

Exodus 034  
 Fear of the Lord  
 Exodus 9:22-32  
 February 15, 2026  
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Let us take our Bibles this morning and open them to Exodus 9:22. Lord willing, we will be looking at Exodus 9:22-32 this morning. The title of our message this morning is "The Fear of the Lord."

God, of course, in the Book of Exodus, is raising up a man—the man Moses—that He is using to redeem the nation of Israel, which has been in bondage for about 400 years. (That is an awfully long time.) God has worked strategically in this man's life where now, at the age of 80, he is really beginning his ministry. Most people at the age of 80 are wanting to retire, but Moses needs to refire, not retire. Ages 80-120, after a season of 40 years of preparation, became the most productive time ministry-wise in Moses' life.

God is actually using Moses, along with his brother Aaron, to redeem the nation by bringing the ten plagues upon the nation of Egypt. We have seen the Nile turn to blood; we have seen frogs; we have seen gnats; we have seen flies; we have seen the death of livestock; and we have seen boils. How much worse can it get? It is about to get worse through hail that is going to be unleashed all over the land of Egypt.

The Plagues of Egypt			
NO.	DESCRIPTION	SCRIPTURE	Egyptian Deity
1.	Water to Blood	Exod. 7:14-25	Hapi, Khnum
2.	Frogs	Exod. 8:1-15	Heqt
3.	Gnats	Exod. 8:16-19	Set
4.	Flies	Exod. 8:20-32	Uatchit
5.	Disease on Cattle	Exod. 9:1-7	Hathor, Apis
6.	Boils	Exod. 9:8-12	Sekhmet, Serapis
7.	Hail	Exod. 9:13-35	Seth, Nut
8.	Locusts	Exod. 10:1-20	Seth, Nut, Osiris
9.	Darkness	Exod. 10:21-29	Re, Horus, Atum
10.	Death of the First Born	Exod. 12:29-36	Min, Osiris, Heqt, Isis

There we are in plague number seven, which we started looking at last time. God has instructed Moses concerning what he is to do to bring forth this plague upon the land of Egypt. We have God's prediction concerning what is going to transpire (Exodus 9:17-21). Now, as we would expect, because God cannot lie, everything that God says is going to happen, happens as the prophecy leaps into fulfillment (Exodus 9:22-26).

## Hail (Exodus 9:13-35)

- I. God's Instructions (13-16)
- II. God's Protection (17-21)
- III. Prophecy's Fulfillment (22-26)
  - A. God's Instructions (22)
  - B. Moses' Obedience (23)
  - C. Plague's Severity (24-25)
  - D. Plague's Limitation (26)
- IV. Pharaoh's Reaction (27-32)
  - A. Pharaoh's Alleged Repentance (27)
  - B. Pharaoh's Request (28)
  - C. Moses' Promise (29)
  - D. Pharaoh's Insincerity (30)
  - E. Plague's Severity (31-32)
    1. Early crop (31)
    2. Late crop (32)
- V. Moses' Reversal (33-35)

Notice, first of all, some instructions:

*"Now the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand towards the sky, that the hail may fall on all the land of Egypt, on man and on beast and on every plant of the field, throughout the land of Egypt'" (Exodus 9:22).*

You are at a point in Moses' life where he is a prepared instrument. Everything God tells him to do, he does. I have to tell you something about this: Moses was not always this way. He was a very stubborn, self-willed person. This is why we can all relate to him. He is the one at the age of 40 who murdered the Egyptian. He saw an Egyptian abusing a Hebrew, and he took matters into his own hands. He murdered the Egyptian, and then he became a fugitive of justice for 40 years. From age 40-80, he was a fugitive of justice, shepherding the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, in the desert in a place called Midian. It is there that Moses is reduced to almost nothing. In fact, when God finally calls him at age 80 at the burning bush, Moses says, "Lord, send someone else. I am unworthy of such a calling."

I am trying to communicate the point here today that Moses became what he became because he was not only an instrument of God, but he was a prepared instrument. The truth of the matter is, everybody wants to be used by God. I do not know of a single Christian that says to themselves, "I do not want to be used by God." We all want to be used by God, but the issue is: Are we willing to walk with the Lord through the preparation process? That is what Moses went through to become that flexible and pliable instrument in the hands of God. Many Christians are not willing to walk through that process, and yet that process is something that is needed to become all that we are in Christ Jesus.

