

# CHAPTER 9

## INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 9

This chapter relates the plague of murrain upon the cattle, and which yet was not upon the cattle of the Israelites, (<sup><0001></sup>Exodus 9:1-7) and the plague of boils and blains on man and beast, (<sup><0008></sup>Exodus 9:8-11) and Pharaoh's heart being hardened, Moses is sent to him with a message from the Lord, threatening him that all his plagues should come upon him, and particularly the pestilence, if he would not let Israel go; and signifying, that to show his power in him, and declare his name throughout the earth, had he raised him up, and a kind of amazement is expressed at his obstinacy and pride, (<sup><0012></sup>Exodus 9:12-17), and he is told that a terrible storm of hail should fall upon the land, and destroy all in the field; wherefore those that regarded the word of the Lord got their cattle within doors, but those that did not took no care of them, (<sup><0018></sup>Exodus 9:18-21) and upon Moses's stretching out his hand, when ordered by the Lord, the storm began, and destroyed every thing in the field throughout the land, excepting the land of Goshen, (<sup><0022></sup>Exodus 9:22-26) upon which Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, acknowledged his sin, and the justice of God, begged they would entreat for him, which Moses did; but when the storm was over, Pharaoh's heart was still more hardened, and he refused to let the people go, (<sup><0027></sup>Exodus 9:27-35).

**Ver. 1.** *Then the Lord said unto Moses,* etc.] The same day the plague of the flies was removed:

*go in unto Pharaoh* boldly, without any fear of him or his court:

*and tell him, thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews:* speak in the name of Jehovah, the God whom the Hebrews worship, and who owns them for his people, and has a special love for them, and takes a special care of them, and is not ashamed to be called their God, as poor and as oppressed as they be:

*let my people go,* that they may serve me; this demand had been often made, and, though so reasonable, was refused.

**Ver. 2.** *For if thou refuse to let them go*, etc.] Continue to refuse, as he had done:

*and wilt hold them still*; in the land, and under his dominion and oppression.

**Ver. 3.** *Behold, the hand of the Lord*, etc.] Which was stronger than his, with which he held the Israelites:

*is upon thy cattle which is in the field*: this takes in all in general, of which the particulars follow, though limited to such as were in the field, and so did not take in what were at home in their out houses and stables:

*upon the horses*: of which there was great plenty in Egypt, as appears from various places of Scripture:

*upon the asses*; used for carrying burdens from place to place:

*and upon the camels*; used the like purposes, and to ride upon, and particularly to travel with through desert places for commerce, being able to proceed on without water for a considerable time:

*upon the oxen, and upon the sheep*; oxen were for labour to plough with, and sheep for their wool, and all of them to trade with: there shall be

*a very grievous murrain*: or “pestilence”<sup>f244</sup>, a very noisome one, and which would carry off great numbers; the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it a “death”, as the Jews commonly call a pestilence, whether on man or beast, because it generally sweeps away large numbers.

**Ver. 4.** *And the Lord shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt*, etc.] Make such a difference and distinction between them, that the murrain should not be on the one, when it was on the other, and which was a very marvellous thing; and especially in the land of Goshen, where the Egyptians had much cattle, and Pharaoh himself, (see <sup><014706></sup>Genesis 47:6) and yet, though the cattle of Israel breathed in the same air, drank of the same water, and fed in the same pastures, they had not the murrain as the cattle of Egypt had; and the word here used signifies a marvellous separation, as has been observed on (<sup><01722></sup>Exodus 7:22):

*and there shall nothing die of all that is the children’s of Israel*; not an horse, nor an ass, nor an ox, nor a sheep.

**Ver. 5.** *And the Lord appointed a set time*, etc.] For the coming of this plague, that it might plainly appear it came from him, and was not owing to any natural cause:

*saying, tomorrow the Lord shall do this thing in the land*; thus giving him time and space, as he had often done before, to consider the matter well, repent of his obstinacy, and dismiss the people of Israel, and so prevent the plague coming upon the cattle, as threatened.

