

God is At War - Let My People Go

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[0 : 00] Now as we continue our progress then through this section of Exodus, we will be going on in the fullness of time into chapter 10 where we'll call a halt. Coming down in chapters 1 to 10, but the latter part of chapter 9 here, we find the actual infliction now of the plague of hail and fire.

Just to recap from last week, we looked at the plague upon the cattle, which was the fifth plague, and then the plague of boils, the sixth plague. And we mentioned how the plague of boils was probably one of those from which the Israelites were not exempt.

No doubt, perhaps the boils healed in due course when the plague was lifted, but we do not read that they were exempt from that plague. We do read that the cattle of the Israelites was exempt from the plague upon the cattle.

And here now, in the seventh plague, the plague of hail and fire, we read at verses 4 and again at verse 7. I beg your pardon, verse 26, that in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.

Now that means, of course, that any Egyptians who happened to live there amongst the Israelites, and we know that there were some, because, well, in fact, there may have been many, because when the Israelites leave the land of Egypt at the end of chapter 12, we read that they borrow from their neighbours jewels of silver and gold and all kinds of precious things.

[1 : 23] Now, they couldn't sort of go out through all the land of Egypt and find rich houses and bed things off them there. They wouldn't have had time. They had to get ready and go in a night. So the people from whom they borrowed or who gave them things must have been people who lived in their immediate proximity.

So obviously there were Egyptians living in the land of Goshen amongst the Israelites and mixed in with them, perhaps. But in the land of Goshen, for the sake of the Lord's people there, there was no hail and fire there.

So it goes to demonstrate to us again, now, even those who have neither love for the Lord nor desire to serve Him, nevertheless benefit from the presence of the Lord's people amongst them.

Where there is a community that lives and loves and worships for the Lord, even those who dwell amongst that community, who may be themselves heathens or unbelievers, they reap the benefit of the Lord's active presence, His relational presence with the people who dwell amongst them.

Where the Lord is at work, everybody benefits. Where the Lord's presence is, everybody feels the good and the benefit of it. Even if they don't acknowledge that that's where it comes from, they benefit from it.

[2 : 43] And likewise, if there be places from which the Lord withdraws His comfortable presence, everybody feels the scourge of that. So where the Lord is active and at work, where He is in active relationship with His people, then His presence is there, His presence is active, and everybody benefits.

So likewise, those Egyptians living in Goshen, they would have been spared this forthcoming plague. of hail and fire. The Lord said unto Moses, then, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, for may he be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.

And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven. And the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground, and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt.

Now, of course, as we mentioned for you, there is thunder. He sent thunder and hail, verse 23. There will, by definition, be lightning as well. Because thunder, of course, is simply the sound, the noise, the crack and flash of electricity that makes itself visible in the lightning.

That's all that the thunder is. It's the sound of the electricity cracking out, this huge voltage of power. So, of course, because light travels faster than sound, and because we perceive with the eye that faster than we perceive with the ear, then lightning, of course, doesn't come at exactly the same time as thunder.

[4 : 20] If you're watching a lightning storm, and you see a flash of lightning, it'll be a good few seconds later that you hear the peal of thunder. But that will be the peal of thunder applicable to that flash of lightning, because you're hearing the sound afterwards of what the flash of lightning is produced by.

So, in a similar way, it's reported that many years ago, there was an athlete in an almost sort of running race, whether Olympics or whatever, you know how they're all sort of poised at the starting line, and everybody waits for the starter's pistol.

He would always look at the starter's pistol. And people were convinced that when the starter's pistol went off, he had already started, and he was cheating, because he started before the gun went off.

But when they replayed in slow motion, they saw that the smoke had begun to come out of the gun, and he was watching, but they had extremely sharp eyes.

In other words, the gun had been fired before he began to move. But he moved with the sight of the smoke, and the crack of the gun going off was fracturably afterwards.

[5 : 25] But by that time, of course, he was off the blocks, and the others were all, no doubt, bowed out, waiting for the sound of the gun. But the sight is captured quicker than the sun. And likewise, when it comes to a storm, you see the lightning before you hear the pure thunder.