When I talk about preparation, what do I mean? Do I mean academic preparation? That could be part of it, depending on what God has called you to do, but I am more focused on the idea of character development. The Lord is sandpapering the rough edges off of our character, off of our personality, like the times when we are easily angered or easily provoked to anger or very irritable or very anxiety ridden or always wanting to have our own way, those types of things—those ugly characteristics that we so frequently are like in Adam's fallen race. It is not that God brings us to a place of perfection in those things, but He works in our lives in such a way that He takes these instruments that He wants to use, and He starts to make them pliable.

That is not something that happens overnight. It did not happen in Moses' life overnight; it took 40 years. Most people, when they study the life of Moses, they will study the first 40 years of his life and then the last 40 years of his life. He lived until the ripe age of 120. But what has always interested me about the life of Moses (and not just the life of Moses, but anyone God uses), is the middle section of his life, the spiritual training. If we had our way, if we had our druthers, we would just leapfrog right over that. We do not like that at all.

It reminds me of something a basketball coach that I follow used to say. He is not dead, and I am reluctant to give his name out because I am not endorsing everything the man said or did. He used a lot of profanity, but Bobby Knight of Indiana University (whatever you think of him, and there were some definite deficiencies), was probably one of the greatest basketball minds ever. That is why they called him "The General." He had a statement and it has always stuck with me. He says, "Everybody wants to win. Everybody has the will to win. Nobody wants to lose. But very few players have the will to prepare to win." That is different when you are willing to be prepared so that you can be a winner. Most people would say, "Thanks, but no thanks."

This is, in a different sense, how God is with us. He wants to use all of us, but at the same time, we have to be prepared to be used. Am I willing to walk with God through the difficulties, the valleys, the silent years, the menial labor, the times when nobody knows I exist or is calling attention to my name, or is singing my praises? Am I willing to walk with God through those times? Because those are the times that, more than anything else in a person's life, these times of preparation are where we learn humility, we learn dependence upon God, we learn faithfulness, we learn obedience.

I hope this encourages some of you, because I know that many of you are walking through desert type experiences. Be encouraged in that, because God is preparing you for something bigger. Walk with God during those times. Take it as part of His plan for your life. Do not fight against it. Do not resist it, but accept it, cooperate with it, because it all comes from the good hand of the Lord, and it relates to how He wants to use us.

Moses at age 40 had a lot of great education in Egypt, but a lot of self-will. There was too much Moses in Moses' life, and not enough God. God fixed that, not immediately, but through a 40-year process. He got his B.D. degree during that time period—the backside of the desert degree—where he is tending these sheep, not really

understanding his destiny. This is the guy that is going to be used to write the first five books of the Bible. This is the guy that is going to be used to bring forth the Law to God's people from Mount Sinai. This is the guy that is bringing these plagues in giant proportions upon the land of Egypt.

As you go to Exodus 9:23, you see Moses doing what we would expect: he obeys God. I do not think as a 40-year-old he was willing to obey God, but now 80 years old. If you look at Exodus 9:23, it says:

*"Moses stretched out his staff towards the sky, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire rained down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt" (Exodus 9:23).*

The words that jump out to me are "Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky." In other words, he did exactly what God said. Of course, we can make the argument that God would have brought the plague anyway. Maybe we could, but He used Moses' obedience. This is what the Lord wants from us at the end of the day. He wants what we like to call around here "Fat Christians"—F, faithful; A, available; T, teachable. That is what we need. That is what God wants. That is what every church needs. Unfortunately, in the body of Christ at large, such people are in short supply. Moses was someone that obeyed God.

In John 2:5 we have the first miracle that Jesus was about to perform at the wedding in Cana of Galilee when they ran out of wine at the wedding. His mom had no idea how this situation was going to get resolved. It is a real social embarrassment to run out of wine at a Galilean wedding, and they ran out. Jesus' mom makes this statement. (This is His mother, Mary.)

*"His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He [Jesus] says to you, do it'" (John 2:5).*

"I am not sure how this is going to get fixed, but He has the answer. When He tells you to do something, start doing it, even though you may not understand it all."

