

EXODUS 5:1-9 (THUS SAYS THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL)

Introduction: Religion. The world is full of religion. It is full of types of religion, and it is full of people who follow religion. The source of a religion and the premise of each religion can tell us if the religion is true or not.

Understanding and comprehending the world around us, the morals we possess, and the nature of the scientific disciplines can all point us to the truth or false nature of religion as well. If we consider the source of, for example, Scientology, we can know the religion is false. A man made it up out of his own head with the explicit intent of making money, as he himself said.

If we consider the premise of Hinduism, we can know that it is false. Hinduism is polytheistic, it teaches that there are many gods. But through mere logical thinking, we can know that this is not possible. The same is true with Islam. It teaches that God is a monad, a single entity.

However, if this were true, there would be no creation because He would never go beyond himself; he could never go beyond himself. Love would be impossible for a monad god. We can know all of these things and so much more by simply thinking about them. But thinking is hard work and it isn't popular, even among great thinkers.

Sometimes great thinkers think greatly about what they want to think about, not about what needs to be considered. When this happens, the great thinking was a waste of thinking because it greatly missed what needed to be thought. Atheists usually follow this avenue of contemplation.

When we have presuppositions about the world around us, or about the nature of God, we will inevitably use them as a mark that we should work towards, even if

the mark is wrong. However, if we get it right, if we have the right information, then we can properly direct our thoughts towards the truth concerning the nature of God.

When we do this, we can then exercise faith in that God and in what He has presented to His creatures. If you want to know more along those lines, you can go back and watch my Genesis 1:1 sermon. But be certain of this - there is one God who is the God presented in the Bible.

There are particular and special ways in which He has revealed Himself to us, and those ways are recorded in the pages of Scripture. If this is so, then it means that the Bible is God's word. It is complete, it is missing nothing, and nothing superfluous is added in. Every word and every verse is given for us to accept, believe, and obey in the context in which it is presented.

To call into question the word of the Lord when it is proven true is to call into question the integrity of God who gave it. Today, we will see a person begin down that path. He will call into question the word of the Lord. At this point, it may be acceptable. He doesn't know the Lord and there is really no reason to accept something without proof.

The problem with this numbskull is that even after he has been given full and sure evidences of the true nature of the God of Israel, he will continue to fight against Him - to his own detriment and destruction. That's a pretty horrifying thought, but he's not alone. People do it all the time.

Text Verse: The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord,
But the words of the pure are pleasant. Proverbs 15:26

The words of Yehovah are pure and pleasant because they are the words of the Creator. If we pit our thoughts against His word, then we are actually making

ourselves an abomination to Him. We are putting our puny fist in His face and saying, "I can do better."

Imagine the arrogance! And yet, are any of us in that position here today? What part of the Bible do you dismiss? The writings of Paul that tell us about the structure and nature of the church and the roles assigned to men and women? What about issue of divorce? Are we willing to ignore God and pursue that avenue because we're unhappy?

What about abortion or homosexuality? What precept do we dismiss from His word because it doesn't fit our personal mores? Do we know better than He knows? I think not. Today Pharaoh will begin his walk down a path of no return because today he will begin to ignore the word of the Lord.

His disobedience is given as a lesson to us concerning how we should act. Let's pay attention to what happens so that we can avoid the pitfalls of destruction. It's all to be found in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Let My People Go (verses 1 & 2)

1 Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh,

We begin chapter 5 with words of obedience to the command of the Lord. Together Moses and Aaron traveled to Egypt, met with the elders of the people, and convinced them that the Lord had visited them. In this is the implicit understanding that they had been appointed over the people to represent them before Pharaoh.

They have now come to that point and so together Moses and Aaron present themselves to Pharaoh in order to make their petition to him. According to Psalm 78, this royal court of Pharaoh is in an area known as Zoan, which is now known as Tanis.

1 (con't) "Thus says the Lord God of Israel:

This is the very first time that the term "the Lord God of Israel" is used in the Bible. In all, it will only be used 2 more times in the books of Moses. It literally reads Yehovah elohe Yisrael. The name Yehovah is a personal pronoun; it is His name. And so it more appropriately reads, "Thus says Yehovah, God of Israel."

