

Are You the One?

by Gayle Erwin

The true deliverer comes not to meet our physical expectations, but to set us free from our sins and bondages through spiritual freedom.

Duration: 38:58

Scripture: Matthew 20:28, Luke 4:17-19, Luke 7:21, John 1:29-30

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the human desire for a deliverer and how it is reflected in literature and popular culture. He criticizes the commercialization of this desire in California, where people can buy a chance at deliverance through the lottery. The speaker also highlights the need for a true deliverer, emphasizing that humans often create their own idealized deliverers based on their own desires and preferences. He mentions how the Greeks and Romans created their own gods as super-idealized human beings, but also notes that the true deliverer is the anointed one, the Messiah.

Transcript

Have you ever noticed that there are times when you are reading the scripture and you come upon a passage that you have read many times before, but for the first time you see it and it staggers you and begins to adjust some of your perhaps long-held theology because it does not fit maybe the way you had been thinking before and you can't drop it. It just moves around in your mind and messes it up. One of those passages is in the first chapter of the Gospel of John and it is about John the Baptist, not John the author of this particular book, but in John chapter 1 verse 29, beginning there, listen to what it says.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I meant when I said a man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me. Now folks, it's the next words that staggered me.

I myself did not know him. What? But the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel. Then John gave this testimony.

I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And look folks, he says it again. I would not have known him.

What? I know what's not in the Bible. It's just, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me the man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.

Folks, I'm staggered by John the Baptist statement. I didn't know him and I would not have known him. He said, I only had one clue.

The one who sent me said, I'm giving you one clue. That's all. When you see the Spirit come down and remain, that's him.

Now, one of the things that bothers me about this is you realize, of course, that Jesus and John were cousins. I thought they kind of grew up together and every Thursday morning would have breakfast at Denny's and would plan this. And maybe a couple of years beforehand, Jesus says to John, John, how do you like locusts? I expect you to eat them.

You can wash it down with wild honey, but you also need to buy a camel's hair shirt. That will really make you preach. But not so.

He says, I didn't know him. Now, folks, when I saw this, here are some things that began to stagger me. I realized that there was nothing physical about Jesus that would cause anyone to look at him and say, Messiah.

No big M on his chest. No blue tights and flowing cape. Now, here's how that affected my prior thinking.

Sometimes you learn things and you really don't even know where you learned them. You just sort of absorb them and it's there. And I realized that I had sort of joined many people, for instance, who believe, and maybe you do, that Jesus glowed in the dark.

I mean, you've seen the pictures, haven't you, that they draw of him with the big symbol behind his head? And on Christmas, which is not too far away from us, we'll put perhaps our nativity scenes out on our lawns and they look relatively normal except for the manger. Folks, if that had been true, do you realize that John the Baptist would have known, this has got to be him. The kid who never could play hide and go seek.

And do you realize that Judas would not have had to kiss him to identify him. He would just say, get the one you can see. So obviously he did not glow in the dark.

And we also have this tendency to think that he was perhaps eight feet tall. He was the one who could say something, yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I'll fear no evil. Because I'm the biggest thing in the valley.

Well, the average, and I understand how we believe that, because we, I don't know if you ever sing turn your eyes upon Jesus, but when you do, where do you look? The average male height of Jesus day was five feet six inches tall. And I figure he was about that height, otherwise he couldn't have lost himself in the crowds as he did, which by the way, the Bible also tells us, when we'll see him, we'll be like him. So you tall men enjoy it now, okay.

If Jesus had been eight feet tall, John the Baptist would have known this man must be him. And Judas would not have had to kiss him to identify him. He would have just said, get the big one.

We also tend to believe, some do, that Jesus was very handsome. Well, of course, I have his picture on my wall. And he's the most beautiful redheaded Irishman I've ever seen.

But folks, if I understand Isaiah correctly, he says that he had no form nor comeliness. Now we don't use that word comely much anymore, but it literally means no handsomeness, no beauty that we should desire him. So if he had been ridiculously handsome, surely John would have known, and Judas wouldn't have had to have kissed him.

