

An Eternal Perspective



Teaching Letter
By Derek Prince

Why Bad Things Happen to God's People. This is not only the title of a very helpful book by Derek Prince. It is also a topic that every Christian (and every human being) wrestles with throughout life. Insight about that perplexing question is the theme of this month's letter.

This issue of the Teaching Legacy of Derek Prince is devoted to the universal question of why bad things happen. As you might expect, it is taken from Derek's book, Why Bad Things Happen to God's People, which is based almost entirely on the life and experience of Job.

The View from Eternity

As we study God's dealings with Job, we begin to realize that God's priorities for us may be different from our own. We may think something is important, but God may see things very differently.

First, God puts the spiritual above the physical; and, second, He puts the eternal above the temporal. God will never sacrifice anything eternal for the sake of something temporal. He always works with eternity in view. Only when we get into eternity will we be able to look back and see what God did for us. We cannot see it all now. We must walk by faith and trust.

I have always been impressed by a wonderful passage that Hudson Taylor wrote. He was one of the great missionaries of the nineteenth century, the founder of the China Inland Mission and a man of God who had a vision for China. Somewhere near the end of his life he wrote, "I used to have clear vision of what I was going to do for God. But I don't now—I just move in trust." That is maturity. Maturity is not becoming more clever. It is becoming more trusting.

God Enjoys Our Faithfulness

We can see from the story of Job that God can be proud of His faithful servants. I use the phrase cautiously because God is not guilty of pride. However, God is excited about the people who do His will. Consider again what He said to Satan in Job 1:8:

> "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a

> blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

God was so pleased with Job that He pointed him out to Satan. God basically said, "Satan, you haven't succeeded with him; he's following Me." We know what Satan said: "Well, just take away what he has and let's see what will happen then."

The scene is repeated the second time Satan appeared:

> "Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.'" (Job 2:3)

Do you realize as you read this that God might be pointing at you? He might be saying to Satan concerning you, "Satan, have you considered that one? They're faithful. They've been through a hard time. They've never given up. They've never denied Me. And they've remained faithful to their first commitment." The thought that God could boast about us is exciting!

A Heavenly Perspective

The Book of Job also gives us a heavenly perspective on earth's events, which is unique to the Bible. When we read the story of Job, we read it in the light of what happened in Heaven before the story even started on earth. We have the scenario where God is pointing out Job to Satan and saying, "Satan, you haven't succeeded with him. He still holds fast in his integrity. I'm proud of him."

For many years I have made it a practice to proclaim the Word of God out loud. I have discovered that when I receive a new proclamation from God and start to proclaim it, almost immediately something will happen to deter me. There will arise some distraction or obstacle aimed at setting that proclamation aside. Or there will be some attempt by the enemy at proving it is not true, or trying to convince me I cannot proclaim it as truth.

At that point, I am always faced with a decision—will I go on proclaiming it or will I let circumstances dictate to me? Whenever that happens I take it as a good sign, because one of the indications of something being in God's will is that Satan opposes it. When we meet the enemy's resistance, it means we are doing the devil some harm.

Revealing Our Destiny

God had a plan and destiny for Job, and likewise God has a high destiny for us in Christ. God's destiny is staggering. It is almost unbelievable what God has planned for us. Paul writes in Ephesians 2:4-6:

> "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together [resurrected us], and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

The Weymouth translation reads, "enthroned us." We have been made alive. We have been resurrected. We have been enthroned. All of that is in the past, not in the future. Paul then gives us the reason in verse 7:

> "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

This is an astounding thought! God says, "These sinners who were rebels, unclean, and lost—I'm going to save them, sanctify them and raise them up. For all eternity, they're going to be the demonstration to the whole universe of My grace." If this is our destination, then it is no wonder we go through some tests.

When we see the lessons of Job from the perspective of eternity, we understand why we must press on to fulfill His purposes for us.

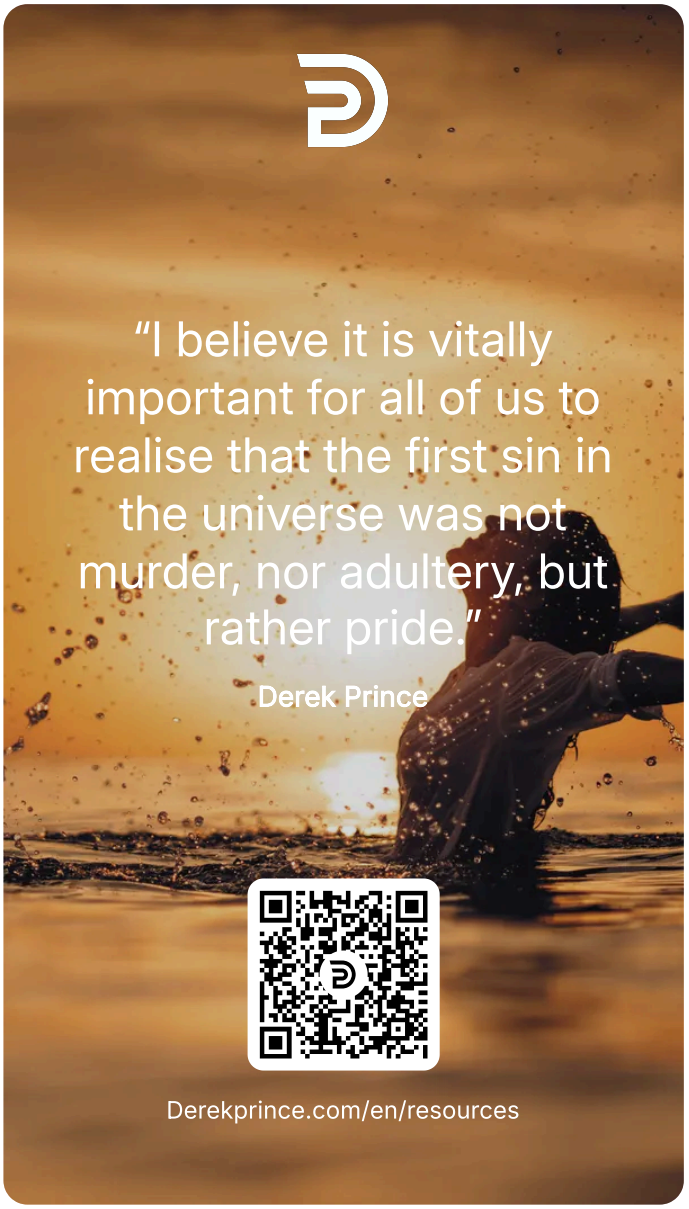
Trusting In Him

Perhaps, like Job, you have been experiencing a season of suffering of your own, wondering why you are experiencing the difficulties that have come upon you. As Derek pointed out in the quote from Hudson Taylor, it may be a matter of trust.

Why don't we take a moment now at the end of this letter to draw close to the Lord and to declare our absolute trust in His sovereign plan?

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