

Text: Exod. 12:21-28

Title: What is Exodus about?

Time: 1/5/2020 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Have you ever had to ask yourself the question, "How am I going to get out of this?" Perhaps they were circumstances that your failings brought on yourself, or perhaps they were circumstances that were completely beyond your control. Perhaps none of this is past tense for you. Maybe you are asking that question right now. Sometimes we need a way out of very serious trouble; sometimes we would like a way out of less serious difficulty.

My dad needed a way out of trouble when his golf cart ran out of juice on the 8th hole this past week. He used my cart, and I walked. He also needed a way of escape from a serious aneurism he had been diagnosed with. Praise the Lord, the doctors have not been able recently to find a trace of it. In many different ways in life, we often need a way out of trouble.

*Exodus* means *the way out*. That seems to be the way the Apostle Paul read the theme of this Old Testament book. You may remember that he said that the events of Exodus happened for our example. He explained in this regard, "There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape (an exodus; a way out) that ye may be able to bear it."

Exodus is about the way out that God provided for Israel. Their slavery in Egypt was a circumstance that created much suffering for them, that was completely beyond their

control, and they needed a way out. The God we worship this morning is the God of the way out that Israel needed, and He is the God of the way out that we need too. This book of the Bible teaches that our way out comes from His mighty work of salvation and faithful deliverance.

As we page through the book of Exodus endeavoring to answer the question this morning, "What is Exodus about?", we find that there are at least three major sections of this OT book.

Chapters 1-4 tell us about Israel's need for deliverance and God's provision of a deliverer. Chapters 5-18 give the history of the deliverance itself. In those chapters we see that God's deliverance is resisted but irresistible, executed and irreversible, both celebrated and lamented, and then at last truly blessed. Then finally Chapters 19-40 describe how the delivered should live. God's people are called to live a covenantal life, a lawful life, and a worshipping life. That is a rough outline of the book.

So Exodus is about deliverance, and in each of these sections of the book three themes about God's power to save or deliver are repeated again and again. Here in our text this morning, we see all three of these descriptions of God's power to save highlighted in a clear way. I want us to notice them together by way of introduction this morning, as the answer to our question, "What is Exodus about?"

I. God's power to save is greater than the enemy's power to destroy (vv. 21-23).

Illustration: Heavyweight boxer Joe Frazier finished his career with a record 32 wins. He lost only four times, twice each to Ali and Forman, and he was known for a specific

punch – a deadly left hook that he used to execute most of his knockout wins.

Application: In the book of Exodus, Egypt is a world power that has stepped into the ring with the wrong Opponent. 1:8 tells us that a Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph. As we read on we learn that he did not reverence Joseph's God and that he became the enemy of Joseph's people.

Egypt and its Pharaohs are very real and formidable opponents. A pharaoh demands the execution of Israeli male newborns. A pharaoh refuses to let the Israelites go, hardening his heart. The entire force of Egyptian evil stands against the deliverance God has willed for His people.

But to quote the Apostle Paul's interpretation of these events, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). God's power to save is clearly greater than the enemy's power to destroy. Egypt is fighting the wrong Opponent.

As we study Exodus we are going to find wonderful truths about God's power to save –

(1) that God's powerful compassion is greater than the enemy's cruelty;

(2) that God's powerful miracles are greater than the enemy's hardened heart, counterfeit miracles, and political and military might;

(2) and that God's powerful justice is unfailingly satisfied in judgment of sin.

That last truth about God's power to save brings us to our passage's description of the hero of Israel's deliverance from bondage (vv. 21-22). When we think of Israel's deliverer, we of course think of Moses. It is one of the wonders

of God's work of salvation that he uses human instruments to accomplish this work. It would be like Frazier tying one hand behind his back before the Thriller in Manilla and still winning.

But the true hero of the Exodus, it turns out, is not Moses. It is the lamb of the Passover. Moses had to be delivered by the Passover lamb. Its blood had to be shed and applied to his doorposts and lintel in the shape of the points of a cross, just like everyone else.

Why do it this way, Lord? Why must there be the death of a little lamb? It must be done this way, because God's power to save requires a certain sacrifice. Deliverance from our death can only be accomplished through the death of another, for God's just judgment must be upheld. This little Passover lamb foretells God's provision of our innocent Passover Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. Seeing Him John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). It is the great tragedy of modern apostate Judaism today that they have no atoning sacrifice, without which there can be no deliverance.

