

Who Shall Escape the Plagues?

WHO shall escape the plagues?

In the Seven Last Plagues "is filled up the wrath of God" (Rev. 15:1); the wrath of God falls upon those who worship the Beast and his Image; for it is written: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the Beast and his Image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation." Rev. 14:9, 10.

This Third Angel's Message is to keep men from the worship of the Beast and his Image, and so to save them from the wrath of God. And the way in which men escape the worship of the Beast and his Image, and so escape the Seven Last Plagues, is by keeping the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus; for the closing words of the Third Angel's Message are: "Here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12.

It is true that, in a sense, whatsoever is in the Bible is of the Commandments of God. Yet, in a particular sense, above all things else in the Bible *the Ten Commandments* are distinguished as the Commandments of God. These are especially singled out from all things else, upon which people are directed to fix their special attention.

Accordingly, thus it is written: "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; *especially* the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, . . . and the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even Ten Commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone." Deut. 4:9, 10, 12, 13.

When He had spoken the Ten Commandments,—these Ten Words,—He spoke no more: there was no more to be said. Accordingly, the conclusion of the whole matter, the sum of all that hath been heard is, "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Eccl. 12:13.

When the Lord spoke that day from the top of Sinai, *all* that He said *needed* to be said. And when He had spoken, all was said that *could* be said. Now the first words that were spoken that day are these:—

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Ex. 20:2.

This is the introduction, the preamble, to all the Commandments, the whole Law of God. It is as much a part of the Law of God as is any word that follows; for it is written: "God spake *all these words*." These words were a part, indeed the very beginning of the words that day spoken, when all was said that could be said, and when nothing was said that needed not to be said.

That law is spiritual: all that is in it or of it is spiritual. This preamble, equally with all the rest of the law that day spoken, is "holy, and just, and good." Rom. 7:12.

God is spirit. And this law, preface and all, being altogether of God, is therefore altogether spiritual; for "the law is spiritual." Rom. 7:14. Accordingly, the Egypt referred to is *spiritual* Egypt; and the bondage referred to is spiritual bondage; for the Scriptures deal definitely with a spiritual Egypt, as well as with a temporal Egypt. Rev. 11:8.

Spiritually, then, what is Egypt? Read this: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Heb. 11:24-26.

Here we have "affliction with the people of God" set over against "the pleasures of sin," and "the reproach of Christ" set over against "the treasures in Egypt;" thus:—

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| Affliction with the people of God. | Pleasures of sin. |
| Reproach of Christ. | Treasures in Egypt. |

This shows "affliction with the people of God," and "the reproach of Christ," to be synonymous; and "the pleasures of sin," and "the treasures in Egypt," to be likewise synonymous. It also plainly shows "sin" and "Egypt" to be synonymous. Spiritual Egypt, therefore, is *the realm of sin*. Therefore this beginning of the Law of God, as spoken by the Lord from heaven, simply says, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the realm and bondage of sin.

And by these holy words being placed at the very threshold of the keeping of the Commandments of God, it is signified to all people forever that in the keeping of the Commandments of God the first of all things is that the soul shall be delivered from the realm and bondage of sin. By this it is indicated that no man can keep the Commandments of God unless he is first delivered from the realm and the bondage of sin. And in these blessed words, God presents himself to every soul, as the perfect and free Deliverer of men from the realm and the bondage of sin, that they may keep His Commandments.

This is the teaching of the whole record of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, which was "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." While Israel was yet in Egypt, the word was spoken to Pharaoh: "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me." Ex. 4:22, 23. And when, by *great plagues* and mighty judgments, Pharaoh was brought to the point where he would let Israel go; and when, by His great power, God had delivered Israel, that they might serve Him,—then He said: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and so on, to the end of the Ten Commandments; and He added no more.

And all this happened unto them for an ensample: it is "written for our learning," and "for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

The deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage did not, even at that time, consist in deliverance from bodily oppression or temporal bondage. For even after the multitude of Israel had been delivered from that bodily oppression and temporal bondage, their hearts were yet in Egypt: in thought and in heart they time and again "turned back again into Egypt." Acts 7:39.

And while they were yet in Egypt, subject to Pharaoh, there were those who were the free children of God. Such was Moses, who "by faith . . . when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Heb. 11:24-26.

And there were others; because it was by faith that Moses, "when he was born, was hid three months of his parents;" for, by this faith, "they were not afraid of the king's commandment" that had gone forth, to slay all the male children of the children of Israel.

As, therefore, it is true that the children of Israel, though bodily and temporarily in Egypt, were yet free from Egypt, and were the children of God; and as the whole multitude, although taken bodily entirely out of Egypt, were not free, but, in heart, were still in Egypt,—this demonstrates that at that time, as well as now and forever, true deliverance from Egypt is spiritual; and that the real Egypt from which this true deliverance is found is spiritual Egypt.

Further consideration will have to be deferred until next week.

Alonzo T. Jones.

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