

The Darkest Night of Their Lives

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 January 2020

Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

- [0 : 0 0] Now we'll continue then this evening and for the next foreseeable number of weeks with the next section in the book of Exodus. Some of you will remember that we looked in previously, in previous months, about Exodus chapters 1 to 10.
- And whilst it may seem to some of us though, but we've only just finished that, we actually finished that at the end of August. It's just that time flies so much when you're enjoying yourself, no doubt.
- So here we move on to the next section, chapters 11 to 20. And we left things, some of you may remember, at the end of chapter 10, in the midst of the plague of darkness.
- The ninth of the ten plagues of Egypt, the midst of the plague of darkness. And just to refresh, if we turn back to chapter 10, verses 22, onwards there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.
- They saw not one another, neither rose any from this place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. And we read in verse 21, that this darkness was even darkness which may be felt.
- [1 : 1 2] It was a close, oppressive, thick, thick darkness. And this the penultimate plague of Egypt. Pharaoh called unto Moses, verse 24, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord.
- Only let your flocks and herds be saved. And your little ones also, let your little ones also go with you. Moses said, I must give us also sacrifices, burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God.
- Our cattle also shall go with us. There shall not a hoof be left behind. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not let them go. And Pharaoh said, Get thee out from me. Take heed to thyself, see my face no more.
- For in that day thou seest my face, thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more. And that's where we left it.
- And then we read in verse 1 of chapter 11, And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. And then he goes on to talk to Pharaoh. So it's not quite clear whether or not we ought to read this verse 1.
- [2 : 1 5] Remembering, of course, that in the original there wasn't any chapters and verses, divisions. It was just continuous narrative. The Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one more plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt.
- Whether in the original it should have been understood as the Lord had said unto Moses. Because verse 29 of chapter 10 seems pretty final. It's as though they are sort of parting from one another in the midst of anger.
- And yet, here Moses then goes on to speak to Pharaoh. Or is it that having initially intended to break off and go out from his presence, the Lord kind of stops him in his tracks.
- And he turns back and says, Look, there's one more coming. Just so you know. And that would have scriptural, if not precedent, an example elsewhere.

If we think of the example of Isaiah with King Hezekiah. Who in 2 Kings chapter 20, Hezekiah is sick, even unto death. And we read that the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amos, came to him and said to him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live.

[3 : 23] So then Hezekiah, praise to the Lord, came to pass, before Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again and tell Hezekiah, the captain of my people.

Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father. I have heard thy prayer. I have seen thy tears. Behold, I will heal thee. On the third day thou shalt go up into the house of the Lord, and I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

And so on. But there we have the prophet Isaiah, as it were, stopped in his tracks. Stopped in his tracks as he is in the process of leaving the king. And having delivered his initial message, faithfully, he is then stopped and turned round and given another message to the king.

It may be in that kind of context that Moses then speaks to Pharaoh, that having been going to say, You'll see my face no more. And then the Lord kind of stops him in the midst of the court and says, There's one more thing, by the way.

The Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Speak now in the ears of the people. Clearly he can't do that there and then and speak to Pharaoh at the same time.

[4 : 32] So it may be that it's referencing what the Lord had spoken to Moses previously in the midst of the plague of darkness. Or it may be that this is what he is to then go and say to the people, Spoil the Egyptians, you know, take, borrow from them gold and silver and so on.

About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt. And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die. So whether it is something the Lord has previously said, or whether he is being stopped in his tracks, as it were, it's possible that verses 1 to 3 might be a sort of parenthesis, like a kind of brackets between verse 29 in chapter 10 and verse 4 of chapter 11.

Now, as I'm sure you all know, the whole thing about brackets in any narrative is that the sentence or the statement has to make sense without the brackets. So that if you had a statement that was running and brackets in the middle of it, the brackets can't be part of the statement that is made.

It has to be able to read also as though the brackets weren't there. So whilst they add information, they shouldn't interrupt the flow of the narrative. So you could have, for example, verse 29, And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face no more.

And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and so on. So it could be a parenthesis, a kind of brackets in the midst of the narrative.

[5 : 59] But either way, there is one more, the most devastating plague of all that is coming. Now, remember that this is in the midst of the plague of darkness.

