

## “The Plague of Hail – the Danger of False Conversion”

Exodus 9:13-35

(Preached at Trinity, February 18, 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 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 killing all of the fish.
  - 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, boils, and hail
  - Last time we looked at the Sixth Plague – a terrible plague of boils  
It must have been a terrible torment as these open puss filled sores covered them from head to toe.
2. Like the other plagues, this was a direct assault upon the Egyptian gods.
  - A. The Egyptians had several gods of medicine. Whenever someone became ill they would go to the priests who were able to go through the religious ritual calling upon the appropriate god for healing.
  - B. When the Egyptians were faced with this disease they responded by trusting in these pagan gods. God was sending this plague of boils to prove the impotence of the gods the Egyptians trusted for healing.
  - C. When the magicians were called to perform their wonders they too were helpless and covered with boils.  
**Exodus 9:11** – “And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.”
3. In spite of the great suffering of Egypt Pharaoh continued to resist God.  
**Exodus 9:12** – “And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.”

4. In **Verse 13** God tells Moses to stand before Pharaoh and once again command him to release his hold upon Israel:  
**Exodus 9:13-15** – “Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that *there is* none like me in all the earth. For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.”
5. In **Verse 16** God reminds Pharaoh of His sovereign purpose—He will get glory from all men.  
**Exodus 9:16** – “. . . for this *cause* have I raised thee up, for to shew *in* thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.”
6. Beginning with **Verse 18** God declares the Seventh plague upon Egypt—a hail storm of a magnitude never before experienced.  
**Exodus 9:18** – “Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.”
7. It must have been a terrible storm.  
 On June 22nd, 2003 a super cell storm moved across Aurora, Nebraska which dropped the largest hailstone ever measured in the United States. It was 7 inches in diameter. Witnesses to the Aurora storm said, "Even hailstones that didn't break records were easily big enough to bust roofs and gutters in Aurora and make whistling noises as they fell through the air. They left craters in the ground up to 14 inches across and 3 inches deep.
8. Imagine such a storm lasting an hour or two hours or two days. What did the land look like when it was over? It must have been total desolation with every shrub and every tree destroyed.
9. Even with God's great judgment, however, there was mercy.  
**Exodus 9:19-21** – “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. <sup>20</sup> He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: <sup>21</sup> And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field.”  
 A. God gave them opportunity to spare themselves and their cattle  
 B. Even the duration was by God's mercy.  
 C. Notice God's mercy upon Israel – they were unaffected by the storm.  
 D. This is in contrast to the final judgment when there will be no mercy.  
**Exodus 9:26** – “Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, was there no hail.”
10. Finally, Pharaoh gives in and confesses 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. <sup>28</sup> 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.”
11. We should rejoice in Pharaoh repenting and turning to God. This is classic conversion. He has humbled himself. He has admitted and confessed his sin. He has declared God to be the God of all righteousness—that God is just in His condemnation—that he is deserving of God's wrath. He promises to turn from his sin by releasing the people. We would rejoice if it weren't for **Verses 34-35** – testimony to his hard heart.

**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. <sup>35</sup> And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.”

12. Pharaoh’s confession and conversion was temporary – unfortunately like so many today. Tonight I want to spend a few minutes looking at the subject of false conversions

II. There is a great danger of possessing a counterfeit temporary faith

A. The Bible has much to say about those who possess a temporary faith

1. The Parable of the Sower speaks of a temporary faith

**Luke 8:13** – “They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.”

2. Paul spoke of believing in vain

**1 Corinthians 15:1-2** – “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; <sup>2</sup> By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”

3. Hebrews warns of those who draw back

**Hebrews 10:39** – “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

4. Jesus warned that true believers are those who continue in the faith

**John 8:31** – “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;”

5. This apparent belief of Pharaoh was only temporary. It was designed to appease the wrath of God but it was not based on a heart felt desire to honor and obey God.

6. There are many things that will cause a man to temporarily turn to God

- a. The pain of adversity – Pharaoh wanted his suffering relieved
- b. Apprehension due to conviction of sin – Pharaoh saw the connection between his suffering and his sin. Many come under the weight of the Law and the wrath of God without surrendering their wills to Him.

