

Old Testament Survey - Part 13

by Dick Woodward

This sermon explores the themes of deliverance and salvation in the Book of Exodus, emphasizing God's power and the principles of faith and obedience.

Duration: 27:38

Scripture: Exodus 14:21

Topics: "Divine Deliverance", "Salvation History"

Description

This sermon delves into the book of Exodus, highlighting the theme of deliverance from slavery, both physical and spiritual. It emphasizes the power of God displayed through the ten plagues, showcasing the need for divine intervention for salvation. The sermon draws parallels between Moses' deliverance of the Israelites and Jesus Christ's deliverance of believers from sin, emphasizing the importance of not compromising with evil. It underscores the necessity of miracles for salvation, divine guidance, and sustenance, culminating in the significance of the Passover sacrament as a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross for humanity's sins.

Transcript

As we continue to survey the book of Exodus, this evening again we would like to remind you of the fact that the word Exodus means way out, and this tells us the theme of the book of Exodus. The book of Exodus shows us the way out of the slavery, first of all the literal slavery the children of Israel were experiencing in Egypt, and then by application the slavery that we experience today to sin. In our first session on the book of Exodus, we put the book in historical perspective, and then we focused upon some of the principles involved in being a deliverer.

As we looked at the great deliverance pictured in the book of Exodus and tried to see the devotional application of the message of the book of Exodus, we focused upon Moses, who is the great human instrument of that deliverance back there in the book of Exodus. We saw some of the principles involved in being the instrument of someone else's deliverance. In this session I would like for us to focus upon the deliverance itself that is pictured in the book of Exodus, because that is the great message of the book of Exodus, deliverance.

The word deliverance, as we said, is the same as the word for salvation, especially in the Old Testament. In the book of Exodus, when we come to the subject of the deliverance itself, the salvation that these people of God experienced, one of the first things that we see is the power of God, because there is no

such thing as salvation, past or present, without the power of God. In the book of Exodus, you see the power of God displayed in a very unique way.

In the form of the ten plagues, you see the great and powerful hand of God come down upon Egypt and the Pharaoh there in Egypt. These ten plagues are a very interesting study in the book of Exodus, especially by way of devotional application, because the message of the ten plagues that come down upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt and move them to the point where they are willing to let the Hebrew people go. This is a picture of a great truth that is taught in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

In the King James and 1 John 4, that truth is expressed this way. He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world. The Living Bible prayer phrase puts it this way.

There is someone in your hearts who is stronger than any evil in this world. That's the devotional application to the message of the ten plagues. As you see Pharaoh respond to the demand of Moses and the elders of Israel, let these people go.

At first he almost seems as if their request is ludicrous. After all, it is kind of ludicrous for a little group of Hebrew slaves to go into the presence of an Egyptian Pharaoh and demand their freedom. The rationale they give for this ludicrous demand is mentioned several times in the record.

These elders together with Moses and Aaron say to the Egyptian Pharaoh, the God of the Hebrews has met with us, therefore let us go, because that's what he's told us to tell you. I find that very challenging. When we meet together for a worship service, I wonder if we have that perspective when we come together to worship the true and the living God.

Do we go out from a worship service and say to the people of this world, we have just met with the true and the living God, and this is what he has to say to you, the world? I think that's an exciting perspective. But that was the perspective with which they approached Pharaoh. Of course at first he refuses to do this.

It says several times in the scripture, it says for instance in Exodus 7.3 and 4.21, God says that he deliberately hardened the heart of Pharaoh so that he would have an opportunity to demonstrate his great power as these plagues come down upon Pharaoh. This is a very interesting concept. It's a theological problem to some and a philosophical problem to some.

It's really the problem of evil. Where did evil come from anyway? What is the context within which evil functions in this world? If God is a good God, how did evil get here? If God is a powerful God, why did he permit it? In this conflict between Moses and the elders of Israel and Pharaoh, I think you see this great struggle, this great conflict between good and evil, which is pictured elsewhere in the Bible. The book of Job pictures this.

The conflict goes something like this, it seems. God permits evil. He permits evil to be in this world.

It's sort of like the black velvet background against which a jeweler displays his beautiful diamonds. God permits evil to be in this world because it gives him a backdrop against which he can demonstrate his great power and his love and his grace and his mercy. It would seem that if evil were not here, God might not have the opportunity to demonstrate this.

