

# On The Frontier

“For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

## God Of Our Fathers

by Linus A. Mathis III

This month marks, for me, the remembrance of a momentous occasion. The 15th anniversary of my ordination to the Christian Ministry. On August 7, 1985, I and 39 others were salted in the presence of God and a great company of the saints. For me it was THE moment of truth for which I was purposed. I will never forget the many things that solidified for me that night. Guidance the Father had given me eight years prior was now established and thus indelibly etched upon my heart. In a symphonic crescendo light cascaded into my understanding. My heart leaped with the joy of a melody reminiscent of a turn of the century calliope. So many, many things were confirmed. With crystalline lucidity I saw with certainty my calling. Yet, as I came to learn, this was but the inauguration of a never ending journey into the Light and Will of God's beautiful presence. Nevertheless, this was a time to remember!

Adding to my "inner" exhilaration was a weather event as dramatic as any I'd ever witnessed. I've been in hurricanes, lightening storms, blizzards, sleet, hail and many a north easter. I've experienced earthquakes and been close to twisters, but to this day, I've never seen a more intense outpouring of rain. It rained harder on the tent we were gathered in than I'd ever seen it rain on anything, anywhere at anytime. In fact, the rain was most

assuredly focused on the section of tent we stood under. Consequently, a huge pool began to form placing dangerous stress on the tent material. *Right above where we were standing!* We stood in place, all 40 of us each with an attending clergyman, patiently awaiting the next aspect of ceremony. The only thing separating us from half a ton of water, a thin membrane of tent material. The tent crew was urgent. They knew they had to do something or lose the entire tent (besides us there were also the officiating clergy, audio and light technicians, musicians, ushers and numerous guests), which could have proven disastrous. It seemed time stood still as the rain relentlessly worried the ever weakening canvas. But I didn't care! I had made up my mind to stand my ground. If this was to be my final hour, so be it. As far as I was concerned, everything was on the line and live or die I made my stand! If this were my very last act of devotion I was blessed beyond words to give it. That thought has remained with me, intact, for 15 years.

A decision was made by those in charge to unplug and remove all things electrical. A brief respite in the program was allowed for to accomplish this. I then looked up slightly and noticed a shadowy figure walking on the top of the tent. The program resumed and in the midst of this magnificent hour, the man casting the shadow made the decision to lance the tent. A common and sensible solution designed to alleviate the strain the water weight was placing on the tent. Lance it he did!

At which time the entire fabric burst open and this enormous measure of water, weighing hundreds of pounds, came crashing down on us. **MAN IT WAS AWESOME!!!** I'll wager everyone present still remembers it. Thank God no one was hurt, not even the program. We were pushed back by the force of the falling gush and at the same time drenched. A large wooden channel, used to cover electrical cables, struck me in the legs and drove me hard into my attending clergyman. Undaunted, he continued on with prayer and prophesy. I was **EXHILARATED!** The 40 of us began the exercise of our commitment with a challenge. We met it and were victorious. I felt 10 feet tall. I've no other words to describe the flavor of that event. Of course I learned that many challenges of greater caveat were awaiting. I'm certain, if asked, my brothers would concur.

The hymn played that night for our ordination was God Of Our Fathers. The sound of it stirs my soul upon every hearing.

### *God Of Our Fathers*

*God of our fathers, whose almighty hand leads forth in beauty all the starry band; of shining worlds in splendor thru the skies, our grateful songs before Thy throne arise.*

*Thy love divine hath led us in the past, in this free land by Thee our lot is cast; be thou our ruler, guardian, guide and stay, Thy Word our law, Thy paths our chosen way.*

*From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence, be Thy strong arm our ever sure defense; Thy true religion in our hearts increase; Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.*

*Refresh Thy people on their toilsome way. Lead us from night to never ending day; fill all our lives with love and grace divine, and glory, laud, and praise be ever Thine.*

This hymn was written by Daniel C. Roberts in 1876 while our Nation was preparing a centennial celebration. Interestingly, it was first sung in a worship service on July 4, 1876 and was in fact chosen as the official hymn for the National Centennial Observance which venerated the embrace of our Constitution. What a privilege to have this great hymn for my ordination. God of our fathers! The author held in reverence the significance of our Nation's founders as do I. But when I think of this great hymn, I think not only of them, but other men who went before me. Men who God called to His work. Men with the spirit and commissioning of God! This is in no way meant to diminish our Founding Fathers, on the contrary. However, without men such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, there doubtless wouldn't have been any foundation for freedom in any era.

