

Exodus 014
Knowing God
Exodus 5:1-3
September 7, 2025
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Let us take our Bibles this morning and open them to Exodus 5:1, which means we are not in Exodus 4 anymore. We are progressing as we continue our verse-by-verse teaching through the Book of Exodus in our main service here at Sugar Land Bible Church.

The title of our message this morning is "Knowing God." I think that is a book title by J.I. Packer, if I remember right, but it is such a good title, I stole it—"Knowing God." I am seeking, Lord willing, to make it through Exodus 5:7 today. No promises there, as usual.

We are continuing on in the Book of Exodus, where the whole focus of the first half of the book is redemption. God, redeeming a nation from bondage through the blood of the Passover lamb, after 400 years of incarceration under a Pharaoh and subsequent pharaohs that knew not Joseph.

Exodus Structure/Outline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Redemption (1–18)<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Redemption (1:1–12:30)◆ Liberation (12:31–15:21)◆ Preservation (15:22–18:27)■ Mosaic Covenant (19–40)<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Law (19–24)◆ Tabernacle instructions (25–31)◆ Apostasy (32–34)◆ Tabernacle building (35–40)

We have seen why redemption is necessary (Exodus 1). The nation of Israel is enslaved. That is why we need redemption, because we are in slavery also, to the slave market of sin. Then we moved into Exodus 2-4, which we completed last time. When God does a work, He selects a person to work through. In this case, the man is Moses. Moses was not qualified for the job—as none of us are—but God does not call the

qualified, He qualifies the called. We see that happening in Moses' life from age 40 to age 80.

Now Moses is ready to do the will of God. He probably stepped out thinking, "This is going to be easy. No problems." He is about to get a rude awakening because there are some problems in Exodus 5, as Moses, coming from Midian, is going to confront Pharaoh for the very first time and request that Pharaoh release Israel: "Let my people go."

First Meeting with Pharaoh (Exodus 5:1-23)

- I. Problem with Pharaoh (1-19)
 - A. Request of Pharaoh (1)
 - 1. Request stated
 - 2. Reasons for the request
 - B. Refusal by Pharaoh (2)
 - 1. Reasons
 - 2. Response
 - C. Request of Pharaoh (3)
 - 1. Request
 - 2. Consequence
 - D. Pharaoh increases Israel's burden (4-19)
- II. Problem with Israel (20-23)

Essentially, what is going to happen to Moses is he is going to have two problems. Number one, Pharaoh is not going to like it—the Pharaoh problem (Exodus 5:1-19). When things go sideways from a human perspective, the Nation of Israel, the group that he is supposed to be helping who are his own people, they do not like it—the problem of Israel (Exodus 5:20-23). We have a Pharaoh problem and we have an Israel problem.

That should encourage us, because a lot of times we step out seeking to do God's will, and we have a bunch of roadblocks. We say, "What happened? Did I miss God's will?" No one ever told us this was going to be easy. It certainly is not easy on Moses. In fact, a number of times it almost looks like he is willing to throw in the towel.

First of all, the Pharaoh problem (Exodus 5:1-19). We have a request of Pharaoh (Exodus 1); a refusal by Pharaoh (Exodus 5:2); another request of Pharaoh (Exodus 5:3). When you get to Exodus 5:4-19 Pharaoh is going to say, "Not only am I not going to let Israel go, but I am going to increase the pain of their servitude."

As this happens, the leadership is going to start second-guessing Moses—the leadership of Israel, the people he is supposed to be leading. That is why Moses is going to eventually end up crying out to the Lord.

As these events develop, notice, first of all, the request of Pharaoh (Exodus 5:1). The request is stated and then the reasons for the request are given:

"And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, "Let My people go..."'" (Exodus 5:1).

You notice the emphasis there on "said": *"And afterward Moses and Pharaoh came and said."* At some point, in order for them to do God's will, they had to open their mouths and speak. That is true with us. Many times God wants us to open our mouth, and He wants us to speak because we possess as Christians the eternal gospel. Unless that gospel is verbally articulated to unsaved people, they cannot hear, let alone understand, the message of salvation.

One of the great works of evangelism happens in Acts 8:35; when Philip evangelizes the Ethiopian eunuch:

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him" (Acts 8:35).

That conversion would not have happened, presumably, had Philip not opened his mouth and talked. I bring this up because this is a terrifying thing to us. We would rather go over to someone's house and paint the fence and mow the lawn. We would rather do anything for people other than verbally share with them the message of Jesus Christ.

