

God's Demand and Pharaoh's Resistance

A Portrait of Life in the World

Exodus 5:

- 1 And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, Let My people go that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.
- 2 But Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah that I should listen to His voice to let Israel go? I do not know Jehovah, and I also will not let Israel go.
- 3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God; otherwise He will fall upon us with pestilence or sword.
- 4 Then the king of Egypt said to them, Moses and Aaron, why are you trying to release the people from their work? Get back to your burdens.
- 5 And Pharaoh said, Look, the people of the land are now many, yet you want them to cease from their burdens.
- 6 And the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying,
- 7 You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks as previously; let them go and gather straw for themselves.
- 8 And the quota of the bricks which they made previously, you shall still place upon them; you shall not diminish any of it, for they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.
- 9 Let the work be laid more heavily upon such men, so that they do it and not pay attention to false words.
- 10 And the taskmasters of the people and their officers went out and spoke to the people, saying, Thus says Pharaoh, I will not give you straw.
- 11 You go and get your own straw wherever you can find it, for none of your work will be reduced.
- 12 So the people scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw.
- 13 And the taskmasters pressed them saying, Finish your work, the same daily assignment as when there was straw.
- 14 And the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and told, Why have you not finished, both yesterday and today, the amount of bricks required of you previously?
- 15 Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, Why do you treat your servants this way?
- 16 No straw is given to your servants, and they say to us, Make bricks. And now your servants are being beaten, but it is the fault of your own people.
- 17 But he said, Idle is what you are, idle; therefore you say, Let us go and sacrifice to Jehovah.
- 18 So go now and work; and no straw shall be given you, but you shall deliver the quota of bricks.
- 19 And the officers of the children of Israel saw that they were in trouble, when it was said, You shall not diminish any of the daily assignment of your bricks.
- 20 And they came upon Moses and Aaron who were standing there to meet them when they came forth from Pharaoh.
- 21 And they said to them, Jehovah look upon you and judge, because you have made us odious in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants so as to put a sword in their hand to kill us.
- 22 Then Moses went back to Jehovah and said, Lord, why have You mistreated this people? Why is it that You sent me?
- 23 Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has mistreated this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all.

- I. In order to expose the real situation of life in the world under Pharaoh's usurpation, the book of Exodus describes twelve conflicts between Jehovah and Pharaoh; in the first conflict God demanded that Pharaoh let His people go into the wilderness a three days' journey to hold a feast unto Him. Exo 5:1-3:
 - A. This demand by God was to let His people go that they may hold a feast unto Jehovah in the wilderness; the feast is in contrast with the slavery, the harshness in Egypt. Exo 5:1; 1:13.
 - B. The demand by God was for His chosen people to take a three days' journey into the wilderness; in the Bible the number three, especially three days, signifies resurrection. Exo 5:3.

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- C. Jehovah also demanded that Pharaoh allow the children of Israel to sacrifice to Jehovah their God; sacrifice is a word parallel to feasting indicating that the feast and the sacrifice are two aspects of one thing. Exo 5:1, 3.
- II. Pharaoh symbolizing the usurping Satan refused to let God's people go; a Pharaoh is one who keeps God's people from feasting unto the Lord. Exo 5:2, 4-9.
- A. Pharaoh denied Jehovah God, ignored His demand, and refused to let Israel go, even refusing to acknowledge Jehovah, virtually denying Jehovah's existence. Exo 5:2.
 - B. Instead of letting Israel go, Pharaoh actually increased their labor with harshness. Exo 5: 7-9.
 - 1. Pharaoh commanded that they be given no more straw to make bricks but make them gather the straw themselves; when God is about to rescue someone from the world, Satan takes away his "straw" depriving him of the supply from the world forcing him to work with harshness in order to make a living. Exo 5:7; 1:13.
 - 2. Pharaoh cut off the supply of straw but still required the same number of bricks indicating that it was much harder for God's people to do their daily work. Exo 5:8.
 - 3. Pharaoh also condemned the children of Israel of being idle; in the eyes of today's Pharaohs, we in the church are also "idle", wasting our time going to meetings. Exo 5:8, 17.
 - 4. Pharaoh did not want God's people to regard the "false words"; these "false words" however were actually the word of God. Exo 5:9.
- III. Discussion questions:
- A. Why do we need a vision of the true nature of life in the world in order to be rescued out of the world?
 - B. In your experience, who is Pharaoh and how has he kept you from enjoying the Lord?
 - C. Discuss your experiences of being revived to pursue the Lord and the situations which come in to discourage and stop our pursuit of the Lord.