



PHAROAH'S HARD HEART

Exodus 5, 6 & 7

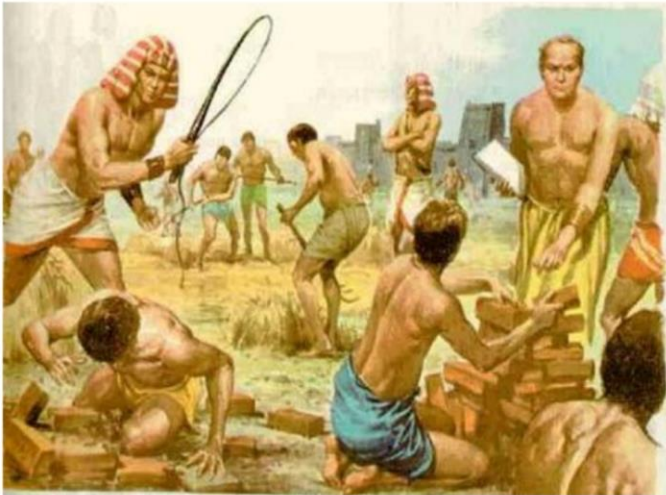
Moses and Aaron met with all the elders of the children of Israel to let them know of God's plans to set them free. After Moses and Aaron met with the elders, they all went to Pharaoh and said, "The Lord God of Israel sends us to say to you, 'Let My people go, so they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'"

Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go."

Moses and Aaron said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. He asks that you let his children travel three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the Lord God, or else He may fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

Pharaoh said, "Moses and Aaron, why do you stop the people from working?" He turned to the elders and said, "Get back to your work." Pharaoh spoke to Moses and Aaron again, saying, "Look at how many people you have taken away from their work!"





After Moses, Aaron and the elders left, Pharaoh gave a command to the taskmasters for their Hebrew officers. He said, "You will stop giving the people straw to make brick. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. Also, you will require that they produce the same number of bricks daily as they made before. They have too much free time. That is why they cry out, saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' Give them more work and they will not listen to Moses and Aaron."

The taskmasters and their officers went to the people and said, "Pharaoh commands us not to give you straw. He requires that you go and get straw for yourselves, wherever you can find it, but none of your work will be reduced." The people were scattered throughout the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. The taskmasters forced them to quickly gather as much as they could, saying, "Hurry. You still must make your daily quota of bricks just as when we supplied straw." When the count was short, the officers whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over the children of Israel were beaten and asked, "Why have you not fulfilled your quota of bricks these past two days?"

The officers over the Israelites came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, "Why are you dealing with us this way? We are not given straw and then we are told, 'Make bricks!' Then we are beaten, but the fault is in your own people."

Pharaoh shouted, "You have too much free time! That's why you ask to go and sacrifice to the Lord. Leave my sight and work. You will not be given straw, and you will deliver the same number of bricks as before." The officers knew that they were in trouble as soon as they heard Pharaoh say, "You will deliver the same number of bricks as before."

As they left from Pharaoh, the officers met Moses and Aaron who were waiting to meet them. The officers said to them, "Let the Lord look on you and judge, because you have made us seem lazy in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. You have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

Moses went to the Lord and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on these people? Why is it You have sent me? Since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done greater evil to the people and You have not delivered Your people at all."



The Lord said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. I will force Pharaoh to let my people go and he will be glad to drive them out of his land. Tell the children of Israel, I am the Lord. I will bring them out from the burdens of the Egyptians. I will rescue them from their slavery, and I will redeem them with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take them as My people, and I will be their God. Then they shall know that I am the Lord God who brings them from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring them into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to them as a heritage. I am the Lord."

Moses told the children of Israel what God said, but they did not believe him because all they had seen was how cruel the Egyptians treated them.

