

EXODUS 5-7:13

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Exodus chapter 5 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Keep in mind that the book of Exodus is a book of deliverance, of redemption. Ray Stedman put it like this. He wrote,

Genesis is the book that reveals the need of mankind. Genesis is all about man - man's creation, man's sin, the new world that followed the flood, and man's slow journey through time, groping after God.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph - four men who followed God - set forth the need of men for justification, sonship, sanctification, and glorification.

Most significantly, Genesis ends with the words "*a coffin in Egypt.*" All you can say about man when you have said everything there is to say, is that he lives in the realm of death.

But Exodus is all about God. Exodus is God's answer to man's need and God's supply for man's sin.

It begins immediately with God's activity and throughout the whole course of the book you see God mightily at work. The book is the picture, therefore, of redemption, of God's activity to redeem man in his need, in his sin, in his degradation and misery.

As such, it is a beautiful picture and contains tremendously instructive lessons to us of what redemption is; that is, what God has done, is doing in our lives, and what he intends to do with us - the steps that he will be taking.

Now redemption isn't complete in this book. You will never get the full story of redemption in Exodus.

You must move on into Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Then the full picture develops as you come into the book of Joshua, where you find Israel brought into the land and into the place of triumph and victory over their enemies - a picture of the triumphant, victorious Christian experience.

Israel, then, is a picture of the people of God, of the church of God, and of you as a child of God. These books are marvelously designed of the Holy Spirit for they describe actual historical events which occurred in such a way under the overruling government of God that they act out for us great redemptive truths.

This is why Paul says in writing to the Corinthians, "These things happened to them as a warning [literally, types] but they were written down for our instruction." (I Corinthians 10:11) Therefore, it is well to give heed to them. . . .

So God began with this baby. As Moses grew up he was raised in the court of Pharaoh and had access to all the learning of the Egyptians; he was trained in the best university of the greatest empire of the world of that day. He was the foster son of the king himself and every privilege, every advantage was his.

But when he came of age, God spoke to him and he realized that he was intended to be the deliverer of Israel. So he went out, trying to do his job, he thought, and ended up murdering a man and having to flee into the wilderness.

As you trace the story through you find that Moses left the land of Egypt and herded sheep for forty years in the wilderness.

Here it was that God found him and dealt with him in the remarkable confrontation of the burning bush. God called him back to his original task, for which he was completely unprepared until he learned that God himself is all it takes to do anything in his name.

- <http://bit.ly/3QKrj0c>

As we concluded our study last time, God was sending Moses and Aaron down to Egypt to deliver His people from bondage. And as they gathered the elders of Israel together, they performed the signs God instructed them to do to authenticate their ministry and in verse 31 of Exodus chapter 4 we are told, **“So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.”**

That is where we will pick up our study this evening, as Moses and Aaron come before Pharaoh with their request from God to let His people go.

Also, keep in mind that we can divide the book of Exodus like this,

In Exodus 1-18 we see the Exodus!

In Exodus 19-24 we see the Law!

And in Exodus chapters 25-40 the focus is on the Tabernacle!

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Exodus chapter 5, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

EXODUS 5**VERSES 1-3**

How did Moses get an audience so quickly with Pharaoh?

Maybe it was because this son of Pharaoh grew up with Moses and his dad was the one that wanted Moses dead after he killed the Egyptian.

And when you see what Moses and Aaron were doing, it was a very bold action on their part.

You see, the Pharaoh's were looked upon as god's, not as servants. And yet, by the power of God working in and through Moses and Aaron, they boldly came before Pharaoh and said that **YAHWEH** God of Israel is saying, "**Let My people go . . .**"

Now the Egyptians were polytheistic, they worshiped many gods and yet he rightly said that he did not know **YAHWEH!**

Was he interested in finding out and surrendering his life to **YAHWEH?**

Absolutely not, his heart was hard towards the true and living God.

The reason for his actions were simple. The Pharaoh's were thought of as gods, and they had all the power, they had all the other god's they worshiped, and for these Jews, they were nothing more than slaves. So really, how great is the God that these Jews serve?

