

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 4- Luke 4:38-44** 55- Jesus the Deliverer- Part 4

November 15, 2009

Luke 4:38-44

The Apostle John writes in **John 20:31**:

But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

"These have been written" referring to the record of the life of Jesus... "These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His Name." So from this we see that the claims of Jesus and the evidence that His claims were true leads us to Salvation.

And in this Book- Dr. Luke records many of the claims of Jesus and he records the evidence very carefully. Luke is a masterful theologian and also a masterful historian. History must have been his special interest because the details of his Gospel Account make it the longest of the four Gospels.

Now back in the very introduction to this Story of Salvation in Chapter 1- Luke introduced his Gospel by saying in verse 4 that his goal was that we might know the exact truth about the things that you have been taught. And he says in verse 3 that he wrote in consecutive order. So, here is Luke the historian giving us precise and exact truth laid out systematically and consecutively so that we work our way through the Life and the Ministry and the Claims and the Evidences for Jesus as the promised Savior.

Luke's investigation is very careful and his writing is very precise. We never expect to find anything that is treated lightly or haphazardly or off-handedly from Luke. Everything here has immense and careful precision in its presentation. And that goes for this passage at the end of chapter 4 from verses 38 to 44.

Now at first reading- these verses seem to be a bit disconnected and disjointed like somehow it was put together by a committee picking from here and there and everywhere and throwing together rather loosely some final thoughts at the close of a chapter. But it is not that way at all. In this passage- like all throughout this Book- we find the amazing inspired careful precision of Luke as he pulls together a summary of the necessary elements of the Ministry of Jesus to convince the reader that Jesus was, in fact- the Messiah.

Now please keep in mind that the **Gospel of Luke** is written to convince us that Jesus is the Savior. The New Testament is written to convince us that Jesus is the Savior. Even the Old Testament was written to convince us that Jesus is the Savior. The Old Testament looks forward to the Messiah and the Old Testament contains many details of what the Messiah will do when He arrives and Who He will be, and Jesus comes in perfect fulfillment of all of that.

And the Gospels record that fulfillment for us. And the rest of the New Testament comments on that. But the high point of Scripture is the Gospels because the Gospels record the perfect, sinless Life of Jesus- which is the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament. The Gospels then provide all the information upon which **The Book of the Acts, the Epistles**, and even **The Book of the Revelation** build. So this is the high point of Divine Revelation. Here is the great moment in history when the promised Redeemer arrives.

Now Luke has already given us immense proof. He has given us a wealth of evidence that Jesus is the Messiah and the Redeemer God. It all started in the first chapter with the testimony of an angel to Zacharias. And then Luke was careful to tell us the testimony of Zacharias, the Old Testament priest, and his wife Elizabeth, the testimony of Joseph and Mary, as well as the testimony of two old saints in the temple by the name of Anna and Simeon. You have angelic testimony. So you have human testimony.

Then you have the amazing evidence that Jesus is the Messiah that is brought about through the virgin birth. Never before and never since has a virgin without a man been able to produce a male child. But in this case- that was true because the Spirit of God planted that life within the womb of the virgin Mary.

Then there is further angelic testimony that Luke records in which the angel tells Mary that the child will be the Son of God and the

promised King. Then comes the birth of the forerunner to the Messiah, the voice of one crying in the wilderness- John the Baptist. Then comes the unique event at the age of twelve in the life of Jesus when He demonstrates full awareness that He was the Son of God and was in the temple because He needed to be about His Father's business.

Then came the declarative testimony of John the Baptist as He begins His ministry and proclaims that Jesus is the Lamb of God Who has come to take away the sin of the world. And then Luke records the testimony of the Father- God Himself- Who at the baptism of Jesus speaks out of heaven and says,

This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.

And then the further confirming testimony of the Holy Spirit- Who descends upon Jesus.

And then Luke records another evidence that Jesus is the Savior. After forty days of fasting Luke tells us the story of Jesus being led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit into conflict with the devil over whom He triumphs totally and vanquishes him completely. And then Luke closes out His evidences in the first three chapters by giving us the genealogy of Jesus from Adam through Abraham through David right on down to Mary.