Of course, it doesn't follow that there's lightning flashes with all the thunder that comes, because sometimes the lightning will be taking place up in the clouds, and it will be beyond our sight, hidden from us by the thickness of the dark clouds.

But that which does hit the ground and come down, we see it, and that is, of course, pure electricity, and that will result in fire with anything that it hits and strikes and bursts into flame, but the thunder will follow after it.

So these two are going hand in hand with the hail. For whatever size the hail stones are, they are sufficient to be fatal when they drum upon man and beast and break the branches of all the trees and bushes and so on.

And as we mentioned last week, they wouldn't need to be all that huge in order to be fatal. If you think you're the size of an old-fashioned bullet or musket ball, it'd be pretty small.

[6 : 37] But if that hits you with sufficient force, and enough of them hit you, then you're going to die. And if you get hit, and it would largely be on the head and the upper body that people would be hit by hail, if you get a reasonably sized hailstorm, hard enough, it's hitting you with a force that comes down from the sky itself.

And that happens enough times. It would only need perhaps one to floor you, and the rest will just keep drumming down on you once you're flattened, and it would be fatal. Clearly, this was fatal to so many of the Egyptians and to their beasts.

In this instance, we need to recognize that just as where there is one with regard to lightning and thunder and so on, there will be the other. And with all this intensity of noise, and remember the drumming of the hail on the ground and on the roofs and everything in store, this must have been an absolutely terrifying experience.

Not simply to those who are caught out in it who would be killed by it, but to those who are cowering in their homes, those Egyptians who have heeded the warning, even for those inside.

Remember how Moses said in verse 19, chapter 9, Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle and all that thou hast in the field, for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them and they shall die.

[8 : 03] He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses, and he that regarded not the word of the Lord left his servants and his cattle in the field.

Now imagine you're an Egyptian family, cowering in your pretty basic mud house or whatever it is, even if it's a reasonably good house, you're concerned not now with the strength of the walls, but with the strength of the roof.

And you will hear this hail battering down around you. It will be hitting the ground, bouncing off it. It will be thundering on the roof. There will be the peals of thunder again and again.

There will be lightning flashes. If you peek out your window, you will see the fire running along the ground, lightning striking everything that's standing. You will see people, if they're not already lying dead as corpses, being felled by these hailstones.

Perhaps your neighbours, creatures, horses, beasts, oxen, lying dead in the field with the hail drumming down on them. And you will be cowed in terror.

[9 : 09] And these are the smart ones. These are the ones that actually heeded the word of the Lord. These are the ones that gathered their beasts and their families and their servants inside.

And still, it will be terrifying for them. You dare to peek out and you will see sights like you have never seen before. Anybody trying to move about out there will be felled.

Anybody who dares venture out of doors to drag in a corpse of somebody or try and save an animal will be killed. And any vegetation, any trees, any bushes will be just hacked down by this hail or struck by lightning and burning up.

There is nothing to do but cower and wait for the plague to pass. 1 Peter, remember, puts it this way about the judgments of God.

1 Peter 4, verses 17 and 18. For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

[10 : 16] But if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? The righteous scarcely be saved. Now we are not righteous in another house.

We are saved at all. It is because we have heeded the warning of the Lord and fled for shelter to the only place we can be sheltered, which is under the covenant of the blood and the righteousness of Christ.

That is the roof over our heads. That is the shelter from the storm. Because when that hail and fire comes down from heaven, which it does with this plague, not as we might have.

You know, if you get a hail shower and you hear it suddenly sort of hissing against the windows and you look out, you see it bouncing on the ground. Oh, look, it's hail. And then a few minutes or so later, it's passed.

It stops. This is not like that. This goes on and on and on. And nothing can stand before it. All the vegetation is destroyed.

[11 : 15] Everything out in the fields is dead. Nobody's able to move. The lightning keeps flashing. The trees are burning up. The fire is running along the ground. You wonder, is it going to come to your door? You wonder, is it going to start looking up your fence and burning at your door?

You hear the sound on your roof and you wonder, is the roof going to hold? What happens if it doesn't? Will it then pour in and kill my family as well? There is dread. There is terror.

And so there should be. This is the plague of God. This is the judgment of God. And those who have fled for shelter are spared. that they are saved only, narrowly, only just.