It is not until Pharaoh asks Moses to, presumably asks him to lift the plague of darkness, we are told, if we turn back again, that the plague of darkness lasted three days.

Verse 23, They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. And one reason for saying that it must have been lifted is that, you know, when the Lord says you'll go out about midnight, when I go out into the midst of Egypt.

Verse 4, If midnight is going to make sense, then first of all, the darkness that has been for the three days, the plague of darkness, such as may be felt, has to be lifted.

Otherwise, all you've got is ongoing darkness day after day, after day, after day, and then, in the midst of all that darkness, suddenly the firstborn die. Now, how do you distinguish midnight?

[7 : 10] Now, in a land before clocks, and a speaking clock, and greenwich mean time, and all that sort of thing, how do you distinguish midnight from any other hour, if you've only got darkness continuously?

So you must have the end of the plague of darkness first, the lifting of the darkness, and the dawn of daylight.

And yet, Moses says, to Pharaoh, verse 4, Thus said the Lord, about midnight, that means tonight, that means this day, and you know, midnight tonight, the day that has begun, with the lifting of the plague of darkness, and all the Egyptians are saying, oh, goodness, daylight, and last, you know, a bright new day, oh, feels like ages, and it would be ages, since we've even seen the light of the sun, and just thinking, oh, last, some daylight, we can get back to normal, we can go about our business, we can get out into the fields, we can have our normal lives back, this day, that very day, that they have been given back, was to be the last day, that they would all have their families complete, because at midnight, that night, there would be death in every single home, throughout the land of Egypt, save those covered by the blood.

So, this is why we say, although Moses and Pharaoh, are having this interview, if you like, at the end of the plague of darkness, and although Pharaoh doesn't explicitly ask, for the plague to be lifted, it needs, must be, because in the first instance, as we say, it lasted for three days, we're told that, in verse 22, of chapter 10, which means, if it's, if it's demarcated, as being three days, there must have been an end, to the three days, and likewise, if midnight is going to make any sense, for the plague of the firstborn, then, the darkness must first have come to an end, then you've got daylight, a normal day, night falls again, and at midnight, that night, that's when you've got, the plague upon the firstborn, really kicks in.

About midnight, will I go out, into the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn, in the land of Egypt, shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn, of the maidservant, that is behind the mill, and all the firstborn, of beasts.

[9 : 31] Two things to notice here, first of all, is going out, not so much, amongst the Egyptians, I'm not going to say, I ain't going to visit all you bad Egyptians, and your firstborn, will all die, and all these nice food Israelites, they're going to survive, they're going to be fine.

Yes, he does say, that he's making a distinction, verse 7, between the Israelites, and the Egyptians, but it's not because, of their racial identity, as is made clear, if we were to go on, into chapter 12, we read, verse 13 of chapter 12, the blood, shall be for a token, upon the houses, where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass, over you, and the plague, shall not be upon you, to destroy you, but the plague, is going out, into all, the land, of Egypt, notice that distinction, the whole, land of Egypt, is to be plagued, and the, the angel of death, if we can call him that, does not distinguish, between those, who are Israelites, or Hebrews, and those, who are Egyptians, he looks, for where, the blood, is, and if there is, blood, upon the lintels, and the door, pause, he is turned away, and if there isn't, he goes in, and does his business, and the firstborn, in that house, dies, so this is the first, thing to remember, it is not a racial, distinction, or a national, distinction, it is a distinction, of who, is, and is not, covered, by the blood, nobody is saved, by the nationality, they belong to, nobody is condemned, because of the nationality, they belong to, they are either, saved, or condemned, according to, whether or not, they are covered, by the blood,

I hope, the parallels, are clear enough, without me having, to take more, time, into a New Testament, context, the second thing, we should recognize, here, in verse five, is, that, this is, the first, of the plagues, that was threatened, we go back, to chapter four, in Exodus, we find, the Lord, identifying Israel, we also mentioned, when we looked, in this chapter four, verse 22, of chapter four, thou shalt say unto him, thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn, and we said, that that usage, in verse 22, is the first, occasion, in scripture, where this, if you like, defining phrase, this enigmatic phrase, thus saith the Lord, which is so, characteristic, of the scriptures, as a whole, of the authority, with which, the Lord's servants, speak, and this is, the first usage, of it here, chapter four, verse 22, thus saith the Lord,

