



# God Has Not Forgotten You

He Is with You,  
Even in Uncertain Times

DR. DAVID JEREMIAH



THOMAS NELSON  
Since 1798



*God Has Not Forgotten You*

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*The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed,  
a refuge in times of trouble. And those who know  
Your name will put their trust in You; for You,  
LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.*

PSALM 9:9-10





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## *Introduction*

# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

According to an old African proverb, “Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.” Oh, how we wish that were not the case!

As a people, we love smooth seas and sunny days. If we had our way, there would be no storms, no clouds, no sorrows, and no losses. Unfortunately, we don’t have our way, which is why we are so often disappointed, discouraged, and distressed.

Just as bad, the “weather” in our lives changes quickly. Without warning we can encounter devastating circumstances—including the loss of our homes, of those dear to us, of money and possessions, of health, of employment, and even of our faith and hope.

The men and women profiled in the Bible understood this reality. Just ask Job! He was living his life with an abundance of blessings: a wonderful family, wealth to last for generations, and a deep and



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personal connection to Almighty God. Then, in the blink of an eye, it all came crashing down. You could also ask Hannah, who endured years of frustration and despair because her longing for a child was unfulfilled. Or ask Jeremiah, “the weeping prophet,” who witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and was so filled with grief that he wrote a book called Lamentations. Or ask Paul, who not only carried the burden of his past persecution of God’s people but was also afflicted with all manner of attacks and attempts on his life throughout his ministry on behalf of the Gospel.

You could also ask Jesus, who—even before He was betrayed by His disciples and crucified on a Roman cross—offered this warning: “In the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33).

I don’t know the particulars of your life, but whatever your circumstance, I’m confident you understand these realities as well. We’re living in a world that can change rapidly. One terrorist act, one natural disaster, one health pandemic, one economic collapse, one nuclear weapon—one example of any number of potential crises, and our lives will change overnight.

Our individual lives are just as fragile. The roof over our head may be gone tomorrow. The money in our savings account might disappear. Those dear to us in our immediate family circle may be absent in the near future. The fragility of life alone generates uncertainty and fear in some people.

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Perhaps worst of all is the feeling of being abandoned in the midst of all this uncertainty. It's one thing to endure hardship as part of a group—to navigate difficult waters under the discerning gaze of a competent captain who is able to bring you through any storm and land you at a place of safety. It's entirely something else to endure that storm on your own. To feel as if no one else sees and no one else cares.

In short, difficult circumstances will always be difficult. But their effect is multiplied tenfold when we feel like God has forgotten us.

So, we need to look honestly at that question: Does God forget about us? Does He lose sight of us? Does He stop caring about the circumstances of our lives and what we are being forced to endure?

Let's answer that question by looking back at Jesus' warning in John 16:33: "In the world you will have tribulation." In my Bible, there isn't a period after the word *tribulation*. There's a semicolon: "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Praise God for that semicolon! It tells us that all of our losses are temporary and all of our blessings are permanent. We need not cower in fear of the future or worry about the present. Instead, we have a heavenly Captain who has overcome the world and knows the way to lead us through any storm.



*We need to look honestly at that  
question: Does God forget about us?*



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Because of who Jesus is and what He has done, here are just a few of the promises we can claim:

- In the power of Jesus Christ, we are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37).
- Nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:38–39).
- All things work together for good (Romans 8:28).
- Those who wait upon Him will renew their strength (Isaiah 40:31).
- We can do all things through Him who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13).
- We can even “count it all joy” when we face trials (James 1:2).
- And we can trust the One who said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5).

In short, God has not forgotten us!

More specifically, He has not forgotten you. He is with you even during the most troublesome times and difficult days. He is with you even now.

Let’s look again at John 16:33 and these words of Jesus: “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Before the word *tribulation* is *peace*, and after *tribulation* is the word *cheer*. Jesus Himself is



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the opening and closing: “I have spoken” and “I have overcome.”  
And we are in Him!

J. I. Packer wrote the following in his book *Knowing God*:

We should not, therefore, be too taken aback when unexpected and upsetting and discouraging things happen to us now. What do they mean? Simply that God in his wisdom means to make something of us which we have not attained yet, and he is dealing with us accordingly. . . .

