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SCRIPTURE

Exodus 10:21-11:8

21 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven so that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness that can be felt." 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was dense darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. 23 People could not see one another, and for three days they could not move from where they were; but all the Israelites had light where they lived. 24 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses, and said, "Go, worship the LORD. Only your flocks and your herds shall remain behind. Even your children may go with you." 25 But Moses said, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings to sacrifice to the LORD our God. 26 Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must choose some of them for the worship of the LORD our God, and we will not know what to use to worship the LORD until we arrive there." 27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was unwilling to let them go. 28 Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Take care that you do not see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die." 29 Moses said, "Just as you say! I will never see your face again."

1 The LORD said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go from here; indeed, when he lets you go, he will drive you away. 2 Tell the people that every man is to ask his neighbor and every woman is to ask her neighbor for objects of silver and gold." 3 The LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, Moses himself was a man of great importance in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's officials and in the sight of the people.

4 Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: About midnight I will go out through Egypt. 5 Every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the female slave who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the livestock. 6 Then there will be a loud cry throughout the whole land of Egypt, such as has never been or will ever be again. 7 But not a dog shall growl at any of the Israelites - not at people, not at animals - so that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. 8 Then all these officials of yours shall come down to me, and bow low to me, saying, 'Leave us, you and all the people who follow you.' After

that I will leave.” And in hot anger he left Pharaoh.

DEVOTIONAL

Heather Henkel '20

Where do you see yourself in this scripture? Are you the leader, Moses? Are you one of the Israelites, finding favor with God, living in the light and just waiting for God’s continued blessings? I have to admit that sometimes I relate to the Egyptians. Living in the darkness. The shadowed days. Losing my first-born child, very suddenly. Perhaps you relate to Pharaoh, being asked for something you feel is unjustly sought, and then trying to negotiate—“You can go, but leave the livestock”—and that isn’t enough.

Where does that leave us in this story, if we don’t relate to Moses and the Israelites? Whenever we read the Old Testament stories, we must remember that Jesus has not yet come as the savior. God was the God of the Israelites before Jesus came along, at which point the picture started to shift: God is the God of all people. So when I read this story, I remember that at this time, God wasn’t known as the God of the Egyptians, or of Pharaoh—but now, thousands of years later, I know this God as my God. And God does see my suffering, and walks by my side in my times of darkness and grief. God will walk with all of us; we just need to allow it.

PRAYER

Faithful God, thank you for sending your son Jesus to be among us, to walk with us, and to teach us. His lessons transcend time. This precious gift cannot be overstated. Thank you for walking with us in our times of need. Send your Holy Spirit to be with us, to guide us, to continually teach us, and to watch over us as your children. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

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