

GOD BENDS, BUT DOES NOT BREAK

Lev 23:34-35, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.”



When at God's appointed times at the Feast of Tabernacles, we take part in the 6th step of God's plan for salvation for mankind through His plan, as outlined in Scriptures. It is truly remarkable to believe that a whole year had gone by since the last Feast of Tabernacles. In preparation for the Feast, we have the Day of Atonement in between to afflict our souls, and be worthy of taking part throughout these seven days, as well as the Last Great Day after the God's Feast.

I want to start with a question: **Have you stopped to think and realize just how difficult and trying it seemed to get spiritually ready for God's Feast of Tabernacles?** I ask you this question because it seems like we as God's elect and called go through some of the most tumultuous times in preparation for the Feast of Tabernacles. Think of your job, and how it might seem as though we have the most to do, the most deadlines to meet, and when the most problems come up, especially when it comes to getting ready to take part in God's appointed times.

Also, there could be your own life to think of, especially when it comes to health conditions, medical examinations, blood work, and often illnesses that we go through right before the Feast. Think of the situation where you live in general, as people are often driving out of their minds, traffic seems to be worse, and things just get complicated with each passing day before the Holy Days. Finally, think of your own family, as it might be possible that family issues, health concerns, and situations do come up, sometimes unexpectedly and often days before the Feast of Tabernacles begin.

Now, you might be going through some of these answers in your mind as I mention these to you, but I want you to know why I am asking these questions. It is often that we have to go through some of the most difficult times in our lives, just before keeping God's Feast of Tabernacles because God is

truly testing our faith in Him, especially when it comes to our application of His Holy Scriptures.

Now, you might be thinking and asking yourself at some point before these past Feast of Tabernacles: ***Why did everything have to happen now, when there is so much to do before getting ready for the Feast?*** We might be thinking that everything that happens to us, happens with no solution or answer in near sight, as everything begins to pile up. However, God allows for everything to happen in our lives, just the way it needs to be implemented because of the trying times that are a necessity in our lives to overcome what the world does to us.

Also, God prepares us spiritually, emotionally, physically, and internally to be ready to take part in such an important occasion, such as the Feast of Tabernacles. However, God will not allow for us to be completely shattered beyond what we think is something that will affect us.

This article will look at several examples in the Holy Scriptures about the concept of bending and breaking our Spirit, our minds, and our bodies, in order to adequately and properly be ready to take part in these Feast of Tabernacles. Today's article will center around two main points to be taken into consideration that we can learn to apply in our lives at any time. First, we will look at working through distress in our life during difficult times.

Secondly, we will look at managing tribulations through our enemies, and how God bends our lives, but He will not break us beyond what we can handle. These two elements are incredibly important, especially when it comes to our understanding of dealing with all the difficult circumstances that affect our daily lives.

Let us begin with a background into the two words that we will be looking about throughout the

rest of the reading, and those are the words bend, and broken. Now, obviously these two words will be looked at from the spiritual point of view, and not literally, although there are some extenuating circumstances in our lives that push our physical abilities, as for example an illness, a medical condition, physical pain, etc. Webster's Dictionary defines the word bend as several meanings:

1. To constrain or strain to tension by curving
2. To force from a proper shape
3. To adapt to one's purpose
4. To direct strenuously or with interest

Also, the word bend has several meanings from the Strong's Concordance:

1. Strong's Concordance 5791 from the Hebrew word **avath** meaning *to be bent or crooked*.
2. Strong's Concordance 43 from the Greek word **agkalé** meaning *an arm, especially as bent to receive a burden*.

Now, let us look at the word broken. According to Webster's Dictionary, the word broken has a lot of different meanings as well, but we are only going to look at a few:

1. To separate into parts with suddenness or violence
2. To defeat utterly and end as an effective force
3. To exhaust in health, strength, or capacity
4. To come apart or split into pieces

Also, the word broken has several meanings from the Strong's Concordance:

1. Strong's Concordance 7665 from the Hebrew word **shabar** meaning *to break, break in pieces*.
2. Strong's Concordance 8368 from the Hebrew word **sathar** meaning *to burst or break out*.
3. Strong's Concordance 2806 from the Greek word **klao** meaning *to break*.
4. Strong's Concordance 1234 from the Hebrew word **bakah** meaning *to break through*.

