

"THE GOD PLOT"

by  
TIMOTHY M. GREEN

*Living with  
Holy Imagination...*

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*one*  
SETTING  
IT'S ALL ABOUT GRACE

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GREAT STORIES possess not only great beginnings but also great contexts. They have image-evoking backdrops. If there ever was a great story with the most remarkable of settings, it is certainly the story of God and his people as expressed by the prophetic voice.

Before God ever called his people to be, to do, or to say anything, he acted decisively in their lives. Indeed, divine action consistently preceded divine call. God's initiative came before any human response. Really, this makes sense, doesn't it? How can anyone *respond* if there is nothing to respond to? As the prophetic voice creatively weaves the story of God together, it is insistent that God never invited his people to participate in his story without first opening the entry door into it.

For the people of God, divine grace was not a mere abstract principle to debate. It was not a sentimental concept

to incorporate into a prayer, song, or sermon. God's grace was concretely expressed and experienced in real life. Divine action took place in the flesh-and-blood realities of daily existence. The prophetic voice paints an engaging portrait of the gracious entry door opened by God so that his people might actively join him in his divine plot.

### The Three Hinges of God's Gracious Activity

The entry door of God's story hangs on three hinges, three pivotal actions carried out by God: divine deliverance, divine provision, and divine covenant. These hinges inform everything else in the God plot. They point to God's character; they form his people's identity; and they undergird the divine call upon the life of the people. They even shape the pattern of their everyday life; as God has acted to deliver, provide, and enter into covenant, so now are his people to act in the lives of their neighbors.

The very core of the people's self-understanding was based on the hinges of God's deliverance, provision, and covenant. Because he was a delivering God, they were a people set free from oppression and captivity. Because he was a providing God, they were a people who had the necessary provisions of life: food, water, and protection from destructive enemies. Because he was a covenant-making God, they were a people in covenant relationship with him and with one another. Just as institutions will often speak of the core values that define their identity and shape their behavior, our ancestors discovered their core values in the narrative of God's deliverance, provision, and covenant. These values defined them, shaped them, and motivated them.

To live within the identity-shaping reality of these three hinges of grace was to live as the people of God. On the other hand, to live outside of the reality of these hinges of grace was to abandon the very identity as a people in covenant with this unique God. To seek deliverance from any other powers, to seek provision from any other sources, to enter into covenant with any other partners in order to secure life was to forsake the identity of being God's people. Two voices clearly associated with this prophetic way of expressing the God plot—Hosea and Jeremiah—would go as far as to call such exchanges of identity as infidelity, adultery, or even prostitution (Hos. 2:2-13; 4:12-19; 5:3-4; Jer. 2:9-37; 3:1-5).

At the very core of the prophetic testimony of God's gracious activity was God's deliverance of his people from captivity. The people of God were well aware that at one time they had been slaves in Egypt, but now they were free! They once had built pyramids for kings they did not know and temples for gods they did not worship, but now they were singing the song of liberation and dancing to the melody of a hope-filled future. The powers that enslaved lost their grip on the oppressed when this God showed up. Iron chariots and mighty horses that terrorized and intimidated were no match for the God who liberates and delivers. No wonder one of the earliest hymns in our Scriptures is the jubilant song of Miriam as she played her tambourine and danced with the other women, singing, "Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea" (Exod. 15:21). Their history of bondage had been transformed to a future of hope. Stepping down into the deathly waters of the Red Sea as slaves, they arose from those waters to new life, new freedom, and a new tomorrow.

However, God had not simply freed his people from slavery to let them survive on their own. The God who freed from captivity was also the God who provided in the wilderness—not just once but over and over again. The memories and testimonies of God’s people were filled with stories of manna, quail, water, and divine protection.

That first morning of their deliverance from Egyptian captivity, the people stepped out of their tents hungry and thirsty. How would they survive? How would they be nourished in this arid wasteland? As they looked out over the desert, the early morning dew caused something to glisten like diamonds. Looking at this glistening stuff, they exclaimed, “*Mannah? Mannah?*” Or literally, “What is it? What is it?” Lifting up a piece of this odd stuff to their mouths, they tasted it. Discovering the nourishment God had provided them, the answer to their question was, “This is bread from heaven!” The God who had delivered them also provided for them. And the provision continued as they threw their nets over their source of protein for the wilderness journey: lowly migrating quail. The people of God once again witnessed that the God who had delivered them from captivity would also nourish them. In their thirst, they began to murmur as they asked, “How will our parched tongues be quenched?” Suddenly from the rock flowed an oasis of water. Indeed, over and over again, the God who had emancipated them from their captivity demonstrated that he would now provide nourishment for their hunger and drink for their thirst. Indeed, this God provides.