And if we are saved by the blood of Christ and what he has done, and if we say, revelantly, barely saved, it is not because there is insufficiency in Christ.

It is because what Christ has done and offered up for sinners is exact in its precision. that is precisely the righteousness, the sacrificial efficacy needed for every one of God's elect who will be saved.

[12 : 26] There is nothing wasted. There is nothing left over. It is precise. It is exact. And to that extent, the righteous, those who are saved by Christ's righteousness, are scarcely saved.

Where shall the unrighteous and the sinner appear? Now we're all sinners. We're all unrighteous. But if we're not under the shelter of Christ's blood, where shall we appear? We shall appear dead. We shall appear in ongoing, everlasting death under the eternal plague of God's judgment.

You see, all of this is pointing forward to the salvation, the shelter that is in Christ alone. Pointing forward to the judgments of God that shall fall at the last of an old sin and unrighteousness.

So as we see those Egyptians who have been wise, sheltering now with their families, with their beasts, their flocks, their herds, or whatever they can gather in their buyers and in their houses, they too will be terrified with all this that is coming and with the deaths of their neighbors and all the beasts that are outside.

In verse 24, we read, so there was hail and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

[13 : 48] We read that and go, yes, that's just describing how bad things are, since it became a nation. Now, fearful, of course, as well they might be, for nothing of this scale had ever been seen before.

I think, well, yeah, that's what the verse says, why are you laboring the point? Well, we're laboring the point because ancient Egypt is described in precisely those terms. It's called ancient Egypt precisely because the civilization there is so very ancient.

It is probably one of the earliest major civilizations in the world. Its pharaohs are traditionally numbered or divided into what historians call 32 dynasties.

32 dynasties of pharaohs ranging from approximately more than 3000 BC all the way up finally to Roman times.

32 dynasties of pharaohs. Stretching back as we said to it, usually the unifying of upper and lower Egypt is taken as the time when Egypt is established as a nation.

[14 : 51] And all these 32 dynasties at the time of Moses and the children of Israel, this would be in the 19th dynasty. So Egypt had been a unified kingdom for about 1800 years.

1800 years give or take. So the description we have in verse 24 here, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation, that's effectively comparing with the previous 1800 years.

Now to do that in the equivalent in Scotland and something was happening in Scotland which had not been seen since it became a nation. You could debate when did Scotland become a nation and something.

We really tend to trace the beginnings of our history from roughly when the Romans were here. That is certainly about 1800 years ago. Up until the 400s AD, you know, that's when the Romans were here.

So in the 200s AD, 1800 years ago, the Romans would be here in Scotland. So something that hadn't been seen since Roman times, being seen now in our day and age in terms of its catastrophe that maybe had been recorded then long ago, 1800 years ago, what was happening there, it hadn't been seen in all the history of Scotland in between.

[16:11] And this for ancient Egypt had not been seen ever since Egypt became a nation. That's how serious it was. That's how much of a disaster it had been.

Now, we speak about the Romans, of course, being in Scotland and just to sort of think, well, we don't have any historical link with ancient Egypt. And in one sense, we don't. But we mentioned the 32 dynasties of Egypt, ranging from the first dynasty way back in the 3000 plus BC.

The final 32nd dynasty, when it ended, it ended with Antony and Cleopatra. I'm sure you've all heard of Cleopatra. She was, if you like, the last, and the female pharaoh as well, the last of the ancient Egyptian line.

And her affair with Mark Antony, of course, was brought to a crushing end by Julius Caesar and by the Romans. So the Romans who effectively ended the dynasties of ancient Egypt.

It's the same Romans that now we are counting from when Scotland would really originate its history. There, if you like, the sort of link between ancient Egypt on the one hand and our own country on the other hand.

[17:24] The Romans who brought ancient Egypt and all its 33 dynasties to an end are the ones from whom we might count the beginnings of our own history as a nation. So there is a sort of, you could say, tentative link there.

But that's how ancient they go back. And that's how dangerous and devastating this particular plague is for that. So we read then from verses 27 on to 33 how Pharaoh then says, okay, okay, I am a people that I've sinned this time.