Israel is my son, even my firstborn, and I say unto thee, let my son go, that he may serve thee, and serve me, and if thou refuse, to let him go, behold, I will slay my son, even my firstborn, now this is before, this is before, the plagues begin, to kick in, this is before, you know, the plague of frogs, the plague of blood, or whatever it, whatever it may be, before it begins, to really, take effect, the Lord, is beginning to say this, he is saying, I'll kill your firstborn, if you don't let, my firstborn go, if you don't let, my son live, and serve me, I will not let, your son live, and serve you, and inherit, your throne, if you will not let, my son, inherit, the service, the freedom, the relationship, I have laid up, for him, now you see here, the perfect symmetry, the perfect balance, that the judgments, of the Lord, are on the one hand, absolutely, proportionate, whilst Pharaoh, is being told, you know, if you won't let, my son go,

I will not let, your son go, if you will not, release my firstborn, I will condemn, your firstborn, it is absolutely, balanced, we might say, it is part of, the Old Testament, equivalent, of what Jesus teaches, in the New Testament, as you would have, others do to you, so do to them, this is the gospel, and yet, this is God's way, of dealing, right through scripture, in the Old Testament, and in the New, as you would want, men to do to you, so do to them, what you consider, to be acceptable, behaviour, as you dish it out, to others, that will be regarded, by the Lord, as acceptable behaviour, when it is dished out, to you, and it is you and I, that define, and dictate, that standard, of what we consider, acceptable, how we treat others, is clearly, how we believe, it's okay, to treat people, and God takes us, as our wives, says okay, that's how you think, it's okay to treat people, this is how you will be treated, you have called the shots,

[14 : 30] I have called the shots, we ourselves, make that decision, and that determination, as to how it is alright, to treat people, in general, that's how we, should be treated, by the Lord, we define, as it were, our own response, from the Lord, to us, and Jesus, reaffirms that, in the New Testament, with the Sermon on the Mount, and so on, so it is the first plague, that is threatened, and if the lesser plagues, had been effectual, if the lesser plagues, had worked, the plague of blood, the plague of frogs, the plague of lights, and flies, and hail, and fire, and cattle, and so on, if all of these, had taken effect, then the plague, upon the firstborn, would not have been necessary, and so it is, with the Lord, if all his lesser strokes, and lesser disciplines, to us, had brought us, to our knees, brought us, to faith, brought us, before his throne, before his cross, then the severer punishments, would not have been necessary,

God deals with us, gently, and graciously, and yet, you know, speaking of the plague, of frogs, it is said, I've never personally, conducted this experiment, but I take it, as being so, that if you drop a frog, into boiling water, it will jump out, immediately, but if you put it, in cold water, and just gradually, heat up the pan, warm, and then hot, and so on, it will just, acclimatize itself, to the temperature, and it will die, because it doesn't, detect the changes, because they are, so gradual, and it is possible, that the very, visiting of these plagues, which as we know, hardened Pharaoh's heart, plague by plague, because they are, administered stroke, by stroke, by stroke, simply, affect the hardening, rather than the, softening, of Pharaoh's heart, towards the Israelites, and by extension, towards the Lord, but we see, not only the, proportionate response, of God, but his, long-suffering mercy, because he, threatens this, worst of all, plagues, first, he declares, the end game, this is not, going to end, well for you,