But at least we see this in the scripture. Evil serves the purposes of God. If God is God, he must at least have permitted evil.

If God is all-knowing, he knows about evil. If he's all-powerful, he could do something about it if he wanted to. So I don't think we can come to any other conclusion than to come to this conclusion.

Evil exists in the world by the permissive will of God. For some reason he permits it, apparently it glorifies him. Here's an illustration of how that might be.

He says, when you go to Pharaoh, he's not going to let you go. I'm going to harden his heart, and because I harden his heart, he's going to oppose you right down the line, and when he opposes you, that's going to give me an opportunity to demonstrate the fact that I am the most powerful God on the face of the earth. I am the true and the living God.

That is demonstrated when these ten plagues come down upon Pharaoh. The plagues demonstrate the power of God to deliver. Through the plagues, God leans on Pharaoh like an elephant until Pharaoh finally lets them go.

In addition to that great truth in this book of Exodus, you can also see what we might call the principles of deliverance from the power of sin or evil. There's a tremendous dialogue that takes place between Moses and Pharaoh in this part of the book of Exodus. As Moses demands the release of the people of God, and Pharaoh refuses to let them go, the plagues keep coming, and these plagues are very persuasive.

Little by little, Pharaoh begins to yield to the power of God. As he does, notice the dialogue between Moses and Pharaoh, because many people believe that in the scripture Moses is a picture of our Deliverer, Jesus Christ, and Pharaoh is a picture of Satan, who is the personification of evil. If we understand something of what's going on between Moses and Pharaoh, we understand something of what's going on between Jesus Christ and Satan today.

Jesus Christ lives in people and works through people, and so does Satan. This makes this part of the book of Exodus a great teaching tool for us, if we come to understand what's involved in our salvation or our deliverance from the power of the tyranny and slavery of sin. Notice for instance when some plagues start to come down upon Pharaoh, and he comes to the place where he's going to yield, he says finally in chapter 8, verse 25 of the book of Exodus, you can sacrifice to your God, Moses has demanded that they be permitted to go and sacrifice to their God, Pharaoh says you can sacrifice to your God, only do it in Egypt, don't leave Egypt.

By application, many feel that this is showing us something. When you announce to your circle of friends that you've become a believer, what's one of the first things they say? Well, I hope you'll still be worldly, I mean I hope you'll still be one of us. I hope this doesn't mean that you're going to draw away from us.

In other words, if you're going to do this religious thing, do it in Egypt, do it in this world. But the word church in the New Testament is a word that means called-out ones. According to the New Testament, we are, as part of the Church, called out of this world.

We're not supposed to be in Egypt or in this world. By the very nature of the Church, we are called out of this world. But the pressure of Satan will come to us, perhaps through our friends, do it in Egypt if you're going to do your religious thing.

And then the next attempt that Pharaoh makes to get Moses to compromise, a few more plagues come and then Pharaoh says, well, you can go, but don't go very far. And again, this is a picture of the way the pressure comes down upon the new believer. If you're going to be a believer and pull out of this world, I

hope you're not going to be one of those fanatics.

I mean, I hope you're not really going to take this so seriously. And then after a few more plagues in chapter 10, verses 8 through 10, Pharaoh finally says, all right, you can go, but leave your children here, leave your children in Egypt. It would seem that when Satan is trying to keep us from living a life of faith, if he can't get us to stay in Egypt or not go very far in our faith, if he sees he isn't getting anywhere with us, he'll try to get our children.

And it's amazing how many people have come into faith themselves, but they leave their children in Egypt. They put braces on their teeth and send them to the best schools. But when it comes to their spiritual nurture, they leave them in Egypt.

I believe that's a stratagem of Satan, as you see it personified here in the Pharaoh. And then the fourth attempt he gets to make Moses compromise is, he says, all right then, you can go with your children, but leave your flocks in your herds. Now, in those days, flocks and herds were like your bank account.

What he's really saying here is, don't let it affect your pocketbook. If Satan can't get you and he can't get your children, he'll at least try to get your money and make you a faithless steward. Well, these attempts to get Moses to compromise show us the stratagem of the devil.

The greatest enemy of the best is the good. He doesn't attempt us to rob banks if God wants us to be a medical missionary. He just attempts us to be a doctor here in this country.

