

EXODUS 11

INTRODUCTION

Can I just remind you where we left off in the book of Exodus? So far the people of Egypt have had to endure 9 plagues. These plagues are God's judgment upon the nation of Egypt because Pharaoh refuses to let God's people who are in slavery go free. Sometimes it appears as if Pharaoh is going to relent, and obey God but as soon as the plague ends he changes his mind and will not let the Israelites go.

But now we are moving towards the climax of this battle that has been taking place between God and Pharaoh. It is a battle between the God of Israel and the gods of the Egyptians. On every occasion God has demonstrated that the Egyptian gods are no gods at all, they are powerless and useless. But in spite of this fact Pharaoh continues to put his hope in himself and in his own gods rather than submitting to the true God of this universe.

Now at the end of chapter 10 we left Moses at Pharaoh's palace. The king had become very angry after Moses rejected his latest offer of compromise (10:24) and Pharaoh ordered Moses out of his sight. Moses replied 'just as you say I will never appear before you again' (10:29). He never again sought an audience with the king; Moses was eventually called back into Pharaoh's presence in order to hear from Pharaoh that he was finally willing to let the Israelites go with no strings attached. However before Moses left the king's presence he had one final word to say.

1. THE FINAL WORD (vs. 1-3)

He told Pharaoh about the last plague that will come upon the Egyptians it was the devastating plague of the death of the firstborn. It seems that Moses received this message about this final plague while he was in the court and presence of Pharaoh (v 1).

This last plague will be the one that finally persuades Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. But it's not just that Pharaoh will let Israel go but he will drive the Israelites out completely (v 1). The word 'completely' probably means that everyone will be driven out. Remember that Pharaoh had previously said he would send the Israelites out without their children (10:10). On another occasion he said that the Israelites could go without their flocks (10:24) but now they will be able to go out of Egypt in their entirety.

Their departure will be without restriction or limitation. But not only will the people of Israel be released but also they will enjoy the favour of the Egyptians as they go (vs. 2-3). The Israelites would ask for the various items and God would make the Egyptians favourable disposed towards them. Now this is in fulfilment of what the Lord had said to Moses when he commissioned him at the burning bush (3:21-22). This promise had probably been forgotten by the Israelites but God had not forgotten He fulfils his word. It is also the fulfilment of God's promise made to Abraham in Genesis 15:14. The great lesson is that God always keeps his word. What made the Egyptians change their minds towards the Israelites? It was God at work. Just as God controls Pharaoh by hardening his heart so here the Lord causes grace to be bestowed on the Hebrews by the Egyptians.

Verse 3 literally says 'he gave the people grace in the sight of the Egyptians.' The very people who had been hated and despised by the Egyptians (1:12) now come to be respected by them. God is at work changing their spirit towards the people of God. But it was not just the Egyptian people in general who were changed for we read that Moses was highly respected among Pharaoh's officials and by the people, which probably means his own people the Israelites.

I want to pause here and help us apply this to ourselves. First we need to constantly reminding ourselves that God keeps his word. We are use to people not keeping their word today. When we listen to our politicians we do not really believe that they mean what they say for we know from experience that they do not always keep their word. O it's not that they deliberately lied to us it's just that they are not in control of everything that affects their promises. If they promise lower taxes they are not in control of the world economy and therefore might not be able to keep their word. But God keeps his word. He made a promise to Abraham, He made a promise to Moses and although those promises might well have been forgotten by God's people down through the centuries God had not forgotten them and when it was the right time he fulfilled them.

The reason why God can keep his word is that he is in control of all that goes on. He is God and he has set purposes and those purposes are being worked out exactly as God had planned it to be. He changes circumstances and people so that his promises can be fulfilled. In this case he had to change the minds and opinions of the Egyptians and of the Israelites who at first if you remember did not see Moses as their leader.

It is good to remind ourselves that God keeps everyone of his promises that he has made to us through the Lord Jesus.

His promise to build his church will be fulfilled. What will it take for God to fulfil that promise? It will mean changing the minds and hearts of people so that instead of being hostile to Jesus Christ and his church they will bow the kneel in humble submission to his authority. Is God able to do that? Is he in control so that he is able to do so? Is he powerful enough to do it? The answer to all of these questions is 'yes' and he will do it. Will Jesus keep his promise to come back again? The second coming is not something that we hear much about today even from Christian people. Yet the bible clearly makes a number of promises concerning the return of the Lord Jesus.

We need to be confident that God will keep this promise and the consequence of that confidence in our hearts should be one of encouraging one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18). When we are living for this world and the here and now is all that seems to concern us, then we need to remind one another that one day God will fulfil his promise and return to take his church to be with the Lord Jesus for all eternity.

The devil wants us to doubt God's word for that will make us inactive and unproductive as Christians. But when we believe his promises then we will act upon them. If we believe the promise of Jesus to build his church we will be involved in evangelism. If we believe Jesus is coming back we will not live for this world but will invest our time energy and finance in things that really matter things that will count for eternity.

The second application that I want us to consider has to do with dealing with difficult people. Moses' own people did not accept him at first, Pharaoh totally dismissed him and so did the Egyptians. But what made them change their minds. Now of course the answer to that is God, but God did not do it in a vacuum. Moses had to patiently obey God, time and time again going back to the people and to Pharaoh and bringing God's message to them.

He had to show by his actions that his God was real and powerful and therefore spoke with great authority. Moses approach and attitude and hosts of other things would have had an affect on all who had dealings with him. Of course ultimately it was the Lord working through Moses who changed the hearts and minds of the various people but Moses had to be faithful and live out his faith in God.

