

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness

GOD's Marvelous Revelations Concerning Sin and Death
and
The Divinely Provided Way of Salvation

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CHAPTER ONE -

THE FIRST PASSOVER

Nothing in the Bible more effectively reveals the infinite wisdom and patience of GOD, in His relations with His Chosen People, than His leading them, step by step, after He had commanded them through His servant, Moses, to forsake their homes in Egypt, assuring them that He would protect and provide for them throughout their journeyings, and that He would go with them and manifest Himself to them, as their Deliverer, Redeemer and Saviour.

BACKGROUNDS AND PREPARATIONS

To a greater degree than we realize they took their first steps in obedience to the Divine commands in sheer faith and dependence, with very partial and imperfect conceptions of the ONE Whom they were to trust and obey. This has led many modern writers to place the emphasis upon the supposed **discoveries** which the Children of Israel made of GOD. There is a decided tendency to overlook the fact that Israel constantly demurred and often rebelled, preventing such discoveries in the realm of the Spirit.

This fact impels us to begin with the revelations which GOD MADE OF HIMSELF, from the very beginning of His dealings with the people of Israel, by what **HE said and did**. These Divine revelations began, as recorded in Exodus 12:1-28, before, and in preparation for, the actual exodus from their homes in Egypt. It was at this instant that their Redeemer and Saviour began to reveal Himself and His plan of Redemption, not only for Israel, but for all mankind. Here, in a very special degree, began the revelation which continues through all the Scriptures, until the Spirit and the Church cry out for the fulfillment and consummation of ALL REVELATION, unfolded in the purpose and plan of Almighty GOD: "**And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book**"

(Revelation 22:17-19).

Therefore we do well to give full consideration to the revelations which GOD MADE to Israel, from the commandments recorded in Exodus 12:1-28, until GOD ended His conversations and commands given to Moses, related to the Tabernacle and everything pertaining to the worship and service of GOD, recorded in Exodus 16:1, "**And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt,**" through Leviticus 27:34, "**These are the commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai,**" imparted by the Lord to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Because of their close relationship to the types and symbols presented in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, we give special attention to their first use in connection with the out-calling and flight of the Children of Israel from Egypt. It is profoundly significant that these types and symbols continue to appear and take on fuller and richer meaning throughout the Word of GOD. It will be our purpose, so far as a book of this size will permit to indicate their meanings and applications in the New Testament, especially in relation to the Person and ministry of CHRIST.

Within the month in which GOD purposed to deliver Israel from bondage in Egypt, in order to impress upon the people that it was by HIS mercy and power that they were to be freed from slavery and death; GOD spoke to Moses and Aaron, revealing that He purposed, not only to deliver them, but to REDEEM them by the shedding of blood, which was to cover their sins and iniquities, as in the sight of GOD, and to be their protection from actual death on the night of their deliverance.

It was commanded that the head of each family should select a lamb, separate it from the flock, and observe it for fourteen days to make sure that the sacrifice was healthy and without blemish. On the fourteenth day the lamb was to be slain and its blood was to be sprinkled upon the two door-posts and lintel of the entrance to every house in Israel, wherein each lamb was to be eaten. While each family was gathered, partaking of the solemn repast, protected by the blood of the lamb, the angel passed over, bringing death to the first-born son in every Egyptian house.

It is exceedingly important that we grasp the fact that the Lord, here, not only instituted a new sacrificial observance in Israel; but that He commanded Israel to begin a new reckoning of times and seasons. *After the passing of centuries, this passover type had its marvelous fulfillment on the exact date, here predetermined, when the Lamb of GOD, our Saviour, as well as Israel's Redeemer, died on Calvary.*

The paschal feast observed that last night, before the Children of Israel set out on their flight from Egypt, became a point from which to reckon times and seasons for observances of the profoundest significance, which were continued for centuries in Israel and for two thousand years have become the most sacred memorials of the Christian Churches. The days and dates and times and seasons then begun, and still in force. JESUS did not set them aside. He fulfilled them and gave to them Eternal meaning. They will have even more glorious fulfillment in the days to come and, doubtless, they will be observed by the redeemed in the ages of the ages.

Unless we give careful consideration to each succeeding reference to the historical fact and meaning of this solemn feast, we shall not be prepared to discover how significant is its place in the Divine Revelation. The high point in Israel's religious observances was reached when the high priest, once each year, on the Day of Atonement, bore into the Holy of Holies the blood of a spotless lamb, in obedience to GOD's command, "**ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever**" (Exodus 12:14). Thus early in Israel's religious history and experience, GOD caused to be made paramount and supremely significant the meaning of John the Baptist's stentorian cry, "**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29).

THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE

In obedience to the Divine command, the whole congregation of Israel gathered in their dwellings by families, or closely related groups, and partook of the Passover feast, girded and with staffs in hand, ready to start on the journey out of Egypt, "bound for the Promised Land." The wonderful significance of the hour when the angel of death passed over Egypt, and the ordained means for the protection of GOD's people in that and other dark hours, will be considered later on.

On the second stage of their journey, the people were startled when there appeared in the way before them a peculiar pillar of cloud, which moved in the direction they were going. It stopped at nightfall, when they had reached a proper camping place. As darkness fell, behold, the cloudy pillar turned into a glowing pillar of fire!

As they resumed their journey, this pillar of cloud led them through a pass in the mountains on the East, out upon a coastal plain facing the Red Sea. There they camped again. Then word came that the armies of Pharaoh were overtaking them, evidently prepared to drive them back into bondage. The terrified host cried unto their GOD for protection and deliverance. In answer the cloud that had gone before them turned backward and passed around the encampment and stopped between Israel and the Egyptian forces. There the cloudy pillar became a black pall, completely engulfing them and confounding them, while it cast a gloriously bright light over all the host of Israel.

