

THE GOD OF MOSES.. WHO
THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING

And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan. (Exod. 6:2-4)

It is not a cause for amazement that God thinks of everything and gives attention to the smallest things in His creation. He gave to bees the instinct to gather pollen and arranged that flowers should assist in the production of honey. He gave to birds the capability of building their nests, but how this is accomplished remains a mystery. Our feathered friends use their beaks and claws, but somehow their homes are sometimes constructed over water where predators are unable to reach their young. It would be expected that the Maker of planets, mountains, and oceans would have no time to be interested in such details.

Speaking about sparrows, the Savior said, "One of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father [being aware of it]" (Matt. 10:29). There were no geographical limits to that statement. The Lord believed a small bird could not be hurt in China, Japan, Africa, India, Europe or any other place on earth unless the Almighty was aware of the accident.

If Moses had illusions about that fact, the promises of God removed his doubts. He had been commissioned to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, but the captives were not cooperative: "And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage" (Exod. 6:9). Then the Lord revealed the details of plans concerning the captives and mentioned seven phases of the operation. The "I wills" of His message deserve consideration; they prove that Jehovah thought of everything!

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The Promise of Release... God's Pity
I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.
(Exod. 6:6)

That statement concerning release from burdens provided a foretaste of heaven. Even had the Israelites remained in Egypt, to be released from trials and difficulties would have been the fulfillment of a dream. The task of making bricks for the building projects of the pharaohs and the unsympathetic behavior of the overlords were disgusting to those proud Hebrews. The captives had suffered for four hundred terrible years and it was easy to believe Jehovah had forgotten them. All they knew of liberty was confined to historical data reiterated by elders. The suffering slaves trembled; birds were free to come and go, but men remained prisoners. And then came Moses. Many stories had been told about him; how his actions annoyed the king, and flight had been essential for survival. All this had happened forty years earlier; the new Moses appeared to be different! He had matured. He was resolute in his demands and unshaken in his faith. Jehovah had sent him to defy the rulers of Egypt. With arrogant disdain for Egyptian authority, the stranger from the desert said, "Let my people go." God's initial promise meant release from servitude. Moses explained that God's children should never be slaves in Egypt or anywhere else. The fact applied in ancient times, and it is still pertinent today.

This was the initial miracle to be performed on behalf of the

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Hebrews. The nation could not march in chains! They could not enter Canaan until they had left Egypt. The lifting of their burdens enabled them to become pilgrims. People ask, "How can we succeed in the new life when we remain slaves to the old?" Lazarus might have had similar thoughts when he came forth bound hand and foot from his tomb. The command of the Savior brought new hope: "Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:44). God always completes what He commences.

The Promise of Rescue... God's Power

I will free you from their bondage. (Exod. 6:6 Av)

Uninspired men would have considered deliverance from Egypt as misleading as a mirage in the desert. The Israelites had no soldiers, weapons, or military experience. Through four centuries they had been dominated by foreign masters and had no friends. A pitiable company of helpless slaves, they obeyed their masters, and rebellion was never considered until Moses challenged the authority of Pharaoh.

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(1) God's Purpose. The Lord intended to deliver His people although they could not contribute anything to the effort. No official could prevent the inevitable. (2) God's Persistence. When Pharaoh refused to cooperate, Jehovah sent deadly plagues to disturb the arrogant monarch, and that onslaught could have continued indefinitely had such a course been necessary. (3) God's Power. The Lord knew exactly how the episode would end. The ruler of Egypt would have lived longer had he known: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." He who held the planets in His hand, whose earthquakes could make mountains tremble, had no difficulty disturbing the Egyptians.

When Simon Peter was sinking in the Sea of Galilee, he cried, "Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him" (Matt. 14:30-31). The disciple gratefully grasped the outstretched hand and was lifted to the surface of the water. Had he pushed the Lord away, he would have deserved to drown! It was the work of Christ to rescue His friend, but even Jesus expected a little cooperation from the desperate disciple. Wise people grasp the helping hand of the Savior; others may not even see it!

The Promise of Redemption... God's Pardon

I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments. (Exod. 6:6)

God never did anything haphazardly; all His arrangements were carefully planned and executed. His love encompassed many people, but not all were delivered. The Hebrews might have been more guilty than their oppressors: they knew the truth; the Egyptians were idolators. Moses understood that "without shedding of blood, is no remission" (Heb. 9:22; Lev. 17:11). Perhaps the captives had either ignored or forgotten the teaching of their ancestors and were unaccustomed to presenting offerings to a God of whom they knew so little. The patriarch emphasized the necessity of obeying the commands of Jehovah. God did not deliver people because they were Hebrews. The angel of death did not differentiate between Jews and Gentiles, the rich and poor. Salvation did not depend on what they were, but where they were! The blood of a lamb had to be placed on the doorposts and lintels of their homes, and afterward the family remained inside the building. The angel of death never knocked to ask who lived within. When he saw the blood he passed over, knowing the residents were believers. Thus it became possible for God to accept strangers into His family. Although some

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of the people (perhaps the Egyptians who accompanied them) argued

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and complained, the Jews never returned to the land of bondage; they had been redeemed forever.

