

# God's Audacious Plan

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     Morning everybody. It's really good to be with you this morning. It's lovely coming here. It doesn't feel like I'm visiting. It feels like we're in something together as the folks at Bells Hill and the folks at Calderwood.
- So it doesn't feel like I come as a visiting speaker as I might do at other places. I feel very blessed to come amongst people that we know and that we love and that we are partnering with in the work that's going on here.
- You inspire us as a church at Calderwood your desire to pray, your commitment to see God move in this town, to see God do something in this place where the gospel would once again be heralded and proclaimed to those who don't know Christ.
- It inspires us and it encourages us and so I'm so thankful for the partnership that we have with you in the gospel and I want to assure you that we pray for you, that we are cheering you on and we want to encourage you in the work that you are doing for God's glory in this place.
- [ 1 : 33 ]     I'm going to read our passage this morning. So if you've got your Bibles, if you could turn to Exodus chapter 3. Exodus chapter 3 and we're going to read from verse 16 to 22.
- So this is Exodus chapter 3 from verse 16. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob has appeared to me, saying, I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt.
- And I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.
- And they will listen to your voice and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, The Lord, the God of the Hebrews has met with us and now please let us go a three days journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.
- But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it.
- [ 3 : 16 ]     After that he will let you go. And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. And when you go, you shall not go empty. But each woman shall ask of her neighbour and any woman who lives in her house for silver and gold jewellery and for clothing.
- You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians. Amen. May God bless the reading and preaching of his word today.
- Father, we do just ask for your help as we come to hear and understand your word. We thank you for your word.
- We thank you that it is sufficient. We thank you that it is inspired by you. And Father, we ask for the help of your spirit to take these ancient words and to help us to see them, to find comfort in what you have done in history and to find hope for what you are doing in our own lives today.

In Jesus' name. Amen. So you have been travelling through Exodus and in chapter 3 you have seen how God has revealed himself to Moses and the unique call that God has given to Moses.

[ 4 : 55 ]     God reveals himself from the not burning up burning bush and he describes himself as the God of Moses' fathers, of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.

And God gives Moses wonderful news. God says, I've remembered my people. He says, I've remembered them.

I've heard their cry. I've seen their suffering. And God says, I'm going to deliver them out of Egypt. That's the words that God spoke to Moses back in verses 7 to 9 of chapter 3.

He said, I've surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and I've heard their cry because of their past masters. I know their sufferings and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of the land to a good and broad land.

A land flowing with milk and honey. And we don't know what Moses' response at that moment was but I think probably as he hears God saying that he's thinking to himself, amen Lord.

[ 6 : 10 ]     Deliverance for my people. Amen. Liberation for the captives. Hallelujah. But Moses doesn't get time to think about that because immediately in verse 10 God says, come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

And quickly it turns from, you know, amen and hallelujah God's going to do this great thing to Moses being like, what, me? I'm going?

You want me to go to who? To Pharaoh? And what do you want me to say? And we got this dialogue which you saw last time between God and Moses and you saw last time how God reveals his name to Moses and here in verses 16 to 22 God now lays out this great plan that he has for his people.

He lays out the message that Moses is to take to the Israelites the message that Moses is to take to Pharaoh and the message of hope that is for his people.

So let's look first at the message to the Israelites in verses 16 and 17 Moses is to go to the elders and it isn't just a message for the elders but it's a message that would undoubtedly be communicated through the elders to the people.

[ 7 : 41 ]     And so Moses gets this message to the Israelites from God and before we get into the content of that message I want us to see a couple of things. First of all we see here, don't we, that it's God that gives the message to Moses.

God doesn't say to Moses hey, go to the elders and explain in your own words what took place here. He doesn't say Moses you've seen the burning bush and you've heard my voice and I want you to interpret that for yourself and go off to the Israelites with your own message.

No, what we see is is God giving Moses this message for the Israelites and then as we'll see in a little while for Pharaoh as well.

He doesn't say to Moses do you know I want you to come up with a plan Moses to get the people out of Egypt and I want you to take your plan to Pharaoh. No, God gives Moses the words to say and this is a pattern for God's prophets.

It is God's words not man's. God's words are the words that contain the power and the authority not our own.

[ 8 : 57 ] This is what Peter says isn't it when he's writing in 2 Peter. Peter says knowing this first of all that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Just as God gave Moses the message so too God gives us the message that we are to proclaim. We don't need to rely on cunning plans or clever ideas we simply need to believe in the power and in the authority of God's word and seek to share that whenever the Lord gives us opportunity.

