

GOD IS ABLE

two messages by

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Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote *The House of the Seven Gables*, published in 1851. The novel follows a New England family and their ancestral home. Hawthorne explores themes of guilt, retribution, and atonement, and he colors the tale with suggestions of the supernatural and witchcraft.

This is not about the House of Seven Gables, but about . . . **The God of 12 ‘Ables’**. There are a dozen or more places in the Bible where it is said that God is able to do something spectacular. Many of these are addressed to you.

#1. God is able to give children to a barren woman

John the Baptist warning the Jews at the Jordan River says: **Luke 3:8**, “And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, **God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.**” Also **Matthew 3:9**

According to the CDC, 10% of women in the U.S. ages 15-44 have difficulty getting pregnant. That’s 6.1 million women.

The American Society for Reproductive Medicine says infertility can be acquired by age, smoking, STDs, being over or under weight.

There is no shame in barrenness: some of the greatest women in the Bible have been barren: Sarah (**Gen. 11:30**); Rebekah (**Gen. 25:21**); Rachel (**Gen. 29:31**); Manoah’s wife (Samson’s mother) (**Judges 13:2**); Hannah (Samuel’s mother) (**1 Sam. 2**); Elizabeth (John the Baptist’s mother) (**Luke 1:7**).

In these cases, God gave them children, but He doesn’t always choose to do so. If you have no children, through infertility of husband or wife, find a way to channel that to help others.

Psalm 113:9, “He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the LORD!”

#2. God is able to provide for your financial needs

Amaziah’s father had been murdered. When Amaziah became king, he mustered an army of 300,000 to fight against the Syrians. He also hired 100,000 elite forces for 100 talents each. But the prophet chided him for not trusting more in God’s ability to make him victorious with his own forces. “And Amaziah said to the man of God, ‘But what shall we do about the hundred talents that I have given to the army of Israel?’ The man of God answered, **The LORD is able to give you much more than this.**” (**2 Chronicles 25:9**)

Notice what the prophet of God advocated and what he did not advocate:

- 1) He advocated preparedness; doing the right things to insure success;
- 2) He did not advocate failing to trust God by doing what was not necessary

According to the Boston Fed, **76.9%** of Americans have a credit card. (192 million)
Close to half of all Americans have more credit card debt than savings. The Corporation for Enterprise Development said that 44 % of U.S. families are “liquid asset poor,” meaning they have less than 3 months’ worth of savings.

God is able to provide for your financial needs, but you must do your part. You take care of your bank, and He’ll take care of His. “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (**Philippians 4:19**).

#3. God is able to deliver you from difficult situations

Young Jewish men and women had been carried into captivity by the Babylonians. But there was a problem. **Daniel 3:12** says, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” (Abed-nego means ‘servant of Nego’ a pagan god)

Nebuchadnezzar threatened to throw them into the fiery furnace. He said, “You shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?” Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us** from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.’” (**Daniel 3:15-18**).

This is life’s ultimate “*if so . . . if not*” situation. God is able to deliver you from difficult situations, but He may not be willing. He doesn’t tell you why. He expects you to trust Him, and that’s not easy to do when you’re battling cancer, pain, or financial ruin.

When you fall into an extremely difficult situation, don’t resign yourself to it. Instead, adopt the faith statement of Job, “The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” (**Job 1:21**).

#4. God is able to rescue you when you are imprisoned

In the United States, 743 of every 100,000 people are incarcerated. To put that in perspective, although the U.S. represents only 5% of the world’s population, a quarter of all of the world’s prisoners are American.

Continuing the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, after they emerged from the fiery furnace unhurt, King Nebuchadnezzar made this decree: “Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for **there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.**” (**Daniel 3:29**)

But there are multiple ways to be imprisoned without being in jail. We can be imprisoned by our foolish mistakes, by addiction to smoking, eating, or drugs, by being in a bad relationship or marriage, by being overcommitted, by overspending.

If you are, stop and consider what imprisons you, confess any sin in your life, and ask God to deliver you from your personal prison. After all, “There is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.”

#5. God is able to humble you when you are proud

Later in Daniel’s story, King Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?” (**Daniel 4:29**)

But God punished Nebuchadnezzar for his pride. **Daniel 4:24-25**, “It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, that . . . your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox . . . till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.”

When restored, Nebuchadnezzar did what we all must do. **Daniel 4:37** says, “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and **those who walk in pride he is able to humble.**”

Psalm 40:4, “Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not turn to the proud.” [for] “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (**1 Peter 5:5; James 4:6**)

#6. God is able to toughen you when you are tempted

Remember the story of Satan’s tempting Jesus at the beginning of His ministry? “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ But he answered, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’” (**Matthew 4:1-4**)

Satan knows exactly how to get to you at your weakest moment. Notice the situation Jesus was in.

- (1) He was at the very beginning of his ministry (no healings or teachings yet; Satan saw him as a novice).
- (2) He left the crowd at the Jordan River where John was baptizing and was now all alone.
- (3) He had fasted for 40 days and was hungry. Satan hit him at the point of his need.
- (4) Satan attempted to get Jesus to doubt himself; “If you are the Son of God . . .” This is what he did to Eve in the Garden of Eden. **Genesis 3:1**, “He said to the woman, ‘Did God actually say, “You shall not eat of any tree in the garden”?’” The Master Doubter is good at implanting doubt in our minds.