Pharaoh would have understood it to be his proper name, just as his own gods had proper names like Ra, Ammon, etc. In Genesis 33, He was called the God of Israel, meaning Israel the person. In Exodus 3, he identified himself as "the Lord God of your fathers," which He then explained as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But now He is identified with the people of Israel. His name is on them and they are His people. This name has been given by God's divine direction as a means of placing honor upon the mistreated Hebrews under Pharaoh's rule. Despite their humiliation, the Lord has exalted them through His name.

It is a pattern which has continued now for 3500 years. The people of Israel bear His name even though they have rejected Him and even though they have been humiliated and crushed. They bear the name and thus they bear His attentive eye and caring affection.

1 (con't) 'Let My people go,

Yehovah's words are given, "Let my people go." They are His people, not Pharaoh's people. All independent nations were identified with their own god or gods. This is a continuous theme which runs throughout the Old Testament. The people of Israel have been identified with Yehovah and they are His people.

1 (con't) that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'"

When a people is identified with a particular god or gods, it was understood that they would present sacrifices and offerings to them. This is still the case in the world of false gods today. Buddhists offer all kinds of stuff to statues of Buddha - incense, bowls of rice, money, and so on.

Marian worshippers pray to Mary, offer her incense and loyalty, and bow in front of statues of her. Muslims offer prayers five times a day, they offer a month of fasting each year, they offer their children as tools of destruction by tying bombs to them and sending them off to kill their enemies in the name of their wicked "god."

The list of false gods, unholy sacrifices, and inappropriate worship is long, but it is a continued pattern which has existed since the fall of man. In such worship, there is also the celebration of festivals. For the Hebrews in the presence of the true God, they are known as khagag, which we translate as "feast."

The word kahgag is based on a word which indicates "to move in a circle" or specifically "to march in a sacred procession." From there you have the implication of being giddy; to celebrate, dance, and feast. It is to be a time of worship, celebration, and sacrifice.

It is based on the same root as the name of the prophet Haggai and it is also connected to the Arabic word for hajj, which is what the muslims perform when they make a trek to Mecca to worship their false god. If you look at photos of their hajj, you will see them going in a circle as they move towards the idol of their false god, a black stone called the al-Hajar al-Aswad; the Black Stone.

This is the general idea of the khagag, or feast - moving in a circle in a sacred procession; thus celebrating, dancing, and feasting. Because this was such a commonly understood form of service to a god, Pharaoh knew exactly what was intended.

Moses and Aaron said that they desired to hold such a feast to the Lord and that it is the Lord who has directed them to do so. In this feast, they have requested that it be held "in the wilderness." The reason for this isn't plainly evident here, but it will be explained in Exodus 8, which says -

"It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? 27 We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as He will command us." Exodus 8:26, 27

Pharaoh, although not having all the information yet, still knew that the God of Israel would have His own expectations for worship, and if He desired it to be in the wilderness, that should be enough of an explanation all by itself. Because the request is so obvious and reasonable, his coming denial shows that he had no fear at all of the God of Israel.

In a previous sermon, we looked at the hardening of Pharaoh's heart and whether it was a self-hardening, or one which came externally from the Lord. In this verse,

we begin to see the evidence of the conclusion we made. It was certainly initiated by the Lord, but Pharaoh had a choice to obey the Lord or not.

Instead of starting with a hard lesson and a terrifying proof that He was capable of destroying Pharaoh, the Lord began with an uncomplicated appeal - "that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness." Because of the simplicity of the request, Pharaoh easily fooled himself into believing that He could stand up to Yehovah.

And so the hardening was passively began by Yehovah, but it is an active decision of Pharaoh. Because he will actively disregard a mild demand of Yehovah, his heart will harden a bit. In the stubborn way of man, this hardening will continue even until Egypt is all but destroyed.

Too often, we as humans would rather face destruction than admit that we were wrong at the beginning. A classic example of this is found in cults all the time. The book of Mormon, for example, has been proven false in several ways.

Through DNA, archeology, and the like, claims in the book of Mormon have been shown inaccurate, but adherents would rather go down with the ship rather than admit they were wrong about where they had placed their faith. The same is true with adherents of any cult or religion which denies the obvious truth.

Even in secular life, people will deny the obvious if they first accepted a lie. Evolution has no basis in fact, and yet it is adhered to as if it were absolute truth. Global warming has been proven not only false, but even falsely presented; it is an outright lie. And yet people will hide from the obvious truth and still hold to this nonsense.

