Study Notes: Exodus 11:1-10
November 1, 2026: "Death is Coming!"
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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. Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbors for articles of silver and gold." (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.)

- This chapter serves to continue the dialogue between Moses and Pharaoh that began in Exodus 10:24. It indicates that YHWH was speaking with Moses either before, or even during his interactions with Pharaoh.
- YHWH promises that He will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and Egypt that will force Pharaoh's hand. This plague will cause Pharaoh to let the people go, and even drive them out of the land of Egypt.
- In preparation for this final plague, the Israelites are to ask their neighbors for articles of silver and gold. This will provide for the Israelites on their journey. YHWH will make the Egyptians, who have a different attitude towards the Israelites than Pharaoh, disposed to provide for the people.
- These verses are a reminder of the promises that YHWH made to Moses when he was called to deliver the people (Exodus 3:18-22).

So Moses said, "This is what the Lord says: 'About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the female slave, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any person or animal.'

- For ancient people, midnight represented the darkest and deepest part of the night. At this time, when everybody is sleeping, YHWH himself will go throughout the land, and strike down the first born of those in Egypt, no one from the least to the greatest will be spared. YHWH will also strike down the firstborn of cattle, given their value to the Egyptians.
- This will cause a great wailing through Egypt. The Hebrew phrase is the same phrase that is used of the Israelites wailing or crying out to God in their slavery. The tables are now turned, and Pharaoh and Egypt are being repaid for their cruel treatment of the Israelites.
    - The New American Commentary explains, "The word used in the original for the NIV "wailing" (*ṣĕʿāqāh*, just as well translated "outcry" or the like) is the term used by God in 3:7, 9 to describe the groaning/crying out of the Israelites from the misery of their horrific slave work. Here, then, is predicted a drastic turning of the tables so that it would be all Egyptians instead of all Israelites who would cry out—and for an even greater suffering."

- The phrase, “not a dog will bark” represents that no harm will come to the Israelites. Dogs were thought of as a threatening creature in ancient times, and their lack of barking or snarling at the Israelites is an idiom to represent the peace and safety that will be upon Israel on the night when terror comes to Egypt.

Then you will know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. 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.

- This plague serves as the final distinction between Egypt and God’s people.
- As a result of this plague, Moses predicts that the officials of Egypt will bow before him and tell him to leave the country, at which point he will leave.
- Moses leaves burning with anger. This is a reaction to Pharaoh’s stubbornness and to his early death threat to Moses (Exodus 10:28). The New American Commentary explains, “Moses’ anger in leaving Pharaoh related to the unwarranted, undeserved death threat Pharaoh had pronounced against him (10:28) and not to any intervening factors. The reader is expected to understand that all his words had presumably been delivered through his anger at the end of this encounter with Egypt’s king.”

The Lord had said to Moses, “Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you—so that my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt.” 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.

- These verses serve to summarize the interactions between Moses, Aaron and Pharaoh. While wonders and signs were performed, they did not move Pharaoh, and YHWH used this to further proclaim his glory.
- YHWH told Moses how Pharaoh would react ahead of time, so it is no surprise that to this point, Pharaoh has refused to let the Israelites go.