Pharaoh, if you pursue, this line, this is where, it is going to lead, and then finally, there comes the time, when it is unleashed, when all the other, plagues, have been exhausted, but of course, one reason, we're going to look at this, in a little more depth, tonight, as opposed to, when it actually, takes place, in the narrative, which is, in chapter 12, I mean, we will, touch upon it, in chapter 12, but, we read, for example, there, verse 29, it came to pass, that at midnight, the Lord smote, all the firstborn, in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, that sat on his throne, unto the firstborn of the captive, that was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle, by the time, we get there, into the midst, of chapter 12, we already have, the importance, of the Passover, of the blood, of the angel of death, who turned away, from the Hebrew homes, we have the fact, that by then, they're gathering up, all their belongings, they're having to, sort of, flee in the night, as it were, by then, they almost certainly, have done, their borrowing, of jewels, and silver, and gold, and vessels, and all the things, they may need, from their Egyptian neighbours, before we get to that stage, of them having to rise, and run, but by the time, it actually happens, in chapter 12, it's almost, the case, that it is, eclipsed, and overshadowed, by all the other events, going on, and once, there isn't, an exact parallel, we can, perhaps, look towards, the last judgment, of our Lord, when we can, recognize, that whilst, the inevitable, condemnation, of any, who are not covered, by the blood, of the Lamb, as he also, with the coming Passover, by the time, that judgment, actually takes place, there are, other events, taking place, there is the enthronement, of Jesus, in glory, at last, surrounded by his redeemed, there is the, the vindication, of the Lord's people, there is the, entering into his, glorious presence, there is the, almost, kind of, divinely granted, forgetfulness, of all that has gone, before, there is that, there are so many, other things going on, come the last day, come the great separation, of the sheep, and the goats, that the condemnation, the actual eternal death, of the condemned, of the wicked, instead of being, the big thing, that it is, with the prophecy here, in chapter 11, and prior to that, instead of being, the big thing, which ministers, and preachers, and evangelists, will have focused, upon the need, to avoid this, throughout, their earthly lives, and ministries, and throughout, hours sitting under it, and our hearing of it, all the years, of our lives, and all the times, we have been under, the sound of the gospel, when it comes, to the actual event, it will be simply, one event, amongst many, there is going to be, so much else, going on in heaven, so much else, going on in that last day, so much else, going on in glory, that yes, it is a big deal, to us, if we are lost, but God has other things, also to be doing, glorious things, great things, the destruction, of the wicked, it is almost, on a side, just as, the actual death, of the first born, when it comes, it is almost like, overshadowed, by the Israelites, now having to rise, and run, the Hebrews, gathering up, all their bits, and pieces, and heading off, into the new dawn, that awaits them, so there is so much, else going on, when it actually, happens, and this is one, reason why, you have to focus on it, to accept, here in chapter 11, as opposed to, when the actual time, comes in chapter 12, there is so much, else going on, by then, but we see here, all the first born, in the land, of Egypt shall die, you mentioned that, it is the land, not the people, those who are covered, by the blood, and so on, from Pharaoh,

that said, that the body is thrown, even of the first born, of the maidsome, that is behind the mill, and all the first born, of beasts, so if you stop, for a moment, and think about that, the Egyptians, yes they were, a people, who cooked in idolatry, they were worshipping, false gods, as people, as human nature, and character goes, they were not, better or worse, than the Hebrews, they were not, better people, than the Israelites, they weren't, better than us, we were not, better than them, the death, of a child, is, an indescribable, tragedy, which, not having, personally, experienced myself, I cannot, enter into that, what somebody, will be going through, but I would, be prepared, almost to assure you, that the devastation, and the heartbreak, and the catastrophic, effect, upon the mind, and the heart, will be, exactly the same, for the Egyptian, as it would be, for the Hebrew, for the English person, for the Scottish person, for the black person, for the white person, the loss, the loss of a child, is an indescribable, tragedy, which nobody, can enter into, who has not, themselves, experienced it, but we would be, mistaken,