I have met Christians that are involved in these humanitarian causes. When they talk about their evangelism to their neighbor, they talk about how they go over and mow the lawn, feed the dog, paint the fence, and trim the bushes. You ask them, "Have you shared with them the gospel?" "No, we have not gotten around to that yet." "How long have you been over there mowing their lawn and painting their fence?" "Oh, I have been doing that for about 20 years."

The truth of the matter is maybe mowing the lawn and all of these kinds of things give you a platform to speak from, but nobody ever went to heaven because someone came over and mowed your lawn. Now, if you want to come over to my house and mow my lawn, feel free to do that. I am already saved. At some point, these humanitarian efforts need to be cooperative with the actual proclamation of the gospel. I would not be saved today if somebody, when I was about the age of 16 and did not understand the gospel at all, had not opened their mouth and explained it to me.

Many times the work of God that he wants us to do involves some kind of verbal message, and we have to get past this fear barrier and open our mouths and speak. That is what Moses and Aaron are doing here. As they give this request, they give some reasons for it. What is the request?

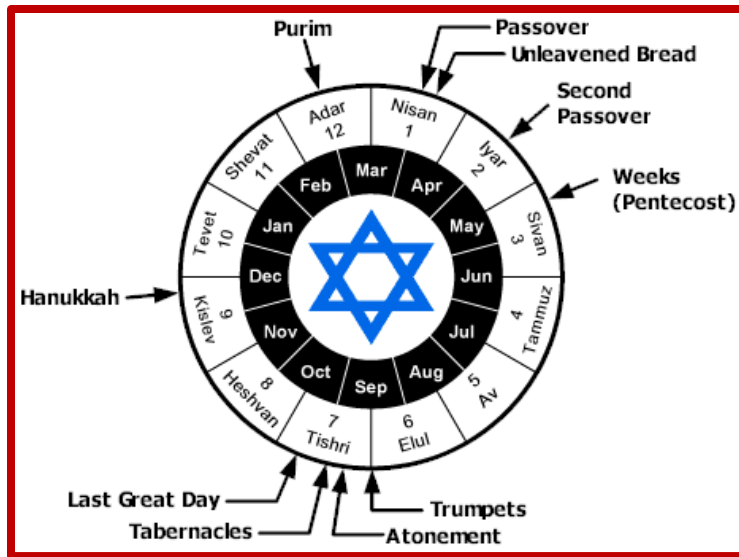
"Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, "Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness..."'" (Exodus 5:1).

Why should the Nation of Israel be let out of 400 years of bondage? So they could get away from Egypt, separate themselves from Egypt, and celebrate a feast in the wilderness.

What is this feast in the wilderness stuff? It is talking about how God, post parting of the Red Sea, is going to take the Nation of Israel to Mount Sinai. This is called the Mountain of God; it is also called Horeb. It is a place that Moses and Aaron knew very well. Their meeting before they came to Egypt, which we studied last week, took place at Mount Sinai. This is the area where Moses saw the burning bush, and this is where God is going to give to His redeemed people His Law—the Law of God. That is coming in Exodus 19 and the chapters that follow.

Part of the Law of God is going to be putting them under a calendar system. They are going to have their own calendar.

Levitical Feasts (Leviticus 23)			
Feast	Season	Purpose	Type
Passover	Spring	Redemption	1 Cor 5:7
Unleavened Bread	Spring	Separation	John 6:35
1 st Fruits	Spring	Praise	1 Cor 15:20
Pentecost	Spring	Praise	Acts 2:1-4
Trumpets	Fall	New Year	Matt 24:31
Atonement	Fall	Lev 16	Zech 12:10
Booths	Fall	Wilderness provision	Zech 14:16-18



He is also going to put them under a feast system where there are going to be seven feasts. These are all described in Leviticus 23: Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles. These are all significant because they relate to things related to the First Coming of Christ, and then the remaining fall feasts—Tabernacles, Atonement, and Trumpets—relate to things that Jesus is going to do in the Second Coming of Christ. This is a hint of the feast system that is on the way.

You will notice that God wants His people to celebrate: *""Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness""* (Exodus 5:1). God is into celebration. Sometimes we look at God as if He is some kind of party pooper, a cosmic killjoy. Anything God touches, it has got to make us miserable. Some Christians are like that. It is like they drink gasoline or something for breakfast every morning, and they are just mad and angry.

That is not Christianity. We are to walk in the joy of the Lord. The Bible is about celebrations. Jesus performed His first miracle in John 2 at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, a celebration-type of environment. We need to develop a more balanced view of God. Yes, God is holy, but He is a God that wants His people to celebrate things at the appointed and the proper time.

