

Exodus Bible Study

Exodus 5:1–10 — When Obedience Meets Resistance

Exodus 5:1–5 *“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. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days’ journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.”*

Introduction

We are beginning chapter 5, and before we break down these verses, we need to remember something important:

God has already revealed His name to Moses.

That name is **I AM**.

The name “I AM” is one of the most profound and foundational revelations of God in all of Scripture. It is not merely a name—it is God declaring who He is, how He exists, and why He can be trusted. This name is also directly connected to Jesus Christ.

The Name of God — I AM

Exodus 3:13–14 *“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”*

Moses is anxious, hesitant, and painfully aware of his weakness. God does not reassure Moses by pointing to Moses’ ability. He reassures him by revealing His own nature.

When God calls someone to trust Him, He anchors their confidence not in who they are, but in who He is.

“I AM” Means God Is Self-Existent

“I AM” means:

- God depends on nothing
- God derives life from no one

- God simply IS

Hebrews 11:6

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is...”

We must believe that God exists—and that He exists independently.

We are made.

We are sustained.

Only God can say, **I AM**.

“I AM” Means God Is Eternal and Unchanging

“I AM” is present tense—always.

God does not say:

- I was
- I will be
- I might become

He says, **I AM**.

Revelation 1:18 “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore...”

Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

The God who helped Abraham, delivered Israel, strengthened David, and saved sinners is the same God today. What He was, He still is. Therefore, He can be known and trusted the same way.

“I AM” Means God Is Sufficient for Every Need

Throughout Scripture, God expands this name through His actions:

- I AM your provider
- I AM your protector
- I AM your healer
- I AM your peace

The name “I AM” leaves the sentence open—because God fills in what His people need. God does not merely give help—**He is help**. Whatever your situation requires, God already exists as the answer.

Fulfilled in Jesus Christ

Jesus later said:

- *“I am the bread of life”*
- *“I am the light of the world”*
- *“Before Abraham was, I AM”*

John 8:58 “Before Abraham was, I am.”

The religious leaders understood exactly what Jesus was claiming—that is why they tried to stone Him. Jesus is not just sent by God—**He is** the I AM in flesh.

The Fear of the Moment

This is the first official confrontation between God’s messengers and Egypt’s king.

It would have been terrifying for Moses and Aaron to stand before Pharaoh. Pharaoh was not just a ruler—he was considered divine. His word was law. His decisions meant life or death. No appeals. No courtrooms.

Moses was a former fugitive shepherd. He had failed once before. This meant reopening old wounds and risking old consequences.

The message itself was an open challenge: “Thus saith the LORD God of Israel.”

Moses was not asking permission. He was declaring that God is the true King.

Courage is not being unafraid. Courage is being afraid and obeying anyway.

Their Meeting (Vs. 1)

Moses and Aaron do exactly what God told them to do.

They speak God’s Word—not their own opinions.

Their tone is respectful, polite, and God-centered.

Their request is about worship.

Freedom begins with worship.

Paul echoes this same principle.

1 Timothy 2:1–2

We are to pray for kings and those in authority so that we may live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.

Paul was not endorsing rulers' morality or policies. At the time, Nero was emperor. Christians were persecuted and misunderstood.

This is missional, not political.

1 Timothy 2:3–4

God desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

That is our prayer. That is our purpose.

Pharaoh's Resistance (Vs. 2)

This is not a question of inquiry.

This is a question of defiance.

Pharaoh rejects:

- God's identity
- God's authority
- God's command

"I do not know your God, and I do not intend to obey Him."

The world does not resist God because it lacks information—it resists because it rejects authority.

Psalms 14:1 "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

God's Purpose (Vs. 3)

This was not Moses' idea. God had met with them. Worship was God's command. Disobedience would bring consequences.

Disobedience always has consequences.

Pharaoh's Perspective (Vss. 4–5)

From Pharaoh's point of view:

- Worship is laziness
- Rest is dangerous
- People are workers, not families

The world values output.

God values people.

Fear drives Pharaoh's response. Fear of numbers. Fear of hope. Fear of worship.

The devil still fears worship, rest, and trust in God—because worship grows hope.

