

The Sovereignty of God

When bad things happen and people don't know what to say there is a word that inevitably comes up to explain the problem away. It's sovereignty, the theological term, which refers to the unlimited power of God, and preachers just love it. When healing doesn't manifest or when babies die and hurricanes blow houses away, the sovereignty of God seems to be the most common reason. "He's God," they say, "He's sovereign and can do whatever He wants to do." That sounds good, doesn't it? And it's true, except when it comes to the Word of God.

If you believe that God doesn't keep His Word, then sovereignty makes real sense. But if you believe God is a just God, then it falls to pieces with even the smallest amount of scripture. And there's a whole book called the Bible that attests to God's faithfulness to His Word.

The truth is that God is sovereign and has unlimited power. Yet, He has chosen to limit Himself to what He will and will not do concerning mankind. He spelled it out in His Word. And that makes Him sovereign, outside of His Word.

Can God do anything? Yes. Will God do anything? No. God has already said what He'll do in many situations. He's already laid the plan out pretty plain. He has bound Himself with His own Word. And that's what makes Him trustworthy.

God promises, "*My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips (Psalm 89:34)*". We know that He can't lie because of Titus 1:2 and we know the father of all lies is the devil because of John 8:44. Yet people still talk about God

as if He breaks promises at whim. This is not true.

God is a promise-keeper, not a promise-breaker. In this article, I'm going to share some truth with you about God and His unchanging Word; about healing and God's wrath. And next month I will share about the story of Job and babies who die too young. My hope is that you will come away with a greater understanding of the faithfulness of your Father God.

The Teachings of Jesus

Traditional religion says that everything good comes from God and everything bad comes from God. It's the Old Testament way of thinking. If that's the case, I want to know what the devil is doing! Twiddling his thumbs in hell? We sure don't need him if God is killing babies, sending sickness and withholding healing from believers.

In the Old Testament, most people were in the dark about God. They didn't think about the devil much because they really believed that God did everything good and He also did everything bad. In the New Testament, Jesus came on the scene to let us know the truth - about God *and* the devil.

We needed somebody to come down here and wipe out our sin so we could see clearly and really know God on a personal level. And that Someone who did it was Jesus, the Son of God. He redeemed man, broke the barrier between God and us and shined a big, bright light on the devil's work within the earth.

The teachings of Jesus were revolutionary to the people of that day. It was a revelation when He exposed the devil by teaching, "*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. (John 10:10-11K'JV)*"

Jesus was saying, and I'll paraphrase, "There's a devil roaming the earth. He's trying to kill you, steal from you and destroy you. He's bad and wants to take your life. But I am good and I'm going to give you a good life. ~ fact, I'm going to give My life for you.

When Jesus came to town, He didn't waste time in exposing the thief. He didn't watch idly as satan tormented and afflicted people. He had compassion on the people and started casting satan's demons out left and right. At one point, demons actually spoke up to Jesus and said,

What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time (Matt 8:29)?"

The devil and his demons had been stealing, killing and destroying since the fall of man. Jesus came to show people how to put a stop to it -and the demons thought they were being tormented! They were finally getting a little payback, Jesus-style! Glory! That makes me want to shout! Jesus showed us through His example how we could rebuke demons, resist them and watch them flee.

God is a Promise Keeper

One time while I was praying, the Lord spoke something to my heart that I believe may help you to understand the way God works. He said, "Jesse, My word shall not return unto me void. But it is very possible that My word can return unto you void."

"What?" I said, "Why, Lord?"

"Because you don't believe it like I do."

That was deep for me and it showed me the importance of my own personal faith. His Word had returned to *me* void but it never returned to *Him* void. In other words, He never broke His promise to me. He always believed and fulfilled His Word. But sometimes I didn't really believe His word in faith. So, there were times when I'd stopped my own success in receiving from God.

The bottom line is that personal experiences don't prove or disprove God's will. There's no such thing as whether God wants to do something or doesn't want to - it's what does His Word say? Because that's what He's made the decision to do. After He's said something, He won't alter it.