He would have just said, get the pretty one. And there are those who believe his voice was different. You see, when we speak to each other, good morning, how are you? Good to see you today.

But some think that when Jesus spoke, there was an electronic echo in his voice. And the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra was playing in the background. Now, if that had been true, John would have known, gotta be him.

And Judas would not have had to kiss him to identify him. He would just say, when you hear the orchestra, that's him. Now, obviously from this, there were no physical clues that Jesus was the Messiah.

Now, there are implications to this that are so wonderful, it's just awesome to me. First of all, I need to tell you this, and you know this, I'm not trying to insult your intelligence. The word Messiah and the word Christ are identical words.

Messiah is the Hebrew word. Christ Christos would be, or Messiah or Messiah, Christ Christos would be the Greek form. And they are identical words.

They both mean the same thing. The meaning of that word is anointed one. Now, it also had come to mean deliverer.

Now, the interesting thing is, we human beings long for, it's ingrained in us, deliverers. This is why heroes are important. This is why we go for the strong sportsmen and the big Hollywood types and so forth, because it seems that they, the heroic ones, have risen above the mundane levels of our life and are sort of almost not human.

Now, notice this about our deliverers. They all look good. They're all big.

They fly. They have voices that project. That's the way we put heroes together.

And we all know that we need one. Israel knew that they needed a deliverer, and it seems that every child born almost, they would look and say, are you the one? Are you the one that will deliver us? There is the cry on every heart for deliverance. And we all know we need help.

Now, I've heard people say, oh, I don't need a deliverer. I can do it myself. All I need is a chance.

Aha. They just identified their deliverer as chance. But they all recognize I've got to somehow have outside help.

And so there was this constant expectation of a deliverer, and it had become contaminated by cultural understandings even by the time of Jesus. They knew, they expected, they thought, they dreamed that the deliverer, when he comes, will throw off the shackles of Rome and set us free and, of course, put us up now as the leaders. In fact, it had become so corrupted, and you ladies will love this, that men believed

that when the Messiah, the deliverer, came, their wives would have one child every month.

Isn't that wonderful? Just makes you pray for the Messiah. No. Now, the reason for that, you see, is they believed that children were wealth.

So hey, ultimate wealth, a child a month. All kinds of cultural expectancies had come about. I'm convinced, and I think I'll prove it to you this morning, that even John the Baptist, though he had this one clue given to him from God the Father, had some cultural expectancies of Jesus.

I know the apostles did. I know they did. Constantly during Jesus being Messiah, the apostles would sort of stop him and say, are you gonna do it now? Right down to the end.

When Jesus is on the Mount of Olives ready to ascend to the Father, once more, the apostles ask him, are you gonna do it now? If I had been Jesus, I would have said, beam me up, Father. There's no intelligent life now. But there beats in the heart of every human being the desire for a Deliverer.

The thing is, you have choices of Deliverers. You will either choose and create what you would like to see as your own Deliverer, or you will accept the true anointed one, Messiah. We put our Deliverers together as idealized human beings.

Humankind has always done so. The Greeks and the Romans created their gods, and they created their own gods as super idealized human beings. Unfortunately, they also created them in their minds as a bit arbitrary and promiscuous, which was a reflection of themselves.

But they also created them as idealized beauty. And to this day, we will often say for beauty or handsomeness that they have the Greek god or the Greek goddess look. Because that's what we do when we put Deliverers together.

Hollywood, when they put their Deliverers together, what do they look like? Tall, handsome, unmovable, never cry, guns that have 5,000 bullets in each one. Always the ability to outdraw the bad guys. Never moved by the wiles of a woman, kisses only his horse.

If you ever visit Universal Studios in California, you'll even discover the ways that they try to make sure they look heroic to you. Because you see, not all of these good looking people that you've ever seen are as tall as you think. Well, they handle that.