Well, Pharaoh is going to find out how great our God is!

And many do the same today, "**Who is God?**" and they are not interested in finding out because they refuse to obey Him and like Pharaoh, they will be judged! In other words, they see themselves as gods, in a sense. They do as they want, and they refuse to surrender to the One true God!

Why did Moses only ask for a three-day feast to go and worship the Lord? I thought they were going to be set free and go into the Promise Land?

It is possible that God is testing Pharaoh's heart, giving him a chance to let them go free for three days and then when the big question came his heart would be soft and he would let them go.

Obviously God knew what Pharaoh would do but He is giving him every chance to change.

VERSES 4-9

It seems that the children of Israel did not work since Moses and Aaron came to town and in Pharaoh's mind, all this free time is giving them visions of freedom.

So he turns up the heat on them - they are to make the bricks but now they would have to gather the straw and they would still need to make the same number of bricks!

Is there evidence that straw was used in making bricks in Egypt?

You bet, archaeology confirms it and as Cole wrote, ***“Bricks of all sorts have been found in Egypt, some with regularly chopped straw, some with rough roots and oddments, some without straw at all.”***

Why was straw used in making these bricks?

Because the straw has an acidic content, and it makes the bricks stronger. Kaiser points that out for us as he wrote, ***“Chopped straw was mixed in with the clay to make the bricks more pliable and stronger by first binding the clay together and then by decaying and releasing a humic acid.”***

We also need to understand that these Pharaoh's had all the power and authority. They were not accountable to anyone and thus, they basically did whatever they wanted!

Not only that, but they saw themselves as gods as I have said, and thus, the people believed that they were the children of the sun god!

That is what Moses and Aaron encountered and that is why we see Pharaoh respond like he did!

Now, what is Pharaoh saying here?

He was telling them, ***"You have no time to worship! You have not time to commune with God! You have no time for devotions! You have no time for God at all!"***

Folks, keep in mind that Pharaoh is a type of the Devil, and he tells us the same thing and tragically, many believe him!

How busy we can be or think we are, and the reality is, you don't have time not to worship God. He should be the priority in our lives.

That is one thing that was understood in our home as our children were growing up. Nothing gets in the way of our worship of God. Not sports, not friends, not any other activity because in the end, they won't matter but how we spend our time with God will!

Remember what Asaph wrote in Psalm 73, **"But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all Your works."** Psalm 73:28.

It is good for us to draw near to God because if we don't, we will not be able to declare His works!

VERSES 10-14

The children of Israel were excited about what was happening and then this. Now, after Moses spoke with Pharaoh, things are a lot worse for the children of Israel.

Not only were they to make the same number of bricks, but now they would have to gather the straw themselves to make these bricks!

Here's the problem for us many times. When we obey the Lord, take those steps of faith, we expect everything to just fall into place and there are no problems. That usually is not the case and I think we are all aware of that.

Isn't it always darkest before dawn?

You bet it is! Looking at things from their position, it doesn't look good.

And folks, we do the same. We look at what we are going through now and see the situation as hopeless, when in reality, God is working, and we need to stand still and see the salvation that the Lord will bring to the situation we are facing!

And please understand, and this is important. As God leads you to do something, go somewhere, Satan will be there to oppose you. And the greater the work the greater the opposition! Don't forget that!

Now, is there historical or archeological evidence to support this change in brick making?

We have spoken about this a little already, but yes there is.

In the city of Pithom it shows that the lower layer of bricks in the buildings are made up of very fine cut straw.

But as you get to some higher layers of bricks in these same buildings you find these bricks have stubble in them or cornhusks and other things.

And then, as you get to the upper bricks in these buildings you find that there is no straw or stubble at all, and it does confirm what the Scriptures are telling us took place!

VERSES 15-19

Look at what is going on here. The heat is turned up on the children of Israel. They are being told to make the same number of bricks only now they would have to gather the straw themselves to make these bricks. Thus, because of these unfair conditions, the “**officers of the children of Israel**” came into Pharaoh to complain about these conditions!

Did you notice who they ran to!

