

Exodus Chapter 11

The order of events in these chapters may be clarified by assuming that (verses 1-3 and 12:1-28), occurred before Moses' final interview with Pharaoh (10:24-29; 11:4-8). Thus, Moses' departure from Pharaoh "in a great anger" (verse 8), would be followed the same night by the death of the firstborn (12:29), and the Israelites would be inspecting the Passover lamb during the three days of thick darkness that covered the Egyptians (10:24-29; 12:3-6).

"And the Lord said". Read as "the Lord had said." In a parenthetical paragraph, the narrative recorded that which God had already said to Moses during the 3 days of darkness, priming him for Pharaoh's summons, and priming Israel to receive Egyptian jewelry and other goods. An aside explained Egyptian generosity as occasioned by divine intervention (12:35-36). This also included a healthy respect by Egypt's leaders and people for Israel's leader.

Exodus 11:1 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague [more] upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let [you] go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether."

Moses was an entirely different person from the one who first went to Pharaoh and asked him to let the children of Israel go. Moses, like many ministers who are called to a certain job by God, was not very sure of himself at the beginning. As he went about doing one job after another that God sent him to do, he grew and his faith became stronger.

Moses was a humble man, who depended totally on God. He conveyed just the message that God gave Him each time. He understood that he had weaknesses, and that his strength was in God. The plague would be brought by God. Moses' part was just to carry the message between God and Pharaoh. This last plague would be of such magnitude, that not only would Pharaoh allow the people to go, but he would drive them out.

This word "altogether" means that they would not be allowed to return to Egypt. This had really been the purpose in all these plagues, to take this family of God to their permanent home in the Promised Land.

Verses 2-10: All the plans and dreams of a family were bound up in the firstborn son; thus, the tenth plague was the ultimate disaster. It was not simply a childhood disease that would reach epidemic proportions. The plague was too selective for that. It would wipe out every Egyptian firstborn son, from the "first-born of Pharaoh ... even unto the first-born of the maidservant that is behind the mill." By contrast, among the Israelites "shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast" for "the Lord doth put a difference" [distinction] "between the Egyptians and Israel."

Exodus 11:2 "Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold."

In fact, these plagues that came on Egypt, spoken by Moses, had caused the general population, and even the magicians, to have a high esteem for Moses and the God he represented. They saw that God, or His messenger, never wavered. Moses told the truth and dealt fairly with everyone. We can easily see why these Egyptians would not be opposed to giving valuable things to these Israelites. They had great respect for these children of Israel, who had been so cruelly treated.

God had already prepared the hearts of these Egyptians to give to the Hebrews. All these children of Israel had to do was ask and these valuable things were theirs. This gold and silver, that was to be carried into the wilderness with them, would be required of them for offerings for the tabernacle in the wilderness. The gold and silver belong to God. Gold and silver are not bad, it is the worship of gold and silver that is a sin.

Exodus 11:3 "And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses [was] very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people."

This is the second announcement that the Lord would give the people of Israel "favor in the sight of the Egyptians" (3:21-22). Moses even found favor ("was very great"), among "Pharaoh's servants."

We see here, that Moses was very popular with these Egyptians. They looked to him as being a minister of the true God, because of the miracles he had brought with the rod God had given him.

Verses 4-8: "Moses said": Moses' response to Pharaoh's threat continued with his giving warning of the final plague and leaving with great indignation. The death treat delivered by Pharaoh evoked one from God. The "get out!" from Pharaoh to Israel's and God's spokesmen would be met by the "get out" from the Egyptians to Israel.

Exodus 11:4 "And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt:"

"I will go out": "About midnight": the day was not specified, as in previous plagues by "tomorrow." It took place either the same day of the final confrontation with Pharaoh or a few days later. If the instructions for the Passover (12:1-20), were not given during the days of darkness, then 4 days minimum would be required to set the stage for that special feast day, i.e., from the tenth to the fourteenth day (12:3, 6; see note on 8:23).

"I will go out": God was, of course, involved in all previous plagues through whatever means He chose to use. But this time, to warrant personal attention, God stated that He Himself (emphatic personal pronoun used), would march throughout the land. Note the repeated "I will" statements in the Passover instructions (12:12-13).

Exodus 11:5 "And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that [is] behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts."

“The firstborn”: the firstborn held a particularly important position in the family and society, not only inheriting a double portion of the father’s estate, but also representing special qualities of life and strength (Gen. 49:3). In Egypt, the firstborn would ascend to the throne and continue the dynasty. Whatever significance might have been attached religiously, politically, dynastically, and socially, it was all stripped away by the extent and intensity of the plague. Namely the execution of all the first born of all classes of the population including their animals.

