

Intro:

Last Sunday we looked at the basis for deliverance in Exodus with a sermon called *Why God Delivers*. We saw that deliverance in Exodus is rooted in God's covenant promises and his considerate compassion. We could use the word *hesed* – covenant love – to express this motivation.

We also saw that these motivations are behind God's deliverance of all mankind from sin in the atonement offered by Jesus Christ on the cross.

Today I want to add another theme or facet of deliverance from the book of Exodus: the theme of agency.

Quite clearly, it is God who is the Deliverer in Exodus. But in Exodus God doesn't merely deliver by His Omnipotent power, he delivers through human agents.

So we are going to consider God's use of human agents as we look at the theme of deliverance once again.

We'll read Ex 2.1-14 to begin looking at God's deliverer. And this is how we will consider him:

The Inadequacy of Human Deliverers

Read Ex 2.1-14

Of course, when we are speaking of *The Inadequacy of Human Deliverers* in Exodus, we are primarily talking about Moses. We are also talking about Aaron, to some extent, but primarily Moses.

Moses is someone who is of great stature among men – he is the most prominent man of the Old Testament.

The greatest work of the artist, Michelangelo, is perhaps his sculpture of Moses. When he completed the statue, he stood gazing at it, yet was not satisfied – the statue was life-like, but silent as death. It is said that in anger he struck the knee of the statue with his chisel, leaving a dent that is still visible, exclaiming, "Why dost thou not speak?"

In a lecture called, "Moses, the Man of God", Bible teacher Carl Amerding refers to Michelangelo's Moses but goes on to say this:

"But Scripture speaks more loudly and more eloquently than any human work of art. If the importance of a man may be measured by the number of times that his name appears in the Bible, then Moses must be very important. He is mentioned more times than any of the patriarchs, not even Abraham excepted. Even in the New Testament he is mentioned more often than Abraham. And while it is true that David's name occurs more often in the Old Testament, in the New Testament Moses is referred to more often than David."¹

¹ Carl Amerding, "Moses, the Man of God," ed. John F. Walvoord, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 116, Oct

Moses was a great man, but we are making an editorial comment about his role: we are saying he was inadequate.

Proposition: Moses led the people of God out of Egypt, but he could not lead them out of their sins. A greater man than Moses is necessary for that.

I. Divine appointment

- A. The remarkable birth of Moses marks him for greatness (2.1-10)
- B. The remarkable position of Moses leads him to assume greatness (2.11-15)
- C. The intervention of God singles Moses out for greatness (3.1-6, 9-10)
- D. The appointment of Aaron as mouthpiece elevates the greatness of Moses (4.14-17; and note also a hint of Moses' inadequacy)
- E. The subsequent acts of Moses mark him out as great among men
 - 1. The last plague [stands for all] (11.1-10)
 - 2. The parting of the Red Sea (14.21-22)
 - 3. Standing before the Lord on the Mount Sinai (19.24-25, 20.18-21)
 - 4. Communing with God alone on the mountain (24.12-18)

II. Human inadequacy

- A. For Moses, seen in his reluctance (3.11, 4.10, 13) [later, in Numbers, Moses in anger disobeys the Lord]
- B. For Aaron, seen in his idolatry (32.1-5, 21-24)

III. Spiritual power

- A. Moses' intercession (32)
 - 1. The Lord's wrath (32.7-10)
 - 2. Moses' appeal to the covenant (32.11-14)
 - 3. Moses' atonement for the sins (32.30-35)
- B. Moses' communion with God (33-34)
 - 1. Speaking face to face (33.7-11)
 - 2. Prayer for knowledge and vision of glory (33.12-23)
 - 3. The prayer answered (34.1-9, *cf.* 29-35, shining face)

Conclusion:

Did any man ever have so close a relationship to God as Moses? It is no wonder that Moses was able to lead God's people out of Egypt, to act as the human agent for divine deliverance.

But in any look at Moses (and Aaron) we must also observe his weakness and inadequacy. Moses could deliver from Egypt, but he could not deliver from sin.

We need a greater deliverer than that:

^{NAU} **Hebrews 3.1-6** Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;

² He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house.

³ For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house.

⁴ For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

⁵ Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later;

⁶ but Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house-- whose house we are...

The deliverance of Exodus speaks to our deliverance from sin, but the deliverer of Exodus cries out for our need of a better deliverer: Jesus Christ, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.