**Ver. 6.** *And the Lord did that thing on the morrow*, etc.] Brought a murrain, or a pestilential disease on the cattle. This, according to Bishop Usher, was on the second day of the seventh month, which afterwards became the first month, the month Abib, which answers to part of March and part of April, and seems to be about the seventeenth of March:

*and all the cattle of Egypt died*; not all absolutely, for we read of some afterwards, (<sup><000></sup>Exodus 9:9,10,19,25) but all that were in the field, (<sup><000></sup>Exodus 9:3) and it may be not strictly all of them, but the greatest part of them, as Aben Ezra interprets it; some, and a great many of all sorts, in which limited sense the word “all” is frequently used in Scripture:

*but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one*; at least of the murrain, or by the hand of God, and perhaps not otherwise, which was very wonderful, since such a disorder is usually catching and spreading.

**Ver. 7.** *And Pharaoh sent*, etc.] Messengers to the land of Goshen, to see whether the murrain was upon the cattle of Israel or not, and whether any of them died or not. The Targum of Jonathan is,

“he sent to Pelusium to see”

*and inquire about this matter*; that is, to Raamses, for so that paraphrase calls Raamses in (<sup><000></sup>Exodus 1:11) a city built by the Israelites, and where many of them might dwell. This Pharaoh did, not merely out of curiosity, but to know whether the divine prediction was accomplished, and that he might have wherewith to confront it, could he find the murrain was upon any of the cattle of Israel, or any died of it; and if they did not, his view might be to convert them to his own use, and make up his loss, and the loss of his people, in a good measure in this way, and perhaps this may be the reason why he so little regarded this plague:

*and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead*; which was very wonderful, and therefore a “behold”, a note of admiration, is prefixed to it, yet it made no impression on Pharaoh:

*and the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go*; though this plague was so heavy upon him and his people, and the loss they sustained so great: in the other plagues of the water, the frogs, lice, and flies, though very troublesome and terrible, yet the loss was not very great; but here much damage was done to their property, yet this did not make his heart relent, or cause him to yield to let Israel go.

**Ver. 8.** *And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron*, etc.] This very probably was the day following, on the third day of the month Abib, about the eighteenth of March, that orders were given to bring on the following plague:

*take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace*; either in which the bricks were burnt, or rather in which food was boiled, since it can scarcely be thought there should be brickkiln furnaces so near Pharaoh’s court; though perhaps some reference may be had to them, and to the labour of the children Israel at them, and as a just retaliation for their oppression of them in that way. These ashes were such as were blown off the coals, and though fresh, yet not so hot but that they could take and hold them in their hands:

*and let Moses sprinkle it towards the heaven, in the sight of Pharaoh*; this was to be done before Pharaoh, that he might be an eyewitness of the miracle, he himself seeing with his own eyes that nothing else were cast up into the air but a few light ashes; and this was to be done towards heaven, to show that the plague or judgment came down from heaven, from the God of heaven, whose wrath was now revealed from thence; and Moses he was to do this; he alone, as Philo<sup>f245</sup> thinks, or rather both he and Aaron, since they were both spoken to, and both filled their hands with ashes; it is most likely that both cast them up into the air, though Moses, being the principal person, is only mentioned.

**Ver. 9.** *And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt*, etc.] Which ashes, thrown up into the air, should be so multiplied and spread as to be over all the land of Egypt, and come down like showers of snow or sleet everywhere, only of a hot and scalding nature; or these handfuls of ashes were to be cast up into the air, and come down in the above manner,

about Pharaoh's court, as a sign and token of what would be the case all over the kingdom:

*and shall be a boil breaking forth [with] blains;* that is, these ashes becoming a small dust, and falling down like the dew, snow, or sleet, yet hot and burning, should produce sore boils, burning ulcers, hot carbuncles, rising up in pustules, blisters, and buboes, which last word is pretty near in sound with the Hebrew word here used:

*upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt;* so that, as the last plague affected their property, substance, and riches, which in those times greatly lay in cattle, this, besides that, would affect their persons, and give them exceeding great pain, though it might not issue in death.

