

## The Turning Point

Exodus 5:19 – 6:9

Do you remember this song from the Broadway musical, *The Music Man*? “Oh, we got trouble, right here in River City...” Well, the city we’re concerned with is probably the ancient city of Memphis, and the river is the Nile. Pharaoh has turned on the Israelites with a vengeance. Yahweh’s demand to let the people go is treated with disdain and ridicule. “Make bricks,” says the great builder. Yet he takes away the straw needed to produce usable building blocks and delivers blows upon their heads when the slaves fail to meet their quota. The result is Israelite anger at Moses and Aaron and general discouragement and hopelessness. Then comes the turning point. God says, “Now I will get to work.”

### I. From Burden to Crisis

- A. For as long as anyone could remember the Egyptians worked the Israelites ruthlessly. (1:14)
- B. But as the people increased in number, the Egyptians added to the burden of their slavery.
- C. At last Moses came to them with a gospel message: “God will make you free.”  
Compare to John 8:36 – *If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.*
- D. But thanks to Pharaoh’s anger, the burdensome is now a crisis, life and death matter. (21)
- E. We, too, have a promise of freedom from sin’s oppression, but the devil strives to keep us.

### II. From Doubt to Faithlessness

- A. Chapter 4, verse 31, says the people believed Moses, but clearly it was not saving faith.
- B. Saving faith weathers adversity and disappointment and keeps eyes on God.
- C. Pharaoh said, “I will not let Israel go.” (5:2) The Israelites raged, “You have made us odious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.” (21)
- D. Quickly, Moses and the people whined, “**Why? Oh, why?**” (22) Even Moses grumbled, “*You have not delivered your people at all.*” (23)
- E. Jesus said to Peter, walking on the water, then sinking, “*You of little faith,*” . . .  
*why did you doubt?*” (Mt. 14:31) To Thomas:, “Be not faithless, but believing.” (John 20:27)

### III. From Nothing in View to God’s Panorama

- A. When Moses’ rosy picture turned dark, the people could not see through the gloom.
- B. This is an example of walking by sight and not by faith.
- C. Neither God nor His promises change, and His picture is always bright. Note verses 6, 7, 8.
- D. Nevertheless, the Israelites stubbornly refused to believe (verse 9); UNbelief is blind.
- E. We live impatiently in a dark world, but God’s Word brings light.  
*The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.* (Psa. 119:130)
- F. God’s powerful declarations became the turning point for Moses (but not Israel).

### IV. From an Unknown God to the Great I Am

- A. Note verse 3, Ch.6 - *And I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, by the name of God Almighty (יְיָ לְבָא), but by my name YAHWEH was I not known to them.*
- B. According to Moses, the Patriarchs did call upon *Yahweh*. But what God seems to be saying to Moses has to do with understanding the full meaning of the Name. “I was not recognized by them with My attribute of keeping faith, by the dint of which My name is called YHWH, [which means that I am] faithful to verify My words. . .I made promises to them, but I did not fulfill [them while they were alive].”
- C. God explained this a bit in Exodus 3 (God as unique and eternal), but this passage shows us that *Yahweh* has yet to fulfill everything in the Covenant given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Covenant that promised on oath that their descendants would forever possess the Land of Canaan. (Remember, Jesus, having the Name above every name (Philippians 2:9-10), is *Yahweh* completing the Covenant for all believers.
- D. Pharaoh did not know Yahweh (5:2 - *Who is the LORD [YAHWEH]?*), and the Israelites were for the most part ignorant of *Yahweh* (3:13 - *And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come to the children of Israel, and shall say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?*) This is reminiscent of Paul’s message to the Athenians: Acts 17<sup>23</sup> *For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.*
- E. Now (verses 6-8) *Yahweh* reveals Himself and His covenantal purpose:  
<sup>6</sup>“Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. <sup>7</sup>I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. <sup>8</sup>And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.”
- F. God only says, “I am the Lord” twice in Genesis, once to Abraham (15) and once to Jacob (28), and in both instances He is promising them the Land of Canaan.
- G. The Land and the People pave the way for Heaven, the Messiah and the worldwide Church.
- H. So don’t be like the Israelites who would not listen to Moses (9). Don’t be like the Athenians who figured there was an unknown god. Listen to the Gospel, accept Christ as your redeemer, claim your part in the Covenant and walk in faith to the heavenly Promised Land.