

February 23

Scriptures: Read Exodus 5 & 6

Key Verse: 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. (5:2)

Overview

After God's divine manifestation of signs caused the people to believe and worship Him (4:30, 31), Moses and Aaron, filled with encouragement and faith, went before Pharaoh. Most probably to their surprise, Pharaoh refused them the three leave to worship and sacrifice to their God. Pharaoh's attitude showed despising and ignorance toward God. He thought they must be idle and that worship of God was unimportant and in vain (a lie of Satan), so he increased their workload tremendously. We see the proud, rebellious heart of Pharaoh, king of the strongest, most civilized nation on the earth. Rebellion and not knowing the God of Israel go side by side, for knowing God is the foundation of obedience to Him. At this time, Pharaoh ignored the God of the Hebrews, but later on he was forced to recognize Him by His mighty deeds.

When Moses was rebuked by the Israelite foremen, he must have felt hurt and possibly embarrassed. He could have been paralyzed and paranoid if he had listened to what the foremen said, and thus would have been unable to serve God the way he should. But Moses did not dwell on their cutting words. Though full of questions and doubts, he went immediately to the Lord in prayer. This is certainly the best thing for us to do as well, when we are troubled or in a difficult situation. But we should not have to wait until we have a problem to go the Lord. Even when things are going wonderfully, we should still thank Him and pray much. When Moses failed the first time on this mission, there might have been a great temptation to quit, but in going to the Lord he received new and greater strength.

Many times we tend to limit God, questioning Him and complaining when a problem arises. Discouragement may come because we cannot see beyond, but God can see the end, and He has everything in control. Sometimes He allows pressure so that greater salvation will follow.

The Lord's reply to Moses was full of grace and reassurance. He renewed to Him the promises of His covenant and commands and revealed to Him the promises of His covenant and commands and revealed His personal name Jehovah, giving Moses grater insight into its meaning, for now we see more the character attributes and the work of God. This will now be the name of their personal God, the God who cared and loved them when they were despised and enslaved in Egypt. They will not only know this by hearing, but will experience it by His power and love in redemption. Now His people have the right to depend on the name of God, the name which will save His people and lift them from distress to reveal His glory. The fuller revelation of God shows us the same in the name of Jesus Christ, the name above all names upon which we can depend.

Notice the six loving and encouraging promises that God gives the children of Israel: He will (1) bring them out in separation from the sinful life in Egypt and will (2) free them from their bondage. He will (3) redeem them. Here for the first time in the Bible we see the word redeem,

referring to God's mighty act of salvation. Literally translated from Hebrew, it means to "untie", thus giving freedom, or to buy back from slavery. He will (4) take them as His people, for God chose Israel to be a light and an instrument in fulfilling His plan of salvation for the whole world which He loves. Likewise we as a Church, the people of God today, must not fail to be a light and an instrument in bringing the world to Him. God took them as His own to keep the promises He made to their forefathers (see Deuteronomy 7:7, 8). God's love and care is seen, for even individuals are listed in the genealogy which serves to validate the leadership of Moses and Aaron over the children of Israel (6:14-27). Then God promised (5) to bring them into the land, which He will (6) give to them as a heritage or a possession. Therefore, God told Moses to tell Pharaoh "he must let the children of Israel go out of his land" (6:10). Now we see a broader request; they are to leave the land permanently and not just for three days. They must be out and free to enjoy the redemption of the Lord.

Isn't it the same for our salvation today? We must be away totally from worldly things if we are to enjoy the Lord's salvation to the fullest. Our salvation is accomplished by the work of God and not of our own strength, power and goodness, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Prayer

O Lord, according to Your promises, You hear us when we pray. Please give us greater wisdom and strength in order to serve You better.