**Ver. 10.** *And they took ashes of the furnace,* etc.] Which was near at hand, perhaps in Pharaoh's kitchen:

*and stood before Pharaoh;* not in his palace, or in any covered room, but in some place open to the heaven, a courtyard or garden adjoining to the palace: and Moses sprinkled it up towards heaven; cast it up in the air; this being again ascribed to Moses, seems to confirm the notion of those who think he only did it; but, for the reasons before given, both may be thought to be concerned:

*and it became a boil breaking forth with blains, upon man, and upon beast;* these falling down in the manner before described, on whomsoever they lighted, whether man or beast, produced sore boils and inflammations, and raised blisters and blotches; and hence arose those lying scandalous stories of the Israelites being a scabby people, and of their being driven out of Egypt on that account, affirmed by Manetho, Lysimachus, Diodorus Siculus, Tacitus, Justin, and others; ((see Gill on "<sup>(1046)</sup>Exodus 4:6")) with this plague the first vial poured forth on mystical Egypt, or antichrist, has some agreement, (<sup>(6642)</sup>Revelation 16:2).

**Ver. 11.** *And the magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boils,* etc.] Which were on them as on others, and which with all their art and skill they could not keep off; and which were so sore upon them, and painful to them, that they were obliged to withdraw, and could not stand their ground, confronting Moses, contesting and litigating with him; for it seems, though they had not acted, nor attempted to act in imitation of Moses and Aaron, since the plague of the lice, yet they still continued

about Pharaoh, lessening as much as in them lay the miracles wrought by them, and suggesting that they had done the most and the worst they could, and so contributing to harden the heart of Pharaoh against the people of Israel; wherefore they were righteously punished with boils for so doing, and for their contempt of the messengers and miracles of God, and for their imposition upon men, and their deception of them:

*for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians*; but not upon Moses and Aaron, nor upon any of the Israelites, and was afterwards called peculiarly the botch of Egypt, (<sup>(102)</sup>Deuteronomy 28:27).

**Ver. 12.** *And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh*, etc.] He having often, and so long hardened his own heart, God gave him up to judicial hardness of heart, to his own corruptions, the temptations of Satan, and the lying magicians about him, to make an ill use of everything that offered to him, and put a wrong construction on all that befell him, so that whatever was said to him, or inflicted on him, made no impression to any purpose:

*and he hearkened not unto them*; to Moses and Aaron, and to the Lord by them:

*as the Lord had spoken to Moses*; both that he would harden his heart, and he should not hearken to them; all this was no other than what the Lord had said should be, (<sup>(102)</sup>Exodus 4:21 7:4).

**Ver. 13.** *And the Lord said unto Moses, rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh*, etc.] Who it seems used to rise early in the morning, and so was a fit time to meet with him, and converse with him; it might be one of the mornings in which he used to go to the water early, though not mentioned, unless that was every morning:

*and say unto him, thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, let my people go, that they may serve me*; thus had he line upon line, and precept upon precept, so that he was the more inexcusable, (see <sup>(102)</sup>Exodus 9:1).

**Ver. 14.** *For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart*, etc.] Not meaning particularly the plague of the hail, which next follows, so called, because it consisted of various things, as hail, rain, lightning, and thunder, as Aben Ezra, and who observes, that Pharaoh was more terrified with this plague than with any other; but rather all the plagues yet to come, for by them are not meant all the plagues that were in the power of God to inflict, which how many and great they are none can say, but all that he had

determined in his mind to bring upon him; and these should not so much affect and afflict his body, as the boils and ulcers had the magicians, but should reach his heart, and fill him with horror and terror:

*and upon thy servants, and upon thy people*; even all that he intended to bring not only upon himself, but upon his subjects, both high and low:

*that thou mayest know, that there is none like unto me in all the earth*; for the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands, particularly his providential dealings with the sons of men, and especially with him.

