

Exod 03-09-14a

As we continue our worship on this Sunday morning, where we will resume our study of Exodus in chapter 16, we pause at the outset and before our scripture reading to make a spiritual check, to mentally go before the Lord and ensure that we are susceptible to the ministry of His Spirit, having noted and acknowledged and confessed our known sins and claimed God's cleansing grace, that much as in Israel, the Passover, the first Passover and then the memorial observances thereafter reminded the people of the nation of God that they were saved, but the other sacrifices, the sin offering, the trespass offering and the various other animal sacrifices were a reminder that there is a need for cleansing, there is a need for sanctification. The Law of Moses, which we will soon be looking at in some detail, made provision and specified a status for the people of God. It didn't change their eternal salvation, so to speak.

It didn't change the fact that they were redeemed, that they belonged to God and that they were part and parcel of the people of God, but coming in contact with something dead, committing a sin as specified in the Law, changed the status from sanctified and cleansed and qualified for approach to what was known as defilement. You could be defiled by contact with various things. You could be defiled by an activity or an exposure and this required cleansing.

And the analog or the fulfillment of that shadow in our lives as Christians is that even though we are believers, we can become separated from God on the experiential level. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit departs. It does not mean that we are estranged in a permanent sense, but it's the case in any relationships between people who have fallen natures that from time to time we offend and we interrupt and we strain our relationship and it always requires renewal, mending.

And the means by which we do that is to claim God's cleansing grace and 1 John 1.9, 1 John 1.7 and 9 tells us about that aspect. That's what we're doing now. We are stopping at the outset to be sure that we have allowed God to come near in the sense of ministering His Word to our souls.

Shall we pray? Father, it is such a great privilege to be given so much by way of insight and information and knowledge of Your plan and purpose. Things that have been hidden and unknown to the human race and even to Your chosen people and to Your prophets and priests have been revealed, have been made known. The curtain has been drawn back and we see so much more than was available at any previous time in history.

We thank You for Your Word, for its preservation, for the unveiling that is possible in our perception because of the full and individual ministry of Your Spirit. We thank You for an environment in our lives that enables us to spend time not only in the study of Your Word but to do so in the company and fellowship of like-minded believers. We thank You for the fellowship in our church.

We thank You for those in our families and those in our periphery who also love Your Word and value Your Son to the extent that it is a priority in life. We are so appreciative of the country in which we live and the environment we have, of freedom. We look to the south and the continent that is plagued and afflicted with those who actively oppress and attack and even torture and kill those who seek to learn Your Word.

We look around the world and other continents and other countries where there is not the freedom and the opportunity that we enjoy. We are thankful and we know that You have given us these benefits for a reason, something to avail ourselves of because You have a plan for us both now and in the age to come. We pray that our study this morning and our fellowship, the ministry of each spiritual gift that You have distributed among us will be an evidence that we will be built up and be united together in love, in the unity of the faith.

We pray that we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work through the things that we learned from Your Word this morning. We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

For a scripture reading this morning, turn with me to the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah. Generally, when I go to the Old Testament, I always figure where I am going by relationship to where it is in the Psalms.

Long ago, when I was a young lad, they said, if you crack your Bible open approximately in the middle, you will hit the Psalms. Once you are there, you can navigate. In artillery, we call that shift from a known point.

You call up the fire direction center as an observer and you say, well, you don't know where this target is yet, but you know where this known point is. We have a church with a steeple or we have a prominent hill with a tree on top. From that known point, go 600 meters left and 1,000 meters beyond and that is my target.

We start at the Psalms. If you go a couple of books to the left, you find Nehemiah just before Esther and Job. In chapter 9 of Nehemiah, we find ourselves on the 24th day of the month.

This is a celebration time after they have completed the reconstruction projects that they undertook in Jerusalem. In chapter 8, Ezra brought the law before the assembly of men and women on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it in the open square from morning until midday.

Now, morning until midday, this is kind of like a four-hour Bible class. We have to strain to accomplish a 30 to 40-minute Bible class, but they stood. Of course, they didn't do this every week, but on this occasion, it says, all who could hear with understanding assembled.

