

## INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS CHAPTER 11

Pharaoh had told Moses to get out of his presence (#Ex 10:28), and Moses had promised this should be the last time he would trouble him, yet he resolves to say out what he had to say, before he left him; accordingly, we have in this chapter,

I. The instructions God had given to Moses, which he was now to pursue (#Ex 11:1-2), together with the interest Israel and Moses had in the esteem of the Egyptians, #Ex 11:3.

II. The last message Moses delivered to Pharaoh, concerning the death of the firstborn, #Ex 11:4-8.

III. A repetition of the prediction of Pharaoh's hardening his heart (#Ex 11:9), and the event answering to it, #Ex 11:10.

Ver. 1.

Here is,

I. The high favour Moses and Israel were in with God.

1. Moses was a favourite of Heaven, for God will not hide from him the thing he will do. God not only makes him his messenger to deliver his errands, but communicates to him his purpose (as the man of his counsel) that he would bring one plague more, and but one, upon Pharaoh, by which he would complete the deliverance of Israel, #Ex 11:1. Moses longed to see an end of this dreadful work, to see Egypt no more plagued and Israel no more oppressed:

"Well," says God, "now it is near an end; the warfare shall shortly be accomplished, the point gained; Pharaoh shall be forced to own himself conquered, and to give up the cause."

After all the rest of the plagues, God says, *I will bring one more*. Thus, after all the judgments executed upon sinners in this world, still there is one more reserved to be brought on them in the other world, which will completely humble those whom nothing else would humble.

2. The Israelites were favourites of Heaven; for God himself espouses their injured cause, and takes care to see them paid for all their pains in serving the Egyptians. This was the last day of their servitude; they were about to go away, and their masters, who had abused them in their work, would not have defrauded them of their wages, and have sent them away empty; while the poor Israelites were so fond of liberty that they would be satisfied with that, without pay, and would rejoice to get that upon any terms: but he that *executeth righteousness and judgment for the oppressed* provided that the labourers should not lose their hire, and ordered them to demand it now at their departure (#Ex 11:2), *in jewels of silver and jewels of gold*, to prepare for which God, by the plagues, had now made the Egyptians as willing to part with them upon any terms as, before, the Egyptians, by their severities, had made them willing to go upon any terms. Though the patient Israelites were content to lose their wages, yet God would not let them go without them. Note, One way or other, God will give redress to the injured, who in a humble silence commit their cause to him; and he will see to it that none be losers at last by their patient suffering any more than by their services.

## II. The high favour Moses and Israel were in with the Egyptians, #Ex 11:3.

1. Even the people that has been hated and despised now came to be respected; the wonders wrought on their behalf put an honour upon them and made them considerable. How great do they become for whom God thus fights! Thus *the Lord gave them favour* in the sight of the Egyptians, by making it appear how much he favoured them: he also changed the spirit of the Egyptians towards them, and made them to be pitied of their oppressors, #Ps 106:46.
2. *The man Moses was very great.* How could it be otherwise when they saw what power he was clothed with, and what wonders were wrought by his hand? Thus the apostles, though otherwise despicable men, came to be magnified, #Ac 5:13. Those that honour God he will honour; and with respect to those that approve themselves faithful to him, how meanly soever they may pass through this world, there is a day coming when they will look great, very great, in the eyes of all the world, even theirs who now look upon them with the utmost contempt. Observe, Though Pharaoh hated Moses, there were those of Pharaoh's servants that respected him. Thus in Caesar's household, even Nero's, there were some that had an esteem for blessed Paul, #Php 1:13.

### #Ex 11:4-10

Warning is here given to Pharaoh of the last and conquering plague which was now to be inflicted. This was the *death of all the first-born in Egypt* at once, which had been first threatened (#Ex 4:23, *I will slay thy son, thy first-born*), but is last executed; less judgments were tried, which, if they had done the work would have prevented this. See how slow God is to wrath, and how willing to be met with in the way of his judgments, and to have his anger turned away, and particularly how precious the lives of men are in his eyes: if the death of their cattle had humbled and reformed them, their children would have been spared; but, if men will not improve the gradual advances of divine judgments, they must thank themselves if they find, in the issue, that the worst was reserved for the last.

1. The plague itself is here particularly foretold, #Ex 11:4-6. The time is fixed--about midnight, the very next midnight, the dead time of the night; when they were all asleep, all their first-born should sleep the sleep of death, not silently and insensibly, so as not to be discovered till morning, but so as to rouse the families at midnight to stand by and see them die. The extent of this plague is described, #Ex 11:5. The prince that was to succeed in the throne was not too high to be reached by it, nor were the slaves at the mill too low to be taken notice of. Moses and Aaron were not ordered to summon this plague; no *I will go out, saith the Lord, #Ex 11:4. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; what is hell but this?*
2. The special protection which the children of Israel should be under, and the manifest difference that should be put between them and the Egyptians. While angels drew their swords against the Egyptians, there should not so much as a dog bark at any of the children of Israel, #Ex 11:7. An earnest was hereby given of the difference which shall be put in the great day between God's people and his enemies: did men know what a difference God puts, and will put to eternity, between those that serve him and those that serve him not, religion would not seem to them such an indifferent thing as they make it, nor would they act in it with so much indifference as they do.
3. The humble submission which Pharaoh's servants should make to Moses, and how submissively they should request him to go (#Ex 11:8): *They shall come down, and bow themselves.* Note, The proud enemies of God and his Israel shall be made to fall under at last (#Re 3:9), and shall be found liars to them, #De 33:29. When Moses had

thus delivered his message, it is said, *He went out from Pharaoh in a great anger*, though he was the meekest of all the men of the earth. Probably he expected that the very threatening of the death of the first-born would have induced Pharaoh to comply, especially as Pharaoh had complied so far already, and had seen how exactly all Moses's predictions hitherto were fulfilled. But it had not that effect; his proud heart would not yield, no, not to save all the firstborn of his kingdom: no marvel that men are not deterred from vicious courses by the prospects given them of eternal misery in the other world, when the imminent peril they run of the loss of all that is dear to them in this world will not frighten them. Moses, hereupon, was provoked to a holy indignation, being grieved (as our Saviour afterwards) for the *hardness of his heart*, **#Mr 3:5**. Note, It is a great vexation to the spirits of good ministers to see people deaf to all the fair warnings given them, and running headlong upon ruin, notwithstanding all the kind methods taken to prevent it. Thus Ezekiel went *in the bitterness of his spirit* (**#Eze 3:14**), because God had told him that the house of Israel would not hearken to him, **#Ex 11:7**. To be angry at nothing but sin is the way not to sin in anger. Moses, having thus adverted to the disturbance which Pharaoh's obstinacy gave him,

(1.) Reflects upon the previous notice God had given him of this (**#Ex 11:9**): *The Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken to you*. The scripture has foretold the incredulity of those who should hear the gospel, that it might not be a surprise nor stumbling-block to us, **#Joh 12:37-38; Ro 10:16**. Let us think never the worse of the gospel of Christ for the slights men generally put upon it, for we were told before what cold entertainment it would meet with.

(2.) He recapitulates all he had said before to this purport (**#Ex 11:10**), that Moses did all these wonders, as they are here related, before Pharaoh (he himself was an eye-witness of them), and yet he could not prevail, which was a certain sign that God himself had, in a way of righteous judgment, hardened his heart. Thus the Jews' rejection of the gospel of Christ was so gross an absurdity that it might easily be inferred from it that *God had given them the spirit of slumber*, **#Ro 11:8**.