The Calm before the Storm

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[0:00] If you've got your Bibles, please open them up to Exodus chapter 9. Exodus 9, this is our third time here in this chapter.

And last week we took a look at the plague of boils. And that plague showed us some insight into the working of our adversary, the devil, showing that there were several supernatural elements to that plague, albeit that was the hand of God.

But we saw that the unescapable infiltration of those boils showed a supernatural spread. And likening that to sin, how that by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin.

And so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. And to consider how it's affected you, to consider that you've been affected by sin, gravely, horribly affected by sin.

Oh no, you don't want to tell everybody about your sins, and I don't want to hear all about your sins, but you've been affected. And it's done worse to you than you'd like us to know and like to admit. Sin is ugly.

[1:11] And there's a spread to it. There's something supernatural going on there. There's something spiritual involved in the spread of sin. Looked at that last week. We secondly saw the unexplainable infection.

That something sterile like ashes would spread to a region-wide epidemic. And that's a bit unexplainable. Of course, it shows us something supernatural behind it. And it was the hand of God.

But in applying that to sin, it's how interesting it is how many innocent things that God has made for His own glory or has given to us, and they've been completely trashed and perverted by humankind.

There's something bigger behind it. There's something pushing mankind to dive into wickedness and to be so consumed with sin. There's the hand of the devil behind all this, and I showed you some of that with some Bible study last week.

And then thirdly, we looked at the unexpected infliction, that even the magicians who were supposed to stand against Moses and Aaron could not stand before them. They themselves were inflicted and overcome.

[2:17] And we studied how even somebody like the Apostle Paul, our authority and our leader in spiritual matters and guide in truth and doctrine, says that he's just a wretched man himself and that sin deceived him and slew him.

And he even describes that he wanted to do good, and he finds that sin is, there's a law inside of him that's bringing him into captivity and that he can't even do the things that he wants to do because sin dwells in him.

And so we saw the presence, the perversion, and the power of Satan, the God of this world, operating and influencing every single soul on this planet, bringing us into captivity of sin and its consequences and even its damnation, but for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, Exodus chapter 9, we move forward past this, the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh again. So here we are, right back where we started for plague number 7. And this time, there's a storm coming.

It's a bad one. Skip ahead to verse 24 and just notice this. And verse 24 says, So that 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.

[3:30] God is going to send a storm on this land. He's going to mingle fire with the hail. And in one of the verses a little bit before that, in verse 23, it says that the fire ran along upon the ground.

And so that's something you understand when we have these wildfires and the wind pushes and that fire just takes off and can run at like 30, 40 mile an hour. And it's something even 50 miles an hour.

So you can't outrun this stuff. It'll overtake you. And this is a storm that God is going to send on this land. And it's the seventh plague. But before he sends the storm, there's a passage that we want to read today from verses 13 to 19, where we see what I'll call the calm before the storm.

And in this passage, God has a few things that he wants to say before he sends the storm. And he wants some people, certain people, to hear some things of his voice, some things that he wants them to be aware of.

And he makes several statements and declarations of things that he desires. And so let's take a read here in Exodus 9. We'll begin in verse 13. Let me pause here and just say that when he says, I will at this time send all my plagues upon thy heart.

[5:05] He's not saying that in this next plague is going to be everything, because there's 10 total that we see in this book that we're studying. We've already gotten through six. This is just the seventh. What he's saying when he says at this time is, at this time of confrontation between you and me, I'm going to send all my plagues.

I'm going to keep them coming. There's more to come. You've gotten six. You're going to get another one. And so here's verse 15. He says, For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with the pestilence, and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.

And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power, that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou will not let them go?

Behold, tomorrow, about this time, I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof, even until now.

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, shall not be brought home. The hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.

Let's pray together. Lord, at this time we ask that you'd speak directly to each heart, that you would minister your word to each person. May we see clearly your will for today, as much as you declared it for this moment, before you sent the storm.

God, I don't have any doubts. Your word declares there's a storm coming to this world. And Lord, it's not a doubt to me that it's come into this land before. But at any rate, before the storm comes, and during the calm, let us hear your word.

