

## MEN OF DESTINY

– *JULY 27. – EXODUS 5:1-14. –*

**"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."  
– Matthew 5:4.**

NAPOLEON was styled a man of destiny, and surely many things connected with his experiences look as though the Lord's providence had something to do with him. This does not signify that he was a servant of God – far from it! But it does signify that Divine Wisdom has at all times been able to overrule the wrath of man to serve Him, and the remainder to restrain, thus to cause all things to work out the Divine purpose. Just what were the Divine purposes in Napoleon's day was far from clear, to even the saints of God then living. Indeed, we may say that that purpose is only partially understood by the Lord's people yet, although Bible Students can see with the eye of faith many ways in which the campaigns of Napoleon worked changes which undoubtedly have had much to do with the world's progress during the past century. To the ear of faith God declares, All my purposes shall be accomplished. "The word that is gone forth out of My mouth shall not return unto Me void; it shall accomplish that which I please, saith the Lord." – Isaiah 55:11.

The Pharaoh who reigned in Egypt at the time that God delivered the Israelites was also a man of destiny. We may be even more sure of this than in respect to Napoleon, because we have Divine assurance of the fact. "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee My power; and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth." (Exodus 9:16.) "St. Paul declared that God hardened this Pharaoh's heart that he should not let the people of Israel go free. He quotes the Divine Word: "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth." – Romans 9:17.

But God's people very seriously misunderstood the purport of these words when in the past they interpreted them to mean that God had created Pharaoh a wicked, hard-hearted man, and that subsequently, He still further hardened his heart. Not so! The Scriptures declare that all God's work is perfect. He never made an imperfect man. Adam was created in His Maker's likeness, His moral image. It is sin that has wrought the havoc, that has made man selfish and hard-hearted.

### **VIEWING THE OTHER SIDE**

This degeneracy has been passed down from parent to child along the lines of heredity, so that Pharaoh was by nature what his forefathers had made him, plus the action of his own volition. St. James declares, "God tempteth no man." (James 1:13.) There is nothing surer than that God has never directly used His mighty power to harden the heart of any human being. On the contrary, the Lord's providences, blessings, instructions and mercies are all intended to soften the heart, to take away its stoniness.

Bible Students now realize that the Apostle meant to tell us that from amongst the princes of Egypt God raised up to the throne of that kingdom a stubborn ruler, upon whose heart the mercies of God, in lifting one plague after another, would have only a hardening effect. And God raised this prince to the throne, so as to teach a great lesson respecting Divine tenderness, gentleness and forgiveness, and to illustrate the principle that God's greatest blessing to mankind – a free will – may be perverted by Satan to work his greatest injury.

Not all men of destiny are in opposition to God, however. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon and the Prophets, as well as Jesus and His Apostles and all His followers, are men of destiny – foreknown, "called of God." With these men of destiny the Lord equally operates, and similarly. Upon these His mercies, tenderness and gracious promises have a softening effect, making

them tender-hearted, forgiving, loving, more and more tending toward the development of the graces of the Holy Spirit – "meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love."

The destiny of these men is only partly worked out in the present life. They are permitted to pay a goodly price for the maintenance of their fellowship with God and inheritance of His promises. This costs them the friendship of the world, and oftentimes the loss of things highly esteemed amongst men, but it brings them the "Peace of God which passeth all understanding." And this peace and joy and comfort amidst tribulation are merely the foretaste of the riches of Divine grace which God has in reservation for these – in Messiah's Kingdom.

Such of these saints as lived before the Redeemer offered His sacrifice for sins are to have a better resurrection to earthly nature than the remainder of mankind will have, and to be "princes in all the earth" as the human representatives of the Messianic Kingdom for a thousand years. The men of destiny, from the time of the First Advent of our Lord down, are to have a still higher reward – a change of nature. The Captain of their Salvation, the Redeemer, has already reached His destiny of high exaltation, "far above angels, principalities and powers" – "at the right hand of God." – Philippians 2:9; Ephesians 1:20,21.