So the long awaited Messiah has come. And the angels give testimony to it, and men and women give testimony to it, and John the prophet gives testimony to it, and Jesus Himself affirms it, and God the Father declares it, and the Holy Spirit indicates it. And the triumph over Satan proves it, and then Luke shows us that Jesus is in the promised Messianic genealogy.

And all of that by the time you come to the end of chapter 3 is a mass of evidence that Jesus is the Messiah- but all of it is preliminary to Jesus' Ministry- it is evidence *before* the actual Ministry of Jesus even begins.

But when Christ's Ministry does begin- when Jesus begins to preach and when He begins to heal people and when He begins to raise the dead and when He begins to exercise power over the world of fallen angels, the supernatural demons, the evidence becomes irrefutable and it mounts and it mounts and it mounts.

As the miracles multiply- so does the evidence so that anybody that rejects the evidence of the New Testament is guilty not only of a heinous spiritual crime, but of a crime against reason. The evidence is absolutely irrefutable.

And now in this passage- Luke does a wonderful thing to help us. Not so much in the anecdotal fashion, although there is an anecdote here, there is a story here, as in the categorical area. And in these last verses from 38 to 44 he shows us that there are three realms in which the Messiah had to demonstrate His power. There are three categories that are critical to proving Himself to be the Messiah. One is a natural category. The second is a supernatural category. And the third is an eternal category.

You see, if this Jesus is really the Messiah- then it must become clear then that He has complete Power and Authority over the effects of sin on the natural world, that He also has complete Power and Authority over the effects of sin on the supernatural world, and that He has complete Power and Authority over the effects of sin on the eternal realm.

That is to say if Jesus is Who He says He is- then He must be able to overturn our fallenness physically- the effects of sin on our bodies which is decay and sin and death. He must be able to overturn the power of demons in the supernatural world who have created a monstrous, deceptive corruption that has become the soul proprietary occupant of the mind of unregenerate men and women. And thirdly, Jesus must be able to overpower that eternal judgment upon which all of us have fallen by birth, having been born, as it were, into the kingdom of darkness, being subjects to Satan all our life, headed for eternal hell.

A true Messiah must be able to break the power of Satan over us and to forcefully and violently extract us out of that damned kingdom of darkness and deliver us into the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of light, the Kingdom of heaven.

So the Messiah must show complete Power and Authority over the natural, the supernatural, and the eternal realms. And this text before us- pulls together the indication that He, indeed, has that Power and that Authority.

Now last week- we saw that Jesus demonstrates in verses 38 to 40 that He has total Power and all Authority over the natural realm- that

He alone can, in fact, break the debilitating decaying diseasing and deadly impact of sin on our human bodies- our physical flesh. Let's read again verse 38:

Then He got up and *left* the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her.

So Jesus arose and left the synagogue there in Capernaum and He entered into Simon Peter's home, and Peter's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever- no doubt a very serious illness. And the family made request of Jesus on her behalf. They knew of His healing power. He had been in Capernaum before and exhibited it and His reputation was mounting, as verse 14 earlier indicated. He went in and standing over her rebuked the fever and it left her, and she immediately arose and waited on them.

And verse 40 adds the general reality of His healing power- that while the sun was setting at the end of that Sabbath- all who had any sick with various diseases brought them to Jesus and laying His hands on every one of them- He was healing them all.

And so Luke is showing us that Jesus is the Creator God in human flesh Who has total power over all diseases in all people, and can heal all illnesses all the time. This demonstrates His power over the effect of sin on our natural bodies.

