

GROWING IN GRACE LETTERS! – Calling saints in Christ, (in our homes and with one another in Church), to walk in the Steps of Jesus! (1 Peter 2:15-25) Edited by James Bell, a servant of Jesus Christ!

[CRITICAL REMINDER: THE HORRIBLE DEPRAVITY and the present tense WRATH OF GOD set forth in Romans 1:18-32, in large part, GREW OUT OF (And still GROWS OUT OF!) A LACK OF THANKSGIVING to God (Rom. 1:21) LET US each one hear the word of the LORD: “IN EVERYTHING, GIVE THANKS!”]

11 25 25 V1n29- OVERCOMING ROADBLOCKS to GIVING THANKS to God! (Part 3)

THERE IS UNSPEAKABLE PAIN, SUFFERING, and EVIL in our world! Thus, there is often a huge crisis of faith for many people **because human reasoning says that**

(1) IF GOD IS all knowing, and all-loving, and perfectly good— **He must WANT to stop all the tragedy.**

(2) And IF GOD IS really sovereign and all powerful— **He must be FULLY ABLE to stop pain, suffering, and evil.**

BUT THE PAIN, SUFFERING, and EVIL continues... and grows! Therefore, a growing number of theologians, pastors, and others are openly asking— **“What kind of a monstrous god would allow all of this?”** AS ONE BAPTIST pastor states, “... If God foreknew that Adolph Hitler would send six million Jews to

their death, why did He go ahead and create a man like that? **How is God not responsible for the behavior of evil people He “unleashes” on the world—** if, in fact, He is absolutely certain of what they will do once “unleashed”? Moreover, if God is eternally certain that various individuals will end up being eternally damned, **why does He go ahead and create them?** If hell is worse than never being born, as Jesus suggests (Matt. 26:24), **wouldn’t an all-loving God** refrain from creating people He is certain will end up there?” Because of such thoughts and questions as these, **more and more people are concluding that,**

(1) God must not be all loving and all good!

(2) Or if God is all loving, God must not be all powerful! He means well. He would like to deliver the world from pain, suffering, and evil— but He is just not able to pull it off!

(3) Besides, there are lots of events that God simply does not know about until they happen! God is only and merely “The God of the POSSIBLE” who may or may not be able to carry out His will!

(4) INDEED: Out of the grief of suffering, Jewish Rabbi Harold Kushner in his best seller book, *“When Bad Things Happen to Good People”* **made the case that God is all-loving but not always all powerful to stop suffering.** Kushner’s book has been strongly embraced by Christian ministers, making his

perhaps the most widely accepted Jewish book by Christian leaders in the last half-century. It helped change the way religious professionals approach the subject of grief and suffering!"

[Like me, I hope you ARE NOT embracing the above questions; and that you cannot swallow Kushner's views!] BUT **LET'S BE HONEST— when life tumbles in with pain and suffering is it not true that many of us quickly question the goodness, love, wisdom, power, and/or the good sovereignty of God?** Moreover, it is a sad fact that many of us tend to forget, or deny, or minimize, and/or refuse to receive and apply BIBLICAL REVELATION!

What follows are some statements along with many Scripture references, which — if we receive them — will tear down ROADBLOCKS to THANKSGIVING to God and move us to peace in the midst of the storms of life!

1. GOD DOES INDEED HAVE ALL POWER AND ACCOMPLISHES ALL OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE! Biblical revelation NEVER HINTS that satan's rebellion; or man's Fall into sin; or anything that satan and/or man has ever done has ever caught God by surprise. God is not wringing his hands in fear or frustration that He will not be able to accomplish all of His good and prefect pleasure. We may not presently understand how these things can be; **but here's critical truth about the true and**

living God ... (Yes, these have been 'set forth' before— but, I need them again and again):

**** Psalm 103:19-** The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. **** Psalm 115:3-** But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. **** Psalm 135:6-** Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. **** Proverbs 19:21-** There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand. **** Proverbs 21:1-** The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever he will.

**** Isaiah 43:13-** Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it? **** Lamentations 3:37-** Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?

**** Daniel 2:20-21-** Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

**** Daniel 4:17-** ... to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

**** Daniel 4:35-** And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed

as nothing: and He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?

2. PAIN, SUFFERING, and evil have to be studied IN PROPER CONTEXT: Adam and Eve disobeyed God's instructions in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 2 & 3) As a result of that rebellion and choice to sin, we all must face multiple realities of pain, suffering, and evil!

3. In a fallen world not only people— but the entire creation suffers and groans: Romans 8:20-22! Hurricanes, Tsunamis, Tornadoes, Earthquakes, Drought, '911', atrocities of war, disease, and more are all repercussions of man's rebellion; and they 'touch' both saint and sinner!

4. From the Beginning, God revealed to Adam and Eve that they were RESPONSIBLE BEINGS who would face repercussions for disobedience: Genesis 2: 16-17. After their sin, God said: Gen. 3:16-19.

5. In our fallen world we witness the AWFUL DEPTHS of man's (OUR) depravity. And the Bible speaks plainly about the WICKEDNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART. (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-18)

6. In our fallen world, God has decreed SOWING and REAPING — SIN PAYS WAGES! We suffer for our own sin. We suffer consequences from the sins of others, such as— the drunk, the Child abuser, the Evil Politician, the specter of Terrorism! **In**

reality, the SORROW, SUFFERING, and EVIL of our world point the FINGER of guilt at us and not at any sort of supposed mismanagement, or powerlessness, or lovelessness on the part of Almighty God! **When we experience or witness some of the HORRORS of this world, WE SHOULD BE CRYING OUT:** "Look at the consequences of sin and rebellion. Look at the awesome evil potential of my own heart! Thus, "O sinner flee to Christ before it is everlastingly too late!" And, "O Christian, be amazed at grace that saved a wicked sinner like me who only deserved eternity in hell!"

