

# GOD IS KEEPING HIS PROMISES BY DISCRIMINATING BETWEEN PEOPLE

## Exodus 10:21-11:10

*Please review this week's catechism question.*

### INTRODUCTION

How does God feel about you? How do you know?

There are probably no more important questions in the entire universe than those two questions. Most humans assume that God feels OK about them. He may be disappointed on occasion, but basically he is happy with us and will be happy to receive us into heaven. When asked to give the reason for this optimistic view most will tell you it is because they are basically good people and they've never done anything really bad.

In this final judgment on Egypt and deliverance of Israel, God shows us that there is a day coming when he will reveal how he feels about every human being who has ever lived. We see in Moses' angry departure from Pharaoh (v. 8), God's just anger against him. God justly hates Pharaoh and has determined to destroy him and his nation. Pharaoh and his people are sinners and deserve what they get. However, we also see that God loves Israel. God's love for Israel cannot be explained by Israel's behavior. God loves them because he chose them (Exodus 2:24-25).

God is the one who decides who will be in heaven. In v. 7, God tells Pharaoh that his destruction of the firstborn of Egypt and his deliverance of Israel shows that God graciously loves Israel but justly hates Egypt. God discriminates between people. In God's treatment of each of these nations, we have pictured for us how God will one day make plain how he feels about every human who ever lived. On the Day of Judgment God's attitude towards every human will be made evident by how he treats each one.

### STUDY

1. Describe the punishment God brought upon all Egypt (vv. 21-23) when Pharaoh "repented of his repenting" after God removed the locusts. How would it feel to experience this?

*God commands Moses to stretch out his hand over Egypt. When he does a darkness that can be felt descends upon all Egypt. There is no light from the sun, moon and stars. The people of Egypt cannot leave their houses because they cannot see where they are going. No lamp can penetrate the gloom enough to make travel safe. They sit in their homes, huddled around the small flickering flames of oil lamps, candles and fires. They are isolated and alone in the darkness.*

2. What are the conditions in Goshen, where Israel lives?

*However, in the land of Goshen, where God's people lived, there was light. The light of the sun, moon and stars filled the land of Goshen and bathed the people of God in life giving light. Children played and families enjoyed the pleasures of life together. There was no slave work to be done because their slave masters could not leave their homes. It was like spending a vacation at the beach with your family and friends and the weather was perfect, not too hot, nor too cold. The moon was full and the sunsets glorious every day.*

3. Darkness is regularly used in the Scriptures as a symbol of God's eternal judgment on the wicked (See Jeremiah 23:11-12, Joel 2:2, Zephaniah 1:15, Matthew 8:12, 22:13 & 25:30, etc.). Light is regularly used as a symbol of the blessing of heaven (Isaiah 60:19-20, Colossians 1:12-15, Revelation 21:22-25, 22:5, etc.). What are some ways that "darkness" and "light" help you to understand the way God feels about and will reward his enemies and his people?

*Throughout the OT and into the NT, darkness is used to describe the terror and horror of God's judgment on the wicked. Without light, there is no life, no comfort, and no interaction with others. In the darkness, you are alone and separated from all that is living. Jesus used the language of darkness to describe the place where all who refuse him will spend eternity. The enemies of God will dwell in the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. The*

*destiny of all who oppose the great, Triune God is an eternity of darkness that can be felt. There is an eternal day that is coming for the people of God. It will be a day full of light and the life that light brings.*

**God has a day planned to make plain how he feels about every human who ever lived. On that day he will cover his enemies with darkness but his people with light.**

**4.** What are the ways that Pharaoh's giving Moses "permission" to go worship the Lord shows that he still doesn't "get it"?

*Notice how he phrases his permission, "even your women and children may go with you..." He still believes he is in control of the fate of the Israelites. The women and children can go because he says so. He has not submitted to God and to his will. He continues to assert his own independence. He shows that he is not obeying God by holding back the livestock of Israel. Again, he holds hostage the animals and aims to force Israel to return to Egypt because they will have no food.*

**5.** Why does Moses tell Pharaoh they need to take all their livestock along?

*They are going out of Egypt to worship the Lord and will need animals to sacrifice to the Lord. However, they do not know which kind or how many so they have to take all them along.*

**6.** How does Pharaoh respond to Moses' command that the livestock must go with them and how does Moses respond (v.29)?