He read in the open square in front of the water gate from morning until midday. Before the men and women and those who could understand. This, of course, is a discernment that we make even today.

We take our little ones and try to minister the word to them in a way that they can understand. When they reach a certain age, they come in with us because they are able to understand. The ears of all the people, it tells us in 8.3, were attentive to the book of the law.

Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose. This is a true podium. When you think about a podiatrist, somebody that works on your feet, that's why we call it a podium.

Sometimes they look at a lectern or a pulpit and they say, well, that's the podium. Well, not unless you stand on it. A podium is something you stand on.

This is a podium in verse 4. Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose. Beside him at his right hand stood Mattathiah, Shema, Ananiah, Urijah, Hilkiyah, Messiah, and at his left hand, Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashim, Hashpadana, Zechariah, and Meshulam. You say, is this information that I need to know? Does it really matter? Well, we'll see here in a moment.

But Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people. When he opened it, all the people stood up. And we still follow this pattern.

This is why you are seated and I am standing. We don't always follow this pattern. It depends on the nature of our study.

But generally speaking, it is for practical reasons. Your voice carries further if you're elevated. This is provision to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to hear.

It doesn't so much matter the form. Jesus sat in a boat on the water a little ways out from land. And people ranged themselves seated on the shore because the water reflected His voice.

And He was clearly heard even to the back rows. This is the idea. Not so much what is the relative altitude of the speaker and the hearers, but can you hear it? He opened the book in the sight of the people.

All the people stood up. Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. All the people answered, Amen, Amen.

See, it's okay to say Amen in church. If you feel motivated, why? Let fly. And if you don't feel motivated, why don't let fly? They bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Then you have another big long list of names here. Helping the people to understand the law. The people stood in their place.

These are individuals who explained. Remember, they've already gone through the time of captivity where now Aramaic is their spoken language. And Hebrew has faded from their memory in large part.

So there is interpretation. Verse 8, they read distinctly from the book in the law of God. And they gave the sense and helped them to understand the reading.

We still do that today. That's my job. It is not my job to invent a religion or invent a lifestyle.

It is my job to try to give you the sense and help you to understand what the Word of God itself says. Well, our reading, this is the context here in the seventh month. When you look in chapter 9, they have just got through celebrating the Feast of Booths up in 817.

Which they haven't done since the days of Joshua. So this is a return. This is a revival.

This is a renewal. Now look at chapter 9. Now on the 24th day of this month, the children of Israel were assembled with fasting in sackcloth and with dust on their heads. By the way, this is a custom.

I'm not sorry. It's kind of faded out of use. Remember, these people didn't have washing machines and dryers and clotheslines and that sort of thing.

If you put on sackcloth, these are sort of like burlap clothes. They're sackcloth. Burlap bags is what we used to get sweet feed in when I was taking care of the horse and cows and so on as a young lad.

We got feed in two kinds of sacks. Some were these heavy-duty double- and triple-walled paper sacks. But the sweet feed, which was the rolled oats with molasses and stuff mixed in, came in burlap bags.

Well, that burlap is really scratchy. I don't know if you've ever seen it. It's sort of almost like a coarse canvas.

They used to have, at my high school, crazy day where you could dress in some bizarre manner and come to school. People would just use their imagination and black their teeth or wear funny hats and do other kind of strange things. Wear two different combinations of clothes and do strange things.

Well, for this one year, I had an excess of energy and not enough to do. So I went out and got those burlap bags in and got a pattern and cut them up. I sewed myself up, and my mother helped me, a suit made out of burlap.

I made the jacket and the pants out of burlap and put buttons on and put a shirt and tie on underneath. I wore this burlap suit to school. I don't know why I invested three or four days and dragged my poor mother into the effort there just for a one-day thing.

But I will tell you from experience, burlap is scratchy and hot and uncomfortable. This is the idea. The only reason I inflict that story on you is to tell you that sackcloth... We say, well, sackcloth and ashes, what's the big deal? Well, sackcloth was an uncomfortable sort of a hair shirt kind of a thing.

