

# The Certain in God's Uncertain Plans

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**S**omeone once said, "What you see is what you get." We talk about people seeing the world as a glass "half empty" or "half full." The Bible is full of stories that demonstrate over and over the difference one's perspective makes.

When Job and his wife lost their ten children and all they possessed, Job's wife questioned why he held fast to his spiritual integrity, and urged him to curse God and die. Job, on the other hand, asked, "Shall we accept good from God and not adversity?" He fell on his face and blessed the name of the Lord. On another occasion, the Israelites had turned their backs on the Lord, and God had placed them under His loving, but firm, hand of discipline, yet He was about to restore them back into His good graces. Deborah, a judge God had raised up for that moment, summoned a man named Barak and told him to take 10,000 men from two of the tribes of Israel to gain the victory. Barak didn't see the word of the Lord as reason enough; he wanted Deborah by his side. As a result, God removed the honor of victory from him and gave it to a woman named Jael who drove a tent peg through the enemy's temple.

Do you remember the story of David and Goliath? The enemy Philistine army was on one side of a great valley, and the Israelite army was on the opposite side. In those days, rather than fighting a whole war, sometimes a champion from each side would fight as representatives of both armies. Goliath, that great champion of the Philistines had been taunting the Israelites for days. He was literally a giant of a man, and his weapons were huge. Not one seasoned Israelite soldier took up the gauntlet. No, it was a youthful shepherd who rose to the challenge. Here are his words to the "tall tree":

***"You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands."***  
(1 Sam 17:45-47)

The rest of the story is history. This rookie recruit without even a suit of armor took five small stones and slung one deep into the forehead of the giant oak. How great was its fall! How great was God's victory! What would have happened if any of the other Israelite soldiers had seen what David saw? What blessings and honor they missed.

Many of us are having difficulties right now. Some are going through job searches. Others have lost spouses through death or divorce. Others are going through bankruptcy. Some of our children have made choices that deeply disappointed us; some parents have done the same. Some of you have your own Goliaths to face—giants that none of us even know about.

In all of these circumstances, what do we see? Do we see the circumstances and conclude that God is evil and want to curse Him like Job's wife? Do we desire the securing of someone else besides the Lord alongside of us, like Barak did? Do we see the power of the enemy and of our own inability, like the Israelite army?

Or...like Job, do we see that God deserves our worship and blessing whether He gives or takes away? Do we see that God provides opportunities for victory, like Jael? Do we see that God is bigger than hugely opposing circumstances, like David, such that our greatest concern is for Him to get the glory and recognition that He deserves?

Whatever the darkness, be certain of this: God's plans for His children are good and not evil. He sees the past, the present, and the future with equal clarity, so He is not surprised by whatever we encounter—the circumstances or the emotional, spiritual, and mental struggles that may come with

them. He is present everywhere. He knows all things. His power is limitless for His righteous purposes.

There is nothing, no circumstance, no trouble, no testing, that can ever touch me until, first of all, it has gone past God and past Christ, right through to me. If it has come that far, it has come with a great purpose, which I may not understand at the moment, but as I refuse to become panicky, as I lift up my eyes to Him and accept it as coming from the throne of God for some great purpose of blessing to my own heart, no sorrow will ever disturb me, no trial will ever disarm me, no circumstance will cause me to fret, for I shall rest in the joy of what my Lord is. That rest is the rest of victory. —Alan Redpath

You see, we have such limited knowledge and perspective, and God's plans, to us, have the ring of uncertainty. That uncertainty results from our not knowing, but imagining the outcome. It comes from not understanding God's purposes and from the dissonance of what we are experiencing that does not coincide with our preferences or plans. So often we want out of the trouble and back into the world of comfort rather than the growth that is part of God's design through trials and heartache. Whatever you are experiencing in God's "uncertain" plans for you, may we all come to see our experiences with the right perspective, to enjoy His peace which passes all understanding, and to life in Redpath's "rest of victory"!

***"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. " Jeremiah 29:11 NLT***