In John 13, in the Upper Room, Jesus got down on His hands and knees. If you can imagine God incarnate, the God-Man got down on His hands and knees and started to wash the feet of the disciples to the point where Peter initially does not want anything to do with that. "What do you mean you are going to wash my feet?" Jesus is role-modeling servant leadership. In the process of all of that (John 13) He makes this statement to His handpicked disciples:

*"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (John 13:17).*

Blessing in the Christian life comes from obedience. It does not only come from knowledge, although knowledge is very important. You cannot do what you do not

know. But He does not say that you are blessed if you know these things. He says the blessing follows if you do these things. A lot of Christians, look at their lives and say, "I am not being blessed the way I think God wants to bless me." The answer is: Are you doing what He told you to do?

Everybody has pockets in their lives where they know there is something they are supposed to do that they are not doing. If you have nothing like that in your life, ask the Lord to show you. He is really good at bringing it up. It could be something very small, like you need to call this person or send this person a card or start this ministry or to knock off this sinful habit. He will show you. So many times we resist those little things, but what you discover in the Christian life is that the little things become the big things. If you will not obey God in the little tiny things, it short-circuits the blessing that He has for you.

Of course, we are reminded of James 1:22:

*"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (James 1:22).*

It is almost like he wrote that for the Bible Church crowd—for us. Many times in my Christian life, I have assumed that the more knowledge I get, that is where it ends; that is the high point of spirituality. I have my facts down; I have my verses down; I have everything down. But James says, "If you think spirituality is measured in those terms, then you are in a state of delusion." Knowledge was never given as a final step; it is given as a first step. We are to regularly apply what we know to do. As we do that, we come out of delusion and we enter into the blessed life that the Lord has for us.

Now you have a description of the plague's severity. Notice, if you will, Exodus 9:24, which says:

*"So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation" (Exodus 9:24).*

This is describing the uniqueness of this plague that has now hit Egypt. We had a description of that in Exodus 9:18 last time, predicting the plague that was coming.

*"...such as has not been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now" (Exodus 9:18).*

You look at the history of Egypt and it goes way back. I have had a chance to go to Egypt. I had a chance to visit the pyramids of Egypt, the tombs of Egypt. They can give you the history going back to Abraham times. It is very likely that Abraham himself, with our basic Bible chronology, knew or saw the Egyptian pyramids. By the way, they still do not know exactly how those were constructed.

There is a plague that is going to hit that will be greater than anything Egypt, going all the way back to its roots, has ever experienced. It will be totally unique. We have a tendency to look at that and say, "That is the past." But I am also here to tell you that that is the future. We know from the Scripture that God is going to bring judgment on planet Earth that will be different from anything our world has ever experienced, but it will be completely and totally unique. It will not be confined only to the borders of Egypt; it will envelop the entire world.

The Book of Revelation talks all about it through the seal judgments, the trumpet judgments, and the golden bowl of wrath judgments. That time period will be completely and totally unique. Jesus, speaking of that time period, says:

*"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will" (Matthew 24:21).*

Jeremiah 30:7, speaking of that future time period says:

*""Alas! for that day is great,  
There is none like it;  
And it is the time of Jacob's distress,  
But he will be saved from it"" (Jeremiah 30:7).*

Guess what, folks? You are not Jacob. Aren't you glad about that? We are the church. It is not the church that goes into this; it is Jacob. The nation of Israel as an unbelieving nation goes into it, and through it they will be saved. They will come out the other end, and every single living Jew on planet Earth will be born again. Never has such a thing happened in the history of the church where an entire nation is born again.

*"Can a land be born in one day?" (Isaiah 66:8).* The prophet Isaiah says, "Yes, it can." That is the future. This is the benefit of coming to Christ now, because you are part of the body of Christ that will be taken to heaven via the translation of the church, or the Rapture of the church, before these horrors (and they are horrific) unfold upon the earth.

We get more of a description of this Egyptian judgment. The objects are mentioned there in Exodus 9:25.