And what they were trying to do with sackcloth... You notice there's nothing anywhere in God's mandates or God's laws that says, Thou shalt wear sackcloth. It's not found. No command, no encouragement, no injunction.

This is something that people took upon themselves. And they say, I want to manifest to the world and to God what is on the inside of me on the outside. I am aggrieved.

I am sad and remorseful and uncomfortable on the inside. And I want to reflect that on the outside. What are ashes? Why would you put ashes on your head of all things? You go to the campfire there.

You go to the last time you had a fire that's gone out. You grab a handful of the carbonized remains. And you just sprinkle it on your head.

And it goes down on your shoulders. It's a, you know, now you've got it all over you. And any time you move around, you know, people had longer hair and had beards and things.

Well, this dust of a fire is just kind of a cloud around them. And they are characterized by affliction, by discomfort, and by a fire that has gone out. Something has been consumed.

And there's just ashes and dust. They put dust and ashes and sackcloth on. This is an outward, an attempt to reflect on the outside what is on the inside.

They're saying, I am aggrieved. I am sorrowful. I am remorseful.

This is how I feel on the inside. And they put it on the outside. So, sackcloth, dust on their heads, fasting, not eating food.

They don't want anybody to see them. You know, you get hungry and you're uncomfortable. When you're eating food, people say, ah, you're taking care of your hunger.

This discomfort is going to go away because you were very hungry. Now you're eating. Something happened yesterday, I think, where I didn't eat all morning and not until 2 or 2.30 in the afternoon because we had a schedule and we were doing things.

And I got pretty hungry, past the point of just feeling hunger and motivation to get food to the point of having a bellyache over it. And we don't often let ourselves go that long. But if you purposely do that, no one sees you eating.

Your campfire is cold. You haven't prepared food. People say, well, there's someone who's really got something on their mind, so much so that they're not eating.

There is a greater affliction. So all of this is designed to demonstrate before man and before God, I am real concerned. I have a grievance.

I have an issue. So, those of the Israelite lineage, in verse 2, separated themselves from all

foreigners. And they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

This is a day of national mourning. We have Thanksgiving Day, which is a day of thanks to God. We have Independence Day, which is a celebration of our national birth.

We have a national day of prayer, even, which is about as close as you get to this. But we don't have a national day of mourning. We don't have a day set aside as citizens of a nation that was established under God to go before God and say, Lord, we are a nation that tolerates and glorifies evil and homosexuality and perversion of every kind.

We are a nation that exports evil to the rest of the world. We are a nation who, in our entertainments and in our song lyrics and in the things that we glorify and publicize and put out, are contrary and in grievous violation of your word and your law and the way a nation ought to function. We no longer are true to what we have on our coinage.

In God we trust. In God we don't trust. We trust in everything but God as a nation.

This is what they're doing. They stood up in their place and read from the book of the law of the Lord their God for one-fourth of the day. The daylight hours, approximately 12 hours.

So how long is this? Three solid hours. They stood in their place and read from the book of the law of the Lord their God. For another fourth, another three hours, they confessed and worshipped the Lord their God.

So this was a six-hour worship service. If it began at 8 a.m. in the morning or 9 a.m. in the morning, then it continued until 2 or 3 that afternoon, right through the mealtime. They'd already been fasting, and everybody had skipped whatever meal would have fallen in that six-hour period.

The noon meal. Then it says, and we have another list, Yeshua, Bonnie, Codmiel, Shebaniah, Boonee, Sherebiah, Bonnie, Kanani stood on the stairs of the Levites and cried out with a loud voice to the Lord their God. And the Levites, Yeshua, Codmiel, Bonnie, Hashavnia, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pithahiah said, Stand up and bless the Lord your God forever and ever.

Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. You alone are the Lord. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them.

And you preserve them all. The host of heaven worships you. You are the Lord God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham.

