
The Deliverance of God

Exodus 3:7-22

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Theme of the series: An Explanation

Today marks the beginning of a series on the Names of God. The agenda is simple. We aim to pray and preach in such a way that 4th graders and up (whether you have been in church many years or whether you are new to the church) will understand the character of God by thinking together on His various names. Each Sunday we will introduce a different name of God seen in a specific part in the Bible. The names of God will then function as a lens through which we see the greatness and goodness of God. The hope is that the Lord will use this series to cause each of us:

1. To see who God really is
2. To draw us to Himself
3. To stop trusting in ourselves
4. To start or continue trusting in all that God is for us in Jesus Christ.

Theme of the series: An Illustration

With that as a brief explanation of the series let me illustrate the them of the series so that we can get a sense of the aim of the series.

<teaching at a school> The Point: Psalm 9:10a – *Those who know your name put their trust in you. The better the familiarity with the name the greater the trust in the person.*

Let's begin now with our first message in this series. This message is titled The Deliverance of God.

Introduction “I need help! I am dying! Who will rescue me from Pre-Algebra, Chemistry and World History? I need to be delivered from my teachers”. These were the kind of thoughts and words my daughter had as she came down to the end of her sixth grade school year this last week. Are we able to identify with her? Many tests, many trials, many stretching moments urge questions out of our hearts like the ones from my daughter. “Who will deliver me”?

A phrase that could be used to summarize the central message of the Bible might be this: The Deliverance of God. Throughout the Bible we hear teachings and see episodes of the God of the Bible delivering His people out of helplessness, foolishness, fear, rebellion, danger, defenselessness, hopelessness and even from the wrath of God in eternal hell.

As we come to this theme in the Bible; The Deliverance of God, we are to experience it as strong and sweet. Our faith grows stronger as our view of God grows clearer.

Yet for most people this clear and compelling theme has disappeared. Rather, in today's world we see other “deliverers” come upon the scene to help us from our plight. We hear promises of help and hope coming out of technology, psychology, media, local and national politics and education. The promise to rescue from boredom and aimless living is offered us also by drugs (both prescription and illegal), illicit relationships, pornography, peer groups

and so forth. These counselors and others are teaching that apart from our own strength of spirit, our own self-esteem, our own cooperation with others, our own physical endurance and intellect there is nothing else.

And even for many, I believe, the Christian faith is no more than a sedative to deadened pain or a suggestion to simply make life manageable. However you say it, today's world advances the notice of self-reliance leading to self-deliverance. Most seminars and books and counsel are designed to help us supervise our own relief efforts.

As we will see this morning, the Bible offers something infinitely more hopeful and wonderful and satisfying than all of that. As we open the second book in the Bible; the book of Exodus, we see self-deliverance shattered.

We come over the hill of modern thought to see the main character of the Bible. As we think carefully over Exodus 3, I pray that we will all be like an astronomer unexpectedly seeing a whole new galaxy when he was only looking for one star. The book of Exodus puts God forth as the One who exists without need of anyone or anything; a God who never had a beginning, never ends, never gets tired and never needs improvement. The book of Exodus puts God forth as utterly absolute and mercifully rescuing anyone he desires through his power and blood and human agency. In light of who we will come upon this morning, whom among us will desire to resort back to self-salvation and lean upon our own relief efforts?

Turn with me in your Bibles to Exodus 3:7-22. To stop trusting self and start trusting God we will first need to understand the promise of deliverance found in vv.7-10. Next we will notice the response to this promise of deliverance. And that is found in vv.11-15. And finally we end hearing of the certainty of the promise of deliverance.

Let's start off by first noticing the promise of deliverance.

The Promise of Deliverance

(7-10)

In vv.7-10 we come across the LORD's promise to deliver His people from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land and into a land flowing with milk and honey. To understand this scene and its relevance for our lives a brief overview of the context might help.

At the beginning of Exodus we notice the Israelites in Egypt increasing greatly. The Lord was merciful to them. Through a man named Joseph God rescued them from starvation and had given them a temporary home outside the Promised Land. For the next two hundred years, the Israelites lived in relative peace and prosperity in Egypt. But then something happened. There arose a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph and was unsympathetic toward the Israelites. The new pharaoh quickly appointed taskmasters over the Israelites and enslaved them to build storage cities.

The King's strategy to control the population of the Israelites wasn't working. And so, he issued a decree for all the newborn Hebrew male babies to be thrown into the Nile River. God was up to something grand as he saved a newborn named Moses. Baby Moses was rescued from the Nile by Pharaoh's daughter and grew up in the

royal court of Egypt. He received the very finest education and training available in his day (Acts 7:22).

But Moses knew deep in his heart that he was different than the Egyptians. He knew his Hebrew heritage. One day he made a decision that required courage and self-sacrifice but was based on self-reliance. Assuming the role of a deliverer he killed an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating a Hebrew slave. Fearing the discovery, he was forced to flee the country.