He'll offer us something that's good, that isn't the best, and get us to make these little compromises until one day we realize we're not serving God and putting him first and doing his will. Now, Moses really shows us the principles of deliverance in these attempts that Pharaoh makes to get him to compromise, because in each case Moses absolutely refuses to compromise with Pharaoh. I like the way he puts it in chapter 10, verses 24 to 26.

He says, we will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds, we will go. He makes no compromise whatsoever with Pharaoh. This is showing us, perhaps, the first principle of deliverance from sin.

You know what the first principle of deliverance from sin is? Don't get involved in sin in the first place. That's the great principle of deliverance for this problem of the bondage and tyranny of sin. I've worked with a great many men, and as I work with men, when I meet them, many of them, before they come into faith, are into all kinds of things, and their lives can be pretty messed up when we begin to work with them.

And I've tried to get a lot of these men to get their lives straightened out. I've counseled with their mistresses and told them to leave and leave him alone because he wants to be with his family, things like this. I remember telling a man at lunch one day, as we were having a heavy counseling session, he asked me, he said, what should I do? And I said, you know good and well what you should do.

He was living with someone else, and I said, you should go home to your wife and your family. So that night he told his mistress that, and she sat on his lap and put a big kiss on him and then said, now tell me to go. And when he came back to lunch the next week, he told me that, and he pounded his fist on the table and the rest of it, and he said, I wish to God I'd never taken the second look at that woman.

But now he was involved, deeply involved, and it isn't easy to get out of these involvements. Well, of course, the first principle of deliverance is don't get in in the first place. Don't get involved.

Don't compromise with sin. You cannot coexist with sin any more than you can coexist with cancer. So don't compromise with sin.

That's what Moses shows us as we look for principles of deliverance here in the book of Exodus. During the Korean conflict, a lot of our men were taken prisoner, and they were indoctrinated by the Chinese communists. And this was a shocking thing, the way that Chinese communists were able to teach our prisoners of war for about two years.

And some of them, about a third of them, were actually influenced to go over to the communist ideology. It was an incredible thing. A man named Eugene Kincaid wrote a book called *In Every War But One*, in which he described all of this.

As a result of what happened to our POWs there in Korea, our president, then president Dwight D. Eisenhower, rewrote the code of conduct for all of our service personnel. And after rewriting this code of conduct, President Eisenhower said to one of his aides, you know, nobody had to tell me when I was a kid that you don't make any deals with the devil. He said, I learned that at home, and I learned that in Sunday school.

But it seems that in our day, we have to tell our young people this, you don't make any deals with the devil. You see, this is the stratagem of Satan, is to get us to compromise. Now, the first principle of deliverance is, don't get into sin, but if you're in it, if you're already into it, as many people are, what is the way out? Now, again, that's the message of the book of Exodus.

To get out of the bondage and tyranny of sin, you need a whole bunch of miracles. That's what the book of Exodus tells us. And it pictures these miracles very beautifully, very allegorically, very beautifully.

I think one of the first miracles that's pictured in the book of Exodus, which you need if you want to get out of the bondage and tyranny of sin, if you're already into it, is pictured by the miracle at the Red Sea, the crossing of the Red Sea. What a great miracle that was. You know, this was really the final deliverance from Pharaoh.

I think you know all the way through this dialogue between Moses and Pharaoh, Pharaoh isn't going to let him go. He keeps changing his mind. He'll say, you can go, and then he changes his mind when the plagues ease up, and he says, you can't go.

And so you know you can't depend upon him, and sure enough, when they finally are released, when they get out to where the Red Sea is, Pharaoh has a change of heart, and he gets his army together, and here are the people of God with their back to the Red Sea, and the army of Pharaoh coming down upon them. He's going to slaughter all of them. And this is one of the places where the Bible tells us that there is a time when it's immoral to pray.

Moses falls on his face. He sees the dust of the Egyptian army coming, and there's nothing behind him but the sea, and nothing in front of him but the Egyptians, and he begins to pray. And God says to Moses, Wherefore cryest thou unto me? Why are you praying? God says to Moses, My will is so obvious, this is no time to have a prayer meeting.

There's only one direction to go. The only place you can possibly go is on the water, so start walking on the water. Anybody ought to be able to see that.

