

Jehovah Or Pharaoh, Which?

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Exo. 5:1-23

Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh to beg leave of him for the Israelites to go and worship in the wilderness.

Exo. 5:1, *“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.”*

They demanded leave in the name of the Lord.

But Pharaoh answered their demand with a defiance of God. Exo. 5:2, *“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.”*

At first, Pharaoh very defiantly refused — *“neither will I let Israel go”*.

But God sent plague after plague upon Pharaoh and his people (river turned to blood; plagues of frog, lice, and flies); then Pharaoh began to make proposals.

Let us consider the four subtle and compromising proposals of Pharaoh.

The first proposal

Exo. 8:25, *“And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.”*

But this plan would never do. Exo. 8:26, *“And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?”*

It would have been an abomination unto God should they have offered the Egyptian sacrifices, and it would have been an abomination unto the Egyptians if they had offered to God their own sacrifices.

Hence, they could not sacrifice in the land without incurring the displeasure, either of God or of their taskmasters.

This plan would have caused them to be on common ground with the uncircumcised Egyptians, and thus put Jehovah on a level with the gods of Egypt.

In this case, an Egyptian could have said, “I see no difference between us; you have your worship and we have ours; but it is all worship.”

There are those who endorse and support many foreign things in the worship who say to us, "There is really no basic difference between us."

It is the difference that is the same as between truth and error, or right and wrong. John 8:32, "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"

Nothing short of complete separation will please God. 2 Cor. 6:14-17, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,*"

There was no meeting place for Jehovah's people in Egypt. There was no temple, no tabernacle, no altar.

A salvation which would have left them in Egypt could not possibly be God's salvation.

Therefore, Moses boldly declared unto Pharaoh that he and his brethren were determined to carry out the will of Jehovah. Exo. 8:27, "*We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us.*"

So should it be with the Christian — he is to crucify himself unto the world.

- Gal. 2:20, "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*"
- Gal. 6:14, "*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*"

Thus, the cross of Christ has not only put away the Christian's sins, but also dissolved forever his connection with the world.

- Rom. 6:1-4, "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the*

glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

- Rom. 6:6-7, *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.”*
- Rom. 6:12, *“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”*
- Rom. 12:2, *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

The Christian is to walk in the spirit.

- Gal. 5:16, *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”*
- Psalms 1:1-2, *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”*

The second proposal

Exo. 8:28, *“And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: intreat for me.”*

This proposal was very much like the first one.

When the first offer was rejected, then Pharaoh consented for them to go into the wilderness, but not *“very far away”*.

Perhaps Pharaoh had heard something of their design to return to Canaan and suspected that if once they left Egypt, they would never come back again. So he was not willing that they should get out of his sight.

If he could not keep them in Egypt, he would at least keep them near it, so that he might continue to have some influence over them.

In this way they might be brought back again, and thereby their testimony would be more effectively abated than if they had never left Egypt at all.

There is always a more serious damage done to the cause of Christ by persons who seemingly give up the world, but who return to it again, than if they had remained in it.

2 Pet. 2:20-21, *“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,*

they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

Therefore, if people do not go "very far away" they had better not go at all.

The third proposal after the plague of the animals dying

Exo. 10:8-11, "And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD. And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence."

Pharaoh knew that just as long as he could keep the children in Egypt, Israel would remain in bondage to him.

Likewise, Satan knows today that just as long as our children remain not as Christians, they would remain in bondage to him.

When we insist that God's people are a "peculiar people" (1 Pet. 2:9), the world says, "But that does not necessarily mean that your children ought to be."

- Too many parents have been influenced by this false philosophy, for they have gone to worship God, but have left their children in Egypt.
- There is little effort to instill in their children Christian values and to teach them words from God.
- The thought is to let them sow their wild oats first, then let them make up their own minds later whether they want to serve God, or not.
- If a child grows up not knowing Christ, then how can he take the matter of following him seriously?

Parents in the wilderness; and the children in Egypt — terrible thought. This would not have been a complete deliverance.

If the children remained in Egypt, the parents could not be said to have left, inasmuch as their children were a part of themselves.

The most that could have been said of such a case was that they were partly serving Jehovah and partly serving Pharaoh.

But Jehovah could have no part with Pharaoh; He desired all or nothing.

Matt. 6:33, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

This is a truth that parents need to learn — that it is their duty to bring up their children in the way of the Lord.

- Eccl. 12:1, *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;”*
- Deut. 11:18-21, *“Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.”*
- Prov. 22:6, *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”*

We should not be satisfied with any other portion of religion for our little ones than that which we practice and enjoy ourselves.

The fourth proposal - Let your flocks stay

It came after the plague of boils, plague of hail and fire, plague of locusts which destroyed their crops, and complete darkness over the land for three days.

Exo. 10:24, *“And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you.”*

What persistence! Pharaoh disputed over every inch of Israel's way out of Egypt!

- He first sought to keep them in the land.
- Then to keep them near the land.
- Then to keep a part of them in the land — their children.
- And now, finally, when he could not succeed in any of the first three proposals, he sought to send them forth without their possessions.

“Go into the wilderness if you must, but leave your business in Egypt.”

Satan is perfectly willing that we be as pious and prayerful as we want to be on Sunday, providing that we forget all about such things on Monday.

He is will for us to be devoutly religious if we will only confine our religion to the church house.

But a religion that does not enter and sanctify business and business relations, is not the religion of Jesus Christ.

2 Cor. 10:5, *“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”*

Moses' reply. Exo. 10:26, *“Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither.”*

Egypt is not the place for God's redeemed.

Therefore, let us leave nothing behind — neither our possessions, nor ourselves, neither our loved ones, nor our affections; so that there shall be no temptation to look back.

Jesus declared that we who are His disciples are not to look back.

- Luke 9:62, *“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*
- Luke 17:32, *“Remember Lot's wife.”*

He who enters the service of Christ must do it with his whole heart. He must give up the world, for he who comes still loving the world, still looking with regret on having given up its pleasures and honors, who has not wholly forsaken them, cannot truly be a Christian.

Conclusion

Jesus is worthy of all. 1 Cor. 6:19-20, *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

There should not be any kind of affection in the heart of a Christian of which Christ would not want to be a part.

This story is indeed a living example to our own age, revealing the necessity for absolute obedience and complete separation from the world.

- The call of God is separation, but the world would urge us to remain in the land and be neighborly.
- The will of God is that we maintain our distance from the enemy’s land.
- Then the world would say that if we insist on being peculiar, it is not necessary that we compel our children to be so.
- When the world insists that we leave our possessions behind, we should realize that it is necessary that we conduct our business in harmony with the spirit of true Christianity, and that our possessions, too, be used for God’s glory, for truly, *“There shall not a hoof be left behind.”*

