

Text: Exodus 1:1-14

Title: "Israel's need for deliverance"

Time: 1/12/2020 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: In the field of medicine, there is a great emphasis on understanding a patient's need for healing. That is called *his sickness*, and we call the ability to identify this sickness *a correct diagnosis*. A correct diagnosis is a great blessing and something that medical professionals work very hard to achieve.

The good news of Jesus Christ, the gospel of God's deliverance, must always begin with a correct diagnosis of the sinner's need for deliverance. The NT book of Romans is all about this gospel, and it begins with the first three chapters giving us the bad news that makes the good news necessary – "all have sinned."

Paul gives his correct diagnosis of this spiritual condition of every man there and concludes: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). The Lord described this guilty condition as not only sin, but as slavery to sin – "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (or slave) of sin" (John 8:34).

Deliverance and freedom from this condition is what the Bible calls *redemption*. Redemption refers to the wonderful truth that a person can be delivered and freed from slavery to his sin. We said last week that Exodus is about God's redemption or deliverance of Israel from slavery. In this history we see the gospel of God's grace illustrated for us, and so it is no surprise that the book begins in this passage with

a description of Israel's need for deliverance. I want us to see three things about Israel's need for deliverance this morning and how they illustrate the need of our own heart.

I. Israel's need for deliverance was unknown to them in their prosperity (v. 1-7).

Illustration: The last time I preached in the high school chapel at Trinity Christian School, it happened to be September 11th. I asked the students I was with to raise their hands if they were alive on 9/11, 2001. No hands in the room went up. High school kids today were not yet born on that fateful day that many of us who are older will never forget.

So this past week we learned that our military took action to kill the top leader of the Iranian Quds force, Qassem Soleimani. Hearing that news must be very different for someone who lived through 9/11 and someone who did not. Somehow, the generation coming is going to have to remain vigilant for our national security without the benefit of the memory of that fateful day.

Application: The book of Exodus begins with a description of the magnitude of God's blessing on the people of Israel. It does so, beginning with the word *And* (the KJV *Now* is the normal Hebrew word for *And*). Moses wants us to see the connection between his description of this prosperity and what had come before in the book of Genesis.

Israel's prosperity was a gift from a former godly generation. Because Joseph had been faithful, those who came after him prospered. God had promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:13) and to Jacob (Gen. 46:3) the very prosperity described in this passage. The passage notes that they began as 70

souls, and we find that at the Exodus event the men alone numbered 600,000 (Exod. 12:37). The vocabulary of verse 7 is the vocabulary of the creation account, as well as the flood account, where God's desire for Adam and Noah was that they would be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

In our New Testament era, we need to understand that fruitfulness and multiplication are blessings from God. We certainly must view our physical children as precious gifts from God to be cared for. But also, it is normal NT Christianity for believers to have spiritual children who are precious gifts from God for whom they care. Acts tells us that, in the early days of the church, disciples multiplied (Acts 6:1, 7), and churches multiplied (Acts 9:31), so that the Word of God multiplied (Acts 12:24). Do we seek the blessing of spiritual reproduction for our lives?

Application 2: Now if we read between the lines of this description of prosperity, we come to see that each new generation needs its own deliverance from sin and commitment to godliness. Scripture indicates that this commitment waned among the Israelites in these good times. Josh. 24:14 exposes the fact that this prosperous generation was also an idolatrous one. This generation of the exodus would ultimately fail to enter the promised land (Num. 14:29).

During these days of great prosperity, Israel was not ready for an exodus out of Egypt. Their prosperity had made their need for deliverance from the true God completely unknown to them. Our prosperity can do that to us. Jesus described one of the reasons a heart becomes hardened to the power of God's Word in these terms in His parable of the seed and soils, "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and

it becomes unfruitful" (Matt. 13:22). So prosperity can be a spiritual thorn that chokes the Word out of our heart and lives. Are we too prosperous to see our sinfulness and our desperate need for God's deliverance from that sin? If so, it is the trick of the enemy who wants to keep us in Egypt.

II. Israel's need for deliverance was unknown to Pharaoh in his wisdom (vv. 8-12).

Illustration: There is a kind of wisdom among men that turns out to be the height of foolishness in disguise. Hans Christian Anderson masterfully illustrated this with his tale of the "Emperor's New Clothes." Two weavers deceive an emperor into thinking that they sold him a suit of clothes that is invisible to those who are unfit for their positions, stupid, or incompetent. It takes a little child, who cared little for the opinions of others, to point out the king's nakedness.

