

God's Unlikely Choices Against Insurmountable Odds

Who ever would have guessed what God would do?

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Scripture Reader and Reading: Jackson Meyer – Genesis 12.1–3

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – No Suggestions

Prelude:

I. A Beautiful World (Genesis 1–2)

- A. The opening chapters of the Bible show a perfect creation.
 - 1. Within that perfect creation,
 - 2. God planted a garden.
- B. In that garden,
 - 1. God placed the first man and
 - 2. built a woman from one of the man's ribs.

II. A Ruined World (Genesis 3–11)

- A. Genesis 3 shows the man and the woman violating God's one prohibition.
- B. Genesis 4 reveals one of their sons killing his brother.
- C. Genesis 6 tells us that things only got worse.
 - 1. Genesis 6.5

5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

- 2. Genesis 6.11

11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

- 3. Genesis 6 and 7 show God destroying everything with a Flood,
 - a) except those on an ark
 - b) (a barge-like vessel).

4. Genesis 8 and 9 shows that God started over with that family animals.
- D. Genesis 9 gives God's explicit command to Noah of what God wanted done.

1. Genesis 9.1

1 So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth."

2. Genesis 9.7

7 "And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth And multiply in it."

- a) Noah's descendants did multiply, but
- b) initially, they did not want to scatter over the earth.

(1) Yet, as you read Genesis 10, you will find that they did spread out.

(2) After explaining the different people groups on the earth, Moses wrote:

32 These were the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.

– **Genesis 10.32**

- E. How or why did they end up scattering over the earth, as we are today?

1. Genesis 11 explains,

1 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." 5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the LORD said, "Indeed

the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

– Genesis 11.1–9

2. God keeps trying to bless man, but
 - a) man does not like God's commandments and
 - b) tries to do the opposite.
- F. Do you know what God wanted for Adam and Eve and all their descendants?
 1. He wanted to dwell with them.
 2. He wanted them to His people.
 3. He wanted to be their God.
 - a) I call this, "The Family Promise of God," and
 - b) you can find it throughout the Bible, both Old and New Testaments.
 - (1) Yet, man through rejection of his Creator
 - (2) frustrates that plan continually.
- G. Genesis 3–11 narratives the sad tale of man's ruination of
 1. the earth,
 2. the commands of God,
 3. the family of God, and
 4. of man himself.
 - a) Can God fix the awful mess
 - b) man has made of himself and of all things?
 - (1) Can God salvage man

(2) from his sin, rebellion, and destruction?

(a) Genesis 12 through Revelation 22

(b) shows the answer

i) that God can,

ii) that He is, and

iii) that he will complete his work.

Persuasion:

I. The Choice of Abraham

A. With the sad story of Genesis 1–11 in mind,

1. how would you salvage it?

2. God salvaged it by looking around and finding

a) an elderly couple, he was 75 and she was 65, and

b) promised to bless the earth through them,

(1) building a nation from their family.

(2) The only problem was, they had no children!

3. Who were they?

B. At the end of Genesis 11,

1. as Moses listed the descendants of Shem, the son of Noah,

a) Moses introduced us to Abram,

b) whose name God later changed to Abraham.

2. Moses gave more attention to Abram

a) than to any other of the descendants of Noah (11.26–32).

C. Then the Creator issued a command to Abram and made a promise

1. upon which the rest of the Bible is built.

1 Now the LORD had said to Abram:

“Get out of your country,

**From your family
And from your father's house,
To a land that I will show you.
2 I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
3 I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."**

– Genesis 12.1–3

2. The rest of the Bible exists to show how God fulfilled that promise.
 - a) The generations of Genesis 10 and 11 wanted
 - (1) to make a name for themselves and
 - (2) to maintain their unity.
 - b) However, God had another way of doing that.
 - (1) He first wanted them to spread over the earth.
 - (2) So, he forced them to do it
 - (a) by creating different languages among them.
3. Then He went about working on his plan.
 - a) He chose an unlikely man
 - (1) with the odds of
 - (a) his great age and
 - (b) his wife's bareness
 - (2) to create a family through which
 - (a) God would make Abram's name great, and
 - (b) in Abram all the families of the earth could be blessed.
 - b) Man always thinks he knows what he is doing,
 - (1) that he has a better way of doing God's things, but

(2) man always ruins it.

