

BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW

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

vain words.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished.

¹² So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw.

¹³ And the taskmasters hasted *them*, saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw.

¹⁴ 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?

¹⁵ Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ But he said, Ye *are* idle, *ye are* idle: therefore ye say, Let us go *and* do sacrifice to the LORD.

¹⁸ Go therefore now, *and* work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh:

²¹ And they said unto them, The

us in other ways to the extent that we can do absolutely nothing for ourselves. Then when God delivers us, no one can get the glory for it but the Lord.

Just because God did not send deliverance the first time that Moses and Aaron asked for it, did not mean He was not going to fulfil His promise. The Word of God cannot fail. We shall see in future lessons that in God's time He brought out His people with a mighty hand, of which Moses often reminded the Israelites, as in Deuteronomy 5:15: "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm." Hundreds of years later, when the Children of Israel were again in bondage, this time to the Babylonians, Daniel remembered this great deliverance and prayed thus: "O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, ..." (Daniel 9:15).

We should take a lesson from this that nothing is too hard for the Lord, and we shall triumph gloriously if we but trust His wisdom. "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (Psalm 27:14).

QUESTIONS

1. What was Pharaoh's answer to Moses' and Aaron's request to let the people go?
2. How were the burdens of the people increased?
3. Do you think the Lord took note of the oppression of His people?
4. Does God promise to provide a "way to escape" when we are tempted?
5. Do you think Moses was discouraged when he prayed for the people?

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.