

GOD MEANT IT UNTO GOOD

You can trace the rainbow through the rain even in your own life. God is still sovereign in the world that His hands created.

By E. W. Lawrence
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Favoritism has always been an unwise policy for any parent to adopt. Joseph, Jacob's son, was a little "prig" and his brothers just detested the sight of him. His coat of many colors set him off from among his brothers as dad's favorite. He carried an air of priority around with him.

Joseph's environment can perhaps be understood better if we remember that he had wily old Laban for a grandfather, old Jacob for a father — and what a twister he was — and for a mother, Rachel, who as a girl could cheat and lie. Even her own father was deceived by her words.

God in His sovereignty, however, had a special plan for Joseph's life.

Joseph proved his metal in later years. He was sold by his brothers into Egypt. Though at first he was given a place of honor, he was shamefully treated and disgraced in consequence of a crime he had never committed. But "the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour."

The story of the seven years of plenty in Egypt is well known. This was followed by seven years of famine, and during that time the brothers from far off Canaan came to Egypt to buy bread. They were ushered into the presence of Joseph, though at the time they did not know his identity.

They had treated him shamefully, but Joseph's heart was still tenderly inclined toward them. However, he wished to test their attitude toward Benjamin, who was not with them. Consequently, he demanded that they bring their youngest brother to Egypt to prove their identity. Joseph then told his guards to put them in jail overnight. These unforeseen and unfortunate turn of events helped to bring back to their subconscious minds the treatment they had meted out to their brother. God meant that this should happen — and so did Joseph. Eventually he revealed himself to them. Their first reaction was to expect revenge.

Joseph said unto them, "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" (Gen. 50:19, 20).

A golden revelation lies there. Evil men purpose this, and plan that. Demon hosts are sent against the Lord's redeemed people. Satan opposes and frustrates God's people, and sends many of them to the place of martyrdom. Trial and tribulation only drive us closer to the Lord. Thousands have proved the truth of this and have mounted the pathway to heaven. Satan still defeats his own ends.

Calvary. God turned man's devilish, mean rebellion into a provision of atonement for man's sin. "He answered man's blow on His holy face," says Erich Sauer in *Triumph of the Crucified*, "with a kiss of reconciling love." Though wicked men nailed Him to that Cross, from that very Cross there has flowed a river of redemption, and it is still available for every penitent seeker after Christ.

Paul and Silas. Satan considered it his master-stroke when he landed them in the jail in Philippi. They had embarked at Troas, en route for Europe, a new continent for them — intent on claiming it for the sake of the crucified Christ. They found themselves in prison instead. At midnight, though, Paul and Silas sang praises unto

Someday we shall see that we have gotten our best things from heaven, not in the days of our earthly joy and gladness, but in the times of trial and affliction.

—J. R. Miller

God. That even in itself was a magnificent witness, for the "other prisoners heard them." They have been hearing them ever since. They still are, in China, Korea, and the cold wastes of Siberia.

The prison in Rome. This was the scene of another of Satan's imaginary triumphs. God forestalled Satan — as He still does — and from that Roman imprisonment alone there came out those priceless literary treasures, the prison epistles of the Apostle Paul — *Philippians*, *Philemon*, *Colossians*, and *Ephesians*.

William Tyndale. He was fully awake to the call of God to translate the Bible into the language of the common folk. It means he had to leave the land of his birth forever, and seek asylum on a foreign shore. Even there he was shamefully betrayed and led out to eventual martyrdom. But the New Testament in English came out of that prison cell at Vilvorde, Belgium. The greater part of the Old Testament also.

The tinker of Bedford town. English puritan, and one time soldier in Oliver Cromwell's parliamentary army, John Bunyan was persecuted by the carnal ecclesiastics of his day. He spent twelve long years in prison. Amid the darkness of that cell he dreamed, and as a result *Pilgrim's Progress* is known and loved. As a book it still holds second place to the Bible.

In His wonderful wisdom, and because of his loving-kindness, God is using even Satan's efforts to destroy men to fashion in His redeemed people those beautiful graces of His desire. Things such as gladness and grief, peace and war, rest and toil, are all interminably intermingled. They follow each other in ceaseless succession, just as night the day, and day the night. However, God overrules, and we are able to trace the rainbow through the rain.

We can! Because God makes it possible. Possible, but not necessarily inevitable. You can miss the victory through want of trust.

Seeming disaster can become the pathway to sovereignty.

God is working in terms of eternity. So many of us, amid the trials and tribulation that make up our lot in the day-by-day, see no further than the immediate ceiling of our lives. This is a tragic situation for us.

Time is but a passing point between two eternities. Overwhelmed by the apparent contradictions of time, and well-nigh cast down because the workers of iniquity seemed to prosper, the Psalmist went into the sanctuary of the Lord. And that made all the difference. "All the day long have I been plagued . . . until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I" (Ps. 73:14, 17). Put a red ink circle around two words in your Bible in this verse; until and then.

"For every handicap," said W. Graham Scroggie, "there is a compensation, and for every disability there is a reward. . . . Our handicap may become our equipment, and seeming disaster may become our shining pathway to sovereignty."

Take God at His Word. For as Miss Havergal put it years ago:

"Those who trust Him wholly,
Find Him wholly true."

—Pilgrim Holiness Advocate