It is often the case, as all the saints know, that fellowship with the Father and the Son is most vivid and sweet, and Christian joy is the greatest, when the cross is heaviest.<sup>1</sup>

Packer then suggested two ways of handling the trials of life when we cannot, for the moment, see God’s purpose in them. “First, by taking them as from God, and asking ourselves what reactions to them, and in them, the gospel of God requires of us; second, by seeking God’s face specifically about them. If we do these two things, we shall never find ourselves wholly in the dark as to God’s purpose in our troubles.”<sup>2</sup>

I’ve written this book to help you do those things in times of distress. Specifically, I’ve structured each of the following chapters to help you seek God’s face when you encounter uncertain periods in your life, such as anxiety, change, worry about your

family and relationships, loneliness, health troubles, unanswered prayers, lost dreams, and more.

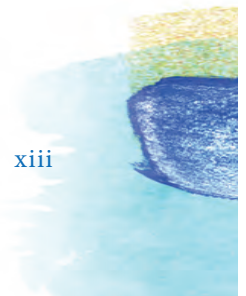
During times of hardship and pain, we find hope, comfort, and encouragement from our loving God. Yes, there is suffering in life—it is inescapable. But God is sovereign, and that is undeniable. He is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Whatever you're going through, remember that God has not forgotten you. You are not alone.

While tribulation is universal, it's temporary for the believer and it's surrounded by peace and cheer.

The apostle Peter, praising God for this truth, wrote,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead . . . In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. (1 Peter 1:3, 6–8)

If you're on stormy seas and being tossed about from the unexpected waves of daily living, remember this: You have a





*While tribulation is universal,  
it's temporary for the believer and  
it's surrounded by peace and cheer.*



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Captain for your faith and an Anchor for your soul. If you're suffering from loss or illness and feeling helpless, know you have an Almighty Sovereign who sees and understands your heartache. If you have burdens that seem too heavy to bear, trust the Bible that is a "lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path" (119:105); it will guide and encourage you. And while your Bible also warns of tribulation and trials, it promises peace and good cheer.

Don't give up when the water is high and your faith feels weak. You are not alone! God has not forgotten you in your distress.

Call upon Him with the words of this hymn by Edward Hopper:

*Jesus, Savior, pilot me  
Over life's tempestuous sea;  
Unknown waves before me roll,  
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal.  
Chart and compass come from Thee;  
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.  
As a mother stills her child,  
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;  
Boisterous waves obey Thy will  
When Thou say'st to them, "Be still!"  
Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,  
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.<sup>3</sup>*

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*One*

## YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

It was a case of David versus Goliath in the digital age. On one side of the fight was Google, the seemingly all-powerful tech giant bristling with lawyers and masses of corporate cash. On the other side was Mario Costeja González, a regular, everyday citizen of Spain.

What were these two combatants fighting about? The right to be forgotten.

One of the age-old “rules” of the internet is that anything posted online will remain online. Forever. That’s because the archival and automatic save features of search engines (including Google) make it difficult, if not impossible, for pieces of content to ever really be deleted.

That reality became a big cause for concern for Mario Costeja González. All the way back in 1998, the Spanish Ministry of Labor



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and Public Affairs posted an article about landowners who were forced to sell their properties because of social security debts. The government wanted as many bidders as possible competing for those properties, so it publicized the list. Mr. González was one of the owners forced to sell.

Sixteen years later, in 2014, that article was still at the top of the search results whenever someone looked on Google for “Mario Costeja González.” The old property had been disposed of long ago, and Mr. González’s debts had not been an issue for more than a decade. But the article still haunted him. He couldn’t get away from it. He tried to resolve the issue with Google through several channels, but nothing worked.

So Mario picked up his five smooth stones and prepared for a legal battle.

Amazingly, he won! The European Court of Justice ruled that Mr. González—and any other citizen of the European Union—did indeed possess the right to be forgotten. Meaning, they had the right to petition search engines to remove personal data that appeared to be inadequate or inaccurate, content that was no longer relevant, or content deemed excessive because of how much time had elapsed. Of course, there have been multiple layers of appeals since that initial ruling, and the practical consequences have taken years to play out. Still, the ruling was a major turning point in the history of the internet.<sup>1</sup>

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There's an irony in that reality. All Mr. González wanted was the removal of a thirty-six-word article so he could move on from past troubles. By suing to make that happen, however, he has cemented his own legacy in connection with that fight.


