

Exodus 11:1-10 | The Lord said to Moses, “Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely.”<sup>2</sup> Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry.”<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> So Moses said, “Thus says the Lord: ‘About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt,’<sup>5</sup> and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle.”<sup>6</sup> There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again.<sup>7</sup> But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.’<sup>8</sup> And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get out, you and all the people who follow you.’ And after that I will go out.” And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger.<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.”

<sup>10</sup> Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

## Exodus 11:1-10 | Final Plague Threatened

Since our Church moved into this neighborhood 5 years ago it has been my habit to preach through the old testament in the Spring, and the New Testament in the fall. Following this pattern we have moved through the book of Genesis, and the Gospel according to Mark. However in order to complete Mark on Easter Sunday last year I continued preaching Mark beyond the fall and into the winter up to Easter. Thus here one year later we return to where we left off in the second book of the Bible, Exodus.

What have we seen so far. God’s chosen people, the Hebrews, are slaves in Egypt. God remembers his promise to them and raises up Moses to be their deliverer from the tyranny of Pharaoh. Moses is protected by God in his birth, called by God in the wilderness, and sent by God to rescue his people. The Lord determined to pry the people of God from the hands of Pharaoh one finger at a time through ten plagues.

Water to blood, Frogs, gnats, flies, death of livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and today the final plague is threatened, the death of the firstborn. After these nine plagues the entire nation of Egypt including Pharaoh and his court have been brought to their knees. The water, air, land and heavens have all turned against them. The gods they depended upon to hold up their world have been humiliated in the face of the God of the Hebrews. But do not mistake suffering for repentance.

### 1. Turning Point

Exodus 11:1 | The Lord said to Moses, “Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely.

The tenth plague is coming. God does not instruct Moses to raise his staff, or throw dust in the air. The Lord is speaking to Moses and he tells Moses plainly this plague is one he himself will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. This is actually the first use of the word plague. The word has the connotations of a stroke, or a wounding. One final wounding will be given to the Pharaoh and Egypt. It will be the final stroke which will successfully break the grip of Pharaoh and actually cause him to drive the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. Moses is the instrument, the mediator, but the final act is squarely in the hands of God. Our God is the one who rescues his people by judging our enemies.

Exodus 11:2-3a | Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry.”<sup>3</sup> And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.

The Lord instructs Moses to tell the Hebrews to ask of their neighbors for silver and gold jewelry. It is just jewelry and therefore it is light and wearable and of course it is valuable. Often the most valuable objects in a person's home are their jewelry. And perhaps incredible it works. The Lord granted favor to the Hebrew people in the sight of the Egyptians. And this is a telling sign of what has really taken place in Egypt over the course of these nine plagues. The Lord has elevated Moses above Pharaoh and the Hebrew people above the Egyptians by humiliating their gods in their sight.

And consider the justice of the Lord. The Hebrew people have been placed into forced labor under the Egyptians uncompensated for their efforts and robbed by the Egyptians although the Hebrew people are the origin of Egypt's global prosperity. Here the Lord ensures they are compensated for their labor. The Lord always sees and always compensates.

Colossians 3:23-24 | Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,<sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

The Lord saw their labor in precisely these terms and rewarded them for it. Imagine the Egyptians coming and paying tribute to the Hebrew's on behalf of the Lord. There is a fear of the Lord being cultivated among the Egyptians and this is the same as a distrust of Pharaoh and the gods of their own pantheon. In fact the whole of the Egypt is recognizing the power of the Lord. Many of them because of the plagues will be brought to true and living faith in Moses' God.

Exodus 11:3b | 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.

I want you to recognize that this is of course more than a political conversion. But it is not less than a political conversion. What is the power they are recognizing and where do they think that power comes from? Do you think your rights if there is such a thing, come from

God or from man? Which gods? The Egyptians are forced into this reality as the God of the Hebrews by the word of Moses humiliates the power structures they had propagated and therefore humiliates the authority of Pharaoh. Simply because the things Moses is saying keeps coming true and the things Pharaoh is saying keep proving impotent. Imagine the humiliation of Pharaoh, who thought himself a god, walking amongst his own court. You know how you play a king in a movie? However you want. What shows a king on the screen is how the people around the king treat him. Moses is the king.

## 2. Death of the Firstborn

Exodus 11:4-5 | So Moses said, “Thus says the Lord: ‘About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, <sup>5</sup> and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle.

The final plague is announced. It has been 80 years since Pharaoh called for the slaughter of all the newborn Hebrew boys. They were tossed into the Nile. I’m sure they had forgotten. But God had not forgotten. The first plague was the Nile’s running red with blood. God had not forgotten. Just like he will not forget the 60,000,000 abortions in our own nation. The first plague jogs their memory, the final plague accomplishes the justice of the Lord.

The future of a people is their sons. They pass on the name and inheritance. They maintain the identity of the people over time. Pharaoh tried to cut off the future of Israel. But of course it is more than that. Infinitely more than that. Because the future hope of the world is caught up in the true son of Israel. The promise from the beginning is that from these people a son would come who would crush satan and deliver God’s people as a blessing to all nations. He is not merely cutting off the hope of Israel he is cutting off the hope of all the nations of the world! A living hope which will only be found in Jesus Christ. God in his justice will protect the sons of Israel by cutting off the sons of Egypt. Irrespective of rank.

Exodus 11:6 | There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again.

The justice of God is severe and absolute. It will be a mourning like the mourning over a firstborn son. The final plague will not be a warning of justice to come, it will be the execution of justice over a nation. Sons die in war. God will have victory over Egypt.

## 3. Final Distinction

Exodus 11:7 | But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.’

God is making distinction between his people and Egypt. The world and the church. He is naming his people and placing his unique covenantal love upon them. He is saying that what is unique about the Israelites is that they are his. What makes them a people distinct in the world is the true God is God over them. He is saying of his people that he has placed his name upon them and taken their names upon himself. Just as he told Moses at the burning bush, call me the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. But make no mistake, he is the one true God in the world. Because amidst the distinction he is making in the rescue of his people does not mean he is some local deity.

Exodus 11:8 | And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get out, you and all the people who follow you.’ And after that I will go out.” And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger.

And Moses will say to Pharaoh, thus sayeth the Lord: All these your servants shall come and bow down to me. They think Pharaoh is an incarnate god, and they will realize he is just a man and there is a God in heaven who holds your very lives in his hands. And all the servants of Pharaoh will bow down in fear of the Lord and they will turn to Moses and say “Get out, you and all the people who follow you.” Then, Moses says, “I will go out.”

The rulers of this world treat the people of God as though they belong to them. They do not belong to them. There is a God in heaven and he has come to rescue his people. Do you hear the hot anger of Moses before Pharaoh? Do you hear this creature from the dirt standing up in defiance of the living God. Do you not think there is some other law, some other order, some other truth under which you might live while you draw the breath he so generously loans to you?

Exodus 11:9-10 | Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.”<sup>10</sup> Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

Every plague was a warning and opportunity for repentance. But it was also the Lord’s work to harden the heart of Pharaoh so that he might demonstrate his saving power. He has raised up Pharaoh so that the Lord’s name would be made great in all the Earth.

Look at the hope of the judgement of God upon the Egyptians. He will deliver us from our enemies. But make no mistake. There is a greater deliverance that must come that Moses cannot provide. The deliverance from the sin in their own hearts cannot be overcome by the blood of all the boys of Egypt. Another cry will need to go out.

Zechariah 12:10 | “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

