

The God who Ever-Is

By Bob Mendelsohn
Given at Greenlane Christian Centre
Auckland, New Zealand
4 April 2013

Greetings

As a missionary among the Jewish people for 34 years I'm keen to make sense of the Bible and sense of the messianic hope found in Y'shua for all people, both to the Jewish people and for all churches.

So today as I lead us in some biblical consideration, I hope you will find meaning and relationship with the Almighty, who ever-is, and ever-was, and ever-will be. May the Eternal One give you revelation as we hear this message.

Let me ask you anytime during this talk to fill out that involvement card you received as you came in, and you can be involved with us down the proverbial road.

Reporting time sheets

Asking a pastor to fill out reports seems a funny thing for religious people. After all, taking what looks like something from school or the business sector and imposing it into a religious worldview seems odd. Ask your rabbi or pastor to account for his work time with a clock in/ clock out timesheet—unusual, right? Or ask him “How many visits with congregants did you conduct?” or “How many funerals did you lead last week?” seems almost morose or odd anyway.

But in 2013, in many arenas of life, we want bang for our buck, we want good value from our investments, and as such we often think in these terms from those whom we hire to lead us.

Does he perform enough to warrant his salary? And why do these guys get so many days off?

The converse is there, isn't it? “Why should I donate to the synagogue? Why should I give that no-good, lazy rabbi money to do what anyone else could do given his especially easy time constraints?” Or we think that the rabbi or pastor at the church only works one day a week, and they should find other

employment if they want more remuneration. Most of you, to be fair, don't think that way, but some in the world do just that.

Last week of course, was Passover. We celebrated in Sydney together, you somewhere else, and I'm glad we were able to remember the blessed season celebrating the Redemption God provided us in our exiting Egypt some 3,500 years ago.

Four cups of wine

In the Seder on first night, we drank four cups of wine. And the tradition about that revolves around four verbs in the book of Sh'mot (Exodus chapter 6). God will 1) bring us out, 2) deliver us, 3) redeem us, and 4) bring us to the Land of Israel. Celebrating God's actions in the time of Moses makes sense.

But in 2013, many people think God is less involved, not concerned about us, not concerned about the planet. They think that if there is a God, that he is incompetent or without interest in the messes on our planet. They almost demand to see His timesheet, and ask to see His log of activity in these

days. Or as the moderns say, “What have you done for me lately?”

In light of this, let me read from the Bible, in this Passover section, and see if it has anything to say to us as 21st century people.

Let’s read that section in Exodus 6, where those verbs are found, and I want to show you what ELSE God did.

“Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the LORD יהוה אני, and I will bring you out הוצאתי from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver הצלתי you from their bondage. I will also redeem גאלתי you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ‘Then I will take you לקחתני for My people, and I will be יהייתי your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you הביאתי to the land which I swore

to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will

give נָתַתִּי it to you for a possession; I am the LORD

” אֲנִי יְהוָה (Exodus 6.6-8)

Looks like God did a lot more than those four *drinking* verbs.

Other verbs of God's actions

Verse 6 begins with a therefore לָכֵן . When you see a *therefore*, see what it's there for, let's look at chapter 6.1-5 to see the context.

“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand (under compulsion) he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.” God spoke further to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD; and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרַי but *by* My name, LORD,

יְהוָה I did not make Myself known to them. I also established

my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their sojourn in which they sojourned. Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant.” (Exodus 6.1-5)

Look how active God is in this chapter. And honestly if you can, look in the rest of the Bible, and you will see a God who although you might think Him distant, uninterested, and busy, He is very involved in His people’s lives and concerns. Listen to these verbs:

Verse 1: I will do

Verse 3: I appeared

Verse 4: I established covenant

Verse 5: I heard and finally...

I remembered my covenant

There is not a time in our relationship with the Almighty where He is uninvolved. He listens. He watches. He acts. He accomplishes. Look at the Passover verbs in Exodus 6 and see the brackets that

frame His other active verbs. Verse 6 says “I am the Lord” and verse 8 says “I am the Lord.” In fact 164 times in the Tenach we read that phrase. There by the way, is no verb in that sentence. It’s God who is Being. It’s God who is always. He was. He is. He will be. There is not a time when God wasn’t and there will never be a time when God isn’t. The God who was, is. The God who is, was and will be. Get it? No wonder some call Him “The Eternal God.”

And it’s because God is, that we can look to Him. He is always on the clock. He is ever working.

But you say, I didn’t find Him when my dad died. My sister had cancer and I asked Him to help and He didn’t. He didn’t fix my situations. He didn’t resolve things as I wished.

This may be a tough one for you to hear, but God is not your servant. God has His own agenda, His own will, His own purposes, and those will be fulfilled.

Isa. 14.27 reads, “*For* the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate *it*? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?” There’s

that Exodus phrase of the *Yad Netuya*, the outstretched hand of God reaching to do what He wills. Nothing can stop it. Not even you. Not even your prayers or plans. He will do what He wills.

Most of us have problem with God when He waits too long. We expect His participation; we demand it. Then He seems silent, even aloof, and a father who has gone walkabout, and we are unhappy. Where is the God with outstretched arm and mighty hand?

This is a common criticism of those agnostics and atheists who knock back our beliefs. They say if God does exist and if He really is powerful, then He must not care about us, because so much evil happens in this dark world. Their argument is that if God does exist and SINCE HE DOES NOT ACT, then he must be impotent or not exist at all.