In other words, because of his desire to be forgotten, Mario Costeja González will be remembered for decades or even centuries!

It's unlikely that you or I will take on a technology giant over the right to be forgotten. In fact, it's unlikely that you or I *want* to be forgotten.


Instead, most of us want to be remembered. We want to be remembered by our family and friends. We want to be remembered for our successes and our character. We want to be remembered for our accomplishments in this life, but most of all we want to be known and accepted by God. Our souls long for a deep relationship with the Creator of the universe, Almighty God.

The Good News of the Gospel is this: Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have access to eternal life as a free gift received through faith. Because of God's Word, we can rest in the knowledge that God not only remembers us but also loves us and desires a relationship with us. It is His greatest desire that we live forever with Him in heaven.

Given those truths, why do we feel God is nowhere to be found? Why do we struggle with doubt about His care? And why is it easy to question whether He is listening to our cries for help?



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We'll address those questions throughout the pages of this book. And we'll do so primarily by focusing on the lives of different individuals in God's Word—starting with King David.

## DAVID'S DISTRESS

As one of the most famous people in human history, David's story has been told and retold for centuries. As a young boy, the seventh son of seven sons, he was selected by God and appointed by the prophet Samuel to serve as the next king of Israel because the reigning king, Saul, had rebelled against God. After his anointing, David achieved national fame by volunteering to fight against a giant named Goliath and triumphing in God's name. Later he became a military leader for the army of Israel, eventually succeeding Saul as king of Israel.

Yet there are some details within David's narrative that are often passed over—the fifteen to twenty years between David's defeat of Goliath and his ascension to the throne—and many of those years were turbulent and challenging for David.

After David's victory over the giant, it's not surprising that the people loved him. They even sang songs about him: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Samuel 18:7). As you might imagine, that kind of notoriety did not go



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over well with someone as narcissistic and paranoid as Saul. In this apprehensive state, Saul became jealous of David and determined to assassinate him. Ultimately David was forced to flee Jerusalem after Saul tried to kill him multiple times.

That was bad, but things got worse. After enjoying the luxury of Saul's palace, David spent years as a fugitive—sheltering in caves and spending innumerable nights under the open sky. He lived his life under constant threat from Saul and his soldiers.

These years were filled with relational strife as well. Incredibly, David's most faithful friend was Saul's son Jonathan—the prince and future king under the line of hereditary succession. Jonathan recognized David's anointing as the future king even if Saul never would or could. Adding to his personal strife, David was married to Saul's daughter. Can you imagine a more complicated personal scenario than that?

Take a moment to consider what David must have experienced during this time of exile as he reflected on his past life. His life started out so positively. As a young man, he was anointed as royalty. He demonstrated loyalty and bravery in fighting against Israel's enemies in God's name. He was beloved by an entire nation. But then everything changed. David was forced to abandon his family and flee, leaving behind his closest friend, or risk being murdered by that friend's father. Instead of life in the palace, he wandered in the wilderness for years to elude a murderous king.

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Would it surprise you to learn that David felt like God had forgotten him? It's true. In the pain of that moment, David cried out to the Lord as he penned what we know today as Psalm 13:

How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?  
How long will You hide Your face from me?  
How long shall I take counsel in my soul,  
Having sorrow in my heart daily?  
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?  
Consider and hear me, O LORD my God;  
Enlighten my eyes,  
Lest I sleep the sleep of death;  
Lest my enemy say,  
“I have prevailed against him”;  
Lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.  
But I have trusted in Your mercy;  
My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.  
I will sing to the LORD,  
Because He has dealt bountifully with me. (vv. 1–6)

I understand what David was expressing in this psalm, and I expect you do as well. Haven't you asked those same questions? *How long, God? Will You forget me forever? Why are You hiding from me? Don't You care?*



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Haven't you made those same declarations? *Remember me, God. Hear me, God. Show me something!*

Yet even in his distress, David showed us the antidote for those moments when it feels as if God is far away—even when it feels as if He has forgotten us completely.

## HOPE IS THE ANTIDOTE FOR YOUR DISTRESS

In the midst of his pain, David reached out for consolation—and what he found was the truth of who God is and what He had done. “I have trusted in Your mercy,” David wrote. “My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me” (Psalm 13:5–6).

David focused on God's character, including His mercy, goodness, and sovereignty. And he remembered God's actions in the past—that God had saved David, blessed him, and been generous with him.

