

## EXODUS 5:1-23      OPPOSITION TO GOD'S PLAN

We all have had bad days, probably more than we would want to talk about. Moses had a bad day that had to not only make him scratch his head, but made him ask God some major questions. Moses had just done what God had told him to do, and was successful, in that the people approved of him overwhelmingly. That had to give him a great sense of confidence as he got ready to go address the Pharaoh. He had a message for him that was going to be unfavorable. God had already told him that Pharaoh's heart would be hardened and he would not let the people go. But God had also told Moses that he would deliver the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses probably thought that this plan of God would happen a lot quicker than it came about. The opposition would be there, but God has all the power, so there should be no difficulty, or so he thought. Things started out bad and then went to worse. Things got so bad that the Israelites probably wished he had never shown up. Moses is confused after this first meeting with the Pharaoh, because God had said there was going to be a deliverance. Moses should have known that this was not going to be easy. There were going to be difficulties, but he didn't want to think about that.

How often this happens to us. We like to believe in all the promises of God and the glorious deliverance. We like that part of the plan, but

we don't like to think about the tribulation that we have to go through.  
We prefer the sweet then and there over the miserable here and now.

Today we look at Moses' meeting with the Pharaoh and how that seemed to backfire as the Israelites get punished for this. What is going on?

## 1.WHY SHOULD I OBEY THE LORD ?           VV 1-2

Moses and Aaron somehow got an audience with the King. The two brothers are beaming with confidence as they were encouraged by the elders. They would go in there with guns blazing, putting those miraculous signs on display. Then the gates would swing right open and the Israelites would be on their way out of there. That would seem to be the way that we would want it too. It doesn't happen that way, for God has something better in mind.

### A.THE BOLD DEMAND

#### 1. The LORD God And His People

The message is simple. They have the very words of God.

They have a clear and direct mandate, let the people go. The first thing that is stated is "Thus saith the LORD". Here is what God says. This was stated with authority and confidence. Surely Pharaoh would listen to this. They name Him as Yahweh, who is the I AM, the self-existent one. They might have been thinking

that this would be relatively easy. Jonathan Edwards, in his sermon, "Sinners In The Hands Of An Angry God", said; All the kings of the earth, before God, are as grasshoppers; they are nothing, and less than nothing: both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the King of kings, is as much more terrible than theirs, as his majesty is greater." Moses and Aaron were probably thinking like this as they approached the throne. They had been sent by God and given the words to say by Him. How could anything go wrong? God is speaking to you now, Not two old men.

## 2. Worship

Moses had a mission to take the Jewish people three days journey into the desert where they could worship the LORD. Six days of travel and one day of worship would mean a week away from their work, but Moses said nothing about how long they would be gone or when they would return. This made Pharaoh suspicious and he had to have been thinking this was an escape rather than worship. God had no mind of them going on this journey and then coming back to Egypt. Three days meant more than just getting away for a little bit.

The festival they mention certainly entailed sacrifices as in 3:18 God was not delivering them so that they would have civil freedom. It was much bigger than that because He wanted them to be set free from their bondage so they would have a relationship with Him

He desired that they learn to worship Him.

#### B. THE NEGATIVE ANSWER

Why should I obey the Lord? Who is the Lord? I don't know the Lord

He would shortly know the Lord in a terrible way.

#### 3. Question of ultimate authority

The Egyptians considered Pharaoh to be a son of god, or god, so why should he obey a strange god? Also what right did this new god have to call the Israelites "My people" when the Jews were slaves of Egypt.

If Pharaoh obeyed this God, then he would be acknowledging a deity greater than himself. There was no way he would listen to this.

#### 2. Pride of the scornful

Job 41:34

Pharaoh opposes God. The battle is really God vs. Pharaoh. We have already seen this in chapter 1. Pharaoh does not give Him any respect.

He is disrespectful and arrogant. He is doing battle with the God of Israel.

#### 3. Absolute denial of the demand

There was no way that he was going to let the people go. The messengers are not even given a hearing.

#### 2. WHY SHOULD I GIVE UP A GOOD THING ? VV 3-9

Their slavery was a boost to the economy. It was basically free work.

Why would Pharaoh give this up?

## A. HUMBLE, MODEST REQUEST

Things are not going as the way Moses expected. He changes the command by rewording it. It goes like 3:18. The 3 day journey is not a lesser request as he would be making it just a 3 day trip and they would be back.. The 3 day journey, after all, was what God told Moses to say in the first place. The 3 days would be what it would take to to get to the place for the celebration. Moses was not willing to settle for the next best thing. The request is not different, it is just reworded. He is saying, “read my lips, maybe I didn’t make myself clear. God is the one who is really speaking, it is not just two old men.

### 1. Sacrifice

There is another twist here. In 14:1-5, Pharaoh is totally surprised that that the Israelites had left. That would make no sense if he had made the order for them to go. His surprise was not that they left but he realized they wer not coming back. In 12:31 he told them to leave and worship the Lord as they requested. The 3 day journey would be for one reason, to get the Egyptians to follow the Israelites, which results in their drowning.

### 2. Judgment

God’s intention was not to bring the Egyptians to repentance, but to harden them in order to bring on them the wrath of God.