Genesis 26:24

And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I *am* the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I *am* with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

God reminded Isaac that He is the

God of Abraham. Why? To reassure him that there was no reason for fear that He would bless him and care for him always. As God was with Abraham so He was with Isaac and this for Abraham's sake. Later, He would do the same for Jacob, Isaac's son.

Genesis 28:13-15

And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I *am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

And, behold, I *am* with thee, and will keep thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done *that* which I have spoken to thee of.

The reason for this again, to confirm for Jacob that what He did for Abraham AND Isaac He would most certainly do for him. All that God promised Jacob would come to pass. The reminder! I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac!

Upon calling Moses, the great deliverer of the children of Israel, God encouraged and exhorted him as He had Isaac and Jacob.

Exodus 3:6-10

Moreover he said, I *am* the God of thy father, the God of

Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Moses surely knew of God's great power displayed in the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The care and love, the miracles, all these were well known to him. God's relationship with these men was and is legendary!!! Despite this Moses remained a bit unresolved, so God continued His dialogue.

Verses 11-15

And Moses said unto God, Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them?

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.

What would be a memorial unto all generations? The deliverance of Israel for one and the knowledge that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had wrought it. What He did for them, He can do for you! His love, His power, His grace, His mercy, His goodness and His unparalleled abilities are as magnificent as ever. What He once was He still is and always shall be. That is, the Lord God Almighty, Most Sovereign, Most High. And if that weren't enough, He's our Father! Even Abraham, Isaac and Jacob couldn't make that claim.

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is our Father and our defense!

Psalm 20:1

The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;

He's also our safe place and refuge for He is with us.

Psalm 46:11

The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.

How blessed we are to have Him as our God and Father!!!

Consider this prophecy spoken upon Joseph the son of Jacob:

Genesis 49:22-26

Joseph *is* a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful bough by a well; *whose* branches run over the wall:

The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot *at him*, and hated him:

But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty *God* of Jacob; (from thence *is* the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

*Even* by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills:

they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

You remember Joseph, his brothers sold him into slavery while still a boy. Yet, the God of his fathers saw to his freedom and yes, even to his abundance.

Even when considering the resurrection and eternal life the Lord's words remind us that God is the God of Jacob.

Mark 12:26 & 27a

And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, *I am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living:

Peter had this to say to the detractors of the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple:

Acts 3:12-16

And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.

But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

The following is in response to threats leveled by those who ruled the Synagogue:

Acts 5:29-32

Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

How blessed I am, dear reader, to have that magnificent hymn "God Of Our Fathers" to remind me of my commitment! How superb to have His Word remind us that, as He was with the fathers so shall he be with us all.

The writer of this wonderful hymn was surely wise as the last line is dedicated to praise!

"Lead us from night to never ending day; fill all our lives with love and grace divine, and glory, laud, and praise be ever Thine."

Praise, worship and glory to the God of our fathers! All praise and worship are due Him for ever and ever!

Psalms 75:9

But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

Psalms 81:1

Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

I will never, ever forget that rainy night in America's heartland 15 years ago. NO, the taste of salt still lingers in my mouth! May it permeate my soul and forever drive me on.

Please consider, if you will, these words. They were spoken by a simple disciple to the man who was to become the great Apostle Paul.

Acts 22:14

And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

In like manner dear one, the God of our fathers hath chosen thee, to hear the voice of His mouth, see His Son and know the greatness of His Will!

You are a chosen one. Chosen by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The God of our fathers.

\*\*\*\*\*