

Exodus 5 - Thursday, August 21st, 2008

- Moses, in chapter 4, after making excuse after excuse finally, though reluctantly, leaves Midian for Egypt as God had commanded.
- He meets Aaron along the way, and upon their arrival they tell the Israelite elders that God is going to use them to deliver the Israelites.
- Now in chapter 5, Moses will go to Pharaoh, and tell him that he will have to let the Israelites go. There's the easy way or the hard way.

5:1 Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'"

- Moses is granted access to Pharaoh and gives him a message from "the LORD God of Israel says; 'let my people go.'"
- Can you imagine what must be going through Moses' mind right about now? After all, that could have been him on that very throne.
- Can you imagine what's going through Pharaoh's mind? He believes that he is a god and the Hebrew's are less than human as slaves.

- It's believed that Amenhotep II was the Pharaoh that Moses would have gone before at the time of the Exodus.

2 And Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go." 3 So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

- Pharaoh responds by asking Moses "Who the LORD thinks He is that Pharaoh should obey him and let Israel go." He then says; "no!"
- Moses then tells Pharaoh that the God of the Hebrews has met with them, and asks for a three-day journey to worship in the desert.
- Moses even warns Pharaoh that if he doesn't comply, God may strike them with plagues or with the sword.

- When Pharaoh says; "Who is the Lord?" it's like he's saying; "we have hundreds of gods in Egypt, I've never heard of your God."
- Actually Mr. Pharaoh, by the time the Lord is through with you, you won't have any doubts about Who the Lord is.

- It's interesting that Moses would ask for three days when he knew that God wanted them out of Egypt for good, not for just three days.
- One has to question whether or not Moses is being deceptive and even fearful by only asking for three days instead of forever.
- One has suggested that Moses is sort of easing into it, and maybe even giving Pharaoh an opportunity to soften his heart and agree.

"This was by no means a large demand, and was doubtless meant to be a test question. He who would not yield the less would be sure to refuse the greater."

Charles Spurgeon

4 Then the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get back to your labor." 5 And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are many now, and you make them rest from their labor!"

6 So 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 brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' 9 Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words."

- Pharaoh is incensed that they would even ask him to let them go and demands that they quit wasting time and go back to work.
- This was the last straw, he commands the taskmasters to stop giving them straw to make the bricks while not reducing their quota.
- What's interesting is that archeological digs have unearthed bricks with the usual amount of straw, then stubble, then no straw at all.

In Exodus 1:11, we are told that the children of Israel built the treasure cities of Pithom and Raamses for Pharaoh. In Exodus 5, we are informed that they made bricks first using straw, and then using stubble, because no straw was furnished them for that purpose. In 1883, Naville, and in 1908, Kyle, found at Pithom, one of the cities built by Israel, that the lower courses were built of bricks filled with good, chopped straw. The middle courses have less straw including stubble. The upper courses were made of pure clay, with no straw whatever. It is difficult to read the biblical account and not be astonished at the amazing confirmation which archaeology here has given to the Bible.

<http://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/LVarticles/HistoricalAccuracyOfTheBible.htm>

One commentator has suggested that the historical records indicate the Israelites made enough bricks to build a wall ten feet high and five feet thick that would stretch from Seattle to New York City.

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 Go, get yourselves straw where you can find it; yet none of your work will be reduced.'" 12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. 13 And the taskmasters forced them to hurry, saying, "Fulfill your work, your daily quota, as when there was straw." 14 Also the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, "Why have you not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as before?"

- When the taskmasters tell the Hebrew slaves that Pharaoh would no longer provide them with straw, they start gathering it themselves.
- It seems that they were not able to produce the same amount of bricks because there was no straw and were beaten because of it.

15 Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, "Why are you dealing thus with your servants? 16 There is no straw given to your servants, and they say to us, 'Make brick!' And indeed your servants are beaten, but the fault is in your own people." 17 But he said, "You are idle! Idle! Therefore you say, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.' 18 Therefore go now and work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks." 19 And the officers of the children of Israel saw that they were in trouble after it was said, "You shall not reduce any bricks from your daily quota."

- The Israelites complain to Pharaoh by telling him that they can't continue to make that many bricks without straw and are beaten for it.
- Of course Pharaoh is not moved with compassion for them in their plight, and sort of mocks them for even thinking they could leave.
- We're then told that the Israelites knew they were in trouble for even saying anything and knew that they would never have any relief.

"Things are always worst when they are about to mend, but these downcast spirits could not see far before them."

Charles Spurgeon

20 Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them. 21 And they said to them, "Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us."

- It seems that they run into Moses and Aaron on their way after leaving Pharaoh, and as you might imagine, they're not too happy.
- They over dramatize it a little bit when they say that Pharaoh's task masters are killing them. They weren't being killed, just beaten.
- I wonder what Moses is feeling like right now. He's probably thinking that this is why this wasn't such a good idea in the first place.

22 So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all."

- It seems that Moses doesn't argue with the Israelites but instead goes to the Lord and starts complaining to Him and questioning Him.
- He asks two questions, and sort of files one complaint; "Why have you brought trouble on this people?" "Why is it You have sent me?"
- The one complaint is sort of humorous if you really look at it; "Since I got here and did what You said, You haven't done anything at all!"
- You've got to know that Moses is in agony and riddled with doubt. What's interesting is that God told him deliverance won't come easy.
- I wonder if Moses thought that, somehow, in spite of what God said, Pharaoh would just make it easy for him and let them go.

"The agony of soul through which Moses passed must have been as death to him. He died to his self-esteem, to his castle-building, to pride in his miracles, to the enthusiasm of his people, to everything that a popular leader loves. As he lay there on the ground alone before God, wishing himself back in Midian, and thinking himself hardly used, he was falling as a grain of wheat into the ground to die, no longer to abide alone, but to bear much fruit." (F. B. Meyer)

Lesson's that I can learn from Exodus chapter five:

1. Like Moses' failure at first, God's deliverance may not come when or in the way we think, however, God's way and timing is perfect.
2. Unlike Pharaoh not knowing the Lord and not obeying His commands, when we know the Lord and love the Lord we'll obey the Lord.
3. The Pharaoh mindset is alive and well today when he would say; "you can't go worship for three days, there's too much work to do!"
4. Like when Pharaoh stopped providing straw for the Israelites; sometimes life's greatest challenges come before God's greatest victory.
5. We are prone to react to hardship and adversity like the Israelites when we cry out to the world instead of God or even God's people.
6. Like the Israelites bondage increasing by turning to Pharaoh for relief, the same thing happens to us when we turn to the world.
7. Like the Israelites thinking Pharaoh was their friend; "we're abhorrent in his sight," he reveals his true colors when they want to be free.
8. Just because, like Moses, we don't think God is doing anything; "at all," doesn't mean He isn't. God is never late nor is He early either.
9. Even though everything and everyone can be against you, you can still be right smack in the middle of God's will for your life.
10. When Pharaoh rebukes Moses, and the Israelites reject Moses, he doesn't argue with them, he goes to the Lord about them.

A Picture:

EXODUS	US
Egypt	The World
Slavery	Sin
Plagues	Judgment
Moses	Jesus
Passover	Crucifixion
Deliverance	Salvation
Red Sea	Baptism