I believe, if we were, simply to think, of this, this plague, as being, simply, a plague, upon, children, first born, or even to think, in terms of, first born sons, and that's it, you know, when we look ahead, into chapter 13, for example, where the Lord, is taking this, this also hits the beast, remember that cattle, in the field, you have calves, suddenly dropping dead, lambs in the field, suddenly dropping dead, you've got, if you've got camels, and you've got horses, or mules, they are dropping dead, if they are the first born, of their parents, this is happening, right across, the agricultural play, as well as in families too, so we read, you know, when chapter 13, verse 2, sanctify unto me, all the first born, whatsoever openeth the womb, among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast, it is mine, the Lord requires, subsequently, sacrifice, of the first born, of all the cattle, the beasts, and everything else, and then, verse 13, for example, or verse 11, of that same chapter, it shall be, when the Lord, shall bring thee, into the land of Canaan, as he sware unto thee, into thy fathers, and shall give it thee, that thou shalt set apart, unto the Lord, all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling, that cometh of a beast, which thou hast, the males, shall be the Lord's, and every firstling, of an ass, thou shalt redeem, with a lamb, and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck, and all the firstborn of man, among thy children, shalt thou redeem, and it shall be, when thy son asketh thee, in time to come, saying, what is this, that thou shalt say unto him, by strength of hand, the Lord brought us, out from Egypt, from the house of bondage, and it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly, let us go, that the Lord slew, all the firstborn, in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn, of man, and the firstborn, of beast, therefore I sacrifice, to the Lord, all that open up the matrix, being males, but all the firstborn, of my children,

[24:10] I redeem, so firstborn sons, had to be redeemed, with a special sacrifice, but, firstborn beasts, were to be sacrificed, to the Lord, because, it is a reflection, of how the Lord, owns, the life, of every creature, whether it be beast, or whether it be human being, but, in the sacrifices, it is only the males, which are set apart, in this way, in the actual plague, upon the firstborn, you will notice, there is neither, distinction of gender, nor is there, specification, as to age, think on what that means, you could have, a 62 year old woman, for example, with an 85 year old mother, and they could both, drop dead, if the woman, happened to, ever being, the firstborn, of her aged mother, and if the mother, the grandmother, whatever, was herself, a firstborn, they are both, dropping dead, the only homes, which could, theoretically, ever escape, would be, those homes, in which, not only, was either parent, not a firstborn, but in which, there had already, been the tragedy, of bereavement, in the family home, if let's say, an Egyptian couple, neither the mother, nor the father, were themselves, a firstborn, they had already, suffered the tragedy, of their firstborn, dying, in a previous, ordinary circumstance, then, all that they had, in their home, there was no firstborn, left, so, they might, theoretically, escape, and yet, we read, of course, that, there was not, a single, home, there wasn't, a single home, where, this, plague, didn't, strike, and verse, 30, of chapter 12, we read, there was not, a house, where there was, not one, dead, so, presumably, in every, home, in Egypt, certainly, the vast majority, of the homes, in Egypt, somebody, whether amongst, the children, or the parents, or the grandparents, was a firstborn, you could be, 75 years old, and still be, the firstborn, of that generation, of your family, you would die, amongst the children, obviously, the firstborn, whether it was a son, or a daughter, would die, you could have this situation, where you might have, an entire family, where you could have, three or four children, who would all be orphaned, if maybe, both their parents, happened to be the eldest, in their families, they would be orphaned, in the middle of the night, along with their eldest brother, or sister, so you see, the extent, of this tragedy, this catastrophe, in Egypt, cannot really, be comprehended, by us, nor can we, underestimate, the national, paralysis, that would have, taken place, across the nation, because,

I don't know about you, but mentally, I've always tended, to think of this, sort of, parents waking up, in the middle of the night, and finding, that the firstborn, amongst their children, has tragically died, I have mentally, always thought of it, as a plague, that afflicts, children, in a house, so, you've got, the firstborn, son, or daughter, or whatever, who dies, and yes, the weeping, and wailing, of the parents, of the household, where there's one death, in a house, but in practice, it is far likely, to have been, far more extensive, than that, you might have, two, or three, generations, where somebody is dead, in one family home, you go out, to the farmyard, and your donkey is dead, your horse, they be dead, amongst your cattle, one of the cats, is dead, and next doors, they've got death, next door to that, along the street, your uncles, your aunts, your grandparents, all your relatives, there's somebody dead, in every single home, those who would normally, come and comfort you, in the midst of your bereavement, they cannot, there's a mighty, one, two, three deaths, in their home as well, in national, paralysis, of this catastrophe, cannot be, adequately described, this is, what has been, brought upon,

