



AND THE LORD SAID:
"I HAVE SURELY SEEN THE
OPPRESSION OF MY PEOPLE
WHO ARE IN EGYPT, AND HAVE
HEARD THEIR CRY BECAUSE
OF THEIR TASKMASTERS, FOR
I KNOW THEIR SORROWS.
SO I HAVE COME DOWN TO
DELIVER THEM OUT OF THE
HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS."

EXODUS 3:7-8A

DELIVERANCE

FROM THE PAST

DATE

February 1 & 2

WEEK

1 of 4

KEY VERSE

Exodus 3:7-8a

SETTING THE STAGE

Some days are difficult. We may face overwhelming tasks at work, challenges at home, or problems with our health. But three words have the power to change our day. They transform a day of hardship or monotony into a day of hope and expectation. The three words are “out for delivery!”

There is nothing like receiving a notification on your phone that your Amazon package will be waiting for you when you get home. Maybe it is a new phone case or a pair of shoes or an Instant Pot. It does not matter. It is “out for delivery,” and now you have a little pep in your step the rest of the day.

Yet as exciting as these three words are, they do not compare to the ultimate story of delivery in the book of Exodus. Philip Ryken calls it the greatest adventure story ever told: “The story of Israel’s salvation has everything that anyone could ever want in an adventure story; a cruel villain (Pharaoh) an unlikely hero (Moses) fantastic disasters (the plagues), a spectacular deliverance (crossing the Red Sea), a long journey (through the wilderness), a mountaintop experience (where Moses receives the Ten Commandments), and a grand finale (when God comes down to fill the tabernacle with his glory).”¹ *Continued on page 42 >*

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Who Is Delivering Us?
2. From What Are We Being Delivered?
3. How Are We Being Delivered?

THINGS TO KNOW

- Exodus: “A going out” or “a departure”²
- Moses: The writer of Exodus whose name means to “draw out”
- Yada: “acknowledge;” to be aware and moved into action
- Bēriyth: covenant, a sacred agreement between God and a person or group of people
- YAHWEH: “I AM WHO I AM;” the most holy name of God
- Holy: separate, distinct, alone

DELIVERANCE

FROM THE PAST

Setting the Stage, continued > At the beginning of Exodus, God's people are not in a position of influence and power like they were at the end of Genesis. They have been oppressed for 430 years by cruel Egyptian taskmasters. However, Exodus becomes a story of God's deliverance of the Israelites from Pharaoh's grip. It is written by its main character, Moses, whose own birth and rescue were nothing short of miraculous (*Exodus 2:1-10*). Exodus is the archetypal story of deliverance revealed throughout the Old Testament.

Today, God's people can find themselves in seemingly insurmountable circumstances from which they need deliverance, too, like health crises, unemployment, and the war against temptation. Exodus gives God's people confidence that He can deliver us and set us free. As we look at Exodus we will learn who our deliverer is, what we need deliverance from, and how we are delivered.

1. WHO IS DELIVERING US?

We often look for deliverance in the things of the world. We search for temporary relief in the approval of people, the accumulation of wealth, or our own morality. But all of these things are bandages that merely cover our circumstances temporarily. They do not bring any true, deep relief and healing in our lives.

The people of Israel found that God was the only One who could bring deliverance to their lives. When we look at the text, we can make some fascinating observations about the identity of our Deliverer.

EXODUS 2:23-25 *Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. ²⁴ So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵ And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.*

Our Deliverer hears us.

The Egyptians treated the people of Israel with immense cruelty. They were harsh, demanding, violent, and oppressive. During their agony and turmoil, the Israelites cried out to God. But we know from verse 24 that their groanings and prayers were not in vain.

EXODUS 2:24 *So God heard their groaning ...*

God heard them. The God of Exodus was not – and is not – deaf, nor was He disinterested with the lives of the Israelites.