Now we learned last time that there are six attributes of Jesus' healing Power. Six characteristics that are always true about Jesus' healing Power:

1. Jesus always healed with just a word or a touch
2. Jesus healed instantly
3. Jesus always healed totally
4. Jesus healed everybody
5. Jesus healed organic diseases
6. Jesus raised the dead

So let's go over them one at a time:

1. Jesus always healed with just a word or a touch. He never screamed or shouted, He never even raised His Voice, He never argued with the disease, and He never debated with a sickness. Just like Jesus had total Power and Authority over the devil and all demons- as God Almighty in human flesh- Jesus had total Omnipotent Power and Authority over all diseases. He spoke- and they left. He touched the sick and they recovered.

2. Jesus healed instantly. It was very critical for Jesus to make sure that any healing was connected to Him- that it was immediately connected to Him. It could never be a progressive healing. The healing could not happen days or weeks later. It could never be a process or there might be another explanation. When people were healed by Jesus- they were healed instantaneously.

Now someone asked me a question about the incident in **Mark 8** where Jesus speaks to a blind man. And Jesus touches the blind man and asks him what he sees, and the man says that he sees men as trees walking. And later Jesus spits and touches his eyes and the man saw clearly and the question is, "Isn't that a *progressive* healing?" And the answer is "No".

All that happened here is that Jesus first touched the man and asked him, "*How do you see?*" And the man gave Jesus the definition of his blindness. He said, "*I see only in this way- I see men like trees moving.*" In other words- it's a blur and I can't tell the difference between a tree and a man.

That was the condition of the man's blindness which he had *before* he was healed. The first time Jesus touched this man- it was not to heal him- but simply to get the man to answer the question of how badly he saw. Then Jesus instantaneously healed the man.

You see, it was necessary for Jesus to heal with a word or a touch instantaneously so that it was clear to everybody that He was the very Source of that healing Power, and that He was the Creator God in the flesh, and that He was the messiah and could demonstrate this kind of Divine Power.

Now later on- Jesus delegated that same kind of Power to His Apostles and the 70 disciples who preached His Gospel and who declared His Deity and His Messiahship. But even at that- their ability to heal the very same exact way that Jesus did was minimal at best.

But Jesus Himself always healed with a word or a touch and He always healed people instantly.

3. Jesus healed totally. When Jesus healed people- there was no recuperation process- no rehabilitation. Here in **Luke 4-** we see that Peter's mother-in-law was healed and she immediately got up after having a high fever with absolutely no weakness, no recuperation period, no physical problems whatsoever. This woman was as healthy as if she had never been ill, and she immediately went about doing her duties to serve dinner to a large crowd of people on that Sabbath afternoon.

4. Jesus healed everybody. Several times in the Gospel accounts- we read that Jesus healed everyone. Nobody went away not healed like they do in all of the so called healers of our day. These guys always have people go away sorrowful because they weren't healed- but not Jesus.

5. Jesus healed organic diseases. That is Jesus always healed those real diseases of every kind that strike people all the time. Real diseases were eliminated when Jesus healed. There was none of this, *"I think I feel better"* when Jesus healed. It was organic diseases. If the medical profession had been back then what it is today- all of Jesus' healings would have been medically documented healings.

6. Jesus also raised the dead. Jesus had the ability and the Authority to bring life back into a dead man's body and cause that dead man to live again. Only God can do that and Jesus did that all the time, and He did it everywhere in every setting in every circumstance; in public areas and in large crowds and in all kinds of places. He never had to stage it- it was not that these people were technically dead or people thought they were dead- these people were stone cold dead, and in the case of Lazarus- he had been dead for several days and his body had already begun to decompose.

Now please listen to this. As I have told you repeatedly throughout this series on physical healing- God is a healing God by nature just as He is saving God by Nature. And God heals sick people today- but only according to His Will- not because some shyster says he

has a hot hand. And we must know that as a Good and Merciful God- God heals the sick bodies of both believers and those who do not believe in Him, and God even heals those who fight against Him.

But as true as that is- physical healing is very, very rare, and it is a miracle and it is notable every time it happens. It does not happen all the time today because it has never been prevalent in the earth at any time except when Jesus walked the earth.

Throughout all of human history since the Fall and the entrance of decay and the entrance of death and disease and the entrance of demons and the dominion of Satan, since all of that began back in **Genesis 3**- there had never been such an explosion of Power on the earth as there is right here when Jesus is in His earthly ministry.