Their problem is the same as ours, when we don't really process this well. We don't see the God behind the actions. We don't see God because we are

too focused on ourselves and our situations. What is God up to anyway? And how shall we respond?

What God is up to? He created the world. He evicted our First Parents after instructing them clearly and they failed. He initiated a method of Redemption, which allows us to get back into relationship with Him, through the blood of lambs back in the Exodus and through the Blood of the Lamb of God in Jerusalem some 1500 years later. All of these things are designed for one reason: God is about the business of making His name and reputation big. And anything that gets in the way of that has to be removed. He wants His glory to be known.

One of my favorite authors and thinkers is American John Piper. Piper's most famous quote is

“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.” So the author was asked, “**What is God's glory?**” He answered,

“Wow. That's a good question, because we talk about it endlessly, don't we? And we should know what we're talking about. And yet it is very difficult to define. I'll make a stab at it.

The reason it is so important is because in the Bible I don't know of any truth that is more fundamentally pervasive than God's zeal to be glorified, which means his zeal for us so to think, so to feel, and so to act as to make him look as glorious as he is. We don't add to his glory.

So we want to make God's glory shine. We want to make it visible. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your

Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). So the goal of my life should be to so live that when people know me well enough, they would say, "God is glorious!" Not "John is glorious," but "God is glorious!"

What is it? I believe the glory of God is the going public of his infinite worth. I define the holiness of God as the infinite value of God, the infinite intrinsic worth of God. And when that goes public in creation, the heavens are telling the glory of God, and human beings are manifesting his glory, because we're created in his image, and we trust his promises so that we make him look gloriously trustworthy.

The public display of the infinite beauty and worth of God is what I mean by "glory,""

(End of quote)

Friends in Auckland, God is glorified in us when we are satisfied in Him, Piper says, and that means when you are resting in His capacity and in His accomplishments.

King David and King Solomon wrote a lot about satisfaction. Solomon said it this negative way in Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, nor are the eyes of man ever satisfied." Prov. 27.20 A longing, and a compulsion, and never satisfied. How unhappy are all those who ever hunger and never eat. And again in "The leech has two daughters, "Give," "Give." There are three things that will not be satisfied, Four that will not say, "Enough": Sheol, and the barren womb,

Earth that is never satisfied with water, and fire that never says, “Enough.” Prov. 30.15-16 There is a craving and it is unyielding. Always wanting more.

In his day, John D. Rockefeller was one of the richest men in the world. For all practical purposes, his money was virtually limitless, a sort of Bill Gates in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Once, an interviewer asked him, “**How much money is enough?**”

Rockefeller replied, “Just a little bit more!”

King David had already given us the comfort of what is titled *satisfaction* but is really the more biblical idea of *contentment* with these words, “How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You To dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple.”

Psa. 65.4 And again “My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth offers praises with joyful lips.” Psa. 63.5 But my favorite is the comment in Psalm 17: “As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied when I awake with your likeness.” Psa. 17.15

We shall be satisfied when we wake up and look like Messiah. Anything less than that is ...less than that. We long to change; we long to have a new life. We are not going to be smug about how far we’ve come. Contentment is another thing. We should be content with our lot in life, with our God, and with our lives, as He has assigned us. But satisfied? Only when we get to be complete. The problem comes when we take what we have as enough, as Hosea the prophet warned, “As *they had* their pasture, they became

satisfied, and being satisfied, their heart became proud; therefore they forgot Me.” Hos. 13.6

End of the day, the goal of God in our lives is to love Him and love others with whole hearts. And the only way that’s going to happen is if we remember God, the God who acts and never fails.

King David’s words in Psalm 65 are still ringing in my ears, ““How blessed is the one whom you choose and bring near *to you* to dwell in your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of your house,”

How did David do this? He saw God as ever-being. He was struck by the Presence of God, in Hebrew, the panim Adonai (the face of the Lord), and he remembered the Almighty.

We do it today in gatherings like here at Greenlane tonight. We remember the Lord. We do it in Passover like we did last night, or last week, in Seders worldwide, in remembering what God did. We read it in the Bible; we hear it sung and watch the movies of God's actions in history and we rejoice. And we are content. We are never satisfied because we know we are not done. Not yet. But we will be.

And we will be, because He ever is. Because of God's presence and because of His promises, we will be changed into His likeness and we will be like Him one day. Hallelujah!

And the goal of our gathering tonight, is to continue to live for His glory, to bring others to that glory, and to make the world a more glorious place.

Maybe that's why I do what I do for a living, in sharing the good news of Messiah Y'shua with our Jewish people. The ever-Is God has come to us, and we must hear, we must believe, we must live in the name of Y'shua, the Eternal one.

If you are a believer in Y'shua, you are here and I need you to join me in evangelism. That is, in bringing the good message of messiah to our Jewish people, by giving financially and by praying with us. If you are not yet a believer, I hope you will fill out this card and extend to us the privilege to speak to you again.

Everyone fill out this card and drop it into the offering we will receive in a moment. Please pray for us in Sydney and New York, in Israel and South Africa. All around the globe, to make a difference in the lives and hopes of Jewish people. They will be satisfied

when they wake up in the likeness, the image of the Son of God. That's our hope, amen? That's our work, amen? It's His presence, which brings this all about. And our rejoicing in being in His presence which gives us eternity, today and when He comes, and into the ages of the ages.

Shalom!