

Transforming Daily
“... *what is this that God has done to us . . .*”
Genesis 42:28

Why were Joseph’s brothers so afraid when they found money in their sacks? Even Jacob was afraid when his sons told him the story and showed him the money. Why? The text doesn’t exactly say why they were afraid, but it probably had something to do with feeling that the “lord of the land” had set them up to look like spies of which he had already accused them of being. Or perhaps they were afraid because they might have been set up to look like thieves and then have to suffer the subsequent reprisals.

It’s really hard to tell from the text what they were afraid of. However, what is clear in the text is that the brothers attributed the event to God. Notice that they not only attribute this act to God, but that it was done *to* them not *for* them. That’s the lesson to be learned here, the lesson of God’s sovereignty. The reader of this text knows that it was done *for* them, but the brothers interpret it as being done *to* them. Why? Perhaps they had guilty consciences. Perhaps they felt that the act indicated that Joseph couldn’t be trusted, or he was going back on his word, which would surely mean the death of Simeon. Whatever the reasons they might have had for attributing this event to God as an act against them rather than for them, they still attributed it to God.

God either allows, assigns, appoints, or arranges the circumstances and situations in which we live. Often God allows adversity, catastrophe, and even mayhem to exist in order to turn the hearts and minds of believers as well as unbelievers to Him. Look at events in recent history. Whenever some national or worldwide event took place, churches were subsequently and immediately visited, e.g., the cowardly acts of Muslim terrorists bombing of the World Trade Center on September 1, 2001. Immediately following these acts that would ultimately lead to the War on Terrorism, Christian churches, as well as other religious organizations, were immediately attended by those who were looking to God (or their gods) for answers to such reprehensible and unconscionable acts against humanity, heinous acts of war against innocent and unsuspecting civilians. One might ask, “Are you saying that the God of the Christian Bible, the only true and wise God, did that?” No, but He certainly allowed it. Otherwise He is not sovereign or omnipotent (however, know that God tempts no one).

God also allows adversity in one’s life on a personal level that the individual might turn to Him in their hour of need or continue to depend on Him for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of who He is and commitment to Him for what He is doing in their life. Mind you, this kind of thinking is biblical, but foreign to what is taught and preached in many churches today.

How do you understand personal or corporate adversity in your life or in that of the life of another? Do you accept the truth that God is sovereign, that He is omnipotent? When adverse events occur in your life, not related to unconfessed sin, and you can’t explain them, who do you turn to, who do you trust? The adversity you and yours is experiencing might very well be permitted by the will of God. If so, understand it to be for His glory and your gain as well as for the betterment of others if you are asked, “What is this that God has done to us?”