*Pharaoh furiously threatens Moses and tells him to leave him and never return and that if he does, he will kill him. Moses, speaking as God's prophet, knowing that Pharaoh's time is up and the day of judgment and salvation has arrived, tells Pharaoh that he is absolutely right. Moses will never see Pharaoh's face again. Moses and all the people of God will be taken away from Egypt. God is going to separate Israel from Egypt permanently.*

**7.** If you will remember that when God first spoke to Moses in Exodus 3:12 that the sign that God sent Moses would be that Israel would return to Mt. Horeb to worship the Lord. Every command by Moses to Pharaoh to release Israel has included the purpose: "so they may worship me." What does the permanent separation of Israel from Egypt so that Israel can worship the Lord tell us about the nature of heaven and hell?

*The destiny of the people of God is to be gathered to God as a worshipping community. Heaven rings with praise because this is the end to which God is bringing all things. Everything that has breath will praise the Lord forever and ever. As Peter says, "But you are a chosen people, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Heaven is the place where the people of God are overwhelmed with the glory of God so that they joyfully, spontaneously worship God forever and ever. This is not mindless, glassy eyed, monotone, dutiful singing of boring hymns. It is being preoccupied with God, all that he is and all that he does. There will be no one present in heaven that isn't completely and absolutely infatuated with God. On the other hand hell will be the place where there is no joy in God but only fear, terror and hatred of God. Hell will be eternally full of bitter complaints and terrified whimpering at the justice of God. Like what happens at the end of the Super Bowl. The fans of the winning team dance and scream and shout their praise for their glorious team and the fans of those who lost slink out of the lit and joyful stadium into the darkness, full of disappointment and complaint.*

**8.** In light of the fact that heaven is made up of a worshipping people, what is at least part of the reason we get together on Sunday morning?

*Now, while we are on earth we have opportunities to practice worshipping God. We get tastes of his glory, which result in moments of honest worship. We gather on Sundays as an expression of our anticipation for that final, glorious day when we will be taken out of this present evil age and spend eternity expressing our delight in God in all that we do and say, forever.*

9. Describe a time you have tasted something of the glory of God and have honestly, from your heart worshipped him?

**God has a day planned to make plain how he feels about every human who ever lived. On that day he will separate his people from his enemies as a worshipping community.**

10. How does 11:1-3 function in the way this portion of the story is told? (Clue: when did God tell Moses this?)

*11:1-3 chronologically belong between 10:20 & 21. Moses tells us this here to explain why he told Pharaoh he would never see him again and why he says what he says next. God told him, before Pharaoh summoned him due to the darkness, this would be the last time he would appear before Pharaoh. He told Moses that there was only one more plague. When Moses went to see Pharaoh he knew that this was the end. He told Moses that when God executed his final judgment upon Egypt that Pharaoh, who was refusing to let them go would so completely change that he would drive them out of his land.*

11. What does God tell Moses will happen when Israel leaves Egypt?

*Each Israelite was to ask their Egyptian neighbors for silver and gold and they would freely give them all their wealth. God would work in the Egyptians and motivate them to give away their treasure. The slaves would ask their masters for their silver and gold and the masters would give their wealth to their slaves as they leave. They would do this because of God's work in the hearts of the Egyptians.*

12. The Scriptures regularly describe the “day of the Lord” as a time when the wicked will have everything taken from them and all the wealth of the world will be given to God’s people (Prov. 13:22, Ecclesiastes 2:26, Isaiah 60:1-11, 66:10-12, Matthew 5:5, 25:24-29, Luke 6:20-26, etc.) How do the experiences of poverty and wealth help you to understand the nature of hell and heaven?

**God has a day planned to make plain how he feels about every human who ever lived. On that day he will give his people the wealth of his enemies.**

13. What is the final judgment on Egypt that God tells Moses and Moses tells Pharaoh? What will be the condition of Egypt and of Israel on the night when God executes this judgment?

