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## “THE MEMORY OF GOD”

### Psalm 103:14

***“For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”***

God is not merely a Force or Power; not “Mother Nature,” or some other vague, abstract concept. God is a Person. He has a mind. His mental capacity is beyond human comprehension.

The human brain is a marvelous mechanism. However, our ability to remember has its limitations and failures. We humans can forget. Forgetfulness has been called “Sometime’s Disease” – that is, you can remember some of the information some of the time.

**Illust.** A man and his wife were going on vacation. As they were checking their many bags at the airport, the husband said to his wife, “I wish we would have brought the radio.” The wife responded, “Why? We already have half a dozen bags.” “I know,” replied the husband, “but our plane tickets are on top of the radio.”

**Illust.** A husband told his wife that he believed in the “hereafter.” She asked him how he had come to that conviction and he replied, “Because, every time I go into a room I wonder, ‘what am I here after?’”

Some people, however, have had an amazing ability to remember:

- It is said that Montezuma, the monarch of the Aztec Mexican Empire knew the name of every man and his army.
- The great musician, Toscanini, had a serious eyesight problem. He memorized every note in every musical piece that he played or conducted.
- It was said of Themistocles, of Greece, that he could name all 20,000 citizens of ancient Athens.
- There are memory experts today who put their memory on display and demonstrate their ability in public forums by naming the persons in their audience.
- Others have memorized entire telephone books.

While we may be amazed at the power of recall of some humans, at our best our memories store only a fraction of what transpires in time, while God’s memory preserves everything that has occurred in eternity! The memory of the infinite God is unlimited.

To say that God has a good memory is quite an understatement. Many Scriptures refer to “The mind of the Lord.” Some are: Leviticus 24:12, Romans 8:27, 11:34, I Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5.

The phrase, “*God remembered*” occurs many times in Scripture. Notice some of these times:

## GOD REMEMBERS IN TIMES OF DANGER

Whenever tragedy strikes a devastating blow to us humans, we look frantically for some sign that God still remembers us. In times of lingering illnesses, in the midst of heartache, loss and disappointment, disparaging individuals wonder, "Has God forgotten?" In time like these, it is comforting to know that God remembers us.

The Scriptures record times when individuals were in danger and God remembered.

### God Remembered Noah.

*"Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided."* (Genesis 8:1)

*"Then God remembered Noah...."* It is not as if God had forgotten Noah and suddenly remember-ed him. This is human terminology conveying to us that the God who knows all things, all the time, determined at a point in time to begin to dry the earth and prepare for the exit of all life from the ark.

On a bulky boat in the midst of a world-wide flood, there was a man, his wife, their three sons and their wives. They were the only humans in the whole wide world! Did you ever wonder if any of them thought, during the long period of their confinement, "Did God forget us?"

There are many of God's people who are shut away in confinement in medical facilities, prisons and repressive regimes who may think that God has forgotten them. Jesus reminds us that the Father cares. He said, *"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."* (Matt. 10:29-31)

Afterward, God made a covenant with Noah that was dependent upon His memory: *"And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."* (Gen.9:15) We can be sure that God remembers to remember us as well!

### God Remembered Abraham.

*"And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt."* (Genesis 19:29)

Abraham's nephew, Lot, was a "tag along." He was a constant thorn in the side of Abraham. Lot chose to live in the sin-saturated city of Sodom. Lot lost a lot when Lot bought a lot in Sodom! When God prepared to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, He first delivered Lot out of harm's way.

Notice that Scripture says, *"God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow...."* Lot owed Abraham big time! It was because of Abraham's friendship with God -

he is called *“the friend of God”* - (II Chron. 20:7; James 2:23) that Lot was spared. When we read *“that God remembered Abraham”* we are not to think that God had forgotten Lot. What the verse is conveying to us is this: for Lot’s uncle Abraham’s sake, God delivered Lot.