They lower the doors so that when they walk through, it looks like they've occupied the whole door, you know. And you think, whoa, look at that guy. When he's really about my size.

That's the way we do. In fact, we love messianic type stories. We love deliverance type stories.

The literature that tends to survive through the centuries is that literature that has a deliverance in it. A deliverer who, when it seems that all things are absolutely impossible at that last moment, with incredible thought or incredible speed or incredible strength, they deliver everybody. Or maybe just 30 seconds before the commercial, the cavalry arrives.

Oh, yeah. We love it. Perry Mason, remember him? Never lost a case.

When it appeared that someone was going to die unjustly at the last moment with phenomenal skills, messianic deliverance, he would solve the case. We love that kind of literature. It speaks to the human

heart, because we all know we need a deliverer.

But you see, we put it together our way. And that's the problem. In fact, we have done something in California that I know that you in Florida are much more intelligent and would never do this.

But we have developed a system to tap into for commercial purposes the desire for deliverance. And you can go in my state to just about any place of business and for one dollar buy a chance at deliverance in the lottery. So you would never do that.

But we did. And I watch, you know, maybe I've stopped at a grocery store and I watch people with almost nothing, man, they can hardly buy anything, but they've got enough money to buy a chance at deliverance. Because we think, what would I do with 100 million dollars? Deliverance.

In fact, I get letters from a very famous lady. She knows me personally. She uses my name throughout the letter.

Her name is Carolyn Davis. And she writes to me regularly. Dear Gail Irwin, knows me.

You and the Irwin family, as well as the Palmer family across the street and the Allworth family next door have been given six chances to win 10 million dollars in the Reader's Digest sweepstakes. I know she knows me because she uses my name throughout the letter. And I look at my tickets, you know, and my numbers are a little bit funny written.

And I think, I have the ones. Oh, what would I do with 10 million dollars? Deliverance. So I put it in my mouth, put a stamp on it, sit down.

Deliverance. It beats in every heart, doesn't it? It's just there. The literature that I mentioned as a kid, Superman.

Oh, he is sort of the ultimate American heroic person. Faster than a speeding bullet. More powerful than a locomotive.

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's Superman. And probably every kid, I know you don't look like a kid now, you guys are older, but there's still a little boy in you that sort of dreams of being impervious to all the bullets. Able to be stronger than a locomotive.

We still dream about it, don't we guys? Am I touching it? And to be able to fly. Heroic. Now, God sends a deliverer, a true deliverer, and the thing that so fascinates me is he does not meet one single thing that we human beings would put together as the deliverer.

But he is the true deliverer. See, the fact is, Superman doesn't exist. The Greek and the Roman gods did not exist.

None of these heroes that we have leaned upon exist. I don't think there is a lottery winner in our audience this morning of significance. All of these forms of deliverance are mere fancy, but the true deliverer who comes has only one clue.

When you see the spirit come down and remain, that's him. Now, most interesting thing. When Jesus was baptized by John, shortly after that, and John says, I've seen and I testify, this is the one, shortly after that, Herod comes and arrests John.

Throws him in jail. I can see John as he heads toward jail with his disciples walking along, and he says, hey guys, don't worry about it. I have just baptized the deliverer.

Oh, maybe 30 seconds before the commercial, he'll be here. No jail can hold me now. Do you know what happened? The Bible says when Herod arrested John, Jesus left the country.

Huh? Some deliverer? No. But then you find after this baptism and the temptation, Jesus goes to his home church, shall we say, and in Luke chapter 4, when they recognize him, of course, to be the teacher that he was, the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, Luke 4, 17, was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written.

Listen to this, folks. The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because he has anointed me.

There we go. And what has he anointed him to do? Does not say throw off the shackles of Rome. Make you the most prosperous people in the world.

Doesn't say the things that we would put together as our messianic expectancies, but it says to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the captives, to prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor or the time of God's favor or that season when God is saying, look, folks, I am on your side. Awesome.