Now, we think, okay, this is the seventh plague now it's getting on a bit. We've really, really had quite a lot already. But if you think about it, if you trace back, Pharaoh has only called for Moses and Aaron this is only the third time.

Out of all the plagues, most of them, he sort of turns a blind eye and he doesn't want anything to do with them or he still won't budge so they have to send another one on the back of the previous one.

Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron. This is only the third time that that's happened. The previous times were in chapter 8 at verse 8. Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, entreat the Lord that he may take away the frogs.

[18:39] That's only the second plague. And then again, in verse 25 of chapter 8, we read, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, go ye, sacrifice unto the Lord God in your land.

And then, this was after the plague of flies. So we've got, you know, with the blood, he doesn't do anything. The frogs, he asks them to take it away. The lice, he doesn't do anything. The flies, he asks them to take away.

And then after the flies, you know, we've got the plague of the cattle and then we've got the boils and then the hail of fire. And now he's back saying, okay, okay, I've sinned this time, this time, yes, fine, go and serve the Lord and do whatever you have to do.

I have sinned this time. The Lord is righteous and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the Lord for it is enough that there be no more mighty thundering and hail and I will let you go and ye shall stay no longer.

Now, of course, Pharaoh is reacting to the extremity of the situation and as we've said many times in the past, plenty of people will do that. In an extreme situation, you'll get plenty of people who will pray to a God they don't really believe in and if they are then delivered by that God to whom they have prayed, they think, oh, that's fine, I can just go back and get on with my life and as if God hadn't delivered that, as if they would have got out of that sticky situation without God's intervention, as if they didn't really need to pray.

[20 : 01] So why do they bother praying in the first place, of course? For most people, entreating the Lord is a last extremity and if their heart is not really moved, if it's only for their own convenience or their own pragmatism that they want this difficulty removed, their heart remains just as hard.

God is kind to them and they think, oh, well, that's fine and they just walk away and they don't acknowledge God at all. This is exactly what Pharaoh was doing here and Moses is not stupid. He says, you know, as soon as I'm gone out of the city, I will spread above my hands unto the Lord and the thunder shall cease.

Neither shall there be any more hate that thou mayest know that the earth is the Lord's. But as for thee and thy servants, I know that he will not yet fear the Lord God. He's not stupid.

He knows what they're going to be like. But if we can work backwards, briefly, from verse 33 back to verse 29, we see at verse 33, Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and spread abroad his hands.

He doesn't just go out of the throne room where Pharaoh waits with all his servants. He doesn't just sort of go to the edge of the house. He actually goes out of the city. Now, it doesn't matter how small the city is.

[21 : 17] If you've got a built up area and he's trying to go out of the city, it means he's got to go out into the city first of all. Now, what's happening in the city? Moses is effectively walking out into the death storm.

He's walking out where there's all this hail and fire thundering down around him, bouncing off the ground. Anything that grows, any vegetation has been leveled by it.

He will be effectively, without wanting to be indelicate, stepping over the corpses of people who will have stayed outside in the streets or in the fields.

he will be picking his way past the bodies of horses and cattle and people, men and women, perhaps children too, lying dead in the streets.

Nobody can venture out to drag them in or to go and bury them because if they venture out, they end up dead as well. So this is the kind of scenario that Moses is going out of.

[22 : 17] He's going out into the death storm, surrounded by the evidence of that death. Out of the city, he's going out sufficient grief, well clear of Pharaoh and his servants before he stretches out his hands abroad unto the Lord and the thunder and hail ceased and the rain was not poor upon the earth.

Now, if this is a storm, a plague, which is killing everybody around, you think, well, how come it doesn't kill Moses? And I think we really sort of know the answer to that, don't we?

I mean, the plague is being sent from God. We have to understand and recognize, we must conclude that of the billions of hailstones descending in this plague, each individual hailstone, each bolt of lightning was having its individual, individual course and trajectory personally directed by the Lord.

