

# God's Resources for His People's Need

by John Nelson Darby

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*God's government is consistent and He desires for His people to know themselves, learn His ways, and maintain a sense of dependence on Him.*

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 8:3-20, Isaiah 40:27, Matthew 6:26, Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17, 1 Peter 1:12

**Topics:** "Dependence On God", "Spiritual Complacency"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes that God provides for His people through resources that are often beyond human understanding, particularly during their wilderness journey. He explains that God places His children in situations where they must rely solely on Him, teaching them about their own weaknesses and His unchanging nature. Darby warns against forgetting God amidst blessings, as this can lead to spiritual complacency and pride. He highlights the importance of maintaining communion with God to recognize our dependence on Him and to avoid the pitfalls of self-sufficiency. Ultimately, he encourages believers to find their joy and strength in Christ alone, acknowledging God's continuous care in both great and small matters.

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## Transcript

Deut. 8 gives us an outline of the resources, by means of which God supplied the need of His people while passing through the wilderness; they were resources unknown to the flesh, and such as the flesh could not picture to itself. God often puts his children in positions where every human resource fails: His object is two-fold --

1st, that they may know themselves;

2ndly, that they may learn God's ways towards them.

God never varies in His government; that is to say, He never acts on a different principle in one case from that which guides Him in another -- e.g., He hates sin, and always acts consistently. Thus, a spiritual Christian may often know beforehand, what line of conduct God will take in a given case. It is most important for us to remember this truth -- that God changes not. His ways may change: thus, He had put His people under the law; now, He has put the Church under grace, and hereafter He will place her in glory. Yet there are principles which never change; and therefore the prophets could say that it was not for themselves but for us that they ministered those things (1 Peter 1:12).

Circumstances may vary: Israel may have been driven out of their land, etc.; but, after all, God does not change; and if the means vary, the end (that is His own glory) is ever the same. As to salvation, for instance; God has always saved upon one principle. For Abraham and every saint, to the most distant ages, is only saved, as we, by blood.

God takes knowledge of everything, and judges us according to the light we have received. He says to His people, "Ye shall surely perish, as the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face" (Deut. 8:9, 20). This is God's principle of government when sin has come to its height, then He punishes it.

It was thus He had dealt with the Amorites, and other nations; and it was thus He would deal with His own people. Thus we see that God acts evenly in His government here below; He cares for His own glory, and acts so as to show it forth. Not one action is unimportant; for the most insignificant may deprive us of blessing, on account of the government of God which is at all times in action. It is true, that often one who walks unfaithfully receives many blessings, because God loves to show forth His mercy; nevertheless, everything bears its fruit, either inwardly in the soul, or outwardly in chastisements.

That which strikes me as most precious in this chapter, is God's desire that Israel should not forget their wilderness position, which was a state of entire dependence, for Israel had no resources in itself, and received the supply of every need by means of a miracle. We are saved, and led into the wilderness; and there we are surrounded with blessings, as, for instance, the enjoyment of brotherly communion, instead of being in a position of isolation. But, as with Israel, God's blessings might lead to two-fold evil, in separating them from Him, and making them forget their dependence upon Him (v. 17); so we have to take care lest the blessing we enjoy should produce the same effects on us. This world must needs be to the Christian a land of drought --a thirsty land, where no water is -- and he should seek all his enjoyment in heavenly places; if he find any here below, it is because his flesh is not mortified; he is in a bad state, and ought not to remain in it. Surely God has given us enough spiritual blessings to satisfy our hearts! We may rejoice in that word of God which opens out to the spiritual man the thoughts and counsels of God towards us. If only we draw from this treasure, our souls will have enjoyment enough, and will be able to do without that which the world offers. Let Christ become our all, and let us strip ourselves of all that is not Christ, that He may reign alone in our hearts. This is real progress, and here is true enjoyment for the Christian.

Verses 11-15. Israel was not to stop short in the enjoyment of the gifts of God, nor to take occasion from them to forget God himself. The Christian, too, must watch, lest, in the enjoyment of the blessing, he should forget Him who has given it, and lose sight of his own dependence upon God. The heart may depart from God, long before God's blessings are withdrawn; and we may still enjoy them when far from Him. But if we ask ourselves, "Have I the enjoyment of such and such blessings? But is my heart really in communion with Jesus? Is it in Him, I find my joy? Do I realize my own weakness? etc., etc." How often would the the upright soul answer, "No!" Let my outward circumstances be as favourable as they may, if my heart is not in communion with God, I shall be unable to meet temptation. This is an important truth, for the consequences are immense.

We see, in the history of Israel, the proof that the heart may backslide from God, long before He withdraws His blessings. How long it was, after Israel had forgotten the Lord, before God came in judgment, to show what was their state! How often do we enjoy brotherly communion, and the word of God, long after we have forgotten our own weakness and dependence! It is by walking in communion with God, that we can be preserved. This is what Moses expresses to the people (v. 11-19); it is -- "Take heed!"

How often have we been made to feel that the object of our daily journeying is to humble us! How much that is painful have we learned of ourselves! And how often have we discovered our unbelief when brought into trial! God has led us through the wilderness, to humble us, (to) prove us and to know what is in our hearts, whether we would keep his commandments, or no.

See v. 3. Manna was a thing unknown to Israel, when they went into the wilderness; neither had their fathers known it, and they themselves could do nothing towards producing it. They were dependent. Had God omitted to send it, even for one or two mornings, they must have perished. The water from the rock was equally miraculous. There was no water in the desert, and God gave it by a miracle. There was no path marked out in the wilderness, and they might have wandered from the way; but God performs another miracle, for a cloudy pillar is their leader. But it was not only in great things that God took care of them, or that He does so for us in the wilderness; we have to admire His precious care in the smallest things, and in our tiniest wants. There is a particular as well as a general providence (v. 4). "Thy raiment waxed not old." It may be that the Israelites had taken but little notice of the fact, and so it is with us. How many details of God's care for us pass unobserved by us!

We find in Isa. 40 immediately after the description of the greatness of God, and the wonderful effects of His power, the expression of this care in small things. "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" (v. 27). God does not forget us, and that we might know how dear we are to Him, the Lord Jesus said -- "Ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 6:26). The Lord would have us remember these two things in the wilderness: -- first, that it is He who has redeemed us from the world, as He did His people out of Egypt; secondly, that it is He who sustains, moment by moment, in the wilderness. It is when we realize this direct dependence upon God, that we are strong to resist the devil; but when we lose sight of it, we feel less the necessity of communion with God; we neglect it, and soon attribute our blessings to ourselves. "Lest thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth" (v. 17).

Verse. 11. "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments." When in the presence of God, the conscience keeps His commandments, for in His presence they are neither hard nor forgotten. How can we forget the desires of one who is dear to us, when with that person? Let us remember, that apart from communion with God, even His blessings become a snare to pride. We are in the desert, but we are there under the care of a tender Father.

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