

## God Works Subtly Behind The Scenes

'We give thanks to You, our God. We give thanks for Your Name is near. Men tell about Your wondrous works' (Psalm 75:1). 'Declare God's glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples' (Psalm 96:3).

We often hear the phrase, "God works in mysterious ways," or as the Bible says, 'Can you fathom the mystery of God? Or can you probe the limits of the Almighty?' (Job 11:7). His ways might be mysterious to most people but to those who know Him intimately, His dealings are often obvious. We should all ask what Moses asked, "If I have found favour in Your sight, please show me Your ways so I may know You, so I may find favour in Your sight" (Exodus 33:13). Moses had the correct attitude. Most people know the actions of God but not a lot of people know the way God works. Moses wanted to know more than what God could do, he wanted to know how God worked things out before He acted. In our lives, we may know God is there and have a mental picture in our minds of the way He works but until He reveals His ways to us, He remains an invisible mystery.

God works for the overall good of all mankind to lead as many people to salvation and obedience as He can, depending on who is willing to accept Jesus as their Saviour a form a relationship with God through Jesus. God knows all things and He knows every person before they were born. Every person born on this earth was destined and called to walk with God but millions refuse His way of salvation, so to get their attention, sometimes God uses drastic measures. 'We know all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also destined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so He might be the Firstborn among many believers. Whom God destined, those He has also called. Whom He has called, those He also justified. Whom He justified, those He also glorified' (Romans 8:28 to 30). Jesus said, "Many are called but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). Many people are called but few choose God's way. God wants a relationship with every person on earth but it has to be their choice. He said, "Whoever desires, let them come" (Revelation 22:17). God never forces anyone to accept Jesus but He does move in various way to get their attention.

The Lord usually uses people or familiar situations to do His works on earth in a non-miraculous way. He normally only performs miracles for two reasons; when there is no person available to do the work He wants done or if what He wants to achieve is impossible for mankind to achieve. For example, when God wanted slavery abolished, He used a mighty man of God named William Wilberforce who first had to become a politician then he needed the courage to take his case to parliament. His case went through court and Wilberforce won, bringing human ownership and slavery to an end in the Western World, although many illegally held slaves exist in third world countries. In that instance, God used a man of God and a very familiar situation to achieve His goal. On the other hand, when God wanted to abolish slavery during the time of the Hebrews, God used His supernatural power to work miracle after miracle until the Children of Israel were freed from slavery. God used Moses to work with Him, but God worked many miracles before, during and after the Israelites left Egypt. God worked constant miracles during their forty years in the wilderness. Eighty years before the Exodus, when we read the story about the birth of Moses and his life, we will be able to see how God worked subtly behind the scenes to bring Moses to adulthood.

We could use the phrase, 'It just so happened.' It just so happened Moses was born to two very faithful, God fearing people who had the faith to hide Moses until he was about three months old. 'The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt. She bore to Amram, Aaron, Moses and their sister Miriam' (Numbers 26:59). 'When

Moses was born his parents hid him by faith, because they saw he was a beautiful child and they were not afraid of the king's commandment (to drown all male Hebrew babies)' (Hebrews 11:23). It so happened, after Moses' mother Jochebed had placed him in the basket on the Nile River, the Egyptian princess found him and it so happened, Moses, although he grew up in the luxury of the palace, he refused to be called an Egyptian but accepted his Hebrew heritage. 'By faith, when Moses had grown up he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill treatment with God's people than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a time' (Hebrews 11:24 & 25). All these events taken together shows us firstly, events like these reveal God works subtly behind the scenes to achieve His goals and secondly, God is in complete control of our lives and is working on our behalf even when situations seem very normal. 'There are various kinds of workings or actions but the same God Who works all things out' (1 Corinthians 12:6). 'Those who know the truth come to the light and their works may be revealed to have been done in God' (John 3:21).

God works with people in the same way as he worked with Moses and William Wilberforce to bring people out of slavery. God is present, even when he does not seem to be and when we do not realise He is working to achieve a goal. God is not mentioned by name in the Book of Esther yet we know He was behind the salvation of the Jewish people. In that book God is revealed to be in complete control of our lives even when He remains silent. Everything we do has a role in life but life does not always work out the way we might imagine. Joseph's life certainly did not come about happily when his brothers tossed him into a well, sold him into slavery where he was imprisoned for something he did not do and finally after nearly twenty years of a harrowing life, God had him elevated to second in charge in Egypt. That was one step towards God building His Messianic nation. The Lord brought about the drought that forced Jacob's family into Egypt then the Lord used Moses to bring them out again 430 years later (Exodus 12:40) but this time as a cohesive nation of millions, not just Jacob's family. Joseph was not happy with his brothers but his statement says it all. "What you meant for evil, God meant for good" (Genesis 50:15). And we know God used the entire situation to build His nation of Israelites and gave them the Land of Israel where He could bring forth His Messiah.