Oh, come on, God doesn't that every individual hailstone is coming down, he empties out a huge shower, it's not each individual hailstone. Well, remember that we are now ourselves at the stage, it's humankind, we're at the stage where we can fly an unmanned aircraft, may I call it a drone, up above the clouds, thousands of feet up in the air and from that they can send a bullet, a tiny little bullet with precision accuracy to kill somebody on the ground or to place hundreds of bullets in precise location on the size of a football field with one an inch apart each occasion.

They could do that as long ago as the 60s. Way above the clouds where nobody could even see that there was anything there. Now we can do that as mere men and women. So if God, who has infinite power to his disposal, do you imagine he can't direct each individual hailstone?

[24 : 14] Well, of course he can. Every bolt of lightning, every individual hailstone will be directed away from Moses but even if we, even if our faith is too weak to think in those times, even if we don't think of each individual hailstone having its own trajectory and direction directed personally by God, although he does of course, but if that's too much of a stretch for your little faith, then at least we can recognise the Lord putting as it were an invisible shield around Moses that as he walks through the storm he himself is untouched.

If it's easier to think in terms of God doesn't necessarily direct any individual here to, but those that would otherwise descend upon Moses are parted. He can part the Red Sea, he can part through hailstones and make sure that as Moses walks he is untouched.

by this storm because clearly he is. As he walks through the storm, as he walks through the plague, the hailstones do not kill him. The lightning does not strike him.

He reaches the outskirts of the city. He goes beyond through the death storm and stretches forth his hands to heaven and it ceases. He is in other words protected by the divine shelter of the Lord.

He would certainly, as we say, be passing through the multitude of carcasses of men and animals lying where they had fallen, both in the city and also perhaps more so out in the fields.

[25 : 46] None to bury that until the plague be overpassed. But here it is, under God, who brings this plague to an end. But if we can work back, work verses 32 and 31 and 32 there, we see how God's mercy, even to the Egyptians, yes, some of their crops are destroyed.

The flax from which they would make clothing and the barley which would be part of their crop, yes, that is destroyed. But the wheat and the rye is not yet, not yet grown up. And so it's still underground, so it's still protected.

There will still be a harvest, God willing, later on in the year from these crops. God does not leave, even the Egyptians, completely destitute. In the midst of wrath, there is still mercy because God is a merciful God.

He is gracious. He is loving. But God, of course, has sent this plague in all its power, in all its strength. We've mentioned how in the past God is effectively doing battle with all the Egyptian gods and goddesses which the pagan Egyptians worship.

We mentioned how for the plague of cattle, Hathor, the Egyptian goddess of love and protection is usually depicted with the head of a cow. We mentioned how ISIS, again, not the terrorist organisation, but the ancient Egyptian goddess was the goddess of medicine and peace and how the boils would be a direct indication of her helplessness.

[27 : 17] She could not heal. The false gods of Egypt cannot heal. The plague of hail and fire would be a direct sort of facing down of moot. the Egyptian goddess of the sky because this hail and fire is coming down from the sky over which she has no control.

But the God of Israel has control of everything. In Job 38, we read verses 22 and 23, hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war.

With whom is God doing battle? You could say with Pharaoh, you could say with the Egyptians, but ultimately God, the living God, is doing battle with the false gods of Egypt of which Pharaoh of course is one.

A false god who claims to be a god just as they claimed the Nile was a god, just as they claimed all the different gods they worshipped in the sky and on the ground and the beasts in the field and so on, depicted them as human beings with animal heads and all these other abominations.

God is at war with the false gods and with, you might say, the demons that men worship other than himself. Anything that we worship other than the living and true God is ultimately of the evil one.

[28 : 46] But again, we see how this plague of hail and fire is visited upon Egypt. Psalm 105 verses 32 and 33, he gave them hail for rain and flaming fire in their land.

He smoked their vines also and their fruit trees and break the trees of their coasts. And of course, that is exactly what we read here.

Of course, as the Lord unleashes this, we read a fire ran along the ground and it rained hail such a grievous hail and it destroyed every herb upon the field upon man and upon beast throughout all the land of Egypt.

He sent thunder and hail and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt such as there was none like it. It smoked throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast. It smoked every herb of the field.

It break every tree of the field, every branch broken, every plant destroyed. There was nothing left that wasn't destroyed by the hail.