Now, with all of these definitions in mind, I ask

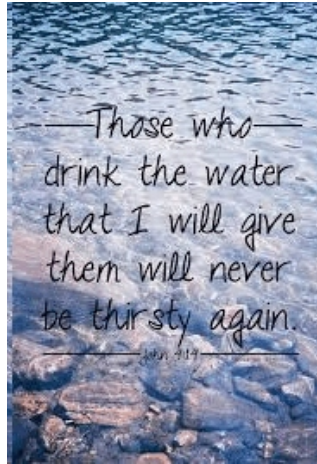
you a second question: **Have you ever felt identified with any of these definitions from these words throughout the weeks that lead up to the Feast of Tabernacles?** I ask you it might seem at times where we are going through so much in life, we feel as though we are completely bent out of our comfort zone, and resulting in a broken heart, a broken mind, and sometimes, even a broken spirit.

Let us begin by looking at the first part of the article with regards to how life and distress sometimes take a hold of us, as you will see throughout God's Word speaking to us. Let us turn first to the Book of Hebrews 10:35-39 (reading out of the King James Version): "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in Him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul".

There are often in our lives, more often than not frankly, where we meet distress in our lives with an unprecedented surprise. Typically, we find ourselves in spiritual, emotional, or physical situations that can cause us to have distress and then we find ourselves looking and searching for the answers about what God will often do with our lives. However, Scriptures are very clear, God will respond to us, we just have to maintain the faith, and make sure that we completely trust in the process God has set out for us to do. God will not be late in our lives, ever, and we must acknowledge the process through which He brings us in our lives, especially because during times of distress, our life can get very complicated.

In the Book of John 4:9-14 (Here we will read about the time Jesus Christ was speaking with the woman of Samaria): "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is

deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”



This familiar set of verses to all of us should resonate an important element of the concept of dealing with distress in our lives. We see the woman, who questions and doubts of the situation at hand, even with our Messiah present and informing her of the truth behind the water of the well, especially when it comes to the spiritual sense of the word. There are times in our lives when we think a problem, a situation, or adversity can become so overwhelming, that we tend to lose focus on the solution that is right before our very own eyes. We are caught up in our human nature with doubt, fear, and emotions that run inside of us at all times, not even realizing that God and His Son, Jesus the Christ, already have a solution in mind for anything and everything that can happen in our life. There is nothing too big, complex, or problematic that God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, cannot handle.

Let us read in the Old Testament the Book of Psalms, and we will see different examples of David managing distress in his life, and we can definitely learn from his examples in our daily lives, Psalms 106:4-5: “Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation; That I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance.” And dropping down to verses 43-48: “Many times did He deliver them; but they provoked Him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry: And He remembered for them His covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies. He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives. Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto Thy Holy

Name, and to triumph in Thy praise. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord.”

During these verses, David acknowledges the problems and distress Israel faced during their disobedience to God. Although Israel went about their way, in sin, in forgetting God after everything that God had done for them, David alludes to an important premise in all of this distress in life, in that no matter how serious our situation in our life can be, God will always hear our cry, when we reach out to Him with a pure heart, and good intentions. Distress can be a very dangerous and overwhelming characteristic to take a hold of us, but we cannot allow it to take complete control of our lives because God is there with us, at any given time, at any given moment, and during any circumstance that is going on in our lives.

We must be calling out to God in our most stressful times, just like Israel did, even after forsaking and disobeying His laws and statutes. Our life needs to be centered around calling to God, and not living in distress. Let us continue in the Book of Psalms, and look at another example brought forth by David, Psalms 107:19-21: “Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses. He sent His Word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” Dropping down to verses 28-31: “Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”. And finally, drop down to verses 41-43: “Yet setteth He the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock. The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.”

There is quite a bit of spiritual meat in these verses. David presents his feelings about how God

handles distress in the lives of people that need assistance in their hearts. David knew, understood, and witnessed the true and amazing power of God to handle anything and everything that would present its way into the lives of people. Also, these verses paint a clear and concise picture, in that God is the calm of the storm that faces our lives at any given time. God is the only one that can provide the solution to our inner troubles because He knows that we must face distress in life. God did not make mankind to be like a robot, emotionless, or with a lack of empathy, no, not at all. God made man in His image, and we have a heart that experiences feelings in our daily routines, and that is why God can calm the storm that sometimes is set before us in our lives because we need to be watchful of what happens to us, and more importantly than that, is just how we react to what happens in our lives in the first place.

