

Sent: Thursday, October 22, 2020 3:54 PM

Subject: Tuesday Nite's MOB Session on Exodus 5 (The Finished one!)

"Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and grandsons!" (Deuteronomy 4:9)

It's all about the great "exodus" of the children of Israel, after years of bondage in the land of Egypt! You know the story! It's one of the central highlights of history for all mankind--about the miraculous working of God--and even the stuff of movies, things worth remembering, and memorializing, and passing on to our "sons and grandsons" (and daughters and granddaughters)! And the story essentially begins with the revelation from God Himself, in Exodus 5, about the confrontation between Pharaoh and Moses (but really between Pharaoh and God)!

"Let My people go! Says the LORD (Yahweh!), the God of Israel!"

Constable writes that God permitted (and obviously "oversaw") the conflict between Moses and Pharaoh for at least five reasons:

- It gave God the opportunity to display His superior power and sovereignty over Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt!
- God used it to strengthen the faith of His people, so that they would trust and obey Him, and realize all His gracious purposes for them as a nation!
- God used these events to heighten anticipation of, and appreciation for, the "redemption" He would provide!
- These conflicts would show how divine sovereignty works with human freedom!
- And, they would clarify how God hands over people to the consequences of the sins they insist on pursuing!

Theologian Frederick Meyer once wrote that "it's impossible to find a better illustration of the truth of Romans 1 (In so far as, I suppose, its portrayal of the "righteousness" of God--and His "wrath as revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...and His eternal power and divine nature clearly seen..." and more!)

But more of these truths and applications for us in the weeks to come!

Getting back to Exodus 5! Did you notice, by chance, how the confrontation between Pharaoh and Moses began? Probably not as you might have first thought (or seen in in the movies)! There were no threats! No miracles! No plagues! But, with a simple request to Pharaoh, to let the children of Israel go "for a three-day journey into the wilderness ...to sacrifice to the LORD" (or "Yahweh," as Jesse would say)! Not that God, or Moses, or the people, ever thought that it would only amount to a temporary reprieve from their labors! In fact, God knew (and foreordained!) from the start (and even stated clearly in Exodus 3:18 and 4:23) that Pharaoh would not permit them to "take a break" even for three-days (and particularly not to worship an "unknown God," since it would have been a threat to his own expectation of being the one to be worshipped)! God's plan all along (as He already revealed to Moses and Aaron) was "to stretch out His hand and strike Egypt with His miracles (plagues), and to "display His power," to ultimately persuade Pharaoh to "let His people go" (and make their "exodus") from the land of

Egypt and, eventually, to the "promised land"! (Our God is a God of grace and mercy, and patience and long-suffering, "not willing that any should perish...")

We saw (and well-remember!) how Pharaoh responded! "Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? Get back to work!" And, just to let Moses and Aaron (and everybody else!) know just who he was, he "commanded the taskmasters over the people...to no longer give the people straw to make bricks, but require them to gather their own straw (increasing their labors)--and with no reduction in the "quota" of bricks required! (Wait a go, Moses!)

You know the story! How the people complained, and the foremen of the people "cried out to Pharaoh! And then met with Moses and Aaron and said to them: "May the Lord look upon you and judge you, for you have made us odious in Pharaoh's sight and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us!" (Exodus 5:21) O boy!

As Exodus 5 ends, we see Moses "returning to the Lord," totally downtrodden--even questioning God's goodness! Can you believe it? "O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all!" Wow!

As we look back on where we are in our study of Exodus, we see, among other things, the stark contrast between the "easy belief" of the people when they saw the "signs" God gave Moses, and Moses performed for the people (in Exodus 4:29-31), and now their complaint, and their quick "look for someone to blame" when the going got tough! Confrontation with Pharaoh had so far only provoked angry resentment by Pharaoh and the Egyptians to the children of Israel, and by the children of Israel to Moses! (Shepherd's Notes describes it this way: Pharaoh rejects God, and the people reject Moses!)

Ever been there? Is there something here to "pass on to our sons and grandsons" (and daughters and granddaughters)?

Isn't it great (knowing what we know!) to look back and realize that "it's not over"? God is not finished! And that "God's ways are not our ways"? And that He's in control of our world! Even in our troubled times!

Constable sums it up this way: "This section (speaking of Exodus 5) climaxes with the apparent failure of Yahweh's plan to rescue Israel! This desperate scenario provides the pessimistic backdrop, and the bleak circumstances, for the supernatural demonstration of Yahweh's power that follows!" Yea!

Matthew Henry once famously noted: "Man's extremity is God's opportunity!" Now that's worth passing on to our sons and grandsons (and daughters and granddaughters), right? And I like the caption (in my NAS version) for next week's lesson on Exodus 6: "God Promises Action!"

Have a great week, men!

Lowell