

Pastor Jim Jackson, 2/14/16

Exodus: Finding Freedom, pt. 6—From Bad to Worse

Exodus 5:1-23

Moses increases Israel's HOPE

The Israelites had been praying for deliverance from slavery for years, so God called Moses from Midian to rescue them (Ex. 2:23). As Moses appeared before the Pharaoh he demanded that the people be allowed to go to Mt. Sinai to worship God. As he does not know 'the LORD/YHWH', the Pharaoh won't obey. *Believers should not be surprised when unbelievers don't see the hand of God at work and are hostile towards it.* Understandably, the Pharaoh has no respect for the God of the Israelites, as in his view, the Egyptian 'gods' have kept the Israelites in slavery. In the mystery of God's plan, what the Pharaoh doesn't realize is that Egypt has been used as an 'incubator' until the Israelites were big enough to take over Canaan (Gen. 15:13, 14). In the mystery of God's sovereignty, He will eventually produce good out of evil done to His chosen people (Rom. 8:28). *What is a mystery to humanity is destiny to divinity!*

The Pharaoh increases Israel's BURDEN

After Moses showed the elders the miraculous power of God, word spread that freedom was near—so many Israelites stopped working. Realizing the economic disaster this would create and believing they had too much time to sit around and think up a new God to save them, Pharaoh makes them scavenge for straw to make bricks instead of having it provided for them. *What looked like a moment of deliverance had become a moment of dismay both for the people and for Moses.* God did not tell Moses he would be rejected by both the Pharaoh *and* the Israelites—as their lives became *more* miserable than before—so he wanted to give up. *God often allows a believer's situation to become worse to test their faith and remind them afterward about God's power and provision.* People who exercise no faith in a time of testing either prove their unbelief or show their spiritual immaturity (Prov. 24:10). Often times the darkness is the deepest and most despairing before the dawn. *Disappointment from God should not lead to pessimism about God but prayer to God.* While the Israelites label themselves to the slave drivers as 'Your servants/slaves', God refers to them as His favored 'firstborn son' and promised to provide for them as His covenant people (4:22; 5:15). Regardless of the personal situation, believers must never forget *who* they are based on *Whose* they are!