

There is nothing too hard for thee.

Jer. 32:7 Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.

The characters in the Bible have much to teach us, how they were ordinary people just like us with their ‘highs’ and ‘lows’. Whether they were prophets like Jeremiah, or kings like David, often they were despondent with how their people were increasingly becoming entangled with idolatry and false religion.

From a Christian’s perspective, we can empathise for there is a similar movement in ‘full swing’ today. For example, we have recently heard how a thousand Scottish churches in one denomination are due to close. That means, in a once-strong Christian country, many communities will have no church for there is not enough interest to sustain one. ... It is not only happening in one denomination, but it is happening in many places. That is the stark reality!

We are constantly being told people don’t ‘do’ religion anymore! The atheistic secularists and humanists gloat the Church is, - as far as they see it, - on an unstoppable decline and with great glee they prophesy Christianity will soon be ‘a thing of the past’. ... So, what is the point, - is there any point, - in swimming against such a potent tide of opposition? Job mourned, *Job 21:6* I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh. ⁷ /Why/ do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? ⁸ Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. ⁹ Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. ... ¹³ They spend their days in wealth ... ¹⁴ ... they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

But let’s not be surprised this is happening though, for the Lord Jesus warned about it, Take heed that no man deceive you (Mt. 24:4). Be careful, be on the watch for anyone who would try to mislead you ... to take you on a path you know you ought not to be on ... to convince you something is true when it is false.

The world says nothing is wrong any more. If it suits you, you are free to do it! And unfortunately, in churches there are many who do not open their Bibles so as to be clear about what God says is right and wrong. Instead, they listen to the alluring sounds from the many seducing spirits of our age. They receive the well-choreographed falsehoods dressed in enticing garments of subtle deception. ... And no wonder many stray from the truth of God’s Word and become enthralled by the ‘vain janglings’ Paul warned Timothy about (I Tim. 1:6). ... And when Jesus said, Take heed that no man deceive you, He was warning His disciples how in the last days particularly (Mt. 24:3), many pretenders will boldly enter places of worship and seduce many away from God’s Word. ...

And the Lord Jesus is eminently aware of what is happening today for in Heaven He continually intercedes for every believer before His Father's throne, as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, *Jn. 17:15* I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. ... We are being kept because our Saviour is praying for us!

God has a path for His people to travel during these troublesome times. For many today, it results in persecution, imprisonment, and even death. Increasing numbers of our brothers and sisters in the faith are dying for Christ ... and that is why we decided in our church meeting recently to send a gift to support some of them. We are grateful to God He has kept such wickedness from us, but nonetheless Satan is busy in our churches for he knows his time is short!

And the path we are on is not 'in step' with the world, and neither should it be because the final destination of our journey is that city, whose builder and maker is God (*Heb. 11:10*) ... for we have been saved *by* God's grace and we are being kept *in* God's grace ... and how attentive and vigilant we must be!

Over one hundred and twenty-three years ago, God put it into the hearts and minds of over forty people to begin His work in this place. During those years, many have come in and out through the doors. The Word of God has been preached. The Gospel expounded. People responded. Souls saved. God's children strengthened and edified. Many hurdles and obstacles were overcome by God's grace ... and God has maintained in this place His witness for over one hundred and twenty-three years. ... How many shops and businesses in Kirkcaldy have lasted that long?! ... The mines are closed, the linoleum factories are closed, and multiple shops in the High Street closed ... but God has maintained His witness in this place for such a long time ... but is He losing His power in these more recent years? Has it become too difficult for even Him to repel the pervading spirit of this age? Is His voice being silenced?

And in our quiet moments, dare we question as David did, *Psa. 42:5* Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? ... Is that how you sometimes feel? ... Like Elijah, you despair, I, even I only, am left (*I Kings 19:10*) ... like Job when he cursed the day he was born (*Job 3:1*) ... or like Jonah when he squirmed beneath the gourd tree (*Jonah 4*).