There is not one single recorded miracle between the Fall of Adam and Abraham- some 2200 years. You don't have any overpowering of demons for that 2200 years either. And from the time of Abraham- somewhere around 2200 BC down to about 750 BC- the time of Isaiah the Prophet- a 1500-year period- the Bible only records 20 healings or 20 miracles that relate to the human body- 20. That's it in all the earth with all the millions of people who were sick and who need a miracle- just 20.

And from the time of Isaiah the Prophet in about 750 B.C. to the time of Jesus Christ- a span of over seven centuries- the Bible records no healings. None. Zero.

So what we have is those very rare and uncommon and unique occasions from Abraham to Isaiah when God was revealing Old Testament Truth, and He used miracles to point to and to give credibility to those men who were His spokesmen and His prophets. But it was very, very rare.

But as soon as Jesus began his Ministry- there's an explosion of miracles that can't even be counted by the thousands and tens of thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands. But as the New Testament era winds down and Christ returns to Heaven- the healings and the miracles begin to wind down and then the disciples are all martyred, and by the time you get to the end of Paul's ministry- we read in the Bible that Paul is sick and Timothy is sick and Epaphroditus is sick and Trophimus is sick, and Paul says, "I left him sick." So the miracle and healing power begins to fade away in conjunction with the

completion of the Revelation of God that we know today as the Holy Bible.

So this healing explosion during Jesus' earthly Ministry makes it very clear that this was an absolute unique moment in human history. The Messiah had come and Jesus was the Creator God- Who had Power over the physical effects of sin and who had Power over the mental impact of demonic deception and He demonstrated that Power by healing and casting out demons.

And this is very good news for us today because that means that Jesus can ultimately save us from the effects of sin in our bodies as well. And He can give us that new body **Philippians 3:20** talks about- that will one day be fashioned just like His Own glorious Body. But no such healing gift ever existed before Jesus or since because no one is like unto Jesus. This was all unique to Him and to a lesser degree- His Apostles.

And that brings up the question- and it's a very important question- *Does God perform miracles today?*

And I will answer this question in the same way that I have been dealing with the issue of physical healing- with Biblical Truth. God is a healing God by Nature even as He is a saving God by Nature, and He is a miracle working God by Nature- that is Who God is and those are things that God does. By definition- the God of the Bible is an Omnipotent God Who moves and does according to the good pleasure of His Own Will- so basically- God can do whatever He wants to do.

But in context with Biblical Revelation- the answer to that question is, basically "No". The Truth is that this kind of explosion of miracles and healings belonged only to that unique time of the Messiah's first Advent- His earthly Ministry- and the time of the writing of the great record of His arrival in the New Testament. There has never been a time of miracles in the entire history of mankind that was like this time when Jesus walked the earth- never. And you certainly don't have to believe me about this- study the Bible and you will find out for yourself.

Our day is not a miracle time. And we shouldn't live our lives going around expecting miracles like we read about in the Gospels. Miracles were extremely rare throughout all of human history before Christ was born. And we will find genuine miracles to be even rarer today.

Does God perform healing miracles today? Yes- but not as the so-called healers on TV promote- not at all. God can do whatever He wants anytime He wants, and He doesn't have to check in with me or you or anyone else to find out if He has permission.

And it is certainly possible that there may be some rare occasion, similar to what He did in the time between Abraham and Isaiah that God may do something that we would call miraculous. And by that we mean a suspending of natural law.

He certainly can do that if He so chooses to do it. There's no way we can or should put any limits on what God will do. But we can say that miraculous healings are not normal and not common place.

There was a book published some years ago by a false healer in America called A Miracle A Day Keeps the Doctor Away. And later on- he changed the title to A Miracle A Day Keeps The Devil Away. And like most of these kinds of books- the author pledged that God was obligated to do a miracle every day for everybody who would just claimed one. But that cannot be proven in Scripture. Miracles and healings- were manifested only to bring credibility to the Word that was received from God by the Prophets in the OT and the Apostles in the NT. And Jesus performed miracles to verify that He was the Messiah.

