

## **THE SAME GOD TODAY**

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OLD202 Pentateuch

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Who is the "God" whose "Word" (the Bible) says that in the beginning He created the heavens and the earth, and all that is on the earth, that is, all creatures in the seas, all creatures that fly in the skies, and all creatures that move upon the earth, including man (that is men and women)? Who dealt with the sin of Adam and Eve and the slaying of Abel by his brother Cain? Who sent a great flood upon the earth because of the wickedness of man but spared Noah and his family? Who watched as man wanted to make a name for themselves by building the tower of Babel, so He confused their language so that they were then scattered abroad over the earth? Who made a covenant with Abraham that He would bless him and make him a great nation in whom all the families of the earth would be blessed? Who blessed Jacob with being the father of the twelve tribes of Israel (the new name God gave Jacob)? Who sent Moses to deliver Israel after 430 years of bondage to Egypt? Who led the Israelites (after 40 years of disobedience) to the Promised Land? Who sent Joshua and Caleb and the Israelites into the Promised Land? Who raised up judges to rule over Israel? Who gave Israel a king (despite His perfect will) and then other kings to reign over Israel and Judah for the next 400 or so years while also sending prophets to speak to His people through that time? Who allowed His people to go once again into captivity (the Northern Kingdom to the Assyrians and then the Southern Kingdom

to the Babylonians)? Who was silent then for 400 years with regards to His written Word? Who sent His Son Jesus to be born of a virgin, Who took on the shame and sufferings and the shedding of His blood by being beaten, mocked, spit on, and then crucified on a cross, to become the Savior of the world, to all who will believe and will call upon the name of the Lord?

When Moses asked God who to tell Pharoah it is that is sending him, God said, "I AM that I AM." When we refer to God, capital G, we are speaking of Him as a title, not that God is His name. In the older manuscripts of the Old Testament, God is referred to as either Elohim or as YHWH (which we pronounce and sometimes spell as Yahweh). Usually, at least in the culture we are familiar with, we refer to Him as God or Lord, most likely, since typically in modern English translations, YHWH was translated as Lord and Elohim was translated as God. Sometimes we refer to God as our "Heavenly Father", most likely since when Jesus was asked how to pray, Jesus started the prayer, "our Father in heaven". But no matter who we refer to Him as, if we are speaking of the "God" in the Bible, all 66 books included, from Genesis to Revelation, we are speaking of the same Person. For He says "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Revelation 22:13). As David asked in what is now Psalm 24 (verse 10), "Who is this King of glory?" "The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory." There is but One!

Even before God had delivered the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt, God said of them, "I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." In the last book of the Pentateuch, which is the first five books of the Bible, which is also called the Torah by the Jewish people, or bible scholars or students of Biblical history, we find in the last book of the Pentateuch, in Deuteronomy, God has Moses remind the Israelites of all God had taken them through and all that God had commanded of them in leading them out of captivity and to the Promised Land. They were right at the border of the Promised Land and God had to instruct His people once again of all they needed to know. First and foremost, He reminded them that "the Lord Himself is God [capital G]; there is none other besides Him (Deuteronomy 4:35) He warned them by saying, "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God." For they were HIS people. But seeing the beginning and the end, knowing the Israelites would follow after other gods (lowercase g), God spoke of His mercy and forgiveness to them by saying, "But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice (for the Lord your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them" (Deuteronomy 4:29-31). Prior to his final

sermons in the book of Deuteronomy God had Moses say to the Israelites, "For I am the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45). From Leviticus 18-26 God says, "I am the Lord", "I am the Lord your God", "I am the Lord their God", "I the Lord sanctify them", and "I am the Lord who sanctifies you". God alone is the One who sanctifies them, sets them apart from others in His righteousness, His holiness. And in Leviticus 10:3, He says, "'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified'" (NKJV). After Moses had reminded the Israelites of the Ten Commandments, God said in Deuteronomy 5:29, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" In Deuteronomy 6:5, God said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." And then He says in "Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth."

Perhaps someone may wonder why bringing up stories in the Old Testament that happened thousands of years ago has any relevance to us today. In An Introduction to the Old Testament, Pentateuch, the author says,

"Throughout the book [of Deuteronomy], Moses spoke to

the Israelites in a series of messages that are often sermonic in style. Even when he dealt with specific laws, Moses exhorted and encouraged the nation to obey the Lord fully...Occasionally Moses brought together events that were widely separated chronologically and in other places he included insights that were parathetical in nature. Time after time he challenged the Israelites to follow the Lord and experience great blessing."