Egypt, and upon, the, the hard heart, of Pharaoh, and his paganism, clearly, it tells us, that Pharaoh himself, was not the firstborn, of his father, or he would himself, have died, so he must have been, a younger brother, that inherited it, but his own firstborn, would have been, the apple of his eye, the future, of his kingdom, and when he dies, even Pharaoh's heart, will be broken, into, hard as it may be, it will be broken, into, but, if we were to go back, to Genesis, we remember, in chapter 34, how, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon, and Levi, deceitfully, persuade, the Shechemites, all to undergo, circumcision, so that, Shechem's son, Hamor, could, could marry, Dinah, Jacob's daughter, and we read, in verse 24, for, unto Hamor, and unto Shechem, his son, hearkened, all that went out of the gate of the city, and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of the city, and it came to pass, on the third day, when they were sore, the two of the sons of Jacob, of Simeon, and Levi,

Dinah's brethren, to each man his sword, and came unto the city boldly, and slew all the males, how on earth would they get away with that, they get away with it, because every single male in the place, is incapacitated, is effectively paralyzed, by the wound, the surgery, which he has undergone, which will immobilize him, for days, if not weeks, as he recovers, but that's a physical wound, a physical injury, from which, had they not all been slaughtered, they would have recovered, the death of a child, or of a grown up child, even within the household, no one can really enter into, the pain of that, the paralysis, of that, grief, is a drain, upon one's resources, somebody who has suffered, at close to the Reban, might be, simply sitting, in their chair, for day after day, just staring straight ahead of them, becoming effectively, catatonic, because, of the sheer, weight of grief, why bother, to go up, and get a glass of water, it's just too much trouble, why you bother to eat, it just tastes like dust, in your mouth, why, get up, go outside, what's the point, breathing the fresh air, what's the point, why, what is there in life, because death, has entered in, it has this, draining effect, this, paralyzing effect, upon, the people, who are themselves, bereft, now, multiply that, across the country, across an entire, nation, where there is not, a single home, where this kind of, paralyzing grief, has not entered in, there shall be, a great cry, throughout all, the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be, like it, anymore, no wonder, the Israelites, were able to get a head start, no wonder, if they borrowed, jewels, and vessels, of gold, or silver, whatever, people just take, what you want,

I don't care, you want the gold plates, just take them, you want the jewels, what use are they to mean, you know, if Esau, turned down, his birthright, because he was famished, and faint, from hunger, thinking, what use is this birthright to mean, just give me the food, no, the Egyptians, are going to be feeling, what use is the clothing, what use is the gold, and silver, just take what you want, and they just be, devastated, in their homes, and if anyone, had the energy, to send up a great cry, if anyone had the strength, to be mourning, one dead, in their house, in his being, multiplied, home by home, by home, the Israelites, who have borrowed, asked, taken, whatever they wanted, nobody's listening, nobody's caring, now, we might think, on the one hand, this verse 3, you know, where it says, I beg your pardon, verse 2, that every man, borrow his neighbour, and every woman, of our neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and likewise, where it says, that they did, as Moses is told, the children of Israel, verse 35, they borrowed, of the Egyptians, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and the Lord, gave the people, favour in the sight, of the Egyptians, so they lent unto them, such things, as they required, and they spoiled, the Egyptians, and I think, well, come on, they're not really, borrowing, are they, they're not planning, to bring them back, they're not planning, this is them taking, no, but they are being, freely given, they're being lent, in the sense, that they're being given, they might say, more likely, they're giving them, such things, to go away, and you might think, well, that's not really, fair on the Egyptians, is it, but remember, that whilst the Israelites, would be at this stage, willing to take, freedom, at any price,

[33 : 35] God is not, unmindful, of their, 400 years, of slavery, from which, they have received, no wages, at all, and whatsoever, they receive now, from the wealth, and from the, the strength, an abundance, of Egypt, doesn't, almost certainly, even come close, to what they would have, earned, in 400 years, had they been paid, a working wage, for all the days, of their labour, so on the one hand, you think, oh, that's a bit rough, on the Egyptians, but remember, on the other hand, what the Israelites, themselves, have gone through, it's not them saying, ah, there's a chance, this morning, the Egyptians, let's grab what they've got, whilst they're all, broken hearted, over their children, remember that, God is, specifying this, to Moses, he's saying, speak to the people, get them, to borrow, from their neighbours, jewels of silver, and gold, and vessels, and plates, and whatever, and these are the things, the wealth of Egypt, the abundance of Egypt, are the things, which come the desert days, when the Lord says, to the Israelites, now, make me a tabernacle, make me priestly garments, make me vessels of gold, and make me candlesticks, and snub dishes, and altars, and so on, all the things, what are they going to do it with?

