

Exegetical Notes, Exodus 9:8-12
“The Humbling Hand of God, Part #5: Anthrax”
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Exodus 9:8-12

Verse 8

Then YHWH said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and have Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh.

- The animals of Egypt were struck by a great plague which was killing them. See Exodus 9:1-7. In the midst of this plague, and in addition to it, Moses is to act again. He is to take handfuls of soot from a furnace and toss them into the air, and he is to do this in Pharaoh’s presence.
- It is to be assumed that the furnace is one of the kilns in which the Hebrews made bricks.

Verse 9

It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils will break out on men and animals throughout the land.”

- The soot will become a fine dust that will spread the plague experienced by the animals over the human population of Egypt. So, the curse on the animals will spread to people.
- The plague will result in “festering boils” on both the people and the animals. Scholars agree that this plague is some form of skin anthrax. Skin anthrax causes burning sores to appear in the skin. These sores or boils are exceptionally painful.

Verse 10

So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh. Moses tossed it into the air, and festering boils broke out on men and animals.

- Moses and Aaron did as God had instructed them to do and events unfolded exactly as predicted.

Verse 11

The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians.

- The magicians of Israel have been reduced to complete ineffectiveness. Initially, they were able to reproduce what God did. (see the curses of blood and frogs.) However, God limited their power so that they were unable to create gnats. They then recognized that God, YHWH, was moving in the land of Egypt. Now the judgment of God renders them completely ineffective. They cannot even stand because they are so sick.

Verse 12

But YHWH hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as YHWH had said to Moses.

- Despite all that had happened Pharaoh remained hard. He continued to refuse to acknowledge the power of YHWH.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *The Humbling Hand of God!* Part # 5: Anthrax. 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*.)