



Matthew 7:14

Excellent Things

"Have not I written to thee excellent things..." Proverbs 22:20

A monthly teaching newsletter of *Narrow Way Ministries International* Issue 3 - June 2018



*"GO YE THEREFORE,
AND TEACH ALL NATIONS"
MATTHEW 28:19*



God Left Him To Try Him

Dear Friends & Family,

In this month's teaching, the Lord led me to a passage in II Chronicles 32. This is the story of King Hezekiah after the Lord miraculously healed him and was now blessing him in his life. In verse 31 it says, "Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart."

The Hebrew word for "try" found here is the same word found in Genesis 22:1 where it says, "God did tempt Abraham." In Genesis 22 we find the story when the Lord asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. This Hebrew word means "to test, to try, to prove, to train, to attempt." The truth is God tries and tests every one of us as He tested Hezekiah and Abraham. In the story of Hezekiah we find "God left him, to try him." The Hebrew word for "left" means "to relinquish or to permit." In other words, God had left Hezekiah to his own accord to test him in order to see his response.

The entire struggle or test for Hezekiah began when the princes of Babylon came to inquire of him. God had healed Hezekiah of a terrible sickness, so they wanted to know about that. When they came, Hezekiah not only shared about his healing, but showed them his kingdom. We find this in detail in II Kings 20:

"¹²At that time Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon,

sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. ¹³And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. ¹⁴Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon. ¹⁵And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them." (II Kings 20:12-15)

First of all, Babylon represents all that pretends to be of the Lord but is not. Paul put it aptly in II Timothy 3:5, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." Babylon represents all things religious. Those who are living in Babylon are those people who have left the true manifest presence of God to embrace simply now a religious form of godliness. The Bible is very clear about Babylon being a place that God's people need to leave and be delivered from. Psalms 137 describes further what happens when we remain in Babylon:

"By the rivers of Babylon, there

we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. ²We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. ³For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. ⁴How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?" (Psalms 137:1-4)

Babylon causes people to forget Zion, or the place where the manifest presence and Glory of God is abiding and enthroned upon God's people. Babylon will cause us to forget the things that previously we held onto so dearly in our hearts. And because of this, Babylon will also cause us to hang our harps or cause us to stop worshipping like we once did. Where once we used to worship radically in the glory of God, we revert to simply standing around in a meeting not really worshipping with our hearts. Babylon will try to imitate Zion by making us sing one of our songs. But the truth is, we can't sing the Lord's song in Babylon because there is something lacking. It is the glory of God.

God was upset with Hezekiah because he had allowed the princes of Babylon to come into the Lord's house, showing them all of his treasures and secrets. Silver represents our redemption. Gold represents the character of God. He showed them the secrets of the house. Instead of guarding the glory like the Scripture exhorts us to do, he let Babylon in. Hezekiah had

JESUS IS PRECIOUS!

been blessed and was a good man. God had healed him, but in this one case, he made a mistake. Hezekiah began to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. And so he opened up the house of the Lord and revealed its treasures and secrets which he should not have done. God then judged him by leaving Hezekiah to himself at that point. This reminds me of a passage in Job:

⁸Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; And backward, but I cannot perceive him: ⁹On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: ¹⁰But he knoweth the way that I take: When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job 23:8-10)

Many times in my life, I have felt like Job here. The truth is, we all go through seasons where God pulls back a little. He will pull back His manifest presence in a situation to try us. Now God never leaves us or forsakes us. But He will hold back from speaking or moving in our lives in order to leave us in situations in order to see our response. And by doing this, He is trying us for a greater good in our lives. He is trying us so He can see what is in our hearts.

In Abraham’s test in Genesis 22, when Abraham held up the knife to slay Isaac, the angel of the Lord stopped Abraham and said, *“Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me”* (Genesis 22:12). God then provided a ram caught in the thicket to be the sacrifice instead of Isaac. It took Abraham going through that trial for the Lord to see that Abraham was willing to give anyone or anything for the Lord and the Kingdom of God. Abraham called the name of that place *Jehovah-Jirah*. This name not only means “the Lord will provide” but it also means “the Lord will see.” In other words, many times in our lives, God will step back to see what we are going to do or how we are going to respond. And by doing this, He tries us.

There are so many passages about the Lord trying us. In Psalm 11:4 it says, *“The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD’s throne is in heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men.”* God’s eyes see us and watch us as He tries us. Jeremiah 17:10 says, *“I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”* The reins are the reins of a horse, but for us it speaks of those things that control our lives. Let me ask you, who has the reins in your life? Does Jesus? Or does your job, spouse, or some other thing rule you? God will step back from us to try us so He can see firsthand what or who truly has the reins of our lives.

