

THE TEXT OF EXODUS
TRANSLATION

11 And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Yet one plague more will I bring upon Pha-raoh, and upon E-gypt; afterwards he will let you go hence; when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. (2) Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them ask every man of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. (3) And Je-ho-vah gave the peole favor in the sight of the E-gyp-tians. Moreover the man Mo-ses was very great in the land of E-gypt, in the sight of Pha-raoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

(4) And Mo-ses said, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, About midnight will I go out into the midst of E-gypt: (5) and all the first-born in the land of E-gypt shall die, from the first-born of Pha-raoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of cattle. (6) And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of E-gypt, such as there hath not been, nor shall be any more. (7) But against any of the children of Is-ra-el shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that Je-ho-vah doth make a distinction between the E-gyp-tians and Is-ra-el. (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 Pha-raoh in hot anger.

(9) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Pha-raoh will not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of E-gypt. (10) And Mo-ses and Aar-on did all these wonders before Pha-raoh: and Je-hovah hardened Pha-raoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Is-ra-el go out of his land.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER ELEVEN
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. Propose a theme or topic for chapter eleven.
2. When did the LORD say the things in 11:1-3 to Moses? How do they fit into the narrative of chapters 10-11?
3. What was to be the result of the last plague? (11:1)
4. What was Moses to tell the Israelites to say to the Egyptians? (11:2)
5. How did the Egyptians regard the Israelites? What brought this about? (11:3)
6. What was the estimation of Moses by the Egyptians? (11:3)
7. At what time of day would the LORD pass over? (11:4)
8. To whom is 11:4ff addressed?
9. What was to be the extent of the death of the firstborn? (11:5)
10. Who were the highest and lowest people in Egyptian society? (11:5)
11. What would be the immediate effect of the death of the firstborn? (11:6)
12. What would the silence of the dogs reveal about the status of the Israelites? (11:7)
13. What was Pharaoh to know (to learn) from the fact that the Israelites were spared the death of their firstborn? (11:7)
14. Who would urge the Israelites to depart? (11:8)
15. What was Moses' feeling as he departed from Pharaoh? (11:8)
16. Why would not Pharaoh hearken? (11:9)

EXODUS ELEVEN: THE LAST WARNING!

1. Revealed by God to Moses; 11:1-3.
2. Related by Moses to Pharaoh; 11:4-8.
3. Rejected by Pharaoh; 11:9-10.

EXODUS ELEVEN: ONE MORE BLOW (OR PLAGUE)!

1. The day for judgment is set; 11:1-3.
2. The day of judgment will be final; 11:4-8.

GOD'S SAINTS FAVORED (11:2-3)

1. Jewelry given; 11:2; 3:22; 12:35-36.
2. Honor given; 11:3.

RESULTS OF THE LAST PLAGUE

1. Death of the firstborn; 11:5.
2. Great cry; 11:6.
3. Distinction demonstrated; 11:7.
4. Supplication of Egyptians; 11:8.
5. Departure of Israel; 11:8.

THE LORD MAKES A DISTINCTION!

1. Between Israelites and Egyptians.
2. Between Moses and Pharaoh.
3. Between Himself and Egypt's gods.

THE SAD SUMMARY (11:9-10; John 12:37)

1. Pharaoh would not hearken.
2. Moses and Aaron worked wonders.
3. Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart.

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. *What does Exodus eleven tell about?*

It gives God's last warning to Pharaoh through Moses. It tells us that God revealed to Moses that only one more plague - the death of Egypt's firstborn - remained before Pharaoh would thrust out the Israelites. It tells of Pharaoh's rejection of Moses and God's message.

2. *When did God inform Moses about the last plague? (11:1)*

God either revealed this information to Moses' mind during his hot conversation with Pharaoh (Cassuto's view); or God had already told it to Moses before his arrival at Pharaoh's house (10:24) (view of Keil and Delitzsch, Hertz, and others.) If that is the true interpretation of 11:1, then the verse should be translated, "Jehovah *had said* unto Moses," We lean to this latter view, but either view is possible. Perhaps God revealed to Moses the facts about the last plague and about the Passover during the three days of darkness.

The word for *plague* in 11:1 is not used elsewhere in Exodus. Its most numerous occurrence is in Lev. 13-14, where it refers to the plague of leprosy. It means a *blow*, or *striking*. It was to be the final decisive blow.

We must reject the unproven views of critics¹ who argue that 11:1-3 was written by one author (called E), and 11:4-8 was by another author (called J). This interruption of the record of the conversation between Moses and Pharaoh is necessary for our understanding of how Moses knew about the last plague (as related in 11:4-8).

3. *What were the Israelites to ask the Egyptians for? (11:2)*

For jewels of gold and silver. The word *jewels* actually just means *vessels*, but the fact that they were of gold and silver justifies the translation of it as *jewels*.

In 3:22 only *women* were mentioned as those who were to request jewels. Here *men* are mentioned also. This is not a contradiction, just an enlargement of the command.

The word *borrow* in KJV is misleading. Neither the Hebrews nor the Egyptians interpreted their asking as borrowing. No one hinted that the items would be returned. See notes on 3:22.

4. *How did the Egyptians feel toward Moses and the Israelites? (11:3)*

They looked upon the people with favor, and upon Moses as very great. This had been predicted to Moses back at the

¹S. R. Driver, *Intro. to the Literature of the O.T.* (New York: World, 1965), p. 27.

burning bush (3:20-22). In 12:33, 35-36 we read about how Jehovah gave the Israelites favor with the Egyptians.

The "people" of 11:3 seem to be the *Israelite* people. Just at this moment Moses was very high in the esteem of the Israelites. Not long before, they had scorned him (5:20-21); and very soon after this they were blaming Moses for every trouble they had (15:23; 16:21).

