

Exodus 11 - Salvation Through Judgment

Part I - Stunning defeat for the Egyptians, their king and gods.

The narrative:

- 1-2 The Lord decides to bring yet another plague on the Egyptians. After this Pharaoh will let the Hebrews go. They are to ask the Egyptian people for gold and silver.
- 3 Moses' reputation among the Egyptians
- 4-7 Moses predicts the destruction of the first born of the Egyptians, whilst the Hebrews are exempt.
- 9-10 He also predicts that Pharaoh and his servants would beg them to depart. Noting Pharaoh's previous obstinacy.

1 - The overwhelming of a strong man who enslaved God's people.

1. There will be one more plague [11.1] and after it Pharaoh will not only allow them to go, he will drive them out of his country completely. Drive in the sense that he will have to let them go because he is overwhelmed, but drive them also in the sense that he will pursue them to the end seeking to destroy them rather than have them serve the Lord in the wilderness.

2. In the sight of the average Egyptian, Moses has been elevated throughout the course of this encounter. So much so that when asked, the Egyptians give of their wealth to the Hebrews so that they may leave. This is truly a plundering [12.35-36] of their country, and yet the Egyptians are willing for the plunder to happen, since their leader has clashed with Another, who is stronger. To maintain their life style, these Hebrews, these former slaves, these people of their God, must go.

2 - Defeat for those who enslave: redemption for the slaves: Salvation through judgment

3. Moses' announcement to Pharaoh is that at midnight, at the height of darkness, the Lord will strike the first born; those who are valued in the land as those who carry the inheritance and future of the country and each family of the people. These first born are the pre-eminent ones, the ones who have the first place in every household and royal house as well.

4. But against the sons of Israel, not even a dog shall bark. In this way Egypt [and Pharaoh in particular] will understand how the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. Further, it will be something which the people who serve Pharaoh will come to understand as well, for they shall insist that the Hebrews leave.

5. What this means is that redemption for Israel, is registered in the hearts of those who enslave her as a danger and defeat of themselves. This defeat is not simply a matter of knowing that their leader [Pharaoh] has been defeated, but that each one of them has suffered hurt and has personally come to know the distinction between Israel and Egypt.

3 - The holiness of the relation between God and His people.

This distinction is a work of the Lord, it is a conviction that this nation is reserved as holy in the midst of others. To touch what is holy for the Lord of Israel, is to suffer pain, hurt and loss - it is to be overwhelmed by a greater power. It is to see all your glorious ones dishonored and overcome. To treat Israel as profane, and not holy, is to imagine that one has control, by force, over them rather than knowing that the Lord allowed it for a time. It is to get between God and his people insofar that you wish them to serve you instead of him - and that is to attempt to break into a holy and reserved relationship. It is to find that when He makes a call on his people

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to serve Him, one must not get in the way of them in this matter; for this is to oppose His will. It is to have your house plundered and to have your slaves taken from you; it is to recognize that they were the property of Another who has come to claim them. It is to come to the realization that those you used were really used illegitimately - as those to who you had no right. It is to learn that, in a fallen world, it is possible to have power but that does not imply that you have the authority.

The Pharisees attempted it and found that the kingdom of God was taken away from them and given to another nation which had the fruit of repentance within it [Matthew 21.38,43]. So it is that every shepherd and leader of God's people must understand that he is handling something holy, reserved for Another, the Bride of a jealous Bridegroom. A people about whom God has made a distinction, and shown that they were always His by redemption - holy to the Lord.

6. It is to learn that there is an insane force that will not submit [11.9-10] to God in this world. It is a leadership by a rebel over the peoples of the world which will go to its own destruction in pursuit of its exercise of power. It will not yield its will - unlike the people of Egypt, Pharaoh will not let them go.

And yet there is another side to this willfulness - it is that the Lord has hardened the heart of Pharaoh. It is that He has cemented Pharaoh in the deception of his rebellion. The Lord's action has forced into the open another distinction. It is that the people of Pharaoh can see what is happening, but the leader is cemented in his madness by the Lord. The revelation to the people is clear but not to the Leader who holds power over them. In this way we see that the Pharaoh is a type or pattern of Antichrist figure [similar to others mentioned in Scripture Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 26]. He is a man with power over others but driven by satanic forces and desires.

This distinction shows that the target of redemption is people, those made in the image of God - they are susceptible to his revelation, even if held under the bondage of their leader.

4 - The Egyptian people can see it.

The Lord gave the Hebrews favor in the sight of the Egyptian people [11.3] and they understood [11.8] but they were not free to go. One day, there would come a redemption that would include them. And it would lead not to the release from a man who mastered them, but from a rebel cherub who enslaved them - Messiah will do it, and all the earth will see it, publicly done, and on a cross.