B. What are some of the characteristics of this false faith?

1. The false believer wants Christ, but not without exception

a. Pharaoh wanted God to take away the destruction of the hail but he didn’t want God as the ruler of his life.

b. The false believer wants the grace of Christ, but not the government of Christ

It’s like the prodigal son who wanted his father’s goods but not his father’s government

c. The false believer wants to go to heaven without bowing before Christ. They want to be saved from the consequences of sin but not from the sin itself.

d. They want Christ but they want their other lovers also

- e. This was Pharaoh's problem.  
He couldn't give up the praise of the multitudes who looked upon him as a god.  
He wanted the million strong force of slaves to labor for him.  
He wasn't willing or able to give himself in submission to God.
- f. How about you? Have you surrendered your life to Him?
- 2. The false believer has not had his heart changed.
  - a. Nicodemus had many religious credentials but Jesus told him, "Ye must be born again."
  - b. Simon the sorcerer believed but he had a bad heart
    - (1) For a season it appeared that he was a genuine believer  
He was baptized  
**Acts 8:13** – "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."
    - (2) But his heart was not changed.  
**Acts 8:21** – "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God."  
**Acts 8:23** – "For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity."
  - c. Pharaoh temporarily turned to God but his heart was not changed  
**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."

II. A person may temporarily bear the marks of true conversion

- A. Pharaoh said and did all the right things
  - 1. He made humble confession of his sins
  - 2. He pledged to give himself to following the commands of God
- B. Hebrews 5-6 serves as a solemn warning  
**Hebrews 6:4-6** – "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, <sup>5</sup> And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, <sup>6</sup> If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."
  - 1. Enlightened – a common illumination or knowledge – but knowledge alone isn't enough
    - a. Pharaoh had been taught of God. He had seen Him work  
Listen to the testimony of the magicians  
**Exodus 8:19** – "Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This *is* the finger of God:"
    - b. By Pharaoh's own lips  
**Exodus 9:27** – "the LORD *is* righteous"
  - 2. Pharaoh had tasted of the good Word of God

3. False, temporary believers “taste” of God’s heavenly gift offered in the Gospel but never become partakers of it. It’s like a man sitting at a table covered with mounds of rich food. He passes each morsel across his lips but never swallows and dies of starvation while surrounded by the rich provision.
4. For the professor of Christianity to fall away it is like crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to open shame. In other words they put the greatest of contempt upon Him. They take their place among the number who shouted, “Crucify Him!”
5. This is a fearful thought and worthy of trembling.  
Matthew Henry: “Very few instances can be given of those who have gone so far and fallen away, and yet ever have been brought to true repentance, such a repentance as is indeed a renovation of the soul. God can renew them to repentance, but he seldom does it.”

### III. The human heart must have a supernatural transformation

- A. Ultimately, Pharaoh’s problem was a bad heart
  1. He would not turn in submission to God
  2. This is the human condition – Our entire nature is bent on self-determination. We love ourselves and hate God and His Law.
  3. The lost man has an insatiable desire to satisfy himself. Nothing in this world will get him to give up his earthly loves and turn to God.  
**Mark 10:25-27** – “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>26</sup> And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? <sup>27</sup> And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.”
- B. This is why regeneration is essential
  1. Jesus told Nicodemus – “Ye must be born again”
  2. Without this change of heart no man will believe, no man will repent  
Without this change of heart no man will love Christ.

### Conclusion:

1. Pharaoh’s problem was a bad heart. He could not love God.
2. How about you? Are you so tied to this world that you really don’t have room for Christ? Pray, “Oh God, change my wicked heart. Give me a heart to love you.”  
Jesus told the father of the demon possessed boy,  
**Mark 9:23** – “If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth.”
  - A. If you can believe, if you can turn to Christ He will save you.
  - B. The problem is our heart. The father of the boy responded to Christ.  
**Mark 9:24** – “And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”
3. Jesus never turns away the broken sinner that turns to Him.  
**Matthew 12:20** – “A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench”