

Bethel

Pulpit

Deliverances Sure

Sermon Number 445

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 22nd May, 2022**

Text: *"Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob"*
(Psalm 44. 4).

Before we come to all the many things in this text, what a striking word is this word *deliverances*. I felt how many people there are in Bethel Chapel this morning who can look up to heaven and bless Almighty God for all those varying deliverances you have had throughout your lives – some in providence, some in grace, some small, some great. O but what a beautiful word it is: *deliverances* – not just one deliverance – *deliverances!* We cannot help but think of that word, it is a word of the Apostle Paul: "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us." I hope many of you young people, you children here this morning, are still praying for these deliverances, and that during your lives there will be many times when you will have to bless the Lord that in His mercy He is a delivering God. Well, just those few things out of context, by the way, in introduction.

"Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob." We do not know who wrote this Psalm. We do not know when it was written. All kinds of divines have tried to find the answer. As far as I know, none of them have succeeded. The point does not matter who the author was. It is clear he was an Israelite, and he was sad, and his sadness was this: he looked back in the history of the Israel of God, the wonderful blessings known and experienced, and now he could see the difference. Everything seemed to be going wrong. The enemy seemed to be triumphing. The people of God seemed to be completely helpless, and yet those thoughts of better days, all those things the Lord did for His ancient people: driving out the enemy, giving them the land, and not their own arm saving them. "*Thy* right hand, and *Thine* arm, and the light of *Thy* countenance, because *Thou* hadst a favour unto them."

So there is this sense of terrible sadness, the desolations of the land, in many ways similar to England today. But suddenly, instead of looking about and looking within and looking around, what does the psalmist do?

He looks up, and he makes this remarkable statement. It is a wonderful confession of faith. I hope we can make this confession this morning. It is very personal. “Thou art my King, O God.” He can see that the Lord is King, the Lord is on the throne, the Lord is almighty, the Lord is in control. Can you, beloved friends, look up this morning? Can you see the same thing? It is true. He is still there, still almighty, still in control, still our God and our King.

The point with this old Israelite was, despite all the sad and awful changes that they had known, all their disappointments, their God was still in the heaven. He was still on the throne. He was still almighty. He was still carrying on His own eternal purposes. “Thou art my King, O God.” And so in hope, he casts himself completely into the arms of this great, loving, almighty God and Saviour. “Thou art my King, O God.” And he prays for these deliverances. It did not seem possible at this time, and sometimes deliverances do not seem possible.

I have thought so much about that case of Joseph. If ever there was a man with whom deliverances were impossible, it was Joseph. You know his history well: cruelly treated by his brethren, sold into captivity, falsely accused, thrown into prison, there for many years. We read of some of those dreadful conditions and those sufferings that there were in the prison, and that word: “Until the time that his word came” – the promise was fulfilled – “the word of the Lord tried him.” Had he been mistaken? Had the Lord forgotten him? Was God gracious no longer, the God he had known as a boy in Israel? If ever there was a deliverance commanded, and in a moment, how could it be?

Well, the mighty Pharaoh had a dream. He had two dreams. No-one could explain them. The chief butler had known what it was to have his dream explained by Joseph two years ago. He had forgotten all about it. Suddenly he remembers. So much hangs on so little. This mighty Pharaoh – well where is this boy, this slave, this young man? Send for him. “Canst thou interpret dreams?” He said, It is not in me; it is God that can interpret Pharaoh’s dreams. He gave that remarkable interpretation: the seven good years, the seven years of famine, the need for provision being made. To the amazement of Joseph, in a moment he is delivered from being a poor slave in a prison to being the next man to Pharaoh upon the throne. “It is no secret what God can do.” O do you believe it? I feel this old Israelite here in his distress, and yet in his looking back, he must have remembered the

case of Joseph. He must have realised that in a moment the Lord could appear in mercy, remember His people, command deliverances for them.

“Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.” Now this is a very interesting word here. He did not pray, Thou art my King, O God: then in Thy mercy deliver us. He said, “*Command deliverances for Jacob.*” What did he really mean? That God only needed to speak a word, and there was deliverance that followed. Just as in creation, “He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” “Thou art my King, O God.” I believe in the power of Thy word. I believe in Thy sovereignty. “Speak the word only.”

“Command deliverances for Jacob.” I am sure you must have noticed that we have a similar expression to this quite a few times in the Word of God, this point: the Lord only has to speak and the thing is done. One of them is, “The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime” – the lovingkindness of God in Christ. It is something we long to know. Perhaps some of you have come this morning feeling you would love to know something of the lovingkindness of God. Well, He only has to speak and then you will feel it, sweetly feel it, sweetly experience it in your heart. “The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime.”

