

‘Go Thus Far and No Farther’

Are you faithfully following and serving God, yet find yourself in the fight of your life, opposed and slandered by unreasonable believers or backslidden Christians?

Is your authority as a pastor, elder, husband, parent, teacher, employer, etc. being ruthlessly challenged by adamant rebels? Have they dealt you a stunning injustice? Left you defeated, overwhelmed and hopeless? Don't rebel or run away.

Long ago God gave a reassuring message of hope to believers facing uprisings. It came through Jeremiah and Job. In Jeremiah's day, the Judeans were in threefold rebellion to God: sinfully worshipping idols, stubbornly denying God's chastening (Babylonian siege), and wickedly persecuting His faithful messenger, Jeremiah. When they rose up against the Lord and those faithful to Him, He spoke.

God's message, addressed to the rebels, deeply comforted Jeremiah and the faithful remnant:

“Fear ye not me? Saith the Lord. Will ye not tremble at my presence, who hath placed the sand at the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though its waves toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? (Jer. 5:22)

Let's examine the symbols God uses in this metaphorical statement. The “sand” represents God's faithful ones, Abraham's loyal faith-children. God told Abraham his seed would be “as the sand” by the seashore. “I will multiply thy seed ... as the sand which is upon the seashore” (Gen.).

“Sea,” which typically represents the unredeemed populace (Rev. 13:1), here symbolizes God's apostate people. Their unbelief and rebellion link them spiritually with the vast sea of unbelievers and its stormy uprisings against God: “This [My

apostate] people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone [from Me]" (Jer. 5:23). These rebels have no peace: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest" (Is.).

The "waves" roaring and tossing themselves against the sandy shoreline represent these rebels' contentious words and actions against God's faithful ones.

The "bound" represents the boundary or time limit God sets on their uprising. It cannot endure but must one day end: "Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over" (Ps. 104:9).

The "perpetual decree" is God's command that the sea not pass the shoreline. Similarly, God's Word commands that surprising stressful insurrections won't destroy us but must one day yield a "way to escape" (1 Cor. 10:13). This parallels nature.

Normally, the sea doesn't pass the sandy shoreline but, submitting to God's decree, stays in its divinely ordained place. During hurricanes or tsunamis, it seems to get away with rebellion! The shocking storm surge or massive tidal wave swamps the shoreline, causing great destruction. The sand appears totally overcome, defeated, and its future hopeless.

But, only for a time will this happen. When God's boundary—of minutes or hours—is reached, the rebellious surging waters humbly retreat. No matter how viciously they have roared and tossed themselves, in the end God's decree prevails and they return to their place. What message does this convey?

God is pledging that rebels can't oppose or overcome His faithful people forever. They didn't in Jeremiah's day—Jerusalem fell—and won't in ours either. They may roar, loudly and shamelessly arguing, accusing, threatening, slandering. They may toss themselves, opposing our every word and move in an attempt to ruin our family, church, ministry or reputation. And, shockingly, they may win—but only for a time. God has set a limit on their "hurricane."

Job describes it: “Thus far shalt thou come, but no farther: and here [God’s appointed time and place] shall thy proud waves be stayed” (Job 38:11).

“Thus far shalt thou come”—this describes God’s surprising yet wise permissive will. He decrees the rebellion will continue, but only temporarily, and only to test the faithful.

When the defiant “sea” has its way against them, will they still trust Him? Wait patiently for His help? Endure their difficulties? Remain loyal to God’s Word and will while other grains of “sand” compromise or desert? Will they reach faith’s summit of total abandonment? Job reached it while viciously misjudged: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). Abraham reached it on Moriah. Will we?

Spiritual hurricanes only serve God’s higher purposes. Once they are accomplished, His decree takes hold: “No farther!” Suddenly, in His time, He subdues our adversaries: “Here [at God’s limit] shall thy proud waves be stayed.” So, like Jeremiah, Job assures the faithful we always triumph in the end.

Quietly remember God’s decree. Your tsunami must go back in God’s time. Wait patiently for Him to say to your overwhelming waters, “Thus far, no farther!”

 Adapted from “Sweeter Than Honey—Volume Two” by Greg Hinnant, copyright 2013, published by Creation House. God’s words are sweeter than honey, and this book is full of devotionals that will satisfy your heavenly palate and bring you joy, peace and energizing from the Holy Spirit so you can face anything life brings. To order your copy, [click here](#).

Prayer Power for the Week of October 6, 2014

This week take heart and begin to thank the Lord for every trial or unpleasant circumstance you may be facing. Let Him know that you know your life is in His hands, and He will only

permit what will work for your good in the end. Thank Him that this is only a season that will soon pass. Thank Him for fruit that will last. Continue to pray for your fellow persecuted Christians, Israel, our nation, and for the spread of the gospel around the world. Lift up our national and spiritual leaders and pray for revival to ignite our churches, the nation and the world (Job 13:15; 1 Cor. 10:13).