[29 : 46] God is at war with the false gods of Egypt and if we would not have God as our enemy, we dare not make a God, small g, of anything in this world.

The temptation is always to make a God to give the highest priority to our families or to our job or to our income or our wealth. Sometimes it always saddens me when you speak to devout, believing Christians and they talk of their family or the younger generations and they speak of them and what they're doing and they say, oh well, as long as they've got their health.

And whilst no doubt we all wish health and well-being on our children and grandchildren and loved ones, physical health will be of no use to us when this world is gone and when our grief time here is past, the most important thing that any believing individual must desire and must pray with breaking heart for their families, their children, their grandchildren, their loved ones is that they would find Christ, that they would be converted and saved for that alone is their protection in this world and the next.

We make a God, small g, of anything that we consider to be the most important thing in this world. It may be our family, it may be our wealth, it may be our career, it may be our home, it may be anything that we consider most worthy of our attention, our resources, our time, our energies.

And anything that we make more important than God, capital G, as effectively become our God. And we have become idolaters, we have placed ourselves at war with the God of heaven and earth.

[31 : 52] It is the first commandment, thou shalt have no other gods before me. And so God is at war with all the false gods of ancient Egypt and of present day Scotland.

Whatsoever we place before the Lord, we place before him to our destruction and to our ultimate damnation. We need the Lord as our saviour more than we need anything, more than we need physical health, more than we need money, more than we need even a roof over our heads.

And I know all these things are important, but Jesus did not say these things are unimportant. He said, after all these things to the Gentiles seek, your heavenly father knoweth that ye are in need of these things, but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.

God is at war with all the false gods of this world, whether in Egypt or whether in Scotland, whether in ancient times or whether in the present day.

To God it is all the same, past, present and future, because he is an eternal God. And he will do this thing. He will either send his judgments or he will withhold his judgments.

[33 : 16] Both the giving of them and the withdrawing of them are of God's glory and God's mercy. Because, as we see verse 29, that thou mayest know that the earth is the Lord's.

And this, of course, is reprised centuries later by David in Psalm 24, where we read, The earth is the Lord's and the fool's thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein.

So not only everything that is in creation, but every person that has ever been made is God's to control. They are his to do with as he sees fit.

If the very hail itself, each individual tiny stone it of is directed and ruled by God, does fail really think that he won't be ruled by him?

Do you and I really think that we won't be ruled and directed by God? Do we think that if we just say, well, I'm not going to believe in that God, I just don't accept it, I'm going to turn away, I'm going to pretend it doesn't exist, that it will thereby not happen?

[34 : 23] Do you really think that if you were on the Titanic after it stuck the iceberg and say, I don't believe the ship's going down, sorry, no, it's meant to be an unsinkable ship, I'm just going to get my deck chair, I'm going to get myself a nice hot drink, I'm just going to sit here until they plug the gap, until they've started repairing it, because it's not going down, I say it's because you don't believe it, if we decline to believe and place our faith in the Lord, it will not alter the reality, it will simply mean that we ourselves are living in an unreality, in a fantasy, for the earth is the Lord's and everything in it.

So we see when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

Just as Moses had said, verse 30, as for thee and thy servants, I know that you will not get free of the Lord God, because his heart wasn't changed. He wanted the hail to stop, he wanted the plague to go away, everybody would want that, but he's not prepared to turn to the Lord.

Once it stops, he thinks, okay, that must be it. He can't have any more tricks of his free. There can't be any more. I don't believe it was even God. I think it was all just coincidence.

Maybe Moses managed to go out at exactly the time it was going to stop anyway. I don't believe it. I'm not going to let them go anyway. When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunders were ceased, no doubt hoping every time that Moses couldn't conjure up any more plagues and not realising they were just getting more and more severe each time.

[36 : 14] He hardened his heart. He sinned yet more and hardened his heart. He and his servants in the heart of Pharaoh was hardened. Neither would he let the children of Israel go as the Lord had spoken by Moses.