**Ver. 15.** *For now will I stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence*, etc.] Which yet we never find was done; for though this by many is referred to the slaying of the firstborn, yet it is not certain that this was done by the pestilence: besides, Pharaoh was not then smitten, nor his people, only their firstborn; wherefore these words are to be rendered, not in the future, but in the imperfect or preterpluperfect tense, thus; “for when now I stretched out my hand, or if now I had stretched out my hand to smite thee and thy people with pestilence”<sup>f246</sup>; that is, at the time when he smote the cattle with the murrain or pestilence, when he could as well have smote him and his people with it; there was no want of power in God to do it, and had he done it, it would have been all over with him and them:

*and thou shall be cut off from the earth*; or “thou hadst been, or wouldest have been cut off from the earth”<sup>f247</sup> must have perished out of it, and been no more in the land of the living.

**Ver. 16.** *And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up*, etc.] Or but truly or verily<sup>f248</sup>; instead of smiting thee with the pestilence, and cutting thee off out of the land of the living, “I have raised thee up”; made thee to stand<sup>f249</sup>, to continue in being; I have preserved thine from perishing by the former plagues, and have reserved thee for greater judgments and sorer punishments. It may take in all that God did to him; the constitution and appointment of him to all this in his eternal mind; his bringing him into being, and raising him up to kingly dignity; preserving him from perishing by the pestilence, boils and blains, and keeping him for future evils, and all upon this account for the following reasons:

*for to shew in thee my power*; in working miracles, inflicting judgments one after another, and especially in destroying him and his host in the Red sea:

*and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth*; as it has been more by that last action than by all the rest of the plagues; though, in all, his sovereignty, wisdom, power, patience, longsuffering, and justice, are most visibly displayed and glorified.

**Ver. 17.** *As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?*] And so against God himself, disobeying his commands, despising his messengers, and slighting his miracles, and hardening his heart against him, and refusing to let Israel go, after all; thereby showing the most intolerable pride and insolence not only against the Lord's poor people, but against himself, for what is done to them he takes as done to himself; or "dost thou still tread upon my people?" <sup>f250</sup> trample them under foot, and make an highway or causeway of them.

**Ver. 18.** *Behold, tomorrow about this time*, etc.] It was now the fourth day of the month Abib, and the fifth when the following was inflicted:

*I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail*; which should fall very thick, and the hailstones be very numerous and heavy, and the storm last long:

*such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof, even until now*; not since the earth or land itself was founded, for that was founded when the rest of the world was, and the sense then would be the same as since the foundation of the world; and so the Targum of Jonathan seems to understand it, paraphrasing the words,

"from the day that men were made, even until now."

And a like expression is used of a storm of hail, thunder, and lightning, and earthquakes yet to come, which will be such as has not been since men were upon the earth, with which this plague may be compared, (<sup>(666)</sup> Revelation 16:19,21), but here is meant since Egypt was inhabited, or rather formed into a kingdom, and founded as such, which had been many hundreds of years before this time; there was a king of Egypt in Abraham's time; the first founder of this empire, and king of it, was Mizraim, the son of Ham, from whom it had its name, by which it is usually called in Scripture. This supposes that it did sometimes rain in Egypt, contrary to a vulgar notion, or otherwise there would have been no room for the comparison; though it must be owned that rain is rare in Egypt, especially in some parts of it; ((see Gill on "<sup>(348)</sup> Zechariah 14:18")).



**Ver. 19.** *Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field,* etc.] The servants that were at work there: this is said to denote both the certainty of the plague, and the terribleness of it, that all, both men and beast, would perish by it, if care was not taken to get them home; and also to show the wonderful clemency and mercy of God to such rebellious, hardened, and undeserving creatures, as Pharaoh and his people were; in the midst of wrath and judgment God remembers mercy:

*for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home;* and there sheltered in houses, barns, and stables:

*the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die;* the hailstones that would fall would be so large and so heavy as to kill both men and beasts, like those which fell from heaven upon the Canaanites in the days of Joshua, which killed more than the sword did, (~~6011~~ Joshua 10:11).

**Ver. 20.** *He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh,* etc.] Who, if they had not the true fear of God, and were not sincere proselytes, yet had a servile fear of him, and dreaded his word, his threatening, his denunciations of judgments and predictions of future punishments; of which they had had many instances wherein they were fulfilled, and therefore had reason to fear that this also would, even the word that had been just now spoken:

*made his servants and cattle flee into the houses;* called home his servants, and drove his cattle in great haste out of the fields, and brought them home as fast as he could, and housed them; in which he acted the wise and prudent part, and showed a concern for his servants and his cattle, as well as believed the word of the Lord.