You will notice I have trumpets highlighted because the Rapture is going to take place September 22nd or 23rd. Did you guys know that? It is on the internet, so it is true, right? You have all these people saying the Rapture is going to take place September 22nd and 23rd. Why are they saying that? Because that is when Trumpets comes up. After all, the Rapture involves the trumpet.

Is the Rapture going to take place September 22nd or 23rd? It could. I do not have any problems saying it could. The problem is when they say it has to. Now we have a problem because when you say it has to happen September 22nd and 23rd, that means the Rapture cannot happen on the 21st, which would bum me out because that is my

birthday. The truth of the matter is the Rapture, the way God has set it up, can take place any moment, any time. It is not contingent upon it happening on a particular feast day.

People are saying this, "We are entering September and this is the high watch time." I thought every day is the high watch time because the Rapture can take place any second. The Rapture can take place before this sermon is over—some of you might be praying for that to happen.

Part of the confusion in this whole thing is people basically have a difficult time understanding that the feasts concern Israel. We are not Israel; we are the church, the body of Christ. The Rapture concerns the church, not Israel. At Trumpets you will see a trumpet sounded at the end of the Tribulation Period (Matthew 24:31). Jesus will gather His elect—that would be the Nation of Israel—where they have been scattered by the Antichrist from the four corners of the earth. That is a gathering that is horizontal.

That is not our Rapture; our Rapture is vertical. We are going up—"harpazo," "caught up." There becomes a problem trying to connect Church Age events—the Rapture is the great event which will end the Church Age—with a calendar system that does not belong to the church at all.

When people get all lathered up about "the Rapture is going to happen on September 22nd or 23rd to correlate with Trumpets," I say, "Praise the Lord. It could happen, but it does not have to happen then." Maybe it will happen before, or maybe it will happen slightly after, but it does not matter. I do not need to know the exact day or the time. I just need to be ready to go at any time.

I know a lot of people listening are saying, "There he goes again with all that Pre-Trib Rapture stuff. I do not agree with that." Well that is okay. You do not have to agree with me because we will explain everything to you on the way up.

They are being brought out of Egypt, and they are being put under this sort of calendar-type system. They are being called into worship. God is interested in creating worshipers. You see that in His dealings with the Nation of Israel. This is what Jesus said to the woman at the well:

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24).

Of all of the things God is looking for in this world, He is looking for people to worship Him. The Father is seeking such people. He does not even say here that He is seeking people to do great exploits for Him, although He is seeking those people. It does not say here that He is seeking people to use their spiritual gifts, although He seeks that.

One of the fundamental things He is looking for is worshipers. "I want people to worship Me in spirit and truth." In other words, you hear the truth as the Spirit illuminates it, and the natural reaction is to worship the Lord. Worship is not something where we just go through the motions: "Let us get the singing out of the way so we can get to the sermon" kind of thing. Some people say, "Let us get the sermon out of the way so we can get to the singing at the end."

It is not one of those things where you go through the motions. It is one of those things that you invest yourself in, because those are the type of people that God is seeking. That is what He wanted for Israel, by taking them out of this bondage. He wanted to put them under this celebration system. The Father is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and truth.

Pharaoh hears all of this, and he is not happy with the request. Have you ever had a boss or someone in authority over you that was never happy no matter what you said or what you did—Time off, request rejected; vacation request, rejected; criticism, criticism, criticism. "You are just being lazy. Oh, you do not want to work on Sundays? You are just being lazy."

That is what Moses and Aaron are facing here. Look at Pharaoh's reaction:

"But Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go'"
(Exodus 5:2).

It is a tremendous question here asked by Pharaoh: "Who is the Lord? You are telling me that the God of Israel, the Lord of Israel, wants me to let this people group, the Jewish nation, go? Who is the Lord? I have never heard of Him," and he is right. Egyptologists estimate that there were probably about 80 Egyptian gods at the time when this was written. We would call them the Egyptian pantheon, many different gods. Pharaoh is basically saying here, "The God that you are talking about is not on my list. So who is the Lord?"

Do you know what, Pharaoh? You are about to get an explanation as to exactly who the Lord is, because what is coming upon Egypt are ten plagues. Every single one of them is designed to mock an Egyptian deity.

The Egyptians worshiped the Nile because that was the source of commerce and nourishment, seafood. It is like how people worship—maybe they do not call themselves worshipers of this, but it is in their hearts—the stock market or the banking system or interest rates. People look at those things as if they are the source of their livelihood. That is how the Egyptians looked at the Nile.

