

# Notes on Lesson 7 – Exodus 5

## Let's review of Exodus 1-4

Let's review the story to this point. **In chapter one** The people of Israel are in Egypt. They came there when Joseph was second in command in Egypt. 400 years have passed and now the Pharaoh's have forgotten all about Joseph. The people are slaves for several hundred years. They have grown in numbers exponentially so much that they are a threat to peace in Egypt. Pharaoh orders the killing of male babies.

**In chapter two** Moses was born and hidden in the bulrushes. He was found by Pharaoh's daughter (probably Hatshepsut, who eventually becomes the Pharaoh herself). Moses was raised in Pharaoh's house and educated in all the ways of Egypt. At 40 years of age he killed an Egyptian, was found out, and became Pharaoh's enemy, and a fugitive from the law. He ran away in to the wilderness of Midian. He saved Jethro's daughters from bad guys. He went to Jethro's house and was taken into his family. He became a shepherd and he married Zipporah and had two children.

**In chapter three** after another 40 years, (he was now 80 years old) God called him from a burning bush to become the deliverer for the Israelites. He didn't want to do it. He made many excuses. Finally, God said Aaron could be his spokesperson. God, somewhere back in Egypt, revealed himself to Aaron, and told him to go meet his brother Moses in the wilderness.

**In chapter four** God gave Moses two miraculous signs to perform before Pharaoh. 1) He was to turn his staff into a snake and then pick it up again and turn it back into a staff. 2) He was to put his hand into his cloak, and it would become leprous, like snow. Then he was to put it in again and it would become restored. God reminded him in Exodus 4:17, 4:21, and 4:28 to perform these signs before Pharaoh.

On the way to Egypt God tried to kill him because he, or his son, or both, were not circumcised. Zipporah saved his life by performing circumcision. She got angry and left him and went back to Jethro and Moses continued on alone.

Moses continued his journey and met his brother, Aaron, who was on his way to meet him. Moses told him everything God did and what God told him to do. Finally, at the end of chapter 4 God reminded Moses to perform the miracles before Pharaoh that God had provided. They arrive in Egypt and told the leaders of Israel what God had said. Then they showed the signs before the people and they believe.

Now we come to **chapter five**.

## Let's read Exodus chapter 5:1-23

## 1. Moses and Aaron's First Appearance before Pharaoh

Remember that no passage is isolated to itself. The story continues from chapter four. It is a continuous story. In chapter five verse one, Moses and Aaron now took the big step of getting an audience with Pharaoh, and told him that God said *"Let my people go."* It seemed to be a very brief interview with Pharaoh and it ended badly. Pharaoh said, "NO!"

## 2. Who is the LORD?

This is probably the greatest question of the book. It is the theme God ordained for introducing himself to his people and to the Egyptians. Pharaoh is right. He does not know who the God of Israel is and he could care less. The Egyptians have over 3,000 gods. What is one more and why should Pharaoh fear the puny god of the Israelite slaves?

## 3. Who were the gods of Egypt?

The Egyptians had over 3,000 gods. In Exodus 12:12 God stated very emphatically that his purpose in the Exodus was to "bring judgment on the gods of Egypt." Next week we will provide a document that lists and defines the gods of Egypt – **it's 35 pages long!**

There is a Scripture in your NIV Bible that states that "the gods of the pagans are demons." Actually the Hebrew word used here is not demons, but "nothing." Why do you think they translated this with the word demons? We have prepared a Bible study on this subject that I think is interesting. In light of this truth we need to see that God was not just mocking the Egyptians for their trust in idols but He was fighting against them to show his "mighty hand and outstretched arm."

## 4. The People Are Punished for Being Lazy

So Pharaoh punished the people for being lazy and wanting to go on a festival in the desert. He took away their supply of straw to make bricks. The people were punished with more work and no straw. The Egyptian slave drivers demanded the same daily quota. The Israelite foremen were then beaten for missing their quotas. The foremen appealed to Pharaoh about the injustice of this demand. Then they learned that Moses and Aaron caused all this trouble and report it back to the leaders of Israel. Now all of Israel was angry with Moses and Aaron for causing all this trouble.

*"May the LORD look upon you and judge you!  
You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his officials  
and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."*

## 4. Moses Complaint

The Israelite foremen came back to Moses and Aaron and blamed them for making them stink before Pharaoh and that it gave him a sword to kill them. Moses took it to heart. He felt responsible. At first the people believed him and rejoiced that God was going to save them and set them free. But now, as it turns out the situation was worse than before. Note what Moses said to the Lord.