Application: C. H. Mackintosh describes the nakedness of this Pharaoh and his wisdom in our passage: "The death-blow to all skepticism and infidelity is the introduction of God into the scene. Till He is seen, they may strut up and down upon the stage with an amazing show of wisdom and cleverness; but the moment the eye catches even the faintest glimpse of that blessed One, they are stripped of their cloak, and disclosed in all their nakedness and deformity."

When the Pharaoh tells his people, "Come on, let us deal wisely," the verb Moses uses is a reflexive form that occurs only here and in Eccl. 7:16, which warns against the danger of "making thyself over wise." In other words, the source of the wisdom that Pharaoh expresses here is himself. It is wisdom that comes from his own heart. He is making himself wise, and that kind of wisdom, so common in our day, has some very foolish characteristics.

1. Pharaoh's wisdom ignored history (v. 8). This Pharaoh was new specifically in his policy to no longer respect the heritage of his fathers with its remembrance of Joseph. He knew not Joseph willingly, much like Eli's sons knew not the Lord in 1 Sam. 2:12. They knew him not, because they did not want to know him. That deliberate ignorance of history is part of our postmodern world, but it is a foolish characteristic of this false form of wisdom.

2. His wisdom perceived the Jewish people as a threat (v. 9). Throughout history anti-Semitism has always been a foolish part of worldly wisdom. God has made a promise to Israel, the fulfillment of which He has staked his reputation and honor upon. Satan and those seduced by his spirits and deceived by his doctrines deny that promise and have even sought to destroy its people. As believers of the church age, we must always oppose anti-Semitic rhetoric and policy.

3. His wisdom failed to perceive the existence and Word of God (v. 10). C. H. Mackintosh: "All this is the reasoning of a heart that had never learnt to take God into its calculations. The unrenewed heart never can do so; and hence, the moment you introduce God, all its reasonings fall to the ground. Apart from, or independent of, Him, they may seem very wise; but only bring Him in, and they are proved to be perfect folly."

Think of the way conventional wisdom has eliminated the thought of God and His Word from its thinking today. What is the result? Argumentation in support of complete falsehood fantasies, like abortion rights, human homosexuality, human transgenderism, macroevolution, and the list goes on and on.

4. His wisdom was dead wrong (v. 11-12). This is the very dangerous part of this kind of wisdom, which is void of the

God of the Bible. It simply does not agree with reality. Our ability to live normal lives of blessing in conformity to reality breaks down here, because this wisdom is simply wrong.

Worse of all, this wisdom is dead wrong about death and our need for deliverance from sin (1 Cor. 1:21). Pharaoh, of course, hardens his heart in this wisdom of his, which keeps him from seeing God's work of deliverance for his people. Will our commitment to the wisdom of our own heart keep us from this deliverance? Remember that it was a child who exposed the truth about the emperor's clothes. Similarly, Jesus taught that our faith must be childlike if we are to know the wisdom that saves (Matt. 18:3; 2 Tim. 3:15).

III. Israel's need for deliverance became known through slavery (vv. 13-14).

Illustration: The first black man to address a joint session of Congress was the pastor of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D. C.. He was a former slave named Henry Highland Garnet, and he titled his sermon that day, "Let the Monster Perish." He preached it to the 38th Congress on Sunday, February 12, 1865, just days prior to their adoption of the 13th amendment to the U. S. Constitution, which banned slavery.

Listen to what Garnet said about slavery: "Great God! I would as soon attempt to enslave Gabriel or Michael as to enslave a man made in the image of God, and for whom Christ died. Slavery is snatching man from the high place to which he was lifted by the hand of God, and dragging him down to the level of the brute creation, where he is made to be the companion of the horse and the fellow of the ox. It tears the crown of glory from his head and as far as possible obliterates the image of God that is in him.

“Slavery preys upon man, and man only. Why? Because a brute has not reason, faith, nor an undying spirit, nor conscience. It does not look forward to the future with joy or fear, nor reflect upon the past with satisfaction or regret.”

Application: The slavery described here is this same chattel slavery – possessing or owning a human being like one owns an animal. This passage tells us what God thinks of this form of cruel tyranny.

But in the end, God used Israel’s suffering in slavery to make them understand their need for deliverance from bondage in Egypt, and we are told about this history because it illustrates a need in each of our own hearts. We need to hear the Great Physician’s diagnosis loud and clear this morning: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (or slave) of sin” (John 8:34). That is me, and it is you too. We need deliverance from this slavery.

Conclusion: Do you see this is true about you?

Perhaps like Israel you have lived a very prosperous and blessed life, so much so that your need for deliverance has been imperceptible to you for a long time.

Perhaps like Pharaoh there is a certain kind of wisdom that has kept you from understanding the sinner’s need for deliverance. Do not be caught in that trap.

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

“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*