I like to say that He's sovereign outside of His Word, not inside. In other words, His power is unlimited outside of what He's already said in the Word... but He has limited Himself by His own Word. It's His promise to us.

Promises, or covenants, are important to God. He said, "*My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips (Psalm 89:34).*" In other words, He's promised to keep His promise!

Some people think that God will break His Word. They think this because someone who was prayed for didn't receive healing, and they died. But, God doesn't use circumstances as a measuring stick for following through with His Word. To do that would mean He was an unfair God.

So, if Isaiah 53:5 says that by the stripes laid on Jesus' back, we are healed, that is a promise to us. The fact may be that somebody's sick, but the truth is that Jesus paid the price for healing. If a person doesn't get healed, is it God's fault? k sovereignty a valid excuse for someone not

receiving healing? Because this is what many people believe. Will God break His Word? Will He withhold healing through the blood of Jesus because of some special circumstance? No. Regardless of circumstances, He won't break His Word. He has promised to keep His promises. From the beginning, God has been a promise keeper. Even in the Old Testament there are scriptures that show us the loyal nature of God. God often swears by Himself in the Bible, just to show that He means business. When God was talking to Abraham in Genesis 22:16-17 after the angel stopped him from sacrificing Isaac, God said that He would swear by Himself to keep the covenant because there was no one greater to swear by. He did it again in Isaiah 45:23, Jeremiah 22:5 and even Amos 4:2. The truth is that God is sovereign in that He *can* do what He wants, and when He wants. But He has made a choice to bind Himself by His own Word. So that makes Him sovereign *outside* of what the Word says.

Sovereignty and Healing

Healing is where sovereignty often gets misused. The truth is that healing is under our covenant with God through Jesus Christ. So, when a preacher tells me that the reason someone didn't get healed is because God is sovereign and His will was death... I think only one thing. *Either you're lying or God's lying. And I pick you.* God made a promise when Jesus was getting His back beaten with a whip. He was making a covenant with mankind that day and He has yet to say that it's "not for today."

When we're talking about healing, the word "sovereignty" shouldn't even come into the conversation. Why? Because healing is a promise in the Word. God said it and He meant it. When we say God is sovereign as a reason for a person not getting healed, we're calling God a liar. We're saying He broke His Word.

If you lay hands on the sick, and they don't recover and they end up dying, it's not God's fault. We sometimes want it to be His fault, because we don't understand why they died. But that doesn't make it right.

Preachers use the sovereignty excuse when believers die sick because they don't know what else to say. They want to be compassionate. They want to offer solace. People want answers. When there are no easy answers, preachers sometimes blame God by saying "He's sovereign. Sometimes we have to accept that healing wasn't God's will." This lets everybody off the hook - except God. He just got accused of killing somebody, for withholding the healing Blood of Jesus and for going back on His Word. This is wrong.

There are a lot of reasons why people can die even after they've prayed for healing, too many to mention in this one article. You'd be surprised how many people claim they want healing and secretly just want to go home to Heaven. They've already given up in their heart. You'd be surprised how many people claim they're standing on the Word who live in fear of death the whole time they're laying in the hospital bed. They ball and squall one minute and claim

faith when someone strong walks through the door. It's like trying to drive cross-country and stopping every fifteen minutes for a coffee break. You won't be getting anywhere soon.

You'd be surprised how many people lay hands on the sick, just because it seems right, but leave the room and don't believe that person will be healed any more than they believe in the man on the moon. Their faith is cracking before they hit the door. And that sick person needs to be surrounded by faith because they're too weak to fight.

The body responds to the mind and the spirit. If they're arguing with each other, what do you think the body will do? Nothing. It will keep on doing its own thing until a stronger voice tells it what to do. It is just a vessel for the real you, the combination of your spirit and soul.

