



“But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;”
Hebrews 7:24-26 - (Also read Colossians 3:1-2)

As we journey from the cradle to the grave, our task as a Christian should be to glorify God. Paul said, *“...Of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities”* (2 Corinthians 12:5). Even in our sickness, we should glorify God. As we look into the message, I am praying the Lord will open our minds and touch our hearts. That He will lead us from the dungeons of darkness and doubt unto the marvelous light of confidence and conquest. There are no impossibilities with the Lord, for He can never fail. He stood by the golden gate of eternity and shouted His triumph, *“I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death”* (Revelation 1:18). Even in the midst of trials and troubles, we are not to question, but to glorify God. How do we turn a tragedy into a triumph? How do we turn every Calvary into an Easter? How do we turn a minus into a plus? I believe it can be done: suffering, sorrow, trouble and tragedy are the raw materials out of which Christians can weave a garment of praise for the glory of God. I want to call your attention to four reasons why we often fail to understand the disguise of the negatives of life as they come our way. The greatest opportunity you will ever have to glorify God will be in your hour of stress and storm. ¹

I. God Works On A Different Thought Level

God tells us in Isaiah 55:8-9, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

God is working on a different thought level. At best, our understanding is fragmentary and finite. We can only see through a glass darkly. We make mistakes and view life with a narrow vision, while God looks from a different vantage point. He knows the end from the beginning.

In the very beginning, God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth. It was corrupt and filled with violence. Do you know why? God said, *“...Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”* (Genesis 6:5). It says in Proverbs 23:7, *“For as he (a man) thinketh in his heart, so is he...”* Isaiah 55:7 tells us, *“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts...”* In Psalm 139:23, David said, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts...”* The apostle Paul told the church at Ephesus that he was serving the Lord with all “humility of mind” (read Acts 20:19). He told the church at Corinth to have “a willing mind” and “a ready mind.” He beseeched the brethren in Rome to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is our reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, but to be transformed by “the renewing of your mind” (read Romans 12:1-2). What was Paul saying? “Get your mind out of the gutter!” One look at our world and it is evident we have come a long way in many areas. We can put Rovers on Mars to study if there are any signs of life. At the same time we are killing innocent life here, aborting 4,000 babies each day.

What were the twin evils of Noah’s day? “Violence” and “corruption”! Corruption permeates every segment of our society. It reaches all the way from Wall Street to Main Street. It has invaded our financial world, our sports world, entertainment world, political world, business world, and yes, sadly even our church world. Daily headlines tell us of child molestation, same sex marriages, ordination of gay and lesbian pastors, etc.

Violence is raging throughout the world in astronomical proportions: terror and fear walk the streets of our towns and cities. No place on earth is safe from suicide bombers. Danger stalks our land! Fear grips our heart! Satan battles for the minds of men and women.

II. God Works on a Different Truth Level

It seems we can no longer discern the truth. The world calls it putting our “spin” on the facts. Even, under oath, many will not tell the truth. To lie is not only a sin, it is a crime. Jesus said, “*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). Pilate asked Jesus the question, “*What is truth*” (John 18:38)? Many are asking the same question today.

Jesus said, “*The devil... is a liar and the father of it*” (John 8:44). Thus, all lies originate with the devil. Did you know that it is impossible for God to lie? Read Hebrews 6:18. God’s righteousness and holiness make it impossible for Him to lie. Therefore, His promises are guaranteed.

One of our famous evangelists has written: “In our appeal to make the Gospel more user-friendly, truth has been eliminated in favor of consensus. Accommodation has replaced confrontation. This attempt is to make the Gospel more appealing to the unchurched. It allows the sinner to come to Christ without relinquishing his sin. Some of the chapters of this book show the results of this kind of water downed preaching: A cross without the blood. A salvation without the Lord. A hell without reality. A people without purity. A church without compassion. A Bible without trust. A Christ without distinction. A worship without Spirit. A church member without conversion. A preacher without power. A society without conscience. A ministry without urgency.”²

We need to see what Isaiah saw

When Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, the truth dawned upon him as to who he really was. He said, “*...Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts*” (Isaiah 6:5). Then when the Lord said, “*...Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?*” Isaiah responded, “*Here am I, send me*” (Isaiah 6:8). I know what Isaiah saw. In 1971, I fell on my face before God and said, “Lord I’ll quit my job. I’ll go for you.” The Lord has opened doors that has allowed me to take the Gospel to other lands. I’ve made some 55 trips out of this country to preach the Gospel. Be careful what you pray for, unless you are serious with God. He might just answer your prayer.

The power of God

What is happening to 21st century preachers? Have we ceased to believe in the power of the Gospel? Have we forgotten there is a power that can change the minds and the hearts of men?

