

5. Who is the Lord?

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Whether the majority of Americans want to admit it or not, not all of them will go to heaven, not because they were born in America, or not because they have been in churches for somebody's funerals or weddings, or not because they were baptized when they were babies or not because simply they are good people in their own standard.

According to the Word of God which we have on our laps, unless we are born-again, we cannot enter into the heaven. There is no other way than through Jesus Christ. Individual person has to ask this simple question to himself and herself, "Who is the Lord?" Depend on that person's heartfelt answer of this question, that person's eternal destination will be radically different – literally heaven and hell difference.

In John 18:38, Pontius Pilate asked, "What is truth?" But instead of really seeking the answer and truth, he crumbled under the pressures of the political balance and popularity. Many people today also crumble under the same pressures or they simply become defiant to the truth. What they don't realize is that the truth will prevail and they will face the consequences of their blatant actions against God's truth.

This morning we are going to meet the Pharaoh who thought himself as a god of Egypt and wanted to contend against the God of Israel who is one true God. He deceived himself and faced the consequence of his stupidity.

A. A DEFIANCE OF A SCOFFER

Exodus 5:1-2 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.'" 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."

Chapter 5 begins the contest with Pharaoh. To appreciate how audacious Moses' request was, we must understand the power and authority the Pharaohs claimed. Each Pharaoh was said to be the child of the sun. Supposedly he was a friend to the greatest gods of Egypt and sat with them in their own temples to receive worship alongside them. Pharaoh was nothing like a public servant. The entire public lived to serve the Pharaoh. His power and authority were supreme and there was no constitution or law or legislature higher or even remotely equal to him.

It is actually a battle of God with the gods of Egypt. So when Pharaoh asked the question, "Who is the Lord," in an arrogant manner, God answered to him by bringing plagues on the land of Egypt. Each plague was leveled at a different god of Egypt. In other words, Pharaoh is going to get a major attitude adjustment from God.

Even though Pharaoh did not have the right attitude, but he did ask the right question. The relevant question isn't who Moses is, or who Pharaoh is, but who God is. If we truly understand who God is even a tiny portion, we wouldn't dare to challenge Him.

God doesn't mind a question from a sincere seeker. But He resents a snotty remark from a scoffer and teaches him a lesson to reveal the truth about God Himself.

B. A HEAVIER BURDEN

Exodus 5:3-9 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." 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."

While I was growing up in South Korea, I've learned a lot about North Korea communism. They believe that when people have full stomachs and warm back, they would start to think something crazy. In other words, when people are comfortable with what they have, they start to look for other things to excite their lifestyle.

In the same line of thought Pharaoh assumed that the Israelites to have enough time to make these crazy requests, then they must have enough time to work more.

How was straw used in making bricks? Straw has an acidic content that makes the bricks stronger and keep it in formation better.

Exodus 5:10-14 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?"

Remember what I taught at the beginning of the study of this Book Exodus. Egypt is a type of the world that we are living in. The world stands against the Bible, Christianity and ultimately God Himself.

The world has no respect for God's Word. It is "vain words" to them. Moses and Aaron presented God's command to Pharaoh, and the result was more bondage for Israel. The sinner will either yield to God's Word, or resist it and become hardened. The same sun that melts the wax also hardens the clay.

We shouldn't be surprised when the greatest challenges come before the greatest victory. At this point, the victory of God for Israel over Egypt seems a long way away.

C. TURNING TO A WRONG DIRECTION

Exodus 5:15-19 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."

In their trouble, the children of Israel did not turn to God. Instead, they looked to Pharaoh to solve their problems, and they were disappointed. The Israelites found no relief by going to Pharaoh.

Many immature Christians put themselves in the same place when satan gives them grief. They respond by running to satan for relief. All he gives them is more bondage – alcohol, drugs, sex, more works, money or even depending on someone else. They find no rest, no peace and no hope.

D. A BLAMING GAME

Exodus 5:20-23 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." 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."

When Israel was a good slave to Pharaoh, they thought he was their friend. Now that the idea of freedom has entered into their minds, Pharaoh shows how he felt about them all along.

Again, satan was "friendly" to us when we accepted his lordship. But when we start to be free in Jesus, he often tries to make life difficult for us. Satan would not give up his former slaves without a fight. He would do anything to keep us in his hands.

Many Christians can have joy when things are easy. But true maturity get to be displayed when we can have God's peace in the midst of trials and difficulties.

E. GOD'S ASSURANCE TO MOSES

Exodus 6:1-9 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land." 2 And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the Lord. 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name Lord I was not known to them. 4 I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. 5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. 6 Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the Lord; (1) I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, (2) I will rescue you from their bondage, and (3) I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 (4) I will take you as My people, and (5) I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And (6) I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and (7) I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord.'" 9 So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.

In reminding Moses of the great name of God, He reminds Moses that He is the covenant-making and covenant-keeping God, who will absolutely fulfill His promise to Moses.

In verses 6 to 8 God reveals the seven "I wills" of redemption. These verses paint a marvelous portrait for us today and were a great encouragement to Moses in that day. Let's go over them one at a time:

1) I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

We carry a burden of sin today. The things of the world are an oppression to the heart. God can deliver us from the burden of sin through faith in Jesus Christ.

Matthew 11:28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

2) I will rescue you from their bondage.

God delivers us from the slavery of sin when we come to Him with an open heart to receive Him into our lives as the Savior and Lord.

John 8:36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

3) I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

People would ask Jesus how much He loves them. He answered, "This much," He stretched His arms on the cross and died for your and my sins.

Romans 3:23-24 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

4) I will take you as My people.

God chose believers in Christ before the foundation of the world which places it before all time – in eternity past. He does not struggle to love His own in spite of our failures.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

5) I will be your God.

God loves us, because it is His nature to love. He wants to be our God.

Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

6) I will bring you into the land.

The trip from Egypt to the land of Canaan typifies our Christian life. The believer ought to walk worthy of his high calling to bring glory to the Father in heaven as Jesus did while He was on the earth.

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

7) I will give it to you as a heritage

Heaven is our home, we are just passing through this earth.

Philippians 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly

body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

F. APPLICATIONS

1) God doesn't mind a question from a sincere seeker. But He resents a snotty remark from a scoffer and teaches him a lesson to reveal the truth about God Himself.

2) Depending on how we receive the Word of God, it can be a great guidance to the truth or a rod of punishment against us. It is up to us.

The same sun that melts the wax also hardens the clay.

G. QUESTION

Let me ask you this question the Pharaoh asked: "Who is the Lord to you?" Is He a big guy upstairs who looks after your needs and wants like a bell boy? Or is He some abstract being you have no idea about? Or is He the Savior and the Lord who gives you eternal life in heaven through Jesus Christ and the God and the Master of your life whom you serve with all of your heart, mind, soul and body?

Depending on the answer that comes from your heart, your eternal destination will be confirmed. Even if you have a wrong idea about Him until now, it is not too late to change your mind. As I have said before, our Father in heaven is willing to embrace you into His arms. All you have to do is run to Him like a little child runs to his loving father's strong arms. Come to Him as you are. He will accept you and will love you and will cleanse you with His righteousness in Christ Jesus.