The hope that we have as the people of God is that He hears us. He bends His ear to the groanings of



¹ *The Literary Study Bible*, page 78.

² Tony Merida, David Platt, and Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Exodus*, Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014.

His people. When we walk through adversity and cry out to God, our Deliverer listens to us, hears our struggling, and attends to our desires to be set free. God harkens to our displacement and suffering in life. We can rejoice because our Deliverer hears us!

To experience deliverance in our lives, one of the first steps we need to take is to cry out to the God who hears us.

Our Deliverer is faithful and loves us.

As God listened from Heaven to the cries of His people, we see in verse 24 that He remained faithful to the covenant that He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He would not let His covenant go unfulfilled.

EXODUS 2:24 ...*God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.*

God did not forget about the Israelites because He is faithful to His Word. He always accomplishes what He promises. We may feel that God has forgotten us in different seasons in life, but we can rest in knowing that nothing slips the mind of God. He always remembers us.

God remembers us because He does not enter into just a contract with His people, which can be broken if the terms and conditions are not met. His love supersedes that of contract and enters the arena of covenant. In Hebrew, the word for covenant is *bĕriyth*. A covenant is a sacred agreement between God and a person or group of people. Sallie Lloyd-Jones defines it as “a never-stopping, never-giving-up, unbreaking, always-and-forever love.”³

Tim Keller explains what this covenant love looks like: God sets the terms and specific conditions and then promises His blessing if we choose to obey. A covenant is not merely a contract. We do not get to negotiate the terms. A covenant is a binding agreement between two parties that holds significant weight and has serious consequences.⁴

One term that we do not get to negotiate is the timeline. Our deliverance may not come as quickly and conveniently as we would like. It certainly did not for the Israelites, as they endured centuries of slavery. However, God was faithful to keep His promise to them in His time. He is and will be faithful to us, too. We have a Deliverer who is committed to being faithful to us and loving us well. We can have confidence that, as the people of God, we are heard, remembered, and loved.

Our Deliverer acts.

In verse 25, we see that God goes beyond listening to His people.

EXODUS 2:25 ...*and God acknowledged them.*

God “*acknowledged them*,” which means more than simple awareness. Because God is all-knowing, He did not suddenly become aware of the Hebrews’ circumstances. He sits on the Throne of Heaven and was aware of the plight of the Hebrews before they ever stumbled into it.

The Hebrew word used in our English translation for the word “acknowledge” is *yada*. It means to be aware **and** to be moved into action. When we read further, we see that God’s awareness led Him to action.

EXODUS 3:7-8 *And the LORD said: “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. ⁸ So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.*

We can trust that God is currently moving heaven and earth to deliver us. He is aware and acting on our behalf today.

³ Sallie Lloyd Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, Nashville: ZonderKidz, 2017.

⁴ Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage Study 2: Consumer vs. Covenant Marriage*, London: Penguin Group, 2011.

God did not passively sit on His hands. His acknowledgment yielded action. Notice the wonderful way the New Living Translation translates verse 25:

EXODUS 2:25 (NLT) *He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act.*

God moved on behalf of His people and set into motion His plan of deliverance. But when we look at Exodus, we may disconnect the account of the Israelites from our reality as God's people today. We might believe that it was true then but that deliverance cannot happen now.

However, we can trust that God is currently moving heaven and earth to deliver us. He is aware and acting on our behalf today. If we want proof of the acknowledgment of God, we need to look no further than the cross. God acted on our behalf to deliver us. He acknowledged our predicament long ago and set His plan into action: He sent the Deliverer to "come down" to die for us. We can heed the words of the Apostle Paul that *since he did not spare even his own Son but gave Him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? (Romans 8:32 NLT).*

Our Deliverer is holy.

We have made three observations about our Deliverer: He hears us. He is faithful and loves us. He acts. Now let's take a look at an exchange in which God Himself reveals who He is to Moses.