A Cruel Response (Vss. 6–7)

Pharaoh responds the same day.

No delay. No reflection.

Straw is removed, but expectations remain. Harder work. Same demand. Obedience is made to look unreasonable.

The enemy often increases pressure to make obedience look foolish or impossible.

Pharaoh's Accusation (Vs. 8)

Pharaoh calls their desire to worship idleness. He cannot comprehend spiritual priorities or spiritual truth.

The world often calls devotion to God a crutch.

Others called it waste—Jesus called it worship.

Matthew 26:8–10

1 Corinthians 1:18

False Accusation (Vs. 9)

God's Word is dismissed as "*vain words*."

The solution is busyness.

One of the enemy's most effective tools is not temptation—but distraction.

Oppressive Orders (Vss. 10–11)

Two voices are heard:

- “Thus saith the LORD”
- “Thus saith Pharaoh”

Two authorities. Two kingdoms.

Romans 3:4 “Let God be true, but every man a liar...”

Not every man lies constantly—but any opinion contrary to God’s truth must be rejected.

Final Truth

Exodus 5:1–10 teaches us this vital lesson:

The first response to obedience is not always deliverance—it is often resistance.

But God was not absent.

He was preparing to reveal His power.

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think God revealed His name **I AM** to Moses *before* sending him to Pharaoh? How does knowing who God is help us trust Him in fearful situations?
2. Moses and Aaron spoke God’s Word respectfully and clearly. What does that teach us about how we should speak truth to authority today?
3. Pharaoh asked, “*Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice?*” Where do you see that same attitude in the world today?
4. Why do you think worship and obedience are often viewed by the world as laziness, weakness, or wasted time?
5. In verses 4–5, what fears seem to be driving Pharaoh’s response? How does fear still influence decisions made by leaders or systems today?
6. When Pharaoh made the work harder after Moses obeyed God, how do you think the people might have interpreted God’s silence? Have you ever felt that way after obeying the Lord?
7. Pharaoh calls God’s words “*vain words*” in verse 9. What are some modern ways God’s Word is dismissed, minimized, or mocked?
8. How can busyness become a tool that keeps believers from hearing and obeying God?
9. What does the contrast between “*Thus saith the LORD*” and “*Thus saith Pharaoh*” teach us about authority and allegiance?
10. Romans 3:4 says, “*Let God be true, but every man a liar.*” How do we practically live this out when we are surrounded by opinions and voices every day?

11. Can you share a time when obedience made life harder before it made sense? What did God teach you through that season?
12. How do worship, rest, and trusting God help believers grow in hope when pressure increases?

Prayer Focus

- Ask God for courage to obey even when resistance follows
- Pray for believers who face persecution for worshiping freely
- Ask the Lord to help you recognize and reject voices that oppose His truth

Personal Journal Prompts

1. **Who is God to me right now?**

When I hear the name *I AM*, what does it reveal about who God is in my current situation? Where do I need to trust Him for who He is, not for what I can do?

2. **What fears surface when obedience feels risky?**

Like Moses standing before Pharaoh, what fears rise up in my heart when God calls me to obey?

3. **Where have I been tempted to measure success the world's way?**

Have I ever viewed worship, rest, or obedience as inconvenient or unproductive? Why?

4. **How do I respond when obedience makes life harder?**

When God's will brings resistance instead of relief, do I question God, retreat, or remain faithful?

5. **What voices am I listening to most?**

Between "*Thus saith the LORD*" and the many opinions around me, whose voice carries the most weight in my decisions?

6. **How has busyness affected my walk with God?**

Are there areas where constant activity has dulled my sensitivity to God's Word or distracted me from prayer and worship?

7. **Where might fear be shaping my responses more than faith?**

Like Pharaoh, am I reacting out of fear—fear of loss, fear of change, fear of surrender?

8. What area of obedience have I delayed or avoided?

Is there something God has clearly spoken that I've postponed because of potential resistance or cost?

9. How does worship strengthen my hope?

When I worship, how does it realign my heart, remind me of truth, and restore hope?

10. What does it look like for me to say, "*Let God be true*"?

In practical, daily choices, how can I trust God's truth over my feelings, fears, or popular opinion?