And the second thing I want us to see is that immediately following the revelation to Moses about who God is comes the instruction verse 16 to go.

I find it fascinating that there's Moses hearing this incredible revelation from God and experiencing it out of the burning bush and God reveals himself to Moses in a way that hasn't yet been revealed to any of God's people and then the next instruction is to go.

Moses isn't given time to dwell in this experience. He isn't given time to marvel at what he has heard. God doesn't say hey why don't you just take a few years and ponder all that I've told you but instead he says go.

[ 11 : 05 ] And of course the command of God to go does have to come in this order. We must first be faced with the truth of who God is and then respond to his command to go.

There's no point in going out with God's message if we ourselves haven't grasped and believed it. No point in going out with God's message if we haven't grasped and believed who he is.

We must believe the truth of who God is first and then go. For the disciples they grasped the knowledge of the risen Lord Jesus and believed in him and were then instructed immediately to go.

They weren't given a few years in the upper room to question Jesus and learn more. They grasped the reality of the risen Lord Jesus and then received that command to go.

And I think for most of us as Christians we can be glad to receive the truth of who God is. We are glad to study it to discuss it to savor it and to appreciate it these things are all good but sometimes we can be so glad to do that we never get to the go part.

[ 12 : 29 ] We get stuck. we get stuck studying and examining and looking and discussing and savoring God's word that we never actually get to the go part.

And you know the truth is that this can be a hard truth for those of us in church leadership that if our discipleship does not lead us to going and sharing the message that God has given us then our discipleship has failed because we've got stuck somewhere.

So God gives us a message that God also commands us to go. So let's look at the content of that message to the Israelites. Well God firstly introduces himself by his covenant name.

Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them the Lord. You see that in capital letters. Yahweh the God of your fathers the God of Abraham of Isaac and of Jacob has appeared to me.

He introduces himself by his covenant name. I'm sure you noted last time that God is not referred to as Yahweh the Lord in capitals as we've got it in our in our Bibles.

[ 13 : 56 ] It's not referred as that anywhere in Exodus chapter 1 or 2. In Exodus chapter 3 when God is introducing himself he introduces himself as God Elohim and it's after God explains that he is I am that God then starts to introduce himself as Yahweh the Lord.

We see that in verse 15 and then repeated again in verse 16. the elders and the people are to they are to know this divine name of God that reveals them to be the eternal and self existent God.

In that name he's telling the people that he is the one who is the one who is like no other. He is in a category all on his own as the self existent self sufficient eternal God.

He is the one who exists completely on his own who does not depend on anyone or anything for his own existence.

He is the one in whom there is life and everything else has life because of him. He is self sufficient he is complete all on his own lacking nothing perfectly sufficient such that no one or no thing can add anything to who God is.

[ 15 : 31 ] He is eternal because he's not only the one who is but he is the one who was and who is to come. He is holy holy holy there is none like him and God's message to these elders is this is who I am.

He's a God of the fathers the one whose promises to Abraham are theirs also and his message to them is one of good news.

He says I have seen your plight and have come to rescue you. And we see a pattern here that Yahweh is the God of the past of their fathers who promised salvation to the patriarchs.

He's a God of the present who sent Moses to save his people and he's a God of the future who didn't just save his people and leave them but promised him a land and a future in this bountiful land of milk and honey.

We see that don't we in verses 16 and 17. The God of your fathers I'm going to save you and I'm going to bring you up out of this land into a land that is flowing with milk and honey.

[ 17 : 00 ] Our Lord Jesus Christ is the God of the past who entered into human history to save sinners by dying on the cross and rising from the grave.

He's a God of the present who's promised to be with us and who intercedes for us and he's a God of the future who's promised to return for his people and bring us to glory in the new heavens and the new earth.

He is the one who saves us from sin and death and who saves us to life and glory with him. And so God gives this message to the Israelites saying I'm the God who's working for you in the past and in the present and in the future.

And God then moves on to give Moses the message to Pharaoh verses 18 and 19. Notice that while Moses has a big role to play here, Moses and the elders are to go to Pharaoh together.

And the message they are to bring comes in verse 18 and they will listen to your voice and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, the Lord, the God of the Hebrews has met with us.

[ 18 : 30 ] And now please let us go a three days journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. I wonder as people who I'm sure are familiar with the Exodus narrative, are you surprised by the message that you read there that I just read?

What are you expecting to hear God's message to Pharaoh to be? As most of us know the story of the Exodus, are we not expecting God to say to Moses, the Lord, the God of the Hebrews has met with us and now please let my people go?

