



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



January 2018

Volume 12, Number 6

A self-centered young man had one goal in life: to be successful. His life in the eyes of the world suggested he had it all together. He drove the right car, had the right position, and was impressed with his accomplishments. However, his aging mother had Alzheimer's disease. Despite her walk with God, she was crippled by this illness. He went to his mother with a penetrating irony: "You've believed in God, and I've not; but I'm successful, and you battle this disease."

Why does God allow inequities like this to happen?

I can relate to that because, during the past several years, I lost both my mother and stepfather. Both knew the Lord. Mom had been a dedicated gospel singer; but at the end of her life, she had dementia and was unable to remember even her grandson.

At the end of another year touched by the circumstances of life, we have seen terrorist attacks and natural disasters and experienced the loss of loved ones. All of these things have challenged our faith. We long for someone to care and take pity as we ask the question, why?

How do we find purpose in the middle of life's painful realities? What does it mean to be a Christian if "it rains on the just as well as the unjust?" (Matthew 5:45b) Maybe you've asked the same question during the events which impacted your life in 2017. And maybe you are expecting to read some great words of theology that would suggest the bitter taste of your ordeal is endurable. But I dare not! For even though I know Mom is with the Lord, even though I know she is in a better place, even though I know we are not without hope, her loss still hurts!

As we feel the pain of life, with an arm around our shoulders God reminds us He will not leave or forsake us. Is this more than religiosity? Does it really work? Yes, it is more than religiosity. Yes, it really does work. No matter

what you are going through, God loves you and has extended His grace no matter how great the storm. Many of you reading this article are either going through or coming out of a storm. If you're not in this category, the chances are you know someone else who is!

But the assurance of God's presence and grace still doesn't give us an answer to our why questions. During these difficult times, we are often being developed. We are growing!

Webster defines a natural storm as a disturbance of the atmosphere marked by wind and usually rain, snow, hail, sleet, or thunder and lightning. It is a serious disturbance of any element of nature.

How do we spiritually define life's storms? Consider life's storms as any disturbances that go beyond our normal human capacity, causing a disturbance in our comfort zones.

God uses storms in our lives to accomplish two additional purposes:

He molds us into the image of His Son. God uses our pains, discouragements, and troubles as a part of the process to make us like Christ. The same grace that saves us teaches us how to live for Christ day by day. Hence we are blessed with the saving Grace of God, the keeping Grace of God, and the teaching Grace of God. As God teaches us, we learn how to rely and depend on Him. One songwriter said, "If I didn't have any problems, I wouldn't know God could solve them."

It's through the struggles of life that God develops us into men and women of God. I realize this isn't enough to convince some of you to say, "Praise God" after seeing heartaches and pains knocking at your door. So I'll use James' words to convince you even more: "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and . . . [Keep Reading>>>](#)

BIBLEWAY Q & A

Q: Why is the US's decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem such a big deal?

A: Suppose you had a priceless family heirloom which had been passed down from one generation to the next for thousands of years. Then one day, your neighbor paid you a visit, saw the family treasure, and said, "That's mine!"

A long dispute ensued between you and your neighbor, until the matter was brought to court. As you prepared to plead your case, you noticed your neighbor's friends were the judge and jury.

The facts were on your side, but it didn't matter. The jury had already determined your treasured artifact belonged to your neighbor, and the judge sided with them.

Is this fair? Of course not, but this is the conflict the nation of Israel faces with its neighbors and the United Nations over the city of Jerusalem. When President Donald Trump announced on December 6, 2017, [he would move the United States' Israeli embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem](#), he made good on an American promise made in 1995.

The Jerusalem Embassy Act was approved by Congress and the Senate, and it called for moving the American embassy to Jerusalem. But for over 20 years, no American president had followed through on this promise. This decision is significant for its political implications. It heralds the beginning of a new era in US-Israeli relations, and marks the first time a nation has officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Until our president's announcement, no other nation had an embassy in Jerusalem. Hopefully other nations will follow suit.

As proof of the political weight of the US' decision, the international community promptly condemned President Trump and the United States, declaring the president's decision null and void. Shortly after the president's announcement, 57 Muslim nations called for recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State.

Why the tug-of-war over Jerusalem? To understand the dispute, we'll have to take a quick history lesson. Jerusalem is the center of three major world religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The Temple Mount in Jerusalem is recognized as the holiest site in Judaism and the third-holiest site of Islam, and is built on the site of the original Jewish temple constructed by King Solomon.

While [Muslims have acknowledged the Temple Mount's historical Jewish connection](#), the site was given Islamic significance when Muslim conquerors captured Jerusalem from the Byzantines after Mohammed's death. About 80 years later, the Byzantine Church of St. Mary of Justinian in the city was restored by the Muslims, converted into a mosque, and re-named Al-Aqsa.

The Koran (which doesn't once mention Jerusalem) makes reference to Al-Aqsa as the location of Mohammed's dream flight. While the name means "the farthest place" or "the farthest mosque," [early Muslim scholars believed Mohammed was referring to a heavenly place or the courtyard of Allah](#). Years later, to make a case for recapturing Jerusalem from the Crusaders, Muslim General Saladin tampered with long-standing Islamic tradition by declaring Mohammed's flight took him to the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Subsequent Arab leaders such as Yassir Arafat have made similar claims, but their claims do not support the historical evidence. 13th-century Arab biographer Yakut stated, "Mecca is holy to Muslims; Jerusalem is holy to the Jews." Rabbi Joseph Katz wrote, "In general it can be seen that significant Islamic interest in the Temple Mount does not precede 1967."

Aside from the historical and religious weight of the US decision, there is a spiritual component which gives the situation significance as well. In Genesis 12:3, God promised Abraham He would bless those nations which bless Israel and curse those who curse her. The United States will be blessed as long as we continue showing solidarity with . . . [Keep Reading>>>](#)



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