They did not run to God or turn to God for help.

And they did not go to Moses for help.

No, they ran to Pharaoh for help, or what we might say is that they ran to the world for help!

Now before we are too hard on the children of Israel, don't we do the same thing?

We often do. Instead of bringing it before the Lord we look for worldly help and it is not going to help.

Think about someone who is delivered from drugs, alcohol, sexual sin or whatever. It is not going to be easy, and the Devil will make things even harder for you. He loves to get you isolated so he can destroy you.

Instead of looking for answers in the world, spend time with the Lord in His Word. Spend time in the fellowship of other believers. It is that important!

In other words, bring it to the Lord as Paul said in Philippians 4:6-7, **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

Don't cry to Pharaoh but cry out to God!

Now for the children of Israel, it is not that they thought that this slavery was okay. In fact, in Exodus 2:23 we are told, **“Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage.”**

But now, with these other burdens placed upon what they were already doing, they thought that what they were doing before was better than the situation that they were now in!

So as these officers came before Pharaoh and were complaining, Pharaoh blasts them and does not cut them any slack.

Now, since they could not be mad at God, who do they take this anger out upon?

As we will see as we read on, it is Moses, the servant of God!

VERSES 20-21

I guess the officers of Israel, who left their audience with Pharaoh getting nowhere, are not too happy with Moses and what he has brought upon them.

What happened since in Exodus 4:31 we were told, **“So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.”**

All the joy they had, the excitement to see what God was going to do, the worship that they had was now quickly changed as their circumstances changed.

But are they going to be delivered?

You bet they are, in spite of what they are now facing.

But here is this problem for these officers of Israel and for us many times. These officers of Israel were fine with God, they believed God was on their side.

Then what was the problem?

Here is the problem. In their minds, anything that made their situation worse, could not be of the **LORD!**

Is that true?

Not at all. Just read these stories here in the Word of God, from Genesis through Revelation and you will see that God is working in the good times and the bad times, the easy times and the hard times!

Jesus did not tell us that the only peace we will have in our lives is when there are no storms. No, He said that we could have peace in the midst of the storms of life because our faith is in Jesus.

Remember what Jesus said in John 16:33, **“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”**

May we not forget that!

Let me make this point also.

When they were not against Pharaoh, they thought he was their friend even though they were in bondage to him.

Now that they want their freedom, they want to worship God, he shows his true colors, he is not their friend, and he was never their friend.

Satan doesn't bother us folks when we don't stir things up but as soon as we want to worship Jesus, things tend to get difficult for us.

It is as Paul tells us in II Timothy 3:12, "**Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**"

Thus, don't compromise your faith, but trust in the Lord!

The problem for us many times is we want the victory without the fight! We want the blessings without the sacrifice!

We are not on a cruise ship sailing on calm seas. We are on a battleship in the midst of a war, a spiritual war that is manifested in people's lives!

And here's the thing. Ministry that is not being opposed by the Devil is probably not a ministry that is of God.

When you are serving the Lord, the Devil will oppose you and try to stop you.

When what you are doing is not of the Lord, he doesn't care!

VERSES 22-23

Let's face it, it is not easy being a leader at times. You try to help people by telling them what God wants them to do, according to His Word, and at times it seems like people are hurt instead of helped initially.

That is Moses here! Moses did the right thing. He told Pharaoh what God told him to say and yet, now all this.

So what does Moses do?

He does what the officers of Israel did not do. He brought it before the Lord, but he forgot what God had said to him back in Exodus 3:19-20, **“But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go.”**

Moses wanted things to go smoothly even though God already told him they wouldn't.

He wanted to tell Pharaoh, ***“Let my people go!”*** and Pharaoh would respond back, ***“Fine, have a good trip!”***

But it doesn't go that way for Moses or for us because things don't work out according to our plans, the way we want but according to what God wants, which is best!

For us, we might say, ***“Lord, You told me to do this and now look. Things are even worse!”***

That is the wrong perspective to have for Moses and for us because what God has promised He is more than able to bring to pass! We just need to obey!