The human condition is one that allows pride to take over and replace the truth with any lie if it will simply mean that we can save face in the process. What a sad condition that we would rather proudly walk into hell than crawl with humility to the foot of the cross.

2 And Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?"

There are a few understandable reasons for Pharaoh to ask this question in his seemingly arrogant manner. First, Pharaoh has obviously never heard of Yehovah, and even the Israelites probably didn't remember the name until it was re-introduced to them after Moses met Him at the burning bush.

If Pharaoh had never heard the name, then he could honestly believe that it was a made up name, just like the made up names of all the other gods of all the other nations. Secondly, if the Hebrews had been subjected to brutal treatment for many, many years, even before he had ascended the throne, then he would feel confident that Yehovah was an ineffective deity.

Thirdly, because the Lord had allowed the suffering to go on for so long, he may have incorrectly assumed that Yehovah didn't even really care about the people. What kind of God was Yehovah that He allowed the people to live in toil and bondage? It is the exact same thing we see in the world today.

The enemies of Israel have looked at them in their exile and suffering and thought, "How can the God of the Hebrews be the true God? If His name is on them, then He must not really be a great God." But as the Bible says -

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord.

9 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.'" Isaiah 55;8, 9

The Lord's plans include suffering, trials, hardships, and loss. They also include eons of those things, countless generations of them, because His plans are greater than any single point in history. They are also greater than providing ease for a brief moment. Instead, His plan encompasses all of time and all circumstances within time.

Pharaoh has failed to see that, and from right here at the beginning, it will prove to be his inevitable downfall. When we as humans try to insert all of God's righteousness, wisdom, love, care, and knowledge into our brief existence, we form an idol which is anything but God.

What we need to do when faced with tough times is to exclaim what Eli, the High Priest of Israel proclaimed when he was informed of really bad news to come concerning his own household. At that time he said, "It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him." 1 Samuel 3:18

If you go through the Bible, almost every one of the great names of faith recorded there went through suffering. Some of them went through immense suffering. But in the end, they are considered faithful because of how they responded to it - "It is the Lord; Let Him do what seems good to Him." Anything less is tantamount to calling into question His over-arching goodness.

Pharaoh's lack of knowledge concerning Jehovah now will be used in the coming story to demonstrate the absolute supremacy of the true God of Israel as He destroys the false gods of Egypt, one by one. From this first meeting until the

waters of the Red Sea cover over him for the last time, all of it contains intentional design in order to display the surpassing greatness of Yehovah.

2 (con't) I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go.”

Jewish tradition of today is that the name Yehovah is ineffable. They say it was and is never to be pronounced. But this verse, among many others, shows that to be false. If Pharaoh says, "Who is Yehovah" then Moses must have used the name Yehovah in order for Pharaoh to ask the question.

And so he exclaims "I do not know Yehovah." Although it is astonishing to consider that there was no knowledge of the true God by the leader of the greatest nation on earth, it is no less astonishing than the fact that there is no knowledge of the same true God by our own leader today. Or, by colleges, universities, governments, and religions all around the world today.

And it is certainly no less astonishing than the fact that there is no true knowledge of this same God in seminaries and churches which actually bear His name. There are countless souls who claim the title of "Christian" and yet know nothing of the Person of Christ.

Like Pharaoh who refused to acknowledge the true God, nor would He let Israel go worship Him, they too refuse to acknowledge Him as well. They dismiss His written word, they disobey their consciences, and they honor Him with their lips while their hearts are far from Him. The rebellious spirit of Pharaoh is alive and well in the world today.

Who is the Lord that you worship?

What is the source of your faith?

Is it in the words of a man, is this your hope
Or is it in the Bible and the words, "Thus the Lord saith

I mean, really... on what is your faith based?
Where, O where I ask can you learn about the Lord?
In someone's crazy agenda, is this where it's placed?
Or do you look for Jesus in God's holy word?

Take out a line, any line from that precious word
And say, these remarks here don't count
Then you have decided in place of the Lord
The counsel of God, and you have poisoned the precious fount

II. A Sacrifice to the Lord (verses 3-5)

3 So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us.

In this answer, Moses and Aaron are granting Pharaoh's view of the matter. In essence they are saying, "Ok, so you don't know Yehovah, and you may not even feel that He has authority over you, but He does have authority over us." Thus, the answer to Pharaoh here is given as an appeal to pity.