That's the refrain that we hear throughout Exodus, isn't it? Please let my people go. Well, don't we expect to hear the word of God say let them go, no more will they be your slaves, let them go or else?

We're maybe a little bit surprised to notice that they are here to go and ask Pharaoh for a long weekend off. Can we go a three-day journey?

Let us go a three-day journey. It's a bank holiday weekend they're asking for. Now, of course, there's nothing here to say that they're going to come back from their journey.

[ 20 : 07 ] And some scholars do suggest that the phrase kind of three-day journey was used to refer to a journey of indefinite duration. But you see, the length of the journey isn't really the issue here.

It's not really that unreasonable, is it, to say, can we go away for three days? That's not the issue. Pharaoh is not going to refuse their request because of the length of time.

negotiation. It's not a negotiation. Well, not three days, but one day. Well, not one day, maybe two days. You know, this is not a negotiation of how long they get.

Because what we see in the Exodus account is that it's all about God's glory. what we'll see as you travel through the coming chapters in Exodus is that the glory of God, the glory of Yahweh, comes into direct conflict with the glory of Pharaoh.

And the issue and the reason that Pharaoh will never grant this request has got nothing to do with the duration of the trip, but everything to do with the purpose of the trip.

[ 21 : 39 ] Because look at what it says they are going to do. Let us go a three days journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.

God. There's where the problem is for Pharaoh. There's why he won't let the people go. This isn't about giving them a bank holiday weekend off to go a nice wee trip.

It's the purpose of their trip. They want to go and glorify God. And Pharaoh has no room for anyone else to receive glory but him.

The idea of these people going and bringing worship and sacrifice to Yahweh is an abomination to Pharaoh and it will simply not be permitted.

Of course, not so much has changed God. There remains regimes in the world today that will not permit Christians to worship our God.

[ 22 : 58 ] Regimes where worship and glory are to be ascribed only to rulers or to state-approved gods, small g, or to the state itself.

And there is no room for Christians to ascribe glory and worship to their God. And in those places around the world, our brothers and sisters face great persecution because despite the dictates of their authorities, they continue to be those who go to great lengths to worship him.

They continue to be those who go against the laws of the land that say that they cannot worship our Lord Jesus.

But instead they do exactly that. They gather together with their own life and their own freedom, their own safety at stake.

faith. And while I wouldn't want to draw a direct comparison with persecuted brothers and sisters and what we face here, increasingly we see, don't we, that there is no room in so-called tolerant and pluralistic Scotland for those who want to bring worship and glory to our Lord Jesus by standing firmly for what he said.

[ 24 : 32 ] particularly about matters like sexuality or marriage or gender. We've seen it just this week, haven't we, that many of our leading politicians have gone on record and said that there is no place for Christian views on these things amongst those who would seek to lead our country.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. There is no place for the worship and glory of our Lord Jesus in so-called tolerant and pluralistic Scotland.

There is only place for the worship of certain progressive views and beliefs. where the knee is not bowed to those particular beliefs.

The glory of God and the glory of man come into direct confrontation. And for the elders of Israel back then and for us today, there is great hope in the first three words of verse 19.

But I know. But I know. And here we see our final point, the message of hope for God's people.

[ 26 : 19 ] God, our great God who knows the future, our great God who has ordained all that will be, says, but I know.

What no one else sees coming, he knows and he has ordained. Fear of the unknown is only something that creatures like us face.

Because our great creator God has no fear of the unknown because nothing is unknown to him. He's the one who he said to Isaiah, he said, remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind you transgressors, remember the former things of old, for I am God and there is no other.

I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying my counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all my purpose.

See there's something wonderful here that God gives the Israelites this message to go and take to Pharaoh and immediately God says, but I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go, but I know.

[ 28 : 01 ] you can imagine perhaps the fear and the terror that the Israelites might have faced if they had just simply received the message to go to Pharaoh and asked to go on this three day journey into the wilderness and they go and they give the message and Pharaoh turns around and says, no.

And the people think, we didn't see that coming. What's God going to do now? Is he going to have to revert to plan B?

Is God going to have to adjust because God didn't expect Pharaoh to say no? Here we see it so beautifully. God gives them this message but God says, but I know.

I know what Pharaoh's response is going to be and I know what it's going to take to get you out of Egypt. I know what it's going to take to fulfill my promise. You know, as brothers and sisters, I think we need to remind ourselves again and again and again in our daily lives of the truth that God really does know.