He says, Speak to my people that they go forward, which meant start walking on the water. And Moses has this great faith. He stretches out that rod, and he says, Stand still and see the great salvation of God.

And when they go out there to walk on the water, the water parts, until you have walls of water on both sides of them, and they go through. On dry ground, it says, and then when the Egyptians try to follow, the walls collapse and the Egyptian armies are drowned. When you come to a story like this in the book of Exodus, you have to settle something.

Do you believe in the supernatural, or do you not believe in the supernatural? I'm amazed at the explanations many people have given for this story. Some say it wasn't the Red Sea, it was the Reed Sea, and the water was only four to six inches deep. I heard about a little boy who was taught that in Sunday school, and he scratched his head and said to his teacher, Well, then it's really a great miracle, because all those Egyptians drowned in six inches of water.

Then there was the little boy who came home from Sunday school, and his mother said, What did they teach you today, Johnny? And he said, Oh, they told us that the army of Israel was backed up to the Red Sea, and the Egyptian army was coming down upon them. And she said, And then what? He said, Well, then Moses ordered that this pontoon bridge be built across the Red Sea, and the whole army went over on the pontoon bridge. And she said, Is that what they told you, Johnny? He said, Mother, if I told you what they told me, you'd never believe it.

I think we have to decide, when we come to the Old Testament miracles, do you believe in the supernatural or don't you? I believe in this miracle. I believe it's just like it's described. I believe it happened just that way.

And it pictures for us our salvation again. It takes a miracle for God to save you. It takes a miracle for God to save me.

And that's what the Red Sea miracle pictures for us. This was the final deliverance from Egypt and from Pharaoh, the miracle there at the Red Sea. After they crossed the Red Sea, they needed another miracle.

They needed divine guidance. And once you and I have been saved, we need another miracle. We need divine guidance, because God saves us for a purpose.

Paul calls it the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Paul says that when we're saved, we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God before ordained that we should walk in them. When God saves us, he saves us for a purpose in this life and in the life to come.

And that purpose in this life is described this way, works which God before ordained that we should walk in them. God has something he wants you to do, something he wants me to do. When he saves us from our Egypt, that's just the beginning.

He wants to lead us to those works for which he saved us. Now, in order for that to happen, we need the miracle of divine guidance, and that's pictured very beautifully in the book of Exodus, by the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. There was a cloud that led them by day and a pillar of fire that led them by night.

That beautiful miracle is a picture of divine guidance. Then once they got through the Red Sea and they were out there in the wilderness, they had an enormous problem. Moses had a great challenge.

What were those people going to eat? Somewhere between two and three million people. You know anything about food services? You know anything about supply lines to supply an army that big? What were they going to eat? And out there in that desert, what were they going to drink? This was an enormous challenge, especially for the leader. They were so ecstatic about their deliverance, they didn't think about that or care about that until they got out there, but then they realized, boy, we've got a problem.

What are we going to eat and what are we going to drink? God comes through for them and supernaturally meets their needs. One morning they get up and this stuff was all over the ground, and in Hebrew they say, What is it? In Hebrew the words, What is it?, are translated manna. That's where we get the word manna.

That's why they call it manna. They never did know what to call it, they just said, What is it? It was lying all over the ground. I married a southern girl and the first time my wife served me grits, I called them manna and I've been calling them manna ever since, and I still haven't figured out what it is.

But this manna had all the daily minimum requirements, all the nutritional needs, I'm sure, were met by this manna, which was supernatural food from God. He also gave them quails and water out there in that wilderness. And this supernatural provision for the needs of these people pictures another miracle you and I need.

It takes a miracle to save us, it takes a miracle to lead us to God's will, and it takes a miracle to sustain us. Who is the source of meeting your needs? You believe the United States of America, the economy of America, you believe that's where it's coming from? I think you're on shaky ground if you believe that. What do you think is the source, really, of your sustenance? The scripture tries to tell us in so many ways that the source of your sustenance and mine is God.

In the Psalms, in Psalm 145, it's put so beautifully. It says, The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

I love to hear that sung as an anthem. It's a beautiful truth. The eyes of all look to God, and God gives them their meat in due season when they need it.

He just opens his hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. That's what we're acknowledging when we say grace. We're just acknowledging the fact that God is the source of this food, and we believe it's coming from him.