Now we likewise must understand that when we live for God there will be people who will oppose us simply because we are Christians. It might be people at work, within our families or within our community. It is possible that there will be people in the church who for one reason or another will

make life difficult for us. What are we to do in such situations? We are to do what Moses did which was to continue to obey God's word.

This involves speaking that word when the occasion arises and just as importantly it means living our Christian faith before others. We will not do the miracles that God did through Moses but we are to show by our lives that our God is real and powerful and is Lord and sovereign of our universe. If our actions and words do not show that then how can we expect others to believe this message? We must show that we believe it wholeheartedly by living out this message.

Unless Christianity is seen to work in your life and my life then how can we expect others to believe it will work for them? Of course ultimately we must rely on God to change hearts and minds and we must pray towards that end but God does it through means and one of the means he uses is us, we are his bible to those who will not read his word.

Therefore while waiting and praying for the Lord to change those who are difficult towards us we must continue to live godly lives before the Lord and others, so that we will not be a hindrance to the Lord but will be useful instruments that he can use to bring glory to his name.

2. THE FINAL PLAGUE (vs. 4-10)

Meanwhile back at Pharaoh's palace Moses tells Pharaoh about God's final plague. Moses tells Pharaoh that at midnight (literally in the middle of the night) death would take place throughout the whole of Egypt. Every firstborn son was going to die and this would even happen to Pharaoh's eldest Son who presumably is now the Prince of Egypt and is the successor to Pharaoh's throne. Even the firstborn son of the slave girl who works at her hand mill will die.

The point is every firstborn son from the top of society to the bottom will die. Even the firstborn of the animals will die. The Egyptians attributed divine character to animals and so they will be destroyed to show that The Lord discharges his judgments against all the gods of Egypt.

The plague will be devastating (v 6) the term used for loud wailing is a term that is used for crying out to your God. The Egyptians will call upon their gods for help but their gods will remain silent. Unlike the Israelite God who is bringing about this particular plague as a result of the cries for help from the Israelites. Egyptian gods do not come to help whereas the one true God does. God makes a distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians, among the Israelites there will be peace not even a dog will bark because there is nothing to disturb his peace (v 7).

But in Egypt total devastation. The reason for this distinction being made is so that the Egyptians might learn that God treats his people differently. God shows grace to Israel but brings judgement upon the Egyptians (v 7) Moses then announces that all the officials in the Egyptian court will bow down before him rather than before Pharaoh (v 8).

After delivering God's word to Pharaoh, Moses leaves him; he does not wait to be sent away by Pharaoh. You would think that even at this late stage Pharaoh would come to his senses and submit to the Lord. He has seen the devastating power of the Lord at work in nine previous plagues surely now he will let the people go? But Pharaoh still refused to obey. Moses knew this would happen because the Lord had told him (v 9).

It seems incredible doesn't it that in the midst of this final threat from God that Pharaoh would remain in rebellion to God. But that should not surprise us for that are what millions are doing today in our world. God warns us that if we remain unrepentant then we face a judgement much worse than the one listed here for we face an eternal judgement in hell. Yet millions go about their daily business unconcerned it's as if the Lord has not spoken.

Is it possible that in our congregation there is someone who has sat through most of this series in Exodus? You have listened to God's judgement as it is pronounced and then brought upon the Egyptians. You have listened while I have tried to show you the application for us and have warned you that you too will face God's judgement unless you submit and humble yourself before the Lord.

But in spite all God's warnings and all my pleadings with you, you continue to treat the Lord with contempt by refusing to admit your sin and to repent of it.

If that is you then heed this final warning. God will punish you if you remain in your sin, if you do not repent and turn to the Lord for forgiveness. That judgement is eternal it is final and it is awful. Therefore please listen and turn to the Lord and find forgiveness and peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the other lesson that I want us to remember today is this; ponder the amazing grace of God. The Israelites did not face the judgement of God and the reason for it was not that they were better than the Egyptians but simply because God showed grace towards them. He chose them to be his people. Of all the nations of the world he chose Israel to be his people to display the wonder of his grace.

God hardened Pharaoh's heart in order that he might display his wonders in Egypt (vs. 9-10 cf. Romans 9:17) and He chose Israel in order that he might display his grace to the nations of the world. If you are a Christian then God chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world in order that He might display his marvellous grace in this world. But the fact that God chose us out of his grace and not because of who we are means that we do not face his wrath and judgement in hell but instead we enjoy the privileges of being in heaven for all eternity.

This is because God sent his Son Jesus to be our redeemer, to die in our place to pay the price and to make atonement for our sin. He took upon himself God's wrath and judgement so that we could go free. We will see this next time when we look at chapter 12 but just note now that God provided the means of rescue for Israel through the shed blood of a lamb. In the same way, God provides rescue for those of us who are saved through the shed blood of the Lamb of God; the Lord Jesus who takes away the sin of the world.

Christian just ponder this amazing grace of God. You and I deserve God's judgement in hell but God out of grace provides for us a Saviour and rescues us from hell.

But my dear unsaved friend you too can marvel at the amazing grace of God if you will only come to your senses, see your spiritual plight and in faith trust the Lord Jesus to be your Saviour. The bible teaches that if we come to the Lord Jesus with a truly repentant heart and with faith then he will not cast us out but will save us by his marvellous grace.

We have a wonderful Saviour why not trust him today. Hallelujah what a Saviour!

Amen