*"The hail struck and all that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant and every tree of the field and shattered every tree of the field" (Exodus 9:25).*

This is interesting because it is talking here about a lot of things that you read about in Genesis 1. Moses also wrote the Book of Genesis. Do you remember, in Genesis 1, the six days of Creation, God brought forth the trees? God brought forth the plants? Genesis 1:29-31 talks about it—humanity originally being created as herbivorous rather than carnivorous because there was no death.

You say, "Wait a minute, Pastor. I am going to go over to the steakhouse today. Are you saying I cannot do that?" Help yourself, because the rules change with the New Covenant in Genesis 9. I am sure the steakhouse industry in Texas will appreciate me saying that. Originally there was no death in Eden. How can you have death when animals are being killed and eaten? This is why the loin coverings that God gave to Adam and Eve after they sinned were such a big deal. Where did those loin coverings come from? Obviously, an innocent animal had to have been killed on the spot, and the skins of that animal were used to clothe Adam and Eve, two people who had never even seen the concept of animal death, let alone human death.

Of course, all of that is a picture of Jesus who would die in our place and God would use the coverings from His death to clothe us in His righteousness.

*"and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22).*

It shows you right out of the gate the seriousness of sin, the severity of sin. God is saying here that the judgment, when it hits Egypt, is going to cover these plants and trees and everything that He created on the six days of Creation. God has a right to bring judgment. Do you know why He has a right to bring judgment? Because He is the Creator. If you created everything, then you have the right to judge what you created.

*"The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains" (Psalm 24:1).*

Revelation 4:11, describing the End Time judgment, says:

*"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created" (Revelation 4:11).*

God has an absolute right to bring judgment when He created everything; and He is judging what he created. No one can look at God and say, "You are being unfair. You are being unjust." The thing to understand about Jesus is that He is your Creator and He is your Redeemer. As the song goes, "He was crucified on a cross of wood, yet He made the hill on which it stood." Who is Jesus Christ? Who is this man that we just sang of? Is He a pop psychologist? Is He a thought leader? Is He an influencer? Who are we dealing with here, exactly?

You are dealing with someone that spoke, and the heavens and earth leapt into existence. You are dealing with someone who, when Creation went astray, stepped out of eternity into time to absorb the wrath of a holy God in our place, when that wrath rightfully deserves to be on us. He has every right to do what He does in history, because He created all things.

In fact, the book of Colossians tells us that He not only created all things, but right now He is sustaining all things (Colossians 1:16-17). People that know a lot more about it than I do tell me that the molecules and the atoms themselves that comprise matter would split apart if something was not supernaturally holding them together. You look at the different orbits of the planets, and if it goes on long enough, there is going to be a collision between the planets. Yet God has designed everything in a way that prevents these collisions from happening. He is sustaining matter. He is sustaining the universe.

We do not feel this way, but we are traveling on the Earth in our heliocentric solar system, rotating around the sun, and we are not so close to the sun that we burn to death, and we are not so far from the sun that we freeze to death. We orbit exactly around the sun at the right distance to sustain life. That is Colossians 1. He sustains what He created (Colossians 1:17).

When creation went astray (that is us), He absorbed the wrath of God the Father in our place. We have to put Jesus back in His rightful position. He is not a life coach. He can be that, do not get me wrong, but if you look at Jesus only as your life coach or whatever, it is a complete diminishment or shrinkage of who Jesus actually is.

Exodus 9:25, as I said before, describes this judgment that is coming:

*"The hail struck and all that was in the field through the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant of the field and shattered every tree of the field" (Exodus 9:25).*

The comprehensiveness of the judgment—man and beast, plants, animals that weren't under protective coverage. The judgment that is coming will be very comprehensive, as well. It will not stop at the borders of Egypt; it will envelop the earth.

The prophet Isaiah, speaking of that future judgment, says this:

*"I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold,  
And mankind than the gold of Ophir" (Isaiah 13:12).*

Jesus, in Matthew 24, says that if those judgments were not supernaturally cut back, no one would survive. In Revelation 6 a quarter of the world's population is gone, just like that. In Revelation 9, another third of the world's population is gone. According to my old math, that takes us down to 50% of humanity wiped out by the time you get to Revelation 9 in these judgments yet coming. During the Covid scare, what were we worried about? About 0.0001% of people are dying. Think of a situation where half of the world's population is wiped out, and God is just getting started with these judgments. We are not even finished with the Book of Revelation by the time this happens.