You found his heart faithful before you and made a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, and the Girgashites to give it to his descendants. You have performed your words, for you are righteous. You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry by the Red Sea.

You showed signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his servants, and against all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted proudly against him. So you made a name for yourself as it is this day. And you divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land.

And their persecutors you threw into the deep as a stone into the mighty waters. Moreover, you led them by day with a cloudy pillar and by night with a pillar of fire to give them light on the road which they should travel. You came down also on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments.

You made known to them your holy Sabbath and commanded them precepts, statutes, and laws by the hand of Moses your servant. You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger and brought them water out of the rock for their thirst and told them to go in to possess the land which you had sworn to give them. But they and our fathers acted proudly, hardened their necks, and did not heed your commandments.

They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of your wonders that you did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage. But you are God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, and you did not forsake them.

Even when they made a molded calf for themselves and said, this is your God that brought you up out of Egypt and worked great provocations, yet in your manifold mercies you did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day to lead them on the road, nor the pillar of fire by night to show them the light and the way they should go. You also gave your good spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth, and you gave them water for their thirst.

Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness. They lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out, and their feet did not swell.

Moreover, you gave them kingdoms and nations and divided them into districts. So they took possession of the land of Sion, the land of the king of Heshvon, and the land of Og, king of Bashan. You also multiplied their children as the stars of heaven and brought them into the land which you had told their fathers to go in and possess.

So the people went in and possessed the land. You subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gave them into their hands with their kings and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they wished. And they took strong cities and a rich land and possessed houses full of all goods, cisterns already dug, vineyards, olive groves, and fruit trees in abundance.

So they ate and were filled and grew fat and delighted themselves in your great goodness. Now this is a long song and it goes on to recount the up and down history of Israel that we have

noted so many times. The pattern we see in the book of Judges, the pattern that we see throughout the history of Israel.

But I want you to notice in particular two things. One is we have the time that we are studying in Exodus chapter 16, the provision of manna and we're about to see the water from the rock episode. God makes provision, God does not abandon.

This is the principle that we note in our own lives. We can fail, we can fall short, we can get contrary to the plan of God, and yet God does not leave us or forsake us. He is ever present.

He provides for our needs. He may withhold provision to test us, to see where our mind will turn, to see whether we have endurance, to see whether we have the patience that is a requirement to qualify for inheritance. Whether we continue to obey, we continue to be faithful, we continue to concentrate on doing what we do heartily as unto the Lord.

But I want you to note in particular, and this is one of the things that always is fun for me because I think it's overlooked, but go back to chapter 9, verse 4 of Nehemiah. You remember the scenario here, return, rebuilding, rededication. This is a big rededication time.

They've celebrated the Feast of Booths, which is a foreshadowing of God with us, Emmanuel. And so now they are standing up in their place and reading from the book of the law. Then we have this list of names.

Why are these individuals noted here? Well, you may want to make a note here in some fashion so you can keep track. Verse 4 says, Yeshua, Bonnie, Cadmiel, Shebaniah, Buni, Sherebiah, Bonnie, Kenani stood on the stairs of the Levites and cried out with a loud voice to the Lord their God. These individuals, there are eight of them named, stand on the stairs of the Levites and they cry out to God.

Well, let's take their names in order. You should recognize the first, Yeshua. This is the name of Joshua.

Fresh in the minds of the people of Israel at this point in their history. This will be the name of the Messiah Himself when He comes, Yeshua. This is short for Yehoshua.

Shua is the verb for deliverance, salvation. And Yeho is from Yahweh. Yehoshua is the Lord delivers.

The Lord is our deliverance. Deliverance is from the Lord. Any way you want to construe that in English.

The Lord is deliverance. And you might put out beside this that you have the name of the Lord in this name. The Yah factor there.

Yehoshua, the beginning part of this name, has the name of the Lord. So in my notes I just put out beside that YAH in capital letters. Because that component, the name of the Lord that was

revealed to Moses and to the people of Israel as they left Egypt, is present in this name.

