

## Exodus 9:13-11:10

Through the plagues God reveals himself to the true God, the mighty creator, a just judge and gracious saviour.

### Introduction

I greet you all in the wonderful name of our saviour Jesus. For those who do not know me my name is Pastor Ntinga, I am one of the pastors here at Christ Central Soweto. Today we are trying something very different, you are listening to a recording of me while you meet in different places rather than in the church in Klipspruit.

The reason for this is because we as a church are responding to the President's call for us to meet in smaller groups as a response to the Corona Virus. This virus is very dangerous, and it is spreading at a fast rate. It is our responsibility to be praying but also to be responsible and love one another by practicing

good hygiene and social distancing. We do this because we love you and care for you and we are trusting that this is only temporary, soon we will be gathering together as a church.

Let's pray, as we begin...

### Context

Over the last couple of months, we have been going through Exodus 1-15, in our series titled the God who saves. And through this series we have been learning about the character of nature of God, Yahweh. We have learned that he is a God who takes his promises seriously, he is a God who does not look away at evil but saves those who are weak. He remembered his promises to Abraham, he heard the cry of his people Israel when they were in slavery and he decided that it is time to rescue them from Egypt.

We also learned last week that brought many signs and plagues against Egypt to reveal the lies they built their lives upon, the false gods and false hopes that they had. He mercifully showed them that he is the true God, the only God that deserves to be worshipped.

However, we also saw that Pharaoh's heart was hard, hard because of pride but also because God hardened his heart to reveal himself to us. Pharaoh refused to let Israel go even when God showed himself to be superior to the gods of Egypt (in the Nile, the frogs, and gnats), even when his people told him that this is the finger of God he refused to let the Israelites go.

### Plague of Flies and livestock

So when we get to 8:20 we see the same pattern of the other plagues. Moses and Aaron are summoned by God to go before

Pharaoh and tell him to let the Israelites go worship God or a plague will come before Egypt. In these two plagues, the plague of the flies and the death of livestock, God makes a distinction between the people of Israel (who lived in Goshen) and the people of Egypt. God's hand on Egypt is one of judgement so that they know that Yahweh is the God of Israel.

In 8:24 thick swarms of flies came across pharaoh and the whole land but not a fly was found in Goshen. Similarly, when the livestock of the Egyptians died in chapter 9, none among the livestock of the Israelites died.

Things were so bad with the flies we are told in 8:25 that Pharaoh started bargaining with Moses, let them sacrifice within the land but when Moses insisted on what God wanted Pharaoh's heart was hard and he refused to let God's people go.

## Plague of the boils

When God sent boils, can you imagine, to come on Egypt. Even Pharaoh's advisors, the magicians, could not stand before Moses. They too were recognising that they need to obey God but in vs. 12...

*<sup>12</sup> But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said to Moses.*

His wise council could not convince him to do the right thing and recognise God's hand of judgement over them.

## Plague of hail

In the plague of hail in 9:14 God again reminds Pharaoh why this is happening to Egypt...

*...this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. <sup>15</sup> For by*

*now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. <sup>16</sup> But I have raised you up<sup>[a]</sup> for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. <sup>17</sup> You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go.*

You see God has a special purpose for Pharaoh, all that we are seeing here are not random events of history but God using the stubbornness of Pharaoh to reveal himself to us, the nations. In fact, God puts it more strongly than that and says that it was for this very purpose I raised you up, for my name. Pharaoh was a chosen instrument in the hands of God, his pride was a hindrance but an opportunity for God to be known.

And in this plague God gives an opportunity for the people of Egypt to decide. He warns the people to bring their livestock to a place of shelter for God will bring a terrible hailstorm. And again, we see a distinction between the people. Now its not between Egypt and Israel but between those who fear God and those who don't, vs. 20...

*<sup>20</sup> Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. <sup>21</sup> But those who ignored the word of the Lord left their slaves and livestock in the field.*

God honoured their choices and the hailstorm was devastating to the land of Egypt. It was so bad that Pharaoh confesses to his sin and recognises his guilt, in vs. 27, yet sadly this guilt was not followed by genuine repentance for...

*<sup>34</sup> When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts.*

### Plague of Darkness

For the sake of time I will skip over the plague of locusts but even then, Pharaoh's heart is hard, and his repentance is short lived.

In the ninth plague God brings his worst judgement yet, darkness for 3 days. In many ways we do not appreciate why this is bad because we are surrounded by lights, electricity gives us comfort. Darkness in ancient times was associated with chaos and death. It was the time where evil prospered, where criminals ruled, where people were unsafe. Light meant warmth, life, and sight (this is why many ancient people worshiped the sun). So, to have 3 days of darkness than could

be felt that must have been the scariest thing you can imagine. It was so bad that no one moved from where they were (10:23), you could not see another person (vs. 21). Yet in Goshen all the Israelites could see each other.

Pharaoh again in vs. 24 seems repentant and again promises to let the Israelites go but, on his terms, leave your flocks and herds behind. Moses explains the folly of his concession. His heart hardened even more and threatens to kill Moses the next time he sees him. Pharaoh now turns on the prophet of God rather than confronting the reality of God. He attempts to silence the messenger than face up to the message.

#### Prediction of the death of the first born

Moses' last words to Pharaoh was to be the plague that finally broke Pharaoh's resolve. At midnight God's judgment would be felt in all the land of Egypt for death is coming. Every first-

born male in Egypt was to die. There would be anguish in all the land, yet in Israel God would make a distinction. In Chapter 1 Pharaoh placed a decree to kill all the boys in Israel, God judgement is about to come on Egypt. Then after than Pharaoh will let the Israelites go.

### Application

It is very difficult to read this and not wonder about the disasters and diseases that plague our world. One often wonders, is what is happening a sign? Is it judgement? Is there something we have missed or is there something God is trying to tell us?

The disciples of Jesus were faced with the same questions we face, in Luke 13 two tragedies faced the people of Galilee. Some religious people were killed Pilate and some men died when a tower fell on them. Jesus responded...

*“Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? <sup>3</sup> I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. <sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”*

Death and tragedy are not necessarily an indication of who is more sinful than the other. The Chinese are not more sinful than us for them to get the Corona Virus first. That was a convenient excuse till we faced the same threat. Rather these things are a warning bell from God that judgement is coming, repent or you too will perish. Something is horribly wrong with this world, and God will fix it, when he returns will he find you as part of the problem or the solution? See the warning signs, don't be like Pharaoh who ignored God till it was too late.

But if we repent and trust in Jesus, we are confident that another faced darkness on our behalf, the first born of God died in our place so that we have life for eternity. When we see death and uncertainty it is a reminder that this world is passing away, but a greater home built with the imperishable awaits those who trust in the Lord. For God never forsakes his people for he is a God who rescues.

Let's pray...