But Jesus knows what you are facing when you face temptation. He faced it too. “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation

for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, **he is able to help those who are being tempted**.” (Hebrews 2:14-18)

People who habitually fall into temptation do three things they shouldn't:

- (1) they remain ignorant of God's promises;
- (2) they question the validity of the promises they do know; and
- (3) they fail to understand that God “is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20)

#7. God is able to strengthen you when you are weak

Weakness comes in many forms: **physical** (getting old isn't for sissies); **mental** (my father with Alzheimer's for 13 years mouthed hymns when we sang). One of today's biggest weakness is **social**—often there is a strong link between social weakness and mental weakness.

Doctors say social media affects us in 6 ways:

- #1 It's addictive.
- #2 It triggers more sadness, less well-being.
- #3 Comparing our lives with others is mentally unhealthy.
- #4 It can lead to jealousy—and a vicious cycle.
- #5 We get caught in the delusion of thinking it will help.
- #6 More friends on social media doesn't mean you are more social.

A study done by Swansea University in England documented the withdrawal people go through when they can't have their digital devices. Swansea's Phil Reed said, “We have known for some time that people who are over-dependent on digital devices report feelings of anxiety when they are stopped from using them, but now we can see that these psychological effects are accompanied by actual physiological changes.” Doctors are calling this “Facebook Depression.”

Now, don't think I am against digital devices. I'm not: we all use them. But like any addictive thing, we must regulate the depth to which we become dependent on them.

We must be concerned about **spiritual** weakness because more and more it appears Christ-followers aren't getting enough spiritual vitamins. We get most of our spiritual vitamins in a passive way (listening to the Pastor, reading a blog or a book, etc.). But we best counteract spiritual weakness in an active way – reading the word for ourselves; making our own commentary on what we read; keeping a spiritual diary or journal; teaching what we've learned to others, like our children or grandchildren (the teacher always learns more than the student).

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.” (Rom. 16:25).

#8. God is able to build you up in your faith

Acts 20 records Paul's tearful goodbye to the Ephesian elders. Listen to what he said, "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock. . . I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert . . . And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, **which is able to build you up** and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (**Acts 20:29-32**).

Paul addressed the theme of being built up in the faith to many of his churches. In **1 Corinthians 14:5**, Paul urged the Corinthians to use their spiritual gifts wisely "so that the church may be built up." To the Colossian believers he said, "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." (**Colossians 2:6-7**).

Being built up in the faith is our personal responsibility. If we are not being built up, hardened in our convictions, certain of our faith, then we have ourselves to blame.

But we also have the responsibility to build each other up. It is both a personal and a community responsibility. This is especially true with our children and grand-children. **Deuteronomy 6:6-7** is not an Old Testament requirement only. This command has never be abrogated, and is totally applicable to today. "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."

The community of faith is responsibility to grow spiritually, individually and corporately, because as Peter said, "You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (**1 Peter 2:5**).

#9. God is able to help you stand in the face of criticism

If you are in a position of leadership, and are not being criticized, you're doing something wrong. Criticism is a part of life, often generated by a sinful world.

Look at the great leaders of the Bible. **Moses** was the only man God could trust to lead 3 million griping Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, but look how they criticized him. **David** was the man after God's own heart, yet his own son, Absalom, criticized him and attempted to dethrone him. The **Apostle Paul** planted I don't know how many churches, wrote 13 letters of the New Testament (24%), formulated the doctrines of the church, and did all of that before any of the Gospels were written. Was he criticized? Almost by everyone.

In **Romans 14:4** Paul displays his attitude toward criticism: "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, **for the Lord is able to make him stand.**"

Ultimately you must answer to the Lord; he is your judge; he will determine your motives for service; he will enable you to stand in the face of those who criticize you.

Don't forget that when people are kicking you in the behind, that means you are still ahead of them. Don't let criticism stop you for doing right. Remember, "the Lord is able to make you stand." You have His promise.

#10. God is able to enable you to abound in good works

Perhaps you've heard me say it before. I said it dozens of times on the radio. You should never quote **Ephesians 2:8 and 9** without **verse 10**.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

As important as it is that you know you are saved by God's grace . . .

As important as it is that you know you are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone . . .

It is just as important for you to know why you are saved by God's grace.

What is the purpose of your salvation? You don't know until you come to verse 10, which is hardly ever noticed. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Learn from this one verse these four amazing truths:

1. Our salvation is the workmanship of God, not our own works
2. We were created in Christ Jesus (saved) for the purpose of doing good works
3. God prepared what He wants us to be and do before the creation of the world
4. God is pleased when we "walk in" or strive to accomplish that for which he created us.

Look, there are many Elvis impersonators, but there was only one Elvis. There are many Christians in the church, but there is only one YOU. God created you for a purpose, a purpose that was in His mind before Genesis 1. You are part an eternal plan, a divine plan.

