

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

"Worship Guidelines"

Exodus 5:1-3

Introduction

1. Israel is in Egyptian bondage. Difficult times have developed since the death of Joseph (1:8). God spoke to Moses to affirm His divine intention to deliver Israel (3:1-12).
2. Israel was the Lord's "firstborn" and He wanted them out of Egypt to serve Him (4:22, 23). Indeed, the Scriptures teach that God had at least three intentions for Israel's deliverance: a. sacrifice (3:18) b. service (4:22) and c. ceremony (5:1).
3. God's cry to Pharaoh was simple: "let my people go" (5:1). Pharaoh refused to do this. At this juncture, God instituted the plagues which were designed to bring about the deliverance of Israel for God's purposes. In the process, Pharaoh offered substitute actions. But these substitutes opposed the intent of the Lord for the nation. Moses and Aaron refused to accept the substitute arrangements.
4. Check out the substitutes and see the spiritual principles involved therewith:

SUBSTITUTE #1: SACRIFICE--WITHOUT SEPARATION 8:25-27

God's order to Moses and Israel was simple: sacrifice to Him three days journey away from Egypt. Pharaoh substituted freedom of sacrifice to the Lord "in the land." This was entirely unacceptable to Moses. One big reason he gives for this is that should Israel do their sacrifice "in the land," they would become an abomination to the Egyptians. This was due to the fact that Egypt worshipped the calf of Heliopolis and the bull of Memphis.

The real issue, however, was this: God's redemption also required separation! There would be no testimony if Israel stayed in Egypt! God teaches the same for us (Gal. 1:3-5). We are to be separate from the world, which means staying away from anything which is not of the Father (2 Cor. 6:17, 18; 1 John 2:16). The Cross does separate (Gal. 6:14). Israel and Egypt do not mix!

SUBSTITUTE #2: SACRIFICE--WITHOUT DISTANCE 8:28, 29

If the Devil can't confuse on total separation, he will try to compromise on

the issue. If Israel can't be kept in Egypt, then keep her near it. This is probably one of the more serious blunders of professing believers. To trifle with Egypt, at having come out of it, is worse than not having left it at all! Here is a dangerous neutrality. There is no blessing to go halfway with the Lord. A trumpet must sound a certain tone. The only manner by which to enjoy the fullness of salvation is by knowing the truths of Romans 6-- identification with Christ. This will mean a death between Egypt and Israel.

SUBSTITUTE #3: SACRIFICE--WITHOUT FAMILY 10:1-11

Pharaoh was under pressure at this juncture of the plague problems (v. 7). The men of the court realized that as things were going, the nation would ultimately be destroyed (Hebrew term means utterly "lost"). The courtiers, therefore, advised that the men (meaning Israel as a group) should be allowed to go and serve the Lord.

The response of Pharaoh is interesting. He changes the term for "men" and suggest that the "male" element in Israel go to serve the Lord. This suggests that the children and women were to remain behind. Think of it: half the family in Egypt and the other half in the wilderness. Impossible! No portion for the fathers should be enjoyed without the entire family (Eph. 5:21-6:4).

SUBSTITUTE #4: SACRIFICE--WITHOUT ANIMALS 10:24-29

Here is the final attempt of Pharaoh at a substitute for God's way of doing things. Now it is to go and sacrifice without a sacrifice. This was totally unacceptable since responsibility was to be interpreted in the light of redemption. There must be wholehearted faith on God's Word. Not one "hoof" would be left behind.

Two items are important here: a. One's possessions all belong to the Lord. b. There can be no sacrifice to God without a sacrifice to give. All belongs to Him and must be there at His disposal.

Conclusion

The Devil, the world, and the flesh always seek substitutes for the real thing. God asks for separation of all unto Himself. So be it today.