The lineage of Jesus had to be pure from the beginning so God initially used the bloodline of Abraham and his family to build His nation of holy people. Rebekah and Rachel chose to marry their first cousins Isaac and Jacob and by faith travelled many kilometres back to Israel to be with them. Rebekah (Abraham's niece, Genesis 24:15) had never met Isaac (Abraham's son) but married him soon after arriving in Israel (Genesis 24:67). Rachel (Rebekah's niece, Genesis 29:10) had known Jacob (Rebekah's son) for seven years (Genesis 29:20) before they married (Genesis 29:28). Jesus is the Saviour of both Jewish people and Gentiles, therefore Gentiles needed to be included in His bloodline. Enter Rahab, a Canaanite woman who had been forced into prostitution to support her family. There were no welfare payments back then. Rahab was a good woman who helped the Israelite spies and in return, they promised her and her entire family safe passage out of Jericho (see Joshua 2:1 to 6:25). Rahab became a Godly woman who married a Jewish man named Salmon, they then had a son named Boaz (Matthew 1:5). Enter Ruth, a Moabite widow who married Mahlon, a Jewish man living in Moab who died after ten years. Ruth moved to Jerusalem with her mother-in-law Naomi then Ruth later married Boaz (see the Book of Ruth). Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed, who fathered Jesse, the father of King David (Ruth 4:21 & 22). The Lord worked subtly behind the scenes in these remarkable love stories and these four remarkable women were all ancestors of Jesus. We all make our own choices but what happens after we have made our decision is no longer up to us and the end result is determined by God. Rahab chose to save the spies and by doing so saved her family

and became remembered as one of the ancestors of Jesus. Ruth chose to go to Jerusalem with Naomi and became another ancestor of Jesus.

When we consider our own salvation, we can often see how events that seem insignificant can lead us to repentance and an eternal walk with God. Nobody is born into salvation. Each of us need to accept Jesus as our Saviour as individuals, even if some people are born into a God-fearing family. Saul/Paul is an example of a man born into a Jewish God-fearing family but he did not know God. He persecuted Christians until God intervened and brought him to repentance. After that, Saul faithfully served the Lord for the remainder of his life. Saul was not born saved, he had to individually accept Jesus as his Saviour. At Saul's conversion the Lord was not at all subtle about it. He weakened Saul so he fell to the ground (Acts 9:4 & 5) ) then told him he was persecuting Jesus Himself. Saul cried out, "Who are You Lord?" because he did not know Jesus. Jesus blinded Saul for three days, Saul fasted for three days (Acts 9:9) and he remained blinded until his eyesight was healed then he began his tremendous ministry (Acts 9:18 to 20). Saul's name was changed to Paul a few years after he was saved (Acts 13:9).

If you or someone you know is experiencing a challenging situation, you can be comforted by knowing God is working subtly behind the scenes to bring about His will, even when we cannot see it. Sometimes we do not much like what has happened, but what the evil one means for evil, God turns it around for His glory. For example, a young man who was born blind was brought to Jesus Who healed him. When questioned about this, Jesus said the man was born blind so the works of God could be revealed in him (John 9:1 to 11). These things can happen in the modern world too. A Godly woman was rushed to hospital and while there was able to tell terminally ill patients about the Lord's salvation. A young Christian man was taken to hospital and placed in a ward for patients experiencing mental disorders and while there he was able to reach many mentally ill patients for the Lord. A Christian couple lost five of their six children in a boating accident and afterwards opened an orphanage for children who had lost their parents, leading them to salvation through Jesus. These situations were not pleasant for the sufferers but God turned each situation around for His glory.

Knowing the ways of God is very comforting because we know what He is doing and events that seem unusual to us can then make sense. We can trust God to work our lives out for our good and the good of others around us. Besides all this, whatever we suffer on earth, we will be generously rewarded once we get to heaven and then God will reveal to us the details of our lives and difficult situations. 'You are of God ... and have overcome evil because greater is He (God) Who is in you than he (the evil one) that is in the world' (1 John 4:4). In the Book of Revelation we can read about all of the rewards we can receive when we overcome our trials (Revelation 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:26; 3:5; 3:12; 3:21; 21:7). God has said He would reveal His will to us. 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets' (Amos 3:7). 'Show me Your ways, Lord. Teach me Your paths. Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation. I wait for You all day long' (Psalm 25:4 & 5).

Amen and God bless you.

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