But once it was verified the Jesus was God, and once the Word that was received by the OT Prophets and NT Apostles was recorded and published- there was no further need of the signs and the gifts and the anointings and the abilities and the offices that God used to get the Word in the first place.

Now people have said to me- *"As long as there is one sick person left on earth- there is a need for healing, and as long as there is a need for miracles- miracles will be done"*. And that statement sounds real great and all, but the fact of the matter is that other than when Jesus walked the earth- God never healed everybody who was sick at any time in human history. At no point in human history have Healings and miracles been prevalent. They have always been rare and they were never wholesale at any point in time and they were never universal.

And even when Jesus walked the earth- He was very focused and reserved about these things. Sick people stayed sick and died during Jesus' earthly Ministry.

And probably the most powerful illustration of this is found in **John 5** at the pool of Bethesda. Bethesda was a place where many sick

and impotent folk gathered to be, healed and Jesus went there and went to one single man and healed that man in a miraculous demonstration of Power and Glory, and then left without even speaking to anybody else who was sick.

So this is not a day of miracles. Don't expect God to suspend natural law simply because you would like Him to. And don't expect that anybody alive on this planet today has the ability to heal people. That gifts of healing that the Bible speaks about was unique to Christ and the Apostles to whom He delegated that Power. And even the Apostle Paul at the end of his ministry doesn't have that ability to heal anyone- including himself.

So then *"Should we pray for God to heal people today?"* If this is not the age of miracles and if nobody has the gift of healing, should we pray to God to heal people from illnesses? And the answer is of course, "Yes!" We are told to pray to God for whatever is on our hearts. And it is never wrong to try to help people who are sick or diseased or hurt or who suffer- whether that means pray for them or sit with them or embrace them or feed them or clean them or take them to the doctor or help them pay their medical bills. It would be wrong *not* to pray for them. **James 5:16** says:

... The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

1Peter 5:7 says:

Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

As a child of God- you have that privilege. You can go to God and you can pray, and He assumes and expects that You're going to pray about those burdens and those matters that are on your heart. And He promises to answer your prayer according to His Will. He may not always answer your prayers the way you want them answered- but God is faithful to answer prayer according to His will.

And part of God answering your prayers according to His Will means that God moves on those things that He sees as being important- not what we think are important. In other words- God moves on those things that are priorities with Him- not with us.

For example- the worst thing about a quadriplegic is not his injured spine- it is his sin. The worst thing about a poor man is not his

lack of money- it is the condition of his heart. The worst thing about any human being is the fact that we transgress against God all day long.

And we are moved by our five senses- what we see and feel and hear and smell and taste- but God is moved by eternal things that are unseen and unheard and unknown to human beings.

So God is infinitely more interested in blessing that person with conviction and giving him Salvation, and God is infinitely more interested in that person loving and serving Jesus with Joy than He is in healing him.

Yet the injury that made that man helpless seems to us as fellow human beings to be so horrible and so unfair and so tragic. And we are tempted to say that God could not possibly have done this evil thing - but that the devil touched him. And we are tempted to want that man to walk again, and we are wanting that man to be free from the pain and the suffering, and that is perfectly normal for human beings to want. There would be something wrong with us if we did not want that.

But we must know that God loves that man more than we do, and God is far wiser than we are, and so if that injury serves to break the staff of that man's pride and convict that man of his sin and brings him to a place of repentance- and he is saved as a result of his injury- then how could we then say that the injury was a bad thing? We have to know that good health and lots of money and human happiness are all fleeting and temporary things- but Salvation is God's Mercy and the ability to be convicted of sin is a gift from a loving Creator.

So whatever God has to bring into our lives or whatever God has to take away from our lives that causes us to be more humble and more godly, and less arrogant and less in love with money and less covetous and more like Jesus- whatever that thing or that series of things that God allows to come to us- no matter how evil or how horrible or how terrible those things seems to our natural eyes- if we are, in fact, molded and shaped into the image and likeness of Jesus as a result of those things- then I will be faithful to tell you that the Bible teaches that this is a demonstration of God's Mercy and not a curse at all.

