A Foretaste of Deliverance

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[0:00] Keep that passage open in front of you, and maybe just turn back to the start of chapter 2.! Let us pray for God's help with it as we turn to it together. Father, we thank you and praise you again for your words, that you in your grace have spoken to us, that you have made us as your creatures who can hear the voice of our Creator.

But more than that, Lord, we listen to the voice of our Redeemer. We thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that you would show him to us now through this passage together. That we might live by faith in him in all that we do.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well, about a month ago, there was a very much advertised but very little anticipated boxing match between Anthony Joshua, who was recently a heavyweight champion of the world, and someone called Jake Paul, who makes videos on YouTube.
Jake Paul wasn't a complete novice, and he had more power behind his punch than the average person. But Anthony Joshua was bigger, he was stronger, he was more experienced, he was more skilled.
Sometimes we like kind of an underdog story, don't we? But in this case, it wasn't kind of great bravery on show. It was great arrogance and great foolishness in equally large measure.
[1:31] It's almost so that people generally weren't rooting for the underdog, they were rooting for the former heavyweight champion of the world to put a very arrogant young man back in his place. It was, obviously, a complete mismatch, and it went exactly the way that you would expect.

That is something of what we are going to see happening in Exodus. In one corner, we have the fairly powerful king of Egypt. In the other corner, we have the infinitely more powerful king of creation.
And in a few chapters' time, we will hear the bell ring for the start of the first round. But for these first couple of chapters of Exodus, I think it's maybe helpful to think about what happened the day before the mismatch in Miami.
As with every boxing match, the day before, the two men showed up for the weigh-in, where the boxers kind of step up onto the scales, they face up to each other before stepping into the ring the next day.
And so at the weigh-in, up steps Jake Paul and Anthony Joshua onto their respective scales in front of a watching crowd. Jake Paul, the YouTuber, started kind of beating his chest, stirring up the crowd, flexing his muscles.
[2:45] I'm not going to replicate it, but you get the picture. But then when the two men kind of faced up to each other, he was kind of getting right into Anthony Joshua's face. He was mouthing off at him.

He was talking a big game. All the while, Anthony Joshua basically just stood there. Unmoved. Saying very little. No bigging himself up. No big show. He simply stood there. Not because he didn't have muscles to flex, but because he didn't need to flex his muscles.
Because long before the fight began, he knew exactly what was going to happen. He knew he was in control.
That is something of what we have going on in the opening two chapters of Exodus. Pharaoh has made a lot of noise. He is flexing his muscles, trying to show himself off as the one to be feared.
[3:51] All the while, God is there saying relatively little. Not uninterested or uninvolved, but utterly unshaken by his opponent's show of strength.

Because he knows what is going to happen. He knows he is in complete control. And he shows that in two ways in these first two chapters.

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We saw last week, didn't we? We'll see again a little bit this week. God is kind of using Pharaoh's pre-fight preparation against him. Every time Pharaoh tries to shrink the Israelite population, God sends them through a growth spurt.
What we'll also see here in chapter 2 is God advertising his game plan. It's like he's sitting down for the press conference and telling everyone exactly what is going to happen over the next 10 rounds. Over the next 15 chapters. Knowing that there is nothing. There is nothing his opponent can do to stop it. Chapter 2 is a foretaste.
[4:59] A foretaste of the deliverance that is to come. And it is, isn't it? It's deliverance that is coming. That's important to remember. Having used the kind of boxing analogy, we need to remember God isn't just interested in flooring an enemy here.

He is stepping into the ring to set his people free. Chapter 2 of Exodus is a blueprint for the deliverance of God's people.
All of God's people. Everywhere. In every generation. Not just from their slavery in Egypt then. But from our slavery to sin now.
So this morning we are going to walk through this chapter and simply see how God saves his people or how God is saying he will save his people before thinking briefly at the end about why God will save his people.
So let's begin with our first point this morning. God will save his people through the seeds of the woman, verses 1 to 10 of chapter 2. Last week we saw God continue to be faithful to his promises, even in Egypt, even in this foreign land, as he continued to multiply the descendants of Abraham.
[6:12] We also saw, didn't we, that the king of Egypt was determined to undo God's blessing. This was the last thing he wanted to see. He did not like that a non-native population was booming within his borders.