Let us hear what you have to say. Speak to our hearts, and make it, as you reveal to us, directly what you want us to be doing.

And help us to be faithful in that, and obedient, we pray. In Jesus Christ's name, amen. Amen. All right, the calm before the storm. Now the Lord instructs, like, I'm sending this plague.

This is the seventh plague, and it's going to be one where he destroys the produce of the land of Egypt. He's already destroyed the cattle, everything that was left out in the field. We saw that in the fifth plague at the beginning of this chapter.

[7:25] Then what came next was the boils, and this one's going to be on the produce, and everything. In verse 25, take a look there. It says, the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt, and all that was in the field, both man and beast.

And the hail smote upon every herb of the field, and break every tree of the field. And so there's orchards that they've been growing, and there's crops and vegetables. You can skip later in verse 31.

The flax and the barley was smitten, for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bold. And so all the crops that they've been growing, and farming, and working, and irrigating through that whole land is a very fertile area.

God's going to destroy it with hailstones, with fire mingled in there. He's just going to wipe it out. Now, some of it gets by, because later on, we'll read there, there's something to be eaten by some critters that he's going to send in a future plague.

But for now, this is going to be a horrible storm, and it's coming. And God gives warning, and even tells them how to prepare for it. He tells them that you can get, in verse 19, to gather the cattle.

[8:27] If they're out in the field, they're going to die. If any of your servants are out in the field, they're going to get smitten with these things. Nobody's going to escape this. You better get them in. Get them into the houses. Get them into the barns, into the stalls.

And so he gives them warning. He gives them even some instructions on how they can avoid this. Now, let's take a look at a few of the declarations God makes in this. Some things he says, before the storm, that ought to be understood, and ought to be something we can take heed to this morning.

In the beginning of his statement, in verse number 13, he tells Moses to rise up early, stand before Pharaoh, and say this line, the end of 13, let my people go, that they may serve me.

Now, God has said this many times already. Many times as Moses stood before Pharaoh and declared that very line, let my people go, that they may serve me. And yet, it still hasn't come to pass, has it?

It still hasn't happened. They remain in Egypt. They are now sheltered from the plagues, but nevertheless, they're still in bondage. And understand this, that it is God's will and his desire, and all of this confrontation going on, is to deliver his people out of the land of Egypt.

[9:39] It is God's will to get them out. He wants them to depart from Egypt. He wants them to worship him. He wants them to sacrifice to him. He's declared that. He wants them to serve him, is what he said, that they may serve me.

When they're in Egypt, they're not serving him. You might think, well, you know, they love him. No, they're serving Pharaoh. That's who they're serving. Remember all the talk of the oppression?

My people are oppressed and they're afflicted and they're serving and they're in bondage. In Egypt, they're serving Pharaoh. God says, let them go, that they may serve me.

You know what God's declaring here, first of all, is I still want my people to serve me. I want them out. I want them out of Egypt. As long as they're in Egypt, they're not serving me.

As long as they're in Egypt, they're oppressed. And God needs a separation. He wants them to leave. They need to leave. They need to get out of that place and they need to learn how to follow God.

[10:46] They need to get away from Egypt first and then they can learn how to follow the leading of God. They need to learn how to trust God. But they got to get out of Egypt first. They need to learn how to sacrifice and worship God.

And that's going to take place when they leave Egypt. They need to learn how to depend upon him. They need to learn how to be satisfied and content with his provision, with the daily portions that he sends and the food and the water out of the rock.

They need to get out where they can hear his voice and rejoice in his presence and in those holy ways and judgments and statutes that he would teach them in the future.

The word of God would be taught to them but they need to get out of Egypt so they can serve God. God declares, I want my people to serve me but not here.

Not here. And remember, they are his people. This people wouldn't exist if it wasn't for God. This started back with a man named Abraham. His wife named Sarah who couldn't have a baby.

[11:51] She was barren and God said, Abraham, I'm going to do something. I'm going to give your wife. You're both old. It's past the time of her bearing children but I'm going to do something.