The honor Moses achieved must be held up in contrast with the excuses he once gave about being such an inferior person (3:11; 4:10). This is a warning to us not to low-rate ourselves too much.

Would Moses as the author of Exodus write words like Ex. 11:3 about himself? Certainly! Why not? It was the truth. Compare the way Paul wrote of himself (II Cor. 10:8-14), and the way Nehemiah wrote of himself (Neh. 5:18-19).

5. *When would the last plague strike?* (11:4)

About midnight! The hour of this plague would make its coming even dreadful.

God did not specify which midnight. We know from 12:1 that a new month (called Abib) had then started. Ex. 12:3 tells us that on the tenth day of that month each family was to select a lamb. Then on the fourteenth day of the month the lamb would be slain (12:6). Thus the "midnight" was at least four days distant, and maybe as many as nine. But Pharaoh did not know this. Possibly the approach of each midnight gave him premonitions of terror as he recalled Moses' words.

In Egyptian mythology the sun god Re was supposed to fight each *night* with Apepi, the monster-serpent, and his army of fiends, who tried to overthrow Re.² Re always conquered, and thus the sun arose day after day in the sky. The occurrence of the death of the firstborn at *night* may have therefore made some Egyptians sense that Jehovah could

²E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Mummy* (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1972), pp. 270-271.

enter the nighttime arena of combat with Egypt's gods, and so utterly overwhelm them that it was evident that they never had existed at all.

The conversation between Moses and Pharaoh that was interrupted at 10:29 is picked up again in the narrative at 11:4.

6. *What would happen in the last plague? (11:4-6)*

God would go out into the midst of Egypt. (The *I* in 11:4 is emphatic.) All the firstborn of Egypt would die, those high-born and those low-born, and the firstborn of all beasts. There would be a great cry of anguish throughout all the land of Egypt.

The lowly maidservant (slave woman) working at the "two grindstones" (a lower one and an upper stone that rotated upon the lower) would see her firstborn die. Pharaoh on his throne would suffer the same.

Pharaoh's forefather had once tried to slay the babes of Israel (1:22). Now all Egypt is sentenced to have its firstborn die.

The death of firstborn beasts would be impressive in Egypt, where many beasts were worshipped as manifestations of various gods.

Ramm comments³ that the universality of the plague of death of the firstborn is a type of universality of God's last judgment, when the small and great alike shall stand before the judge (Rev. 20:12). God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). There will be weeping and wailing, like the cry that came up from Egypt (Matt. 25:30).

The cry that was to arise throughout Egypt on that dreadful night recalls the cries of the Israelites (2:23). Now it is the Egyptians who will cry out in anguish at God's judgment.

We surely cannot accept the hypothesis set forth⁴ that the story of the death of the firstborn is an exaggerated account of a fatal pestilence which struck the Egyptian children and

³Bernard Ramm, *His Way Out* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal, 1974), p. 68.

⁴*The Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Broadman, 1969), pp. 363-364.

brought about the release of the Hebrews. Proponents of this theory think that through years of transmission within Israel the memory of the event was so shaped that the end product, the present Exodus narrative, suggests that *only* the firstborn were involved, and that both the firstborn of man and beast were involved. Bernard Ramm replies well to this notion with the point that Pharaoh would not have released Israel because of an ordinary epidemic among children.⁵

7. *How would God show that He made a distinction between Egyptians and Israel? (11:7)*

He would protect the Israelites from the death of their firstborn. His protection would be so total that not even a dog would bark at the hordes of departing Israelites and their cattle. (Literally the text says that a dog will not "sharpen" [or point] his tongue. This same idiom is used also in Joshua 10:21.)

What a contrast! The wicked crying, the good quiet; the wicked dead, the good living; the wicked frightened, the good peaceful; the wicked helpless, the good protected. (*Preacher's Homiletic Commentary*)

8. *What would Pharaoh's servants do when their firstborn died? (11:8)*

They would come to Moses, bow down, and beg him and his people to leave. "After that," Moses said, "I will go out!" These were Moses' last words to Pharaoh before the Passover.

What a reversal! Egyptians begging Moses to leave? Yes, and even Pharaoh joined in the begging (12:30-33).

9. *With what feeling did Moses leave Pharaoh? (11:8)*

With hot anger! First Pharaoh became angered (10:28); then Moses' wrath arose. But it was a righteous anger, the kind all noble Godly souls should feel sometimes when dealing with people like Pharaoh - lying, double-dealing, promise-breaking, stubborn, cruel, persecuting, hard, resistant to the truth.

10. *Did Pharaoh change his mind after Moses left him? (11:9-10)*

⁵Ramm, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

In no wise! God cautioned Moses not to expect Pharaoh to come to his senses. All along God had foretold that Pharaoh would not listen, and that He would work his signs (miracles and plagues) in Egypt; and *then* after all that, "I will bring forth my hosts, my people, the children of Isreal" (7:4; 4:21).

There is a marvelous review and summary of the first nine plagues in the two verses Ex. 11:9-10.

The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart after plagues number six (boils), eight (locusts), nine (darkness), and after Israel departed (14:4, 8). See notes on 4:21 concerning this hardening.

Ex. 11:9-10 are truly transitional verses. From now on Moses will be dealing with Israel and not with Pharaoh.

THE TEXT OF EXODUS TRANSLATION

12 And Je-ho-vah spake unto Mo-ses and Aar-on in the land of E-gypt, saying, (2) This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. (3) Speak ye unto all the congregation of Is-ra-el, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household: (4) and if the household be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbor next unto his house take one according to the number of the souls; according to every man's eating ye shall make your count for the lamb. (5) Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old: ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats: (6) and ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Is-ra-el shall kill it at even. (7) And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel, upon the houses wherein they shall eat it. (8) And they