"The God of the Hebrews has met with us. We are a group of people who are identified as separate and peculiar from the Egyptians. We have suffered in bondage, we have been your slaves, and now we have been confronted by our God. In our meeting, He has made a demand of us."

The words are intended to appeal to the already hardening heart of Pharaoh. They form a petition that will now show the severity of the consequences against them if their request isn't granted.

3 (con't) Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

In this statement, it has to be noted that the consequences for denial aren't directed toward Pharaoh, but towards Israel. It is another passive way of the Lord hardening Pharaoh's heart. No threat is directed towards him and therefore he feels there are no consequences that will affect him.

He must be thinking, "If Yehovah had a demand and could enforce it, He would make it against me, not against His own people. He must be scared of me." But, at the same time, any supposed god is given offerings by his people in an attempt to appease him. If this weren't so, then there would be no need to offer sacrifices.

Pharaoh should have no reason to doubt that the Hebrews believed they would suffer if they didn't sacrifice to the Lord. But if it didn't affect him, then why should he care? The saying, "That's your problem, not mine" holds true in this exchange.

His concern isn't if the people he has already treated brutally would die by pestilence or the sword. His concern is that they continue to be used for the building of his empire. If many die, there were still many more to take their place. To him, there is no gain and only loss by responding favorably to their request.

4 Then the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work?”

Ten times in this chapter, the term "Pharaoh" is used. However, only in this verse is the term "the king of Egypt" given. Time and again "Pharaoh" has been set in contrast to Yehovah or Yehovah's people. But in this verse, he is set in contrast to Moses and Aaron who are supposedly inciting the people against his rule.

Thus he is termed "the king of Egypt." In essence, he is charging them with insurrection and rebellion. It is the common charge which is levied against those who rightly or wrongly look for a change in the general order of a given society.

The prophets of Israel were often accused of this when they spoke the word of the Lord, in order to get the people to return to their faith and worship of the Lord. And more often than not, they were accused of rebellion and sedition.

Jeremiah's life continuously fell into this category. As soon as he opened his mouth, he found himself accused, challenged, imprisoned, or threatened with death. A classic example of this is found in Jeremiah 26 and is well worth the read.

And unfortunately, the same is found to be true more and more within our own society today. When preachers stand up for the truth of God and the contents of His word, they are rallied against, even by their own family members, their own government, and even members of their own church sometimes.

And sometimes the people in the church are the ones who stand up against the faithless pastors who have departed from the word of the Lord. No matter which direction, inevitably the person of God will be accused of sedition against those who feel threatened by their words; words which exalt God, even at a personal cost.

4 (con't) Get back to your labor."

The words are leku lesiblotekem - "get you to your burdens." It is the same word, siblah, used twice so far in Exodus to describe the unusually heavy labor of the people in bondage and under a heavy load of work. It will be used again in the next verse and only two more times in Exodus.

In what is certainly directed to Moses and Aaron personally, and not to the people generally, he tells them to get to the demeaning work which he has assigned to the people.

5 And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are many now, and you make them rest from their labor!"

The words of Pharaoh here, "Look the people of the land are many" implies that the injury to his kingdom was immense. If a portion of the people stopped working, others would fill the gap, but if an entire population of many people suddenly stopped working, the effect would be disastrous.

This is what he is implying, and yet it is completely contrary to the idea of what it means to rest. In this verse is the first use of the word shabbat or "sabbath" when applied to people in the Bible. The only other time that the word has been used was when God rested from His creative efforts and when it said that the cycles of the seasons wouldn't cease as long as the earth remained.

Now it is being applied to the people of God in a negative way, as if they were to have no such rest. But it is this very rest, which will be given to them as a sign of being the covenant people, which is what has brought them prosperity, abundance, and culture.

The very thing that Pharaoh accuses Moses and Aaron as causing harm to his kingdom is the thing that, if given to them, would cause his kingdom to prosper beyond his wildest imaginations. But the stubbornness of the human heart cannot see beyond its own pride.

Who will proclaim the word to the people?

Who will be faithful to the call?

Is there any faithful soul remaining under the church steeple?