And what about love? How can we expect our faith to work when we're not walking in love? Galatians 5:6 tells us that faith actually works by

love. If we're in unforgiveness towards another person or sowing seeds of discord, that stops our faith from working. Faith is crucial to receiving healing power; so then love must also be paramount in our lives. Sometimes things happen that are hard to explain looking at the surface events. Who can know the

heart of another person? Who can measure the faith of all those involved? Who would admit to not believing while they're slapping anointing oil on a dying person? Those kinds of heart-issues are only known to God. Some situations are obvious and we can say, "This seems like the reason." But the truth is that unless we ask God for wisdom and understanding and receive that from Him, there are some things in life that we may not know until we get to Heaven. There are many reasons for not receiving healing and many circumstances that hinder us from receiving a miracle, but none are because God decided to flex His sovereignty and break His Word.

Is Healing For Everyone?

"But I don't think God heals everybody, Brother Jesse." Really? Then, I guess He doesn't save everybody who wants salvation either. That cross thing had some sure bets and some not-so-sure bets, right? Wrong. The truth is that salvation is always present. But it isn't always received... just like healing and everything else Jesus died to give us.

In Luke 5:17 it says that the doctors and the Pharisees of the Law were sitting nearby and Jesus was teaching. There was the one that was sick of the palsy and the Bible says the power of the Lord was present to heal them. To heal who? Not the sick of the palsy guy. He hadn't even gotten there yet. To heal the Pharisees and the doctors of the law. But they didn't receive that So consequently the man that was sick received it all. The healing power was present, but the Pharisees couldn't receive the power from Jesus.

When Jesus told the sick man to pick up his bed and walk because his sins were forgiven, it shook the Pharisees up. But Jesus was showing us that He deals with the heart before the body. The heart is what is changed first, then the body. The heart accepts first, then the body.

Do you know that salvation has already been planned and made for everyone on the planet earth? It is all up to you to accept it. Jesus died for the sins of the past, the present and the future. People are not going to hell because of adultery, fornication, homosexuality, stealing, lying, and killing. Even though those are

terrible sins. Actually the Lord shed His Blood two thousand years ago and has forgiven people - our answer was given before we ever had a problem.

What people have to do is believe in their heart and confess with their mouth that Jesus rose from the dead and then, they are saved. First it happens in the heart, then the soul receives the salvation. People who are going to hell are going for rejecting Jesus' sacrifice, That is a fact. The Lord has already done the work. Why can't we just accept what He has already done?

We've got to believe in our heart and confess with our mouth if we want salvation. The same is true with all the rest that Jesus died to give us. Not believe in our heart that He *can* save or heal us, but believe that He will.

Is it His will?

Yes. His Word is His will.

So, what exactly is a sovereign act of God then? The perfect example of a sovereign act of God is the story of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. This incident has nothing to do with God's already established Word. God decides to do

something to get Saul's attention. (Turn to Acts chapter nine for the full story.)

Saul is going to kill some Christians. The Bible says he's so ticked off that he's "*...breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:2).*" The boy is mad and he's looking to hurt somebody. The Lord decides to intervene. God slaps him off his donkey, shines a light around him and starts talking to Saul. I'll paraphrase, "Why are you persecuting Me, Saul?" Saul is blown away by this and says:

"Who are you, Lord?"

"I'm Jesus, the one you're persecuting!"

"OK, Lord. What do you want me to do?"

God tells him to go to the city and he'll be told what to do when he gets there. That begins the life of Saul who became Paul, who would soon become an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ - the one who would preach the Gospel to the gentiles. Now, that situation was a sovereign act of God. That's God doing something *outside* of what He's already said in His Word -not inside. The Bible never promised us that God would shine a light around every one of us while we re traveling down the road and tell us to stop doing what we're doing! God doesn't slap everybody whose mad and riding a donkey to persecute Christians. No, this was a special incident where God acted sovereignly *outside* of His Word and did what He wanted to do.