Moses spent the next forty years as a shepherd for Jethro in the land of Midian, east of the Sinai Peninsula. He got married, had a couple of children and lived a peaceful life. But back in Egypt the story was different. In 2:23 we read “During those many days (approximately 15,000 days)...the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery...”.

God will not forget His people. As we pick up the story in vv.7-10 we come to God’s promised deliverance. <read vv.7-10>

In his time (7-9)

Now one could read this text and come away saying, “Well, it’s about time God. Your people have been suffering for decades and generations. Their backs split open from the whips of the taskmasters. Their children without education have grown up under cruelty. And now you say that you have seen the affliction and have heard their cry. Where have you been all these years? Did you not know about this for all those many years and now have come to understand the horror of the problem? Or perhaps you knew all along but chose to turn your back on them until now”. That would be one way of reading this text. But it would be an ill informed and wrong way of reading it. It is not as though God were absent minded. He doesn’t promise and forget to carry it out like we do. The all-knowing God does not share our infirmities. Furthermore, as v.16 makes plain, God never stopped watching over their pain and suffering. He never lost interest in them. On the contrary, what we have here is a peak into the sovereignty of God, His perfect love for his people and his impeccable timing.

God knows that the time is right. The people are now ready for His deliverance. They are not interested in trying to save themselves. They have no confidence in their abilities to make life better apart from God. No, they are crying to God out of sheer helplessness and dependence upon Him. As verse 9 makes clear, NOW is the time for God to activate his promise to deliver.

To understand the promise of deliverance we first need to reckon with God’s timing.

In his way (10)

But in order for us to stop trusting ourselves and start trusting God, we need to see something else regarding His promise. Verse 10 gives us great insight not only into his schedule but also into his strategy.

Imagine with me what Moses must have been thinking his last forty years. When is God going to rescue His people? How long must they suffer without any sign of imminent deliverance? And now in the backside of the desert, Moses hears from the Lord. He hears marvelous words like we read in v.8; “I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians”. “WOW”, Moses must have thought, “this will be spectacular. I know the awesome power of the Lord. What sight this will be when he comes down and smashes the Pyramids and Sphinx and overwhelms the pride of the Pharaoh and taskmasters. O, the people will tremble under the manifested strength of the Lord. Maybe he will send myriads of angels against the puny chariots of Egypt. Maybe he will send lightning and whirlwinds to devastate their man-made securities. This will be totally awesome. God is coming down! What is this deliverance going to look like Lord”?

Well, in verse 10, the Lord tells him what it’s going to look like. “I will send you to Pharaoh. I am coming down and you are going out; you the 80 yr. old shepherd. You will confront the powerful Pharaoh”. Moses’ heart must have sunk when he heard those words. Undoubtedly there was a time in his life when he would have jumped at the opportunity. When at age forty; in the prime of his life with exceptional education and training, Moses might have said, “I’m ready God. I’m your man. I’ve been trained by the best. I got a 4.0 at Harvard. I’ve got what it takes. You can count on me”. But the Lord has a pace and is wise. He needed Moses to be seasoned by time and the desert; This 80 yr. old man knows the realities of life. He is man stripped from self-reliant thinking. Moses reduced to a simple shepherd now can respond to the Promise of Deliverance. And that is what we find in vv.11-15 <read verses>

The Response to the Promise

(11-15)

In these vv. we come to a dialogue between God and Moses. There are five questions in all that extend into chapter four. We will only address the first two. These first two questions we will look at are not driven by doubt as we see in chapter four. Rather, these seem more proper and fitting.

Question 1: Who am I?

The first question “Who am I” is a common question we find in the Scripture. We see this response from Jeremiah. He was young and inexperienced. He looks at his resources and then looks at the enormity of a task and says “Who am I”. Solomon said something similar prior to getting God’s wisdom. The Apostle Paul later on in his life said, “Who is adequate for such a task”?

This is a right response coming from an awareness of who we are and what we are up against. Moses was called to be a town crier ringing the bell to awaken his people. He was to confront the King and request that his people be let go. He was to take the message of deliverance to the elders and the common people. The task far exceeded his resources. Here we find in v.11 a humble assessment of human ability. Moses shows us more a prayer for help than a refusal to obey. This mistrust in self prepared him to hear God’s answer.

Answer 1: I will be with you.

How does God answer this question? What do we need to know about God that will cause courage and strength to well up in us? The Lord's answer is clear and compelling. "I will be with you". I will go with you. That is all He said. That's okay Moses that you don't have what it takes. The implication of the answer tells us that the ability to carry out the Lord's command and mission is not to be hunted for in us. It is found in God and God alone.

Question 2: What should I say?

Remember background to this question. Forty years earlier, Moses tried to do this very thing. He stood up to rescue a Hebrew man and what happened? The Hebrews asked him who he thought he was. They questioned his credentials by saying "who made you a prince and a judge over us?"