That is why David mentions man's response to how God solves problems several times in verses 21 and 31 that we just read here in Psalms 107: **"Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"** Reading now Psalms 118:5-8: "I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." And dropping down to verses 13-18: "Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore: but He hath not given me over unto death."

These words written by David should remind us of a very important part in managing all distress in our life, and that is that God does not allow man to do more unto us than what we can handle. David is very clear in his message because he knew that God was with him at all times, and there was not anything that mankind could do to us that God cannot handle, and that is the same mentality that we should have today as

well in our lives.

Let us go to the New Testament to the Book of James 5:10-11: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." Continuing in the Book of James 1:12-18: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

James talks about two different points we can apply in our lives in moments of distress. We need to be reminded of the patience and endurance with the example of Job, as well as other prophets in the Bible that had to go through their own difficult times of distress in their lives. Also, the concept of not letting sin in our lives, especially when it comes to moments of distress in our lives is also important because distress can deviate our attention away from the statutes and laws set forth by God to mankind. We cannot lose focus, we must continue to strive for the solution with God and Christ, not let Satan and his ways dominate our inner most self. Let us read in the Book of Hebrews 12:1-2: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Reading the Book of Ephesians 3:11-17: "According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him.

Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.” These two separate set of verses paint a clear picture of how to manage distress in our lives, and that is to take the preparation, life, and example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, and make sure we have in our hearts and minds our purpose in life. Although life may become difficult at times, it was the same way for Christ when He was on this earth, and believe me, it will be difficult for us at times, we just cannot let the situation get the best of us.

The instructions are clear in Scripture as we just read, in that all tribulations that happen in our lives is for our glory and belief that there is an Almighty God, with His Son, watching how we react to the situations that present themselves in our lives. Our Christian fortitude lies within the commitment at baptism when we received the Holy Spirit to know that God and Christ will be watching out for us, regardless if we see an immediate response or not. Just like Christ endured distress in His life on this earth, we should be expected to do the same, when tribulations and distress come into our lives.

Speaking of tribulations, let us look at the second and final element, and that is managing tribulations with our enemies. This aspect of our lives is often the most difficult one to manage because I know that it can be incredibly hard to believe that things can only happen to us, it would seem so. But, the answer is no brethren, tribulations happen to every single person that has ever lived on this planet, there is absolutely no exception to the rule, or exception of person that has not lived through tribulation in their life. The difference between those of us that are called into God’s truth, and those who are of the world, is the actual response and mindset that goes along with how tribulations affect our lives. I know that sometimes, you might be thinking: ***Am I the only one going through tribulations? Are my enemies exempt from all that happens in this world?*** I can assure you, every person, including our enemies, go through tribulations.

Our solution, unlike the world, rests within the Holy Scriptures at this very moment, and God’s Word always speaks to us, especially when it comes to dealing with these situations.

Let us read the Book of Romans 5:1-5: “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us”. Paul’s letter to the Romans reminds us that tribulations, especially with our enemies, creates and develops a critical part of our Christian character. For example, Paul is writing for us to know the importance of the work the Holy Spirit does in us during times of tribulation. The essence of going through tribulations is to forge our inner being with the Christian fortitude needed to surpass anything that comes up in our life. Remember, our hope is in God and Christ, and tribulations are a part of understanding how that hope of a solution is manifested in our lives as well.

Reading the Book of Hebrews 6:9-15: “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.”

Abraham also had his trials and tribulations during his tenure on this earth. We need to be diligent, and maintain our hope unto the end, the same way Abraham did in the face of all he faced in his life as well. God does not forget His love for us because He knows everything we have done for Him in our lives, and He will not leave us alone, ever.

Going back to the Old Testament, to the Book of Psalms 136:23-24: “Who remembered us in our low estate: for His mercy endureth for ever: And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for His mercy endureth for ever.” David also presents the element of knowing that God remembers His called out children, even when we are at our lowest point in our lives. Just when it seems that all is lost, and that we cannot go any deeper into a problem that has affected us so much in our life, God is there for us, remembering us, and answering our call to Him. No enemy can affect us in a way that God cannot overcome through His love, His mercy, and His care for us during all circumstances affecting our life. God will never forsake His elect, especially in times of need.

Let us conclude by acknowledging the words of the prophet Isaiah: “A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law. Thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the Lord: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands. The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, He shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: He shall cry, yea, roar; He shall prevail against His enemies” (Is. 42:3-13).

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