

### Sabbath School Lesson #3 – Rough Start – 12-18 July 2025

**C**hrist was the leader of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan. “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. 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” (Exodus 5:1-2). In this Bible version the Hebrew word translated as “LORD” is “Jehovah.” If in our Bible version the word “Jehovah” were allowed to appear wherever it does in the corresponding place in the Hebrew, the sense would often appear more clearly. “Jehovah” is the distinctive title of the one true God. Paul says, “There be gods many, and lords many; but to us there is but one God” (1 Corinthians 8:5-6). He is the one who made all things, and who exists by His own power. This God, Pharaoh did not know. When Moses and Aaron said, “Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Let my people go,” he rudely exclaimed, “Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go.” If Moses had said, as our version indicates, “Thus saith the Lord,” it would not have been distinctive, for the sun-god, which Pharaoh worshiped, corresponded to the Canaanitish Baal, which means “lord.” Pharaoh knew many lords and gods, and one above all, the sun-god, which was known as “the lord;” he knew Ra, Osiris, and Isis, but he did not know Jehovah, the only Lord. He might have known God, but, like the other heathen, he did not like to retain God in His knowledge – it is said of the heathen, “even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge” (Romans 1:28). Still God gave him this opportunity to know and recognise Him; and when Pharaoh haughtily said, “I know not Jehovah,” the Lord brought judgments upon him until he was forced to confess His power.

**Sunday: Who is the Lord?** – Read again the memory text, Exodus 5:1-2; what was Pharaoh’s response to God’s demand, “Let My people go”, and what significance can be found in this response? We start by question and answer to understand what was going on in Exodus 5:1-2. With what words did Moses and Aaron greet Pharaoh? “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” (verse 1). What reply did Pharaoh make? “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” (verse 2). This is the common way of sinners when they give themselves up to stubborn resistance against God. But (to our present point) let it be noted, this state of heart is not from God. He does not impel men to ignore Himself and thrust away His claims. This ignoring of God, and this repelling of His claims by denying or half denying His existence, is from the Devil, not from God; or it comes up from the foul depths of the sinner’s own heart. But even though Pharaoh was stubborn, God still gave him an opportunity. It is not in accordance with God’s plan to punish any man, no matter how wicked he may be, without warning him, and giving him a chance to repent. Therefore, although he knew that Pharaoh was so churlish and stubborn that he would not listen to reason, he did not begin to send judgments upon him at first, to force him to let Israel go, but sent a simple request instead. Thus his justice was manifested. In the demand, “Let my people go, that they may hold a fast unto me in the wilderness,” an opportunity was offered to Pharaoh to recognize the God of Israel as the true God. It was, in fact, Pharaoh’s chance for repentance. If Pharaoh had granted the simple request which Moses brought to him from the Lord, it would have indicated that he recognized the authority of God; and in that case he would have been willing to grant whatever else the Lord might demand.

**Monday: A rough start** – Read Exodus 5:3-23; how is the rough start felt by Moses shown in these texts? The rough start was first felt by Moses. Even today, many who have had evidence that God has sent them to work, when they meet disappointments, are often tempted to ask the question: how can this be the work of God, yet be attended with so many disappointments? The answer is found in the rough start felt by Moses. Moses expected an early deliverance of the people of God, but Moses was disappointed, and cried out under his disappointment, “Wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? for since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all” (verses 22-23). God, however, did subsequently

justify His own ways in their deliverance. And so today, when you are sure that you are doing God's work, and meet a rough start or disappointment, give not to doubt, He will deliver His people now when He has sufficiently tested their faith and love for Him.

**Tuesday: The Divine "I"** – Read Exodus 5:22-6:8; what is God's response to Moses, and what important truths are revealed in these texts? God wanted the children of Israel to esteem the covenant He made with Abraham which was wholly dependent on what God Himself would do to save Abraham and all the world, not dependant on the people. What we read in Exodus 5:22-6:8 that it is God alone that was to save them, is repeated at Mount Sinai – read Exodus 19:4-6. Note how God dwelt upon the fact that He Himself had done all that had been done for them. He had delivered them from the Egyptians, and He had brought them to Himself. That was the thing which they were continually forgetting, as indicated by their murmurings. They had even gone so far as to question whether the Lord was among them or not; and their murmurings always indicated the thought that they themselves could manage things better than God could. God had brought them by the mountain pass to the Red Sea, and into the desert where there was no food nor drink, and had miraculously supplied their wants in every instance, to make them understand that they could live only by His word (Deuteronomy 8:3). The covenant which God made with Abraham was founded on faith and trust. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto Him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3). So, when God, in fulfilment of that covenant, was delivering Israel from the Egyptian bondage, all His dealing with the Israelites was calculated to teach them trust in Him, so that they might in truth be the children of the covenant.

**Wednesday: Uncircumcised lips** – Read Exodus 6:9-13. When Moses hesitated going to speak to Pharaoh, saying "how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" (verse 12), what assurance did the Lord give him? "And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" (Exodus 7:1). What was meant by this? "Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land" (verse 2). "And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God" (Exodus 4:16).

**Thursday: Like God to Pharaoh** – Read Exodus 6:28-7:7; what lessons can we take from these texts, especially that Moses would be Elohim to Pharaoh? Let us read verse 1 and supply the Hebrew for God. "And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god [ĕ-lō-hîm] to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" (verse 1). Many Adventists have been deceived to think that the Hebrew word "Elohim" refers to a plurality and hence wrongly included that God is three-in-one or a trinity. If that were true that the Hebrew word "Elohim" means three, how do the trinitarians explain the fact that Moses who was one single individual was "Elohim" to Pharaoh, was Moses three persons? But Moses himself writing about God declared the "Elohim" was one LORD. Moses wrote: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4). Jesus confirmed the words spoken by Moses when He had a conversation with the Scribe in Mark 12:28-34. Notice that Jesus quote Moses, "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord." In Revelation 14 we are told to "give honour" to God. This also is what Jesus Himself did, He gave honour to God: "Jesus answered, If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing: it is My Father that honoureth Me; of whom ye say, that He is your God" (John 8:54). But those who apply philosophy to the word of God tend to complicate the words by Moses about one God. They point to the words in Genesis and say the words used for "God" there was "Elohim" and that means plural, so they build a theory of plurality of God. There is no plurality in the word "Elohim," but majesty. We see this applied to Moses in Exodus 7:1: "the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh." Check it out, but the Hebrew word applied to Moses is Elohim. "I have made thee a Elohim to Pharaoh," said the LORD to Moses. Moses as Elohim was not multiple of Moses. Elohim means majesty. Elohim is greatness. This is given in Exodus 11:3: "Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people." So, greatness is what Elohim meant. God is Majesty, God is Great, that is, Elohim. The Elohim that we are called to worship in Revelation 14:6-7 is not a trinity, just as Moses was not a three to Pharaoh.