

WHO IS THE LORD THAT I SHOULD OBEY?**Exodus 5-12**

Intro: ABC has been spending a lot of time in Egypt this year. A few months ago Jay Shifley spent a few days in Egypt (this photo was from when he and Heather were there a couple years ago). And since last month when we began a study of Exodus, we have seen how the people of Israel were in slavery in Egypt because, the Pharaoh on the throne did not remember Joseph, his people, and their God. It's also cool that we spent an entire week in Egypt as we learned about Joseph in VBS and we have that to thank for my Egyptian back drop.

Here we are – Moses has been called from the Wilderness by a God he needed to become acquainted with to deliver his people – who had also pretty much forgotten about the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph – and he was to introduce the arrogant King of Egypt to the one true God.

Pharaoh's response, predictably was, "Who is this Lord?" and in a way this is the question of humanity for all ages. It was certainly the question of Pharaoh, who arrogantly asked, "Who is the Lord that I should obey?" Well, he learned.

I'm going to cover 7 chapters in the next 25 or 30 minutes and we'll answer the question for ourselves and by it be reminded what a mighty God we serve.

First . . .

Who IS the Lord?

- The short answer is – you'll soon find out. Listen, (Read Exodus 5:1-9)
- And the Israelites responded with a "THANKS FOR NOTHIN'!!!" In their mind, and for that matter, for Moses their response was "*But God, you just made it worse for us!*"
- And so Moses was snubbed by Pharaoh. His response was to take refuge in God. F. B. Meyer writes, "*There's no other refuge for a limited man than to return to the infinite God. When you feel that you failed, return to God with your story of failure. He will give you new instructions.*"
- To Moses's "Now look what you've done!" God replies...

I am the Lord

- (Read Exodus 6:1-9) Lord is a very personal name – he is truly our God. We can know him personally, he's not distant at all.
- The Lord is a God who can handle our questions
- So when Moses, in frustration and failure, went to God and asked "What are you doing? Why are you leaving us out to dry?! God's confident response is "You just watch what I do! You'll see." This is because...
- He knows what's going on. He tells Israel...
 - I will bring you out of Egypt and away from all the burdens it's placing on you.
 - I will deliver you
 - I will redeem you
 - I will take you for my people and I will be your God.
- God is still the Lord even when we are broken and believe we are beyond repair and rescue.
- And so, Moses, you WILL bring my people out of Egypt.
- Pharaoh's heart was hardened. F. B. Meyer, again using his picturesque language writes of Pharaoh, "*Just as in winter, the thaw of noon makes ice harder during the night, so if the love of God fails to soften, it hardens.*" So, in this sense, God seemed to harden Pharaoh's heart. The real conflict lay with Pharaoh's stubborn will which would not yield even though his servants advised him to let the Israelites go. Pharaoh's hard heart was his own doing. He refused to acknowledge God – in fact he only saw him as competition since he saw himself as a god.
- God took control and said...

Here's how I'll do it

- Notice, first of all that God was not unreasonable. From the get-go. He endeavored to prove to Pharaoh who and what he was. One of the chief reasons for the plagues, as well as the miracles that led up to them, was to establish the fact that the Lord of the Hebrews was the great being who is behind the entire apparatus of nature. The Lord is a God who can easily conjure up 10 plagues.

- As we've seen, Pharaoh's heart was hardened and the plagues only made it more so. It was a teachable moment that God took advantage of because Pharaoh was a very slow learner.
 - The truth is, the further from God you go, the harder your heart becomes.
- The ten plagues that we see in Exodus 7-12 probably took place in a process that was probably about 9 or 10 months long.
- And here's the cool thing: The plagues were not miracles in themselves. Instead they were natural phenomena that show God's power over his own creation. Let's look at them:
 1. Blood in the Nile. The Nile was essential for life in Egypt. The Sun god was important, but the Nile was more so.
 2. Frogs – Significance of frogs is that frogs are a goddess in the Egyptian belief system. So when there was a plague of frogs everywhere, it was unlawful to kill any of them because that would have been blasphemy.
 3. Gnats and then...
 4. Flies – Now just think about this – bugs drive me nuts on a good day in Ohio.
 5. The death of all livestock – but not of the people of Israel – this is, again an attack on their very livelihood.
 6. Boils on man and beast – Pharaoh's selfishness caused him to make his people suffer – but that's what happens when your heart is that hard.
 7. Hail – Again – an assault on life itself. Think about the damage
 8. Locusts – what's left gets eaten by locusts. (Cicadas in PA)
 9. Darkness – think about the restlessness that happens when a storm is approaching
 10. DEATH!
- You see this is what God can do. He is really God. Pharaoh was just a mere mortal who fancied himself a god.
- The ones who know God and obey him absolutely can rely on him with perfect certainty and confidence. Our God delights in the faith of his people that dare to acknowledge his willingness and power to do great things around them and through him. I think it was Meyer who wrote that God *"will not fail the soul that ventures wholly on his all-sufficiency."*

Conclusion: Pharaoh relented. He knew who the Lord was. He, once and for all, sent the Israelites packing. Well, at least till he reconsidered his decision and sent his army after the People of Israel as they approached the Red Sea. But that's a couple weeks down the road. For now, even in Pharaoh's mind, God wins. This is not gloating – it's just the truth. Who is the Lord that I should obey him? Now you know. Amen.