Wrath Is Not For You

Some people think God sends hurricanes and other natural disasters to judge His kids and get them to draw closer to Him. While there is a judgement side to God, if you are a believer and you obey Him, you'll never see it. His wrath isn't reserved for His own children. We're appointed to His grace because of Jesus' blood. God's wrath is for the ungodly and the unrighteous and it comes when the work of sin is finished.

Romans 5:9 assures us that, "*Much more then, being now justified by His Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*"

There are laws that can't be broken. "*Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:15).*" If you sin, and don't accept forgiveness through Jesus' blood, that sin will eventually come to a finished state and death will be waiting. It's sin that destroys a person, not God.

God is like a judge in a courtroom. When a judge looks at a man who's broken the law and he says, "I sentence you to die by lethal injection" does the judge go to jail for sentencing the man? No. Does the executioner go to jail for putting the drugs in the person? No. Why? Who killed that person? Did the judge kill that person? No. Did the executioner kill that person? No. That is why they can't be charged with murder.

What killed the person? The letter of the law. Sin is a spiritual law. It's what came into the world when man chose to side with satan and reject God's commandment. By man's own free will, he disobeyed God and ushered in satan's sin. That sin, which the Bible calls "iniquity" was born in the heart of satan and brings death. It's a spiritual law that begins with lust, turns to sin and ends in death.

Does God kill people? No. The sin they choose eventually kills them. All they need to do to escape sin and death is to accept Jesus as Savior. After that, they move out of the path of wrath and into His grace. If they reject Him, their sin will eventually bring about their demise.

This is the reason for spreading the Gospel in love to people. It's important that people realize God is good; that He loves them and wants them to live good lives that are free from sin's harsh end.

God will not break His Word and use His sovereign power to save people who have chosen to reject Him. God allows their free will to reign supreme. That's how just God is. He'll protect a person's right to go to hell, if they so choose. He is that *just*.

The Merciful Father

God is a merciful Father. He's honorable and just, but He will extend His mercy and grace to His kids all of their life. But He won't infringe upon our free will - and that is in regards to our salvation, our healing, our joy, our peace and everything else He wants to give us.

When we use the traditional doctrine of sovereignty as an excuse to blame God for what we haven't received, we aren't being fair to our own Father. We're accusing Him of being something He's not. And that's wrong.

Our God is good, not bad. He's merciful and loving, not impatient and cruel. He's not looking to withhold anything from us. What does He want us to have? Everything Jesus died to give us'. And every other good thing mentioned in His Word.' What He wants most, however, is that we draw close to Him and believe that He is good and that He only wants the best for us. In the beginning, God walked with man in the cool of the day. He was a Friend back then and He's still a Friend today. When man fell and sin entered the earth, God made a plan. He sent His only Son, Jesus, to redeem us and bring us back into His fellowship. Then, He sent the Holy Spirit to guide us and comfort us.

All this should tell us that our Father loves us and cares about us. He has gone to great lengths to provide for us. He's our sovereign God, unlimited in His power and unlimited in His love. But there is one thing He just will not do. He won't break His Word. He's promised to keep His promises. That's just the kind of God our Father is.

"My covenant will I not break, nor after the thing that is gone out of My lips. (Psalm 89:34)

Stealing, Killing and Destroying

In the Old Testament, people believed that everything good came from God and everything bad came from God. When Jesus came on the scene in the New Testament, He revolutionized Old Testament ideas about God and the devil.

Jesus shined a big, bright light into the world through His teachings and His life. The best part is that Jesus exposed the devil's work so that we never had to wonder again if those bad things happening were from God.

In John 10:10~11 Jesus said, *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."*

Now, if Jesus said He came to give us abundant life and called Himself "the Good Shepherd," do you really think that His Father is an angry tyrant who is raining down lightning bolts and putting sickness and disease on His children to teach them something? No! The Father, Son and Holy Spirit work in unity.

Jesus never touched people and gave them a disease. He touched them and removed their diseases. Jesus didn't kill one baby while He was on the earth. He loved children and wanted them to get close to Him. Jesus also never created a huge storm to blow away the town He was last in. He calmed storms, walked on water, healed people and multiplied food to feed people. He was a Good Shepherd.

