

Remember God

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I would like to open my message with a hypothetical question. What if you could remove yourself from this present earthly realm, this finite time in space that we live in? What if you could go way back before the beginning of time, before anything existed?

There is a radio announcer here in Portland that uses that term 'way back.' In the cartoon "Rocky and Bullwinkle," a guy named Peabody and Sherman would go back in time to historical events, and they called it the 'way back' machine that took them back.

But, what if you could go all of the way back to the beginning of time, and be a spectator on the sidelines? Back so far in time that you would only see the existence of the two great beings, which composed the God family. God the Father, and the other person of the God family, who later became the creator God of the Old Testament, the one referred to as YHVH, and the one who later became Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

You would be seeing things, in my hypothetical, which your human eyes would normally not be able to see. You would see the glory that these two great God beings shared, something which you had nothing to compare to, the closest thing you could compare it with from your own experience would be perhaps an atom bomb going off, or a nuclear reaction, or the brightness of the sun in its fullness, which you could not even look at with your own human eyes for more than a second.

Well, in my hypothetical, you would be a spectator having a front row seat on the sidelines of these great events that are about to come into being. You would have the ability to observe these two great God beings over eons of time, as they planned to implement an idea that They conceived over time, to add to themselves more God beings of Their own kind.

You would have been amazed beyond words, at how these two worked together in perfect unity and perfect harmony, with oneness of mind, with total outgoing concern for each other, as they carefully and meticulously thought out every detail of Their plan in advance, with total unity of purpose the likes of which is unheard of in the human experience.

You would have seen the beginning stages of this great plan of creation come into being with the creation of angelic beings. And then, over time, you would eventually have seen the creation of the universe!

And while seeing this come into being, you would be shouting for joy, just as the angelic sons of God shouted for joy at this incredible feat of creation which God was able to do because of His great knowledge and His great ability. Because there is simply none other like Him.

Even with having witnessed this firsthand with all of these spectacular events; no doubt, it would leave you with memories that would inspire you for the rest of your lifetime.

Or would it really? I say this, because of what we read of our Israelite ancestors' experiences in the wilderness.

I Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,

I Corinthians 10:6 Now these things became our examples...

The experiences that the children of Israel went through, in the wilderness, were examples recorded for our time today. The Israelites in the wilderness, witnessed firsthand spectacular miracles, one after another in God's rescuing them from slavery, and bringing them through the wilderness. Yet, they still had serious problems believing in, and trusting God.

Since all of those events were recorded as examples for us today, of all of the things that we take with us after keeping these seven Days of Unleavened Bread, there is one very important thing, perhaps the most important that we need to take with us as we return to our everyday lives.

It is something that sounds very obvious and so simple, yet it is something important enough that it is worthy of mention, and it can be summed up in two words: Remember God. It does seem so obvious, and our reaction might be, "Of course, why would we not remember God?"

Well, God Himself felt it was important enough to remind ancient Israel.

Deuteronomy 6:12 Then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Most all of us know Church of God brethren, or former brethren, who have either lost some of the truth, or have accepted different slants on the true doctrine. Or, they have completely forgotten the truth, and have gone back to the world. We need to keep in mind that we all have targets on our backs, and our adversary will not relent, and will constantly try to wear us down.

The name of one of the tribes of Israel, Manasseh (men-ash-sheh), actually means 'causing to forget.' And, of course, for the most part, we believe that Manasseh is the modern day United States, and makes up the majority of us here.

God gave us His annual Holy Days as memorials, reminders of His plan of creation for mankind.

I Corinthians 11:24-25 And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

The word 'memorial' is tied to the word memory. The definition from *Merriam Webster Online Dictionary* is, "Something that keeps remembrance alive; something (such as a speech or ceremony) that commemorates." As we keep the annual Holy Days, the weekly Sabbath, His commandments, and as we take in His words and instructions for living our daily lives, we take on the character of God.

However, as long as we are human, we still have the tendency to be forgetful in some way. The

mind is like a recorder that continually records memories throughout our lifetime. How often have you had a memory of a previous life experience come to mind triggered by anything from a fragrance, or a sight, or a sound, or perhaps a person who reminds you of a relative, or an acquaintance, from your past?

Yet, how easy it is to forget something minor, and how often have we completely forgotten something more important. I am always in a state of awe as how I will run to the store to buy one thing, and while in there three things pop in my mind, I need to get this, this and this. I leave the store, driving all the way home, and did not get the thing that I went for. It is just the nature of us.

All the more reason it is just as easy to forget something that is even more important, and on a larger scale. We need to take heed to the biblical admonition to beware of forgetting God.