DIVINE DELIVERANCE

When the people were calmed and confident of Divine protection and leading, GOD commanded Moses to lead the people to the shore of the sea. There in the sight of all Israel, Moses shouted "**Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you**" (Exodus 14:13, 14). Then GOD said unto Moses, "**Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward**" (Exodus 14:15).

Humanly speaking, there was no "forward." Mountains hemmed them in on the North and on the South. The armies of Egypt were back of them, and before them was the western arm of the Red Sea. This was the desperate situation, when they saw Moses stretch out his hand over the waters, and to their amazement, the restless waves parted to the right and to the left and rolled back, forming a towering wall of water on either side, leaving an open road across the bed of the sea to

the farther shore.

Though hesitant and fearful, the people of Israel obeyed Moses' commands. Doubtless, no one loitered on that part of the journey, and when all were safe on dry ground, at GOD's command, the waters rushed back together again, completely engulfing and destroying the armed hosts of Pharaoh. Thus was demonstrated and symbolized forever the willingness and power of GOD to guide, deliver, and protect in every hour of danger and despair, and even from death, all who put their trust in Him, and obey His commandments.

As we have noted, surprisingly, the pillar of cloud turned not to the northeastward, which was the shortest course to the Land of Promise; but it led the way to the southeastward along the East shore of the sea, out into a desert region, reaching for miles from the sea coast to a distant ridge of mountains, toward which they journeyed, in all, a distance of close to one hundred and fifty miles.

A BARREN COUNTRY

The writer has twice sailed along that coast-line, with deep interest observing and studying that region. Later on, when crossing New Mexico and Arizona, he was reminded, again and again, of the rich coloring of the plains and mountains, and desert surroundings, to which the host of Israel became accustomed on that journey. In passing, we cannot take time to recall the strenuous and trying experiences which the people endured, so different from what they had known in Goshen, that they complained and sometimes came close to rebelling, making things very difficult for Moses.

The reader will do well to read and ponder the record of those experiences, as found in Exodus 15:22 to chapter 19:1, 2. These passages of Scripture will reveal why the people of Israel could not be led directly from the Red Sea into the land of Canaan. It was necessary for them to be tested, sifted, tried, purified, and made ready for a fuller knowledge of GOD, through as it were, kindergarten lessons, imparted in the simplest; yet marvelously significant and beautiful types and symbols, which were presented in everything related to the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. Thus GOD revealed Himself to His servant, Moses, and through him to the Children of Israel, and, as we shall soon discover, to ALL who would come unto the Father, through our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER ONE

Egypt has always been a type and symbol of materialistic worldliness, of rejection of Divinely-given light and truth, and of ignorance of the TRUE GOD, in the midst of boasted civilization, art and culture and worldly power, dominated and controlled by the spiritual forces of darkness, wickedness, and death.

The paschal lamb has always symbolized the Lamb of GOD, slain from the foundation of the world, as the basis of Divinely wrought Redemption from sin and eternal death. The sacrifice of the lamb, and partaking of that sacrifice, were necessary before the first step could be taken by anyone, who would seek deliverance from sin and death.

That redemption and deliverance, out of the darkness of sin and slavery thereto, is entirely of GOD, is forcefully demonstrated by the position the people of Israel found themselves in as they encamped by the sea. On the North, East and South, they were hemmed in by the natural barriers of this world. On the West, forces dominated by Satan sought to restrain or destroy them. The sea has always symbolized the "great beyond", into which all but two, so far as we know, have had to pass by way of death and the grave.

Here, GOD, this early in the Divine relation, demonstrated that He could and would open a safe way out of darkness and the grave, and all the seeming perils attending death, through the power of His might; just as many years later, CHRIST conquered death, and came forth from His grave, and left a shining pathway to our heavenly home: **"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"** (John 14:3-5).

The truth here revealed is superbly stated by the apostle Paul: **"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come"** (Ephesians 1:18-21). Here is a striking example of a type having a wonderful fulfillment in its "anti-type." In most instances, as here, they have had, and yet shall have, complete fulfillment in, and through our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

TRUTH FOR ALL NATIONS

Nor are these precious truths all that we should discern, as we study these experiences, which came to the Children of Israel. Not only Egypt, but all other nations and evil forces which would oppose GOD's people and oppose the benign purposes of GOD, must yet pay the penalty for their hideous sins. That truth needs to be emphasized, today more insistently than at any previous hour in history. We are very close to GOD's "harvest time" for all the world. Satan knows it, and is doing his utmost to work as great havoc as possible, for **"he hath but a short time."**

While evil men think that they are hemming in those peoples and nations who have composed the Christian world, GOD knows that very soon He is going to lead His own up that shining pathway into Glory. Not only so, but He will engulf in darkness, confusion and chaos all those who would oppose or prevent our Lord from establishing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Events, now coming to a head, only hasten the hour when Russia and all the nations and peoples, deceived by Satan's lies, will come to sudden judgment and perish from the earth, as did Pharaoh's host.

Satan-controlled forces will never consent to let GOD's people go. Dark, dreadful hours lie before mankind. Soon men's hearts will begin to fail them, for looking at those things coming to pass on earth: **"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's**

hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:25-28). The same GOD who redeemed the children of Israel and led them safely out of Egypt, through the threatening sea, and on into the Promised land, is OUR GOD. His promises to Israel in former crises, are ours. **HE and THEY will never fail.**

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

"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. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee" (Isaiah 41:10-13).

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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