

(Exodus) Exodus 5:1-23

by J. Vernon McGee

Moses and Aaron approach Pharaoh to ask for the Israelites' release, but Pharaoh refuses, and the taskmasters increase the difficulty of their work, leading to a complaint from the Israelites and a frustrated Moses.

Duration: 6:57

Scripture: Exodus 5:1-2, Exodus 5:15, Exodus 6:2, Exodus 6:6, Exodus 6:9, Exodus 6:30

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the increasing difficulty faced by the Israelites in their servitude to Pharaoh. The officers of the Israelites cry out to Pharaoh, complaining that they are not being given straw to make bricks and are being beaten. However, instead of granting their request to go and sacrifice to the Lord, Pharaoh makes their burden even harder. Moses and Aaron are blamed by the Israelite officers for making their situation worse. Moses questions God about why he has treated the people so harshly, and Pharaoh accuses Moses and Aaron of causing unrest among the people. As a result, Pharaoh commands that the Israelites gather their own straw for brick-making, but the quota of bricks they must produce remains the same.

Transcript

Now, as I come to chapter 5, will you notice, as we move through this record, verse 1, I'm reading, "...And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." Now, you see that this was to be the first step. They didn't go in and say, let my people go, we are leaving here. We're going to the promised land, but that's not it.

Just let us go out in the wilderness and worship. That's preparing him or softening him up for what is ultimately coming, of course. But notice the reaction of Pharaoh.

And Pharaoh said, who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. Two things, you see. I don't know the Lord, and I don't intend to let Israel go.

Well, he certainly doesn't know the Lord, or he'd say, I'm going to let Israel go. But he's going to get acquainted, and this is part of the purpose of the plagues. Verse 3, "...And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us.

Let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword." In other words, God will judge us if we do not take this step now. "...And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye Moses and Aaron let the people from their works get you under your burdens? And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens." In other words, Moses was having mass meetings of these people, and they were restless now. They wanted to go, and this Pharaoh sees that he's presented with a real problem.

He says, you get back to your work, and he sends them back to the brickyards and now increases their problem and their difficulties. "...And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tail of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them, ye shall not diminish aught thereof, for they be idle.

Therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God." In other words, they were asking for a holiday, and he said, there's nothing doing, you're not working hard enough, and their task is increased by the withholding of straw from them. The very interesting thing is that Dr. Melvin Grove Kyle, that I've referred to before in this study in Egypt, he was an Egyptologist, and I had the privilege of being under him as a seminary student for a time, and Dr. Kyle brought to the class one day a brick that he had taken out of the city of Ramesses, out of the ruins, and you find that the first brick that were there were made with straw, but up at the top, and he said these that were on top were brick that had been made without straw. This is apparently a historical record, you see, that is, that can be corroborated and substantiated from the brick that are there.

Now, I don't know about you, but I believe the record, not because they found some brick over in Egypt, but because God has said it. But it's interesting to note that it has been confirmed. Now, we find that the task is increased for these people, and it was something that was hard on them.

Actually, before they served with rigor, we are told, now will you note, and I'm dropping down to verse 15. Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick, and behold, thy servants are beaten, but the fault is in thine own people. But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle.

Therefore ye say, Let us go, and do sacrifice to the Lord. Go therefore now and work, for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of brick. And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily tasks.

And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh. And they said unto them, The Lord look upon you, and judge, because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us. In other words, Moses and Aaron, the thing you've done, you haven't helped us, but you've given Pharaoh an excuse to make our burden more difficult than it ever was before.

And Moses returned unto the Lord and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil and treated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? You would think at this point that Moses was complaining. And there's always been a question, Is Moses complaining here? I think so. I think that Moses came down to deliver the children of Israel, and he felt like, My, they'd certainly be for him.

Since he wanted to deliver the people, but things are not working out like he anticipated. And I feel like that he is complaining. And now verse 23, For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people, neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

And Moses is complaining. He's rather impatient. He said, I've come down here to deliver them at your instructions.

I've delivered the message. And instead of Pharaoh calling me in and saying, All right, here's your passport. You can go.

Instead of that, he's made their difficulty much harder than it was. But you see, God is moving slowly, patiently, which is his way. And here in chapter 6, now, he wants to encourage his servant.

He also wants to encourage the people of Israel and teach them. And he has a little message for Pharaoh also.

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