When we examine what Moses spoke of in his messages, which of course were messages that God told Moses to tell the people, we find something very interesting. For starters it is said the entirety of the Bible is God's Word to His people. That is from Genesis to Revelation. While the Pentateuch was previously mentioned, we find as was well stated by Terence Fretheim in his book The Pentateuch,

"The Pentateuch does not stand alone; it is integrally related to the rest of the Old Testament,"

and is tied into the Psalms, the prophets, Joshua, and the Kings, and "from Genesis to Kings is a continuous story from the creation through the origins and development of Israel and the long journey of their life in the promised land, climaxing in the destruction of Jerusalem and exile."

While it could certainly be argued that the climax is yet to come, given what is prophesied to happen in the book of Revelation, or that the climax happened on Calvary when Jesus died for all of our sins,

to all of us who believe, or when Jesus conquered death, metaphysically speaking, when He rose from the dead on the third day, what we find in all things considered is that the same messages that Moses was speaking to the Israelites back then is the same messages Jesus and the Apostles were preaching in the New Testament. What messages would that be, you may ask? I'm glad you asked. I've already mentioned them. First off, the God of the Psalmist said "But You are the same, and Your years will have no end." He is the same God that the writer of Hebrews said, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Then the God that said to the Israelites, "the Lord Himself is God; there is none other besides Him", is the same God Who says to us, His people in the New Covenant, "there is no other God but one (I Corinthians 8:4) and that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:1-3). The God who told the Israelites, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength," is the same God Who spoke through Jesus saying the greatest commandment of God is "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." The God Who said to the Israelites, "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has

chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth", is the same God Who says to us today in I Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." The God Who said to the Israelites, "For I am the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy for I am holy" is the same God who says to us in I Peter 1:16, "Be holy, as He is holy." The God Who said to the Israelites, "I am the Lord who sanctifies you", is the same God who says in Jude 1:1, "To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ" and in I Corinthians 1:30-31 "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." The God Who spoke to the Israelites 1000s of years ago, is the same God Who speaks to us through His Word today. Moses spoke of what was hoped for, from the beginning to the end, in Deuteronomy 18:18-19 "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him." The God who said to the Israelites, "'I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brings

you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" is the same God Who says today in Matthew 11:28-29 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." The God Who led the Israelites by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day is the same God Who places His Spirit in us to where His Word says in Romans 8:14-17, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." He is the same God Who says to us today, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."

What is different today versus the time of the Israelites in the Old Testament is that the Mystery has now been revealed. The mystery of our righteousness and redemption that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. As



Oswald Chambers puts it in My Utmost For His Highest,

"The purity which God demands is impossible unless I can be remade within, and that is what Jesus has undertaken to do by His Redemption. No man can make himself pure by obeying laws. Jesus Christ does not give us rules and regulations; His teachings are truths that can only be interpreted by the disposition that HE puts in. The great marvel of Jesus Christ's salvation is that He alters heredity. He does not alter human nature; He alters its mainspring.

It becomes Him that flows through us!

No longer do we sacrifice animals and walk in the spirit of the law for "there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2). We have all been grafted into the vine that was once reserved for the people of Israel, all those who will call on the name of the Lord, for "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The veil has been lifted and it is now known of whom we are redeemed, who has delivered us out of the darkness and into His marvelous light, who now calls us to walk in the newness of life that we now have in Christ Jesus our Lord;

to all who will believe!

In Closing, Andrew Murray, in Abide in Christ said this,

"Why is it that, when we possess a Savior whose love and power are infinite, we are so often filled with fear and despondency? We are wearied and faint in our minds, because we do not look steadfastly unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, Who is set down at the right hand of God-unto Him whose omnipotence embraces both heaven and earth, Who is strong and mighty in His feeble saints...

Blessed life! it is ours, for Jesus is ours. Blessed life! We have the possession within us in its hidden power, and we have the prospect before us in its fullest glory. May our daily lives be the bright and blessed proof that the hidden power dwells within, preparing us for the glory to be revealed. May our abiding in Christ the Glorified One be our power to live to the glory of the Father, our fitness to share to the glory of the Son.

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