God says, "I will deal with that. I will turn the Nile into blood, and it is going to move on from there to frogs, gnats, flies, disease on cattle, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and the

death of the firstborn." Why is God doing this? Because these are all the things the Egyptians worshiped as part of the Egyptian pantheon.

"Do you like frogs? You want to worship frogs? Have some frogs. I will multiply them all over Egypt, right down to the death of the firstborn," because the Egyptians worshiped their firstborn. God took out the firstborn all over Egypt.

When Pharaoh says here, "I do not know the Lord, who is the Lord?" The rest of the Book of Exodus is answering that inquiry. You are about to find out exactly who the Lord is that you are mocking. He says here: *"I do not know the Lord"* (Exodus 5:2).

Is that not the definitive issue in a person's life? You either know the Lord or you do not. What does it mean to know somebody? It is not dealing with data that is placed in a person's mind. That is part of it, but that is not the complete picture. To know someone is relational. In fact, if you go to Genesis 4:1 sometime, you will see that Adam knew his wife. What does that even mean? She got pregnant. That is where Cain came from.

The most intimate form of expression between man and woman, the sexual relationship, is called in the Scripture (Genesis 4:1), knowing, knowledge of somebody. By way of illustration, by way of analogy, that is what the Lord wants for every single human being. He does not want us to know about Him; He wants us to know Him. This is relational. This is conversational.

If I am in an intimate relationship with someone and we have not spoken to each other in 15 years, that is not much of a relationship. When you know the Lord, the Lord is constantly speaking to you. He speaks to you in all kinds of different ways. Creation would be an example, but the primary way He speaks to you is through His word. Then we turn around and we speak to the Lord through prayer.

I do not know if you have been in any one-way conversations with people. They are very frustrating when they do all the talking and you do not talk or they want you to talk and they never say anything. We can pray and pray and pray and never read His word. That is a one way conversation. We can study and study and study and never pray. That is a one way conversation. God wants this flowing in both directions. That is what knowing somebody means.

If somebody comes to me with relational issues, marital issues, the first question I am going to ask is what is your level of communication like. Communication is the lifeblood of any relationship. God wants us to know Him; it is a personal relationship. I remember witnessing to somebody once and they said, "The way you talk about Jesus, you talk about Him like you know Him or something." I replied, "I do. I do know Him, and He wants that relationship with you, too."

You put your finger on the definitive issue. That is really what it comes down to at the end: Do you know the Lord or not? There are a lot of people out there that go through a

bunch of rituals called religion, but they do not know the Lord. Jesus said this in Matthew 7:21-23:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and in Your name perform many miracles?'" (Matthew 7:21-22).

"Look at all of this stuff we did. Look at all of this stuff we memorized." But Jesus will say this in Matthew 7:23:

"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you ['ginosko,' relational]; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'" (Matthew 7:23).

He is saying, "I never had any personal relationship with you." We have made the world of Christianity so complicated; yet what it comes down to is a personal relationship with your Creator and your Redeemer. I remember years ago I was sitting in a church with somebody, and I tried to explain that, and she said, "I have been sitting in this church for X amount of years, and no one has ever said that. I wish someone had told me that at the beginning when I started coming to this church. I wish people had told me it is a personal relationship with God."

Apparently, God wants this with us because He moved heaven and earth, as we memorialized it in communion this morning, to remove the barrier that inhibits that relationship. Yet, it is a tragic thing when people do not really know the Lord. Jesus said this in the Upper Room to his hand-picked disciples:

"These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering a service to God. These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me" (John 16:1-3).

"To you disciples there is coming a wave of persecution against you, and it is going to be orchestrated by people who think they are actually doing a service to God. The reason that they are so confused is they do not know Me. They do not have a relationship with Me."

Why do people do the stuff that they do? We are living in a weird world, and it is getting weirder. I do not understand somebody like what happened in Minnesota a couple of weeks ago, going to the Annunciation School and killing a bunch of people there, praying during school time, a bunch of young students, kids. I do not understand how somebody could do something like that, but there is a reason: that person obviously did not know God. The killer, the murderer, if that person knew God, they would not do stuff like that.

Many times it is easy to get mad at the exterior. Why do people behave this way? Why do they act that way? They do not know the Lord. They do not have a relationship with the Lord. If they had a relationship with the Lord, they would not think the way they think. They would not act the way that they act.

