

The tenth judgement – the death of the firstborn sons

• Final plague brings total release

• When God saves us, He does so radically

• He takes us to a different realm altogether

• It is a transfer of kingdoms

• Ample provision

There will be a final judgement

• Judgement will be universal

• Judgement will bring extreme distress

• Amidst judgement there will be salvation

The tenth judgement was the death of the firstborn sons. God was adopting Israel as His son. The entire people were God's firstborn. Since Pharaoh was refusing to release the nation of Israel, God's firstborn son, God announced that His tenth judgement would be the death of firstborn sons throughout Egypt. It is this tenth judgement that will lead to the release of the people.

There is no change of scene between Exodus 10 and Exodus 11. Moses is still standing before Pharaoh where we left him at the end of chapter 10. God will bring one more plague, and it will lead to radical, total and permanent release from the bondage of Egypt¹.

When God saves us He does so radically. It is not that we are left where we are but get a little bit of help from God. God did not leave the Israelites in Egypt but just gave them a little bit of help. Rather when God saves us He takes us altogether out of the realm where we once were and takes us to a different realm altogether. In the story of the Exodus the transfer was territorial. The people were rescued from Egypt and the nation was brought eventually to Canaan. With the Christian the change is spiritual. God transfers us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Jesus. It is important to see salvation this way. It is a **transfer of kingdoms** not just a little bit of religion!

In this transfer from one territory to another, Israel will receive ample provision. The people are going to ask for supplies from their neighbours and they will receive it in abundance. The Egyptians will be glad to give assistance in releasing Israel to a new destiny¹. There will be favour from God, but favour from the people as well².

There will be a final judgement. In every family the firstborn son will die by the direct and supernatural hand of God. The nine earlier plagues could be regarded as simply unusual incidents in the course of nature. They involved remarkable events in the physical territory of the land of Egypt with its river, its insects, its animals and its sunshine. But now there comes something greater, the direct hand of God. In this judgement Moses will not use his staff (as in 7:19 and elsewhere) or stretch out his hand (as in 10:21). God says '*I will bring one more plague . . . About midnight I will go throughout Egypt*'¹.

The judgement will be universal. Every household in Egypt will experience God's action, from Pharaoh to the humblest slave¹. Even the firstborn animals will die. As in the story of the flood the created universe is tied in with the human race. When people are judged, their possessions are judged as well.

The judgement will bring extreme distress. There will be an unprecedented wailing of bereavement throughout the land¹.

Amidst the judgement there will be salvation. The salvation will be for God's people whom He has determined to save. There is a people 'chosen by grace' (as Paul would say). For no reason in themselves God has resolved to take Israel to Himself as a chosen nation. It has nothing to do with Israel's merits. Israel did not choose itself, nor were they distinguished for their great devotion to God. It is Yahweh who 'makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel'. As a nation Israel is chosen according to grace. No reason can be given for the choice of the nation except God's will. It was not because of anything Israel had done but because of God's own purpose and grace (compare 2 Timothy 1:9).

¹ 11:1

¹ 11:2
² 11:3

¹ 11:4

¹ 11:5

¹ 11:6

• *The salvation for Israel – comprehensive and far-reaching*

• *For Israel their release would be effortless*

• *All of this was told to Pharaoh before the event*

• *Opportunity for mercy*

• *But unwillingness to change despite many evidences*

• *Moses' anger at Pharaoh's cruelty and indifference*

• *All the principles of the Christian's salvation are to be found here*

The salvation for Israel would be comprehensive and far-reaching. Not a dog would bark against them^{□1}. Their deliverance would be profound, far greater than anything they could have dreamt of in those days when they 'groaned in their slavery and cried out'^{□2}.

For Israel their release would be effortless. It would not be a matter of sneaking out in timidity and fear. They would not have to beg to be released. It would not take mammoth efforts. The officials of Pharaoh would submit to Moses and the people would be publicly, officially, released^{□1}.

All of this was told to Pharaoh before the event. There was opportunity for Pharaoh to call for mercy. But there was no sign of any willingness to change in Pharaoh, even though his own firstborn son was threatened by this latest announcement. The total unconcern of Pharaoh and his disbelief despite the many evidences that have been presented to him rouses Moses' anger^{□1}. He sees immense suffering awaiting the people of Egypt. The total refusal to take warning or show any concern for the suffering that awaits the land of Egypt arouses Moses' anger. Moses is a man of compassion. Pharaoh's relentless cruelty in having no concern for the sufferings of his people fills Moses with distress^{□2}. Moses announces all this to Pharaoh but it produces no change in his attitude. As God had said, he still would not let the people go. Yahweh had inflamed within him his own hardness of heart.

All the principles of the Christian's salvation are to be found here. God's judgement is still universal. He looks upon every member of the human race and weighs their sins and their refusal to hear His voice. God's judgements bring extreme distress. Yet amidst God's judgement there is salvation. God is still a God who takes a people to Himself, separating them out from all others. Still it has nothing to do with merit. It is because of God's own purpose and grace. Still salvation is comprehensive and far-reaching. If God is for us who can be against us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Still God's salvation is in its beginnings effortless, received not worked for, given not deserved.

□1 11:7

□2 2:23

□1 11:8a

□1 11:8b

□2 11:8b



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