

# (Exodus) Exodus 5 Introduction

by J. Vernon McGee

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*The sermon explores the relationship of the individual Israelite to God and the contest with Pharaoh, highlighting the significance of the plagues and the demonstration of God's power.*

**Duration:** 12:20

**Scripture:** Exodus 4:22, Exodus 7:5, Matthew 6:33, Galatians 6:15

**Topics:** "Divine Judgment", "Gods Sovereignty"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the plagues that God sent upon Egypt to reveal His power and superiority over the gods of Egypt. The plagues were not random, but were specifically targeted at the idolatry and institutions of Egypt. The preacher emphasizes that the Egyptians were not foolish and that there was power in their religions. Through these plagues, God not only delivered His people, but also made Himself known to the Egyptians, showing them that He is the Lord.

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## Transcript

Now today, friends, as we come to the 5th chapter, there's something that I probably should mention because it's going to come up again and again in the Old Testament, and that is the relationship of the individual Israelite to God. He was never called the individual Israelite, a son of God, but we saw back in chapter 4, verse 22, the thing that God did say of the nation. And I was so busy talking about the home life of Moses that I didn't speak of the home life of the nation.

Now let me read this, "...thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn." Now the nation as such was considered a son of God, and I think each individual Israelite, and we'll have to see this as we go along, had to have that experience of the new birth to come in under the covenant. You see, the sign of it, as we've already seen, was circumcision, and that was the badge of it. But as Paul made very clear, you will recall, to the Galatians, he said, "...for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." In other words, there are a great many people today even boast of the fact that they don't belong to a church and they don't do this and they don't go through a ritual and all of that.

Well, my friend, that's nothing to crow about, nothing to boast of, whether you have or have not. It's the inward experience. It is to have experienced the new birth.

And I believe that the individual Israelite had to go through that. But the nation as such was called the Son of God, and each one had to come in under that badge, which was circumcision outwardly, but you see it spoke of an inward relationship. Now, we'll have a great deal more to say about that from time to time, especially when God sent the nation into captivity.

Now, here in chapter 5, we begin actually a new section, and it's the contest now with Pharaoh. And I'd like to say something preliminary about this as we'll move rather hurriedly after we get going in this section. You see now what has happened is this.

Moses appears back in Egypt after 40 years' absence. Now, God is ready to deliver his people. And the deliverer now is prepared.

Moses is prepared. And Moses was to assemble the elders of Israel, and they're all to go to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh will refuse.

And that refusal will open the struggle between God and the gods of Egypt. Actually, it was not a battle between the people of Egypt or the nation Egypt. It was against the gods of Egypt.

And the plagues actually were not haphazard. In other words, when God sent the plague of frogs, he didn't say, well, now I wonder what I can think of to do next. The fact of the matter is that probably nothing was quite as organized and as meaningful as these plagues.

They were directed very definitely at certain institutions in Egypt, and that was the idolatry of Egypt. And the thing that was going to happen as we'll see here, Pharaoh is going to ask the question, who is the Lord? I don't know him and don't intend to let his people go. Well, God's going to introduce himself.

And he'll do it by bringing these plagues on the land of Egypt. Now, over in the 7th chapter, verse 5, the Lord makes it clear what he had in mind. And the Egyptians shall know that I'm the Lord when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

You see, he not only delivered his people, but by the plagues he let the Egyptians know who he was, because each plague was leveled at the different gods of Egypt. And believe me, they had gods many. I'll go into detail in this after today when we take up each plague separately.

But there were literally thousands of temples in Egypt. And there were millions of idols and about 3,000 different gods in Egypt. Now, that will outdo anything we've got in this country today.

There was power in the religion of Egypt. Somebody's going to say, you don't mean that. Well, I certainly do mean it, friends.

There was power in that. The Egyptians were not fools. I don't know why that we today always arrogate to ourselves a superior knowledge to the people of the past, because we have a transistor radio.

We have color television. We've been to the moon. And that means we're superior, know something.

Don't you know that all of our knowledge is based on that which has been handed down by the past? And we've been building just like you put up a wall, one stone on another down through the centuries. And these people in the past were not fools. And Paul, I think, makes it very clear that there was power in the religions of Egypt.

