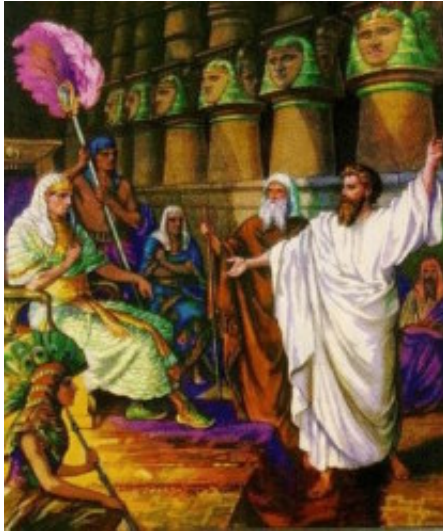


LESSON 5



PHARAOH OPPOSES GOD'S COMMAND

Scripture Text: Exodus 5:1-14, 22-23

After Moses had received his commission from the Lord, he returned to the Israelites. On the way, he met his brother Aaron who was to be his spokesman. Moses was a prophet of God, passing on God's Word to Aaron. Aaron was a prophet of Moses, passing on Moses' word to the people. In Egypt they showed the miraculous signs and gave God's message to the Israelites who accepted them as their leaders.

With the attempt to leave Egypt came increased oppression and suffering of slavery. It also brought increased assurance from the Lord that He would bring Israel out of Egypt and give them the land of Canaan.

MEMORY VERSE: *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

— *Romans 7:24*

Telling God's Message

Exodus 5:1-5. Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh with God's message. **Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go.** Pharaoh was not impressed. **Who is the Lord . . . ? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.** The old Pharaoh was dead. This Pharaoh was a different one than the one who had seen God work great things through Joseph. He did not remember Joseph or Joseph's God. He was very arrogant and blasphemous. God had said **the king of Egypt will not let yo go** (Exodus 3:19). Still, Moses and Aaron were disappointed and continued to press their cause, and still, Pharaoh was unmoved. He accused them of taking the Israelites from their work.

No Straw, but More Work

Exodus 5:6-12. Pharaoh made more severe rules. No more straw would be furnished for the reinforcement of the clay to make bricks. The straw was "chopped up and mixed with the clay to make them more compact and to prevent their cracking" (*Smith's Bible Dictionary*). **Let them go and gather straw for themselves.** Because the grain was reaped close to the ground, the gathering of the short stubble was difficult. The longer we serve sin, the more it requires, and the less it rewards. Pharaoh thought that by more work he could drive from the Israelites all thought of going to worship God. He failed to consider that God was in this. Pharaoh's order was given to the Egyptian taskmasters, who passed it on to the officers who were set directly over the people. **Go ye, get you straw . . . yet not ought of your work shall be diminished.** The people scattered over Egypt to hunt stubble in place of straw.

What a picture of sin we have here! The Israelites were slaves. They could not direct their own lives. Neither can the sinner. They were oppressed, burdened, and punished in increasing severity. Sin never gets better. **The wages of sin is death.** They could not free themselves. Sin binds. The sinner is a slave, unable to free himself. Only the power of Jesus Christ can free the sinner. (See Memory Verse, and always read verse 25 with verse 24.)

Off to a Discouraging Start

Exodus 5:13-21. The condition of Israel was getting worse and worse. **The taskmasters hastened them**, demanding the same amount of bricks as before. When unable to turn out as much work, **the officers of the children of Israel . . . were beaten**. The officers appealed to Pharaoh, who refused to listen, saying, **ye are idle**. When leaving Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron and laid upon them the burden of blame for their hard lot.

Moses did not see the results he expected. Instead, there was suffering, failure, and blame. The condition of the people confused their vision. When Moses tried to tell them God's sure promise of deliverance, they heard his words, but they meant nothing to them. So it is today; sinners desire to place the blame for their unhappy condition on others and go so far as to blame God. When a man of God tries to tell the sinner of God's promise of salvation and the joys of the life in Christ, he cannot hear or see because sin blinds and binds him. (Read Matthew 13:13.) Bewildered and discouraged, Moses questioned God. So often we, also, become impatient to see fulfillment of God's promises. We forget there are two powers at work—God and Satan. Ofttimes, we must endure hardship, persecution, and years of waiting before victory is enjoyed.

The Weakness of Moses

Exodus 5:22-23. Moses was helpless in himself. He did not understand the situation either. He did not know how to answer those who blamed him for Israel's circumstances. **Moses returned unto the Lord**. He questioned God's slowness in delivering Israel. **Why is it that thou hast sent me?** The Israelites would not listen to him, and he doubted that Pharaoh would. He felt he had nothing in himself capable of accomplishing the deliverance of Israel. Israel was not delivered BY Moses, but THROUGH Moses. Moses alone was nothing. Any of us alone is nothing. God had not broken His promise. God never breaks a promise. His time had not yet come. God never gets in a hurry nor is He ever late.

Typical Meanings

1. Pharaoh is a type of Satan who binds people in slavery to sin. 2. Israel's slavery is a type of sin. 3. The increased oppression is a type of the pain of conviction of sin which makes one more willing to leave sin. 4. God's promise of freedom to Israel is a type of His promise of salvation to sinners. 5. God's promise to make Israel His people is a type of His establishing the Church of God, the people of God. Moses did not have examples to inspire his faith in his duties for God. We have many examples of those before us that make us more responsible to walk in the path in which God has called us without allowing our faith to be weakened by life's circumstances. Prayer changes things.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Why don't we jump at opportunities as quickly
as we jump to conclusions?**