The people’s experience of God’s grace went beyond a one-time deliverance and one-time provision. Grace overran the banks of the Red Sea and overflowed far beyond

the baskets of manna and quail in the wilderness. The God who had graciously delivered at the sea and who had graciously poured out provisions in the wilderness now committed himself to be the delivering and providing God into perpetuity. Graciously initiating a covenant with the people whom he had emancipated and sustained, he announced, "I will be God to you, and you will be people to me" (Exod. 6:7, author's translation). Within this covenant formula was the divine commitment that he would continue to act as the delivering and providing God of this community.

The God who delivered one generation across the Red Sea into the wilderness would deliver the next generation across the Jordan River into the Land of Promise. That same God would deliver a generation from exile centuries later; however, this time he would deliver his people across an arid desert from Babylon to the Promised Land. For one generation, this covenant God is the *Way Maker* across the sea; for another generation, this covenant God is the *Way Maker* across the arid desert. What he does for a later generation may indeed be a new thing, but the new thing remains consistently grounded in the age-old confession that he is the covenant-making God who will consistently deliver and provide regardless of the context within which a given generation finds itself:

Thus says the LORD, who *makes a way* in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you

*grace*

not perceive it? I will *make a way* in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isa. 43:16-19, emphasis added)

This God of deliverance and provision is the faithful covenant-making Partner yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

## The Tapestry of Giants

Following the gracious acts of God's deliverance, provision, and covenant with his people, Moses delivers in the book of Deuteronomy an image-filled and image-evoking sermon to the second generation. Forty years had passed since that momentous event of Israel's escape from Egypt and trek across the Red Sea. For forty years, God had faithfully provided food, drink, and protection to his people. In the midst of these four decades of God's grace and fidelity, a covenant had been sealed between God and his people.

But very early in the journey, the covenant people struggled with what would become the perennial, nagging problem faced by people in covenant with God. They just seemed unable to wholeheartedly trust this God who had delivered them. They just could not fully believe that he really would continue to provide for them.

Shortly after all the great covenant events surrounding Mount Sinai, God instructed the people: "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Resume your journey. . . . go in and take possession of the land that I swore to your ancestors" (Deut. 1:6-7, 8). All seemed hopeful, but then came the giants! Oh, those giants and the terror, the insecurity, and the lack of trust that they always seem to evoke. In Moses' sermon, his focus shifts to those giants. "Giants" become the color-filled thread interwoven throughout the

tapestry of the people's interaction with God for the next two chapters of the sermon.

At the start, it was giants that caused an entire generation to fear and to fail. Out of anxious fear, the people of this generation refused to set foot into God's promise for a tomorrow. They concluded that the land with its mighty fortresses and huge warriors was far too big and overpowering. On the one hand, the spies brought back an amazingly optimistic report: "It is a good land that the LORD our God is giving us" (1:25). But the positive report of promise was tempered with the reality that "the people are stronger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified up to heaven! We actually saw there the offspring of the Anakim!" (v. 28). Anakim are the giants.

The people who were well on their way into the Land of Promise concluded that it was up to them to fight the giants. They became terrified. They grumbled and rebelled. They even accused God himself of despising them. Moses could only make one conclusion. In spite of God's promise to go with his people; to fight for them, as he had done in Egypt; and to carry them like a parent carrying an infant, as he had done in the wilderness, the people would not trust the Lord (vv. 30-32). Their distrustful fear and anxiety would eventually come back on them in full force; not a single member of that generation, with the exception of the two who knew that the battle was ultimately the Lord's, would set foot in the territory of God's promise. Paralyzing fear and a debilitating lack of trust stopped the faith journey short.

Indeed, the story of God for that first generation had originally had so much more to it than death in the wil-

derness. The God plot was intended to continue on into the land of God's promise; it was not supposed to end in the arid desert. Manna and water-producing rocks only pointed forward to a land that flowed with milk and honey. The delivering, providing, covenant-making God had only begun to carry out his plot in the life of his covenant people.

Divine grace indeed provided the backdrop; divine deliverance, provision, and covenant composed the setting of all that was supposed to follow! The God plot was well on its way for that generation. How tragic! Because of their fear and distrust, the people of that generation would spend the rest of their lives wandering in the wilderness of their doubt. They would die outside of the land of God's promise, and for them the God plot ended with no more than a period or a question mark.

However, the fuller God plot never ends with a period or a question mark. Indeed, the most common punctuation mark in the narrative of God consists of ellipsis points—dot, dot, dot. The God plot would continue through the next generation. Forty years had now passed since the crossing of the sea. As the former generation had died off, a new generation had emerged. It was now time for Moses to prepare the people of the second generation to cross the Jordan and to enter into God's territory of promise that their parents and grandparents had forfeited. In order to prepare them to enter, Moses reminds them of instances when this generation could readily have been terrified at what lay ahead. When King Sihon refused to let the people go through his land, this generation could have thrown its hands up in fear and become paralyzed. However, the Lord was faithful so

that “there was no citadel too high for us. The LORD our God gave everything to us” (2:36).

Then there was Og of the land of Bashan (3:1-21)! Once again, a giant with giant resources and giant fortresses appears in the story. It seems that the people of God just couldn’t escape running into those giants that threatened to paralyze them with fear. The land of Bashan was renowned for its rich, luxurious natural resources. Its fertile land produced fat, sleek, healthy cattle. The land of Og had fortress cities with extensively high walls, double gates, and strong bars. Numerous outlying villages dotted the landscape. The land of Bashan was “strong,” but even more, its ruler, Og, was a giant—a Rephaim (see explanation of all of the terms for giants in 2:20-21). His bed was made of the preferred metal of the day, iron. It was nine cubits long and four cubits wide; that’s approximately thirteen feet long by six feet wide. Indeed, it was a strong, mammoth bed for a large, mighty warrior. What does Moses have to say to this generation about the delivering, providing, covenant-making God in the face of such terrorizing, paralyzing giants? “Do not fear him, for I have handed him over to you. . . . So the LORD our God also handed over to us King Og of Bashan” (3:2-3).

The delivering, providing, covenant-making God was faithful in leading his people through the bewildering land of Sihon and Og. The people of the previous generation had thought it was their responsibility to save their own lives and to wage their own war against the threatening giants. Fear-filled paralysis set in and they spent their lives in the wilderness without setting foot into the land of God’s promise. Nevertheless, God continued to demonstrate his trustworthiness and his covenant faithfulness over and over

again. He faithfully guided his covenant people through the land of giants. Indeed, the people of the generation who thought the battle against the giants was theirs to fight died in the wilderness. However, the generation who looked into the face of fear-evoking giants and dared to declare “You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts” (1 Sam. 17:45) saw the giants fall and witnessed the ongoing gracious, delivering, providing, covenant-making acts of God. No wonder Moses concludes the introduction to his prophetic sermon in Deuteronomy with these words: “Your own eyes have seen everything that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so the LORD will do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross. Do not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who fights for you” (Deut. 3:21-22).

So let's think for a moment about divine grace in the matter of giants. To live in the reality of divine grace is to recognize that imminent giants are not ours to fight. The battle is not ours; the battle is the Lord's. On the other hand, to live outside of the reality of divine grace is to believe and ultimately to live out life with the idea that battling the giants is up to us. We naively believe that we must produce the weapons, plan the battle, run into the valley, and slay the giants. To live outside the reality of divine grace is to be consumed with our own survival and to discover and employ every tactic available just to survive.

## A Challenge for the Next Generation

Just as Moses prepared a generation to enter into the Land of Promise in his sermon in Deuteronomy, his successor, Joshua, instructed that same generation and their chil-

dren to settle down and live in the land of God's promise. In so many ways, Joshua's sermon to the people in Joshua 24 is a microcosm of Moses' much more detailed sermon in Deuteronomy. As the people gather in the valley of Shechem, Joshua challenges them to make a decision: choose which god you will worship and devote your lives to. The options are many: the gods of the past, the gods of the popular culture, or the God who delivered, provided, and made covenant with a ragtag group of escapees from Egypt. In an outburst of decisiveness, Joshua then exclaims, "As for me and my clan, we will serve the LORD" (v. 15, author's paraphrase).

It is so fascinating, however, that before Joshua ever challenges the people to choose some god to whom they will give their devotion, he lays out a thorough, detailed overview of all that the Lord had already done in their lives. The rehearsal of divine actions is filled with God's faithful, continuous deliverance and provision:

I took your father Abraham. . . . I gave him Isaac. . . . to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. . . . I gave Esau the hill country. . . . I sent Moses and Aaron. . . . I plagued Egypt. . . . I brought [you] out of Egypt. . . . [I] put darkness between you and the Egyptians. . . . your eyes saw what I did to Egypt. . . . I brought you to the land. . . . I handed them over to you. . . . I would not listen to Balaam. . . . I rescued you out of his hand. (Vv. 3-10)

Just before Joshua challenges the people of God to serve the Lord God with undivided allegiance or at least to choose some god to worship, he concludes his detailed review with these image-evoking words: "It was not by your sword or by your bow. I gave you a land on which you had not labored,

and towns that you had not built, and you live in them; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards that you did not plant” (vv. 12-13).

Do you see it? Can you hear it? Before Moses and Joshua ever call the people of God to do, to be, or to say anything, they are adamant about the context of the story of God. They are unrelentingly persistent on the setting of the God plot. The core identity of the people of God is not found in their own productivity, achievement, or accomplishment. They did not build their own bridges across the Red Sea or the Jordan River; they did not produce their own manna; they did not slay their giants by the strength of their warriors; they did not plant their own vineyards and dig out their own wells. No, indeed, they are solely and uniquely the recipients of gracious divine deliverance, provision, and covenant. At the very core of their identity, the people of God are the blessed, the graced, and the gifted children of God.

Before a call or a challenge ever goes out to God’s people, they *already* have the identity of being recipients of divine grace. They are recipients of divine love as no other—that is, holy love. They are recipients of incomparable divine mercy. The Lord has delivered them. The Lord has provided for them. The Lord has entered into covenant with them. He will continue to be their God, and they will be his people—a people of deliverance and a people of provision.

The Kingdom Prayer: Give Us Daily  
Bread....Deliver Us from Evil

Across space and time, the people in covenant with this delivering and providing God have realized that they are defined by an alternative reality. They belong to a different

kingdom with a radically unique (holy) politic for deliverance and a radically unique (holy) economy for provision. God is the Source of both, not themselves!

When facing the onslaught of giant-sized enemies that seek to devour them and spit them out, they seem to understand, or at least deep down they know they should understand, that they themselves are not the source of their deliverance. This unique covenant-making God is the Source. When facing even their own death and potential demise, they confess, or at least they know they should confess, that their own manipulative devices, controlling schemes, and power-playing games will never deliver them. This covenant-making God alone is their Deliverer. It is no wonder then that they would pray, “Lead us not to the time of trial, but *you deliver us from evil!*” (see Matt. 6:13).

When facing hunger and thirst, these people in covenant with this graciously providing God seem to understand, or at least they know they should understand, that they themselves cannot engage in the “hunger games” to guarantee their lone survival. This unique covenant-making God alone provides manna to the hungry and water to the thirsty. When dwindling bank accounts and dying congregations seem to threaten their very survival and existence, these people in covenant with this graciously providing God seem to understand, or at least they know they should understand, that they could never manipulate fertility or magically coerce resurrection. This unique covenant-making God alone gives life to the lifeless and breath to the dying. It is no wonder then that they would pray, “Give us today our daily bread” (v. 11, NIV).

And what would they call a politic in which God delivers from all that destroys and an economy in which God provides the daily bread? “Your kingdom come: your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (see v. 10). These people in covenant with the unique (holy) God who delivers and provides seem to know, or at least they know they should know, that there is a radical alternative to self-sustaining survival and to self-fought deliverance. They have even referred to that alternative as the reign of God on earth, the kingdom of God. To say it another way: they dare to believe and hope that this unique (holy) delivering, providing, covenanting God engages in the real-life world of every man and every woman in every land each and every day. And so they pray, “May your heavenly will come right down to earth: may *you* provide today’s *manna*, and may *you* deliver from all that would destroy.”