And so he implemented increasingly cruel policies to try and decimate the Hebrew population. But first, he made them work ruthlessly as slaves.
But when that didn't work, he enlisted the help of Hebrew midwives, telling them to kill the baby boys on the birthstool. But the midwives feared God more than Pharaoh, so that finally Pharaoh had to enlist the entire Egyptian population to carry out his command.
Just look there to the last verse of chapter 1 with me. Chapter 1, verse 22. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, every son that is born to the Hebrews, you shall cast into the Nile. But you shall let every daughter live. I don't know if you noticed that last week, but Pharaoh is only really concerned about half the Hebrew population, isn't he?
[7:28] Throw the boys in the Nile, but leave the girls. Men, I see, as a threat. They could band together into an army. No need to worry about the women. It is no coincidence that the next ten verses, in the next ten verses, the narrative zooms in onto the action of three women, all of whom play a crucial role in delivering God's people from Egypt.

None of them are named in this chapter, but they all play a key piece in God's salvation plan. Verse 1 introduces us to a couple who get married, they get pregnant, and then the woman bears a son. That's not good news in those days, is it? The woman bears a son. All the way back in Genesis 3, immediately after Adam had sinned, immediately God had promised a deliverer.
An offspring of the woman. An offspring of the woman who would crush the head of a serpent, one who would set his people free from their slavery to sin.
Every chapter after Genesis 3 is looking forward in anticipation to that promised offspring of the woman. Now, there are lots of children in the Bible, and unsurprisingly, they're all born of a woman.
[8:58] But there are a couple of hints in these opening verses that this child here has an especially close connection to that promised offspring of Genesis 3.

In verse 2, we have there, in the ESV it says, fine child. The Hebrew literally reads, she saw that he was good. It's relatively uncommon wording.
The one place that's very common is in Genesis 1. It's already just a tiny little hint of a new beginning here.
And that hint of a new beginning grows much stronger when we get to verse 3. Pharaoh's genocidal decree is still in force, and so when the parents can't hide the baby any longer, they, well, what do they do?
They decide to obey Pharaoh's command, sort of, because into the water goes the baby. But this baby goes safely into the water because he is protected by an ark.

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[10:11] Again, the word basket there in verse 3, I think it's again in verse 5, the only other place in the Bible you will find that word is Genesis 6 to 9, where it appears a lot. What does the ark do?

It saves people for a new beginning. It is a picture of God's promised salvation, carrying the offspring of a faithful woman who saw that he was good.
This is how God will save his people. Through a child born of a woman living by faith, born under the rule of a bloodthirsty tyrant, born to save, born to give new life, to make people new.
A handful of verses about an ancient Hebrew family living as slaves in ancient Egypt, and yet Jesus is everywhere here. It is a foretaste of the deliverance to come.
But for now, for them, the little ark is just bobbing helplessly down the river. The baby's big sister is watching on, hoping against hope, presumably, that somehow something good might happen.
[11:23] Maybe some other Hebrew family will see him and have a bigger house and take him in and be able to hide him. Hoping against hope that something good might happen. And then she sees some rustling in the reeds.

Someone's appearing. The hope rises. And then surely the hope is completely dashed. Because through the reeds appears none other than the daughter of Pharaoh.
I think surely at this point the big sister is expecting that the basket just to be turned upside down and never to see her brother again. Pharaoh's daughter.
But then something amazing happens. Verse 6, when she opened it she saw the child and behold the baby was crying. She took pity on him.
She took pity on him and said this is one of the Hebrews' children. Pharaoh's own daughter. The apple has fallen very far from the tree hasn't it?
[12:37] Seeing the pity on the princess's face the big sister boldly approaches with so it's an ambitious plan isn't it? Why don't I find someone to look after the baby for you? I actually know a woman some of her time has just freed up she's got a bit less on her plate and it all sounds good to Pharaoh's daughter.