God is meeting my needs. That's what we're saying when we say grace, and we thank him for that. That's what the wilderness provision pictures.

Also back there in the book of Exodus, especially in chapter 12, you have a sacrament at the heart of this deliverance. It's very interesting, because the sacrament at the heart of the deliverance of the children of Israel has become the sacrament at the heart of our salvation. In the 12th chapter of Exodus, we're told that when that last plague came through Egypt, it was taking the firstborn of every Egyptian family.

Here's one of the great sacraments in the Jewish faith, even today. When the wrath of God came through Egypt and was taking the life of every firstborn in the households of Egypt, he instructed the people of God to take a lamb, and they were to kill this lamb, they were to slaughter this lamb, and the blood of this lamb was supposed to be put on the top and both sides of the doorposts of their homes. And with the blood of this lamb on the doorposts of their homes in this manner, they were to be inside those homes eating that lamb, according to God's specifications.

You don't have to look very hard at that to realize that that forms a cross. In the New Testament, Jesus says in the 5th chapter of John and in the 24th chapter of Luke and other places, he says, "'Moses wrote of me,' that's what opened up the scripture to the Apostles, remember, when he said, "'It's all about me, Moses wrote about me.'" We'll see this all the way through the book of Exodus, and we'll see it in Leviticus, we saw it in Genesis, because this blood as it was placed there pictures a cross. This Jewish sacrament of Passover was instituted to be an annual thing for all of their generations.

It's called Passover because when the Angel of Jehovah saw the blood of that lamb on those doorposts, he passed over their homes, but he took the life of the firstborn in the Egyptian homes. Many, many years later, our Lord Jesus was sitting at a table with his Jewish Apostles celebrating this Passover, and he said, "'Believe me, I shall not eat this Passover again until all that it means is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'" Having said that, within hours he was dying on the cross. What did he mean when he said this? "'I've looked forward to this Passover because I'll never eat it again until it is fulfilled, all that it means, in the kingdom of God,' or in the will of God.

When Jesus came into this world, John the Baptizer introduced him this way, "'Behold the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world. The Lamb that was pictured by that Passover Lamb,' and all the sacrifices that God instituted in the sacrificial system, were fulfilled when Jesus Christ died on that cross. Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God whose death took away the sins of the world.'" There is a place in Norfolk, Virginia called the MacArthur Memorial, where you have many, many pictures of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur.

When you go through that memorial, you look at all these pictures of General MacArthur, and then you are supposed to come away with your memorial of General MacArthur, the composite of all those pictures that you saw. Before the General died, he visited that memorial, because Norfolk was his hometown. They asked him, of all the pictures in this memorial, General MacArthur, which one really says it? Being a very decisive man, he pointed to one, and he said, "'That one.

That one really says it.'" The needlepoint with the ruffled hat, he said, "'That really says it.'" When Jesus was eating that Jewish Passover with his Jewish apostles, he knew that some of those men sitting at the table with him were going to memorialize him through word pictures by writing gospels, biographies of Jesus. They picture him in many, many ways. There are many ways we think of Jesus because of these word pictures of him in the gospels.

But when Jesus was eating that Passover with them, he said in so many words in advance, "'Let me tell you the one picture that really says it. Let me tell you the way I really want to be remembered. I want to be remembered on my cross.'" He chose to be remembered that way not because he needed to be remembered that way, but because he knew we needed to remember him that way.

When Jesus did that, he took the sacrament at the heart of the deliverance of the children of Israel, and he made that the sacrament at the heart of Christian salvation. That's why we refer to our faith as the Jewish

Christian revelation of truth. The basic Jewish sacrament is Passover.

The basic Christian sacrament is communion, the Eucharist, the Lord's table, whatever you call it. The reason why the sacrament of Passover is at the heart of the deliverance of the children of Israel and the Eucharist is at the heart of Christian salvation is because it took a miracle to save those people in Egypt, and it took a miracle to save you and me. There's only one miracle that saves you and me, and that's the miracle that's pictured by the basic Jewish sacrament and the basic Christian sacrament, Jesus Christ dying on a cross for the sins of this world.

I pray that as you look at the principles of deliverance in the book of Exodus, you'll see that. You'll see the miracles it took to save you and to save me.

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