They're going to do it, with the abundance, the wealth, and the riches, that they have taken with them, out of Egypt. All the wealth, and abundance of Egypt, which in a sense, has been worked for, well and truly, by the Israelites, all during their years, of slavery, which they now have, as wealth, with them, in the desert, but you know, there's nothing to spend it on, out there, so they've still got it, out there.

This then, becomes applied, to the construction, of the tabernacle. This then, becomes part, of the worship, of God. The Israelites, themselves, we might say, will subsequently, be worshipping, God, with that, which was, the labour, of their hands.

That which they, themselves, had worked, and laboured for. So, there is, perfect, justice, and there is, perfect, symmetry, and proportionality, with the Lord.

And just in case, we may be thinking, yeah, come on, what about the poor, ordinary Egyptians? Look at what they do. All because of Pharaoh, all because of the hardness, of his heart.

[36 : 11] No, what's, where's the justice, in that rest? This is, the reality, of sin. This, is the darkness, and the death, that sin, brings.

If we have not, the Lord, as our king, then it doesn't matter, whether we call, that false king, that false god, small g, Pharaoh, or our career, or the world, or money, or ourselves.

It doesn't matter, which. Because you follow, and you serve, that which is, less, than God, and it will not, spare you, from any heartbreak, it will not, spare you, from bereavement, it will not, spare you, from suffering.

What is unusual, in Egypt here, is that all of this, suffering has come, with, to everybody, on the same night, but sooner or later, somewhere along the line, every one of these homes, would be believed, of somebody, in their home, at some point, but it's all happening, at the same time.

This death, is inescapable, this suffering, is inescapable. Whether you follow, Pharaoh, or whether you follow, the Lord, who is the God of life, who makes, that suffering, meaningful.

[37 : 30] Every tear, is buckled, every sigh, is recorded, he puts it, to purpose, so that that suffering, is overcome, with life, and all its fullness. We think, all the poor Egyptians, they're getting a hard time.

Yes they are. That is, the inevitable fruit, of following, darkness. It is the inevitable fruit, of having a false God, as your God.

Of having a false king, as your king. Of having anyone, other than the Lord, as your saviour. That is the fruit, of godlessness.

It is the fruit, of worldliness. It is the fruit, of unbelief, darkness, suffering, death. That is the fruit, of being, without the Lord.

But against, any of the children, of Israel, verse 7, shall not a dog, move his tongue. Now, we think in terms, of dogs as pets. We like our dogs, we love our dogs, whether we train them up, as sheep dogs, or whether we have them, sitting in front of the fire, with us.

[38 : 33] We like our dogs, in the Middle East, especially at that time, dogs were wild, they were vermin. And dogs, would always be howling, and barking, and looking for, for carcasses, they could feed off.

We think of Psalm 59, verse 6. They return at evening, they make a noise, like a dog, and go round, about the city. And again, at verse 14, at evening, let them return, let them make a noise, like a dog, and go round, about the city.

Dogs were a pest, they were vermin, they were noisy, they were always disturbing, at night. But such is the sense, of fear. Such is the sense, of the awfulness, of what had struck, in Egypt, that even the dogs, themselves are cowering.

They are silent. A dog shall not move, his tongue, against man or beast, that ye may know, how that the Lord, doth put a difference, between the Egyptians, and Israel.

What is that difference? It is not racial, it is not genealogical, it is that the Israelites, the Israelites, will be, covered by the blood. The Israelites, will be, protected by the blood, upon the lintels, of their doorposts.

[39 : 40] The Israelites, will be, protected by, the lamb. That is the distinction. And that is the distinction, for each of us. Whether we are protected, by the blood of the lamb, or whether we are, dependent, on our own strength, or trusting, to our worldly rulers, or powers.