The writer to the Hebrews was evidently a great lover of the Scriptures. His excellent interpretation of the Old Testament reminded his readers that the ancient events were a foreshadowing of things to be revealed fully in Christ.

Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Shed on Calvary:
Shed for rebels, shed for sinners:
Shed for me.

The Promise of Recognition... God's People

And I will take you to me for a people. (Exod. 6:7)

The grandeur of this promise can only be appreciated when the past and future of the Israelites are compared. When the captives toiled in Egypt, they were beaten, oppressed, and almost suffocated in the intense heat. When they returned to their hovels, they wished they could die in their sleep. Later, as they marched toward Canaan, they lived in tents stretched in neat rows that radiated from their sanctuary.

At night an intense glow illuminated the tabernacle and reminded viewers they were not alone; their Benefactor resided in the midst of His people. When dawn arrived, the fire was replaced by a cloud, which led them when they traveled. They were a strange nomadic nation, living among hostile neighbors who knew the Hebrews were different! It might have been difficult to explain why God had chosen such people to become His special children, but His provision for their needs was astonishing. He fed them with manna and caused gushers of water to arise from the earth. Their renown terrified the inhabitants of Jericho, one of whom said, "We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side of Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Josh. 2:10-11).

The Christian church represents the greatest people who ever lived. Redeemed by the blood of the Savior their future is assured, for the

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Lord promised, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Blessed are they who can say

I'm so glad I belong to the family of God:
I've been washed in the fountain,
And cleansed by His blood.

The Promise of Responsibility ... God's Preeminence

I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God. (Exod. 6:7)

The slaves in Egypt did not have a God, a prophet, or a spiritual leader. The nation marching to Canaan knew the Most High resided in their midst; a high priest interceded within the tabernacle, and their prophet appeared to be the most powerful man on earth. Things had changed significantly. Other nations possessed man-made idols, which were completely helpless; Jehovah constantly assisted those who trusted in Him. Each person within the camp was able to exclaim, "He is my God." Jehovah was above everything that existed. He was their Guardian and Guide who had assumed responsibility for the welfare of the nation.

The Bible teaches that God is for us, with us, and in us, and these

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facts cannot be overemphasized. Furthermore, these things would never change for His covenant was an everlasting one (see Gen. 17:7-8). There was progression of thought in the names of God. He was known as The Most High, Jehovah, God, and finally heavenly Father. Jesus said to His disciples, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God" (John 20:17).

A student after one semester in college returned to his father's church in Cornwall, England, and was invited to pray in the morning service. He began with the words "O God, what shall we call Thee? Omnipotent? Omniscient? Omnipresent? What shall we call Thee?" An elderly deacon seated close to the pulpit whispered, "Son, call Him heavenly Father."

The Promise of Remembrance... God's Plan

And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. (Exod. 6:8)

God's purpose for Israel was twofold: to bring them out of Egypt and into Canaan. He could not commence the second phase of the

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operation until the first had been completed. There was more trouble with the second part. The distance from Egypt to the borders of Canaan was only about 120 miles. Unfortunately, it took the Hebrews forty years to complete what could have been done in two weeks. It was the work of only one night to liberate Israel, but 14,600 days and nights to get Egypt out of Israel. Christians know what this means. Paul said. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:18-20). It was reassuring for Israel to remember that God said, "I will bring them into the land." He was fully aware of forthcoming problems, and realized a different generation would replace the one destined to die in the wilderness. Yet His promise would be fulfilled. Nothing could prevent the completion of His plan. John appreciated that fact when he wrote, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). Doddridge and Toplady were correct when they wrote

"Twas grace that wrote my name
In life's eternal book.
"Twas grace that gave me to the Lamb,
Who all my sorrow took.

Grace taught my wandering feet
To tread the heavenly road.
And now supplies what e'er I need
While pressing on to God.

The Promise of Recompense... God's Pleasure

I will give it [the land] you for an heritage: I am the LORD. (Exod. 6:8)

Canaan was never meant to be a type of heaven. Joshua was compelled to evict his enemies, and even then some of the territory remained in the hands of Canaanites. The journey through the wilderness was an introduction to a richer, fuller life. Similarly, the carnal life of believers can be replaced by more rewarding experiences.

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Paul explained this when he wrote the epistle to the Ephesians: "In [Christ] also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11). "[God] bath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6-7). Until that glorious day dawns, Christians are to maintain what God foreordained, and that necessitates combat against evil.

Paul continued: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places [the heavenlies]" (Eph. 6:11-12). Christians can live a triumphant life (see Rev. 12:11). The Lord made a promise to Abraham - and to - us - that guarantees a wonderful inheritance to all who follow Him to journey's end.

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