BIBLE TEXT: Exodus 5:1-23

LESSON 50  Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 5:1-23
1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.
2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.
3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.
4 And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.
5 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.
6 And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying,
7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.
8 And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.
9 Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard

NOTES:

Egyptian Idolatry

Moses and Aaron had the confidence of the Children of Israel, but they still had to face Pharaoh -- and with the knowledge that he would refuse their request. If they had not known that God was with them, they probably never would have been able to get enough courage to stand before that idolatrous king to ask if the millions of people he held in slavery could go to the wilderness to worship a God he knew nothing about.

Archaeologists have found evidence in Egypt that there were at least 2,200 gods that the Egyptians worshiped. If Pharaoh had had many gods, why should he pay any attention to the God of his slaves? But we shall find that before God was through with Pharaoh, he had lost all confidence in his many gods.

Increased Oppression

All Pharaoh's interest was in getting the most work out of the Hebrews for nothing. God's people were receiving barely enough to keep them alive, and yet they had to work very hard. When Moses and Aaron asked that the people be given a few days off to go into the wilderness to worship God, Pharaoh complained that the people did not have enough to do and that was the reason they had time to think about such unnecessary things as offering sacrifices. It made him so angry that instead of giving them a holiday he made them work harder than before. He no longer provided the straw for making brick, and yet they were compelled to manufacture the same amount as previously. He thought that by such tremendous oppression he could discourage all their desire to think.

There are despotic rulers in our day who think they can do the same thing. In some countries the slave labourers live in very bad surroundings and are treated worse than we would treat our animals. They are not supposed to have any mind of their own. But God has put a soul in man, and his humanity cannot be destroyed. There is a longing in the heart of man for better things; and, whenever possible, he will throw off the yoke of his oppressors.

"Trust and Obey"

The Children of Israel had been hopeful that release would come soon; and now when their burdens were made even heavier than before, they began to wonder whether God was for them, after all. Moses himself wondered why this should be. Was this God's way of fulfilling His promise?

God wants His people to trust Him. Sometimes when one is ill and is praying to God for healing, instead of getting better he will get worse. That is not the time to give up his faith in God, but he must lean a little harder on the Lord Who said, "I am the LORD that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). We sometimes hear the expression: "It is darkest just before the dawn." Sometimes we wonder how things can get any darker, and then even more trials come! But God has promised that His grace is sufficient. He wants His people to trust their hand in His, and wait for His will to be wrought.

God may sometimes let afflictions come to us, or He may try
And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. 

Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished.

So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw.

And the taskmasters hasted them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw.

And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?

Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore doest thou thus with thy servants?

There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people.

But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the LORD.

Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.

And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task.

And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh:

And they said unto them, The
LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

22 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me?

23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.