All these thy servants, shall come down, unto me, and bow down, themselves unto me, saying, get thee out, and all the people, that follow thee, and after that, I will go out.

And he went out, from Pharaoh, in a great anger. Anger, why? That he had been, badly treated? No, Moses was a meek, meek man. Anger, at the disrespect, done to the Lord, but perhaps also, anger, at the suffering, and pain, that was being, stored up, for these people, of Egypt, who had already, suffered, so much.

And now, we're going to suffer, yet again, because of the, determination, to hold fast, to a false god, of this world. Friends, I don't know, how much, you may, or may not, have suffered, in your life.

None of us, gets a free ride. I know, that you will have, suffered, somewhere along the line, just in the normal, ways of life. There will have been, bereavement, there will have been, sorrow, there will have been, heartbreak, at different stages, of your life, maybe problems, with relationships, maybe difficulties, of money, there will have been, suffering, that much, we all know, it's not news.

[41 : 06] But that suffering, need not be, multiplied, by hardening our hearts, against the only one, who is able to save. Against the only one, who is able to deliver.

Remember, remember that, God's, justice, is absolutely, proportionate, absolutely right. If we will not have life, there will only be death.

If we will not have, our hearts healed, by the balm of Gilead, by the spirit of Christ, there is only, heartbreak, and sorrow. If we will not have, the light, there is only the darkness.

Now this darkness, in which, the interview with Pharaoh, would have been conducted. This, after he went out, from Pharaoh, the dawn, would have began to break.

Think about that, for a minute. As this chapter 11, ends, the darkness, will be lifting. The darkness, that has been there, for three years. And Pharaoh, in his service play, oh thank goodness, well there he goes, off and I stop.

[42 : 04] But look, the darkness is lifting up. At last now, we might have, some freedom here. We might have, some light. And don't realise, that this is only the dawn, before the darkest night, of their lives.

Friends, don't make the mistake, of thinking, there's plenty of time. Don't make the mistake, of thinking, oh well things are okay, look outside, it's okay, the darkness has lightened, the nights are shortening, the days are lengthening, it's coming on to spring, eventually, yes.

But, what awaits you, in the spring, on the summer, or the autumn, if you were spared, to see it, if you would secure, your freedom, if you would make, all the suffering, these past years, worth it.

If you would give them, a purpose, if they would be applied, to something, for which they will, never be lost, never be wasted, there will be, fulfillment, there will be meaning, there will be the crowning, of all the years, of your life, with a purpose, meaning, and fulfillment, of life, in all its fullness, then you can have, that only in, the God of Israel, who delivers, his slaves, from bondage, who delivers, his children, from death, and the Christ, who has died, that you might have life, and have it more abundantly.

Moses and Aaron, did all these wonders, before Pharaoh, and the Lord, hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not, let the children of Israel, go out of his land.

[43 : 30] We might say, why, you know, what is there left, to lose? In chapter 10, if you turn back, a couple of pages, verse 7, Pharaoh's servant, said unto them, how long shall this man, be a slave unto us, let the men know, that they may serve, the Lord their God, knowest thou not yet, that Egypt is destroyed?

What is there left, to lose? What is it, that Pharaoh is holding on to? What is it, that you and I, may be holding on to? What is there left, to lose, that is so precious, that you might risk, and endure, all the darkness, all the heartbreak, all the horror, and bereavement, and loss, and pain, that will be stored up, for all who are not redeemed, by Christ?

What is it, that makes it, worthwhile? Pharaoh, just, doesn't, get it. what about you? What about each of us?

What is it, you're holding on to? Don't you know, Egypt is destroyed? Don't you know, this land, this world, is a veritable city, of destruction, living on borrowed time?

Don't you see, the life, and the liberty, that is set before you, in the light of Christ? Jesus says, come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

[45 : 03] Whether you've been a Hebrew, slogging away, for 400 years of slavery, or whether you've been an Egyptian, enduring nine long plagues, and just wanted all to stop, this is your hour, this is your day, but the night is coming, when the only distinction, which will matter, is, who is covered by the blood, and who isn't.

Let us pray.