I'm going to give you a child and that child's name is going to be Isaac. And in a matter of time, she bore a son named Isaac. A miraculous thing.

And he said, that seed is the seed of promise. And I'm going to do something with you, Abraham and to your seed after you that is going to be a revelation to the whole world.

As a matter of fact, their existence and life today is still a revelation to the whole world. But beyond that, he promised to take something special from that covenant with Abraham.

They're a covenanted people. A people of promise. They're God's people. And they're in bondage in Egypt. And he said, I gave you life.

You don't exist but for me. This relationship that we have, we need to get out of Egypt to where we can have our time. To where you can serve me and I can be a God unto you.

Now let me bring this to where you live today. Are you a child of God? I mean like you personally. Are you a child of God? Do you know it?

By faith in Jesus Christ you've been born again. Do you have life? That eternal life of your father. Are you alive in Christ? And if you're alive in Christ and you're a child of God then you don't belong in Egypt either.

And it's God's will to deliver you from Egypt. And it's his will to take you out of that land so you can do what? Serve him. Serve him. Let my people go that they may serve me.

If you're a child of God he wants you to serve him. He wants you to sacrifice to him. He wants you to worship him. He wants you to hear his voice. He wants you to follow him.

[13:50] While you're in Egypt you can say well I'm still a child of God. You could be God's people people of his promise people that he that's got special protection.

but you're not serving him because you've got to get out of Egypt to do that. You've got to separate yourself from some things to serve him the way he calls for you to serve him.

He doesn't want you to serve him in Egypt. He wants to get you out of Egypt so you'll never look back and move forward walking following him as he leads you by that pillar of fire and cloud.

He will lead you away from Egypt. He'll lead you to a place where you rely on him. To a place where sometimes it's tough and you'll call on him and he'll help and you'll know him and you'll experience his voice and his ways.

He wants you to learn to trust him. He wants to get you out of Egypt so you can trust him with your life and with your family and with your food and with the direction that you go in this world.

He wants you to rejoice in his presence but not in Egypt. The longer you stay in Egypt the more surrounded by those pagans you are the more you pick up their habits and their evil ways the more you see destruction you see a hatred against God these people's hearts get hardened the Pharaoh the leader the God of that world his heart's hardened against God you're not worshiping God you're not serving God not in Egypt if you're a child of God get out of Egypt it's to God's will and God's desire it's his declaration in this passage that he wants you out he wants you to serve him he wants you to serve him with a separation between you and Egypt there's something else he declares and you can read it in verses 14 and 16 he says look at the end of the verse at the end of 14 he says that thou mayest know know what know that there is none like me in all the earth in verse 16 come to the end of that verse where he says

I'll show in thee my power and he says that my name may be declared throughout all the earth God declares that he wants his people out of Egypt to serve him he also declares to an individual like Pharaoh as well as to the masses of the earth that there's none like me in all the earth that I want you to know and see my power and I want my name to be declared throughout all the earth what is this saying God wants to be known he wants to be known that he alone is God he wants to be known in the earth to an individual to a leader and to an entire nation I created all things that I am before all things the Bible says by him all things consist it is this God in his name that made the sun to rule by day and the moon to rule by night when you open your eyes and look out every day of your life you're seeing a work of almighty God and he wants to be known as the one that did that he wants to be declared throughout all the earth he sends the rain he created the waters he formed the mountains he formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul he didn't grow out of some puddle or some little mixed up soup with some kind of electrons wiggling around but man was created by God the Bible says he giveth to all life and breath and all things without him was not anything made that was made he is before all things and by him all things consist and all this is true and all this has been revealed but not all of this is known for some reason why is he unknown to Pharaoh why is he unknown to mankind

