**Pharaoh Increases the Israelite Workload**

**A Bible Story From**

**Exodus 5:1–6:13**

**Bible Story Number: 1010490**

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**Bible Story**

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**Background**

God made a profound promise to Abraham (called a covenant):

I will bless you and make you the father of a great nation.

I will make you famous throughout history.

I will protect your allies and punish your enemies.

I will bless the entire world through your descendants.

This promise (covenant) was passed on to Isaac and Jacob. God reconfirmed His promise to the descendents of Abraham. The nation of Israel continued to be God’s chosen people.

The Israelites (descendents of Jacob) moved to Egypt as a part of God’s plan. God used what Joseph’s brothers intended as evil as a way to bless Joseph and rescue the entire family.

**Story from the Bible**

**Exodus 5:1–6:13**

This is what the Bible says.

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and told him that God, the God of the Israelites, had sent them. They told Pharaoh that God said, “Let My people go, so that they may hold a festival for Me in the wilderness.”

Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should obey Him by letting Israel go? I do not know anything about Yahweh, and besides, I will not let Israel go.”

Moses and Aaron said that God is the God of the Hebrews. They told him that God had met with them and sent them. They said that God had sent him a message. He said you are to let His people take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to Him, their God. If you don’t, He will send plagues on you and your people.

Pharaoh asked them why they would take the people away from their work. He told them to get back to work.

That same day, Pharaoh gave orders to the slave drivers and people in charge to no longer supply the Israelites with straw for making bricks but to make them get it themselves. He also told them to require the same quota of bricks. Pharaoh accused them of being lazy and trying to get out of work. He told his men to work them even harder so they would not pay any attention to the lies.

So the slave drivers did as they were told. They told the Israelites to get their own straw and produce the same quota of bricks. So the Israelites attempted to do as they were told. When they could not meet the same quota as before, the Israelite overseers were beaten.

When the Israelite overseers complained, Pharaoh accused them of being lazy and said to them, “That is why you are saying, ‘Let us go sacrifice to the Lord.’” They were told to get back to work.

The Israelite overseers complained to Moses and Aaron. They said that they were making things worse.

Moses went to God and asked why God had brought this trouble on the people. He asked God if this was why God sent him. He said, “Ever since I went in to Pharaoh to speak in Your name he has caused trouble for this people, and You haven’t delivered Your people at all.”

God told Moses, “Now you are going to see what I will do to Pharaoh: he will let them go because of My strong hand; he will drive them out of his land because of My strong hand.”

God told Moses that He is God Almighty, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He made a covenant with the Israelites and He would see it through. He reminded Moses that He was the one who heard their groaning and He had not forgotten His promise (covenant).

God told Moses to go back to the Israelites and remind them that He is God

He was to tell them that God is God, and He would bring them out of slavery in Egypt. God said He would redeem them and take them to the land He promised to their forefathers.

Moses delivered God’s message to the Israelites. However, they did not believe it because of their discouragement and hard labor.

Then God told Moses to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. But Moses said to God, “If the Israelites will not listen to me, then how will Pharaoh listen to me, since I am such a poor speaker?”

God spoke to Moses and Aaron about the Israelites and Pharaoh. God commanded them to bring the Israelites out of Egypt.

That concludes this story from the Bible.

**Retelling the Story**

Let’s review this story by retelling it as a group. We want to retell it as faithfully as we can to the story from the Bible. We do not want to add to it or leave out anything important. Who will get us started?

**Questions**

* What questions did Pharaoh ask when Moses and Aaron first told him that God wanted him to let His people go?
* How did Pharaoh respond to the request to let the Israelites go?
* What did Pharaoh do to increase the workload on the Israelites?
* What complaint did Moses say to God?
* How did God respond to Moses’ complaint?
* What was God’s promise (covenant) with the Israelites people?
* What did you like about this story?
* What did you not like about this story?
* What did you learn about God from this story?

**Prayer**

Prayer is more than a way to end the session. It is time to talk to God. Public prayer is a model for others. Boldly ask God to guide participants to use the Bible story with others. Ask God to give you and the participant’s insight and understanding as you think about this biblical event.