**Ver. 21.** *And he that regarded not the word of the Lord,* etc.] Or “set not his heart”<sup>1251</sup> “unto it”, took no notice of it, but treated it with the utmost contempt; and of this sort it may be thought there were the far greatest number: everyone of this cast

*left his servants and cattle in the field;* let them remain there, and took no care of them, nor thought about them, and so took no methods to preserve them; in which he acted a foolish part, to his own detriment and loss.

**Ver. 22.** *And the Lord said unto Moses,* etc.] When the morrow was come, the fifth day of the month Abib:

*stretch forth thine hand toward heaven*; with his rod in it, as appears from the next verse, to show that the following plague would come from the heaven, that is, the air, and from God, who dwells in the heaven of heavens:

*that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt*; not only in that spot, and near it, where Moses stood, and from that part of the heaven towards which he stretched forth his hand, but from the whole heaven all over the land of Egypt; which shows it to be an unusual and extraordinary hail, for a hail storm seldom reaches far, a mile it may be, or some such space; but never was such an one heard of as to reach through a whole country, and so large an one as Egypt:

*upon man and upon beast*; such as belonged to those who would take no warning, nor attend to the word of the Lord to fetch home their servants and cattle:

*and upon every herb of the field throughout the land of Egypt*; it should fall so thick, that scarce an herb would escape it.

**Ver. 23.** *And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven*, etc.] The same which Aaron had made use of before, but was now in the hand of Moses, and whose rod it properly was:

*and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground*, hot thunderbolts, which struck their flocks, (<sup>1788</sup>Psalm 78:48) and hail which fell so thick and weighty as to destroy both men and cattle, and break trees in pieces, and spoil the corn, the grass, and the tender herb; and fire, that is lightning, which descended so low, and in such quantities, as ran along the ground, and consumed all it met with. Artapanus <sup>f252</sup>, an Heathen writer, who speaks of this storm of hail, says, that Moses, besides the hail, caused earthquakes by night, so that those that escaped the earthquakes were taken away by the hail, and those that escaped the hail perished by the earthquakes, which he says overthrew all the houses, and most of the temples:

*and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt*; upon Egypt, where rain was not common, and on all the land of Egypt, when in some parts of it it was scarce known, and hail as thick as rain; ice, snow, and hail, are most rarely if ever seen there, the air not being cold enough for the production of them <sup>f253</sup>. This was the Lord's immediate doing, when there was no likelihood of it, nor any appearance of second causes concurring to

produce it, and came at the exact time he had foretold it should; all which were very extraordinary.

**Ver. 24.** *So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail*, etc.] Which was a miracle within a miracle, as Aben Ezra observes; and very wonderful indeed it was, that the hail did not quench the fire, nor the fire melt the hail, as Philo the Jew <sup>f254</sup> remarks:

*very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation;* ((see Gill on “~~Exodus~~ Exodus 9:18”)).

**Ver. 25.** *And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt*, etc.] It was in all the land, and it smote and did mischief in all parts of it, only in Goshen, after excepted:

*all that was in the field, both man and beast;* which they that neglected the word of the Lord took no care to fetch home, these were all smitten and destroyed by the hail: and the hail smote every herb of the field; that is, the greatest part of them, for some were left, which the locusts afterwards ate, (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 10:15), and brake every tree of the field; and the vines and fig trees, (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 78:47 105:33).

**Ver. 26.** *Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel [were], was there no hail.*] So that such Egyptians as might dwell among them, they, their servants, their cattle, and their fruits, escaped this plague; and oftentimes do wicked men fare the better for the people of God that are among them.