And He went to the cross so that you could experience an abundant life.

The stealing, killing and destroying that happens in life comes from only one source the devil. Jesus told us and showed us, through His example, how to rebuke the devil and all his demons, to resist their temptations and watch them flee from our lives. He gave us knowledge of our enemy, which we desperately needed. But most of all, He gave us the power to destroy all the work of the enemy when He went to the cross!

This month, I'd like to share a story with you that I believe has been misunderstood for many, many years. It's the story of Job, God and the devil and it's a "sovereignty" doctrinal classic. This is my interpretation of this old story in light of the teachings of Jesus about the nature of that killing, stealing and destroying idiot the devil.

The Story of Job

Job was an Old Testament guy who didn't know the difference between what the devil did and what God did. Just like most of the other Old Testament guys, Job thought that everything good and bad came from God.

Because of this lack of understanding, Job's words were littered with confusing ideas about God. People have picked up on that and then preached God as a bad guy when He is most certainly not. Job said what he believed to be true, but because he didn't have a revelation on the devil and his work, he was in the dark. That's why we needed Jesus to come on the scene and give us the light of truth!

Now, this is my view of the story of Job, in light of the teachings of Jesus about the devil. To me, once your eyes are opened to the devil as the stealer, killer and destroyer of man, you can see this story much more clearly.

The Bible says that Job was a perfect and just man. Why would the devil want to attack Job? I happen to think that it was for two reasons. The first is that Job was a perfect and just man. The devil hates it when people are really into God. But the second reason I think the devil wanted Job to suffer was this - Job was the richest man in the east.

Now, consider this: if the devil could shut down Job's finances, he could shut down Job's influence in the area. Job's influence was a good one. He was known as a godly man who had prospered and grown wealthy. This made his lifestyle much more appealing to others.

The devil hates the prosperity of the righteous because it gives them greater influence in the earth. He wanted to wipe out Job. But the devil couldn't even see Job. The Bible says that there was a hedge of protection around him. So how did he even recognize Job? He recognized him by the blessings.

The devil paid a visit to God. You'll notice that the scripture says he went directly after Job offered burnt offerings for his sons, who he thought may have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. The Bible says one day the sons of God, which were angelic beings in this instance, came to present themselves to the Lord and satan came along with them.

When God saw this, He said, *"...Satan, Whence comest thou? Then satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it (Job 1:7)."*

Notice that God's first question to the devil was, and I'll paraphrase, "Where did you just come from, satan?" Do you think God wasn't aware of where the devil had just come from? Do you think He asked because He was curious? No. He already knew.

When satan answered that he'd just come from walking the earth, it was a deliberately vague and deceitful answer. Of course, we know the devil does roam the earth looking for someone to kill, steal and destroy, looking for someone to devour. But I believe God asked him where he'd come from because He already knew that satan had come from somewhere specific -Job's place.

So, God knew satan had come to Him for a reason. He wanted information about Job so God got right to the point. He said, *"Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil (Job 1:8)?"*

God likes to ask questions like this. This is one of His ways of dealing with deception. Consider Cain and Abel. God asked Cain where his brother was, even though He already knew Cain had committed murder. It's His way of allowing the person to come clean about his act or motive. He never pounces on a person immediately. He gives them the opportunity to explain themselves. When they don't, then He goes straight to the point.

In Cain's case, God talked about his brother. In the devil's case, He talked about Job. You can't pull one over on God. He sees the heart. And because He's just, He won't withhold truth from anyone, even the devil. He's honest and doesn't bend His just nature to suit the circumstance.

God was so quick to point out to the devil that Job was a good man who respected Him and refused evil. God complimented Job and even

bragged on him to the devil. He was proud of Job and He loved him.