So mum arrives on the riverbank and is handed back her own baby with a paycheck. Pharaoh's bank account is paying for this Hebrews woman to raise her own Hebrew son.
Now it would have been no doubt difficult because there was a time coming for Moses' mother when she would have to hand back the little baby boy but this is no doubt way beyond her greatest dreams what has happened here.
After some time the boy does come under the care of Pharaoh's daughter who names him we don't know what his name was before this point she names him Moses Moses because she drew him out of the water literally the name means he draws out.
Can you see that the foretaste of deliverance God's got a God's got a bigger and better plan and view doesn't he? Pharaoh might have drawn Pharaoh's daughter might have drawn Moses out of the river Moses is going to draw all of God's people out of Egypt through a much bigger river.
[14:14] God is not mentioned in these ten verses but you can see can't you that the silhouette of the conductor throughout Pharaoh flailing his limbs God smiling behind in the background in complete control and he exercises that control through three women.

It is not only a pointer back to the promised offspring of Genesis 3 it is an insight into how God uses always uses those whom the world completely overlooks.
In chapter one we saw Pharaoh repeat his command and we kill the boys don't worry about the daughters. Now not only is a mother and Pharaoh's own daughter central to the story but stitching them together is a daughter.
One of the little baby girls that Pharaoh was happy to let live because he saw no threat. What can she possibly do that would damage a king like me? A little girl whose life Pharaoh spared because he didn't think she mattered.
And yet look at how God uses her. You might not feel valued by the world around you. You might feel looked down upon, unimportant, insignificant.
[15:41] If that is how the world sees you, know that that is not how God sees you. And that how the world sees you has no bearing whatsoever on how God can and will use you for his purposes to save his people.

The way the world sees you has no bearing on how God can use you. These women were not just peripheral pieces of the puzzle. Each of them took a central role in the rescue of his people. That is a wonderful picture, isn't it?

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Not only of God fulfilling his promise to save his people through the seed of the women, but God's way of saving through those that the world will look down on, will look over, will not care about. God very much does, and God will use you for amazing things should you live by faith in him.
So we see how God will save through the seed of the women. Secondly, we see that God will rescue his people through a rejected redeemer. Although he was raised as Pharaoh's son, or the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses clearly knew his heritage, didn't he?
Verse 11, having grown up, he went out to his people. It's twice there in that verse. He might have been raised as royalty, but Moses willingly leaves the comfort of the royal courts and comes down to his people.
[17:15] When he sees one of his people being struck by an Egyptian, Moses looks left, he looks right, there's no one in sight, and so he strikes the Egyptian who was striking the Hebrews. It's the same verb time and time again in this little section.

He strikes the Egyptian who was striking the Hebrew. The next day, he sees a Hebrew striking another Hebrew, and he calls his brother out. Why do you strike your companion?
Why are you treating your brother the way that the Egyptians treat us? In response, who do you think you are?
Who do you think you are to judge us? Who do you think you are to rule over us? You're not a prince. You're a murderer. Turns out that the Moses' actions are no secret.
And so he has to run. Rejected by the Egyptians. Rejected by the Hebrews. Now, when we read this little section in isolation, I think it's very easy to assume that Moses has messed up here.
[18:27] Golden opportunity, and then he's just kind of lost his rag one day, and it's all gone to pot. It was nice of him to try and sympathize with his people, but he massively overreacted. He shouldn't have tried to play judge over the fellow Hebrews. But God has a much better understanding of this passage than we do, and hopefully we get this passage explained for us in the New Testament.

It might not be what we expect, but it is God's explanation, so it is the right explanation. Just listen to this. I'm going to read a section from Acts chapter 7. This is Stephen's sermon in chapter.
He says, when Moses was 40 years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel, and seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian.
He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. And on the following day, he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, men, you are brothers, why do you wrong each other?
But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?
[19:58] At this retort, Moses fled. And became an exile in the land of Midian. Moses was defending the oppressed. He was avenging his brother.

He was trying to reconcile his brothers. Now, we obviously need to be very careful about how we draw the lines here. Should we strike someone down if they are punching a fellow Christian?
No. Should Moses have struck down the Egyptian in Exodus 2? Well, actually, yes. Because Moses occupies a unique role as God's chosen deliverer, coming to deliver his people who are under physical slavery in the land of Egypt.
And so, he acts justly as God's going to act justly in a few chapters' times. It's never that helpful talking about lots of Hebrew in a sermon, maybe mentioned a bit too much already, but all the verbs used of Moses in this section will be used of God later on.
Moses strikes down the Egyptian in a few chapters' time, God is going to strike down the firstborn throughout Egypt. Moses is a foretaste of the deliverance that would come by the hand of God.
[21:30] Not kind of needlessly striking down foreign nationals, but the chosen deliverer who came to strike down God's enemies in order to set God's people free. Now, we want to be careful here, don't we, about drawing the parallels?