There is a power that can make our enemies footstools. There is a power that can turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones. There is a power that can turn harlots into missionaries. There is a power that can turn cursing men into Gospel preachers. There is a power that can open Red Seas. There is a power that can furnish manna from on high. There is a power that can confound the enemy on the battlefield. There is a power that can feed 5,000 with a little boy’s lunch. That power is available to us. For He who has called us and sends us, has not, and will not leave us or forsake us. But rather, He is ready to empower us. He promises that, as we go, there will be strength for the day, and courage for the battle. Have we become soft and lazy? Are we no longer willing to fight? We must remember that it was in the thick of the fight that the sun stood still. It was in the thick of the fight that the fire fell on Mount Carmel. It was in the thick of the fight that the Red Sea divided. It was in the thick of the fight that the prophet saw horses and chariots surrounding the enemy. It was in the thick of the fight that a shepherd killed a giant with a slingshot.³ Isaiah 40:28-31 says, “*Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*”

This may be the reason that, “this generation loves everything but righteousness and fears everything but God.”⁴

God is not a man that he should lie

As mentioned earlier, it is impossible for God to lie. God had promised Moses that he would lead His chosen people from Goshen (Egypt) to the promise land. He led them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. He parted the Red Sea for them to cross; every morning He sent them manna from Heaven and every evening He sent them quail. He gave them the Law at Mt. Sinai also, the pattern to build the tabernacle. He fought their battles, destroyed their enemies. No man, no nation, no earthly power could stand in their way.

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Balak, king of Moab, saw them coming and devised a plan to stop them. He attempted to bribe Balaam, the prophet, to curse them. As he went forward to curse Israel, He did not see the angel of God standing before him with drawn sword in his hand. Three times the mule, on which Balaam was riding, saw the angel and finally fell down on him. The prophet began to beat him. God gave the mule the power of human speech and he cried out, "Balaam, why are you smiting me?" Balaam answered, "You've mocked me." Then the angel opened Balaam's eyes and he took this message to Balak, found in Numbers 23:19, "*God is not a man, that He, should lie...*" Hallelujah, this ought to make us shout! God cannot lie and man cannot change it because God works on a different truth level.

III. God Works on a Different Trust Level

The book of Job is one of the greatest books of the Bible. No other man in the Old Testament ever suffered more than Job. After all his temptations, sorrow, sickness and grief, the Bible says, "*In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly*" (Job 1:22). Do you know Job's secret? It is found in Job 13:15. Job said, "*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him...*" Job trusted God in everything he faced.

Romans 4:3 tells us, "*...Abraham believed (trusted) God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*" Yes, Abraham trusted God, or believed God. He was called God's friend. But God also trusted Abraham. God said in Genesis 18:19, "*For I know him (Abraham), that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord...*"

What kept Abraham going when he faced an uncertain future? He believed God! What kept him moving when he did not understand? What helped him to get beyond the petty problems of life? What motivated him, when the world was closing in? Abraham believed (trusted) God. What kept him going when tears filled his eyes? What kept him marching when the battle looked impossible? Abraham trusted God. God also trusted Abraham. Can God trust you?

We need to do what Hezekiah Did

You ask what did Hezekiah do? In II Kings Chapter 18, we are told that Hezekiah trusted in the Lord God of Israel more than any other King of Judah that ruled before him or after him. Hezekiah destroyed Judah's high places, brake the images, cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the image of Nehushtan. Do you know what this image was? It was the brazen serpent that Moses had made at God's instruction 700 years earlier. When God told them which had been bitten by the serpents to look at the brass serpent on the pole and they would live. Numbers 21:9 says, "*...If a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.*"

Notice it was not the looking at the brass serpent that caused them to live. Rather it was their obedience to God's command. Now we read that 700 years later they have kept the brass serpent around and have continued to burn incense to it in a form of idol worship which God's commandments forbid.

How guilty we all can be of clinging to old relics and idols which mean nothing to God. Hezekiah's trust in God was shown not by His obedience to do right in the sight of God, but His determination to tear down and destroy that which was wrong in the sight of God.

IV. God Works on a Different Time Level

God doesn't look at time as we do. II Peter 3:8 says, "*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" Let's look at this Scripture in a literal sense. One thousand years equals one day as the Lord counts time and one day equals 1,000. Now 1,000 years seems like a long time to us. But to God, it is like a day, for He works on a different time level.

So if 1,000 years is to God as one day, then 40 years would be like an hour. Praise the Lord, I am less than two hours old (1,000 divided by 24 equals approximately 40). Now using these calculations, the earth is not yet six days old. Using the Chronological Bible, as edited by Edward Reese, the earth as we know it is 5,980 years old ⁵, or it's 11:30pm on the sixth day of time, or 30 minutes until midnight. Then begins the seventh day, or the day God rested from all His work which He had made. Hebrews 4:9 says, "*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*" This is just one more sign that the minutes are ticking away and as Matthew 25:6 states, "*...At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.*" Are you ready?

1. Angel Martinez, *The Logic of Tragedy*, (Florida: Christ for the World Publishers, 1958), pp.6-7.

2. Bailey Smith, *Taking Back the Gospel*, (Oregon Harvest House Publishers, 1999).

3. Adapted from, E.V. Hill, *Victory in Jesus*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003) p. 87.

4. Vance Havner, *Messages on Revival* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1958) p.24.

5. The Chronological Bible, edited by Edward Reese, (Nashville: E.E. Gaddy and Associates, 1977).