Moses remembered this encounter no doubt. He could anticipate how they would respond to him. Questions like, "What message do you have that is so important? What qualifications do you bring that will cause us to listen to you"? "What authority is behind these words"?

Well Moses didn't think he had a good answer to these types of questions. What could he tell them that would draw them to the message? Was there anything about God's character of which they were unaware? Would this new insight be striking and move them to accept the promise to deliver?

How does God respond to this concern?

Answer 2: I Am who I Am

The response to Moses' question is an epic revelation. Here we come to the Name of God. God reveals himself in a way that causes Moses to respond to the call and will cause God's people to follow. This self-revelation is in the form of the basic name of God. He says to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, "I Am who I AM...I Am has sent me to you". God is telling Moses and He is telling us something about Himself. God is unveiling Himself as the eternal, self-sufficient, unchangeable, underived source of all authority. Can we fathom what we are seeing about God? There was never a time when God wasn't. He always was and is and will be. He was there before we came. He will be there when we are gone. The God who gives you life and breath this very moment never had a beginning. The sheer eternal existence of God brought Moses into leadership. The sheer reality that God has no needs and can never be bribed because of deficiency dazzled Moses into obedience. This is in part what the name I AM means. God does not need to bring credentials or a resume or a year end performance rating to the Hebrews. He is who He is and that will be enough. God borrows nothing from anyone. He needs no testimonials as a man would when approaching an enormous task.

This unusual name was so sacred to the Hebrews that they formed an acronym for it. The Hebrew phrase "I Am who I AM" was condensed down to the acronym YHWH. This name was pronounced Yahweh; the name by which God was to be known.

God, the self-authenticating, self-revealing, self-sustaining, self-motivating, self-satisfied God calls His people to trust Him and demonstrate that trust by following Him.

And where do we see Yahweh in the Bible most clearly? This “coming down to rescue” kind of God? In the fourth book of the New Testament; the gospel of John, we see Jesus looking at the Jews and saying, “I Am the way, I AM the door, I AM the resurrection, I AM the bread of life, I AM the truth, I AM the good shepherd, I AM the life. Jesus Christ was not just borrowing language from this text. He was the Flame in the burning bush. He was revealing Himself as the only source of authority and hope. He made this clear that He is the God who comes down to deliver His people when he said, “before Abraham was I AM” (John 8:58). Jesus was making the same point to the Jews as God was to Moses. He didn’t need to prove himself to anybody. He is the eternal, never-developing, never-needing, never-changing one who went to the cross to take the burning wrath of God upon Himself in order to rescue anyone who turns to Him in trust. Jesus Christ is the great I AM; the Flame that never consumes those who stop trusting in themselves and start trusting in Him!

The Certainty of the Promise

(16-22)

And so, with those questions answered, “who am I” and “who are You” we can face anything like Moses did. To fuel confidence in Him, the LORD cites the certainty of His promise. In vv.16-22 come across many things the Lord says He will do. I won’t take much time combing through these. I simply want to lift them up to you in order for you to take heart in the promise of God that we are looking at this morning.

The Lord essentially said to him, “I told you who you are, I told you who I am and so now let me tell you what I will do.

- ☞ I will bring you up out of affliction.
- ☞ I will bring you in to the land flowing with milk and honey.
- ☞ They will listen to your voice.
- ☞ I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt.
- ☞ Pharaoh will let you go.
- ☞ I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.
- ☞ You will not go out empty.

The Lord sketches out for Moses the certainty of the Promise. He will deliver them from slavery. He will do it by empowering His servant Moses so that they will listen to him. He will demonstrate His power and so Pharaoh will let them go. And when they go, they will go in style. It will be a celebration as the Lord gives lavishly to His people. No longer are

they slaves. No longer are they poor. No longer are they joyless. They are free. They are rich. They are joy filled!

Conclusion This encounter with God changed Moses' life forever. This encounter with God changed a Nation forever. Does this encounter with God make a life-changing difference in you?

In conclusion, what are some overarching lessons we can learn from this passage?

- ∞ The God of the Bible (Yahweh) exists without need of anyone or anything.
- ∞ Yet, this God “came down” to deliver His people from slavery for His glory and their good.
- ∞ This God is Jesus Christ...
 - ∞ Whose sinless life was nailed to a cross to die for the sins of many
 - ∞ Who arose from the dead to defeat sin and Satan
 - ∞ Whose death and resurrection secured for his people forgiveness of sins and everlasting joy

In light of these lessons, how will you respond?

- ∞ Will you trust Him?
 - ∞ To deliver you from the penalty of sin
 - ∞ To lead you out of recurring sin
 - ∞ To finish His work by bringing you safely home (heaven)
 - ∞ To use you to help others come out of enslaving sin
 - ∞ To use you to speak to others of who He is and what He wants