EXODUS 3:5-6 *"Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."*⁶ *Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. ...*

Moses and the Burning Bush is a very familiar scene for many Christians, but we must be careful that we do not let our familiarity lead us to a commonplace view of God.

Moses and the Burning Bush is a very familiar scene for many Christians, but we must be careful that we do not let our familiarity lead us to a commonplace view of God. As God speaks to Moses, He conveys the reverence that all of us should have as we approach Him. He tells Moses to take off his shoes, for the place where he stands is holy ground. God establishes Himself before Moses as holy.

It is of utmost importance that we recognize God's holiness. The word holy means to be separate, distinct, and alone. There is no one like our holy God. He is not like us. His holiness is displayed in His purity; God is separate from us in that He cannot sin or commit evil. His holiness is also displayed through His power. He has the power to create, work miracles, forgive, and heal.

Our Deliverer is I AM.

As God commissions Moses to free the people of Egypt, Moses asks who he should say is sending him. God responds by providing His Divine Name.

EXODUS 3:14 *And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

The holiest name of God is YAHWEH, which means, "I AM WHO I AM." It points to His self-sufficiency, self-existence, and eternity. He is the One who is and will be. He does not need us or anyone. He exists apart from us. Before we took our first breaths, God was. Before Adam and Eve blinked the first time, God was and saw them. Before the sun burst forth its first ray of light, YAHWEH was.

We can find solace in this name of God and rejoice in the many other names and attributes of God that appear throughout the Bible. His names reveal Himself to be who we need Him to be. God meets us at our points of need and can fulfill any need. There is nothing that we need that cannot be found in God's personhood and work. Our efforts are vain apart from Him. Our Deliverer can pull us out of all slavery, bondage, or dire circumstance in which we find ourselves.

I AM...

YAHWEH Jireh

The LORD Will Provide

YAHWEH Rapha

The LORD Who Heals You

YAHWEH Nissi

The LORD Is My Banner

YAHWEH Sabaoth

The LORD of Hosts

YAHWEH Raah

The LORD Is My Shepherd

YAHWEH Mekoddishkem

The LORD Who Sanctifies You

YAHWEH Shammah

The LORD Is There

YAHWEH Shalom

The LORD Is Peace

2. FROM WHAT ARE WE BEING DELIVERED?

In Exodus, the people of Israel are being delivered by God from their slavery in Egypt. God describes their slavery in Exodus 3:7.

EXODUS 3:7 *And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows."*

The Egyptian taskmasters have mistreated them for centuries. Pharaoh has killed their children and placed impossible demands on them. The Egyptian empire was built on the backs of the Hebrews.

While the slavery of the Israelites to the Egyptians was not a result of any specific sin, Scripture uses this paradigm of slavery and delivery quite frequently to illustrate the freedom from the bondage of sin. In fact, Jesus said in John 8:34: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin."* Sin is a harsher taskmaster than any Egyptian could ever be. It never considers our well-being. Sin shackles us to selfishness. It imprisons us to a life of brokenness and heartache. Just like the Egyptians murdered the children of Israel, sin violently murders us, leaving behind nothing but the carnage and ashes of burned-down lives.

Sin is a harsher taskmaster than any Egyptian could ever be.

We may not have taskmasters controlling our lives as the Egyptians did, but we are often controlled by our sinful appetites. The Apostle Peter writes to the Church in 2 Peter 2:19 (NLT): *"For you are a slave to whatever controls you ..."* When we are controlled by our appetite for wealth, we neglect our families and become slaves to our careers. When we are controlled by our appetite for acclaim, we are so desperate for people to notice us that we will go to extreme measures to be seen and heard. When we are controlled by our appetite for lust, we search for pleasure around every corner instead of finding our ultimate pleasure in Christ.

An appalling depiction of slavery to our appetites is found in Thomas Costain's history, *The Three Edwards*. It chronicles the life of Raynald III, the fourteenth-century duke of what is now Belgium. Raynald was nicknamed *Crassus*, which is Latin for "fat." Raynald was morbidly overweight, and his appetite for food led to his imprisonment and death.

