

MSB248

# MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

## THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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# WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?

by David R. Hettema

In a recent visit to a Bible Book Store, I saw a number of books bearing titles similar to this study, all intended to give helpful answers to the people who have experienced unexplained hurtful tragedies in their lives. All of us have these undesirable tragic events interrupt our lives.

Bad things do happen in all our lives. This is the universal experience of all humanity. We are like batters in a baseball game facing whatever the opposition can throw at us. We can possibly handle the straight stuff but suddenly there's that curve ball and you don't know where it's going and how to handle it. Curve balls are inevitable; its not a matter of *if* but *when*.

We have heard the perplexed queries: Why did God let Tommy die? Why did my younger Sister die of Cancer? Where was God when the flood drowned all those people? O God, why me?

In the Word of God are answers that bring understanding to these questions. In Ecclesiastes, King Solomon, a God gifted man who was without a doubt one of the wisest men on earth, sought out the answer to this very problem: **I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with** (Eccl. 1:12-13). RSV

Solomon's conclusion to the problem is a universal truth that has been in effect ever since Adam's sin and it will continue until God governs the earth and destroys sin and death. Here's his observation: (Eccl. 9:11-12). **I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor**

**the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but *time and chance happeneth to them all*. For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it *falleth suddenly upon them***

Yes, time and chance happens to us all. The curve balls of life come at us without discretion. Many Christians believe that God sees everything, hears everything and knows everything, and furthermore not a thing happens that He does not have His hand in it. Many individuals manifest this type of thinking and God gets the blame for everything:

They tell you that everything that happens in their lives is put there by God for a reason.

They will state that "God took my husband" or "God took our child; He needed another voice in the Heavenly Choir."

"God has a plan for my life, I must find what it is."

"God let me have cancer to make me learn patience."

These statements might be comforting but they are not the truth.

If this concept is part of our Christian experience, that God is the cause behind all things, maybe we should re-examine our thinking in the light of God's Word.

The Lord Jesus taught His listeners not to have that concept. He used two current events that were common knowledge. Here's what He taught them: **There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."** (Luke 13: 1-5). His telling them so meant the Romans did not

slaughter the Galileans because God was behind it, nor did the tower fall on the eighteen workmen because God had a hand in it. The Lord was affirming what the wise King Solomon had said, that *time and chance happen to them all*.

Today this unrelenting fact still prevails. The hurtful curve balls of life do come, but not from God. Even in this time of God's grace some of us can be in the wrong place at the right time.

We do have the privilege of prayer, the wonderful option of asking God to take note of our problems and requesting His help. Sometimes we make the mistake of trying to handle these problems in our own strength. The Apostle James speaks of those who *have not* because they *ask not*. Ask of your heavenly Father, talk to God. He has promised to hear us and consider our petitions: **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:6-7).**

God does not move in ways that we might think, but I know that in my personal experience, more than once in my life, when very serious problems were mounting up and calamity seemed imminent God moved secretly, untraceably on behalf of my prayers and turned what could have been a disaster into a blessing beyond my imagination. It is true, prayer changes things.

To anyone that harbors the feeling that life is totally unfair, that God doesn't care or that He's governing this universe on a hit or miss basis, let me point out that He is not ruling this earth at the present time. Satan is the god of this eon, this evil flow. In the sixth chapter of Ephesians we are told to put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of Satan. The armor of God is the faith that we generate from God's Word: **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph 6: 12).**

A man's basis for judging as to whether life has treated him fairly is limited to his experiences in this life. Man's view can be shortsighted and distorted. God's view extends far beyond death into the future when a man's resurrection will take place and Christ's righteous judgments will be setting everything right.

Because of Adam's sin every individual has an appointment with death, but beyond that every individual will experience resurrection and live to have his day in court. **And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment** (Heb 9:27). Don't be afraid of God's judgments; they are more to be desired than gold (Ps. 19:9-10). His judgments will solidly establish the earth; the element of time and chance will no longer exist.

**For as in Adam all die** (are dying), **even so in Christ shall all be made alive.** But every man in his own order. The three resurrection orders are:

1. **Christ the firstfruits;** (*Aparche Christos*, The firstfruits company, those resurrected into the Kingdom of God).

2. **Afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.** (The tribulation martyrs).

3. **Then cometh the end** (The Great White Throne resurrections), **when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.**

All the dead, from Abel the first man to die to the last human to die before God intervenes will hear the voice of the Son of God. Jesus said: **"I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. . . . Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out-those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned"** (John 5:25,28-29).

The Apostle John, inspired by the Holy Spirit included the resurrection of Lazarus in his gospel as one of the signs or credentials that confirmed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Furthermore, Jesus used the incident of Lazarus' death and resurrection to teach us that God's answer to death and the inequities of this life are found in Him, Jesus said: **"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die (be dying). Do you believe this?"** (John 11 :25-26). Jesus also spoke of the quality and the value of eonian life, **I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly** (John 10: 10).

## RESURRECTION IS GOD'S ANSWER TO DEATH

Chapter 11 of the book of John gives us the record of a family that is suddenly engulfed in a tragedy they cannot handle. Lazarus is critically ill; his sisters Martha and Mary concerned and dismayed that this could happen to them, sent word to *Jesus* that their brother was very sick.

The Lord responded to the messengers: **This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby** (John 11:4). He could have healed Lazarus at a distance but He stayed two more days in the place where He was. Jesus was aware of the moment when Lazarus died and only then did He go to Bethany with His disciples.

Martha, and then Mary, both mourning the death of their brother, came to meet Jesus. This unexpected tragedy was just as difficult for them as it is today for anyone who has lost a loved one. Both said to Him, "**Lord, if You had been here my brother would not have-died,**" words that echo today when a brother, mother or child is taken by death. The wounds inflicted by time and chance are without mercy.

Jesus told Martha: "**Your Brother shall rise again.**" She responds, **I know that he will be raised again in the resurrection in the last day,** expressing her belief in the future kingdom of God. Jesus demonstrated what men can expect when he rules the earth. He raised Lazarus from the dead. Under God's government when sin and death are removed, the restoration of life, the healing of broken hearts and broken families, every bad thing that a believing individual has incurred because of time and chance will be restored and more.

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