We want to see the patterns without overlooking the differences. Jesus was never placed into an ark. Jesus was never struck down a Roman soldier.
Moses was different because he was raised to deliver God's people from a physical enemy. And so he struck down a physical enemy. Jesus came to free his people from a spiritual enemy, from Satan.

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And so he came to strike down Satan. There is an obvious difference, isn't there, but there is a pattern. Not only that they came down to set God's people free through the striking down of their greatest enemy, but also that in coming to redeem their people, they would both face rejection. People would reject their redeemer, not because they don't need saved. The two Hebrew men who Moses approached very much needed saved. They were enslaved. But because they don't like the idea of someone coming to rule over them, they reject him.
[22:56] But for the one who was striking his fellow Hebrew here in Exodus chapter 2, in order to accept the coming of his redeemer, he would have had to accept the sinfulness of his own actions.

He would have had to let him stand in judgment over him. He would have had to submit to Moses' authority. But rather than acknowledge his own wrong, he rejected the one who had come to save him.
God has sent his redeemer. But that redeemer is rejected by many who would rather live their own life.
Whoever you are here this morning, do not let that be you. Do not reject the loving and righteous rule of Jesus.
us. Do not refuse him as your redeemer by refusing to acknowledge your own sin. He came down from heaven for you.
[23:59] Not just from a palace in Egypt, from a palace in heaven where he had been dwelling for eternity. He came down from there to identify with his people, to save his people, to redeem his people.

Do not reject him. He is your ruler and your judge, whether you want him to be or not. He is your ruler and your judge, but if you accept him as your ruler and judge, he will also be your redeemer. That is why Christ came. That is what he wants to do. That is what Moses wanted to do. But he could not rescue these people because they refused his rule.
Please do not let the same story be true of you. But thirdly, then God saves his people through one who delivers the oppressed. Having fled from Egypt, Moses finds himself sitting in a well in Midian where he sees some shepherds come to try and drive away some women who have come for some water.
But Moses steps in to save them. It is another verb that matters. He does not just help them out or offer them a hand.
[25:16] He saves them and provides for them like the striking down this language that will only be used of God later. It is a picture in miniature of what we are going to see played out in the big screen in the chapters to come.

God saves his people when enemies surround them. God saves his people when they cannot save themselves. God saves those who are helpless in the face of a foe that would otherwise overpower them.
Rugal's surprise at his daughter's early appearance makes it clear this was a regular occurrence that they went out expecting to be driven away day by day. And yet what had become a normal pattern of life, a regular drumbeat of defeat, is turned on its head by the appearance of God's chosen deliverer.
We'll see it played out in the big screen in a few chapters time at the Red Sea, but even that is just a trailer of what comes further down the line. Just as God uses those whom the world overlooks, so Jesus comes for those whom the world oppresses, squashes down, wants nothing to do with.
That the weak and the vulnerable, the poor and the neglected. That doesn't mean you need to be in those categories to be saved, but we see clearly, don't we, through the life and ministry of Jesus.
[26:50] He doesn't come looking for the seat of honor. He doesn't make a beeline for the popular crowd. He comes to those who are at the very edge of society.

He comes to those who are unable to help themselves, to save themselves. If you feel beat down by the world, if you cannot bear the burdens that are placed on you, know that Jesus does not come to add on to your load, but to take it away.
He comes to you and says, doesn't he, he says, come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest. I will save you. So come to him.
Come to him. To be saved by him. Come to him every day for his yoke is easy and his burden is light. God will save his people through the seed of the women, through a rejected redeemer, through one who will save the oppressed.

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That is how God will save his people. But just before we finish, let's turn our attention very briefly to the last couple of verses there of chapter two and think about why God will save his people.
[28:03] people. In verse 23, the camera zooms back out again. Years have passed by.