You see, that's the way God puts a deliverer together. Different from the way we would. But you see, none of those other fancies that we have of deliverers produce.

But Jesus does. Jesus does. But now we must go back to John in his jail.

He's sitting there and he's thinking, where's the deliverer? I thought he would be here by now. Have you, now don't raise your hands on this, but have you ever prayed for a physical rescue from God or been upset that he didn't grant one automatically? I mean, the worst thing in the world, you know, is you're coming to church and you have a flat tire. God, why'd you let this happen? I mean, I'm going to church.

Are you God? Have you ever gotten into a situation that was really trying your being and your soul and, oh man, it was maybe the most difficult thing you'd ever faced. And yet, God left you there. You think, wait, wait, wait, wait.

Aren't you God? Don't you deliver people from these difficulties? I think John was thinking that. I just baptized the deliverer. And here I am still.

But you see, physical deliverance from some trials are not necessarily what the great deliverer wants to have happen. Sometimes, yes. Sometimes, no.

But there are things that are far more important than that. We know even as we read from the life of Paul, he spent much of his life in prison and yet he says, hey, don't worry about it. My being in jail has fallen out for the good of the gospel.

And some of the greatest writing that he did came out of that jail, you see. It isn't always that physical freedom or prosperity is the thing that is true deliverance. And Paul was even able to say, you know, I wish you were just like I am to one great leader, except for these chains.

You see, the freest man in that courtroom happened to be Paul. And the true deliverer, the true anointed one, comes and sets us free. There's only one way he does it, and it's spiritually.

There have been many great, wonderful people of God who were not delivered from death. Read Hebrews 11. They were not delivered from being fugitives.

They were not delivered from having to be in caves, and yet their faith sent them there. They were not failures. Maybe they were in our eyes, but not in God's.

In fact, he even says the world wasn't even worthy of them. But back to John, Jesus doesn't come. And finally, finally, in the seventh chapter of Luke, it finally comes home to roost.

Luke chapter 7, verse 19, well, verse 18. John's disciples told him about all these things, calling two of them. He sent them to the Lord to ask, are you the one who was to come? Or should we expect someone else? Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait.

This is the same guy who said, I have seen and I testify, this is the Son of God. Now he's saying, are you the one? Verse 21. At that very time, Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses, and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind.

So he, Jesus, replied to the messengers, go back and report to John what you've seen and heard. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Do you see what's happening? Jesus doesn't say, go back and tell John he had better kind of, you know, hitch things up there and keep his chin up, man, and be tough.

I've got to have it. I mean, if he's going to be anything, he'd better be tough in that jail. He doesn't do that, does he? He doesn't say, you go back and tell John that he's in great danger, man.

If he had such a great revelation from God, and now he's having this kind of a problem, he had better watch out. He doesn't do that, does he? You know what he does? He says, go back and tell John the Spirit is still here. You had one clue, John.

Remember, when you see the Spirit come down and remain, that's him. Tell John the Spirit is still here. In other words, I am still living out what you and I both know the Messiah was supposed to do.

The Messiah came not to merely draw attention to himself, not to be the great deliverer from Rome, but to come and be the one truly others-centered, servant-hearted person. And look at his clientele, would you? The poor, the outcast, the oppressed, those who are in bondage, those who are blind and don't understand, those who feel out of favor. That's his clientele.

And so he comes to us as the true deliverer. And oh my, if you happen to be here this morning, and you find yourself seeking deliverance in some other way, maybe you think your biggest problem is really financial, or maybe your biggest problem is even your health, or your biggest problem is some other thing beside the sin and the bondage from which he wishes to release you. I want you to know that your biggest problem is the sin.

And there's only one person who can deliver you from that. Only one. The lottery can't.

You win the lottery and you just have more money to spend with. It's almost like a truck driver who meant an awful lot to me in my early days. He said something I'll never forget.