Both Noah and Abraham constantly remembered God in the days before danger came. Then God remembered them during the days of danger. Many of God’s people expect to be remembered and delivered in moments of sudden need, but will not daily seek God’s guidance and help when all is well. Not that we earn God’s protection, for He is the God of grace and mercy. However, in many instances, if we followed our Shepherd as we ought, we would not find ourselves in circumstances and situations where we need to make an emergency call heavenward!

Paul and Silas were in prison for doing the right thing. There is no evidence that they even gave a moment’s thought about hitting the panic button. Instead they *“sang praises to God.”* (Acts 16:25) They knew God had not forgotten them. Before daylight pierced their dungeon, God sent an earthquake that shook up the jailer and shook them out of prison!

God knew where they were and why they were there. And He knows where we are every waking or sleeping moment of our lives. We can take comfort in the truth that God remembers us in times of danger.

### **GOD REMEMBERS IN TIMES OF DESPAIR**

Two illustrations at this point will suffice:

#### **God Remembered Rachel.**

*“Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived and bore a son, and said, “God has taken away my reproach.” So she called his name Joseph.”* (Genesis 30:22-24)

Jacob had worked seven years for Rachel and was given her younger sister Leah instead. Then upon the promise that he would work seven more years for Laban, her father, he was given Rachel. The story is recorded in Genesis chapter 29.

Rachel was unable initially to bear children. In that day and culture that was considered to be a sign of divine disfavor with the individual. Consequently, Rachel was in a state of mental and emotional despair. She prayed, no doubt fervently and regularly, for a child and *“God listened to her and opened her womb.”* (Gen. 30:22)

*“Then God remembered Rachel....”* which is another way of saying that God heard Rachel’s prayer. It may sound trite, however, it is true that, *“Whenever we are in despair, God is always there!”* Many times God, who knows the dilemma we are in, seems to wait until we call upon Him before He intervenes.

#### **God Remembered Hannah.**

The prophet Samuel’s mother, Hannah, would have passionately abhorred the idea of any woman having an abortion. She was childless and despairing of her plight in life. Her

husband, Elkanah, no doubt shared her burden for he seems to have been a very caring man. He said to her, "*Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved?*" (I Samuel 1:8)

She sets a beautiful example for all of us - when in despair, cast your burden upon the Lord. And so we read: "*She was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish. Then she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maid-servant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life....."*" (I Samuel 1:10-11)

Her priest, Eli, was an incentive old man and when he saw her lips moving as she whispered a prayer, he jumped to the conclusion that she was inebriated (v.13) and sternly rebuked her saying: "*How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!*" (v.14)

Hannah's reply further indicates her despair for she replied, "*I am a woman of sorrowful spirit .... I have poured out my soul before the Lord.*" (v.15) Does it do any good to pray when in despair? The account records that "*The Lord remembered her. So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel.*" (I Samuel 1:19-20) The name "Samuel" means, "Heard of God."

When she took Samuel to dedicate him to the Lord she said the Eli the priest, "*For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition which I asked of him.*" (I Samuel 1:27) Does it pay to pray when in despair? Hannah would answer with a resounding, "yes!"

David said, and he would have surely known from experience: "*Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you.*" (Psalm 55:22) But we often struggle under our burdens until they become too heavy to bear before we finally, as a last recourse, cast our burden upon the Lord who has been walking right beside us all along, just waiting for us to acknowledge Him and relinquish our load to our Lord who "*knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.*" (Psalm 103:14) Yes, God remembers us in our times of despair and like Rachel and Jacob, Hannah and Elkanah comes to our aid.

## GOD REMEMBERS IN TIMES OF DECLINE

### God Remembered Israel.

You will recall the story of Joseph and how he was sold by his brothers and was taken to Egypt. That was the beginning of a long and painful experience in the history of the Jewish people. When a famine struck in Canaan, Joseph's father, Jacob, sent his sons to Egypt for food where they discovered that Joseph was second in authority to Pharaoh. Eventually father Jacob and his entire family move to Egypt and lived peaceably in the land of Goshen until another Pharaoh ascended to power and enslaved the Israelites.