Over the whole land there has been cast a deadly pall

God desires from His flock worship and sacrifice

He desires that they honor Him with a pure heart

Praise from the lips to Him is deemed pleasant and nice

Let us vow to turn to Him in a fresh start

Be bold and make the solemn proclamation

And be sure to give God what is His just due

And even more, let us worship with jubilation

Because of His attentive care for me and you

III. An Unreasonable Command (verses 6-9)

6 So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying,

In looking at the exodus account, we find that after Pharaoh there are three levels of superintendence over the people as they worked. The first were mentioned in chapter 1 and were known as sare missim, or "chiefs of tributes." The next are mentioned here and are known as nogeshim, or taskmasters.

The word means to drive like an animal, a workman, a debtor, or an army. The implication is to tax, harass, and tyrannize someone. The people were constantly afflicted and never given rest from it. These, like the other ones, would be the ones who extracted service or money from the people for the benefit of Pharaoh and the economy.

And there is also another group known as shoterim, or "officers" which are explained in the coming verses as being Hebrews. These Hebrews would be scribes that attended to the counting of the production of the work, the number of hours people worked, and the like.

It is to these last two groups of people that Pharaoh makes his demand concerning the common people who labored under them...

7 "You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before.

All along the Nile, there was planting and harvesting going on. When the crops were harvested, what would make sense is that the stalks from the harvests were to be bundled up and floated down the river to wherever bricks were made.

In doing this, there wouldn't be any waste and it would increase the efficiency of the construction projects in the kingdom. Once the straw was received, it would be cut up into smaller pieces and used as a binding material for the brick. This is the same idea as using rebar in concrete to keep it from cracking.

Without the straw, the bricks wouldn't hold together well, but would instead crumble. The thing about others gathering the straw made for efficiency in the brick-making process, and it also meant that the Hebrews didn't have to do it.

Pharaoh's thought on this was that if they had to get their own straw, they wouldn't have time to worry about other things. Instead, their time would be consumed with work and not the thoughts of God, rest, or the like. And so his order is given...

7 (con't) Let them go and gather straw for themselves.

The problem with this command is that it would literally consume all of the people's time. Because they weren't at the fields, they would have no way of getting the straw of the harvests. This wouldn't just increase their work time, but probably double it. And even then they would find it hard to meet their needs.

In a dry and arid land, apart from living directly on the Nile, there would be little available straw. And the areas that had the straw would be fields of harvest that were managed by others. It would be a giant dilemma for the people.

8 And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it.

This would have been the most crushing news of all to the people. To make brick was tiresome work. To be told that they also had to provide the straw for the brick would make life most wretched, only adding to their misery.

But to tell them that they had to do both and still maintain the same number of bricks as before would be no less than torture itself. Straw couldn't be gathered at

night in any meaningful way and so the straw would have to be collected at day, and the brick-making would have to continue on until any or all hours of the night.

There would be no time for rest, no time for family, and no time - certainly no time, for worrying about taking time off to sacrifice to the God who had suddenly appeared in their lives in hopes of making them better. Instead of things getting better, they had only taken a much more troublesome direction.

8 (con't) For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.'

Pharaoh equates the people's desire to worship their God with being indolent. But once again, when dealing with the worship of the true God, the opposite is true. Throughout Scripture, in both testaments of the Bible, and both implicitly and explicitly, the people of God who are obedient to God are always called on to be model citizens and the most productive and faithful of workers.

In the books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, Solomon writes extensively about the importance of laboring and not being idle. The premier example of a virtuous woman in the Bible is noted in Proverbs 31 as being the epitome of diligence in labor.

Throughout the entire description, she is noted for hard work, late hours, and continuous care of her time in a productive manner. And this woman of virtue was probably a description by Solomon of his ancestor Ruth who is shown throughout the book which bears her name to be exactly such a woman of virtue.

In the New Testament, Paul sets the example for others in that he continuously labored with his hands, making tents, in order to keep from being a burden on those he ministered to. And in Ephesians 4, he gives us this advice -

"Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need." Ephesians 4:28

These examples, and many others, show us that Pharaoh's edict here is a vindictive move against the Hebrews, not an attempt to save his kingdom from some type of monetary loss. The record of Exodus 1 is that the Hebrews were the ones who built the supply cities of Pithom and Rameses.

