

The Exception That Proves the Rule

God observes His own Law, including the Sixth Commandment which says, Thou shalt not kill or murder (Exodus 20:13). How can He not observe it? The Law expresses His character in written form (See Psalm 119:172; Jeremiah 23:6). Humans get the master they choose to obey. Since our omnipotent God is love and wants only good for His children, we are safe within His great loving arms while we obey Him. That is the rule.

Scripture underscores this truth in many ways.

- The Law formed the very center of the Israelites' worship service, since the two tablets were placed inside the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place in the heart of the Sanctuary. The Law was the respected core of their worship of God, the only writing in their literature that came from the finger of God. In both BC and AD, that was the Law that God wrote in the hearts of all who followed Him.
- When Jesus healed the paralytic by the pool of Bethesda, He admonished him, "Behold, though art made whole. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14). He counseled the woman caught in adultery to "go and sin no more" (John 8:11). When He emphasized this, God as our Protector was clearly on His mind.
- The apostle Paul says, "Awake to righteousness and sin not" (1 Cor. 15:24). He was not bashful about emphasized this point. No doubt he realized the implications of sinning against God. No doubt he knew that sin leaves us vulnerable to bad things, from sin's consequences to nature gone wild.
- Again he says, "Wherefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). Texts with these sentiments appear so profusely in the sacred word that to deny them would be to deny Christianity. God wants to give us victory over these things.
- When Jesus' attention was called to the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices, He told them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but *unless you repent*, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:2, 3, emphasis supplied). He was referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, yet future. The tragedy that unfolded in the Sanctuary was just the first drops of an overwhelming storm that would one day overtake Israel, all because of sin.

In a major theme, everywhere Scripture warns of the consequences of sin. The putting away of sin constitutes a foremost aspect of Christian living. Our Bible wouldn't be the Bible without this theme.

There are innumerable reasons to worship and obey God, foremost among them is this: "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for ...[you], an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma" (Ephesians 5:1, 2, NAS). When we behold the love of God for us, few can resist its drawing power to worship and obey Him. God has given us every reason to enlist on His side in His great war with Satan. But if we cannot serve Him for

these exalted reasons, can't we serve Him out of self-preservation?

God can only protect us dependent creatures while we obey Him. It is the law of the great conflict between Christ and Satan. It is the law of gracious interaction between intelligent creatures. It is the rule.

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But there are exceptions to every rule, including this one. Everyone knows of a sanctified person or family upon whom some great tragedy has fallen in their lifetime. These events do occur, and we do not deny it. Remember, God is all powerful. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 18:8). There is no question that God could protect His children under any and all circumstances. How are we, then, to understand it when God releases and exposes His own faithful children to harm?

The first example that we will look at is an important Biblical statement on this topic—the story of blind Bartimeus, whom Jesus healed. "Who sinned," asked the disciples, "that this man was born blind, the blind man himself or his parents?" Pay close attention to Jesus' response. "Neither he nor his parents sinned. This was done for the glory of God" (Mark 10:46-52). Much confusion has resulted from our incorrectly interpreting Jesus' words. This man was born blind specifically because Jesus would heal him in due time, and that healing would bring glory to God.

The reason Bartimeus was born blind had to do with God's receiving the glory for healing him. Throughout his long life, every moment brought him nearer to meeting Jesus and receiving the blessing of healed eyes.

Therefore, let us be very slow to judge. Because God is omnipotent, it is easy to think that every affliction indicates a curse from God and every occasion of prosperity a cause for rejoicing in God's benefits. In the story of the healing of the blind man, Jesus gave them an important lesson that this is not always the case. For this reason the apostle Paul directs us to praise God in everything, for He can make *all things* turn out to the glory of God. But make no mistake about it: At the point where we choose willfully to sin, at that point we are vulnerable to the prince of darkness.

The Righteous Job

Consider for a moment the righteous man, Job. Had he sinned to attract the misfortune that came his way? Not at all. We know what Job didn't know. God got into a discussion with the accuser over Job's motivation for living a righteous life, and God proved His case, that the benefits God poured out to Job did not influence the way he lived. He proved that Job would be righteous regardless of his circumstances. Job never knew why "God" treated him so badly, but he kept right on loving Him through thick and thin, through weal and woe, and God in the end restored his fortunes and gave him twice what he had lost (Job 42:10-17).

The Example of Jesus

The example of Jesus is a huge case in point. Jesus was a righteous nonpareil. Yet the Father released Him to experience the wages of sin for all humanity. Sometimes for a greater good, and for a time, God releases His own to trouble. Therefore, we must be very careful about judging others because we do not always know why God allowed this misfortune to come upon this individual. Through whatever comes — good times or what we consider bad—let us keep on praising the Lord! Thereby we can demonstrate that our faith is real, that our Christian service does not depend on our benefits.

These principles are as solid as granite and as transparent as glass. God does not destroy; He heals whatever He touches. Satan destroys. Humans get the master they choose to obey. We become vulnerable to the destroyer when we choose sin.

The exception does not negate the rule that we get the master we choose to obey. Each day brings word of deeper iniquity and strange things transpiring on this planet, which one day will break out in an overwhelming storm. When that time comes, let us be solidly on the Lord's side of the battle. Then we shall go forth "[F]air as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" (Song of Solomon 6:10).

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- www.The-Character-of-God.com
A Book Titled: *Light Through the Darkness: A Vindication of God*, 157 pages
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBZfdggyXw&feature=youtu.be
(or) <http://youtu.be/hMaltpis72c>
A Video Titled: *A New Look At the Character of God*
- www.GodsCharacter.com
A Book Titled: *Servant God: The Cosmic Conflict Over God's Trustworthiness*, 418 pages