

Exodus 5:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Pharaoh's response 'Who is the LORD (הָאֱלֹהִים) that I should obey his voice?' reveals the central conflict: will Egypt's god-king submit to Israel's God? His claim 'I know not the LORD' demonstrates willful ignorance—the plagues will answer this question definitively. This rejection initiates the progressive revelation of God's power.

Historical Context

Egyptian pharaohs claimed divine status as incarnations of Horus and sons of Ra. Pharaoh's question reflects the Egyptian worldview where national gods competed for supremacy. His refusal anticipates the theological confrontation between YHWH and Egypt's pantheon.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What modern 'gods' compete with YHWH for allegiance in your culture?
2. How does Pharaoh's willful ignorance mirror contemporary rejections of God's authority?

Interlinear Text

אָשָׁם עָשָׂה יְהֹוָה כִּי אָמַר
that I should obey
said And Pharaoh Who is the LORD
H559 H6547 H4310 H3068 H834 H8085

אָתָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא יְשִׁבָּא לְבָלָל
I know H853
his voice go H853 neither will I let Israel
H6963 H7971 H3478 H3808 H3045

אֲשֶׁר לֹא יְשִׁבָּא לְבָלָל אָתָּה יְהֹוָה
go H7971
Who is the LORD H1571 H853 neither will I let Israel H3808

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 3:19 (Parallel theme): And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

Job 21:15 (Parallel theme): What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

2 Kings 18:35 (References Lord): Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?