When you trace through the lives of the men and women in the Bible who belonged to God, He kept them, despite their weaknesses and fears. ... He kept them *through* their anxieties. He kept them when they were dragged off to a foreign idolatrous land. He kept them through the times of all their invaders. ...

How did He do that? Because deep within their souls He had planted the hope and confidence, that despite every weight which was laid upon them, they possessed an unbreakable trust in their invincible God, **Ps. 22:28** the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations. ... ²⁷ All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. ^{42:11} hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him. That was also Job's confidence, **Job 19:25** I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: ²⁶ And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: ²⁷ Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold,

“God answers prayer in the morning, God answers prayer at noon, God answers prayer in the evening, So keep your heart in tune”. ... “God is still on the throne, and He will remember His own; though trials may press us and burdens distress us ... He never forsaketh His own; His promise is true, He will not forget you, God is still on the throne!” ... He is watching, and we are under His protection, and there is no power on earth to match the power of God, **Rom. 8:38** neither *the power of* death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹ Nor height, nor depth *L... any of this world's dimensions!*, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord ... and He is working out all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:11,12).

That's God's 'benchmark', *His glory*. He has made it perfectly clear, **Is. 42:8** I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another. ... It is how it was when David stood before Goliath. It was not with youthful folly or exuberance he stood before that great giant! Not at all, for as David stepped out into the valley of Elah, he was already convinced the battle was the Lord's. He was certain His God would deliver his enemy into his hands, no matter how powerful, or how large, or how loud his adversary boasted! ... The armies of King Saul hid behind the rocks every time Goliath mockingly challenged them until this young man of God confronted him on the battlefield. David was massively outsized, out-armed, and 'out of his league' as far as everyone was concerned. But when David the shepherd-boy heard the giant, he called on the fighting men of Israel, who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? (I Sam. 17:26). And as their heads drooped in shame, David prepared himself to stand in front of the giant who *laughed* at him. Undeterred, David boldly confronted him in the confidence of the Lord, ⁴⁵ Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. ⁴⁶ This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷ And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth

not with sword and spear: for *the battle is the LORD'S*, and he will give you into our hands. ... Nothing of David, but to God be all the glory!

How can you win hiding behind the rocks? ... Conversely, how can you lose when the Lord is on your side? ... To even contemplate defeat is to sound the notes of disbelief in Him, *the battle is the LORD'S*, and he will give you into our hands!

Paul explains how ^{Eph. 6:12} we wrestle not against flesh and blood *human agencies alone*, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places *against unseen wicked forces*. ... We are 'out of our league' and we dare not go out against the enemy in our strength for it is a battle we would certainly lose! There would not even be any point facing the enemy if we did not have the Lord on our side! ... God's work is only to be achieved for His glory ... and the only way we can be successful, is to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of *his* might (Eph. 6:10).

Jeremiah sounded this same victory song, ^{Jer. 32:7} Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. ... Faith in God is trusting Him beyond what is already there, like Elijah at the brook Cherith and later in the town of Zarephath. It is about believing in God when there is no earthly reason to believe. That is what faith is, "being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see (Heb. 11:1). It is about obeying God despite the evidence around us. ... In Egypt Joseph believed, in spite of being a slave. In Babylon Daniel believed, in spite of the lions. In the fiery furnace, his three friends of Daniel despite the flames. ... Often God leads us to where our faith will be tested and tried to confirm its substance. Warren Wiersbe puts it well, "No matter what our problems are, God is greater, and the more we see His greatness, the less threatening our problems will become".

Over these next few weeks and months, we have 'a steep hill to climb', ... but the same God Who kept His people in Egypt, Who then led them through the wilderness, Who brought them into the land He had promised, He is the same God we trust in today, and we look to Him and we affirm with the prophet, Jeremiah, ^{Jer. 32:17} Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, *and there is nothing too hard for thee*.