EXODUS

Chapter 11

*The Plague on the Firstborn*

**Now the Lord had said to Moses, “I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here, and when he does, he will drive you out completely. 2 Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbors for articles of silver and gold.” 3 (The Lord made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and Moses himself was highly regarded in Egypt by Pharaoh’s officials and by the people.) 4 So Moses said, “This is what the Lord says: ‘About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. 5 Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. 6 There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. 7 But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.’ Then you will know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. 8 All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, ‘Go, you and all the people who follow you!’ After that I will leave.” Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh. 9 The Lord had said to Moses, “Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you—so that my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt.” 10 Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country.**

**11:1** *Yet one plague more*. The 10th plague is the final judgment of God, who revealed this to Moses during his last meeting with Pharaoh (10:28–29; 11:8). (TLSB)

*and when he does.* The Hebrew for this phrase can also be read “as one sends away [a bride]”—i.e., laden with gifts (see Ge 24:53). (CSB)

**11:2–3** See 12:35–36. (CSB)

**11:2** The Israelites were to ask the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold, which the Lord would make them willing to give. (TLSB)

**11:3** *favor*. Pharaoh’s servants wanted God’s wrath to end after so much suffering. (TLSB)

*Moses was very great in the land*. Moses’ fame in Egypt influenced Pharaoh’s servants and people to give freely. (TLSB)

**11:4** *Moses said.* Continuing the speech of 10:29. (CSB)

*I will go out*. The continuation of Moses’ brief answer in 10:29; at midnight of the Passover. (TLSB)

**11:5** *Every firstborn son in Egypt will die.* See Ps 78:51; 105:36; 135:8; 136:10. This is the ultimate disaster, since all the plans and dreams of a father were bound up in his firstborn son, who received a double share of the family estate when the father died (see Dt 21:17 and note). (CSB)

Cf Ps 105:36; 135:8. On the great importance of a firstborn son, see “firstborn,” p 6. The daughters were not killed in this plague (cf 4:22–23). (TLSB)

*slave girl, who is at her hand mill.* The lowliest of occupations (see Isa 47:2). (CSB)

*cattle*. The plague was to fall upon the firstborn of both people and animals as God’s judgment of Pharaoh’s sinful conduct in imprisoning the Israelites and their cattle. (TLSB)

**11:6** *a great cry*. An oriental custom in the case of death. (TLSB)

**11:7** *not a dog shall growl*. Perhaps a proverbial expression. As a severe storm approaches, animals hide and are silent; dogs would be inconspicuous, not uttering a sound. Not the slightest injury would come to the Israelites. (TLSB)

*distinction.* See note on 8:22. (CSB)

While Egypt was given into death, Israel would be saved through divine intervention. (TLSB)

**11:8** *bow down*. Pharaoh had lost his people’s respect. See notes, v 3; 6:30. *hot* *anger*. Occasioned by the king’s threat (10:28), Moses left Pharaoh in great wrath, pointing to the judgment of God. (TLSB)

**11:9–10** Ends Moses’ negotiations with Pharaoh, which began in ch 7. All these events served God’s plans for Israel and Egypt.(TLSB)

**Ch 11** God’s final judgment is about to come upon Pharaoh and Egypt. The hardened king will see that God’s patience has come to an end and His wrath is imminent. The 10th plague will bring judgment upon sin and its wages (Rm 6:23). In our stead, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, took upon Himself the full punishment for all our sin so that we will not die an eternal death. • Dear Father, I commend my spirit into Your merciful hands. Receive my prayer because of the blood, sufferings, and death of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Amen. (TLSB)