God not only wants to see what is in our hearts, but He allows these things to try us so we can see what is in our hearts as well. God stepped back in Hezekiah’s life so Hezekiah can see how he was missing it. He stepped back so perhaps Hezekiah could see the pride and error of his way.

So the Lord will step back in all of our lives with this same purpose in mind. No He never leaves us, but He sure does try us. He simply steps back in His manifest presence. I Peter 4:12 says, *“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.”* Most of us have a tendency to think that when God is trying us that something strange is going on. We think that God does not see us or is involved in what is happening. The truth is the fiery trial is simply God watching us to see how we are going to respond or what we are going to do in that situation.

I Corinthians 3:13 says, *“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.”* This passage doesn’t say what size is our work, but what sort it is. God is after the quality or character behind our work. He is after the motivation behind everything we do in life. I can’t tell you how many times over the years while I was leading worship that

the Lord would ask me, “What are you doing? Why are you doing what you are doing?” As a worship leader, God constantly was checking my heart. He did not want me to do things by rote but always from the heart because the anointing always rests because of someone’s heart, not their talent. Preaching and moving people can be a learned art. And God would step back from time to time while I was ministering to always keep me in check so His anointing can grow in my life. Also by stepping back, God was allowing me to see what was in my own heart. For example, did I sing or shout a particular way to be seen of men or did I do it unto the Lord?

In today’s Christian church, so much emphasis is put on the size of a work. When you go to a minister’s meeting, everyone is always wanting to know two things: how much and how many. They want to know how much money is flowing and how many people are coming. Sadly, they use these two things to measure success. But God measures success by the sort or character of our lives. He knows He is our provider in every area of our lives, so He isn’t concerned about the things we are concerned about. Moreover, Jesus never concerned Himself with the numbers of people. There were many times where Jesus asked people to leave. When Jesus ministered a challenging word in John 6 and the Bible says many disciples left off following Jesus, *“Then said Jesus unto the twelve, will ye also go away?”* (John 6:67). At the end of Jesus’ life and ministry, everyone forsook him and fled. He was left alone. So in today’s vernacular, Jesus must have had an unsuccessful ministry. I don’t think so.

God is simply after our hearts. He is after why we are doing what we are doing. He is looking to see if we will do the right thing in every situation. He is wondering whose lives have we helped or blessed today. He is looking to see if we are faithful to keep pressing on with the vision He has given us.

At Narrow Way Ministries, we are laboring to make disciples all over the

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Excellent Things

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world. We are not looking to build a big ministry or make our name great. We are looking to help the people whom God has sent to us and properly serve, pastor, and teach them so they can fulfill the will of God for their lives. And by the grace of God, we are doing that today in many places in Bolivia, Alaska, Africa, Florida, and North Carolina. We are trying to obey the Lord's great commission in doing this. God is moving mightily in the nations, but in this new season of my life, the Lord has me refocusing my attention to America.

America to me is the number one nation that needs a move of God. I believe God has pulled back, waiting and watching who is going to take a stand. God has left us to ourselves to prove and try us to find out what His people are going to do. He wants to know what our hearts truly want as believers. Is our goal in life prosperity or fame? Or do we want Jesus and His Kingdom above all? And I believe the only way for Him to get this answer is by pulling back. And by pulling back, He will learn if religion is enough for us. By pulling back, He will learn who are the hungry and thirsty among us. He will learn who are the faithful. Is having a big church and lots of money enough?

Our hearts should pray like David's in Psalm 26:2, "Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart."

Moreover, Psalms 139:23-24 says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." This should be our prayer and the goal of our hearts. Deuteronomy 8:2 explains this process perfectly, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no." The times God pulls back as we walk through the wilderness, He is simply humbling and proving us to see if we will keep doing what we know to do.

So many times, we need to know what is in our hearts. This is God's way of revealing and proving us. God lets us discover our motives as He pulls back and watches our response. God left Hezekiah to try him.

Let me ask you today, has God's presence lifted off your life a little? In Hezekiah's case, it was because of his mistake of opening his house to the princes of Babylon. God wanted Hezekiah to know the error of his way. But maybe you are going through a situation and you did nothing wrong to cause it. Well the answer could be simply God is trying and proving you so you can know what is in your heart. And when we discover what is there, all He wants us to do is repent and

adjust our motives where needed. God does not want our hearts ugly towards anyone no matter what the situation.

As a Christian now for over forty five years, one of the hardest things to do is to keep my heart right in every situation. Jesus promised as we keep our hearts right, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). In other words, as we keep our hearts right in every situation, we will see God in it. In our everyday life, we can see the Lord if we keep our hearts right. If the Lord's presence lifts and He is trying us, make whatever adjustments need to be made like Hezekiah did. He repented and ended up prospering even more. God left Hezekiah to try him to know what was in his heart. God's whole purpose was to let Hezekiah know what was in his heart.

