

If Christians Really Believed God is Powerful They Would Relate to Him Differently

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Christians are so casual in the way they talk about the Power of God. They call Him, "Almighty" but they don't seem to understand what this implies. Do Christians acknowledge God as David acknowledged Him before the congregation of Israel, when he said,

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; this is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as Head over all"
(1 Chron 29:11)

The power of God is made apparent in many ways. Who instructs all the animals in the ways of life, and directs bees in the building of their combs, and tells birds how to construct their nests? We may call this *instinct*, but Who puts the *instinct* in their tiny brains?

There are many passages in the Bible that direct our thoughts to the theme of creation. David again, in Psalm 147:4,5 says,

"He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names.
Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite."

Or we could consider the greatness of God's power in sustaining His creation; in supplying it with food day in and day out. The most outstanding example of this was in His providing the Israelites with manna from heaven over a period of forty years while they wandered in the wilderness. If the manna had fallen every day, it would have been miraculous enough, though some might have attempted to explain it away as being a peculiar phenomenon of nature; but for it to fall for six days, and miss every seventh day, and for a double portion to be made available every sixth day to make up for the lack on the seventh day, is something that cannot possibly be accounted for except as a demonstration of the mighty power of God (Ex 16:11-36).

Or we might consider God's directive power in the universe- how He guides the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars on their various paths, so that day regularly follows day, and the seasons succeed each other in consistent

sequence, and eclipses of heavenly bodies can be foretold many, many years in advance with extreme accuracy.

These are all what we may perhaps term general indications or evidences of God's power; but in the Scriptures we have more specific demonstrations, and it is to these that we should turn our attention. They are brought to our understanding by Paul, and the first of these, in point of time, is God's dealings with Pharaoh, referred to in Romans 9:17:

“For this selfsame thing I rouse you up, so that I should be displaying in you My power, and so My name should be published in the entire earth.”
Romans 9:17

Paul is, of course, quoting from Exodus 9:16. You remember the circumstances of the time. The Israelites, whose forbears had entered Egypt with Jacob because of a famine in Canaan, had lived there in comparative comfort until there had been a change in the dynasty of the ruling Pharaohs. As the Scripture puts it, a new king had arisen who knew not Joseph, and he began to oppress the Israelites most severely indeed. This oppression continued for quite a while until Moses was appointed by God to deliver His people from Pharaoh's successor. Moses and his brother, Aaron, presented themselves several times before the new monarch and demanded in the name of the Lord the release of the captive people. But again and again Pharaoh refused to let them go.

“Who is the Lord,” he asked in this arrogance, “that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the lord, neither will I let Israel go” (Ex 5:2).

It was this haughty question of Pharaoh that was answered by the succession of plagues that God sent upon Egypt. In the deliverance that followed the plagues, the host of Pharaoh was engulfed in the waters of the sea, while the Israelites passed through onto dry land, the waters being held back on either side like walls to allow them to pass through.

Thus the power of God was demonstrated in a way that was to be remembered by Israel for all generations to come. On numerous occasions, we find this deliverance from Egypt mentioned in the Old Testament. It is the supreme example in ancient times of God's power.

But what did this deliverance really signify? Was it a case of God pitting His strength against that of a man? Surely not, for Isaiah tells us that *whole nations* are as mere specks of dust in the scales as far as God is concerned. No, it was not God versus man, but *God versus Pharaoh and everything that Pharaoh stood*

for. Pharaoh, as head of a nation that desired the subjugation of God's own people, was Satan's tool in the Adversary's attempt to thwart the purpose of God.

Throughout the Scriptures we find that, whenever God makes a move that would seem to reveal His intentions, the Adversary is at hand with attempts to upset it. When God created Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden, Satan was quickly on the scene in the guise of a serpent. When God indicated His choice of David as Israel's king, the Adversary confronted him with a giant, Goliath, in an obvious attempt to destroy the monarchy.

When the Messiah was actually born in Bethlehem, Satan through Herod attempted to massacre Him, but was thwarted through Joseph and Mary being warned by God in a dream and fleeing into Egypt. We could find other instances of the Adversary's intervention; it is not in his nature to be idle or to stand by and let God's purposes proceed unopposed. He was created an Adversary.