After a skirmish between Raynald and his younger brother, Edward, Raynald was captured and imprisoned. Edward built a room around him and promised him that he could leave and regain his position, property, and wealth as soon as he was able to walk out of the room. An average-sized person

Jesus' calling is to lead us out of the prison of selfishness and sin – but we must choose to follow Him into freedom.

would not have had difficulty leaving the room, as it had several windows and an average-sized door with no locks. Raynald's only hindrance was himself. In order to escape and be restored, he would need to lose weight.

Edward knew his older brother desired to feed his appetite more than he desired to be free. Every day, Edward sent his brother delicacies and rich foods. Raynald gorged himself and grew bigger. Ten years later, Raynald was still trapped in his prison. Duke Edward was accused of being cruel to his brother, to which he quickly replied, "My brother is not a prisoner. He may leave when he so wills." Raynald was shackled to his own appetite, his gluttony the very thing that entrapped him. He was free to leave but enslaved to his appetites.⁵

Raynald's story may seem extreme, but if we are honest, we all find ourselves imprisoned to some extent by our own appetites. However, Christians are not to be controlled by fleshly appetites. Our lives are to be controlled by our appetite for God and living a righteous life.

Jesus has offered us freedom. The door is wide open. To experience deliverance, all we must do is die to our appetite for sin and choose to walk into freedom. Moses's calling was to lead the Israelites out from the oppression of the Egyptians – but the people had to choose to follow Moses to leave the reign of Pharaoh. Jesus' calling is to lead us out of the prison of selfishness and sin – but we must choose to follow Him into freedom.

3. HOW ARE WE BEING DELIVERED?

Moses was assigned what seemed to be an impossible task: He was to lead all of Israel out of slavery and into the Promised Land. Never had one man been tasked with such a significant assignment. As his weaknesses and insecurities came to the forefront of his mind, Moses realized he was inadequate. He was not a man of control; he had killed a man in a fit of rage and buried him in the sand. He was not a general; he was a shepherd. He was not a young man; by this time, he was eighty years old. He was not a good speaker; he had a speech impediment that caused him to stumble over his words. How could the Exodus occur through a seemingly unqualified and inadequate leader?

Moses asked God how this task would be possible. We see God's response in Exodus 3:10-12.

EXODUS 3:10-12 *Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.*¹¹ *But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"*¹² *So He said, "I will certainly be with you...."*

God made a promise to Moses, "I will certainly be with you." Deliverance is only possible because God has promised His presence. And we see that God fulfilled His guarantee. God was with Moses on every step of the journey and in every meeting with Pharaoh. God was present with Moses on the edge of the Red Sea and in every mile in the wilderness. The promise of God's presence to Moses was the great equalizer.

⁵ Thomas B. Costain, *The Three Edwards*, London: Tandem, 1977.

HOW HIS PLAN SHAPES OUR PURPOSE

The story of Exodus is the story of the deliverance of God's people. God delivered them from a past oppression that kept them in Egypt for over 400 years. For generations, the only thing the people of God knew was a life of slavery, bondage and oppression. They needed to be delivered from their past. As we seek deliverance from seemingly insurmountable circumstances in our own lives, we find great assurance in three truths.

- Our Deliverer is our holy God, YAHWEH. He hears us, is faithful and loves us, and acts on our behalf.
- Our Deliverer can lead us out of bondage. He sets us free from slavery or any dire circumstance in which we find ourselves.
- Our Deliverer promises His presence. Among Jesus' last words before he ascended to Heaven were, *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:20 NKJV).

God will guide us through the wilderness of life and part the waters of impossible situations for us. He is faithful to walk with us, just as He did for the Israelites. Ultimately, we will experience His presence in the Promised Land of Heaven. The deliverance from the past gives us confidence as God's people that He can deliver us today.