To say that Israel was in a state of despair in their bondage is an incalculable understatement! They, no doubt, thought throughout those years in Egypt, that God had forgotten them. However, had they known God as they should have and could have known Him, they would have known that Jehovah is not forgetful!

It is recorded in the book of Exodus that, *“It happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.”* (Ex. 2:23-25)

This is the Abrahamic covenant recorded in Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21 and 17:1-22 and repeated to Isaac in Genesis 26:2-5 and to Jacob in Genesis 28:10-15 and 35:9-15. It promised them a land and through them universal blessing to the world. In general, the covenants of God with mankind are Divine contracts. He cannot and will not break them. What He has promised He will perform. After 490 years in Egypt, many of those years of groaning under the harsh taskmaster Pharaoh, God raised up a deliverer in the person of Moses.

In Exodus chapter 6. He repeats what He said in chapter 2 saying: *“I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 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. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.’”* (Exodus 6:5-8)

To fulfill His covenant He gave them seven actions that He would take:

"I will bring you out of Egypt" – v.6

"I will deliver you from slavery" – v.6

"I will redeem you" – v.6

"I will take you to be my people" – v.7

"I will be your God" – v.7

"I will bring you into the land" – v.8

*“I will give it to you for a possession.”* (v.8) That land is Canaan: *“I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan.”* (Exodus 6:4)

Many years later, in Isaiah chapter 49, a conversation is recorded between God and His people: *“But Zion said, ‘The LORD has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.’* (Isaiah 49:14) That is what “Zion” or the people of Jerusalem said to the Lord.

The Lord answers them saying: *“Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.”* (Isaiah 49:15-17)

God has remembered his people. Israel was not the best at remembering God. They would follow Him for a time, then turn away and follow other gods and forget the one true God. But

God remembered them! He is faithful. He remembers His covenants to keep them even through periods of drift and decline from God.

Do you think God has forgotten you? No! God never forgets to remember His people. Oh, that we would not to forget to remember Him every day and all the days of our lives!

### **GOD REMEMBERS IN TIMES OF DEVOTION**

God not only remembers us when in danger, despair and decline but He remembers us when we are devotedly obeying and following Him.

#### **God remembers Israel's early devotion.**

*"The word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the LORD, "I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of his harvest. All who ate of it incurred guilt; disaster came upon them, declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 2:1-3)*

Jeremiah contrasts the present unfriendly relations between Jehovah and His people with their past love. When the nation was young, God said that the people were devoted to Him. Now they were not.

Is our first love as fervent today as it was in days past? Jesus said to the church at Ephesus, *"I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place - unless you repent."* (Rev. 2:4-5) God notices our devotion or lack thereof and remembers.

#### **God remembers those who fear and honor Him.**

*"Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name." (Malachi 3:16)*

The expression *"a book of remembrance"* is used, only to picture vividly to our minds, that our faithfulness to the God and our relationships with fellow believers is not overlooked by Him. It is interesting that He listens to our conversations and remembers them! He also is not forgetful of those who *"meditate on His name."*

#### **God remembers our labors.**

*"For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister." (Hebrews 6:10)*

Even our smallest deeds are noted by God. Jesus said, *"Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."* (Mark 9:41) The day is coming when God will hold an Award Banquet and distribute the rewards that we have coming. In the last chapter in the Bible He reminds us:

*“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.” (Rev. 22:12)*

God knows whether the fruits of our labors are combustible like “*wood, hay or straw*” or whether non-combustible such as “*gold, silver or precious stones.*” (I Cor.3:12)

### **God remembers the righteous.**

*“A good man deals graciously and lends; he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he will never be shaken; the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance.” (Psalm 112:5-6)*

### **Conclusion**

God remembers to remember us in danger, despair, decline and devotion. He never forgets to remember! The antidote for danger, despair, decline or lack of devotion is to remember that God remembers!

However! There is another aspect to the memory of God: He promises to remember to forget! This is what He has said:

- Isaiah 43:25 - *“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.”*
- Hebrews 10:16-17 - *“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*

Praise the Lord that **“He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”**  
(Psalm 103:14)

**God will not forget us! – Do we forget Him?**