

**The seventh judgement – the destructive hailstorm**

• Severity of judgement increases

• God's restraint

• God uses Pharaoh's sinful hardness

• In a mysterious way, sin does not achieve its own will; it achieves God's will

• Prediction fulfilled but Goshen spared

• Moses the intercessor

• Pharaoh has knowledge but no respect

• What God wants is not knowledge but submission

**The eighth judgement – the plague of locusts**

• Almost everyone in Egypt aware

**The seventh judgement was the destructive hailstorm**<sup>□1</sup>. Heavy hail with thunder and lightning ruined the barley in upper Egypt but not in Goshen. God is increasing the severity of His judgement against Pharaoh. How great will the chastising punishment of God have to be before Pharaoh will yield? God warns Pharaoh, 'I will send the full force of my plagues'. God will compel Pharaoh to recognise God's uniqueness<sup>□2</sup>. God could have removed Pharaoh from existing on earth altogether<sup>□3</sup>. But God has raised Pharaoh up to his position in history in order to demonstrate His power<sup>□4</sup>. God has actually been restraining His anger. He has endured Pharaoh with much longsuffering. But God has used the wickedness of Pharaoh. God can use sin in order to achieve some purpose of His own. It is this verse that Paul quotes in Romans 9:17. The point is that God's purpose is not **failing** because of Pharaoh. Far from it. Pharaoh is in fact raised up by God to be used by God in His purpose. God plans to give a magnificent demonstration of His power. He uses Pharaoh's sinful hardness to achieve not Pharaoh's will but His own will.

This is a constant theme of Scripture. In a mysterious way, sin does not achieve its own will; it achieves God's will. This does not mean that God creates sin, but it does mean that God so controls sin that it does not achieve its own will. Hail was an extremely rare event; Egypt received almost no rain. Pharaoh is still in rebellion against God<sup>□1</sup>, so a miraculously timed and miraculously heavy hailstorm is about to come<sup>□2</sup>. It threatened death to human life and to all domestic animals<sup>□3</sup>. The prediction forced a separation between those who did and those who did not believe in Moses' predictions<sup>□4</sup>.

The violent hailstorm comes as predicted<sup>□1</sup>. Israel's territory in Goshen was spared<sup>□2</sup>. Pharaoh relents more than he had done before. He admits to sin<sup>□3</sup>, asks for Moses to pray for him and promises to let the Hebrews go<sup>□4</sup>.

Moses promises to intercede<sup>□1</sup> and Pharaoh will be forced to know that the earth belongs to Yahweh, the God of Israel, but Pharaoh's knowledge does not lead to the fear of God<sup>□2</sup>. Pharaoh now has **knowledge**, but he does not have **respect** for God. The 'natural man' in some sense 'knows God' and may be brought to a yet greater knowledge of God. But a reluctant willingness to admit that God is real and that God is powerful is not enough to bring about a heart-felt loving submission to God. Knowledge is forced upon Pharaoh but it has not led to a change of heart, or a change in the direction of his life.

The agriculture of Egypt was severely damaged, although the survival of the wheat and spelt<sup>□1</sup> meant that there was some mercy amidst God's judgement. As soon as the pressure was off of Pharaoh, the true state of his heart was revealed; he still had not submitted to God<sup>□2</sup>. What God wants is not knowledge but submission. One may know a great deal about God and his ways but have an un-submissive heart.

**The eighth judgement was the plague of locusts**<sup>□1</sup>. Again God gives Moses a preview of what is about to happen. The signs that God will give will be forever remembered by the people of Israel<sup>□2</sup>. Pharaoh is persistently proud and disobedient<sup>□3</sup>. God will now send an unprecedented plague of locusts<sup>□4</sup>. Almost everyone in Egypt now knows the power of God and the trustworthiness of Moses' word. They implore Pharaoh to yield to God's will<sup>□5</sup>. Pharaoh is willing to let Israel go but only if he keeps the children in Egypt<sup>□6</sup>. Soon the judgement of God comes<sup>□7</sup> and Pharaoh is

□1 9:13-35

□2 9:13-14

□3 9:15

□4 9:16

□1 9:17

□2 9:18

□3 9:19

□4 9:20-21

□1 9:22-26

□2 9:26

□3 9:27

□4 9:28

□1 9:29

□2 9:30

□1 9:31-32

□2 9:33-35

□1 10:1-20

□2 10:1-2

□3 10:3

□4 10:4-6

□5 10:7

□6 10:8-11

□7 10:12-15

• Again, Pharaoh relents but then changes his mind

**The ninth judgement – darkness over the land**

• Pharaoh's hardness confirmed

• Pharaoh brings interviews to an end

• God has demonstrated His absolute control

• God's judgements are preceded by warnings

• Final judgement comes slowly

• Pharaoh's last chance

forced to pretend obedience once again<sup>☞8</sup> and to plead for 'this death'<sup>☞9</sup> to be taken away. In response to Moses' intercession God took the chastening punishment away in an impressively thorough manner<sup>☞10</sup>, but God hardened Pharaoh's heart<sup>☞11</sup> and again the permission to leave was withdrawn.

**The ninth judgement was the darkness over the land.** At Moses' signal there came a thick darkness over the land<sup>☞1</sup>. It was probably a whirlwind spreading thick dust, so thick that it blotted out the light of the sun. Israel was excepted<sup>☞2</sup>. Pharaoh agrees to the release of Israel<sup>☞3</sup>, but God hardens his heart and Pharaoh withdraws his permission<sup>☞4</sup>. The series of interviews is brought to an end by Pharaoh himself. He – in his own hardness of heart which has been confirmed by God – makes the decision that he wishes to have no more of these interviews with Moses who has been to him the agent of God's word coming to him<sup>☞5</sup>.

God had demonstrated His total and absolute control over the so-called gods of Egypt and over every kind of natural phenomena. He had brought these things to pass with ever-increasing severity. Pharaoh had made it clear that his rebelliousness was in the face of clear proof of the reality of Yahweh, and he had himself admitted that Yahweh was behind what had been happening. He himself was now refusing to see Moses again. He was himself bringing to an end his opportunities to know God. 'Get out of my sight'<sup>☞1</sup> is the last word to Moses, and it reveals the final state of Pharaoh's heart.

God's judgements are preceded by warnings. Final judgement came only slowly upon Pharaoh and after very many warnings and clear indications of God's will. It is a great mistake to withstand God's voice. At any point Pharaoh could have said 'I am wrong' but God let him have the kind of heart that he wanted – one that was totally hardened against God.

These warnings are Pharaoh's last chance. There comes a time when God does not speak again. Now will come God's tenth judgement. It will be quite different from the other nine. For every sinner there is a last opportunity, the time after which God will never give the same opportunity again.

☞8 10:16  
☞9 10:17  
☞10 10:18-19  
☞11 10:20

☞1 10:21-22  
☞2 10:23  
☞3 10:24-26  
☞4 10:27

☞5 10:28-29

☞1 10:29



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