

Satan Meant it for Evil

But Is It?

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:28-32).

God’s plan is perfect, and if I am to worship in the way of His plan, I must have the Word of God dwelling richly in my heart. But unless Bible doctrine (which is the mind of Christ in specific categories) is ruling in my soul, my con-

science will be occupied with people, things, and circumstances. The old sin nature will rule the soul that is not filled with doctrine. My emotions, designed by God to appreciate and respond to the things of God, cannot do so apart from doctrine.

When we were saved, we were placed into the perfect plan of God; no believer can ever be taken out of God's plan. Ultimately, we will be perfected in the plan (Philippians 1:6). But if we are to understand the plan of God, we need the Word of God so we can experience His provision, walk in His power, enjoy His peace, and fellowship with Him in His will.

This message does not glorify sin. Sin always breaks our fellowship with God and brings chastisement. Furthermore, God never uses sin to promote His Kingdom (Psalm 5:4). But a perfect God has to have a perfect plan, and that plan includes perfect provisions—even for our failures.

“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good...” (Genesis 50:20a). The account of Joseph's life is a clear example of Satan's evil plot against our lives, but God has a plan to work it all together for good and to bring us to victory.

As you study this booklet, I hope you will understand that everything—even the things that are not “good”—will work *together* for good in your life.

Chapter One

“GOD MEANT IT UNTO GOOD”

“Now Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him” (Genesis 37:3-4).

“And when they saw [Joseph] afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him” (Genesis 37:18).

“And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again” (Genesis 37:22).

“And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and

myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content” (Genesis 37:25-27).

“And the Midianites sold [Joseph] into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh’s, and captain of the guard” (Genesis 37:36).

Joseph was in real trouble. But we know that all things worked together for good for Joseph.

First, Jacob made a big mistake by favoring Joseph above the rest of his sons. Joseph’s brothers hated him for it—and that wasn’t good. Then they conspired to kill Joseph—and *that* was not good. Reuben intervened with a plan to put Joseph in a pit, intending to save him later; but before Reuben was able, his brothers sold Joseph to a caravan of Ishmeelites, who were on their way to Egypt.

In Egypt, Joseph was sold as a slave to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. Joseph worked hard and was promoted as an overseer in Potiphar’s house. But one day, Potiphar’s wife—after failing to seduce Joseph—lied about what happened and had Joseph thrown into prison.

The things that happened to Joseph were *not* good.

But Joseph found favor with the prison keeper and was placed in charge of all the other prisoners. That was good! Later, as a result of interpreting two of Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph was released from prison and promoted as a ruler over all of Egypt, second in authority only to Pharaoh.

So far, everything that had happened to Joseph worked together for good—even though some of the circumstances were not good.

Sent Ahead to Save Lives

“And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt” (Genesis 45:4). A famine was coming, and God's plan was to bring Joseph into Egypt to save his family and preserve the nation of Israel.

Genesis 45:5 records some of the sweetest words ever spoken in the Bible: “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.”

“For these two years hath the famine been in

the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance” (Genesis 45:6-7).

God’s grace, love, and forgiveness are perfect. He guides us in a perfect way. In His perfection, He overrules our sins and failures. Did Joseph’s brothers sin? Yes. Was what they did good? No. It never pays to sin. Yet, God showed His goodness, love, mercy, and grace throughout Joseph’s trial of faith. Through it all, God’s plan was perfect. And His provision for Joseph was perfect.

God’s Divine Reversals

The Bible is filled with accounts of how God worked things together for good. It wasn’t good for Moses to kill an Egyptian (Exodus 2:12); but, after fleeing into the wilderness and settling for something less than God’s best for forty years, one day God called Moses to lead His people out of Egypt. Numbers 12:3 reveals that Moses became the meekest man on the face of the earth.

David committed adultery with Bathsheba. That was not good. To cover their sin, David

sent her husband, Uriah, to the front line of battle where he was killed. Remember, God does not use sin to promote His kingdom. God chastised David by allowing the child born out of adultery to die. But after David repented, God gave them another child, named Solomon, and Bathsheba became one of the greatest mothers in the history of the Old Testament.

After Solomon became king, he disobeyed God by taking many foreign wives and setting up altars where they worshiped their strange gods. But late in his life, Solomon returned to the Lord and was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the Song of Solomon and Proverbs.

The night that Jesus was betrayed, Peter denied Christ three times. That wasn't good, but God worked it all together for good, and Peter became a faithful servant of God.

Saul of Tarsus persecuted Christians for their faith in Christ by arranging executions. Yet, he met Jesus Christ on the road Damascus, obtained mercy, and became a great servant of God. It was Paul who was inspired to write Romans 8:28, which we've quoted so often, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

In Genesis 45:5, Joseph said to his brothers, “Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves”—it *will* work together for good.

Joseph could have said *many* things to his brothers, but he chose to edify them. Though they feared revenge and pleaded for mercy, Joseph revealed Who was ruling his soul when he said, “Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, *ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good*, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive” (Genesis 50:19-20).

Chapter Two

THE WORD DWELLS RICHLY

“As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him” (Psalm 18:30).

“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he” (Deuteronomy 32:4).

“Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all” (1 Chronicles 29:11).

Think about Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that *love* God...” We love God on two levels: Positionally, “we love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19), and experientially, by allowing the Word of God to dwell richly in our hearts

(Colossians 3:16).

Without the Word dwelling richly in my heart, I can never understand the plan of God. The Word of God reveals the will of God for every believer. It allows me, as a believer, to choose to live in God's permissive will. But once I repent and forsake my sin, God overrules the consequences of those negative choices and works them together for good.