What is happening in Egypt is a type of what is yet to come. Judgment is always tempered by mercy, which you see there in Exodus 9:26 with the plagues' limitation:

*"Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel were, there was no hail" (Exodus 9:26).*

Where is the land of Goshen? There it is:



These judgments hit and everybody residing within the land of Goshen—God's people, the nation of Israel—was exempted from these judgments. It is like in the Tribulation Period. There are judgments that are coming, yet in the Tribulation Period itself, some people will get saved. Praise the Lord. In fact, many will get saved after the church has been taken to heaven. When you study passages like Revelation 9:4 and Revelation 16:2 you will find that in some cases those that are believers during this terrible time period are exempted from certain judgments.

As Solomon said, "What has been will be again" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). God brought protective care to the animals. If you look back at Exodus 9:19, it says:

*""Now therefore send, bring your livestock and whatever you have in the field to safety. Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail falls down on them, will die"" (Exodus 9:19).*

Get the animals out of the way. Some did, some did not. Some animals survived, some did not. This is a type of the judgment yet to come. You can find protective covering somewhere. You can actually be exempted from this time of judgment through the cross, as Jesus took the penalty of our sin for us 2,000 years ago.

As all of this is happening, in Exodus 9:27-32 you see Pharaoh's reaction. Notice in Exodus 9:27, he cries some crocodile tears, but it really does not look like his repentance is authentic.

*"Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, 'I have sinned this time; the Lord is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones'" (Exodus 9:27).*

This is the first time we have ever had any admittance like this in our study of the Book of Exodus, where Pharaoh acknowledges that God is right and the Egyptians are wrong. It is interesting to me that individuals, even those that are suppressing the truth in unrighteousness, know who God is, and they know what is right. Paul talks about this in Romans 1:18-20:

*"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19-20).*

Think of the most ardent atheist on planet Earth, the most antagonistic, hostile atheist that has ever existed. On the Day of Judgment at the Great White Throne judgment, when heaven and earth flee in the presence of Jesus, as Revelation 20:11-15 say they will, the atheists will not be able to stand there on the Day of Judgment and plead ignorance. They will have no ability whatsoever to say something like, "I had no idea You were out there, God," because the issue is not a lack of knowledge, the issue is suppression. One atheist I watched on a documentary recently asked this question, "What if God really does exist and you show up on the Day of Judgment, what are you going to say then?" He coughed up some excuse of, "Why did You do such a good job hiding Yourself?" The truth of the matter is, God has not hidden Himself at all. God's existence is plain, as plain as the nose on our face. The problem is taking what is obvious and suppressing it in unrighteousness.

You notice that Pharaoh has a moment of candor here, where he admits that that is what he has been doing this whole time. "I know we are wicked, and I know God is righteous." He is in a bind here, and what comes out of him is what he really thinks. These games of "I did not know and I had no idea" are not so. When the seal judgments are opened up, this is what it says in Revelation 6. This is what the inhabitants of the earth will do:

*"And they said to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the sight of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'" (Revelation 6:16-17).*

They know about God sitting on a throne. As unbelievers they know about the Lamb. They may even have some kind of knowledge of the Trinity because it says "The great day of their [plural] wrath has come." If they have all of this information, why are they not

saved? Because they do not want to be saved. They "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18). This is the frightening condition that Pharaoh is in.

The Bible is pretty clear that the unrighteous do not like the light. In fact, John 3 tells us they hate the light because the closer they get to the light, the more that their deeds are exposed. There is a natural proclivity towards the unsaved against the light, which explains Christian persecution all over the world. Christianity is being persecuted today like it has never been persecuted before. It is just that we are exempted from it, to a large extent for now, in the United States of America. Why the hatred for Christians? Why the hatred for Christianity? Because the unrighteous hate the light. What did Jesus say we are? We are not only the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13), but we are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).

You see this happening here with Pharaoh. Then you also see that he seems to be crying some crocodile tears. If you look down at Exodus 9:27, he says, "We are wicked." It looks like he is repenting, but if you go down to Exodus 9:30, you see that his repentance is short-lived.