But we must know that there is a real backward theology at play in the modern Church that says that God is sitting there waiting on us to do something- to either pray the right prayers or to say the right words or to rise up in faith and denounce the devil or to cry out against

the disease and until we do that- God is just going to sit there waiting on us.

And as far as I can tell that is not taught anywhere in the Bible, but it all goes back to the real bad preaching of Billy Sunday and Charles Finney back in the 19th Century who both taught that Man has to take the first step and then God moves in response to our faith. And this teaching is very popular today as it pertains to Salvation, and these modern healing ministries have just brought that very same unbiblical theology over into miracles and healings.

But the Bible does not teach that God responds to us moving first. The Bible says that God doesn't respond to humans at all. The Bible says that God is Sovereign and that God moves first because God does all things after the predetermined Counsel of His Own Will. Nothing takes God by surprise and God does not wait on any Man- Man must wait on God. Man does not choose God- God chooses man, and God is not sitting back waiting on us to pray the right prayer before He can spring into action- that's just nonsense.

Ephesians 1 says that we are saved- but only because God chose us to be saved from before the foundation of the world; **1John 4:19** says that we love Him only because He first loved us. **Ephesians 2:8** says that we have faith to trust in His Promises- only because God graciously gave us that faith; **1Peter 1:5** says that we remain in Jesus - only because we are kept by the Power of God; and **Philippians 2:13** says that we have both the will and the power to do of God's good Pleasure- only because God Sovereignly worked in us to give us that will and that ability.

I want you to turn with me and look at a very important passage that speaks to this subject found in **Genesis 50:20**. Now as you know the story- Joseph was betrayed by his brothers who sold him into Egypt as a slave and he was then betrayed by Potipher's wife, and then he was betrayed by the butler. It seemed as though- every time Joseph did what was right- he was punished and he spent almost 13 years in prison for obeying and serving God, and through a series of Providential events- and by God using Joseph to interpret Pharaoh's dream- Joseph was taken out of prison after spending almost 13 years there and was made the Prime Minister of Egypt in one day.

And here in Chapter 50- Joseph's brothers are coming to him very sheepishly and they are being confronted with the wickedness of their own hearts, and in **Genesis 50:20** Joseph makes this profound statement:

As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

Now most of the time- this verse is taught as though it says:

You meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good

... meaning that the devil did the wicked or the bad thing first, and then after we rose up in faith and after we rebuked and bound the devil, and after we resisted against the evil that came on us in that particular situation- then God woke up and God rose up and God rode in like the Calvary, and God moved in response to what we did first to turn that "bad thing" into a "good thing". That is usually how this passage is taught.

And it is from this wrongly interpreted and wrongly applied verse- that Finney and Sunday and many others today get the false notion that Man must move first and then God responds to what we do afterward.

And this teaching is very prevalent in our day- especially as it pertains to financial blessings and physical healings- that God is sitting up in Heaven- very passively- waiting on us to have enough faith to be healed or blessed and then he will come to our rescue. And this false teaching then goes on to say that the only reason why we are not healed- every single time we get sick- is simply because we don't have enough faith or we don't pray the right prayers or we don't say the right words.

And the result of this false teaching being taught and being believed by millions in our day is that not only are these people sick- but now they are condemned as well- because according to this false teaching- the very people who had enough faith to be saved and who had enough faith to walk with God and overcome temptation for years suddenly don't have enough faith to be healed.

And I tell you this is one of the most vicious and cruel and wrong teachings that exists in the modern Church- and it is all based on a misread and a mis-understood and a misinterpreted verse here in Genesis that doesn't even say what they say it says.

