in judgment would be declared throughout the whole earth (9:15, 16; The Apostle Paul quotes this verse in Romans 9:17 to express the sovereignty of God). It was God’s desire that the whole world might know and believe in Him, not just one country. Later on in history, the nation of Israel missed part of their purpose as being a light for all nations. Today the believers in Jesus are to be lights to the world (Philippians 2:15). We see a similar picture foretold in the last days when the wrath of God will be poured on the earth, but rather than repent, they will curse God (Revelations 16:9, 11, 21). The seventh plague was a terrible hail and lightening storm which killed anything that was exposed, including plants and trees. It was against the gods Isis and Seth who were believed to be their protectors from such disasters.

There had never been anything like that in Egypt before or since that time. Once again, God gave a gracious warning of the coming danger (just as He does today) so that those who believe and fear Him might save their livestock and themselves by taking cover. Again Israel was completely

spared. God also showed His mercy in the timing of the storm for, although it destroyed the barley and flax, it came too early to destroy the wheat, which was an important staple for them.

This plague brought Pharaoh to the point of confessing that he had sinned, but Moses, with the gifts of discernment and knowledge, knew that he was not really humble or sincere and his heart was still against God (9:30). Pharaoh was not sorry for his sin; he was merely sorry for the result of it. Moses set the time for when he would stop the storm, so they might again know it was the Lord's doing, for "the earth is the Lord's" (9:29). When Pharaoh saw the storm had stopped, he again hardened his heart as God had told Moses he would do.

Prayer

O God, grant us the grace to be genuinely sorry for our sin. Forgive us for the times when we're only sorry for the consequences of our sin.