### Grace: Great to Experience Now but All Too Easy to Forget Tomorrow

Why would recitals of God’s gracious deliverance and provision appear throughout Scripture? There just seems to be the recognition that we human beings are all too easily prone to amnesia. As we fail to remember the delivering, providing, and covenanting character of this unique (holy) God, we quickly forget what he has done. In our amnesia of who God is and what God has done, we then forget who we are (delivered, provided, covenanted people). And in our forgetting who we are, we turn our attention to and make covenant with everything and everyone else that promises to deliver and to provide.

The attention of our biblical ancestors very quickly would turn to the options of other gods offered by the dominant, popular culture in which they lived. Failure to remember and failure to tell the next generation of this unique covenant God's faithfulness are always linked to the warning not to turn to the gods of pop culture. It makes sense that in Moses' sermon (Deuteronomy) to the second generation that did not have the privilege of being eyewitnesses to God's defining moments of deliverance and provision, Moses makes repeated calls to remember and to not forget.

In Deuteronomy 6:12, Moses challenges the people to be extremely careful (literally, *to guard* or *to protectively watch*) not to "forget the LORD, who brought [them] out of the land of Egypt." How easy it would be to look at the majestic, large cities that they did not build, the houses filled with all types of goods that they had nothing to do with achieving, the smooth-stoned wells that they did not manufacture, and the fertile vineyards and olive groves that they did not even plant and to conclude that all of this was the achievement of their own hard work and efforts.

Later, in Deuteronomy 8:11-20, in the light of the people's full bellies, well-constructed houses, fertile herds, and abundant wealth, Moses warns them not to exalt themselves and *forget* the Lord, who had accomplished all of this for them. And how would they forget the Lord? Moses was certainly not concerned that they would miss the answers in a round of Bible trivia. His concern was that they would end up concluding, "My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth" (v. 17).

Integral to the prophetic call to *remember and not forget* the Lord is the challenge to rehearse over and over all that

God had done. The only way the next generation can ever know the faithfulness and the gracious actions of this unique God is for the preceding generations to pass the story on. One generation must give witness to what preceding generations have seen and heard God do. This witness includes not only verbal testimonies about God's faithfulness but also the creation of signs and symbols that will cause future generations to ask the most significant question in learning: "What is that?" Once curiosity is invoked, the "testifying generation" will have the most opportune setting in which to share the *good news* of God's fidelity. However, when the "testifying generation" remains silent or simply settles for empty clichés, amnesia overpowers that generation and ignorance overpowers the subsequent generation.

In the next chapter, we will explore in detail the pivotal prophetic call upon the lives of God's people expressed in the *Shema*, or the call to love the Lord with all the heart, soul, and strength (see 6:4-5). Immediately after his call for undivided loyalty to the Lord, Moses exhorts the people to give their attention to rehearsing the story of God "when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise" (v. 7). When future generations ask why the people live life as they do, the "testifying generation" is to answer, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand" (v. 21).

The context of God's gracious activity through his deliverance of, provision for, and covenant with his people goes hand in hand with the repeated concern to remember and not forget and to tell the next generation. Amnesia and ignorance can all too easily consume and destroy the foundational identity of grace. This concern for remembrance is a

vibrant thread interwoven throughout the ongoing story of God's people. Immediately after the people crossed the Jordan River into the Land of Promise, Joshua selected a man from each of the twelve tribes. He instructed each of them to take a stone out of the river and to pile the stones at Gilgal. This pile of stones would function as a *sign* among the people so that when future generations ask "What do those stones mean to you?" they would proceed to tell them how the waters of the river were "cut off in front of the ark of the covenant of the LORD" (Josh. 4:6-7).

Once the various tribes settled into their allotments of land, they gathered in the village of Shechem to renew their covenant with the Lord (chaps. 23–24). As we mentioned earlier, before Joshua ever calls upon them to choose a deity to worship (24:14-15), he goes into extensive detail reminding the second generation of all that the Lord has done in their lives, concluding with the declarations, "It was not by your sword or by your bow" and "I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and towns that you had not built" (vv. 12-13).

Once settled in the land, a statement very early in the book of Judges articulates the fruit of a generation growing up unaware of its identity as the graced people of this covenant God: "Another generation grew up after them, who did not *know* the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel" (Judg. 2:10, emphasis added). The next two verses depict what becomes the perennial dilemma of the people of God: "Then the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and worshiped the Baals; and they abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they followed other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were all around them" (vv. 11-12).