EXODUS 6

VERSE 1

Moses was discouraged because of the outward circumstances he was facing. Moses was discouraged because he was too impressed by Pharaoh and not impressed enough by God.

And notice how God responds. Not in anger at Moses but God tells Moses to look to Him instead of Pharaoh, because Pharaoh will let them go!

Now as you look at that from an earthly perspective, that is not going to happen.

All Moses had was the Word of God to him and he would have to trust the Lord and walk by faith.

We, like Moses, need to correct that problem and not let the world nor the ruler of this world impress us with their power or might, causing us to fear instead of looking to the One who created the heavens and the earth and the One who is in control!

Yes, from a human perspective, an earthly perspective, things don't look too great. But when our eyes are upon the Lord, we have a different outlook because He has told us in His Word what is going to happen! He is coming back to rule and reign and righteousness, not wickedness will fill this land!

As we read on we will see the contrast between discouragement, the loss of hope to encouragement and great hope. As one writer put it, "*When all human help has failed, and the soul, exhausted and despairing, has given up hope from man, God draws near, and says, I AM.*" (Meyer)

Amen to that. Let's see this encouragement the Lord gives to Moses as we read on.

VERSES 2-5

God reminds Moses who He is, *YAHWEH*, the *Great I AM!*

And God is showing Moses that He is not only the God who made this covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob but He is the God who will keep it, who will fulfill this covenant that He has made!

Now here in Exodus 6:3 we are told that, "... by My name LORD I was not known to them."

What the Lord is saying here is that the Patriarchs only knew God as *God Almighty* or *El-Shaddai*, but they did not know Him as **LORD** – all capitals or **YAHWEH!**

And yet, in Genesis 13:3-4 we are told, “**And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.**” There it is, Abraham called the Lord **YAHWEH!**

Not only that but in the book of Genesis God is called by the name **YAHWEH** or **LORD** in capitals some 160 times, so how can this be?

I see it like this. The Patriarchs knew the God who made this covenant, that He is Almighty God, but they never understood the full significance of His name.

But now the children of Israel will know God as the One who has fulfilled this covenant!

Think of it like this.

You can know a woman, you may be friends with her, but you don't have that intimate personal relationship with her until you marry her!

I think that is the idea here. They did not know the Lord as the all-becoming One, the One who would meet them where they were at. But they are going to find out who He really is!

There are a lot of people that have grown up in church and know that God is an Almighty God, the God that created heaven and earth.

But that is where their knowledge of God ends, it is a purely intellectual or head knowledge. They don't know Him personally, deeply or spiritually, because they haven't been born again.

I like what God says in Exodus 6:5, “**I have remembered My covenant.**”

First of all, please understand that God did not forget the covenant that He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Then what does He mean? He means that it is now time for God to act upon that covenant and bring them into the land of Canaan as He promised them.

And it truly is not that God remembered His covenant. The real issue is can Moses remember the God of this covenant and that is true in our own lives!

As we read on, we will see the Lord give Moses seven “**I will**” promises that relate to their redemption and they are sandwiched between two “**I am the LORD**” statements.

Why?

Because a promise is only as good as the one who makes it, and **YAHWEH** is making these promises! Thus, we can trust what He tells us because what He has promised He is more than able to bring it to pass!

VERSES 6-8

God wants Moses and Aaron to tell the children of Israel all that He is going to do in delivering them from their bondage in Egypt.

And He starts out by making sure they say that this is coming from the God of the covenant – **YAHWEH!**

It is after He establishes that He gives Moses seven “**I will**” statements. And as He closes these out, we once again see Him tell Moses who He is – **YAHWEH!**

Remember in Isaiah 14:13-15 Satan gives five “**I will**” statements but he had no power to bring them to pass but God does and will and did!

Now let me share this with you because it will give you an idea of how certain these things were going to happen. It is not hopeful thinking or wishing, but a reality. You see, ***“Each of these verbs are in the Hebrew past (i.e., perfect) tense instead of the future tense, for so certain was God of their accomplishment that they were viewed as having been completed.”***

(Kaiser)

Now let’s look at these seven **“I will”** statements of God. And as we do, look at how they can apply to our lives today and what God has done, is doing and will do in our lives.

