

Compassionate Action

Exodus 1-4

March 7, 2010

The careful balance between deliverance, direction, and dedication unfolds in the Book of Exodus as we learn how a people are prepared for the journey awaiting them and how a leader is prepared for the task of leading a ragtag group of people into a long-awaited land of milk and honey.

I. God Takes Notice. Ex. 2:23-25 **Say Not, My Soul**

Say not, my soul, "From whence
Can God relieve my care'
Remember that Omnipotence
Hath servants everywhere.

His help is always sure,
His methods seldom guessed;
Surprise will give it zest.
Delay will make our pleasure pure;

His wisdom is sublime,
His heart profoundly kind;
God never is before His time,
And never is behind.

Hast thou assumed a load
Which none will bear with thee'
And art thou bearing it for God,
And shall He fail to see'

- J. J. Lynch

The Disciplines of Life, by V. Raymond Edman (Minneapolis: World Wide Publ., 1948), p. 78.

II. God Discloses Himself. Ex. 3:1-6

Imagine a family of mice who lived all their lives in a large piano. To them in their piano-world came the music of the instrument, filling all the dark spaces with sound and harmony. At first the mice were impressed by it. They drew comfort and wonder from the thought that there was Someone who made the music--though invisible to them--above, yet close to them. They loved to think of the Great Player whom they could not see. Then one day a daring mouse climbed up part of the piano and returned very thoughtful. He had found out how the music was made. Wires were the secret; tightly stretched wires of graduated lengths which trembled and vibrated. They must revise all their old beliefs: none but the most conservative could any longer believe in the Unseen Player. Later, another explorer carried the explanation further. Hammers were now the secret, numbers of hammers dancing and leaping on the wires. This was a more complicated theory, but it all went to show that they lived in a purely mechanical and mathematical world. The Unseen Player came to be thought of as a myth. But the pianist continued to play.

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III. God Takes Action. Ex. 3:7-10

Moses tried to deliver his own people by his own strength and ended up making a poor decision. God took action through calling Moses.

What we are called from and called to:

- I. Called from labor to rest (Matt. 11:28)
- II. Called from death to life (1 John 3:14)
- III. Called from bondage to liberty (Gal 5:13)
- IV. Called out of darkness into light (1 Pet. 2:9)

- V. Called from bondage to peace (1 Cor. 7:15)
- VI. Called to the fellowship of His Son (1 Cor. 1:9)

What we are made by obeying the call:

- I. We are made sons of God (John 1:12)
- II. We are made the children of God (Gal. 3:26)
- III. We are made the servants of God (Matt. 25:21)
- IV. We are made God's saints (Col. 1:1)
- V. We are made God's witnesses (I Thess. 2:10)
- VI. We are made workers together with God (2 Cor. 6:1)
- VII. We are called to a high calling (Phil. 3:14)
- VIII. We are called to a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9)
- IX. We are called to a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1)

Pulpit Helps, August, 1992, p. 11.

IV. God Works Wonders. Ex. 3:19-20

God works wonders now and then; Behold a lawyer, an honest man. *Franklin, Benjamin*

This quote is tagged *Law and Lawyers*

God is sovereign.

God has validated Moses in the eyes of the elder, but He gently petitions this earthly king. This earthly king ought to be groveling before God, and yet God puts a simple request to him. Allow my people to go three days into the wilderness to offer sacrifice, to worship Me, and immediately we are told what the response is. In verses 19 and 20 we see God's sovereignty displayed in His foreknowledge and in His foreordination. Moses is told ahead of time how Pharaoh will react and what God will do. Before Moses ever went on his errand, before he ever went to speak to the elders, before he ever went to speak to Pharaoh, God told him what the outcome will be because He knows the end from the beginning just as we heard this morning. God knows everything. Why does God know everything? Because He's got the best crystal ball in the universe? No. Because He's ordained everything. He knows because He has ordained, and He tells ahead of time, Moses, what the outcome will be. He says, "The King of Egypt will not permit you to go. Go ask him, but the King of Egypt will not permit you to go."

And then at the end of verse 19 He says, "Except by a strong hand." Now there are many ancient Egyptian texts that speak about Pharaoh's strong arm against his enemies. So in a tongue and cheek way, the God of Israel, by His strong arm, is going to strong arm Pharaoh who thinks he has a strong arm into releasing the children of Israel. He will not let you go except under compulsion. Under God's strong arm, the people of God will be compelled into deliverance.

And then, at the end of verse 20, we are told that God will strike Egypt, will do wonders in her midst, and will compel Pharaoh to let them go. Only after he has done those wonders, only after Pharaoh has refused, God is showing His plan and His knowledge of that plan ahead of time to Moses. Again, He is the center of the story. Moses may be His great human spokesman. He may be the spokesman to Pharaoh. He may be the leader of His people, but God is at the center of the story, and we are learning about Him as He speaks to Moses in this passage.