We should be very quick to denounce this false teaching- every time we hear it- because the God of the Universe is not passive at all-

but He is the most active and effectual Being in the entire Universe, and the Bible doesn't teach that God is sitting up in Heaven - passively waiting until Man rises up in faith before He can move- no, the Bible declares that God does all things after the counsel of His Own Will and God is not waiting on anything. God is very busy right now- carrying out His Plan that He developed and put into motion- from way before He ever made the worlds.

God does not heal in response to anyone's faith- that is simply not true. God heals sick bodies based upon the good pleasure of His Will- regardless of whether or not the people are even saved. God doesn't need our faith to heal or to bless or to save us, and God never in any way responds to what we do first. I have no idea what God these people are talking about- but the God of the Bible is Omnipotent and Effectual and Sovereign, and He doesn't wait on any man. God is not a responder- God is an initiator.

So I pray that you can see that **Genesis 50:20** doesn't say that at all. This verse says that Joseph's brothers,

... meant evil against (Joseph), *but* God

... meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

And this is a completely different concept- in fact, it is the very opposite concept than what is being taught today- that Man moves first, that Man rises up in faith first, and then God moves in response to what we do first. This verse does *not* say that God "turned" the evil that Joseph's brothers did him to "good" in response to Joseph's faith- no, this verse says that God *meant* what happened to Joseph all along- both the suffering and the glory that followed- both his unfair treatment and his appointment as the Prime Minister- so that God's Plan to save much people would come to pass.

This verse says that even though Joseph's brothers thought within themselves to do Joseph harm- and they were held responsible by God for the evil that they did- that God is Sovereign and that God *ordained* or predetermined- which is what the word "meant" means- that God *allowed* the evil that happened to Joseph, and God *allowed* his brothers to do him evil, and God *allowed* Potiphar's wife to lie, and God *allowed*

the butler to forget Joseph, and God *allowed* Joseph to sit in a jail cell for almost 13 years - so that God's greater Plan to save much people alive would come to pass.

And I tell you that this very same Sovereign, Omnipotent, and Effectual God is still in charge today, and we who are saved are in His Hands- and those Hands are strong and those Hands are capable and those Hands are Kind and Loving and Secure, and, therefore- whatever comes our way- no matter how "good" it looks to us and no matter how "bad" it looks to us- the Promise of Scripture found in **Romans 8:28** is that everything that God has Sovereignly allowed to come into our lives is working together with everything else that God has allowed to come into our lives for the greater good of the Glory of God- even though what may be happening to us now may seem to us to be "bad" or even "evil".

The entire Book of Job was written to tell us that satan must always, and in all cases, get permission from God before he can do anything to God's chosen people. So there is nothing that can come to a child of God other than what God has allowed- and if God has allowed it- then it for His Glory- no matter what it looks like to us. And strong faith is not about escaping trouble, strong faith is not about eliminating sickness or disease or pain or suffering or afflictions or persecutions- and strong faith is not about always being delivered from these things.

No, strong vibrant Biblical faith will rejoice if God so chooses to heal and deliver and bless and prosper and change our situations. But strong faith in God will always rejoice and persevere through sicknesses and pain and suffering and afflictions and unfair treatment and persecutions and trouble because it trusts in the Promise of God.

The Bible teaches that there are two ways in which God moves as it pertains to deliverance and physical healings and blessings- two ways- not just one. There are times when God graciously and mercifully heals the sick bodies of human beings, and we rejoice over that with gladness of heart, and we are to praise God and love Him and worship Him for His Goodness and Kindness when God chooses to do glorify Himself through the healing and deliverance of His people.

But there are times when the Bible also declares that those who are strong in faith and who love and serve God faithfully are *not* delivered, they are *not* healed, they are *not* blessed, they are *not* taken out of unfair treatment or persecution- but it is God's Will that He be glorified through their faithful walk *in* their pain and through their

joyful submission *to* their suffering, through their faithful perseverance *in* their trouble and *in* their sickness and *in* their afflictions.

There are times, dear friends, that God is most glorified in us and through us by not doing what we want and by refusing to heal and by refusing to deliver and by refusing to allow the suffering to stop. And I tell you that we are to receive that from the Hand of God with as much rejoicing and as much praise and as much joy and as much faith as we did the other.