As the Word of God dwells in my heart, I will begin to understand grace and my conscience will control my mind. My conscience, when it is void of the grace of God, may be ruled by legalism, anxiety, insecurity, negativity, or lust.

Memories of being abused as a child, or memories of our own failures do not have to rule us subjectively. God's plan is greater than our sin, greater than our iniquity, greater than our mistakes, greater than our failures, greater than our successes. His plan is greater than every single thing about us.

Perfected in the Plan

All things work together for good to "them who are the called according to his *purpose*" (Romans 8:28). God's call always includes an eter-

nal purpose once I am placed into the plan of God through salvation (Ephesians 3:11). But if I'm not saved, then there is no eternal purpose for my life, and everything does not work together for good.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Romans 8:29-30).

God has a five-step plan to bring us to glory: we are foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified.

Billions of years ago, in eternity past, God foreknew every detail about your life. He also predestinated those details to work out in His plan for your life. Knowing everything that you would do, He planned to work it all together for good for the purpose of conforming you to the image of Christ.

We find two important Greek words in Romans 8:29—*summorphe* (*conformed*) and *eikon* (*image*)—speaking of a gradual process of inward and outward transformation. The verbs in Romans 8:29-30 are in the constantive aorist tense;

meaning, God saw our lives gathered up in completion before the foundation of the world.

It may take a long time to have your conscience built up and rehabilitated. Don't get discouraged when the process doesn't go quickly. When the Word of grace controls your conscience, your conscience will then rule your mind, self-consciousness, emotions, and will.

If God Be For Us ...

Romans 8:31 asks, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If you want to, have a pity party and confess things such as "Nobody loves me. No one ever comes to see me. Nobody cares for me." Go ahead. Join the other pity-partiers and have pity parties every opportunity you get. I'll even furnish the material, but I won't show up! You don't have doctrine hidden in your soul, you don't have grace in your conscience, and you don't have power in your will. There's no love in your heart; therefore, you don't operate in the plan of God.

But I have news for you: You are still in the plan of God—whether you operate in it or not. And you can never get out of that plan. Even if you believe not, He abides faithful because He cannot deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13).

In the phrase, “If God be for us, who can be against us,” the relative pronoun *tis* (*who*) indicates that opposition will come. Often, we start by opposing ourselves by trying to get attention through manipulation, complaining, and being just plain miserable.

If God is for us—and He is—how can you be against yourself? “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).

Chapter Three

MORE THAN CONQUERORS

Romans 8:33 poses the question, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?” Have you ever laid a charge against God’s elect? If you have, you exalted yourself against God’s plan. No one can lay any charge to God’s elect, because each one is already justified and glorified in Christ.

Sin is not good; it may bring chastisement and even physical death years before our time. If a Christian backslides and refuses to get right after numerous warnings and much chastisement, God works it out for good by taking him to heaven early to get him out of the mess he’s made of his life. This person will not receive any rewards at the Bema Seat, but he will still be in heaven.

Irreversible Blessings

No one can curse one of God’s children, or

reverse the blessings He has commanded for them. Balak, the king of Moab, sent messengers to Balaam to ask him to curse the people of Israel. After much deliberation between the two, Balaam asked Balak, “How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?” (Numbers 23:8). When Balak persisted, God told Balaam to say, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”

“Behold, I have received a commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them” (Numbers 23:19-21).

Through the years, people have tried to curse me and reverse my blessings, but it hasn’t worked. In spite of the evil things that have been said about me, and the bad things that have been done, they couldn’t reverse the blessing of God. All of these things have worked together for good to promote our ministry in a Word of God revival.

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is

even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34). Jesus said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone” (John 8:7). No one can condemn a Christian—not even *another Christian*. James 4:11 tells us, “Speak not evil one of another, brethren” and Roman 14:13 says, “Let us not therefore judge one another any more.

Nothing Shall Separate Us

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Romans 8:35-37).

We are sheep accounted for the slaughter. Nothing can affect us because we die daily with Christ (1 Corinthians 15:31). A dead man can't be stressed out about persecution. The Bible declares that we are “more than conquerors”—*hupernikao* in the Greek, which means *super victors*. We are people who have gone beyond natural victory and human understanding. Every one of us can experience this supernatural

victory because there is no way sin or iniquity can be imputed to us. Through rebound, even chastisement can be stopped in a moment. Even deserved suffering will work together for good for us because of God's glory, God's grace, and God's sovereign will of love.

Eternally Secure

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

These two verses teach the doctrine of eternal security. It is shocking to think that there are Christians who believe we can fall out of God's keeping hand.

Nothing can separate us from God's love. Demons can't do it. Sin can't do it. Failure can't do it. The pastor can't do it. People can't do it. And *you* can't do it.

Do you need more proof? Consider Psalm 145:14: “The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.” Psalm 37:23-24 declares, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his

way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.” Jesus said, “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (John 10:28). And He who began a “good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

CONCLUSION

I want every Christian who reads this booklet to take Romans 8:28 and run with it! I want you to believe that *all* things work together for good. Because you trust God in your love for Him, He will continue to bless you. Furthermore, He will not let anybody or anything reverse your blessings, and He will not let anyone curse you.

Our time on earth is the only opportunity God has to demonstrate His great love toward us. Only here can God show us the depths of His love, forgiveness, patience, and mercy, because, in heaven, we will not have old sin natures. The former things will be passed away. But on earth, we are getting to know what God is like *before* we are perfected.

The time is short (1 Corinthians 7:29), so let's use the opportunities we have to receive God's love and share it with others. Help them to know that *all* things work together for good.