Another one is in that lovely little one-hundred-and-thirty-third Psalm, speaking of the place where brethren dwell together in unity. “*There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.*” Well, we have our lovely prayer meetings. We pray for the blessing. All we need is the Lord to speak. “*There the Lord commanded the blessing.*” It is true in the one-hundred-and-thirty-third Psalm – may it also be true at Bethel – “*There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.*”

Just one other instance; I do not want to weary you with them. “Thy God hath commanded thy strength.” It is that strength we continually need, and sometimes we specially need it, and some of you perhaps find at times you cannot go on without it. Where is it going to come from? Well, if the Lord speaks – command. “Thy God hath commanded thy strength.” So here, it is a prayer, and I am sure it was a prayer that prevailed, and it has been answered many times since. May it once again be answered amongst us at Bethel.

“Thou art my King, O God: *command deliverances for Jacob.*” You wonder why he referred to the people of God as *Jacob* – of course, one of

the names for Israel. I suppose one thing is this: if there was ever a sinner saved by grace who knew deliverances, it was old Jacob. Really, if you read through the life of Jacob, it is a life of trials, a life of deliverances. Old Jacob walked this word out: his God commanding deliverances for him. Some of them, he could hardly have expected. Would he ever see his beloved Joseph again? He assumed he had been torn in pieces by some wild beast. O the deliverances that Jacob had! He did not have one more trial than he had deliverance, and you come right to the end of his life, and he had not got a single cloud in his sky. "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." Beloved friends, I would just say this to you. You have your various trials. Some of you have severe trials; some of you have more than others. These trials. But you will not have one more trial than you have deliverances.

"Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob." Now let me with the Lord's help try to speak to you this morning of a few of these deliverances that the Lord commands for His people. First of all, *the great deliverance* is that from the guilt and power and eternal punishment of sin, the greatest of all deliverances. We have it so beautifully opened up in the thirty-third chapter of the Book of Job. Some people call that chapter *the gospel in Job*. "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." I hope all of us realise the great importance of that. Left to ourselves, if grace never intervened, we should end up sinking down into the pit eternally. O but that beautiful hymn of John Kent's:

"Thy love was great, Thy mercy free,
Which from the pit delivered me."

"Command deliverances for Jacob." But beloved friends, there is one great, vital, important difference here. The great deliverance could not be performed just by an almighty word like creation, or just by the Lord's sovereign command. Before sinners could ever be delivered from the pit, that ransom must be found, and that ransom must be paid in the blood of Jesus. Before any sinner could be saved, any sinner could be delivered eternally, there must be the sin-atonement sufferings, the crown of thorns, the purple robe, the nails, the cruel spear. There must be Calvary before one sinner could ever be delivered from eternal ruin, from sinking down into the pit. It was not just by a word, just by a commandment; but now that the Saviour has died and risen again triumphantly, He ever lives almighty to

save. He now can speak and He can command deliverance for poor sinners on the way to hell, poor sinners with no concern. Because His work is complete, because His beloved Father is pleased with that work, He can say, Command that sinner's deliverance; command him from going down to the pit. Why? "I have found a ransom."

You know what the ransom is: the price must be paid before there can be deliverance. "The price, His own heart's blood." "Not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." That was *the great deliverance*. David, when he closed the eighteenth Psalm, closed with that word: "Great deliverance," that the Lord had afforded to him. I wonder if David by faith had a little glimpse of that greatest and most glorious of deliverances through the work of his own Son and Heir, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob." But that is the foundation, and there are many deliverances. There are times when God's people are sorely tempted by Satan, some more tempted, some less, but sometimes God's people are staggered by Satan's temptations, something they had not thought of. Where has it come from? Something which almost startles them. It almost throws them off balance, if that is the right word. How can you escape? How can you be delivered? O but what a prayer for a tempted soul, that cry for deliverance. Satan is too strong for me; I am too weak against his advances. This one seems to be overpowering me. It is going to overthrow me, unless Thou dost intervene.

"Thou art my King, O God" – this almighty King, this King in control, this King on the throne, but this King who "with heaven and earth at His command, waits to answer prayer." If there are any tempted ones here today, especially if you are tempted on any special thing, may this be your prayer: "Command deliverances for Jacob," command deliverances for me. Because surely you can come in under the character of Jacob. He was unworthy; he was a great sinner; he was always making mistakes; he was always faltering and failing. But we are told, "The God of Jacob is our refuge." What a mercy that He condescends to call Himself, "The God of Jacob," and what a word that is: "The God of Jacob is our refuge." "Command deliverances for Jacob," when so sorely tried, when so afflicted and troubled by Satan.

“Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.” Now another thing God’s people often need deliverance from is *fear*. God’s people have so many fears. So often they fear when there is no cause for fear. It seems to be one of the temptations that we have. It is a wonderful thing that Almighty God has put so many *fear* *notes* in Scripture. He knows how many fears His poor people have. “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.”

Some of you children and young people, when you are at school, I am sure at times you have things that trouble you, you are afraid of, you fear them. It may be someone bullying you. It may be someone you thought was a friend who has turned against you. It may be a teacher. It may be an exam. You wonder how you are going to go on; you wonder how you are going to manage. Well, how many people, how many children in their early days have perhaps had to pray for the first time because they were frightened. Then they realised that God answered their prayers, that there is a God. They had always heard about Him, but there is a God, and God is in heaven, and God is almighty, and God does hear and answer prayer.

“Upon Him call in humble prayer,
Thou still art His peculiar care;
He’ll surely turn and smile again,
Nor shalt thou seek His face in vain.”

I think you will all be interested, but especially you children. Recently when my daughter Rachel was giving her testimony before the church, she went right back to when she was a little girl in Sunday school, and it was a story that Mr. Gurney, who was teaching them that day, old Mr. Gurney, told them. One day, through no fault of his own, he was late for school. There was something he had to do at home; it could not be avoided; it was completely necessary. He knew that the headmaster severely punished anyone who was late. He used to thrash them with a stick. As a little, timid boy, he was so afraid, and he prayed for the first time. The headmaster came in as he always did after the assembly to administer this severe punishment, and the poor little boy was trembling. The headmaster said something like, “I have not got my stick,” or, “I have forgotten my stick. All of you go back to your classrooms.” Mr. Gurney felt as a little boy, what a wonderful thing: there is a God who answers prayer. Interestingly, you children, so many when they have spoken in their

little testimonies before us, they go right back to when they were children and when they have had to pray for the first time.

“Thou art my King, O God; command deliverances for Jacob.” Then there is this point. Many of the Lord’s dear people have a little sweet assurance that, “‘Tis well with them while life endure, and well when called to die.” But I am sure I am speaking to many cases here this morning. You have a good hope – “Cast not away thy little hope” – but you are troubled with that coldness and deadness and darkness that you often feel, that backsliding of heart. You are not what you would be. You are not what you feel God’s people are. You are not what you feel you should be. You are not what you feel you want to be. O but you feel helpless in it. Well, this is a good prayer for deliverance here. What does our hymnwriter say?

“Through corruption, felt within,
Darkness, deadness, guilt, and sin,
Still to Jesus turn thy eyes.”

This is what this prayer is doing here. It is turning your eyes to Jesus. O that we might look on His beautiful face! As we sang in our opening hymn this morning (18), to behold the beauties of the Lord. O but it would be a different thing if we were delivered, if we knew the difference.

I unexpectedly came across something in one of the Puritans recently, and he made a very simple statement. He said, “If you have been out in the cold and you come in, and there is a lovely fire, you know what that warmth is. It is something that you *know*, and it is something that you *feel*, and you clearly know the difference between when you were feeling cold and when you are feeling warm.” Well, we do not always feel that warmth. We think of that word, “Warm our cold hearts with heavenly heat.” But this is a good prayer: Command deliverance from that death which is felt within.

“Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.” Just one word briefly as we come to a close: *trouble*. That is perhaps the great thing of all: deliverance from trouble. There is not time to go into all the aspects of it, and there are some troubles that God’s people are not delivered from, and some may have to wait a long time for the deliverance, but there is this word that has been made a blessing to many. I can leave you with it: “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” It is worth repeating. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I

will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” It does not specify what the day of trouble is, whether it is providential trouble, or spiritual trouble, or both, or what it is. “Call upon Me.” The Lord knows, He understands, He cares. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” And then of course there is the final deliverance in the great day. What a mercy to be brought safely through, to be safely landed!

“Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.”

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Indulgent God, how kind
Are all Thy ways to me,
Whose dark benighted mind
Was enmity with Thee;
Yet now, subdued by sovereign grace,
My spirit longs for Thy embrace!

How precious are Thy thoughts,
Which o’er my bosom roll!
They swell beyond my faults,
And captivate my soul;
How great their sum, how high they rise,
Can ne’er be known beneath the skies.

Preserved in Jesus when
My feet made haste to hell;
And there should I have gone,
But Thou dost all things well;
Thy love was great, tTy mercy free,
Which from the pit delivered me.

A monument of grace,
A sinner saved by blood;
The streams of love I trace
Up to the fountain, God;
And in His wondrous mercy see,
Eternal thoughts of love to me.

J. Kent