He really does know the future. He really has ordained everything that shall come to pass. We can read our newspapers and we can listen to the news and we can feel a deep sense of grief where our nation.

[ 29 : 44 ] And as the news reader is speaking to us on the TV, we need to be speaking back to the TV saying, but my God knows.

But my God knows. God knows the future of this nation. My God knows the future of those who will be in power or not.

My God knows the future of secular agendas and progressive beliefs. My God knows all of that. He has ordained it for His purpose and for His glory and His glory will prevail.

And as you travel through the chapters of Exodus that are to come again and again, it will seem as though Pharaoh is the one who's calling the shots.

Remember. Remember that He's already said to His people, but I know. I know. He knows what is to come.

[ 30 : 54 ] He knows what lies ahead. God didn't have to resort to plan B when Pharaoh said no.

God didn't have to come up with a different idea, but everything that we see unfold in the coming chapters is predetermined by God and is brought to pass by His mighty hand.

What hope that would have brought to the people as they saw the plagues unfold in the midst of Pharaoh's staunch refusal. Hope that their God will prevail and that His promises will come to pass.

hope that will be faithful. And so it continues today. We should find great hope in this. And in this message of hope is that God's grace will be upon His people.

Look at verse 21 with me. And I will give this people favour. And when we read the word favour in the Old Testament, read grace.

[ 32 : 15 ] That's what that word means. It can be translated favour or grace. And I will give this people grace in the sight of the Egyptians and when you go, you shall not go empty.

The message of hope for Israel is that God's justice will prevail. This weak and insignificant people will triumph over their enemy. That there will be a great reversal.

The weak conquering the strong, the slaves set free, the poor made rich. The Don Moan worship song Give Thanks says, Now let the weak say I am strong, let the poor say I am rich.

Why? Because of what the Lord has done for us. What Yahweh will do for his people in the exodus will cause the weak to say that they are strong, will cause the poor to become rich.

Brothers and sisters, in Christ it is this way for us also. Christ's atoning death has taken us from our poverty of sin and blessed us as Paul writes to the church in Ephesus, blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

[ 33 : 43 ] We who are poor are now rich in Christ with a glorious inheritance in heaven that is awaiting us. And in our weakness we have been made alive with Christ and able to live every day by the power of almighty God.

God will rescue his people by his mighty hand. The song, the keeping Christian Getty song, Christ the True and Better, one of the verses says, Christ the true and better Moses called to lead a people home, standing bold to earthly powers, God's great glory to be known.

With his arms stretched wide to heaven, see the waters part in two, see the veil is torn forever, cleansed with blood we pass now through.

The power of sin and of death and the reign of the devil would not let us go unless compelled by a mighty hand.

Mighty hands, mighty hands that were outstretched and nailed on Calvary's cross. Mighty hands that belonged to our Lord Jesus who stretched them wide for your salvation and for mine.

[ 35 : 24 ] Amen. Amen. Take hope, take hope, Christians, in the one who stretched out his mighty hand, who rescued you from sin and from death, who plundered you from Satan's kingdom and brought you to himself.

those mighty hands of Christ can save you no matter who you are, no matter what your history has been, no matter whether you would count yourself as a religious person or not.

put your trust in the Lord, the almighty, holy one. Believe in the son who died for you.

But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. Pharaoh would not be moved by anyone other than the one true God who is mightier than Pharaoh himself.

Satan whose kingdom we all once belonged to his kingdom plundered by the mighty hands of our outstretched Lord died on Calvary's cross and arose again that we might no longer be slaves to sin but we might be set free and given a promised inheritance.

[ 37 : 30 ] to believe in these great truths are we to take a few years to ponder them and consider them and discuss them and save them or are we to believe them and go are we to believe them and go go and live for him go and share this message of hope for our world which is for his glory trusting that he is the one who knows the future let's pray our mighty God and gracious father we we rejoice we rejoice in what you have done for your people throughout the ages you are the

God whose mighty hand has saved your people again and again throughout the Old Testament you are the God whose mighty hand brought defeat to the enemies of your people and you are the God who in your son took on flesh and by his outstretched hands defeated our greatest enemy of all the ruler of this world and even of death itself father would you help us as your people to have great confidence in what you have done great hope and the truth that you know the future trusting that your mighty hand has saved us and that all that you have ordained shall come to pass for just as you worked for your glory in ages past you continue to work for your glory today so father might you equip us and enable us to be captured by these great truths and to go from this place proclaiming them in

Jesus name all is to chatting to all people ask