

Week 2: The LORD, and his deliverer

Exodus 3-4:17

Aim: To see the living, personal, and overruling character of God who is known by his actions, using his majesty in mercy to rescue his chosen people. His pattern for these great rescues is to use a human instrument, but an instrument who serves and succeeds in the LORD's strength. Moses here points us to the one greater, who is both God come down and a man - the Lord Jesus - through whom we are rescued for a living and personal relationship in the presence of God

Getting Started:

How do you get to know other people and what they're like?

Pray for understanding as we read God's word.

What is God saying?

Read Exodus 3:1-4:23

How does God gain Moses' attention and what does this encounter reveal about God in 3:1-6?

V2 Angel of the Lord appeared in flames of fire in a bush, without burning the bush, attracting Moses' attention.

Then the LORD spoke, and addressed Moses by name

The encounter confirms past experience in Exodus that - God speaks, and is personal.

And adds - God is holy (set apart), via the instruction about the holy ground where he meets Moses, and Moses' reaction of hiding his face in recognition that he is a mere creature before the creator.

God is also the God of Moses' fathers (which will come up repeatedly)

What is God's plan for his people, Egypt and Moses in 3:8-12?

(You could note the personal nature of v7 where God uses the personal pronoun 'I' and describes himself as the living God who 'sees', 'hears' and 'is concerned'. He is the living God!)

He has 'come down' (drawn near, down in the trenches so as to speak) to rescue them from their oppressors and to 'bring them up' into the good and spacious land. Moses will be his instrument in confronting Pharoah and leading the people out of Egypt, but he need not fear because the LORD will be present with and powerful through him.

God reveals himself in a new way to Moses and Israel here, by his name. How does this unfold and what might it mean?

V13 Moses asks in case the Israelites ask – 'you say you've been sent by him, so what's God's name, who is he...?' (And Moses could be asking for his own benefit as well)

V14-15 His name is 'I am who I am', or LORD (the English translation for 'I am who I am' as a name in Hebrew) which has the sense of the God of the past, the present, and the future. He is not constrained, he is the God over all, and he will be known by his actions - and we read on to see how that plays out in the Exodus!

What does the ultimatum to Pharoah in verses 3:18-20 reveal about how the LORD's people should respond to him, how Pharoah should respond, how Pharoah will respond and finally how the LORD will act (see also 4:22-23)?

His people – should worship him; Pharoah should obey his commands; but God will harden Pharoah's heart (4v21) and will need to be compelled to obey; and as Pharoah refuses to let God's 'firstborn son' Israel go, so God will kill Pharoah's firstborn.

Cast your eye again over each time Moses speaks to the LORD. What do you notice about his response to the LORD here?

3:11, 3:13, 4:1, 4:10 and 4:13 (3:5 is straightforward)

He shows increasing reluctance and push back until finally pleading for God to send someone else. Why? Stephen tells us Moses was 40 when he left Egypt, 80 at this point, and would live another 40 years (Acts 7:23, 27, 36), and we know from ch1-2 the threats to his life by Pharoah, powerful ruler of a great superpower nation, and rejection of his own people. He's overwhelmed by what's being asked of him and the risks to himself he foresees in obeying!

Why is God saying this?

How does John's gospel in particular show Jesus identifying with the LORD's name given here, and Moses' role, and the place of signs?

Jesus speaks the 'I am' sayings which could be him simply saying 'I am this or that' (actually he uses it for word pictures) but can also be understood as taking on himself the name of God. The Pharisees certainly hear it this second way when they try to kill him for blasphemy (John 8:58-59)!

You don't need to look them up, but for reference -

- I am the Bread of Life (John 6:35)*
- I am the Light of the World (John 8:12)*
- I am the Door (John 10:9)*
- I am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14)*
- I am the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25)*
- I am the Way and the Truth and the Life (John 14:6)*
- I am the Vine (John 15:1,5)*

Jessus is like Moses the instrument of God to rescue people from slavery (but from sin and the devil), Moses features prominently on Jesus' and the author's lips, and John draws attention to the signs which Jesus does that confirm what he says about himself.

How has this passage helped you understand the character of God and how we relate to him? And challenges you still feel?

Consider such aspects as – he is someone not something, he reveals and relates personally, as he has acted in the past, so we can be confident he will be able to do the same in the future – as in promising and fulfilling the Exodus, and Jesus' coming and work – keeping his promises to us about life, as well as endurance through hardship, and suffering, and doubts

Prayer Starters

- Praise God he is the LORD
- Thank God that he has revealed himself to us fully and finally in the Lord Jesus and all he has done
- Pray that God by His Spirit would enable us to have our expectations of the LORD shaped by what he has revealed about himself

Growing Growth Group Suggestion

Share with one another a ministry you are involved with and prayer suggestions for it (either one at church or beyond) and pray together. You may have time for one or two, but can do others in the future.

Are there any people I should follow up this week?