When satan heard this, he was critical and lashed out with this: *Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face (Job 1:9-11).*"

Satan saw the blessings and hated Job's love for God. That's a point I want you to notice. Even though the devil couldn't see Job directly, he came to Heaven with an opinion of Job. He knew Job had a hedge around all his stuff, which meant the devil must have been walking around that hedge. He knew about Job's work and his wealth, which meant he must have really taken notice of that. And it angered him. He hates to see any of God's children blessed and walking righteously. He's perched and ready to devour them.

Satan lashed out at God's compliment of Job by saying that Job didn't love God for nothing. He said that if God held Job's material possessions back, Job would curse Him to His face. In other words, he was telling God that Job didn't love Him and all he cared about was his stuff. That was an insult to God. But God didn't retaliate by withholding information from satan. He told satan the truth anyway, *"And the LORD said unto satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand (Job 1.12)."*

Some people think this means that God allowed satan to hurt Job, or that God was testing Job. I believe that the truth is that the devil came to God with Job on his mind looking for ways to hurt him. He wanted information he didn't have. He knew about the hedge and hated Job's goodness and prosperity. He wanted to see Job suffer and he wanted to know if God would put His hand on Job and take his stuff away.

Now, God knew that the devil was virtually limitless in hurting mankind.

That was the horror of the fall, and sin's admittance into the earth changed everything. Did God want to let the devil know this? No. He loved Job and recognized him as a good man. Did He *have* to tell satan his limits? Yes. Because He is a truthful and just God, He did not withhold the information even though it would hurt Job.

Mankind had given the earth to satan at the Fall. At this point, the truth was that satan could touch all of the earth's stuff and it was very much in his power to inflict harm upon mankind. Apparently, the devil wasn't sure about his power on the earth when he started talking. He told God that if God put *His hand* on Job's stuff to take it away, Job would reject Him.

This was ignorance talking. Because God replied, and I'll paraphrase, *"You can put your hand on everything but Job."* God never said He was putting His hand on Job to take from him. The devil was the thief in this story.

Now, we know that Job had great fear concerning his kids. He was making those sacrifices for them because he was afraid they were cursing God. Maybe they were. With a mother like they had, who knows?

At Job's lowest point, his wife wasn't exactly a big ball of encouragement when she said, "*Why don't you just curse God and die, Job?*" Now, that's bad! In the worst of it, Job said, "*For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me (Job 3.25).*" So, he must have been fearing a lot before the devil came to steal, kill and destroy his life.

Some people say that Job's story is one of the Bible's oldest and that the events written occurred before Abraham was even born. We don't really know this, but we do know it was a different time frame. We don't know what kind of covenant, if there was any, that there was between God and Job. The sad part is that Job didn't even know about the devil really. He didn't have a revelation of fear and how it negates faith. He didn't realize the devil was the one killing, stealing and destroying people on earth. Other than Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah, hardly anybody realized the works of Satan in the Old Testament. And those that did were being given words from the Holy Spirit - divine prophecy that would be fully understood much later. So, Job was in the dark. You didn't hear him rebuking the devil once during this attack, which is believed to have lasted about nine months. You didn't see him fighting or even talking about the devil.

Job didn't have the nine Gifts of the Spirit. He didn't have the nine Fruits of the Spirit, against which there is no law. He didn't have the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. He didn't have the Holy Ghost in him. And if you read the forty-second chapter of Job, he still won in the end and God gave him twice the amount that he lost!

Now, if Job can do that living in such darkness, how much more can you that have a new covenant through Jesus Christ, the nine Gifts, the nine Fruits, revelation on the devil and the Holy Bible from Genesis to Revelation?

Today, we have everything we need to be a success in this life - spiritually, physically, emotionally and financially. We can't blame God's sovereignty for our lack of success in an area. His will for our lives is good, not bad. It's our job to recognize the devil's mark -stealing, killing and destroying - and take care of it with the Word.

God Doesn't Kill Babies

Here's another one people often lay at the feet of God's sovereignty - babies who die. "You know, the reason why the baby died is because God looked into the future and saw that the baby

would sin. So, God took the baby out when it was innocent so it would make heaven its home." I can't tell you how many times I've heard people explain the death of a child with this line!