- ***I WILL BRING YOU OUT***
- ***I WILL RESCUE YOU FROM THEIR BONDAGE***
- ***I WILL REDEEM YOU***
- ***I WILL TAKE YOU AS MY PEOPLE***
- ***I WILL BE YOUR GOD***
- ***I WILL BRING YOU INTO THE LAND***
- ***I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU AS A HERITAGE***

And, like I have said, just in case they still doubt, He says, **“I am the LORD.”** In fact, in these verses there are some 25 personal pronouns that show what God has done, is doing and will do for the children of Israel!

He is not only the covenant maker, but He is the covenant keeper!

Folks, may we not forget that!

VERSE 9

Here we see Moses give the message to the children of Israel that the Lord gave to him, and they just could not believe it. It says that the reason was they had **“... anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.”** Exodus 6;9.

That phrase, **“anguish of spirit”** *“The NIV weakly translates ‘their discouragement’; but it was the inward pressure caused by deep anguish that prevented proper breathing – like children sobbing and gasping for their breath.”* (Kaiser)

I am sure we have all been there before and maybe some of you are going through that right now. We have to focus back on the Lord and as bad as things may look, as difficult as things may be, we need to trust in the Lord and His promises to us! Renew your mind in the Word of God and get a Godly perspective of the situation! (Romans 12:2)

For the children of Israel, they just could not believe God because all those years as slaves under bondage made them think as slaves instead of believing that they are the people of the covenant!

In fact, in Ezekiel 20:5-9 we are told, **“Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “On the day when I chose Israel and raised My hand in an oath to the descendants of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised My hand in an oath to them, saying, ‘I am the Lord your God.’ On that day I raised My hand in an oath to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, ‘flowing with milk and honey,’ the glory of all lands. Then I said to them, ‘Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.’ But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did**

they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, ‘I will pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.’ But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles among whom they were, in whose sight I had made Myself known to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt.””

In other words, instead of seeking the true and living God they believed the lies of these false gods, and specifically the lies of Pharaoh. Thus, they didn't trust God.

Folks, we have lived in sin for a long time and now that we are set free, it is hard to let it go, it is hard to believe that God has forgiven us of all our sins, but He has!

Thus, live that way.

May we not believe the lies of the Devil but understand that we too are the people of the covenant!

VERSES 10-13

Notice what God is telling Moses here. God is telling Moses to go and do what he had unsuccessfully done before. (Exodus 5:1-2)

So he failed once and he is gun shy to go and try and do this again. And from a human perspective you can understand how Moses felt. His own people did not believe him, thus, how will Pharaoh?

But God gets Moses and Aaron refocused by taking their eyes off the people and the situation and focusing back on the Lord! He wants them to stay on course no matter how choppy the waters may get.

How many times God has shown me that one over the years! To focus on Him and steady the course, to believe that what God has promised He is more than able to bring them to pass.

Thus, He tells Moses to go back to Pharaoh with the message - ***“LET MY PEOPLE GO!”***

For Moses, he had to understand that this was God’s will, not merely a few suggestions for Israel and Pharaoh. This was His divine command that would be accomplished, one way or another.

As we come to Exodus 6:14-25 Moses is going to add a genealogy to the record. What is interesting is that he starts out by listing the first two sons of Jacob, Reuben and Simeon, but when he comes to the third son, Levi, he begins to list sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons, but why?

Because he is giving to us the complete genealogy of Moses and Aaron who now are the focus of what is happening here.

VERSES 14-27

In this section we see the genealogies of Jacob’s first three children and we are not going to read through all of this.

But there is Ruben, Simeon and Levi and then the focus is on the descendants of Levi.

Within the tribe of Levi were three main families: ***Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.***

As we will see in our studies, each of these families will have specific duties in the Tabernacle and their service to the Lord.

Then, from the family of Kohath is the father of Moses and Aaron, Amram.

We also see some of the descendants of Aaron, his sons: Nadab, Abihu and Eleazar and grandson through Eleazar, Phinehas.

