

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 (יהוה) 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

אָמַר	וַיֹּאמֶר	אֶשְׂמַע	אֶשְׂמַע	אֶשְׂמַע	אֶשְׂמַע
said	And Pharaoh	Who is the LORD	that I should obey		
H559	H6547	H4310 H3068	H834 H8085		
אֶתְּ	אֶתְּ	אֶתְּ	אֶתְּ	אֶתְּ	אֶתְּ
his voice	go	neither will I let Israel	I know		
H6963	H7971	H853 H3478	H3808 H3045		
אֶתְּ	אֶתְּ	אֶתְּ	אֶתְּ	אֶתְּ	אֶתְּ
Who is the LORD	neither will I let Israel	go			
H3068	H1571 H853 H3478	H3808 H7971			

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?