It's not unlike what we read in Zephaniah chapter 1 verse 12. The Lord is talking about the Jewish people in Jerusalem at the time but he says it shall come to pass in that time that I will search Jerusalem with candles and punish the men that are settled on their leaves that say in their heart the Lord will not do good neither will he do evil the Lord will not do good neither will he do evil nothing that happens is going to be of God God is not going to be at work it's all going to happen it is what it is if it's going to happen it'll happen if it's not it's not of God God will not do anything the Lord will not do good neither will he do evil now if we're going to take that line then what does it say it talks about unbelief indifference but what sort of if you think about it remember those who heard

Jesus and listened to him who were they were the poor they were those who were ill or disabled or sick or in some way handicapped those who needed his healing those who needed his help those who were the poor those who were the outcast of society the common people heard him gladly Jesus himself said that those who are not sick don't need anything to solve it people who like their lives people who like the way their life is generally speaking don't want to alter it by introducing Christ and the Lord into their life because they feel it will alter their priorities of course they're right it will alter their priorities it will let them see the true God instead of their false gods it will mean that they direct their energy their attention to something that will give them fulfillment and blessing and joy such as they have never known before they don't want to go there because they like their life as it is by contrast people who have an unhappy life people who have made a train wreck of their lives who have been enslaved by addiction or been besieged by problems or difficulties of the heart break of whether marital breakdown or broken relationships or loss of employment or whatever it might be people whose lives have become a disaster where they see no hope who have come to be unhappy with the status quo they rather their life and the way it has turned out they are more ready to embrace change they hope it will alter the situation in their lives and they are willing to try because anything's got to be better than the way their life is just now this is one reason why the lord sometimes in his mercy drives us down to rock bottom and i can say that categorically because he did it to me he can drive us down to rock bottom where we have nowhere else to go except to give our lives completely into his hands while things are good we don't see the need to do this and pharaoh is still pharaoh he is still king of ancient egypt he is still as far as he sees it the bright and warming star he is still a god in the eyes of his people and now the hail has stopped okay let's try and get back to normal now of course we're not going to let the Israelites go his life his life is still comparatively good and as with pharaoh so with unbelievers generally ironically it is often those whom the lord has blessed most in this life who are the least prepared to put their trust in him or even to acknowledge that the good things in their life are provided by him but it's he who has given them their good life this is their they choose instead rather to pretend that because nothing major has befallen them yet nothing ever will the lord will not do good neither will he do evil he will do nothing he will not get involved in my life he will not get involved in the world because of course he doesn't and all these people who think he's us they're just fooling themselves because their life is comparatively good and i'll say it again it is ironically so that though often those whom the lord has blessed most in this life who are the least prepared to put their trust in him no disaster has befallen them so they think that nothing ever will the lord will not do good neither will he do evil except on i chapter 1 verse 12 and this is the case with he refuses to believe

that god is going to do anything else now he's not going to attack he's surely he's stent now he must have run out of tricks he must have run out of plagues by now there can't be more things can only get better no things are going to get worse and it is true also for us if we be at enmity with god things may be bad and we may shake our fists in heaven and we may grind our teeth and say i'm never going to give in to this god if he was a god of love he'd never let these things happen to me and so we shake our fists and we make an enemy of god and we say well things can't get any worse than they are now friend believe you me they can things were going to get worse for pharaoh he was going to have such plagues as he could never imagine they were finally going to break that hard heart of his things would get worse and friend if you are still in a state of empathy against god believe you me it is only going to get worse it will not make itself better by pretending that god will do nothing good or evil god desires to do good he desires to save he desires to redeem he desires to set you up upon your feet and to restore that beauty of dignity that wholeness of humanity in which we were designed of the first but he cannot do that if we are of enmity with him until we have been reconciled to him so if god is bringing you down low it may be for such a purpose of grace the sooner we surrender the sooner there will be peace the longer we continue at enmity with god the worse things will get do not be like the fools in Jerusalem settled upon their leaves who said in their hearts the lord will not do good neither will he do evil against sin the lord will do evil but toward the penitents and the humble and those who cry unto him out of their need he will do only good the lord desires to do good he desires to deliver and when we are in the grip of satan's claws when we are enslaved to addiction when we are broken in our spirit and surrounded only by what we see as the hopeless darkness of our lives if we will turn to the lord he will pronounce yet one more time to the devil who holds you in his grasp let my people go let's pray good take love love love to being