It would be very tempting to point a finger at the people of this generation who did evil, abandoned the Lord, and followed the gods of pop culture. However, we just can't put the blame on them! How could they remain faithful to a God whom they did not even know? Why would they worship a God of whom they had heard nothing or, perhaps at best, only sentimental clichés? If the only god of whom they were aware was the god made popular by the dominant culture or the empire itself, it only makes sense that they would turn to the god with whom they were familiar. Even if they would continue to use the familiar, sentimental language of a god by the name of Yahweh, they would simply understand and worship that deity as another god of the pop culture. It just doesn't make sense for a subsequent generation to give allegiance and wholehearted loyalty to a god it doesn't even know!

In spite of the repeated reality of amnesia and ignorance, the insistent concern to remember and not forget and to tell continues to reappear throughout the thread of the plot of God and his people. After a victorious battle, Samuel set up the *Ebenezer* ("stone of assistance") so it could give testimony to both the present and future generations: "Up to this point the LORD has [assisted] us" (1 Sam. 7:12, NLT). In his farewell address (12:6-18), Samuel provides a recitation of "all the saving deeds of the LORD that he performed" (v. 7). Describing the people's forgetfulness of all that the Lord had done after Moses and Aaron had led them out of Egypt, Samuel recalls the activity of God through such judges as Jephthah and Samson.

In the next generation, in spite of all of the mighty trials that David had experienced from the hands of his enemies

both outside and inside his family, the king looks back on his life and celebrates the Lord's faithfulness in a remarkable expression of gratitude. Lifting up his voice in melodic poetry, he summarizes his journey with the Lord in these words: "The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge" (2 Sam. 22:2-3). After an extensive, lengthy recounting of all that the Lord had done in his life, David then concludes, "The LORD lives! Blessed be my rock, and exalted be my God, the rock of my salvation. . . . He is a tower of salvation for his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed" (vv. 47, 51). What a testimony to future generations of this uniquely gracious, delivering, providing, and covenanting God!

Several centuries later, the classically prophetic voice of the eighth century, Hosea, grieves over the reality that there is "no knowledge of God in the land" (Hos. 4:1). The prophet directly ties the lack of knowledge of God to the lack of fidelity as well as the pervasiveness of violence, dishonesty, stealing, and adultery throughout the land (vv. 1-2). He bemoans that the people in covenant with the delivering and providing God are destroyed because of their "lack of knowledge" (v. 6). According to the prophet Hosea, "Israel has forgotten his Maker" (8:14). As Hosea provides the covenant community with a prayer of repentance, he paints a vivid picture of the deep need for the people to remember their covenant God: "Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD" (6:3).

Finally, in the next century, the other classically prophetic voice of Jeremiah grieves in a manner very similar to Hosea: "My people are foolish, they do not know me; they are stupid children, they have no understanding" (Jer. 4:22). Poignant-

ly asking, "Can a girl forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?" he concludes, "My people have forgotten me" (2:32).

### Grace...Forgotten!

What a remarkable identity: a graced and blessed people through divine deliverance, divine provision, and divine covenant. What a unique (holy) God, gracious and blessing, Deliverer, Provider, Covenant Partner. But of what value is this identity when it is not remembered? Of what significance is the gracious activity of divine deliverance, provision, and covenant when it fails to be confessed to subsequent generations? When diluted to a forgotten cliché, "amazing grace" has a nice ring to it, but its identity-shaping, ethos-forming capacity in the life of God's people is diluted to sheer sentimentality.

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"BAD HAIR DAY."  
"EAT CROW."  
"TO EACH HIS OWN."

Clichés are the colorful remnants of once insightful comments grown empty through overuse. Christ followers have clichés such as “holiness,” “sanctification,” “purity,” “cleansing,” and “Christlikeness.” We use these phrases so frequently that we often lose touch with what they mean.

*The God Plot* invites clergy and laypersons to move beyond clichés and participate in something bigger. As the Plot unfolds, the old familiar words and clichés are restored to their rightful place in God’s story. The result is an astounding journey that will help you understand your life in Christ with a renewed and biblically grounded holy imagination.

Inspire your heart, engage your mind, and stir your spirit.

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