

Ex. 5:1 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.

Ex. 5:2 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.

Ex. 5:3 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.

After gaining the trust of the people of Israel, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and gave him a message from the LORD, the God of Israel—"Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." Pharaoh is a mighty king and knows nothing of this God of Israel. He certainly hasn't seen any evidence of the people being in a "god's" favor to this point, and we have already been told that Joseph has long since been forgotten. So his response is expected—"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." Moses and Aaron continue to press. The God of the Hebrews has met with us. They asked to be allowed to take the people on a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to their God to keep Him from striking them with plagues or with the sword.

Ex. 5:4 And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.

Ex. 5:5 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now *are* many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.

Ex. 5:6 And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying,

Ex. 5:7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.

Ex. 5:8 And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish *ought* thereof: for they *be* idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.

Ex. 5:9 Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.

Pharaoh isn't a bit threatened. He is just upset that the people aren't working, and he tells the people to get back to work. Then I think he is emphasizing how much work is being lost by having so many people not working

Pharaoh attributed their desire to go and sacrifice to their God to not having enough to do (vs 8). So he ordered the slave drivers and foremen not to supply the people with straw for making the bricks anymore. They were to have them gather their own straw, but not reduce the number of bricks that were required to be made in one day. He figured if they had more work to do, they wouldn't have time to listen to the "vain words" of Moses and Aaron.

Ex. 5:10 And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw.

Ex. 5:11 Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished.

Ex. 5:12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw.

Ex. 5:13 And the taskmasters hastened *them*, saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw.

Ex. 5:14 And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, *and* demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?

Ex. 5:15 Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?

Ex. 5:16 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.

So the slave drivers and foremen went out and instructed the people as Pharaoh had commanded them. The people scattered all over Egypt looking for straw, and the slave drivers kept pressing them to meet their daily quota of bricks. They beat the Israelite foremen for not making the quotas. So the Israeli foremen went to Pharaoh and asked him why they were being treated this way. They blamed Pharaoh's people for not providing what was needed to make the bricks.

Ex. 5:17 But he said, Ye *are* idle, *ye are* idle: therefore ye say, Let us go *and* do sacrifice to the LORD.

Ex. 5:18 Go therefore now, *and* work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.

Ex. 5:19 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 task.

Ex. 5:20 And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh:

Ex. 5:21 And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour 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.

Pharaoh had no sympathy. He called them lazy. He told them their laziness was why they wanted to go and sacrifice to their LORD. Then he sent them back to work—gathering their own straw and maintaining the same quotas as before. The foremen knew this was not possible. On the way out they ran into Moses and Aaron. They called for God's judgment on Moses and Aaron for making Pharaoh hate them. The Hebrew for "savour" indicates that they had become a stench, a bad odor to Pharaoh. At this rate, they would all die for not being able to produce as commanded.

Ex. 5:22 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why *is it that* thou hast sent me?

Ex. 5:23 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.

So Moses goes to the LORD in prayer. These aren't the results he expected after obeying God's command to go. He asks God why he sent him to Egypt? Was it to bring trouble to the people of Israel?

This is typical of how things often seem to go when we are trying to be obedient to the LORD. I believe it is Satan using all the tools at his disposal as the god of this world in trying to thwart the will of God, the plan of God. When God allows him to do this, it is always because the glory that can be gained by overcoming these evil attempts is greater still. We are just to keep being obedient and wait for God to gain the victory for us.

Moses is doubting his actions because the script isn't happening as he expected. His people are in worse trouble than when he got there; this hasn't been a rescue.