He said, civilization and education does not make you better. Civilization and education will not keep you from killing someone. It'll only keep you from eating him after you've killed him.

So all of the things that we put our trust in are powerless to do the very one thing that the great deliverer and the true deliverer came to do. And that's to set you free from that true bondage. And I want you to know that if you're in bondage now and you've not asked him to be lord of your life, the true messiah, the eternal superman, waits to do so just for you.

The spirit is still there. Now, Jesus goes on and makes this interesting statement. He says in verse 23 of Luke 7, blessed is the man who is not offended in me or who does not fall away on account of me.

What is he talking about here? He is just simply saying, blessed is the man who, when he sees what I am truly like, does not say, well, you know, that's not the kind of messiah I had in mind. I was hoping that the true messiah would be born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and would be a good old American boy, you know, and just number one kind of guy. That's not, I just, if he isn't, if he isn't the mild-mannered Clark Kent who only needs a phone booth, then I'm just not interested.

And there's some who are that way. But Jesus is saying, blessed or happy is the man who, when he sees what I am truly like, says, that's him. Him I will follow.

Some years ago, I was in the city of Nashville and was doing a seminar, actually, for a church there and its leadership. There was one particular chap, I remember him so well, but he was kind of everyone's leader type. I mean, he was well-dressed, he was smooth, he was tall, he was big, he was kind of, could sell you anything.

And I come in and I teach on the servanthood nature of Jesus and the fact that he was the one truly other-centered person. He says, I didn't come to be served, but to serve. Jesus wasn't a taker, he was a giver.

Some months, actually, later, the pastor called me on the phone. He said, I think I owe you a report. Remember when you were with us? I said, oh yes.

He said, remember so-and-so? And he named the guy. I said, oh yeah, you can't forget him. He said, after that weekend, he went on a two-week Caribbean cruise.

He said, you ruined it for him. I said, really? He said, he spent two weeks at the rail of that ship, weeping. Because it so confronted all of his physical, fleshly, carnal dreams and expectancies, and he realized that the Jesus that he had been serving, or thought he was, was not the Jesus that you had described.

And he said, he also realized that the Jesus you described was the true one. And it so wrenched him, because he knew that he was going to have to choose, will I serve the true Deliverer, or the American, or the European, or the Asian Deliverer? We all do this. And the pastor said, I'm happy to report to you that he's serving the true Jesus now.

And so, I really cannot offer you the opportunity to follow mild-mannered Clark Kent, waiting only for the chance to clobber a few criminals. Can't offer you that. I can't offer you a Jesus who defeats all the bad

forces of the world immediately on the spot.

But I can say to you right now, that he is the Anointed One, the Deliverer. And those things that truly hold you, he will set you free. Because he is God's Messiah and Anointed One.

So if you've come here and you are ready to say, that's the one and him I will follow, then I have good news for you. He's here, and he hasn't changed. The Spirit still remains.

So I'm going to pray now, and you be thinking about this, because maybe this is the day that you will say, the bondages in my life, I give up to you now, because I believe you are the Anointed One. You are now my hero. Let's pray.

Lord, you really are good to us. You refuse to let us limit you to our fleshly conjurings. You refuse to let us make you less than what you truly are.

And I sure am glad of that, God, because everything I could have imagined would not have been enough to deal with the true me. But you come in reality as the Son of God, exactly like the Father, and designed by him to do what we desperately need, and that's to hear the good news, God. So thank you for setting us free.

Thank you for being here. We now throw everything on you, because we know who you truly are, the true hero, the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One. Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you, that you are that.

Amen. To help you explore the lifestyle of Jesus in more detail, Servant Quarters offers a wide variety of books, audiobooks, audio messages, and videotapes. For a complete listing of these resources, please write Servant Quarters, Post Office Box 219, Cathedral City, CA 92235.

Or, you may call Servant Quarters toll-free at 888-321-0077. You may also visit our website at www.servant.org.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/21/SID21782.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gayle-erwin/are-you-the-one/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net