

# The Exodus: Seeming Setbacks

Read Exodus 5:1 – 7:7

Moses' first meeting with Pharaoh does not seem to go well (Exodus 5:1-5). Pharaoh tells Moses, "I don't know your god, and I will not let Israel go. Get back to work!" To accentuate his point, Pharaoh then gives a new order: the Israelites would now have to gather their own straw for bricks, and without decreasing their output (5:6-14).

When the Israelite foremen are beaten for not completing their quotas, they blame Moses (5:15-21), and Moses blames God (5:22-23) and himself (6:12).

God is unflustered by all this. He assures Moses that nothing has changed. God is never caught off guard.

- God repeats His promise that under compulsion Pharaoh will not only let His people go, but he will drive them out of his land (6:1).
- God tells Moses that He promised Canaan to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (6:2-4).
- He tells Moses to assure Israel that He has heard their groaning, and He will redeem them *"with an outstretched arm and with great judgments"* (v.6b, NASB). They will be His people, and He will be their God, and He will give them the land He promised. *"I am the LORD"* (v.8b, NASB).

The immediate results of their conversation are not promising: *So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage* (6:9, NASB). Moses in turn complains to God, blaming his seeming failure with Pharaoh on his own inadequacy (6:10-12, 28-30).

At this point, as He sends Moses back to Pharaoh for a second encounter, God gives Moses more details about His plan with Pharaoh. He has already told Moses that Pharaoh would only cooperate *"under compulsion"* (3:19-20). Now He explains further:

*"I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments."* (7:3-4, NASB)

God is deliberately hardening Pharaoh's heart, prolonging his disobedience in order to create an opportunity to demonstrate His power in the sight of Israel, Egypt, and the whole world. God is not unfairly manipulating a morally-neutral Pharaoh. He is using Pharaoh's disobedience and unbelief to glorify Himself. God regularly, systematically uses evil against itself. Further, God's prolonging of His judgments are a mercy to Egypt as well, which deserved to be destroyed already (Exodus 9:13-17).

Listen & Sing: [Come and See the Works of Our God](#) (from [LNWhymns.com](#))

© 2014 by Ken Bible