We must remember that as God- God does not look at things the way that we do. We see things through fallen eyes, and we reason things through a fallen mind- our understanding of what is bad and what is good is very limited by our five sense and we are trapped in our own human limitations of the here and now- but God is high and He is lofty and He is eternal and infinite, and God is all wise and all-knowing and He looks at the past and the present and the future all at once, and God is very busy- working all things together after the Counsel of His Own Will so that His Divine Plan is carried out in the earth. And that is why there are times that God doesn't move on our prayers the way that we think He should, and why He doesn't always heal, and why He doesn't always do what seems to us to be so right. Please turn with me to **Hebrews 11:32-35**.

Now this entire Chapter of **Hebrews** is called the Hall of Fame of Faith. It is a testimony to what true, genuine, Biblical faith can and will do in the lives of God's children. And we see an example of this in verses 32 through the first part of verse 35 where it says:

32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed *acts of* righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

35 Women received *back* their dead by resurrection...

So we see from this that great and wonderful things happened because of strong and vibrant faith- and we should emulate that faith and we should embrace that faith in our lives today. But now look at the last part of verse 35 through verse 38:

35 ... and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two,¹ they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

38 (*men* of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

So while we saw that the first group in verses 32- 35 received "great" and "nice" and "wonderful" things from the exercise of their faith- this second group here in verses 35- 38 received what we would call "bad" things. The first group was healed and delivered and saw miracles and powerful supernatural demonstrations of God's Power at work in their lives while this second group were beaten and maligned and persecuted and killed and made destitute, and they were not healed and they were not delivered.

And most people today who are being taught wrongly would simply say that the first group exercised faith while the second group didn't. That the reason why the first group was blessed and healed and prosperous and delivered was because they had strong faith, and the reason why the second group was not healed and was not blessed and was not delivered was because their faith was not strong or else they didn't exercise their faith properly.

But I beg you to examine verses 39&40 with me very closely:

39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

The first thing I want you to see is that the writer of Hebrews uses the phrase- "these all" in verse 39. So you see that? And the phrase "these all"- means both the first and the second group. So the writer is tying both groups together- the group that was blessed and healed and delivered in verses 32- 35 with the group that was not in verses 35-38.

And what does the writer say in the inspired infallible words that come after the phrase "these all"?

... gained approval through their faith...

This writer says that both groups gain approval through faith; that both groups- the group that was healed and the group that was not healed- both had a good and wonderful and powerful testimony of their faith. The group who was delivered and the group that was not delivered- both groups had a powerful and wonderful and eternal testimony of God's Goodness and God's Provision and God's Glory through their faith.

The one group gave God glory for His Physical Healing and His Deliverance and His Mercy in rescuing them from their circumstances, while the other group gave God Glory for His Strength to endure the pain and His Provision in the storm and His Kind and Loving Mercy in saving their sinful and unworthy souls- even though their bodies perished and were not delivered.

And although the writer goes on to teach that all these OT Jewish heroes had far less in all of this than we have now in the Lord Jesus Christ- the point is clear- the difference between why some of these faithful servants were healed and delivered and others were not had absolutely nothing to do with their faith- because the writer says here that both groups manifested great and lasting faith.

So the difference is in the Will of God, dear friends- the Sovereign Plan of God; the Omnipotent Good Pleasure of our loving Creator God Who Sovereignly chooses to be glorified in some faithful servants through merciful deliverance *out* of their suffering while choosing to be glorified in others through merciful sustenance *in* their suffering. And our place is not to try to determine who is to be healed and who is to be delivered and who isn't- but our place is to pray for all and to hope for all and to love all and to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep, and when God so chooses to heal and deliver and bless - we are to rejoice with gladness of heart and worship God for His Goodness and when God so chooses *not* to heal or chooses not to deliver or bless- to rejoice with gladness of heart and worship God for His Goodness and to know and to trust that God does all things well and we are safe in His Arms.

Let's come and pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.