D. What we just read in Genesis 12.1–3 provides a pivot between

1. man's destructive ways, and
2. God redemptive ways.

E. Yet, along the way many apparent obstacles appear.

1. First, God did not give the elderly couple a son until 25 years later.
 - a) Yes, when Abram was 100 years old and
 - b) when Sarah was 90 years old.
2. Then God asked Abraham to sacrifice their son, but
 - a) God stopped it.
 - b) That son, Isaac, and his wife also had problems having a son initially.
3. Their son, Jacob, had countless problems.

F. Why did God choose Abraham with so many insurmountable odds?

1. God wants to know whether we trust him!
2. Even when we can see no way for God's will to be fulfilled,
 - a) he wants us to trust him.
 - b) He wants us to know and to believe
 - (1) that he knows what he is doing and
 - (2) that his way is always right and successful.

II. Many More Unlikely Choices Against Insurmountable Odds

A. The story of the Bible continues to show

1. the unlikely choices that God made
2. against seemingly insurmountable odds
 - a) to bring about the fulfillment of his plan and
 - b) to salvage the human race.
 - (1) God always wins!

(2) Do you believe that?

B. He delights to have the odds

1. stacked against his people and his plan
2. that he might show the mightiness of his power,
 - a) that whatever the odds are,
 - b) that no matter how winless the situation appears to be,
 - (1) he will select the most unlikely person
 - (2) to fulfill his scheme.

C. He chose the excuse-making shepherd to lead Israel out of Egypt.

D. He chose two fearless spies to take Israel into their land when others feared.

E. He chose the hesitating farmer to lead 300 men against 135,000 Midianites.

F. He chose the woman-chasing judge to kill thousands of Philistines.

G. He chose the giant-killing shepherd to bring glory to Israel's kingdom.

H. He chose the identity-hiding girl in Persia to save the Jews from extinction.

I. He chose a carpenter

1. to bring together all the components of God's plan to salvage man and
2. bring all people into the The Family of God.
 - a) From the promise to Abraham and its fulfillment in Jesus Christ,
 - b) God continued to make unlikely choices against insurmountable odds.
 - (1) How could a carpenter,
 - (a) who became a teacher and a preacher,
 - (2) be the most important person ever to walk the earth?
3. Acts 3 answers the question,
 - a) bringing the story of the Old Testament together
 - b) in the story of Jesus:

24 "Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as

many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

– Acts 3.24–26

4. You see, to be in the family of God,
 - a) we need to be holy, because
 - b) he is holy.
 - (1) To be holy we have to have our sins forgiven.
 - (2) By believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and
 - (a) by obeying him,
 - (b) he will turn us away from our sins.
5. That is how Genesis 12.1–3 finds fulfillment.

III. He Continues to Make Unlikely Choices Against Insurmountable Odds

- A. How does God show that he will forgive even you of your sins?
 1. He forgave those who executed his innocent Son.
 2. He also forgave a man who
 - a) tortured and imprisoned Christians, even
 - b) killing them when he thought it necessary.
 - (1) That man then became the most vocal proponent of Jesus Christ
 - (2) the world has ever known and
 - (a) that man did more to change the Roman Empire
 - (b) than any other single person.
- B. What he wrote to a young preacher friend of his, in First Timothy 1,
 1. shows that Paul understood why the Lord selected him,

2. even while he was on the way to persecute more Christians:

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, 13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

– 1 Timothy 1.12–16

3. If Paul and the executioners of Jesus could be forgiven, so can you!

Exhortation:

I. In the same way that the Lord chose

A. Abraham,

B. Moses,

C. Joshua and Caleb,

D. Gideon,

E. Samson,

F. David, and

G. Esther,

1. he chooses you.
2. I do not know what he wants to do through you, but
 - a) if you are ready for things you never dreamed of,
 - b) he will take you and astound you.

II. I saw something the other day of a cowboy at a rodeo.

A. The message was that some kid in the stands

B. wants to grow up and be just like him.

1. Therefore, that cowboy needed to set a good example.

2. Someone admires you.

a) What do they see in you?

b) Be someone worthy of imitation.

III. If you will submit to baptism today,

A. He will begin to work

B. on you and through you.

IV. Christian, have you been resisting him as many did in the Old Testament?

A. Change your ways today.

B. Let us pray for you.