**Ver. 27.** *And Pharaoh sent*, etc.] Not persons to observe whether there was any hail fell in the land of Goshen, though there are some <sup>f255</sup> that so supply the words; but it cannot be thought that Pharaoh would send, or that any would go thither amidst such a storm of thunder and hail; but he sent messengers,

*and called Moses and Aaron;* who might be in his palace, at least not very far off:

*and said unto them, I have sinned this time;* not but that he had sinned before, and must be conscious of it, particularly in breaking his promise so often; but now he acknowledged his sin, which he had never done before: and this confession of sin did not arise from a true sense of it, from hatred of it, and sorrow for it as committed against God; but from the fright he

was in, the horror of his mind, the dread of the present plague being continued; and the terror of death that seized him, the rebounding noise of the thunder in his ears, the flashes of lightning in his face, and the hailstones beating upon the top of his house, and against the windows and sides of it, frightened him exceedingly, and forced this confession from him:

*the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked*; which was well spoken, had it been serious and from his heart; for God is righteous in his nature, and in all his works, and in all those judgments he had inflicted upon him; and he and his people were wicked in using the Israelites in such a cruel manner, and in detaining them when it had been promised them again and again that they should have leave to go, and especially in rebelling against God, and disobeying his commands.

**Ver. 28.** *Entreat the Lord, for it is enough*, etc.] Hail, thunder, and lightning enough; or pray that this may be enough, and thought sufficient, and that there may be no more; or “entreat the Lord, and much”<sup>f256</sup>; pray, and pray much, pray earnestly and without intermission until the plague ceases:

*that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail*; or “voices of God”<sup>f257</sup>; for thunder is the voice of God, and these thunderings or voices were very loud, the claps were very terrible to hear, and the hail was very grievous and heavy, and the whole was very amazing and frightful, and the more to Pharaoh, who perhaps had never heard the voice of thunder, or seen an hail storm before, even a common one, these being rare in the land of Egypt:

*and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer*; go the three days’ journey into the wilderness, directly and immediately; he would not put it off, on any account, and much less refuse to let them go at all, as he had often done.

**Ver. 29.** *And Moses said unto him, as soon as I am gone out of the city*, etc.] Zoan or Tanis, for it was in the field of Zoan where these wonders were wrought, (<sup><1978D></sup>Psalm 78:12,43), the reason why he went out of the city to pray, Jarchi says, was because it was full of idols; but the truer reason was, that he might be private and alone while he was praying to God; and perhaps he went out also to show that he was not frightened at the storm, or afraid of being destroyed by it, and was confident of

preservation in the midst of it, in the open field, by the power of God, whom he served:

*I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord*; which was a prayer gesture directed to by the light of nature, and was used very anciently, and by the Heathens, as well as others; of which the learned Rivet has given many instances in his comment on this text:

*and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail*; this he had faith in, and full assurance of before he prayed for it; he knew the mind and will of God, and not only he knew what he could do, but what he would do, and which he tells Pharaoh of before hand; which was a full proof that he was a god to Pharaoh, as the Lord said he had made him, (~~(100)~~ Exodus 7:1)

*that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's*; that the whole earth is his, and therefore he can do, and does in it whatever he pleases; as the heavens also are his, and therefore can cause thunder, lightning, hail, and rain, and stop them when he thinks fit; or that the land of Egypt particularly was his, and not Pharaoh's, and therefore could destroy, or save it at his pleasure; and particularly it being his, Pharaoh had no right to detain his people in it against his will, who was Lord of it.

**Ver. 30.** *But as for thee, and thy servants*, etc.] Notwithstanding the confession of sin he had made, and his earnest request that the Lord might be entreated to remove this plague, and though he had been assured it would be removed:

*I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord God*: they had not feared him yet; the confession of sin made did not arise from the true fear of God, but from a dread of punishment, and when delivered from this plague, the goodness of God would have no such effect as to cause him and his servants to fear the Lord; or "I know, that before ye were afraid of the face of the Lord God"<sup>f258</sup>, which Kimchi<sup>f259</sup> and Ben Melech interpret thus, "I know that thou and thy servants, before I pray for you, are afraid of the face of the Lord God, but after I have prayed, and the thunders and rain are ceased, ye will sin again;" and so they did.