This is an outright false doctrine. It's almost laughable. If it were the case, everybody who ever died and went to Hell could holler, "That's not fair!" And they'd be right. They could say, "Wait a minute, God! Why are you sending me to Hell? Why didn't you take me out when I was innocent and pure like you took that baby?"

If God would kill a baby so they wouldn't grow up and go to Hell, then He would be an unfair God who cares for one person more than He

cares for another. And the Bible clearly tells us that God is no respecter of persons in Acts 10:34

Again, the truth is that people say this because they just don't know why the baby died and they want to offer consolation to the grieving. I understand and I realize that people just want to show compassion, but lying about God's nature isn't the way to do it. I'd rather someone be uncertain about "why" than angry with God for something He didn't do.

The Bible tells us that if we lack wisdom in an area, we can ask for it from God and He will give it liberally (James 1:5). In these situations, I suggest the grieving parents really get alone with God and allow Him to minister to their hearts one-on-one.

Peace is found in the *presence* of God. Wisdom is found in the *presence* of God It's the only thing that can heal a person's heart from such tragedy.

To lie to a person who is going through such a tragedy is wrong. It just puts a wedge between them and God - a wedge of anger for the loss And they need God's comfort during this time more than ever.

It's our job to stand with people in faith and if we don't know something, then we ought to have the integrity to say it. We ought to have the guts to say, "Look, I don't know what happened but I know God loves you and wouldn't hurt you. We are going to pray together and search this thing out in the wisdom and power of God. God is going to give you wisdom concerning this situation and peace for your mind."

Satan kills. God gives life. The comfort is knowing that God doesn't lose one of them. Every child, who ever died on earth, went to Heaven and began growing up there. Some people don't believe that. But I know it's true because I've been there and I've seen the children with my own eyes. Whether the baby dies after five years on earth or only two days after conception, that life lives on in Heaven. And what a childhood! To be raised in Heaven learning the oracles of God - free from sin, sickness and pain. It sure beats being raised on the bayous of Louisiana!

We All Have an Appointed Time

Death is not the end of a sentence. It's just a comma in the sentence. We go on and live in another place - Heaven or Hell. There will be no unbelievers after death! Everybody will believe - whether they want to or not!

We all have an appointed time to die and after this comes the judgement of God according to Hebrews 9:27. Sometimes the devil steals a life before its appointed time, but we all have a time to die and it's important that we do what we can to keep the appointment

- and don't show up earlier than we should!

Sometimes in life people want to go earlier. Did you know Paul the Apostle was trying to die for years before he was supposed to? He talked to God about it, begging Him to get him out of here. But he ended up saying that for your sake, it was better for him to stay. He knew the Lord had a destiny for him to fulfill, even though he wanted to go home to Heaven. God called Paul to the Gentiles and he didn't want him leaving earth until that foundation of truth was laid plain for the Gentile people.

That's why when he was on death row, he didn't bawl and squall about dying. Instead Paul said, and I'll paraphrase, "Give me a piece of paper. I am going to write down one more revelation before I go home to be with God."

He was still taking care of his body cause he said, "Give me a coat."

He was still taking care of his mind because he said, "Give me some books."

But he was taking care of his destiny by saying, "But, give me the parchments. Let me tell you more about what God has said." He understood that before his appointment with death, he had to fulfill his destiny. That's a man of faith.

Temptations, Tests And Trials

Here's another one that God always gets the blame for - life's tough circumstances. But, did Jesus ever tell us that His Father was going to send us through temptations, tests and trials to teach us something? No. He said in Matthew 26:41, "*Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*"

Would Jesus tell you to watch and pray not to enter into temptation if He knew it was His own Dad who was sending it? Come on! Not when Jesus later rebukes the devil for tempting Him! The devil is the tempter. Jesus just knew our flesh was weak and the devil would prey upon that. So He told us to pray about it.