I want to show you why keep your place but find Romans Romans chapter 1 find in Romans chapter 1 a pattern that every civilization has followed across the globe throughout history without fail Romans chapter 1 and the Bible will tell you the truth it will always reveal why things are the way they are you just have to get in the book it will tell you but God wants to be known and God deserves to be known for all the work that he has done in Romans chapter 1 in verse 19 the Bible says because that which may be known of God so it's possible it's within reach to understand and know some things because that which may be known of God is manifest in them that's the people for God hath showed it unto them how did he show it to them for the invisible things of him alright there are things of God that are not understood and seen and known there's a lot of things spiritual things but there are things that he declares or has revealed to us about himself the invisible things of him from the creation of the world that's the means are clearly seen so you look upon creation and you can understand and know things that you can't see with your eyes the existence of God number one you can't see him with your eyes but look around something made this and we don't have time to talk about the arguments and the design and all of that but you got to be completely clueless or full of rebellion and to have swallowed such delusion that this just came about come on now from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made even his eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse so God believes that what he created is sufficient to tell every human being that he exists and it is the truth is you have to be educated out of that you have to have somebody else teach you that he doesn't exist because your own grow up your own eyes your own experiences will tell you somewhere along the line you will come to just be totally befuddled by something you're looking at in this world in this creation you'll just you'll come to it it'll hit you and you'll eventually whether you're six years old or ten or twenty five you'll just stare at it and say how is that possible how did that come to be how did that happen how does that still maintain itself you'll you'll get blown

I'll get blown away by a little tiny seed putting it in some dirt put a little water on it and then watch it grow and grow I just watched a video this week just a mathematical thing it just these things get to me of how trees tall trees 60 feet tall break all of physics and that they can suction or pump water all the way up to the top at 60 feet high and had a straw you couldn't suck water all the way up it's not in you but a tree does it it's a living organ anyway so come on the more you learn and study and look at it the more it just screams at you of an omnipotent intelligent almighty creator and a good one and so in verse 21 though after all of this is revealed and declared and displayed for man verse 21 says because that when they knew God oh so they did know they did get it they did see his hand when they knew God they made a choice they glorified him not as God neither were thankful but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened professing themselves to be wise there's your scholars and your

PhDs and your physicists they became so stupid that they write in journals and speak in lectures and say we know that this is 78 billion years old and we've seen this little bone and come on they became fools and verse 23 and change the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image this is what Egyptians did into an image made like unto corruptible man and to birds and to four-footed beasts and creeping things wherefore God also gave them up in verse 25 he changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator who is blessed forever amen so that's the pattern is God revealed it they see it but then they just chose not to glorify him and worship him as God and with the darkness that comes over them the deception that comes over them they begin to worship things they can see and touch and the creatures and so the Egyptians worshipped the sun as it rose every morning and the Egyptians worshipped the waters that brought forth life and creatures and sustained their habitat and so they began to worship things and creatures and creations and the birds and the four-footed beasts but God wants to be known it's got so bad

Egypt is known for its numerous gods and it's known that it has a king back in chapter 5 [24:02] and verse number 2 that said who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go I know not the Lord how is it that they have a king that doesn't know the Lord well I just showed you why because he's worshipping he's gotten to that phase of this all the way down to where he's worshipping everything around him the Bible says in Acts chapter 14 that God left not himself without witness in that he did good and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons filling our hearts with food and gladness it's the hand of God that that maintains all of his creation and sustains our lives God deserves all the praise and all the acknowledgement of what his hand has done all of his care over you all of his provision all of his blessing he deserves it he makes it to rain upon the just and the unjust so the unjust deserve or he has desert from them to praise him for the rain that comes on their lands the heavens declare the glory of God you know what you and I ought to do more is make his name known it's already been known in his creation he wants it to be known in all the earth he said and yet even his own people get nervous when they're in public and their meal is served to them and now they think oh can I even bow my head and acknowledge my great God for providing and sustaining my life with food

Paul said that food is to be received with thanksgiving one of the problems we just read in Romans one neither were thankful and this is just one little area one glimpse of how you can make his name known but even his own people are ashamed to bow their heads and pray in public or ashamed to speak to a family member or friend about their God or to tell them about Jesus Christ or even acknowledge that they well the reason I can't come is because I'm going to go to church instead God's people say the reason I can't come well I got something else I have to do what would that be tell the truth don't ever be ashamed to make his name known still today God wants to be known and he wants he deserves to be known and God will not ignore a nation any nation that declares that he doesn't exist he will not ignore that that nation that teaches as if it's acceptable fact that man though fearfully and wonderfully made is just the product of some random causes and natural things and evolution here in the calm before the storm in