Moses promised consequences for not obeying God’s command. The use of plagues is obvious. Moses is making a threat, and he is not begging Pharaoh to let them go or God will deal with us severely. It is saying God will be angry with us and you.

## B. DENIAL OF THE REQUEST

Kings don't appreciate threats and the Pharaoh does not even consider this command by Moses.

### 1. No worship---Get back to work

Pharaoh liked the big number of slaves. He loved to exploit them for his and Egypt's advantage. He just wanted them to work.

I'm the only god these people need. It is not go and worship, but go and work.

### 2. Unreasonable

The slaves would now have to gather their own straw while still doing their same work with the bricks. This was done for a purpose. It was to get the people to disrespect Moses.

If they have so much time on their hands to take a week off, then let them find the straw. They must not be working hard enough.

### 3. Burdensome

They must work harder. God didn't want them to work any longer, while Pharaoh is making them work even harder. In the Hebrew, it meant that the work was to be severe. It is a war between God and Pharaoh.

It was going to be very difficult for the Israelites now to do their duties.

Pharaoh called Moses a liar at the end of v 9. He is slinging mud at Moses and at the same time discredits the Israelites, calling them lazy. To Pharaoh, these are his people and they have no right to complain.

At this time Moses must have started to get a little discouraged. He

didn't think it would go this way. So much for a quick exodus.

Matthew Henry—"What strange steps God sometimes takes in delivering His people; He often brings them to the utmost dire straits whe He is just ready to appear for them. The lowest ebbs go before the highest tides, and very cloudy mornings commonly introduce the fairest days. God's time to help is when things are at the worst; and Providence verifies the paradox, the worse, the better.

### 3. OPPRESSION ON THE ISRAELITES VV10-19

#### A. SEVERE EGYPTIAN TASKMASTERS

The slave drivers and the foremen gave the people the bad news.

The entire structure from Pharaoh on down, was based on fear.

How would you like to have delivered that news ? They see you and they are waiting for good news. They are now given an impossible task.

"This is what Pharaoh says." Moses and Aaron said,"This is what God says."

#### B. SCATTERED ISRAELITES

The Israelites had to go to wherever the straw was. This took time and toil.

#### C. ISRAELITE OFFICERS BEATEN

The Israelite foremen were responsible for making sure the daily quota was met were beaten by the Egyptian slave drivers. The foremen were very surprised at this and went to Pharaoh thinking some mistake had been made in communication. "Why are you beating us while your people have stopped giving us straw, if anything, beat them for it's

their fault. It was easier to beat a few foremen, rather than a whole people. The foremen would either have to abuse the others or get the abuse.

#### D. THE OFFICERS CRY OUT

2:23, 3:7

They cried out because of their oppression. They went to Pharaoh to protest.

#### E. PHARAOH DENIES THEM AND MOCKS THEM

Pharaoh didn't listen. He called them lazy as he had done before, v 8 He had such a hard heart. He was irrational. He not only made them work harder but accused them because they brought the problems on themselves. He kept saying they were lazy.

He wanted to break their wills to resist.

### 4. COMPLAINT OF THE ISRAELITES           VV 20-21

#### A. MEETING WITH MOSES AND AARON

After being shocked by the Pharaoh, they started blaming it on Moses.

Pharaoh accomplished what he wanted. He broke their wills to resist.

The foremen now run into Aaron and Moses. This day was not just working out the way it was supposed to. Moses own people now pronounce a curse on him and Aaron. How did they ever forget the miracles Moses did in 4:30? The plan seems to be falling apart.

They were calling down judgement from God on the very one He called.

The very ones who he was going to deliver were cursing him.

#### B. UNJUST COMPLAINING

Moses expected a warm welcome for he was going to lead them out of bondage. They were under harsher circumstances than they were before Moses showed up. It seems they have a hard heart too. This isn't the last time they will complain to Moses.

Why didn't they just get all the elders and Moses and Aaron together and pray. They could have remembered the promises of God.

What a difference that would have made. They continued their complaining all through this ordeal of 40 years. They just couldn't believe God. This is the same thing for Christians today. We always complain.

## 5. COMPLAINT OF MOSES

VV 22-23

### A. WHY DID YOU SEND ME, LORD?

Moses didn't see the entire picture, but God was moving slowly and Patiently, working out His plan. This is why we pray, to find out His will.

He did take his problem to the Lord. He had nowhere else to go.

Jere 20:7-10 We should always take our case before the Lord.

I knew this would happen. I tried to tell You, Lord, that I was not the one to do this job. Moses should have known God much better than this. He forgets God's promises. God said "I will be with You."

So often we ask why? And how?

### B. YOU HAVE NOT DELIVERED, LORD

When Moses said this, he was questioning the very character of God.

Moses should have expected opposition. He should have trusted in God and what he said.

We can identify, however, when they go from bad to worse.

But disappointments should not drive us from the Lord.

It is natural to expect God to intervene in affliction on His people,

but we don't like it when suffering seems to increase.

Hab 3:16-19

Adversity can drive one closer to Christ. God uses so many different

ways so we can know Him .

The enemies of God's people are enemies of God.

God's presence does not guarantee immediate results.