What Pharaoh is saying is he is getting ready to cause a lot of trouble. "The reason I am going to do all this stuff," Pharaoh, through his own words, gets to the root of the problem. "I do not know the Lord." That is why people do the things that they do.

Look at the second part of Exodus 5:2. Pharaoh says, *"...and besides, I will not let Israel go"* (Exodus 5:2). Is that not what God said would happen? In Exodus 3:19, God told Moses when He was preparing him:

"But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion" (Exodus 3:19).

"Moses, when you get pushback, why are you acting surprised? I told you this would happen and I have to deal with Pharaoh's heart." When we step out and do the will of God, and you find that your circle of friends does not like you anymore, your family thinks you have lost your mind and they do not want anything to do with you, we sit around scratching our heads saying, "I cannot believe this has happened," When God told you this would happen. It is very clear: "You want to be My disciple; you are going to incur the wrath of Satan, the fallen nature, and the world's system." So do not act shocked when it happens.

"Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus [not might be, not could be] will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12).

You have a little book at home, a book of promises. I have those books. They tell you all of the promises of God, and usually they are warm and fuzzy type promises—God's going to provide, God's going to meet your needs. I never see this one included in those books but this is a promise: *"Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted"* (2 Timothy 3:12). The only thing that level of persecution confirms is that you have surrendered to the call of Jesus to become His disciple.

Salvation is free, folks. Justification is free. But I will tell you something: this walk of being a disciple—that is going to cost you something. When it happens, not if, do not be shocked.

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you" (1 Peter 4:12).

Why are you surprised at persecution? Why are you surprised at problems? Why do we act like it is some kind of unwanted intruder? It goes with the territory. Peter is also very

clear that our sufferings should not be because we are rude, crude, and obnoxious. There are a lot of Christians that suffer by doing goofy things. That is not what Peter is dealing with.

He is dealing with somebody that says, "Lord, I am a believer and the rest of my life is Yours. Do what You want with it. To the best of my ability, under Your power, I am going to try to press into Your purposes." You start talking to God that way, and do not expect everybody to stand up and applaud. I am not saying God is not faithful in sending encouragement. He is very good at that, but when the pushback comes, not if, do not act stunned and shocked and surprised: "I cannot believe this is happening."

Did you know that of the most populous countries of the world—four of the 5, 80% of them—right now, as I speak, have Christians under the thumb of persecution? Some would call it the red-green axis—red, Marxist; green, the color of Islam. Right now as I speak, your brothers and sisters around the world, in 80% of the most populous countries on Earth, are under the thumb and rod of persecution.

As Americans, we just look at that and say it is unconscionable, because we are so blessed and spoiled in our country. I love America, do not get me wrong. Every day of my life I thank God that He allowed me to grow up in this country and live here. But this bubble that we have is an abnormality. It is an abnormality today, and it is an abnormality in the last 2,000 years of church history.

There is a doctrine in Scripture. This is not going to pack the church out and bring in the biggest offerings either, talking about this. It is something we need to know on the front end. There is a doctrine of suffering where God allows things that are more important to Him that transcend our immediate desire for comfort and prosperity. "Moses, Pharaoh is going to push back, and that should not surprise you. I told you this would happen."

This leads to a second request by Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh. In Exodus 5:3 there is a request. Then the consequence, if the request is not met, is articulated by Moses and Aaron. It says this:

"Then they said, 'The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, otherwise He will fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword'" (Exodus 5:3).

That looks pretty serious to me. Notice this name that Moses gives to God: *"the God of the Hebrews."* In Exodus 5:1 it is "the God of Israel." When we were in the Book of Genesis, we talked a lot about the names of God, how each name of God brings out a different feature of God's character. The seventh one that we covered is in Genesis 33:20, where God is called the "God of Israel."

Names of God in Genesis
Elohim (1:1) – Power

Yahweh (2:4) – Relational
El Roi (Gen. 16:13) – Aware
El Olam (21:33) – Eternal
Jehovah Jireh (22:14) – Provision
God Isaac Feared (31:42, 53) – Reverenced
God, the God of Israel (33:20) – National

I do not see anywhere in the New Testament where this changed. He is still the God of Israel. Obviously, our relationship with Him today is different. It is not national. He is the groom; we are the bride. He is the head; we are the body. He is doing something unique and different today, but that never, never, never, never subtracted or detracted from the fact that one of His names is the God of Israel.

In fact, if I am understanding the End Times right, God Himself is going to fight for the Nation of Israel when Israel needs the help the most. That is in Zechariah 14:2, where he says:

"For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city" (Zechariah 14:2).

This is Israel in her darkest time.

"Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle" (Zechariah 14:3).

Do you mean Israel does not even need America's help? You do not need anybody's help if God comes out of the corner, fighter, out of the ring. God fights for Israel when no one else will fight for her. God takes up Israel's cause when no one else will do it. Why would He do that? Because He is the God of Israel. He has sworn an unconditional covenant to the Nation of Israel.

"But look at the Jews. They did this wrong and they did that wrong. They are bad people." Just listen to Candace Owens and Tucker Carlson go on and on—well, do not listen to them; I will listen for you—ragging on the Nation of Israel, pointing out every bad thing that they have ever done. I am thinking to myself, listening to these influencers that I call sinfluencers, "You do not even know who you are messing with. You really want to get in a slugging match with God?" God is the God of the Hebrews. He is the God of Israel. He fights for Israel when no one else will fight for her.

*"Behold, He who keeps Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep"* (Psalm 121:4).

The world is about to find that out, are they not? Pharaoh, why should you let God's people go? Because God is a God of Israel. He is the God of the Jews. Jesus said that to the woman at the well. He said, *"Salvation is from the Jews"* (John 4:22).

Had God not worked supernaturally in the covenant structure that He set up that we have studied in the Book of Genesis to bless the world through the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we would have no Bible. We would have no Savior, because Jesus was Jewish. He was not a Methodist or a Presbyterian or a Bible church guy.

You study John's Gospel, and you will see Jesus going five times to celebrate the various feasts of Israel. He was honoring Leviticus 23. Do you want to tell me Jesus was a Palestinian? What Palestinian would go celebrate the feasts of Israel? Are we having a reading problem here with this Christian Palestinianism?

Are we not seeing the genealogy in Matthew 1, where Jesus is linked genealogically back to David a thousand years before, and then from there another thousand years back to Abraham? Does that not sound Jewish to you? Jesus was a Palestinian? Give me a break. Jesus was Jewish. Jesus was Hebrew.

Of course He would be, because God said at the beginning of His book: "I am going to bless the world through the Nation of Israel." No Israel, no Jesus. No Israel, no Bible. No Israel, no kingdom coming, which will be headquartered not in Washington, DC, but in the city of Jerusalem.

We are entering a very peculiar age in the United States of America, where more and more Christian voices are turning against Israel; more and more people that are more conservative, right-leaning type people, are turning against Israel. If that is what it means to be a conservative today, count me out. I am a MAGA person and I voted for our president three times. I think he is doing a great job. He is not a perfect person, but if being part of the MAGA base, the MAGA movement means turning against Israel, then I am absentia. I am out.

If you touch Israel, you touch the apple of God's eye. We need to be very careful about the way we think about Israel, the way we talk about Israel. We need to be very careful about putting our support behind people that are anti-Israel. In the good old days, it was the left that was anti-Israel. We expected it from them, but it is not that way anymore. There are more and more conservative type voices on the right that are anti-Israel. Why would I be anti-Israel when God identifies Himself as the God of Israel and the God of the Hebrews?

You will notice He says here, related to this request, "Please." It is like Moses and Aaron are being really nice about it:

"Please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God" (Exodus 5:3).

Three days. How do you interpret that? If I interpreted that the way people interpret Genesis 1, where they think each day of Creation is an age of time—because they are intimidated by Charles Darwin—I would say, since the same Hebrew structure is used here, "day"—or "days" plural plus a number, a numerical modifier—I would say that Moses is making a request for three billion years, which is crazy.

Whenever you see "day" in the Bible, the word "yom" with a number attached to it, it always refers to a 24-hour day. No one would interpret each day as an age there in Exodus 5. Why are we playing games with Genesis 1? The reason we are playing games with Genesis 1 is that we are trying to fit Genesis 1 into human philosophy.

When I got saved, I believed all this stuff about billions of years of evolution. I believed all of it because I was a product of public schools, K through 12. They taught me that evolution was a fact. Then I got saved and I tried to make the Bible fit evolution. It is like mixing oil and water. As hard as I tried, I could not do it.

I reached a point in my walk with the Lord where the Lord said, "I am not really interested in baptizing your pagan philosophy. I am not interested in putting a coat of fresh paint over your pagan belief system concerning origins that you were not even around to see when I did it."

That is what God said to Job, "Where were you, Job, when I did this and that in Creation?" Revealing that Job does not know anything. There is only one eyewitness to Genesis 1, it is God Himself. I am either going to take His word for it, or I am going to enthrone Carl Sagan and Charles Darwin and the rest of them.

