



July 5, 2007

For Goodness Sake

From time to time we encounter those who have had a life altering event and in the wake of that event have remembered that when things were not so good they tried to make a deal with God. Sometimes we hear folks recount how they pledged to be better, attend services more, read the Bible more, pray more often etc. As time passes and the bad time comes to an end most who have made these “deals” forget and over time recede into their former life and habits. There are others who are devout in their service, until something bad happens and then their ideas about God and his care for mankind are put to the test. Some give up, becoming angry and sinking into a lifelong state of agitation and depression, never resolving why God allows bad things to happen. All of this goes to show that bad things happen to all of us and while God has the power to change things and prevent them from happening he does not always do so. Satan was aware of the care that God provided for his children and used this against Job. When asked if he was mindful of Job and his devotion to God, Satan answered, ***“Doth Job fear God for nought? 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). Throughout all of his trials, Job did not give up on the Lord nor denounce his faith in God. Christ serves as the greatest example of the fact that everything isn’t going to go well for us all the time. God allowed his own son to be murdered for the sake of a world that for the most part still does not care or understand what his sacrifice meant. Some look at the world around us and see the turmoil that exists and begin to wonder where God is and why things are the way they are. It is hard for us as humans to look beyond the events on a physical level and envision something else but that is precisely where the word of God comes in. If we believe in God then we must afford ourselves the comfort of knowing. The knowledge that we

must have is contained in the scriptures and without them we will be filled with confusion. Paul told the Romans, ***“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”*** (Rom 15.4). The history that is contained in the scriptures gives us a glimpse into the lives of those who have gone before. They also tell us how God preserved and cared for his children, even through death and carnage, strengthening them in ways that allowed them to stand faithful to Him throughout their lives. The writer of Hebrews bears this out in chapter eleven, reviewing the lives of the faithful, finally summarizing their existence stating, ***“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”*** (Heb 11.39-40). Christ had not come into the world, the full revelation of God’s word had not been made known and so those faithful whose lives are recorded in chapter eleven passed from this existence with many questions about what was to come. Today we have the full revelation of the word. We have the evidence of the working of God and the promises that have been made in the scriptures. So what else is there? The judgment of course will come at which time God will decide to send Christ back. Jesus stated, ***“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”*** (Matt 24.36). We will all give an account of the things that we have done in this life (2 Cor 5.10). For that day we need to prepare. So why believe in and serve God? We hope and wait for the fulfillment of promises that have been made. A fulfillment that exists beyond this life. While there may be much disappointment and things may not always make sense, we serve God because of his goodness and promises. Not for what we might receive now. We see in the scriptures that the faithful of all time will be united with the Lord and each other through their shared faith and service. We may not be able to make sense out of a lot of things that happen in this lifetime but the absence of the answer we want does not mean that God does not care. **TLC**