REMEMBER THE HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF JOB:

- (1) God initiated the conversation with satan about Job.
- (2) Job rightly proclaimed: ***"God gave. God took away. Blessed be God!"***
- (3) God used satan to accomplish God's purposes.
- (4) JOB and his friends 'go at it' in deep and often confusing philosophical and theological discussions! During these discussions, in spite of his wrong perceptions, Job continued to hold on to a genuine faith in God.
- (5) FINALLY, GOD COMES TO JOB and asks a series of mind blowing questions!** (Job 38-41). As God asks all these questions, Job begins to realize something— the world does not revolve around me, my plans, my wants and wishes! Then,

in Job 42:5-6, Job gives the proper response of repentance to and humility before God!

7. THEREFORE, LET US UNDERSCORE this truth: The world was not created for me, for us; or for our pleasure! The world and all that is in it was created by God and for God and His purposes and His good pleasure. (Rev. 4:11) **Indeed, flowing out of the setting of satan's temptations, man's sin, and God's redemption— grand demonstrations of God's attributes are revealed as Almighty God, the Master Potter, does ALL of His good pleasure! (Rom 9:13-23)**

HERE ARE BOTTOM LINE REALITIES:

1. Yes, IN OUR WORLD, were it not for the restraining mercies of Almighty God, there would be more HITLERS, more shooters, more '911's'... etc... **Why? Because of the exceeding wickedness of human hearts! Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:22- 23; Matthew 24:21-22.**

2. FROM all of the atrocities to be found in our world... FROM every groan and all the agony on the earth — coming from man or beast — IN REALITY, IS THIS SHOUT: *"O, the awfulness and the consequences of sin... O, THE DEPTH OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY!"*

3. Here is the FAR GREATER and supreme grand mystery of planet earth— the reality that there are countless Trophies of Grace— the redeemed, what a glorious wonder! Hell deserving as all others, yet redeemed by the Blood of the

Lamb, coming right out of the midst of a world of sin and suffering— this is the great mystery! Amazing Grace!

4. The redeemed have often suffered and have often been slaughtered by God haters. The redeemed have NOT been shielded from the diseases and other sufferings found in our fallen world. **However, for all eternity, the redeemed have no complaints or regrets! (Rev. 7:14-17)**

5. From Genesis right through the Revelation, God reveals that He holds men responsible and accountable. Throughout time, God demonstrates His patience. But the day of vengeance against unrepentant rebels is coming: Romans 1:18-32; Rev. 16:4-11; 21:8. AND, for carrying out His holy and just wrath, God will be rightfully worshiped! (Rev. 19:1-2)

6. ABOVE ALL ELSE God's ultimate purpose of a Bride for His Son, out of every kindred, tongue, tribe and people is now being and will be totally fulfilled: Rev. 21:9 - Rev. 22:5.

7. Finally, let us not be surprised that we do not understand all of these revelations from God, even though they are clearly stated in His holy Word— for HIS ways are not our ways! (Isa. 55:8-11) **Nevertheless, let us HUMBLE ourselves and rejoice!**

ALMIGHTY GOD who is love, who is all powerful, who is holy, who is faithful, who is merciful, and so much more— HE

REIGNS IN GRAND AND HOLY SOVEREIGNTY! (The following quote is edited from Don Baker's book, Thank-You Therapy)

"Sovereignty means that God is free to be God... It's the truth that enables me to say THANK YOU to the One who allowed whatever it is that's the cause of my anxiety and to know that he could have controlled it if He had wished. Since He didn't, then ***I accept the fact that INFINITE WISDOM and UNCHANGING LOVE conspired with ALMIGHTY POWER to cause something that's ultimately for the Christian's good and God's glory!***"

[Who am I that I should question God on what He brings and/or what he allows? Who am I, a piece of clay, to argue with God, the Master Potter?]

"THANKSGIVING to God [Giving THANKS in the midst of a world like ours] is not a psychological tool intended to change circumstances. **It's purpose is to** change our attitudes, to lift our gaze from what we do not fully understand, **to a focus of trust in and worship of the Almighty God of Calvary love and proclaim,** "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!... For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to WHOM BE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN!" (Rom. 11:33, 36)

And let us not forget: An amazing result of such THANKSGIVING and PRAISE to God is that we begin to experience the peace of God that surpasses all understanding! (Phil. 4:6-7) WITH THANKSGIVING!

Grace! Peace! THANKSGIVING! James Bell

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sunday Services, November 30

Sunday School @ 9:30am; classes all ages

WORSHIP SERVICE @ 10:45am

(11/30- An Evening for Rest and/or Ministry!)

EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am— Men's Bible Study (Doors open by 7:30am— Enjoy Coffee / Juice / Donuts / Hardee's Biscuits!)
STUDY starts @ 8:00am— ROMANS 3

NEXT Ladies Bible Study; EARLY 2026; New Study: The Acts of the Apostles!

EVERY TUESDAY @ 10:00am – 10:30am LADIES PRAYER MEETING (Back door, first room on right)

TUESDAY EVENING, Teens, Young Adults— Bible Study, 'EXODUS!' ... 7:15pm @ Jaden & Rhi's home

WEDNESDAYS, 6:30pm— (Come in back double doors; **ADULT
MEN'S PRAYER GROUP**)

YOUNG FAMILIES— Study & Prayer Service

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GIVING) For Church Ministry and/or MISSIONS:**

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TN 37066 / OR... *TO GIVE* via ONLINE GIVING**

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