Keep in mind that Nadab and Abihu will be struck dead for their blasphemy!

Thus, the priestly line can be traced through Aaron!

VERSES 28-30

Once again, probably because of the previous failures, Moses is refusing to do what God has called him to do. He is questioning God.

What is wrong with Moses?

God has spoken to Him very clearly and yet he is questioning the plan of God!

Folks, don't we do that?

Of course we do as God tells us to go forward and we don't, or make excuses. And don't say that God is not speaking because He is, through His sword in which Paul says, "**For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**" Hebrews 4:12.

Don't forget that and be obedient!

God wants to use you, but you must walk by faith no matter what the situation looks like because He is the one who is doing the calling!

Now as we move into Exodus chapter 7, these verses here in Exodus 6:28-30 should be the first two verses here in Exodus chapter 7, and you will see why as we look at this chapter.

EXODUS 7**VERSES 1-2**

Moses objects at the end of Exodus chapter 6 and now here in Exodus chapter 7 we see God call Moses and Aaron to go to Pharaoh! Our God is so gracious and merciful. He does not even rebuke Moses for his unbelief here but just re-instructs Moses on what he is to do before Pharaoh.

I am thankful for that because if it wasn't for God's grace and mercy, I would have been done a long time ago and folks, so would you!

I want you to also notice that this was not going to be the words of men, the words of Moses but God instructed Moses who would then tell Aaron who would then tell Pharaoh.

How important that is for us as we speak to people, that we speak forth the Words of God instead of our own ideas!

Morgan put it like this. He wrote, *“He should stand before Pharaoh in the place of God, not only delivering His messages, but accompanying them with such actions of power as should demonstrate the authority of those messages.”*

How does that apply to us today? Does it even apply to us today?

I think it does. Remember what Paul wrote in II Corinthians 3:2-3, **“Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.”**

Here is my point. Many people will not read the Word of God, but they will look at, they will examine our lives. In a sense, they are reading our lives and learning about God as we live out our faith.

And please understand that we don't want our message to go forward, but the message of God, just like Moses was doing!

Thus, "*A prophet is one who represents God to man and, as such, all the Lord's people are prophets. Are we giving those around a true idea of God?*" (Thomas)

That is a great question!

VERSE 3

Now some read this and they say that Pharaoh did not have a choice in the matter. God hardened his heart and there was nothing that was going to change it!

And they will use this to show that God has saved some people, but He refused to save others, they had no choice in the matter, neither one of them. That is what Reformed Theology or Calvinism teaches and it is wrong!

Please understand that God is hardening Pharaoh's heart according to Pharaoh's own wishes, his own desires.

And God still does that today as Paul tells us, "**Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.**" Romans 1:24, 28.

Make no mistake about it, man goes to Hell because he has chosen to go there. God did not predestine him to go there.

Let me show you what I mean here with Pharaoh.

There are two Hebrew words for “**harden.**”

One is a stubbornness or rebellion and that is the word that is used of Pharaoh hardening his heart before God.

The other Hebrew word carries with it the idea of making it firm. It would be like putting a piece of clay into the fire to harden it.

That is exactly what God did to Pharaoh – He made his heart hard in that stubborn or rebellious position he had.

And here’s the thing. God did not just give up on Pharaoh, even though God knew what Pharaoh would do. He did everything possible to get Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go, but he will keep refusing.

When we get to the plagues that God pours out upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, please understand that each of them went against the gods that they worshiped!

Thus, God was trying to show Pharaoh and the Egyptians that He alone is God and there is no other, even though they had many, many gods that they worshiped. There is no God like our God!

James Montgomery Boice puts it like this. He wrote,

In order to understand these plagues, we need to understand that they were directed against the gods and goddesses of Egypt and were intended to show the superiority of the God of Israel to the Egyptian gods.

There were about eighty major deities in Egypt, all clustered about the three great natural forces of Egyptian life: *the Nile River, the land, and the sky.*

It does not surprise us, therefore, that the plagues God sent against Egypt in this historic battle follow this three-force pattern.

The first two plagues were against the gods of the Nile.