Over in 2 Timothy, the third chapter, verse 8, he says, Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds reprobate concerning the faith. And I think it was satanic. I've always felt that the Greeks really got a great deal of fireworks from Mount Olympus, but it was satanic.

And Satan grants power to them that worship him. The Oracle of Delphi is an example of that. Spiritism today.

Now the plagues were directed at the gods of Egypt, against idolatry, against Pharaoh, against Satan. And I like to call it a battle of the gods, for that's exactly what it was. And listen to the 12th chapter of Exodus, verse 12.

And this was the last plague. Listen to this. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night.

I will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt, I will execute judgment. I am the Lord. It definitely is a battle of the gods.

It's God directing these plagues against the idolatry of Egypt. Now to reveal to Israel, of course, the ability of God to deliver was another very important lesson there. You see, they were born in brickyards.

And they were in idolatry. And God had to show them that He was superior, that He could deliver them. Now let me run through these plagues very briefly, just to let you see that there's some sense to them.

Moses first changed the rod into a serpent. And the wise men of Egypt do that. That was something that reveals that Satan has certain power, which is quite definite.

Now the Nile was turned to blood. The fertility of that land depended upon the overflow of the Nile to bring both fertilizer and water. And it was sacred, the Nile, sacred to Osiris.

There were pagan rites every spring. Life became death now. And before, the Nile spoke of life.

But now it's death. It's blood. And then the frogs, they were dirty and ugly.

And the very interesting thing is that the Egyptians worshipped about every animal that was imaginable. They worshipped Heka, the frog-headed goddess. And it was a fence to kill frogs.

But my friend, when you get up of a morning, there are frogs in bed with you, frogs on the floor, frogs in the kitchen. You have a mind to want to kill them. But they're all sacred, you see.

And then you have here the fact that the magicians in Egypt duplicated up to this point. But from here on, they're out of business. The next one was the lice.

And the magicians could not duplicate this one. And it makes you believe maybe the others were fake that they did. But at least there was a duplication.

Now Keb was the earth god. And lice were made out of the dust of the earth. That, to me, is a very interesting thing.

Then the judgment of the flies. And that is the scarab. That's what they find in the tombs today.

It speaks of eternal life. The beetles, if you please. They were sacred to Ra, the sun god, Ra-Ammon, and Kippara.

And then the murren on the cattle. Well, Egypt was a land of zoolatry. They worshipped the whole animal kingdom.

And Apis, especially the black bull. And may I say to you, it's rather ridiculous. They're now going to have to worship a sick cow.

Don't tell me there's not humor in the Bible. And I think God must have smiled about this time. And then the boils.

There was hail. And this is where now God begins to demonstrate his power. Isis, the great god of the air, of the atmosphere.

And he's moving in on them now. Locusts, the crops were cursed. And that is an evidence of the judgment of God.

We find that in the book of Joel and Revelation. And then darkness. You see, Egyptians worshipped the sun, Ra-Ammon, that disk with the rays going out from it.

I know when I was in Egypt in the museums and around the old buildings, the ruins that are there, you see this sign over the doorway, Ra-Ammon. It's the disk of the sun and rays shooting out from it. Well, the sun's blotted out in this darkness in Egypt.

And then the tenth one, the death of the firstborn. And the firstborn belong to the gods of Egypt. In other words, God just took what belonged to the gods of Egypt.

This was a tremendous thing, you see, that God is doing here. He's teaching the Egyptians. And he's convincing Pharaoh.

And he's also bringing his own people where they're willing to acknowledge him. Now, I think it's important to see that, friends, because it lifts this record out of an account that some would like to make it rather ridiculous. Well, it's not ridiculous.

You can imagine the idolatry that was in Egypt. And God, by the way, through Isaiah predicted later on every idol would disappear from the land of Egypt. And you know today they're Muslim down there.

And they don't permit idols at all. And the land that was loaded with more idols, probably than any land, that includes Babylon, every one of them has disappeared. And you go to old Memphis, and God said that this is the city that he would absolutely remove every idol.

And the only thing that's left there is that great big statue of the Pharaoh that was so vain. And it's all broken up. But it's a tremendous, huge thing.

They've got a building over it now. It was formerly just right out in the big outdoors. Now, that gives us something of the background that we have here.

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