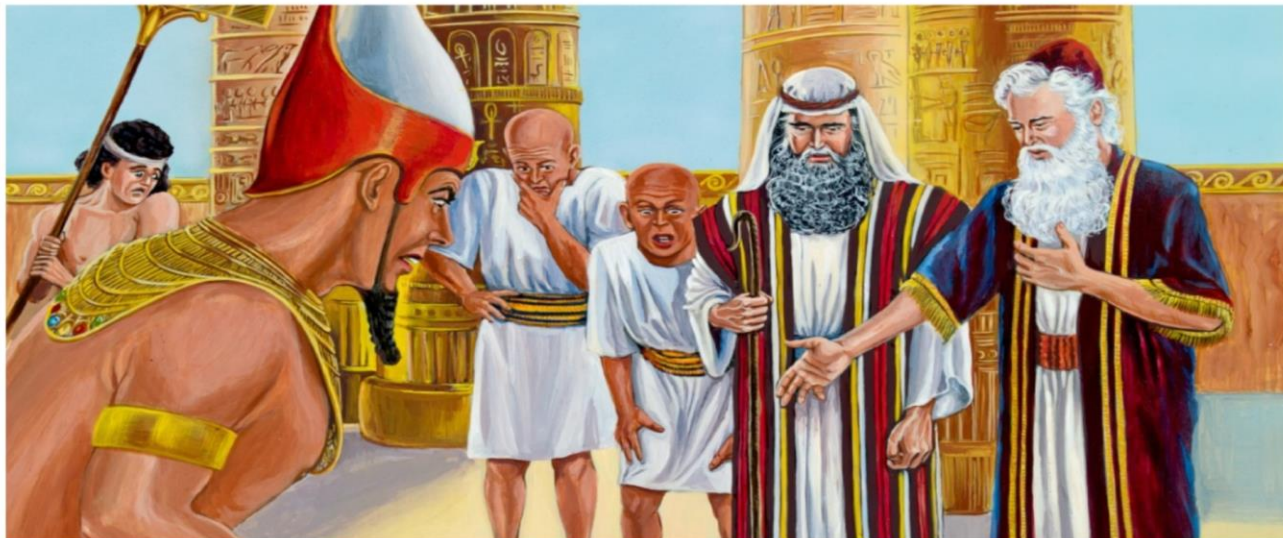
The Lord told Moses, "Go and tell Pharaoh again to let the children of Israel go."

Moses said to the Lord, "The children of Israel do not believe me. How can I expect Pharaoh to believe me?" Moses parents, Amram and Jochebed, were elders of the tribe of Levi. They were among those that Moses and Aaron had to convince.



The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. The Lord said to Moses, "I have made you a mighty man of God in the sight of Pharaoh. Aaron, your older brother, serves as your prophet. You will speak all that I command you to Pharaoh. Aaron will tell Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go out from his land. I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh will not pay attention to you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great demonstrations of my power. The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them."

Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded them. Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when God sent them to speak to Pharaoh.



The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show us a miracle,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent.'" Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

Pharaoh called his wise men and sorcerers, the magicians of Egypt. Just as Aaron did, the magicians threw down their rods, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not pay them any attention, just as the Lord had said.

The Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hard, and he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and stand by the river's bank. Take the rod which was turned to a serpent with you. Say to Pharaoh, 'The Lord God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me in the wilderness". Until now you would not hear! The Lord says, "By this you shall know that I am the Lord. I will strike the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. The fish that are in the river will die, the river will stink, and the Egyptians will not be able to drink the water of the river.'"



Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, their streams, rivers, ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they become blood. There will be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in their buckets and pitchers.'"

Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded. Moses lifted the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. All the waters of the river were turned to blood. The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. Moses gave the rod to Aaron. Aaron stretched the rod high and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

Then the magicians of Egypt did the same with their enchantments, and Pharaoh's heart again grew hard, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said. Pharaoh turned and went into his house. So, all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water from the river. The water remained this way for seven days after the Lord struck the river. This was the first plague God sent to Pharaoh.