So, the Lord is deliverance. That's man number one here. The fellow standing beside him is named Bani.

And Bani means built, built up, constructed. Better name for a man than a woman perhaps. Then the third name here is Kadmiel.

They spell it with a K in your New King James, but this is a Q in Hebrew. Kadmiel. The Kadmiel is derived from a word that means the east.

And the east has significance in the ancient world. All of our maps have what direction at the top. Unless it's a special purpose map, north is up, right? And so we tend to think and orient ourselves to the north.

Well, in the ancient Near East, they oriented themselves to the rising sun. And if they were to sit down and draw a map, east would be up. And anytime someone is giving relative directions, they assume that you're facing east.

And so when they talk about somebody going to the left, he's heading north. If he's going to the right, he's heading south. Ahead of you is the east and behind you is the west.

It is the direction of hope. It is the direction of expectation. It is the direction of renewal.

This is where things originate. Like the sun that originates a new day is the direction of the east. So it came to mean, Kadmiel comes to mean, the antiquity of things, the history of things, the origins going back to the beginning are in the east.

So, Kadmiel's name suggests the east in terms of origins and in terms of the past, what has gone on before, where things came from, Genesis. That's man number three. Next to him stands Shebaniah.

You can already tell in the ending of that name, you have another occurrence of the name of the Lord, Yah. Shebaniah means the Lord has grown or prospered. Next to him, you have another man whose name means built, Buni.

It's vocalized a little bit differently in the Masoretic text. They put a U instead of an A in it, but the consonants are exactly the same, B-N-Y. So, once again, we have built.

Next to him stands Cherubiah. Cherubiah, his name means Yahweh has scorched. Yahweh has burnt to the ground.

Yahweh has set fire to something and destroyed it. Next to him stands another man named Bani, built. Then finally, last man in the row, opposite of Yeshua, is Kanani.

And this is not the Kanan that we think of in terms of mercy or grace. This is Kanan that has the

idea of something being founded or established. A station being assigned to someone.

Now, you will notice that Bani, Buni, Bani, and Kanani, their names all end in this E sound, which sometimes means this belongs to me. This is my whatever. But a lot of times, it was the shortened form of a name that ended in Yahu.

This could have been Bani Yah. Yahweh is the one who builds me up. Kanani Yah, or Hananiah, Ananias that we're studying in Acts, this would be the Lord is my grace.

Or in this case, Kanani here would be God establishes me. The Lord assigns me my station. But in these names, and this was sort of a nickname kind of thing, my name is Shmuel or Samuel, but people generally call me Sam.

They leave off the last part because it's quicker. It's convenient. It's a nickname.

Same thing here with these men. But it is symbolic that the name of the Lord has been trimmed off of the end of these because if you look, the first name, the fourth name, and the sixth name, the Yahweh part is present, and on the other names, it has been left off. They've been shortened.

So look at the sequence here. The Lord is deliverance, and then you have built. Things were built.

Then you have in the origins of things, in the past. Then you have Shebaniah. God has grown and prospered.

So what do these first four names tell us? God is the source of deliverance. Things built up, but you have the Yahweh part left off. They were things that were allowed to grow and build.

And in the ancient times, God grew and God prospered. Then you have Buni. Things continue to be built, and then God has scorched and burnt to the ground.

Once again, you have things being built up, and then you have God establishing or assigning my station. The last word there is my station. But once again, the Yahweh portion has been left off of that name.

And there's some doubt. Well, where did this station come from? Is it from God, or is it something that was just a part of my building? Is it the outgrowth of my building? These names mean something. These names are a reflection.

When people looked at the men ranged across the platform there, saw them on the stairs of the Levites, and went down their line with their names, and their names mean something. You know how in the Indian culture, the American Indian things, when we translate their stories and things into English, we call him, you know, Lone Wolf or Sitting Bull. Their names actually are composed of words that mean something to us.

When we say Joseph or Samuel or Daniel or one of these, we have to go to another language to find a meaning. But the names that are assigned, you know, Running Bear and this kind of thing, the name actually has a meaning as soon as you say it. That's how it was in Israel for these.