**Ver. 31.** *And the flax and the barley was smitten*, etc.] With the hail, thunder, and lightning, and were beat down, bruised, broken, and blasted, and destroyed; of the former there were great quantities produced in Egypt, which was famous for linen, much was made there, and there were

many that wrought in fine flax, (see <sup><2309></sup> Isaiah 19:9) and the latter were used not only to feed their cattle, but to make a drink of, as we do, ale and strong beer; and so the Egyptians use it to this day, as Dr. Shaw <sup>f260</sup> says, both to feed their cattle, and after it is dried and parched, to make a fermented, intoxicating liquor, called “bonzah”; probably the same with the barley wine of the ancients, and a species of the “sicar”, or strong drink of the Scriptures:

*for the barley [was] in the ear, and the flax [was] bolled;* or in the stalk, quite grown up, and so the ears of the one were beat off, and the stalks of the other battered with the hail, and broken and destroyed.

**Ver. 32.** *But the wheat and the rye were not smitten,* etc.] Bruised, broken, beat down, and destroyed by hail: the word by us rendered “rye”, and by other “fitches” or “spelt”, is thought by Dr. Shaw <sup>f261</sup> to be “rice”, of which there were and still are plantations in Egypt; whereas rye is little, if at all known in those countries, and besides is of the quickest growth; and he observes that rice was the “olyra” of the ancient Egyptians, by which word the Septuagint render the Hebrew word here; and from Pliny <sup>f262</sup> we learn, that “olyra”, and “oryza”, or rice, are the same, and which with the Greeks is “zea”, by which some translate the word here:

*for they were not grown up;* and so their leaves, as the same traveller observes, were at that time of so soft and yielding a nature, that the hail by meeting with no resistance, as from the flax and barley, did them no harm; and so the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it: “they were late”; and so the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret it: for the wheat harvest with the Jews, and so with the Egyptians, was later than the barley harvest, there being about a month’s difference between them: some render the word “dark or hidden” <sup>f263</sup> because, as Aben Ezra says, they were now under ground; and if this was the case, indeed the reason is clear why they were not smitten; but this was not the case, for, according to Pliny <sup>f264</sup>, there was but one month’s difference in Egypt between the barley and the wheat; but rather they are said to be so, because the ear was as yet hid, and was not come forth; it just began to spindle, or, as the above traveller explains it, they were of a dark green colour, as young corn generally is, as contradistinction to its being of a bright yellow or golden colour, when it is ripe; for, adds he, the context supposes the wheat and the rice not only to have been sown, but to have been likewise in some forwardness, as they well might be in the month of Abib, answering to our March.

**Ver. 33.** *And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh,* etc.] Into the field, where, being retired from company, he could freely, and without being disturbed, pray unto God:

*and spread abroad his hands unto the Lord;* denoting the spreading of cases before God, and expectation, hope, and readiness to receive favours from him:

*and the thunder and hail ceased;* immediately upon the entreaty of Moses; see the power and prevalence of prayer: a like instance we have in Elijah, (<sup><3157></sup>James 5:17,18) and the rain was not poured upon the earth; so that there was rain as well as hail, which was restrained and entirely ceased.

**Ver. 34.** *And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceased,* etc.] And there was a clear sky and a fine serene heaven, the black clouds were dispersed and gone, and he heard no more the clattering of the hailstones, and the terrible claps of thunder, and saw no more the flashes of lightning, but all was calm and composed:

*he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants;* instead of giving glory to God, who had heard the prayers of Moses and Aaron for them, and had delivered them from their frights and fears, and the terror and horror they were in, and of letting the people of Israel go, (see <sup><3162></sup>Revelation 16:21).

**Ver. 35.** *And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened,* etc.] Instead of being softened, as it seemed to be when under the plague, it became harder and harder when delivered from it:

*neither would he let the children of Israel go;* though he had so absolutely promised it, and assured them that he would not keep them, and that they should not stay any longer:

*as the Lord had spoken by Moses;* that so his heart would be hardened until the signs and wonders were multiplied upon him, God designed to perform, (<sup><3172></sup>Exodus 4:21 7:3).