These cities weren't built through indolence or idleness, but rather through the untiring efforts of an already oppressed and yet diligent group of people.

9 Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words.

These concluding words of the day reject the words of the Lord in two ways. First, they reject His request to let the people go by forcing the people to work harder. The exact opposite of what was requested is what occurs.

The second way in which they reject the words of the Lord is that they claim they are a lie. Yes, Moses and Aaron presented the words to Pharaoh, but they presented the words of the Lord as intended. He is directly challenging the Lord because Moses and Aaron have been commissioned by Him for the work in which they are engaged.

The phrase Pharaoh uses for "false words" here is b'divre shaqer. Amazingly, this is the first time that the word sheqer, or "false" is used in the Bible and yet it is being ascribed to the One in whom there is no deceit at all. The absolute irony of this is beyond astonishing.

The next time this word sheqer will be used is going to be in Exodus 20, when the Lord gives the Ten Commandments. There in the ninth of them, it will say -

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” Exodus 20:16

Pharaoh described the words of Moses and Aaron as false words, but these words were given to them by the Lord. Many of us have made that same error in the past, but eventually we realized that the words of the Lord are true. We called out to Him and He saved us. And yet, from time to time we still question the truth of His words.

We dismiss parts of the Bible because we don't like what they have to say. It shows that a bit of the spirit of Pharaoh still resides in us; a rebellious streak that needs to be quieted. Let's strive with all of our ability to quiet the lie, hold fast to the truth, and accept this precious, superior word at face value.

If the Creator demands that we only testify to the truth, it is because He is truth. He is incapable of any type of unrighteousness and our false witness will only put up a wall between us and Him. And just one transgression is all that is needed to eternally separate us from Him.

The Lord is infinitely perfect and our one sin infinitely separates us from that perfection. The connection is lost and we cannot mend it because we're heading in the wrong direction in time. The past is unavailable to us except as a sad memory of what could have been.

But into this stream of time came the Lord of creation. He did this to mend the rift between us and His heavenly Father. By calling out to Him for pardon, we can be reconciled once again. So as we close today, please give me another moment to explain this to you.

Closing Verse: Forever, O Lord,
Your word is settled in heaven. Psalm 119:89

Next Week: Exodus 5:10-23 (Gathering Stubble to Make Brick) (15th Exodus Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if a deep ocean lies ahead of You, He can part the waters and lead you through it on dry ground. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Thus Says the Lord God of Israel

Afterward Moses and Aaron went in

And there they told Pharaoh

“Thus says the Lord God of Israel

"Let My people go

That they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness

This is the Lord's request which to you we address

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; this is my spoken choice
So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us
Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert
For this we are desirous

And sacrifice to the Lord our God, according to His word
Lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword
Then the king of Egypt said to them
"Moses and Aaron, why do you take
The people from their work?
Get back to your labor; no more trouble shall you make

And Pharaoh said, "Look
The people of the land are many now
And you make them rest from their labor
I will fix this disobedience somehow
So the same day Pharaoh commanded
The taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying
"You shall no longer give the people straw
To make brick as before; this command I am relaying

Let them go and gather straw for themselves
And you shall on them lay
The quota of bricks which they made before

You shall not reduce it in any way
For they are idle; therefore they cry out
Saying, 'Let us go
And sacrifice to our God
But my answer to them is "No"

Let more work be laid on the men
That they may labor in it
And let them not regard false words
This is my decree, I do submit
The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, this we see
But it was done in a passive way
Pharaoh instead hardened his own heart actively
He rejected the word of God on that day

Who is responsible then, in the matter of Pharaoh's heart?
Can someone say that he was in any way free of guilt?
Not at all, for in this he did his own part
He made his own design, like the weavings of a quilt
And we too make the choice about our destiny
Jesus gave His life if we so choose the heavenly pardon
Or we can walk another path, one which ends in misery
By rejecting the cross, God's heavenly beacon

Don't be found in such a sad, sad state
Instead, call out to Jesus, eternal life to receive
And then together with the redeemed patiently wait
On His coming again, for all who do believe

Sure and sound is our heavenly hope
Faithful and true are the promises of the Lord
And so in this life of trials we can cope
Because of the wonders ahead, guaranteed in His word

Hallelujah and Amen...