So as they look down the row, the Lord is deliverance. Built. Origins in antiquity.

God has grown and prospered. Built. God has scorched and burned to the ground.

It's a judgment of fire. Then there's a building, and now there is establishing. There is the assigning of position and function and station.

This is a recounting of the history in Israel up to this point. They had just returned from a captivity where God scorched and burnt and destroyed everything that had been built before that. God had prospered them, but something happened, and God had to come back and scorch and destroy with fire.

Now they have returned, and the last man in this first group, how is the station going to be assigned? How are things going to be established now? Is it going to be God or not? The Yah portion is not on there. It's not Hanani Yah or Hanani El. It's not there.

And so there's a question. Well, then we move to the very next verse here, or the very next part of the verse, verse 5, the Levites, and now we have some of the same men, but there's a different personnel order when they get up to sing this song. These men led in the prayer.

What did the first group do, the first eight? They cried out to God. They got to the end of the thing. Who's going to establish the station? They're crying out to the Lord.

Now you have this second group in verse 5, and it starts, as it always does, with the delivering and saving Lord. You have Yeshua once again. Everything begins with the deliverance of God, the deliverance of the Lord.

Next to Him now, we've taken out Bani, and we don't have Bilt there. Right next to Yeshua stands Kadmiel. We know his name talks about the origination of things, the antiquity of things, the history up to this point.

And then next to Him is Bani. We had a three-fold building in the first group of people, Bani, Buni, and Bani. This time, we're only going to have one.

We're going to have one builder, and this is Him right here. The Lord is deliverance. You have antiquity, the man of the East, the origination of things, the history, and now Bani stands next to Him.

Now we have a new individual who is standing in line here as number four. This is Hashabni Yah, and this means literally whom Yahweh regards, whom the Lord regards. And this is sort of an answer to the question that is posed in the names of the first group of men.

How are we going to be established? What is going to be the foundation and the station that is accomplished here? Well, from of old, the saving, delivering Lord builds based on whom He regards. That's what you get out of these first four. It is whom Yahweh regards and how He regards us that determines how we will be established.

Who stands next to Hashabni Yah here? Sherabiah, God has scorched and burnt to the ground. Right next to Him stands Hodijah. And this name means my splendor is Yahweh.

My glory is Yahweh. My elevation and lifting up, my nobility and my glory is Yahweh. My splendor is the Lord.

So, there is sort of a fork in the road here. But notice, all of these last five names have the Lord component attached. You start out with Yeshua.

You have history there with Cadmiel. You have the establishing of things in the human realm with Bonnie. And now, here is the divine answer so to speak.

Yahweh will regard. Yahweh will either scorch and burn to the ground or God will be the splendor and the glory of an individual. And Shebaniah here, God has grown and prospered.

The Lord has grown and prospered. Or the Lord will grow and prosper. And then the final man you have here is Pithahiah.

Yahweh has opened. The Lord has opened. This is the open door to the city.

The open door to opportunity. The open door to potential and great things in God's kingdom and God's future. So, it's an unfortunate thing to just skip over details that God has included in inspired scripture.

There is a great message just in the names of these men who stand before the congregation of the Lord and lead them in worship. There is a choice that we face depending on how we respond to God's prospering of us. God's provision for us.

God's building up of us. God's bringing us to the place of opportunity. God will regard us.

And based on what He sees, based on how He judges us, we will either be scorched and burnt to the ground. The wood, hay and stubble are going to feed the flames. Or there is going to be gold and silver and precious stones.

The things about all of those things of value is they reflect the light. They are glorious in the light. You put gold and silver and precious stones in a dark room, they mean nothing.

It's only as the light reflects off of them that they have their value and their beauty. God will grow and prosper and cause us to be a part of His splendor. And will open for us the gates of life and the gates of opportunity.

It all depends on us. Well, that's our scripture reading this morning. It has taken up our whole first session.

We'll pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll pick up in Exodus chapter 16.