Exodus chapter 9 God wants to be known and when a nation insists on denying his existence well just like Egypt they can prepare for him to show himself he will not be mocked the wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God so where does that leave us in our land are we any better than Egypt have we not been declaring to generation after generation after generation that there is no God you say well I haven't done it but our nation as a matter of public policy and government education has declared there's no God there never has been a God and if you want to believe that that's over there and you keep it over there but here where modern man and civilization we embrace all things we embrace all sins and all abominations there's no God that's what our nation says and you're about just a week and a half to a few weeks away from seeing the rainbows everywhere and there's going to be a big public display of it and your president's going to be at the center of it and if you want to look it up he'll put out some speech at the beginning of June celebrating and declaring an abomination and

God's not going to wink at it for much longer by his grace there's a calm before the storm but he wants to be known and this government and this world is not making his name known in all the earth and so a storm is going to come in Exodus chapter 9 let's come back there there's one more thing that God wants to be declared before his storm comes and that's found in verse 19 verse 19 says 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 send therefore now send send what send warning send this word spread this word send it that I'm going to destroy some things and if you're out there in it you're going to get destroyed with it send messengers to carry this message to everybody so before God sends the judgment in the calm before the storm

God sends a message he commands that this message be spread across the land why would that be because God is not willing that any should perish this is not Pharaoh talking hey everybody go no this is God's voice saying send therefore now I'm going to destroy them I'm going to destroy everyone that's in the field but you have a choice to get out of the field you have a choice to seek safety and refuge but the command here what God is saying is send tell them warn them a storm is coming and in that storm a fire is coming and that fire will devour you you don't want to be in it you don't have to be in it so send therefore I'm after the crops I'm punishing your nation you don't have to be in this fire what a responsibility for those that stood and heard these words of warning and heard this command to send therefore now and how accountable those must be to get the word out to their neighbors and to their countrymen and to their families and their to their very friends and all the people of the land what a responsibility is on them what accountability and what liability is on them to obey the voice of God and send therefore now now before the storm so my question this morning along these lines is what are we doing what are you doing to send that message of coming judgment and there's a way out and God will have all men to be saved and he's not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance so what are you doing having heard the message that I need to send and I need to tell I need to go are you just just going to hang out where the messenger is or are you going to go you're going to hang out where Moses said those words just stay in church stay in church keep it in church or are you going to say oh they need to hear this too they need to hear this you've got cousins you've got co-workers send therefore now you've got people you've known since you were a little kid yet they don't know the truth about the

Lord Jesus Christ they're practicing some religion somewhere or they're just believing that they've swallowed the line that everything's fine they can choose their own way every road leads to heaven God is love and they don't know that Jesus Christ died to get them out of hell send therefore now you have a responsibility there's some men that were sent in this Bible and I know what you think I know sometimes I'm the same way you are you think well they're not going to listen to me or I've tried already and there's there's examples this book will give you everything God sent Jeremiah to a nation to preach to them a message of coming judgment and destruction and how to escape it and well you know what they did they threw him in prison that's how much they thought of his message from God they they accused him of being a traitor they accused him they mocked his message and they said it's not true it's not of the Lord because God is love is kind of how they pitched it there's peace coming and

