

Sermon or Lesson: Colossians 1:13 (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Rescued From, Brought Into

INTRODUCTION: During your life until now, have you ever been rescued or delivered by someone, perhaps from: drowning; being attacked by a dog; being hit by an object; being assaulted by a bully; and etc.? In that moment when you were rescued from harm and brought into safety, was that an incredible relief? And were you exceedingly grateful to the person who rescued you? Let's examine and study in Colossians to learn about some of the rescue activities that God accomplishes.

READ: Colossians 1:13, with vv.12,14,21 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - We believers are to possess a Kingdom perspective that is characterized by "spiritual wisdom and understanding", so that we can correctly determine and comprehensively live in accordance to God's will. (v.9)
 - - But due to our corrupted perspective, we believers need increasing enlightenment from God through gaining spiritual knowledge from His Word, in order to improve our ability to determine and live in accordance to God's will. (v.9; cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16)
 - - Part of that spiritual knowledge should include learning that God has worked in the past and continues to work in the present at blessing us who believe, qualifying us, including us, giving us an inheritance, and sanctifying us. (v.12)
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v.13 - READ

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, and describe in detail the characteristics of the activity of God that is referred to in this verse.]

SECTION POINT: God conducts the activity of delivering true believers out of "the dominion of darkness" and "into the kingdom of the Son".

- - By His own choice and motivation, the Father takes the initiative to implement action that "rescues", "delivers", or removes us true believers from both present and impending harm that relates to our previous unqualified status with the Father. (Strong's #4506; v.12)
- - This rescue is comprehensive and permanent - we can no longer or again become subject to the harm that He particularly rescues us from - being previously unqualified in our status with the Father.
- - God makes this kind of rescue always successful for those persons whom God chooses to rescue.
- - And by implication, God uses sufficient power or means by which to successfully accomplish this kind of rescue that He chooses to conduct. (cf. v.11)

- - God rescues us true believers from or delivers us out of "the dominion of darkness", the "authority", the control, and the domain of darkness. (v.13, Strong's #1849)
- - In the context of Colossians chapter 1, the term "darkness" is associated with: separation and "alienation from God" (vv.13,21), exclusion from His Kingdom (v.13), absence

of acceptability to God (v.12), and a state of existence that does not acquire "an inheritance of the saints" (v.12), nor "the forgiveness of sins" (v.14), nor redemption through the Son (v.14).

- - So by default, at birth all of us humans are naturally, automatically, immediately, and comprehensively subjected as members in "the dominion of darkness", being under its "sovereignty and control, [which has and exercises its] right and power to govern, possess, and dominate" us. (from *AHD* - 'dominion')

- - Rescuing and delivering us out of "the dominion of darkness", the Father simultaneously "brings", carries, and "transports" us true believers into His kingdom, placing and establishing us in "the kingdom of the Son" - in effect we are technically and legally adopted. (v.13, Strong's #3179; cf. Ephesians 1:5)

- - In the past, about 2,000 years ago, long before we became in any way aware (for we had not yet been born nor heard the gospel), the Father was busy working on the means by which He would use to one day qualify us and bring us into His kingdom. (vv. 5-6,12,14; cf. Ephesians 1:4-5)

- - Even in the near-present during the first part of our life and up to the moment we become a true believer, the Father is busy working in preparation to qualify us, like He did with the Colossians through His servant Epaphras. (vv.5b-7,12)

- - The Father proceeds with this preparation even though we live being naive or under-informed, not sufficiently aware of the dire predicament and the severe ramifications of the dire predicament we are in - "alienated from God" and disqualified "to share in the inheritance" in His kingdom. (cf. Romans 5:8; Colossians 1:21,12)

- - The nature of this deliverance out of "the dominion of darkness" and "brought into the kingdom of the Son" is an activity conducted by God within the spiritual realm, which renders us humans, who are in the physical realm, to being entirely helpless to achieve this activity on our own - by our own means or power or intellect.

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, and describe in detail the characteristics of the results that the deliverance activity of God has on the life of those persons He rescues.]

SECTION POINT: God's activity of deliverance produces results that radically change life for those persons He rescues.

