

All Horses in Egypt Did Not Die

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All the Cattle and Horses in Egypt Died
(*Exodus 9:3-6*)

All the Horses of Egypt Did Not Die
(*Exodus 14:9*)

When there is an apparent contradiction between scriptures, that deal with what appears to be the same subject, it is important to examine the original language used by translators of the Bible. One reason for doing this is that more than one English term can be used to describe the original Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek word. For instance, when Exodus 9:3-6 was translated into the original King James Bible, the translators used the descriptive word "cattle" rather than the general term "livestock." Unfortunately, other translations of the Bible used "livestock" instead of "cattle", which makes understanding the scriptures that follow more difficult, and confusing.

The original Hebrew word, that some translations of the Bible render "livestock," is SHD 4735, which is translated 63 times into the English word "cattle," five times into the word "possessions," three times into the word "flocks," two times into the word "substance," one time into the word "herds," and one time into the word "purchase." Therefore, rendering SHD 4735 as "livestock" is not the best choice. As a result, some of the scriptures used in this study will be quoted from the original King James Version of the Bible.

Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous

murrain (SHD 1698; cattle disease, cattle plague; pestilence). ⁴And the Lord shall sever (separate) between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel (Ex. 9:3-4; Ed. notes in parentheses; KJV).

And the Lord did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt (Fig. Synecdoche [of Genus], Ap. 6; p.12; Companion Bible; **all kinds of cattle**) died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. ⁷And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead (Ex. 9:6-7; Ed. note in parenthesis; KJV).

In essence, God warned Pharaoh in advance that a number of plagues were coming, and many would have varying effects upon all the animals in Egypt. However, the fifth plague focused more on Egypt's cattle than the other animals. By concentrating on cattle, God was dealing with one of Egypt's chief objects of worship.

In Egyptian mythology, Apis or Hapis (alternatively spelled Hapi-ankh), is a bull-deity that was worshipped in the Memphis region. Greek writers make the Aptis bull an incarnation of Osiris. It was the most important of all the sacred animals in Egypt. It was supposedly conceived by a ray from heaven and a house was constructed for it at Memphis. Apis was a source of prognostication, and the Egyptians mourned at his death and created an elaborate tomb with a separate chapel built above it. When another Apis was found, there were rejoicings and celebrations throughout the country.

It is speculative, but based on the next scripture it would not be unreasonable to suggest that whatever Apis bull was alive at the time of this plague upon Egypt's cattle, it would probably have died.

For I (God) will pass through the land of Egypt on that night (Passover), and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; **and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment:** I am the Lord (Ex. 12:12; NKJV; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It is no coincidence that the first sin ancient Israel committed, after leaving Egypt, was to fashion an idol in the form of a calf. Apparently, based on the Egyptian custom of celebrating when a new Apis was found, ancient Israel began dancing, singing, and participated in other rituals contrary to God's law (cf. Ac. 7:41),

But he (Moses) said, 'It is not the noise of the shout of victory, nor the noise of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing I hear.' ¹⁹So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets (of God's law and commandments) out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain (Mt. Sinai). ²⁰Then he took the calf which they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it (Ex. 32:18-20; NKJV; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In essence, the Israelites were giving credit to the Egyptian god Apis for their freedom from slavery. However, in a spiritual sense they were still slaves to the false religious system that God wanted them to come out of. This principle applies to all nations today.

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, '**Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive her plagues**' (Rev. 18:4; NKJV; emphasis added; see study: A Contentious Woman and A Harlot).

During the seventh plague, the Egyptians still had some cattle that survived the murrain of the fifth plague (cf. Ex. 9:3).

Behold, tomorrow about this time I (God) will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now. ¹⁹**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 (Ex. 9:18-19; KJV; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Consequently, not all the cattle died during the fifth plague and there was no specific mention of horses dying. This explains why Pharaoh was able to muster his army and pursue the Israelites to the Red Sea.

But the Egyptians pursued after them (the Israelites), **all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen**, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the (Red) sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon (Ex. 14:9; KJV; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So there is no contradiction between events that took place in Exodus 9:3-6 and 14:9. Instead, there can be misunderstandings based on an incorrect rendering of the Hebrew to English language, especially regarding the terms "livestock" and "cattle."

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