A pharaoh has passed away. But the enslavement of God's people very much remains. And so the people cry out to God for help.
And his response is there in verse 24 and 25. These verses contain four amazing things that God does. We'll just take them briefly in two pairs.
First of all, in response to his people's groaning, God hears and God remembers. God hears his people.
He always hears his people. The cries of God's covenant people really do go up to heaven. We have a God who hears us, who hears our cries for anguish, of anguish, who hears our every plea for help.
[29:09] None of it goes in one ear and out the other. He hears every single one. And when he hears, he remembers his covenant. Let's be clear, when we say God remembers his covenant, we're not saying that God sometimes struggles with memory issues.

When it comes to God, remembering is a way of saying about to act. God forgetting, why does it his refusal to respond?
So, we actually sang just before the sermon, didn't we? We sang from Psalm 25, asking that God would remember his love and not remember our sin, forget our sin, not recall it.
We're not asking there that God would suffer from selective amnesia. We're asking that he would act towards us according to his love and refuse to respond to our sin.
Here in Exodus, God never forgot his covenant. But now, in response to his people's prayers, he is going to act upon it. We already thought a little bit about this last week, and we'll actually be thinking more about it again this evening, but let me just reiterate, God will always and forever be faithful to his covenant promises to us.
[30:38] Because he hears and he remembers that faithfulness might not always look the way we hope it will look, but it is no less faithful. He hears your every prayer, and he will act for you according to every promise he has made to you in Jesus.

He hears and he remembers. Secondly, then, verse 25, he sees and he knows. There's a wonderful completeness, wholeness to what God understands of our circumstances.
It is amazing, isn't it, that he listens to our prayers, but his knowledge of what we are going through is not determined by what we remember to communicate, because he sees. He sees it all.
He saw everything his people were going through then, he sees everything you are going through now. We know that sometimes even those closest to us, they just don't get what we are maybe struggling with, they don't really get our pain or why we are feeling as sad or as sorrowful as we are. Sometimes even those closest to us just don't get it because they don't see everything in our lives, they don't see what's going on in our hearts, they don't see the turmoil in our minds, but God does.
[32:07] He sees it all. Every single piece of it, he sees it and he knows.

Sometimes words mean more when there are very few of them, don't they? Sometimes in our darkest moments, in our saddest moments, in the times of deepest sorrow, we don't want someone to come next to us and talk and talk and talk.
we simply want someone to put their arms around us, lean into us and say, I know. God knows, cares.
Jesus knows it all, he sees it all and he sympathizes with it all. And he comes to all of his suffering people and he says, I know.
And because he knows and because he remembers his covenant promises, he will act for the good of his people. This is not just a picture of how God will save, it is a picture of how God has saved and why he has saved.
[33:39] He has acted on his covenant in sending us the seed of the women, the rejected redeemer, the one who delivers the oppressed and he does it because he knows us, because he sees us, because he hears us and because he remembers the covenant he has made to us.

so he has acted on it in sending his one and only son, Jesus Christ, and he will act on it again when Jesus shall come again to his people and he will wipe away every tear because he sees and he knows and he loves.
one day God will wipe away every tear from every eye of every one of his people.

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That is an amazing thing to look forward to, isn't it? And as we cry out to God today, thankful for the salvation he has sent, looking forward to the salvation that is coming again, we know and we can always know that he hears us, that he remembers his promises to us, that he sees everything in our lives and that he knows.
Let's give thanks for that wonderful truth. Let's pray that it would embed itself deep in our hearts. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you and praise you for your faithfulness to your covenant promises.
[35:24] We thank you, Lord, that you are always and forever faithful to that promise and that even to the people long ago, to your people, suffering, enslaved in the land of Egypt.

Lord, you heard them, you saw them, you knew them, and you were acting on your covenant promises towards them. We thank you for how we see that you did that for them.
We thank you how we have seen that you have done that for us now. we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus Christ, for the offspring of the women who came to crush the serpent's heads, for the rejected redeemer who continues to hold his arms out open wide to any who would come to him, for the one who delivers the oppressed,!
Who saves those who this world looks down on. we thank you and praise you that you have been faithful to each and every promise in Christ Jesus and that he will one day come again to take his people home.
We thank you and praise you. We pray that you would help us to love him and live for him in all that we do. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.
[36:44] We are going to respond to the reading and preaching of God's word.

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