And here, in Egypt, he was undoubtedly the force behind Pharaoh in his many attempts to suppress the Israelites. Who but Satan would inspire Pharaoh to issue an edict that all the male children should be killed as soon as they were born? Who but Satan would inspire his successor to increase the burdens of the enslaved nation, to expect them to make bricks without straw, and to appoint taskmasters to see that their task did not diminish, and all this because Moses had approached Pharaoh in the name of the Lord?

This was a deliverance of God's people, not just from Pharaoh, but from all the forces of evil that were ranged behind Pharaoh at that time, and which undoubtedly sought the destruction of Israel as God's people. As a rescue operation, it became the standard of God's power to save His own, and as such it is mentioned over and over again in the sacred records concerning Israel. For that nation it contains an assurance for the future. Though Israel might be persecuted to the limit, she could not be exterminated; the bush might burn with a fierce flame, but it would not be consumed.

But surely there is still more behind the matter than this. If all that was at stake was the deliverance of God's people, why the succession of plagues? It was because the Egyptians worshipped a multitude of false gods and regarded all kinds of things as sacred. Each of the plagues attacked one or more of their gods and proved that the God of Moses was superior to them all!

The things that the Egyptians worshipped became an abomination to them. The idol river, the Nile, was turned into blood in the first plague and became abhorrent. The goddess Hekt, with the head of a frog, could not prevent swarms of these creatures invading the homes; the sacred scarab could not stop the invasion of beetles or flies; Ra, the sun-god, could not dispel the darkness that

could be felt. Apis, the sacred bull, could not protect his species from the murrain. Not one of the gods of Egypt -- not all the gods combined -- could save the country's firstborns. When God pronounced the destruction of Egypt's firstborns, He said, "Again ALL the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment. I am the Lord.:" Ye He could save all the firstborns of Israel, and also deliver His own firstborn, the nation itself, for He spoke of Israel as "My son, even My firstborn" (Ex 4:22).

Pharaoh at this time was the earthly representative of all false worship; the supporter of every type of alien god; the willing tool of Satan in his antagonism to the worship of the one true God. He was the example of that type of which Paul speaks in Romans 1, who would change the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of a corruptible human being and flying creatures (such as scarabs) and quadrupeds (sacred bulls) and reptiles (frogs and serpents).

It does not matter what people may set up in place of the One true God, whether they be actual idols, or abstract images like wealth, ambition, social prominence and the like; they, in His own due time will be rendered as impotent, and will be seen to be as impotent as were the many gods of Egypt.

The true position is as stated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6:

"We are aware that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God except One. For even if so be that there are those being termed gods, whether in heaven or on earth, even as there are many gods and many lords, nevertheless for us there is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is, and we through Him."

The Might of His Strength

The deliverance of Israel from Egypt in the Old Testament was the release of God's people from outside oppression; the deliverance accomplished at Calvary in the New Testament was the liberating of all humanity from the oppression of sin within themselves.

The Old Testament is the **Physical deliverance** of the nation of Israel (who were NOT "Jews" -- they were a "mixed multitude" - Ex 12:38) from the Egyptians (pagan worshipers of many gods) -- the New Testament is the **Spiritual deliverance** of ALL mankind from sin!

The third great deliverance brought to our notice by Paul is that of the Lord Jesus from the dead. This stupendous act completely vindicates God in all His doings demonstrates His absolute supremacy over every force in the universe, and ensures the successful culmination of His purpose.

In Ephesians 1:20, Paul, after having spoken of the transcendent greatness of God's power for us who are believing, tells us that it is "in accord with the might of His strength, which is operative in the Christ, rousing Him from among the dead..."

Rousing Christ from among the dead! After the crucifixion, Christ did not remain in the tomb forever, He was roused from among the dead. Was this a special demonstration of God's power? If so, in what way? Jesus Himself had done that several times in the restoring of life to a dead person.

There is something more in the rousing of Christ from among the dead than there was in, say, the awaking of Lazarus. Lazarus died again, but we are informed that Christ dies no longer' He died to Sin once for all time (Rom 6:9,10). Furthermore, the rousing of Christ from the dead means the awakening of everyone else who has ever passed into death, and not only the awakening, but the ultimate vivification. All, like Christ, must be placed ultimately beyond the power of death.

"For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall ALL be vivified" (made alive forever) (1 Cor 15:22).