Jeremiah said oh no oh no you're gonna get it and that city got burned with fire because they wouldn't listen to God's messenger but you know what he sent he went and preached it he ended up in jail God took care of him in the end he was walking a free man while the rest of them were in bondage because he obeyed the voice of the Lord there's another king who had an opportunity to obey the voice of the Lord but instead of getting freedom and liberty he ended up having his eyes plucked out and being in bondage and in jail because he wouldn't obey the voice of the Lord he sends Ezekiel to a rebellious nation and he calls them an impotent and stiff-hearted people and he said go preach and he said to him I'm not promising you that they're going to hear I'm not promising you that they're going to forbear it's one or the other they're going to resist you or they're going to receive you but whatever you do don't you be rebellious Ezekiel you go and preach send therefore now God doesn't accept the excuses when he gives a command he gives the command he expects obedience in Isaiah chapter 6 the Lord asks whom shall I send and who will go for us and Isaiah immediately ready said here am I send me maybe God will send you to some people that are just as rebellious that won't listen to a word that would persecute you and mock you and just cut you off maybe God would send you to a people like that are you willing will you obey his voice do you care maybe God will send you to somebody that's receptive and somebody that's looking for light in a dark life somebody who's just fed up with their sin and fed up with the way things are going and just internally they're just holding out for some concrete truth in a sea of just despair and deception and God says send send tell them because there are those that will receive it are you not one that by the grace of

God received it or maybe not immediately but are you not one that received the truth God doesn't need excuses he's not looking for that he wants to be known and he wants you to send from the beginning he wants you to serve him in the calm before the storm God wants his people to serve him but not in Egypt if you find yourself hanging around in Egypt if you look around at your friends look around at the situations and places you go and you say God's not here this is not blessed of God this is Egypt that's all this is then get out get a separation get to where you can start to hear his voice and follow him and follow his leading and have his holy word revealed and declared to you and eventually allow him to lead you into that promised land and that life of rest God wants his people to serve him he wants his name to be known in all the earth he's done so much already and yet he's not acknowledged and he's not given credit for it and he's not getting worshipped instead he's just getting ignored they're lying about him and it's not going to fly with him the storm's coming and so

God wants the warning to be sent out he wants you to warn the wicked to rescue the perishing to seek and to save that which was lost the storm's coming church are you prepared are you preparing is your family in are you living like it's not coming are you living like it's just you know just one day after another everything's good and I don't have to be like those crazy people I don't have to be like those Christians that are out there on the street or handing out tracts or telling people they're going to hell well what are you doing if that's not you then you're probably not serving him you're just saved and enjoying it but God wants his people to serve him and his name to be made known so let's start sending let's send there's the calm before the storm next week the storm's coming and it's going to be grievous like he said and and as we look at that we'll see that every man has a choice to get out of it or to taste of the wrath and the fire and by God's grace I'm not going to get the fire because of Christ and his blood and I wonder this morning before we dismiss and before we go home is there one here is there somebody sitting in this church that says I don't know that if God sent his judgment now if I'd be getting it or if I'd be freed have you ever been released from Egypt have you walked away from Egypt have you been has has the Lord Jesus Christ the redemption that's in Christ Jesus been applied to your account have you walking away do you know the liberty in

Christ Jesus or you still stuck back there under the oppression of the God of this world if you've never been saved don't go home today without Jesus Christ and talk to me after the service take you through the Bible in five minutes ten max show you how you can know for sure without any doubts no more doubts you can know for sure that you're born again there's nothing like it it's beautiful it's liberty and you should have it God offers it to you it's called the gift of eternal life you can have it I have it and I'm no better than you the only reason I have it it's because Jesus Christ offered it to me and I took it and I want you to take it to it's free so let's pray and then we'll be dismissed and if anybody wants to talk about that I'll be here Lord we love you thank you for the Bible and thank you for how it points us to things that are accurate and relevant for our lives today Lord help us to be faithful witnesses of the Lord Jesus

Christ and of his pending judgment on this world your book already declared you already it came out of your mouth it's going to come to pass and Lord we don't doubt that we don't want to be found not obedient to you either so God give us courage give us wisdom and insight to hear your voice and to acknowledge your direction in our lives individually to speak up for you to make you known to those who need to know you help us God to be faithful in this thank you for Bible Baptist Church please bless each one with a good week please strengthen us as we go help us to live by faith to trust you help us to resist the devil to resist our old man and the sins that that get around us and consume us and get in front of our face God help us to walk with you this week help us to please you and do something for you we ask this in Jesus Christ name and for his sake amen