It says in Exodus 9:30:

*"But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God" (Exodus 9:30).*

For whatever reason, Moses was given the ability to look into Pharaoh's heart and ascertain that his repentance was not authentic and it was not genuine. What do you do with this man, Pharaoh? It is like a guy who is very sorry that he got caught. There are a lot of people on death row that way, or have spent a lifetime in prison. What are they sorry about? They are sorry that they are in prison. They are sorry that they are headed towards capital punishment. They are sorry they got caught, but they are really not sorry for what put them in prison. That is what Pharaoh is like. That is why his alleged repentance is not real. He does not like these plagues that are hitting, and he wants that scenario to change.

As you look at Exodus 9:28, Pharaoh makes a request to Moses:

*"Make supplication to the Lord, for there has been enough of God's thunder and hail; and I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer" (Exodus 9:28).*

"I want you, Moses, to stop the plagues, stop the hail, make supplication for me, make supplication for my people, and I will do the right thing." All of it is fake, because Pharaoh was in a place of suppression. What sorrowed Pharaoh and caused him to say some of the right things is not sorrow over the sin, but sorrow over the consequences of sin. May our hearts always be soft unto the Lord, where our sorrow is not so much

because of the consequences of sin (which can be very horrific, by the way), but we are sorry over the sin itself because it displeases the heart of God.

Moses in Exodus 9:29 makes a promise:

*"Moses said to him, 'As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease and there will be hail no longer, that you may know the earth is the Lord's'" (Exodus 9:29).*

What is God trying to do with Pharaoh? He is trying to get him to a point where Pharaoh can recognize that he is not God, and that this Egyptian polytheistic framework that he has been worshiping is not the true God. Creation itself is not the true God. God is God. God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. God is the One who spoke and the heavens and the earth leapt into existence.

*"The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains" (Psalm 24:1).*

Bringing a person to that point is the agenda of God. This is why people, under the Lord's intervention, are brought to the end of themselves. God has a goal in mind: He wants them to understand that He is their Creator, and He is their Redeemer. In fact, as Daniel 5 says that our very next breath depends upon the Lord (Daniel 5:23), because He is the One that is continuing the palpitation in my heart. He is the One that is keeping my muscular system moving. He is the One that is keeping my cardiovascular system moving. He is not just my Creator. He is my Redeemer, and He is also my Sustainer. I would not even have woken up this morning if God had not allowed it. In fact, my very next breath is dependent upon Him. That is who God is, and He is perpetually bringing people to the point where they are willing to acknowledge this.

Then as you look at Exodus 9:30, you see Pharaoh's insincerity in the whole thing. This is why I know his repentance is fake; it is feigned. There is really no godly sorrow over sin. What he is sorrowful for is the consequences of sin. He is sorrowful for the hail that has been unleashed. Moses is speaking to Pharaoh, and I am not sure how Moses knew this, but God apparently gave Moses in this case the ability to look into Pharaoh's heart.

*"But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God" (Exodus 9:30).*

That is something about God that to me is very frightening. He can look past all of the pretense; He can look past all of the religiosity; He can look past all of the seemingly spiritual statements and biblical statements that people say. Pharaoh, probably, if you look at Exodus 9:27, gets an A in theology. Everything he said there was right. This may be why, when John sees Jesus in the Book of Revelation, it describes Him as having eyes with fire. He sees through everything and He looks directly at the heart. That is

apparently what God is allowing Moses to do. He says, "Your repentance is not real. I know what your problem is: you do not fear the Lord."

There it is, right there at the end of Exodus 9:30. That is why the title of this message was "The Fear of the Lord." What is the fear of the Lord? What does that even mean? Does it mean I live my life in a state of anxiety and trepidation? No. Biblically speaking, fear of the Lord is respect for God, who He is, and His ways. I try to align my life according to His precepts because I respect those precepts. You start thinking that way and you are walking in a good place.

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7).*

That is usually misquoted. People misquote it as, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." That is later in Proverbs, but the first time this concept comes up is in Proverbs 1:7. *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."* What is the difference? Knowledge is "gnosis [γνῶσις]," what you know or understand. Wisdom—the Hebrews called it "hakma [חָכְמָה]," and the Greeks called it "sophia [σοφία]"—is knowledge applied. Knowledge applied is wisdom.