As much as I tried to do that, the Lord started to deal with me that, "I do not care about your pagan belief system. In fact, what I am going to do in the walk of discipleship and sanctification is I am going to take a wrecking ball to the whole thing, and I am going to rebuild you from the ground up."

That is what the Lord will do for you in any area. When you submit to His calling to be a disciple, He will take everything that you thought was right and show you it was not. The great thing about it is that He will replace it with something better. I have such a better understanding of how things came about, because I am trusting in the only eyewitness that was there. Carl Sagan was not there, Charles Darwin was not there.

God was there. He says, "This is how I did it. I did it in six 24-hour days. Do not play games with the Hebrew. Do not play games with language. Submit to Me." If you will not do it here, you are going to pay a price regarding how you interpret other sections of Scripture. You would never interpret Exodus 5 that way, even though it is the same Hebrew structure, but you want to do that in Genesis 1. Three days' journey.

You will notice that Israel, in this three days' journey, is called to go out into the wilderness because God wants to remove them from Egyptian influences so He can

teach them how to worship the right way. Sometimes when God wants to teach you the right way of doing things, He will separate you for a season from deleterious and negative influences.

"Therefore, 'Come out from their midst, and be separate,' says the Lord" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

"Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

There is absolutely nothing wrong with seasons of alienation, isolation, being alone with God, being away from all of the influences of the world, where God will take our minds and He will renew them.

When you leave for three days, as Moses and Aaron are speaking to Pharaoh, "The reason we are making this request is so that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God." The prior verse was: "You are going to celebrate"—the Levitical system, the calendar, feast days. But another part of the Law of Moses that is coming at Mount Sinai is the sacrificial system. What an elaborate system that is going to be. There is the layout of the tabernacle that is coming later on in the Book of Exodus. There is a picture, or a portrait, of the Ark of the Covenant that is coming in the Book of Exodus.

Why is God doing this? Why is He putting them under a sacrificial system? This is very important to understand: it is not to redeem them, because as we will be studying, they already had redemption as they passed through the Red Sea and the prior work of the Passover lamb. They already had redemption. If they already had redemption, why put them under this system? The system was not given to redeem a people, but it was given to a redeemed people, where these folks are God's people.

As you will see, they still sin. This is the crowd that is going to build the golden calf. They are going to mess up a lot of things, so now we have a real issue. How does the Holy God maintain His presence amongst His people when His people are sinful? Answer: sacrificial system. The sacrificial system will get the job done. The sacrificial system is not there to redeem you. You already had that, but it is so a holy God can maintain His presence amongst His people who had been redeemed, but still sin.

If you can understand that, you will understand exactly what 1 John 1:9 is doing in your Bible, John himself identifying with the audience: *"If we confess."* What does that mean? It is "homologeo"—"homo," same and "logeo," spoken word—"homologeo," agree.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Why in the world would I ever have to do that if I am saved by the blood of Jesus already? Because 1 John 1:9 is not there to get you saved. If it was there to get you

saved, why would John say, "if we." That means John is not saved. That does not make any sense. First John 1:9 is not there to get you saved.

You have that the moment you place your personal faith in Jesus Christ. The problem with us is that we still sin, because the sin nature did not take a holiday just because I am a Christian. I have the resources in Christ to say no to the sin nature, but I can go back to it at will, not as a slave as I once did, but at will.

As God's child, I still sin. Do you guys sin at all as Christians? Those of you that did not say yes are sinning right now because you are lying. When I sin, what happens? I do not become a non-Christian. What happens is that my intimacy with God is short-circuited for a season.

It is like my wife and myself. We have a dispute about something. Maybe one of us is in sin—that is me, right? I say something to her that is unkind. That does not mean the marriage is dissolved. She might want to dissolve the marriage, but legally, the marriage is still there. What is broken is my moment-by-moment enjoyment of her; my moment-by-moment intimacy with her is hindered. My position to her did not change, but my enjoyment and fellowship with her did change until I apologize to her.

The apology does not make us married again. The apology restores broken fellowship. That is what 1 John 1:9 is doing in your Bible. That is what the whole sacrificial system is doing here with the Book of Exodus. It is not to redeem them. It is the reality that even though you are redeemed, you are still going to sin, because you still sin.

How does a Holy God maintain His intimacy with you when you do sin? Answer: sacrificial system. Answer for the New Testament Christian: 1 John 1:9. All of these things are beautiful portraits of New Testament realities.

"The God of the Hebrews has met us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, otherwise He will fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword" (Exodus 5:3).