The rousing of Christ from the dead leads to all the consequences mentioned in 1 Cor 15:20-28, verses that are so familiar to us, and which end with death itself being abolished, and God being ALL in all. The resurrection of Christ gives God's purpose an impetus that is not expended until the whole is brought to its final consummation. The resurrection of Christ means the deliverance of the whole human race from the bondage of the tomb. This is implied in the term, "Firstborn from among the dead" (Col 1:18). If the term, "Firstborn of every creature" (Col 1:15), covers all who have ever come into being, then the term, "Firstborn from among the dead," includes all who have ever passed into death. And if the powers that have brought forth the universe were placed in Christ at the beginning, then all the powers necessary to bring forth the dead were placed in Him when He became Firstborn from among the dead.

This is a tremendous manifestation of God's power, but there is more. A guard of Roman soldiers was placed around the tomb of Jesus in order to prevent the body from being removed. But the guard quaked at the appearance of the angel of the Lord. The men were powerless in the presence of Divine power.

But the human guard that Pilate provided would be puny in the extreme in comparison with the guard that Satan would set over that tomb. Knowing, as he would know, that God's whole purpose demanded the resurrection of Christ – that it would utterly fail if Christ were not raised – knowing, too, that Jesus had foretold His own resurrection – can you believe that Satan would not assemble every force he could muster to prevent God's power from being exercised? Would the Adversary cease to be an Adversary at this critical point, and having apparently succeeded in destroying Jesus, stand aside and tamely watch while He was aroused from the dead? Experience and history both show that Satan opposes God at every point, and the forces of opposition concentrated around that tomb must have been almost overwhelming.

Jesus was not only resurrected from the dead, but He was exalted above *every* power that might raise itself in opposition. Here is displayed the real might of God's strength, in that He resurrects Christ from among the dead, and Christ is seated "at God's right hand among the heavens, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in the eon coming: and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia (the called ones) which is His body, the complement of the One Who will be all in all" (Eph 1:20-23)

Or, as it is written in Philippians,

"Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name (character) of Jesus **every knee will bow**, in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth, and every tongue will be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord – **to the glory of God the Father.**" Phil 2:9-11

If the "bowing" will bring "glory to God the Father" it will NOT be a "forced" bowing. It means that everyone accepts Jesus Christ as their Savior!

Or, as it is written in Colossians,

"And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia (the called ones) Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first, for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him to reconcile ALL to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens" (that includes Satan and the evil angels) (Col. 1:18-20).

In light of the later revelation of the prison letters of Paul, the passage in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 becomes even more glorious. It shows us that the impetus given to God's purpose in the resurrection of Christ from among the dead does

not stop until all others are vivified in Him (made alive forever)' until ALL enemies are placed under Christ's feet; until the last enemy, death itself, is abolished; until ALL in the universe are made subject to Jesus Christ; until Jesus Himself has handed over all sovereign power to the Father, and God has become ALL in ALL!

The resurrection of Christ from among the dead sets in motion a chain of happenings that carry on and on and do not stop, until God's purpose is fully consummated: until EVERYONE is saved!

What a demonstration of power! The might of God's strength, that operated in Christ, resurrecting Him from among the dead, was sufficient to exalt Him to the highest pinnacle in the universe, thus ensuring that ALL His enemies would be made subject to Him - - that every opposing power would be made subordinate to Him – and that God's purpose would be fulfilled in Him in all its grandeur.

We also are the recipients of the blessing of God's power

In Romans, Paul writes,

“Now if the Spirit of Him who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its home in you, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also be vivifying your mortal bodies because of His Spirit making its home in you.” Romans 8:11

God's Spirit operated in Christ when it roused Him from among the dead, and raised Him to the highest pinnacle in the universe. So tremendous was the power! It was the Might of God's Strength! And what is the nature of the power that is now operating in us? It is in accord with that same Might of God's Strength.

What does Paul tell us about that power as it operates in true Christians today:

“Now to Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly more than we can ask or think, according to the power that is operating in us, to Him be glory in the ecclesia (the called ones), and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen!” Eph 3:20,21

If Jesus Christ can do “abundantly more than we can ask or think” – why then, since Jesus DIED for the whole world – can't He SAVE the whole world!

Why doesn't the Christian church believe in the “Power of God”?

Excerpts from, Essex, J.H., The Power of God

