

Exegetical Notes, Exodus 9:1-7
**“The Humbling Hand of God, Part #3: Transportation,
Economy, and Religion”**

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Exodus 9:1-7

Verse 1

Then YHWH said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what YHWH, the God of the Hebrews, says: “Let my people go, so that they may worship me.”

- After God brought Pharaoh to his knees by bringing gnats and flies on the Egyptians, Pharaoh had agreed to honor God’s request by letting the Hebrews go out into the desert to worship. However, he quickly changed his mind and refused to let the Hebrews go out to worship God.
- So God sent Moses to Pharaoh to renew his request.

Verse 2-3

If you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them back, the hand of YHWH will bring a terrible plague on your livestock in the field --- on your horses and donkeys and camels and on your cattle and sheep and goats.

- Again, a curse is promised if Pharaoh refuses to honor the request of God concerning the Hebrew slaves in Egypt.
- This time the words of the text call for a “terrible plague” to fall on the livestock of the Egyptians. The words are those used to indicate a contagious epidemic. The animals will become sick and die (see verse 7).
- Notice that the plague will only afflict those animals that are in the fields of Egypt and that the animals to be afflicted are horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep and goats.

Verse 4

But YHWH will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will die.”

- As with the curse of the flies, the Hebrews will not be affected by this curse.

Verse 5-7a

YHWH set a time and said, “Tomorrow YHWH will do this in the land.” And the next day YHWH did it: All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one animal belonging to the Israelites died. Pharaoh sent men to investigate and found that not even one of the animals of the Israelites had died

- Again, the curse is delayed for 24 hours. But it did fall at the very time God had decreed and in exactly the way God had decreed. Pharaoh carefully “checked out” the details and found it to be just as God had said. Only Egyptian animals were afflicted by this curse.

Verse 7b

Yet his heart was unyielding and he would not let the people go.

- This was the most sweeping curse to fall on Egypt yet. Horses, donkeys, and camels were the transportation system of Egypt. Horses were the military vehicles of the day. Ordinary people traveled by donkey. Camels were the commercial vehicles of the time. God struck the Egyptian system of transportation and collapsed it. If the national system of transportation was shut down the economy of Egypt would be adversely effected. The deaths of all cattle, sheep, and goats would also devastate Egypt’s economy. Religiously, Egypt worshipped Apis the bull and the sacred cows Ptah, Mnrvis, and Hathor by offering them sacrifices of sheep and goats. This curse attacked Egypt on these three levels.
- But Pharaoh was unmoved. He refused to honor God’s request.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *The Humbling Hand of God! Part # 4: Transportation, Economy & Religion*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)