An interesting comparison of memory, in common everyday technology, is the memory in your computer. It is dependant upon the integrity of the data bits that make up the software, or anything that you are storing whether it is a document on your computer; maybe it is a music file on your MP3 player, or your computer. If data becomes corrupt, then it becomes unusable, which means you lose the information, and/or perhaps the operating system or applications.

The same would be true for the integrity of God's Word, the knowledge and the understanding of His truth in our minds. It would thwart God's plans for us, if His truth became corrupt in our memory, or in our mind, and we ended up going in a different direction, or arriving at different conclusions than He intended for us. Or, if we lost His truth entirely, which would be the equivalent of spiritual amnesia.

From the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, the word "amnesia" is: A loss of memory due to a brain injury, shock, fatigue, depression, or illness; a gap in one's memory; a selective overlooking or ignoring of events or acts that are not favorable, or useful, to ones purpose or position.

This is a scary thing to think about in spiritual terms.

Let us look at the things that get in the way of us remembering God. Here are just a few:

THE CARES AND CONCERNS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Matthew 13:3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow.

Matthew 13:7 "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.

Matthew 13:22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

The original Greek for 'choke' is *sumpnigo* (soom-pnee'-go) and it means: To strangle completely; or literally to drown; also, to crowd. I am sure that we can all identify with having so many things on our plate to deal with, in just the living of our everyday lives, that God can easily get pushed into the background.

We all have our share of trials and troubles. Worry is another thing that can actually cause God to be pushed out of the picture.

Matthew 6:25-27 Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

Matthew 6:33-34 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

I like the *New Living Translation* for verse 34:

Matthew 6:34 (New Living Translation) So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Also, another thing, the world has no end of things that can look very tempting. This is a direct tie-in, as there are times when we may think that we have a handle on it, but it could be that Satan has conjured up something just tailor-made for us. We see this in the example of our Israelite ancestors, in the wilderness, yearning to return to Egypt. They were being very selective with their memories, forgetting that they were slaves. We need to be able to see through the facade of deception, to see which the right way.

Romans 6:20-22 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

It is interesting because we are either going to be slaves to the world, or we are going to be slaves of God—there is no middle ground. I think that is an important thing to make careful note of.

I think it is also important to remember that there is a way of escape in any temptation, as we know God promises that there is.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

The way of escape for the Israelites in Egypt, their first big test of faith, was right in front of their eyes, yet they lacked the vision to see where God was going to take them. That may be something to keep in mind for all of us.

I will digress for a moment.

How often do we remember that we are the salt of the earth?

Matthew 5:13-16 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

There are two other scriptures that I feel that this is directly tied to.

I Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.

I, for one, can identify with the being a peculiar person. I do not doubt that God has called me for whatever reason He had.

I Corinthians 1:26-29 For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: That no flesh should glory in His presence.

It is reassuring to be reminded of how important we are to God. But, how often do we associate being "*the salt of the earth*" with Matthew 24?

Matthew 24:21-22 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

That puts quite a bit of responsibility on those of us who are called the salt of the earth, not to lose our savor. How much is on the line for that?

Also, how often do we remember that our calling is the opportunity of a lifetime? More so, it is the opportunity of an eternity.

Matthew 13:16-17 But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Do we truly appreciate the value of what God has given us, and the miracle that He has performed in opening our minds to His truth?

King David, a man after God's own heart, was very much aware of how precious, and how rare it is, to have the knowledge of God's truth. He also recognized the weakness of his own human nature, and how important it was to hang on to what God had given him.

Psalm 119:5 Oh, that my ways were directed To keep Your statutes!

Psalm 119:18-19 Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law. I *am* a stranger in the earth; do not hide Your commandments from me.

Psalm 119:43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for I have hoped in Your ordinances.

And how often do we remember that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a child?

Matthew 18:3-4 Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Do we have that childlike enthusiasm for learning God's truth in the way that a child soaks up like a sponge what they are interested in? Also, do we have that innocent, unquestioning trust in God that a child would have?

In all of this, there is one truly unflinching steadfast resource. The most positive and dependable thing that we have available to us.

Referring back to an earlier scripture about the Israelites in the wilderness:

I Corinthians 10:4 And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

We have the rock solid example of our Savior to pattern our lives after, because He has never forgotten us. He was tempted in every way possible, yet He never lost His sense of purpose, all with us in mind.

In Matthew 4, after He had fasted for forty days and was hungrier than any of us has ever been, He never gave in. He did that for us. He remembered us, because that was the plan from the beginning.

He overcame Satan's temptation, by quoting God's word in Matthew 4: 4, *but He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

He was actually referring to Himself, the Word of God,

John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven.

As we conclude keeping these Days of Unleavened Bread, we need to continue to take in that living bread from heaven, daily. And with that in place, as part of our daily routine, I think that we will find it much easier to remember God.