What is this dealing with here? First of all, it is a fulfillment of prophecy. All the way back in Exodus 3:18, it was predicted that Moses and Aaron would say, "Let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord," and now you see the prophecy being fulfilled.

Every time God makes a prediction, it will happen. It is just a matter of time. I like to promote this book by one of my mentors, John Walvoord, because it has every prophecy of the Bible—short-term, long-term. Every single one of them materializes.

What if they do not go and do what God said, and go into the wilderness for three days and worship the Lord and sacrifice to the Lord, and celebrate unto the Lord? There is a

consequence: "...otherwise He will fall upon us [that is not the Egyptians, that is the Hebrews] *with pestilence or with the sword*" (Exodus 5:3).

What is being introduced here? The reality of divine discipline, which is a covenant structure that God is going to put Israel under at Mount Sinai. Part of that covenant structure are blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. When Israel obeys God, she is blessed. When Israel disobeys God, she suffers consequences called divine discipline.

When Israel is under divine discipline, she does not stop being God's nation any more than your own children, when you discipline them, stop being your children. In fact, your willingness to impose discipline on them because of their disobedience actually proves they are your children.

Part of this request by Moses to Pharaoh is, "If you do not let us go and do this, God is going to discipline us as His nation." I think Moses understands this because back in Exodus 4:24-26, as Moses was getting ready to do the job God called him to do, it says:

"Now came about at the lodging place on the way that the Lord met him and sought to put him to death" (Exodus 4:24).

Why would God do that? Because Moses was disobedient. He had not circumcised his own son. Had it not been for Zipporah moving quickly here, Moses was about ready to be taken out of this world through divine discipline. If that happens, does Moses stop being God's child? No, but *"whom the Lord loves He disciplines"* (Hebrews 12:6).

There are things that get introduced into our lives when we, as God's children, move into disobedience. It does not detract from the fact that we are God's children, but it does enter another realm that can be quite severe at times—of divine discipline.

If a child runs out in the street without looking, any parent worth their salt will discipline that child so the next time the child thinks about running out in the middle of the street without looking, they can associate the momentary pain with the rebellious action and not run out in the middle of the street. That is great, because that prevents the child from being killed by a truck or a car. That is how discipline works. It is not judgment. Judgment is for the world. Divine discipline is for the Christian.

That whole concept is being unfolded here, as Moses is saying to Pharaoh, "You have to let us go for this three-day pilgrimage, or we are going to come under the disciplinary hand of God." A lot more of that is coming in the Law of Moses, particularly Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26. How it applies to you is Hebrews 12:5-13. That is how it applies to the Church Age believer: *"...whom The Lord loves He disciplines."*

Now let me just close with this: do not conclude that everything that is painful in your life is necessarily the result of divine discipline. It could be the result of divine discipline, but

the truth of the matter is, when you look at the full counsel of God, there are different storms that happen to people. I am talking about believers.

There are storms of correction. You can put Jonah into that category. "Go, preach to Nineveh." "No, I will not." He went the opposite way. God dealt with Jonah. He put him in time out for three days, vomited him back up on the shore, and suddenly Jonah was ready to do the will of God. That is a storm of correction. That is a storm that comes into a person's life because God is going to correct them.

Not all storms are that way. There are also storms of perfection, Job being the example. There is no known sin that I can find in Job's life. Yet you know about the calamities of Job. Sometimes God brings trials into our lives because He is trying to take us to the next level of maturity. It could have absolutely nothing to do with any disobedience on your part.

"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4).

Sometimes God says, "It's time to grow up. Time to move to the next level of Christ likeness. Time to move on in your progressive sanctification. You have been comfortable on that mountaintop for too long." If the truth would be known, we do not really grow very much in the mountain top experiences of life. It is the valleys in between the mountaintops where you grow.

Sometimes a storm or a trial comes into your life for that reason. Other times it could be a storm of correction. Storms of perfection. Storms of correction. Pretty good theology.

Do you think Pharaoh is going to hear one word of it? Not at all. He is going to take Israel's burden and increase it. We will see that next time, beginning in Exodus 5:4.

Let us pray. Father, we are grateful for the Book of Exodus, grateful for the principles that it establishes for the Christian life. Even though we are not the Nation of Israel, we can identify with Your hand and Your pattern and how You deal with us. I do ask, Lord, if anyone is here and they have never trusted in the Savior that today would be the day of salvation for them; that they might understand what Jesus did for them, and even as I am speaking, that they might exercise faith, which means trust in the finished work of the Savior.