An atoning sacrifice is where deliverance must begin for you and for me. We need a hero for our deliverance. We need the sacrificial Lamb of Calvary, because each of us is in the cruel bondage of our own sinful transgression of God's laws.

Those who refused to protect their home with the blood of the Passover sacrifice died on the night of the last plague. Will we refuse to open the door of our heart to the application of Jesus's Passover sacrificial blood? Remember Paul's warning: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Do not try to stand before God's just judgment without the blood of the Lamb atoning for your sin.

And so John said, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” Each of us needs his sin taken away. Deliverance through the Christ of Calvary only requires that I behold Him with eyes of faith as the Lamb whose atoning death and victorious resurrection are sufficient to take away my sin.

II. God’s power to save is a promise of His providence (vv. 24-27a).

Illustration: We have come to the year 2020. That is really an amazing number to me. Twenty years ago, when the world was concerned about a Y2K crisis hitting computers worldwide, the company I work for had to change the way it loaded a pricing record for billing into its system. We needed to pick an end-date for billable pricing that was far enough out into the future that we would not have to change it again. We picked 12/31/2020. And now here we are, and it looks like we will need to change that again.

Application: As the Lord institutes the Passover ceremony for His people, He speaks of His plans for their future. He mentions their sons (v. 24), and He mentions the land he was going to give them (v. 25a). And then he tells them that this future is based on His past promise (v. 25b). God’s power to save is a promise of His work of providence. That promise includes a plan that secures the future of the delivered, because they are His covenantal people.

The covenantal nature of God’s deliverance is brought out forcibly in the reassurance the Lord gives Moses after his first unsuccessful encounter with Pharaoh in Egypt (Exod. 6:1-8). At the center of this reassurance stands the word *covenant* (v. 4). Verse 8 speaks of God’s *swearing* or *taking an oath*. The author of Hebrews explains that just like Israel’s hope was covenantal, so also is ours (Heb. 6:13-20). Exod.

6:6-7 also describe what this means for us: freedom from the burdens of bondage; I am His; and He is mine.

Illustration: The famous 19th century evangelist D. L. Moody was saved as a teenager in Boston. He spoke of how he felt when he first came to know freedom from the burdens of his bondage, that he was now God's, and God was now his: "I remember the morning on which I came out of my room after I had first trusted Christ. I thought the old sun shone a good deal brighter than it ever had before—I thought it was just smiling upon me; and as I walked out upon Boston Common and heard the birds singing in the trees I thought they were all singing a song to me. Do you know, I fell in love with the birds? I had never cared for them before. It seemed to me that I was in love with all creation. I had not a bitter feeling against any man."

Some [see Robert Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul: Book 2*, 161] have speculated that the Irish pastor George Robinson wrote the second verse of his hymn, "I Am His and He Is Mine," after hearing that testimony from Moody: "Heaven above is softer blue, earth around is sweeter green; Something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen! Birds with gladder songs o'erflow, Flow'rs with deeper beauties shine,  
Since I know, and now I know, I am His and He is mine."

This promise of God's power to save tells us that we are loved with an everlasting love. His covenant says we shall be in bondage never again, because now we are His and He is ours. Can you remember the day that became true for you?

III. God's power to save enables His people to properly worship (vv. 27b-28).

Application: Half of the book of Exodus provides instruction for how a delivered covenantal people should live. We will find emphasized in this Old Testament book two guiding principles of life that are equally applicable to our lives today. First, delivered people must endeavor to obey God's law; and second, delivered people must endeavor to reverence God's dwelling place. In both of these emphases we find the true nature of proper worship.

At the very beginning of these chapters, God explains why it is so important for His delivered people to obey his laws and reverence his dwelling place (Exod. 19:1-6). God wanted to use the nation of Israel to lay claim again to what is rightly His - "all the earth is mine" (v. 5). His plan for Israel was not only that they would have a priesthood, but that they would be a kingdom of priests who represent the true God to other nations and who intercede for other nations before the true God. With this purpose in mind, Israel was to be a peculiar treasure and a holy nation.

Conclusion: Today, all the earth is still the Lord's. Jesus said before His ascension, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And in our day, He has raised up His church to this same mission, one that requires obedience to His law and true reverence for His dwelling place today, the local church assembly time (Matt. 18:20).

The Apostle Peter put it to local church members this way: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

He called me out of darkness into His light. My burdens are gone; I am His; and He is mine. And all this means I

must obey and worship Him as His priest, whose singular life mission is to show forth His praises to others who are still in that darkness and need that light. This is what Exodus is about. It is what our lives need to be about as well.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*