Only you can do what you can do. God doesn't want anybody else to do what He created you to do. You are important to Him, but you are only pleasing to God when you are busy doing what He created for you to do.

So, why are you here? Why does God leave you here? After all, if heaven is so great, and it is, after you were born again from above, why didn't God just take you to heaven? Why did He leave you here?

I am convinced that the most frustrated people in the world are not the unsaved who don't fully grasp the judgment they face. I think the most frustrated people in the world are

Christians who are hanging around, but they have not yet discovered what God wants from the, what they are here to do.

Make an effort to discover your spiritual gifts right away. Get involved in a form of ministry that uses those gifts, and if there isn't an opening, get involved somewhere sharpening your skills until there is an opening.

One final thing on this topic. Don't settle for "good enough." Don't just meet someone's quota for getting the job done. Go beyond the quota. God didn't just save you to be "good enough." He doesn't want you just to live out His grace, He wants you to abound in that grace. It's another of His "ables." "And **God is able to make** all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, **you may abound in every good work.**" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

#11. God is able to keep you secure in His mighty hand

Jesus assured his followers with these words: "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and **no one is able to snatch them out** of the Father's hand." (John 10:29).

This is one of those reverse promises where God's ability creates man's inability. Once we are placed in God's hand at the moment of our salvation, we are safe in the hand of God. No one is able to strip our salvation from us.

I have many Christian friends who do not believe in the perseverance of the saints, what is often called eternal security. I love them dearly as brothers and sisters. But they are misunderstanding their salvation because they are misunderstanding this verse. They see salvation as reaching up to God's hand and holding on for dear life. But our hand is never mentioned in this verse. Our strength is not the issue here. It's God's hand and God's strength the verse talks about. The promise of the Lord Jesus is that no one can snatch you out of God's hand, and the voice of the verb indicates that includes you. It is in the middle voice which means it's something you do, or in this case can't do, to yourself.

We are all born into a cesspool of sin, because we are born into a 100 percent sinful world. "None is righteous, no, not one;" (Romans 3:10) "No one does good, not even one." (Romans 3:12). "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We all have the same problem; we are weak morally and spiritually because we have all sinned. But we all have the same God, and that's the good news, and our God's hand is strong.

So stop thinking that your salvation is you stuck in this cesspool of sin, reaching up to God and holding on to His hand to the end. It's not that way at all. It's you, stuck in this cesspool of sin, reaching up to God and Him reaching down and grabbing hold of your hand. Your security is not in the strength of your hand; it's in the strength of His hand. He holds on to you, and because He does, **no one is able to snatch you out** of your Father's hand. For that, you can praise God.

#12. God is able to cause you to stand confident in the day of judgment

One day we must all stand before God as our Judge. He is not judging whether we go to Heaven or Hell; that was settled at the Cross of Calvary and cemented the day we came to trust Christ as our Savior.

No, when I say we followers of Christ must stand before God as our Judge, I am not talking about the Great White Throne Judgment described in [Revelation 20:11-15](#). “Then I saw a great white throne . . .and I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. . . . Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” That is the future judgment for unbelievers in the Lord Jesus.”

But we believers must also stand before Jesus as our Judge, not for salvation but for our service. We call this the Judgment Seat of Christ. [2 Corinthians 5:10](#) apprises us, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

I have written two books on the subject of rewards and the Judgment Seat of Christ. The last one is called *Facing Your Final Job Review*. In both books I demonstrate from Scripture how important our motives are in receiving a reward. If our motives are not right, it doesn't matter how successful we've been in serving the Lord. That service is unacceptable to Him. Also, our faithfulness matters, as does the “Christ-in-You” Principle. Did you serve the Lord in your own strength or in the power of the God who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think?

How can you be certain that your service to the Lord Jesus is acceptable to Him? Follow the biblical guidelines presented in God's Word. In the book I boil those guidelines down to an easily understandable 5 or 6 things God is looking for in our service.

And when we do stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, who can make certain that we are able to appear before our Judge confidently and successfully? Who else than the God who is able.

Paul explains to Timothy how he suffered as a preacher and teacher, and then he says, “But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that **he is able to guard until that day** what has been entrusted to me.” ([2 Timothy 1:12](#)).

There are two great lessons I learned early in my Christian life. One, there is a God; and two, I am not Him. Since I can't rely on the subject of the second lesson, I sure am glad I can rely on the subject of the first.

If you are old enough, do you remember the little chorus we used to sing 50 years ago: “He is able, He is able, I know He's able. I know my God is able to carry me through.” There are a couple of updated versions of that. My favorite is Henry Smith's:

He is able, more than able,
To accomplish what concerns me today.
He is able, more than able,
To handle anything that comes my way.
He is able, more than able,
To do much more than I could ever dream,
He is able, more than able,
To make me what He wants me to be.”

Thank God. He is able.

Please allow me close with this doxology written by Paul to the Ephesians:

“Now **to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think,** according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (3:20-21).

Note: To obtain your personal copy of *Facing Your Final Job Review*, just go to our ministry websites (either wkministries.com or theheliosprojects.org), click on “Store”, and scroll down until you see the book.