- - At the core of this "darkness" and its "dominion" is the problem of the committing of sins. (v.14)

- - Within its many facets, this spiritual phenomenon called "the dominion of darkness" exerts influence and power over humans to commit sins, being allowed by God to exert reign or ruling authority over them to effectively entice, and incite, and compel, and control, and enslave them to commit sins. (v.14; cf. Romans 1:18,24,28-32)

- - For those persons who are "rescued from the dominion of darkness", God makes available His "all power" to "strengthen" those rescued persons to subdue and defeat within their life the control and enslavement to committing sins that "the dominion of darkness" exerts. (v.11)

- - For those "rescued" persons, there is also a diametric and radical change in membership, allegiance, orientation, identity, eternal destination, value (v.14), devotion (v.4), purpose (v.10), perspective (vv.12,5), calling or mission (vv.10,6; cf. Ephesians 4:1), standing

before God (vv.12,14,21-22), access to God (v.12), contact with God (v.27), empowering by God (v.11), beneficiaries to an inheritance from God (v.12), and etc.

- - Being a member of "the kingdom of the Son" means now operating amicably from a new "realm of royalty" - rather than previously operating hostilely from the realm of darkness, being an "enemy". (Strong's #0932; v.21)

- - As with the believing humans in Colosse, God accomplishes and completes this rescue from "the dominion of darkness" while the believing humans are alive on this earth.

- - But for every person who dies not having previously placed his/her "faith in Christ Jesus", they thereupon and immediately become permanently and irreversibly locked into "the dominion of darkness" and forever excluded from "the kingdom of the Son". (vv.4,13)

- - The sad reality is that the vast majority of people who live on the earth fail during their life to properly place their faith in Christ Jesus, which upon death automatically and by default causes each of them to eternally remain in the dominion of darkness, and suffer all of the repercussions and consequences that flow from never having their sins forgiven by God. (vv.4,13,14; Matthew 7:13-14; John 3:17-18)

- - In other words, each person who properly places his/her faith in Christ Jesus during their life on earth ultimately inherits a state of existence of living eternally in heaven with God, whereas each person who fails to properly place his/her faith in Christ Jesus during their life on earth ultimately inherits a state of existence of living eternally in hell without God. (John 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

BIG IDEA: Life is radically changed in the present and through into the eternal future for those persons whom God rescues out of "the dominion of darkness" and brings "into the kingdom of the Son".

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

- - Has God actually, technically, and legally "rescued [you] from the dominion of darkness and brought [you] into [His] kingdom"?

- - - - If you think so, what do you base that on? (PAUSE - give them a few moments to formulate their answer in their mind.)

- - - - If your answer is anything other than the truthful confession "***I have placed my faith in Jesus Christ, that He died on the cross to pay the punishment for my sins and that He rose from the dead on the third day***", then the Scriptures clearly declare that the required "redemption" through the Son and corresponding "forgiveness of sins" have not been applied to you, which means you remain a member of "the dominion of darkness". (vv.13,14)

- - - - Whereas every person who fails to properly place his/her faith in Christ Jesus during their life on earth ultimately inherits a state of existence of living eternally in hell without God, do you want to stay in this "dominion of darkness" day after day, and risk being locked-in eternally to forever suffer in hell? (John 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Colossians 1:13)

- - For those of you who have truly placed "your faith in Christ Jesus" (v.4), do you maintain gratitude in your heart and regularly "give thanks to the Father" (v.12) that He has "rescued

[you] from the dominion of darkness and brought [you] into the kingdom of the Son" (v.13)?
If not, why not?

- - If you do regularly "give thanks to the Father", then what else can you do to show your gratitude to Him? How about doing what is listed in verse 10 - to the maximum? (READ v.10)

- - Would your friends, relatives, and co-workers say that you definitely are a member of "the kingdom of the Son"?

- - - - Or instead, would they say you appear to be a member of "the kingdom of the Son" only when you are in church, and otherwise you speak and act as if you are a member of "the dominion of darkness" all of the rest of the time?

- - As a member within God's royal kingdom, does your life bring honor to that royal status of His kingdom? Consistently?

- - - - Or instead, do you bring shame and disgrace on that royal status of God's kingdom by how you live your life - as if you are still a member of "the dominion of darkness"?

- - Are there any sinful habits and/or bondages to sin that you picked up while you were a member of "the dominion of darkness"?

- - - - In gratitude to the Father, should you be working strenuously to battle, extinguish, and get rid of those sinful habits and/or bondages to sin?

[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - If the Father and the Son (and the Spirit) do all these things to prepare, and qualify, and rescue, and deliver us, then what part or role do other people play in that process, if any? Discuss, analyze, and speculate. You can use the example of Epaphras with the Colossians, verses 1:7; 4:12-13.

- - An additional question (that will fry a few brain cells): Do the roles that other people play in any way influence or determine who God rescues and brings into His kingdom? Discuss, analyze, and speculate, but do not get angry or argue if other people in your group disagree with your answer to this question. Hint: Perhaps the most scripturally-accurate answer to this question is 'No!'... and 'Yes!' (both together). See Matthew 9:35-38.]

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