*God himself will go out into all Egypt and he will kill every firstborn son in all the land of Egypt, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh to the firstborn son of the lowest slave woman. He will also kill the firstborn male offspring of all Egypt's livestock. This night of death will result in all of Egypt being filled with loud wailing due to the overwhelming grief. However, in the land of Goshen, during the night of death and anguish in Egypt there will be nothing to disturb the peace. All will be calm and safe; there will be no cause for a dog to bark at neither man nor beast.*

14. Why does God kill all the firstborn sons and male offspring of animals? How is God’s mercy revealed along with his justice?

*Firstborn sons are the pride and security of every family in this culture. To lose all the firstborn sons in a night is a great and grievous loss to the nation. It is also perfect retribution because Egypt has enslaved God's firstborn son (Exodus 4:22-23), Israel, and murdered Israel's sons (Exodus 2:22). While this judgment foreshadows the end of the world, it is not the end of the world and so mercy is mixed with judgment. God could legally, justly destroy every single Egyptian as he did the whole world in the time of Noah or as he did with Sodom and Gomorrah in the time of Abraham. However, he only kills the firstborn of every family. He takes the life of the leader and primary heir of every Egyptian family but he only takes these and leaves the rest.*

15. Why does he do this to all Egypt and not just to Pharaoh and his officials? How is it just to kill the firstborn child of the non-Jewish slave girl? How does this illustrate Paul’s description of humanity as being either “in Adam” or “in Christ” in Romans 5:12-19?

*We see here the unity of the people of God and the unity of the enemies of God. It is not just Pharaoh who is guilty before God but all the Egyptian people. While Pharaoh has been the spokesperson and the*

*head of the Egyptian people, all of Egypt is joined with him in their hostility to God and his people. All Egypt oppressed Israel and helped kill their babies. We see in this judgment and this deliverance that there is only one difference within the human race that matters. Every person in the world is either among God's enemies or they are among his people. Every human is either joined to Adam in his sin or to Christ in his obedience. The apostle Paul describes this only significant division in Romans 5 when he says, "Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous." On that last day, every human being will be identified with Adam in his sin and thus incur the wrath of God against sin or they will be identified with the Son of God and thus receive the inheritance of love that is due to the Son of God.*

**16.** The Scriptures regularly describe the condition of God's enemies at the judgment as that of eternal grief (Isaiah 65:13-15, Jeremiah 47:2-4, Matt. 8:12 and of God's people as that of eternal peace and joy (Isaiah 60:15-18, 65:17-25, Revelation 21:1-4, etc.). How does the description of grief and anguish for God's enemies and of peace and joy for God's people help you to appreciate the reality of heaven and hell?

**God has a day planned to make plain how he feels about every human who ever lived. On that day he will immerse his enemies in grief and fill his people with joy.**

**17.** How will all of Egypt's princes respond to the judgment of God upon them?

*Moses declares that when God's final judgment comes upon Egypt, all the princes of Egypt will come and bow before him and plead with him to leave their country.*

**18.** How does this foreshadow what will happen at the final judgment? (See Isaiah 60:10-14, 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, 6:2a, 3a, Philippians 2:9-11, etc.)

*Here we see in Moses a foreshadowing of that great day when all the kings of the earth will come and bow before the Lord Christ and before us, his people. The apostle Paul talks about that day in 1 Corinthians 6 when he asks the Corinthian church, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? .... Do you not know that we will judge angels?" We know that there is a day coming, when all the kings of the earth will bow before us. God will one day, subject all of humanity to the rule of his Christ and all who follow him. No longer will the people of God be oppressed by their enemies but will be triumphant over them as they are led by their captain, the resurrected and glorified Son of God.*

**19.** How does this picture of the conquest and subjection of God's enemies by Christ and his people help you to grasp the reality of heaven and hell?

**God has a day planned to make plain how he feels about every human who ever lived. On that day he will subject his enemies to the Messiah and his people.**

**20.** Do you often think about the God's final judgment of the world? Why or why not? How does this portrait of God's final of Egypt affect how you think about God's final judgment of the world?