The next four were against the land gods.

The final four plagues were against the gods of the sky, culminating in the death of the firstborn.

- James Montgomery Boice

So please understand that God did not create this Pharaoh for destruction, like everyone else, God gets no pleasure in the death of the wicked and He calls for them to turn to Him! (See Ezekiel 18:32, II Peter 3:9)

VERSES 4-7

Remember back in Exodus 5:2 where we read, “**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.’**”

By the time the children of Israel are freed from their bondage in Egypt, Pharaoh and the Egyptians will know who *YAHWEH* is!

Yes, he won’t listen at first but after he sees God’s judgment, he will let God’s people go! But it will cost him dearly!

And keep in mind that *“These miracles would also be an invitation for the Egyptians to personally believe in the Lord. Thus the invitation was pressed repeatedly. . . . and some apparently did believe, for there was a ‘mixed multitude’ (Exodus 12:38) that left Egypt with Israel.”* (Kaiser)

What is amazing to me is that we see this played out in the book of Revelation as well. God pours out His judgment upon a Christ rejecting world and yet, people refuse to repent and get right with God.

Let me show you what I mean in Revelation 6:12-17, where we are told, **“I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’”**

They will not be able to stand in their own righteousness but only in the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed into their lives by faith. And as you look at Revelation chapter 7, you see those who are able to stand, those who came to saving faith in Christ. But the world, in general, refuses to come just as we see here in Exodus!

VERSES 8-10

Moses and Aaron obeyed the Lord and came before Pharaoh a second time, which took some faith on their part since things did not go too well the first time.

And now, the sign that God gave them to share with Pharaoh so he can see the power of God is now manifested as Aaron throws down the rod and it turns into a snake!

And I'm sure Moses and Aaron thought that this would do it, but God already told them it wouldn't.

I guess they didn't hear that and many times we do the same, don't we?

Now let me expound on this a little more. Back in Exodus chapter 4, when God told Moses to throw down his rod and it became a serpent, that was the regular word for serpent.

But here it is a different word, TANNIYN or a cobra snake, which was the symbol of the power of Egypt, and it is what they adorned the head pieces that the Pharaohs wore!

Again, God was trying to get his attention!

VERSES 11-13

Now according to II Timothy 3:8, two of Pharaoh's wise men, sorcerers or magicians were Jannes and Jambres.

But don't come to the conclusion that there were only two of them. The text indicates that there were many and they all threw down their rods and they turned into snakes!

Was this some cheap parlor trick?

I don't believe so. There is power in the demonic world; Satan does have an arsenal of lying signs and wonders that he will use to deceive.

Remember what Paul said about the Antichrist, that he will have these signs and wonders, but they of course will not be from God. Paul put it like this in II Thessalonians 2:9-12, **“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”**

The truth is out there, just like it was for Pharaoh, but he refused to see it and believe it, like so many are doing today!

Thus, miracles don't prove that it is from God! I wish more Christians would understand that fact today instead of being drawn to these things!

These are just imitations of the works of God to deceive people by and it happened back then, and it is happening today, and it will happen during the Tribulation Period!

What I like here is that Aaron's rod, or I should say snake, swallowed up all of their snakes!

Can you imagine the faces of Pharaoh and his men!

Don't tell me God doesn't have a sense of humor! And yet, after all of this, Pharaoh still rebels against the Lord and refused to let His people go!

Now just to give you an idea of who some of these Pharaoh's were.

The Pharaoh that did not know Joseph was probably Pharaoh Sesostris III, who was reigning just before Moses was born.

And Pharaoh Amenemhet II followed him and was on the throne during the time of Moses.

And the Pharaoh during the time of the Exodus was Pharaoh Neferhotep I.

Keep in mind that this wasn't the first plague but as one historian said, ***"When Aaron's staff became a serpent and then swallowed the staff-serpents of Pharaoh's magicians - God was providing a graphic sign of what was to come."***

We will begin to look at the plagues that God poured out upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians next time.

Let me close our study by reading from Psalm 62:7-8, where we are told, **"In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us."**

May we not forget that!