The loyal band following in His footsteps in the Narrow Way, seeking, according to the Divine promise, glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship in Messiah's Kingdom, are also men of destiny. But their destiny has not yet been attained. It is for them to wait until the full number of the elect Church shall have been called, chosen and proved faithful. Then their destiny will be reached by the glorious change of the First Resurrection; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." By their change they will be perfected in the Divine nature like their Master. (2 Peter 1:4.) O

glorious destiny! United, or married, to their Lord on the Heavenly plane, they will be His joint-heirs, a Royal Priesthood, to reign with Him a thousand years for the very purpose of blessing the world of mankind, for whose recovery Christ died. – Revelation 20:6.

Eventually, the destinies of those faithful before the Cross and those faithful since the Cross will be united in the Kingdom, as St. Paul declares. The Ancient Worthies, although proved, cannot be made perfect until the Church, of still higher destiny, shall have reached her glory. – Hebrews 11:38-40.

### **"I KNOW NOT THE LORD"**

In due course Moses, accompanied by Aaron, who acted as his mouthpiece, presented himself before Pharaoh and delivered the Divine message respecting the liberation of the Israelites. He was met with derision, Pharaoh declaring, "I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go." For a time it seemed as though the whole work would be a failure. It was a time of testing to the faith of not only Moses and Aaron, but all the Israelites. Pharaoh with great hardness of heart sent forth the edict that the tasks of the Israelites should be increased. The Israelites were doing forced labor, making bricks for public buildings. **[R5263 : page 191]** Apparently the bricks were made of unburned clay, and straw was provided for use as a binder. By the new rule, the Israelites must produce the same number of bricks per day, but must additionally scour the fields and hedges to gather some kind of stubble that would serve them as binders. Thus their tasks were practically doubled; and if not performed, they were beaten. Can we wonder that the Israelites of less faith murmured against Moses and Aaron and blamed them with the increase of their tasks! Nevertheless, by these very bitter experiences the people were all the more prepared to welcome the liberty subsequently offered them in God's providence.

And is this not true in respect to some of our spiritual liberties also? To some extent, at first, our efforts to please and obey God

bring greater trials of the flesh, greater oppositions from the Adversary. The Lord would strengthen our faith, and cause us to appreciate the privilege of being set free from the power of sin and [R5264 : page 191] death, and of being inducted into His family.

Confirmations of this very account of the tribulations of the Israelites were discovered by the French savant, M. E. Naville, in 1884. He found the city of Pithom, which the Israelites built. (Exodus 1:11.) In the British Museum in London and also in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, there are on exhibition some of these very bricks. In size they are about four inches to eight inches square and about two inches thick – unbaked, but very hard. Another traveler, describing the walls of Pithom, says: "The lower courses of these walls, and for some distance up, are made of well-made bricks, with chopped straw in them; but, higher up, the courses of brick are not so good. The straw is long and scanty, and the last courses have no straw at all, but have sedges, rushes, and water plants, which had been mingled with the mud in their making."

## **PREPARATIONS FOR CANAAN**

The statement of Exodus 1:14 is generally understood to imply that the Israelites were compelled to learn all the trades and occupations of their masters. They had been from Abraham's time a pastoral people, and by this very operation they were forced, as it were, into an industrial school in the foremost civilization of that day. It was a severe training, but a very useful one and undoubtedly a grand preparation for the necessities that lay before them. Shall we say that all this was of chance? Shall we not rather say that the Lord in His providence was dealing with them – humbling them, as well as qualifying them for the larger opportunities He intended to present?

Whoever can discern the Lord's leadings in connection with typical Israel of old should be fully prepared to note and appreciate Divine providences in his own case as a Spiritual Israelite. Nevertheless, few lessons are harder to learn than this one – that God supervises the affairs of all who are truly His. Nevertheless, it is well to remember that only those who have entered into covenant relationship with God, and who are maintaining that relationship, can apply to themselves the comforting words of St. Paul, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." – Romans 8:28. Our present experiences of disappointment, trials, vexations, oppositions, etc., are designed to work in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and to thus "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

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