My prayer is this Word encourages your heart today. May you see and understand better the purposes of God in everything we go through. If you find yourself in a situation like Hezekiah or in a wilderness, may Jesus give you the grace to make whatever adjustments you need to do, in Jesus' name, Amen!

Jesus is Precious, Brother Sam

Church in Asheville, NC

To the right are some snap shots of our new church gathering in Asheville, NC. We are currently meeting at 10:30 am on Sunday mornings at 658 Lakeshore Dr., Asheville, NC 28804. God's glory has been faithfully and strongly meeting with us in every meeting bringing with it great unity, expectation, and joy! There is definitely an open heaven up here in North Carolina. Thank you for continuing to pray for us up here as we seek to create a larger hole in the heavenlies and take root as a beacon for discipleship, worship, and the glory of God up here in Asheville, NC. What an exciting time it is and we are grateful for the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!



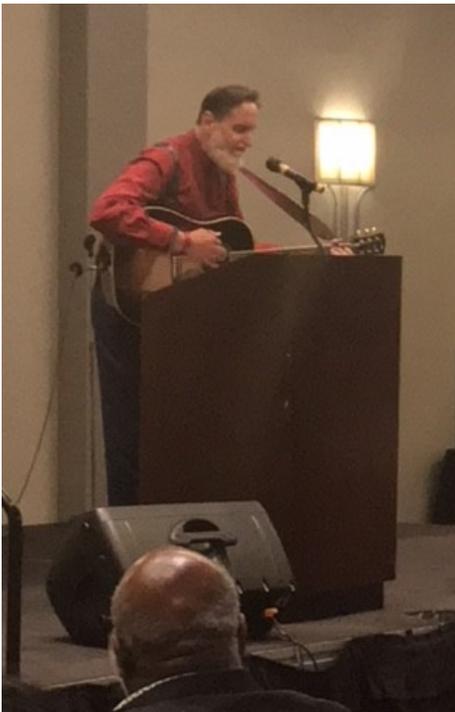
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The Gathering 2018 Chesapeake, VA

This past month, Brother Sam was invited to minister up in Chesapeake, VA during a conference called The Gathering, hosted by Bishop Thomas Weeks of New Destiny Fellowship International of Wilmington, DE. It was a great time to meet many pastors and Christians that are part of their ministry from all over the country.

Brother Sam had the opportunity to minister twice. The first time was the first night during the large nightly meeting. Brother Sam ministered one of the songs the Lord gave him years ago called, "Let The Weight Of His Glory Fall On Me." For most people in the room, it was the first time they ever heard Brother Sam sing or lead worship. It truly was a beautiful moment as hundreds of precious believers worshipped together in the glory.



The next day, three pastors came up to us wanting Brother Sam to come and lead worship and teach at their churches. We are grateful to the Lord for the relationships that Jesus is forming in our lives in this country. Two of the pastors have churches in the Philadelphia area and the other pastor is in New Mexico.

Brother Sam also had the opportunity to minister in one of the teaching sessions. He shared out of II Samuel 23 on David's three mighty men who broke through the host of the Philis-



tines to bring a drink of water out of the well of Bethlehem to King David. Instead of drinking the water, David poured it out on the earth. King David here is a type of Jesus and him pouring the water out is a type of the last great move of God that is coming. What is going to proceed the last great move of God is a group of overcomers breaking through the host of the enemy, drawing water out of the well of Bethlehem. Bethlehem means house of bread. In other words, the last great move of God's glory will come from the well of the Word of God!



The Lord gave Brother Sam many tremendous prophetic words that deeply ministered to many of them present. We had two young brothers want to join the Bible school as well.

Needless to say, Jesus had many divine appointments during this trip. We were very well received and the people were precious beyond words. We felt at home the entire time. We are grateful to the Lord for all that He did and we give Him all the glory because we could not have scripted it better the things that happened during this trip. It was obvious God moved in so many lives. Jesus is precious!



On behalf of Brother Sam, thank you again your continued prayers and support. For your convenience, here again is our contact information and the 3 different ways to give. Please stay in touch and let us know if there is anything we can do for you. If you ever desire for Brother Sam to come and visit your area, let us know as well. Receive all our love from Asheville, NC:

- 1) Call me, Andrew Jensen, at 904-514-0409 to give using your debit or credit card
- 2) Mail a check payable to "Narrow Way Ministries International" and mail it to:
Narrow Way Ministries International, 825 C Merrimon Ave, PMB #300, Asheville, NC 28804
- 3) Go online to pay via PayPal with your debit/credit card at: <http://www.nwmin.org/donate>

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