Knowledge is not the end game; it is the first step, but you cannot apply what you do not know. A lot of people do not seem to know anything. You watch the same cable television and politicians that I watch and hear. All of these people are saying, "We need to bring the trans movement into the public schools, and we need to put men in women's sports." I am thinking, "Have you people lost your minds? What is wrong with you?" Why do they not know anything? Everybody knows the genders are different. Everybody knows that if you have a male football team and a female football team, the men are most likely going to win nine times out of ten, because men are naturally stronger than women. Doesn't everybody know that? I guess not.

Why do they not know it? Why do they not understand it? Because they do not fear God, that is why. It is obvious that they cannot understand anymore, because the fear of the Lord is knowledge. Then once you have knowledge (the Greeks called it "gnosis [γνῶσις]"), now you have something to apply to your life, and that becomes "sophia [σοφία]," wisdom, what the Hebrews called "hakma [חָכְמָה]."

"Pastor, do you have a good book we could read on wisdom?" Yes. Proverbs. You are not going to find a finer book on it than that. It tells you how the knowledge of God can be applied to daily life—how it can apply to marriage; how it can apply to emotions; how it can apply to finances; how it can apply to how we conduct ourselves within community; how it applies to relationships. Read the Book of Proverbs and start applying what it says, and your life in 2026 is going to take off spiritually. But it begins with a fear of the Lord, a respect for God.

Moses says, "Pharaoh, you say all the right stuff. You get an A plus in theology, but I can see your heart. God gave me the ability to see your heart because God sees

hearts, and you do not really fear God. You are going to reverse your promise once you get away from the consequences of your sin, which is this hail which is really what you are upset about."

Exodus 9:30-31 closes with the plague's severity. You have a statement about the early crop in Exodus 9:31 in a parenthetical statement:

*"(Now the flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they ripened late.)" (Exodus 9:30-31).*

When you are on your Bible memorization tour, are those verses you commit to memory? Those are some strange verses. What are those even doing there? Charles Ryrie says:

"The barley was ripe and the flax in blossom indicates that the plague of hail was in January. Also, from January to April cattle were usually outdoors (cf. vv. 20-21)."

"The wheat and spelt (an inferior kind of wheat) were not harmed at this time because they ripen a month or so late."<sup>1</sup>

This took place at the right season for some things to be destroyed by the plague, but not other things, because they would not ripen until later. Why would God put that in His word for us to study? Would you develop a sermon series around that? Why is that even there? That is what you have to ask as you are going through the Bible. Why is that there?

I think it is there because it is showing us that whoever wrote this was an eyewitness. This is not Veggie Tales; this is not "Jack and the Beanstalk." This is real history. Whoever wrote this (we think Moses wrote this, primarily as the compiler and the primary eyewitness) saw these things happen, and that is why he gives such specific information. Rather than letting this stuff bother you, you should rejoice. Look at the details that are here. The whole Bible reads like this. As we are studying the Book of Acts on Wednesday evening, it has things in there about geography and going up to Jerusalem and all kinds of things that someone would not know unless they were an eyewitness to the events.

There is something very interesting that is said in John 21:11, this has to do with the miraculous catch of fish:

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible*, 105.

*"Simon Peter went up and drew the net to the land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was torn" (John 21:11).*

"At the end of everything, we had 153 fish." You would not believe what the commentators try to do to figure out what the number 153 means. They go on and on and on. All of this ink is spilled trying to figure out what the number 153 means. There are all these theories. They are endless. But I think I know the meaning. You know what 153 fish means? It means there were 153 fish. Why does he have to tell me that there were 153? Because John was there. That is what the book claims.

John, writing about these things, says:

*"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).*

"I was there, and I saw the whole thing. That is why I knew there were 153 fish, not 152, not 154, but exactly 153." I say, praise the Lord, because my Christianity comes from the most powerful witness that can ever be introduced in a court of law, which is eyewitness testimony. To my knowledge, there are very few things in a court of law that are more powerful than eyewitness testimony. That is what the Revelation of Jesus comes as; not someone's fictional account long after the original events, but an eyewitness.

Moses saw these things. Next week we are going to see how Moses reverses the hail judgment, something that the Egyptian soothsayers could not do.