It appears here, that Moses had never really left the face of Pharaoh, because it was Moses whom God would have to tell of the impending last plague. The fact that this was to happen at "midnight" made this punishment even more frightening because it was in the very dark part of the night. We see here that this plague was not carried out by another, but by Jehovah Himself. The "I" in this verse is Jehovah God. The ministers, who teach that all bad things come from Satan, have undoubtedly never seen this Scripture.

In Egypt, the “firstborn of Pharaoh” was the presumed heir to the throne; thus, the death of Pharaoh’s son would be both a personal and a national tragedy. Thutmose IV was likely the one who gained the throne as a result of the death of his older brother.

It leaves no doubt at all that this was God punishing Pharaoh (type of Satan), and the Egyptians (type of worldly people). This was a direct result of God judging Pharaoh and these Egyptians for killing the boy babies. There would be no discrimination at all. The wealthiest to the poorest would lose their firstborn. This punishment was so severe, that it reached to the first born of the animals as well.

Exodus 11:6 "And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more."

So drastic was this plague that its uniqueness in Egypt’s history, already past and yet to come, was noted in the warning.

Every Egyptian family would be touched by this terrible plague. Grief would be in every home. Remember, Egypt symbolizes the world, or worldliness. Those who are caught up in the world and its trappings would suffer at the hand of God.

Exodus 11:7 "But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."

In contrast to the turmoil and grief experienced in Egyptian territory all remained tranquil in Israelite territory, so much so that not even a dog barked. That the Lord had made and was making a sharp distinction between the two peoples was a fact to which none could be blind.

We actually see that God was separating those who follow the flesh (Egyptians), and those who follow the spirit (Israel). God takes care of His own, even in the worst of circumstances. Life or death is in the hands of Almighty God; life to those who are God's chosen and death to those following false gods.

Exodus 11:8 "And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger."

We see that great fear had fallen upon these Egyptians. Pharaoh's people had now given up on Pharaoh as a god. They saw that Moses' truth was real truth. They came and bowed down to Moses, as if he were the king. They realized the God that Moses represented was the true God.

Moses had finally gotten angry. Moses prophesied that Pharaoh and his people would ask the Israelites to get out of the land. They were afraid of a God with this kind of power. They feared another plague. These Egyptians were willing to give up all of their earthly possessions if necessary, to get these plagues stopped.

Exodus 11:9 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt."

We see that Pharaoh was a very stubborn man, and having not succumbed to the other nine plagues, would not succumb to this either until God, Himself, had carried this out. Some of the delay in Pharaoh listening to the warnings had helped the Hebrews in many ways. Even though their work load had been added to, they had found favor with the Egyptian people. The Egyptian people had begun to realize that all these false gods they had been worshipping, had no power and that the God of the Hebrews was the true God. They also realized that Moses, not Pharaoh, was who they should listen to. These wonders performed had convinced these Egyptians that Jehovah was the true eternal God. Once again Pharaoh did not listen.

Exodus 11:10 "And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land."

One of the reasons these ten plagues had to come was so the Israelites would be willing to follow Moses into the wilderness. With each wonder, their confidence in Moses grew, until they were willing and ready to go at the end of the tenth plague. The reason that these wonders had to be done in the presence of Pharaoh was to show Pharaoh and his people, the one true God.

In most of these plagues, we saw the same thing as some of the punishments that will come on the world at the end of the Gentile age. God never changes. We need to learn from Bible history. We do not want to fall into the category of the worldly.

Exodus Chapter 11 Questions

1. When this tenth plague came, what did Pharaoh do to the Israelites?
2. What was the difference between Moses, after the tenth plague, and Moses before the first plague?
3. Where did Moses' strength come from?
4. What was the purpose of the plagues from the beginning?
5. What was the message to be spoken in the people's ears?
6. At what point did the Egyptian people side against Pharaoh?
7. What caused these people to esteem Moses highly?
8. How did the Egyptian people feel about God?
9. What would the gold and silver be needed for in the wilderness?
10. What caused these people to think of Moses as great?
11. At what time of day, or night, would the tenth plague strike?
12. Who would carry it out?
13. What was the tenth plague?
14. What people would be affected by it?
15. What made this plague even more frightening?
16. What was this plague the direct result of?
17. Why was this cry to be so great?
18. Who would suffer at the hand of God?
19. What would not happen to the Hebrews?
20. What two things was God separating?
21. Life, or death, was in the hands of whom?
22. When did Moses get angry?
23. What did the Egyptian people fear?
24. Why would Pharaoh not listen to Moses?
25. Even though the Hebrews' work load was heavy, what gain did they get from the delay?

26. Why were the wonders done in front of Pharaoh?
27. With each wonder, what happened to the Israelites?
28. Name the ten plagues?
29. What was the miracle done, just before the plagues started?
30. What do these plagues remind us of in our time?