

The page is framed by a wide, intricate border of floral and foliate motifs. The design features scrolling vines, acanthus leaves, and stylized flowers in shades of blue, orange, and green, set against a light background with fine gold dots. The border is enclosed within a thin gold line.

The Gospel
According to
Moses
a study of exodus

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Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day



Today's Sermon: *A Very Bad Start*

Exodus 5:1-21

Exodus 4:27-31

²⁷ The LORD said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” So he met Moses at the mountain of God and kissed him. ²⁸ Then Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and also about all the signs he had commanded him to perform.

²⁹ Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, ³⁰ and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, ³¹ and they believed. And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.

Exodus 5:1-21

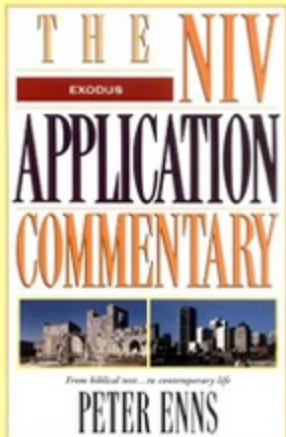
Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.’ ”

² Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go.”

³ Then they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, or he may strike us with plagues or with the sword.”

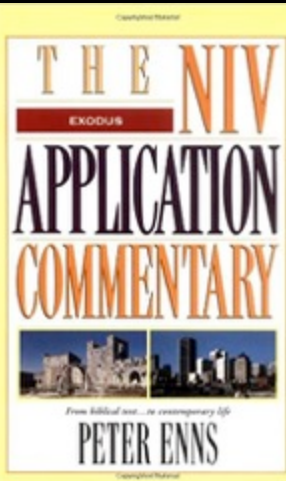
Perhaps nowhere is Pharaoh's hardness of heart demonstrated more clearly than in the first words he utters in the Exodus narrative: "Who is the LORD?" In time, of course, Pharaoh will have this question answered for him more pointedly than he ever imagined, and as such, Pharaoh's question foreshadows the irony of Israel's escape from his grasp. Moreover, verse 2 gives us a further glimpse into the true conflict that drives the subsequent chapters. As we saw in chapter 1, the true battle in Exodus is not between the Israelites and Pharaoh,

nor even between Moses and Pharaoh. Rather, it is between the God of Israel and Pharaoh...What, then, are we to make of Pharaoh's question to Moses in 5:2? Is this an honest question? Should we expect Pharaoh to have known who Yahweh is?



Pharaoh's question is not simply a request for more information. Again, one of the points of this narrative is to demonstrate Pharaoh's hardness of heart. Pharaoh does not keep the Israelites under lock and key because he doesn't know who Yahweh is, but because he does not *know* Yahweh, meaning he does not accord him any respect. At the very least, he should recognize as a matter of diplomacy the God of these slave people, just as he recognizes the many gods of the Egyptian pantheon and the gods of other nations around him. Pharaoh's response is disrespectful and sarcastic. He is, with disastrous consequences, positioning himself to do battle with this so-called "God of Israel." Pharaoh here counterattacks: Yahweh's messengers are not even given a hearing.

~ Peter Enns, *Exodus*, The NIV Application Commentary
(Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 153-154.



Exodus 5:1-21

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Exodus 5:1-21

⁴ But the king of Egypt said, “Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their labor? Get back to your work!” ⁵ Then Pharaoh said, “Look, the people of the land are now numerous, and you are stopping them from working.”

⁶ That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and overseers in charge of the people: ⁷ “You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw.”

Exodus 5:1-21

⁸ But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don't reduce the quota. They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.'

⁹ Make the work harder for the people so that they keep working and pay no attention to lies."

¹⁰ Then the slave drivers and the overseers went out and said to the people, "This is what Pharaoh says: 'I will not give you any more straw. ¹¹ Go and get your own straw wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced at all.' " ¹² So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw.

Exodus 5:1-21

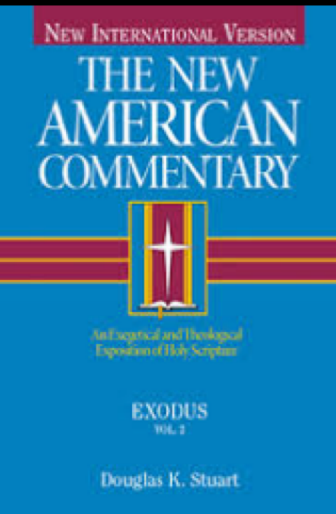
¹³ The slave drivers kept pressing them, saying, “Complete the work required of you for each day, just as when you had straw.” ¹⁴ And Pharaoh’s slave drivers beat the Israelite overseers they had appointed, demanding, “Why haven’t you met your quota of bricks yesterday or today, as before?”

¹⁵ Then the Israelite overseers went and appealed to Pharaoh: “Why have you treated your servants this way? ¹⁶ Your servants are given no straw, yet we are told, ‘Make bricks!’ Your servants are being beaten, but the fault is with your own people.”

Straw is preserved plant stalks from the more rigid long-stalk grains and vegetables. Straw comes from those plants that are harvested but whose stalks are inedible to humans and/or animals. Stubble is the very short remaining stalks of plants after harvesting: the bit between the root and where the reaping scythe or sickle cut the plant. It was only a relatively poor substitute for straw, making the process of producing suitable bricks much harder, but it also was much harder to gather from harvested fields even when the season is right (requiring careful, tedious hand pulling and cutting) as compared to the purposely preserved (and usually bundled) straw and was almost hopelessly difficult to gather in the off season...



The fact that the Israelites under the new rules simply could not meet their brick quotas is not surprising: Pharaoh had made the task virtually impossible. When the foremen, even under the penalty of being beaten, could not get the people to produce any more bricks (vv. 13–14), the situation was obviously intolerable. It is not surprising that an anguished appeal to Pharaoh for relief followed (vv. 15–16), even though such an appeal was essentially an act of desperation, presumably having little chance of success.



~ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 165.

Exodus 5:1-21

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Exodus 5:1-21

¹⁷ Pharaoh said, “Lazy, that’s what you are – lazy! That is why you keep saying, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.’” ¹⁸ Now get to work. You will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your full quota of bricks.”

¹⁹ The Israelite overseers realized they were in trouble when they were told, “You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day.”

Exodus 5:1-21

²⁰ When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, ²¹ and they said, “May the LORD look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

Mark 6:45-51

⁴⁵ Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

⁴⁷ Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake.

Mark 6:45-51

He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” ⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down.

Job 42:1-3

Then Job replied to the LORD:

²“I know that you can do all things;
no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

³You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my plans without
knowledge?’

Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me to know.



Gospel Application:

Are you too quick to pray for the storm to end?

Gospel Application:

Are you too quick to pray for the storm to end?

*Trust God that he does things that are beyond our
comprehension*