



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: God's Will and Purpose

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GOD HAD PLANNED SOMETHING BETTER

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Hindsight vision is always 20-20, but seeing what lies in the future is totally something else. The future is unknown, risky, and indefinite. It's no wonder we hesitate to take the bold step whether it is launching a business or moving away from the security of the nest. No business or marriage would likely fail if we knew the future, but neither does any endeavor succeed apart from a measure of risk. The armchair critics risk nothing. They are the ones who quarterback from the sidelines. They are exactly right with their criticism, but they are worthless when it comes to playing the game.

The writer of the book of Hebrews talks about a genre of heroes--at least heroes from God's point of view--whose exploits always seemed to fall short of success. The writer says, "Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy..." (Hebrews 11:36-38). Tough people, those who chose to face difficulty and the sure consequences that accompanied it, rather than to take the easy way out.

In the same passage the writer says, "And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:39-40). Did you notice that phrase, "God had planned something better for us..."? And what does that mean? Does it imply that it is better not to face the tough times of life? Naturally, that appeals to us. Nobody likes criticism or persecution for his faith. But that isn't what it means.

Those individuals who were willing to pay the price for their faith did it without seeing deliverance. They willingly laid down their lives for a victory which they did not yet see.

Those whom the writer of Hebrews was addressing, though, did see a victory which those who lived in bygone years only anticipated: the victory of an empty tomb, the victory of seeing Jesus Christ go hand-to-hand in combat with the enemy and come off victorious.

It was this that the writer saw as that "something better which God had planned." What's the bottom line? There are many things which we've got to take by faith--the times when we seem to lose, the times when we pray and it seems that evil triumphs, the times when you do right and seem to become the victim.

Can you accept by faith the proposition that God had planned something better? "Hey, just a minute!" you may be thinking. "Isn't that like whistling in the dark, or pretending that something is true which really isn't?" It all depends on your perspective.

If you live only for the hour, then perhaps the one who suffers or dies for a cause which will ultimately win is really the loser. But if God is God, and He is the Sovereign of the universe, then He will have His payday someday, and He will ultimately even the score, giving reward to those to whom it is due, and rendering judgment to those to whom it is due, as well.

The wheels of justice seem to grind so very slowly, yet the overview of history says that they grind exceedingly fine and sure. Better to lose in a cause that will ultimately win than to win in a cause that will ultimately fail.

Resource Reading: Hebrews 11