Then, why did Peter say we should count our trials as precious as gold? Because he knew that going through a trial is tough, but it shows you where you are.. .and besides, Peter went through the toughest trial of his life when Jesus was taken captive. He fell and betrayed Christ just like Judas did. The difference was that Judas didn't accept forgiveness, but Peter did.

Peter knew that trials proved our loyalty. And once he had missed the mark and then accepted forgiveness, Peter realized that he could defeat anything the devil threw at him. He'd been through the worst of it and had survived because of God's grace.

That shows you that even when you fall, if you ask for forgiveness, God can raise you up and use you in a great way. Judas lost out because he couldn't receive grace. Peter went on to do great things for God simply because He

received forgiveness and wouldn't let the devil beat him up about betraying Jesus for his entire life. The devil brings condemnation and heaps criticisms on people. God gives grace and forgiveness - and He never brings those old things up again.

The spirit of people who walk in faith is different from those who walk in doubt. After Peter received forgiveness, he was back on track.

In Acts three, when Peter and John saw the crippled man at the gate called "Beautiful" they didn't give that crippled man sympathy. They gave him compassion like Jesus would. They said, "*Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have, give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength (Acts 3:6,7).*"

Notice that they didn't wait for the man to get up, they reached down and grabbed him. Why? Because they believed it was going to happen. And notice this. They didn't even say, "Look on Jesus" before the miracle happened.

Verse four says, *"And Peter,; fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, 'Look on us'"* Wouldn't that shake up religious people if preachers went around saying that today?

No, Peter and John knew God would get the glory regardless and they wanted the man to look directly at them and know that they didn't have silver and gold to drop in his cup, but what they did have they would freely give him. What they did have was the power of God working in their lives. However, in the very next chapter you'll notice that God poured out His great grace upon them and they had silver and gold laid at their feet!

Acts 4:33-35 says, *"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."* God's grace was sufficient

for the apostles of Jesus. Every need was met so that they could do the work God had called them to do.

You've Got Authority

Jesus told us that there would be tribulation. It's part of life in a sin-filled earth. The bottom line is that there is a war going on and sometimes the devil wins a battle or two. Does it mean it is God's will, if the devil wins in one of his attempts at killing, stealing and destroying one of God's kids? No. It just means some way, somehow, he got a punch in. But his day is coming. God tells us so at the end of the Book. That idiot is going to burn.

Saved people that you know who have died of cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, accidents or some other tragedy are in Heaven now. And one day, when it's all said and done, they will all be able to look at that lying devil and say, "What? This? This is what caused all the trouble in the world? Boy, you killed me once but you can't kill me twice! I am back here again, glory to God, with a redeemed, glorified body and I'm going to cheer when God kicks you into the fire!"

We will see that happen! Jesus taught us to be of good cheer when tribulations come. Why? Because He has overcome the world with His sacrifice and you have a covenant that God won't break. Through Jesus' example we learn how to live. Through His teachings we learn how to think right - to banish all the dark, ignorant thinking and start understanding what it means to live in a sin filled earth. Through His death we gain the power and authority we need to destroy the works of the devil.

That authority is for exposing the devil's work in your life and the life of your loved ones. It's for rebuking and resisting and watching the devil flee. It's for saving the lost and healing the sick. It's for overcoming everything satan throws in your path.

When you are weak, God says you are strong. Why? Because greater is He who lives in you, than he who is running loose in this world. If God is for you, who can be against you?

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And if you say to that mountain in your life, "Be gone" and you believe it and don't doubt in your heart, it's going to start on its descent into the sea. Those problems, regardless of their size, are going to start going down.

God will be glorified by your faith; by the miracles that happen when you recognize the devil's attack against your life and use the Word to overcome his plans for your destruction.

Your covenant with God was made with the innocent blood of Jesus. And if you think He's going to dismiss that just because He's sovereign, somebody has sold you a lie. God loves you and He loves His Son. He is sovereign all right. He sovereignly decreed to abide by His Word.

[By Jesse Duplantis](#)

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