*"O LORD, why have you brought this trouble on us? Why have you sent me?  
Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak IN YOUR NAME, he has brought trouble  
on this people, AND YOU HAVE NOT RESCUED YOUR PEOPLE AT ALL!"*

Wow! What an indictment of the Lord God of Heaven.

*It's all your fault! You make me look bad. You made it worse.  
You brought this trouble on the people. You have not rescued. You failed. You lied.*

## 5. What Went Wrong?

Did you ever stop to think about what went wrong with this first attempt? Why did things turn out so badly? I am amazed that many commentators don't point this out. Even J. Vernon Magee passes over it entirely. What did Moses do wrong?

Look at chapter five verse one.

*Afterward (after doing the miracles for the leaders of Israel) Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.'"*

### **He didn't bring out his staff or do any miracle as God commanded.**

He just let Aaron speak and tell Pharaoh to let them go on a three-day holiday into the desert to worship their God. WHERE'S THE BEEF! Where's the authority and power behind these words? Was Moses so gullible to think that his presence alone would impress Pharaoh to let the people go?

If Jesus came preaching the good news without the miracles and signs from God, do you think the people would have believed him?

Mark 4:41 *And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?*

Luke 4:32 *And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.*

The Apostle Paul agrees that the Gospel without power is just another philosophy.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

*When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. <sup>2</sup> For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. <sup>4</sup> My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*

## 6. It's not about you, Moses

The whole point was that they might KNOW THE LORD, not Moses Throughout Exodus God emphasized that the miracles were so "that you might know" the LORD!

### **Exodus 7:17**

*This is what the LORD says: By this you will know that I am the LORD: With the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into blood.*

### **Exodus 9:29-30**

*Moses replied, "When I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to the LORD. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may know that the earth is the LORD's. But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the LORD God."*

### **Exodus 10:1-2**

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD."*

### **Exodus 11:7**

*But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.' Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.*

### **Have you ever felt that God failed you?**

Or God told you to do something, you did it, and things didn't turn out very well? Have you ever felt that God isn't treating you fairly? Or he failed to show up to save the day? Or he lied? Have you every experienced God's silence or his inaction when you faced a crisis? Moses was just a man. This experience was just what he had feared from the beginning. It's like his worse nightmare come true. He wasn't along many of the prophets of God experienced the same disappointment with God. Think about David, Jeremiah, Elijah, and Job. All of them poured out their complaint to God because God wasn't treating them fairly or didn't show up to save the day, or left them sick and hurting.

### **Read Jeremiah's complaint in Lamentations chapter three.**

Read the whole chapter out loud and use a dramatic voice as Jeremiah would have said it.

God didn't strike Moses dead for saying those things. He was simply telling at it is, or was. He was being honest to God. Too often we as Christians pretend that everything is okay, or we put on a happy face when things are bad. We even tell people "Don't cry. It's going to be alright." Is that really being honest about your pain? Or is it pain and pretending?

God honors an honest heart. We are encouraged to pour out our heart to God, to tell him our complaint. Job said, "*If I knew where his throne was I would come before him and plead my case.*" Moses was pleading his case. He was being honest to God. In the next chapter we will see and hear God's response to his complaint.

### **Application**

#### The Bondage of Sin

Satan desires to hold God's people captive through sin and its cords. The story of the Exodus is for each of us. We are easily entangled in sin and cannot get out. The more you try to free yourself the tighter Pharaoh's hold on you. Satan, like Pharaoh, will not let you go until the Lord releases you with a mighty hand and outstretched arm. Call on him.

#### Who Is the Lord – to you?

JB Phillips wrote a wonderful small book titled, "*Your God is Too Small.*" In it he decries the tendency of today's Christian to make God like unto the gods of the pagans. Jesus said we even pray like the pagans, thinking that much speaking, or much asking, pleases God or that God needs to be appeased, placated or convinced to help us by the sacrifice of fasting and prayer. Often the Lord is our heavenly Santa Claus, Genie of the Lamp, or our Emergency Alarm.

#### Honest to God

We often complain about our trials, troubles and taskmasters. But do we ever pour out our complaint to God? David, Jeremiah, Elijah and Job all had troubles and poured out their complaint to God. It is okay to be frank with God. He has heard it before. Pretending that you are not disappointed with God is only fooling yourself. Your arms are too short to box with God. You'll never give him a bloody nose. But he invites you to be "Honest to God." Tell him all your troubles. Tell him what you are feeling. He knows and understands.