Because David knew and trusted in God and His nature, he found hope in the midst of his despair. You can find the same confidence even when it feels as if God has abandoned or forgotten you.

The truth is that every generation since Adam has faced

calamity. Within its epochs, the Bible records a long history of wars, plagues, famines, corruption, depravity, suffering, and wrongdoing. Yet God is in control. He reigns and rules and overrules. He has a plan; and when we walk with Him, we find ourselves lifted by the irresistible updraft of biblical hope.

The writer of Psalm 42 tapped into this when he wrote, “Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance” (v. 5).

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in commenting on this psalm, said,

The first thing we have to learn is what the Psalmist learned—we must learn to take ourselves in hand. This man was not content just to lie down and commiserate with himself. He does something about it, he takes himself in hand. . . . He talks to himself. . . .

I say that we must talk to ourselves instead of allowing “ourselves” to talk to us! Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?<sup>2</sup>

The good doctor is right. We need to speak truth to ourselves, and we need to encourage ourselves in the Lord. We must learn to search out and claim God’s promises for our present needs and



*God is in control.*

*He reigns and  
rules and overrules.*



future fears. We must ask the Holy Spirit to make those verses so real in our minds they'll lift our spirits like giant balloons of spiritual helium.

- The psalmist said, “I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more” (Psalm 71:14).
- Proverbs 10:28 says, “The hope of the righteous will be gladness.”
- Jeremiah said, “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river” (Jeremiah 17:7–8).
- Lamentations 3:21–26 says, “This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. . . . His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore I hope in Him!’ . . . It is good that one should hope and wait quietly.”
- Romans 5:5 says, “Hope does not disappoint.”
- The apostle Paul wrote, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

The Bible is filled with hopeful verses, and each one is special because God knows we sometimes feel hopeless. Peter said



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that we have been born again into a “living hope” (1 Peter 1:3). Romans 12:12 tells us to be “rejoicing in hope.”

According to Isaiah 40, those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength and mount up with wings like eagles. In a world where we’re beset by burdens both big and small, we have the strong gusts of hope catching our wings and sending us soaring heavenward as God’s hopeful, joyful people.

When it seems like God has forgotten you, turn to the only antidote that will cure what ails you: hope.

## HOPE IS THE ANCHOR FOR YOUR SOUL

There is both good and bad news about the availability of hope. The good news is that the hope we have in God is free to all, and it is available in unlimited quantities. The bad news is that our confidence in that certain hope comes most easily when our lives are going smoothly. Hope is much more difficult to maintain when we are experiencing an emotional trial, which causes us, at times, to question if God has forgotten us.

Obviously, allowing our sense of hope to be determined by circumstances is no way to live. That’s why the New Testament speaks of true hope being based on something immovable: the unchanging nature of God and the unchanging reality of His



*Hope can actually  
keep the soul from  
being moved!*





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promises. The author of Hebrews was focused on those elements when he wrote, “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast” (Hebrews 6:19).

I love that image: hope as the anchor of the soul. Hope can actually keep the soul from being moved!

Think about the gigantic Nimitz-class aircraft carriers in the US Navy. They carry two anchors that weigh thirty tons each and are held by chains in which every link weighs 360 pounds.<sup>3</sup> So when an aircraft carrier is anchored offshore, it has sixty tons of weight (even more counting the weight of the chains) protecting it from the movement of tide, wind, and waves.

That’s an incredible image of the role hope plays in the human heart. Regardless of the winds and waves of circumstance that come against us, we can remain unmoved. We can be content; we can live with hope that God’s promises are unchanged.

Our nation has an anchor: the founding documents of our Constitution and Bill of Rights, which were inspired by the Declaration of Independence. Those documents contain the core values and principles to which America returns whenever she faces crises—and there have been many in our history.

What about the anchor for the individual? Our founding document is God’s Word, which contains the record of the unchanging nature and purposes of God for humanity. Specifically, the Bible contains the “exceedingly great and precious promises” (2 Peter

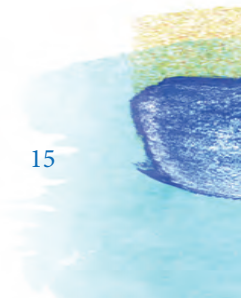
1:4), which the writer of Hebrews spoke about. God's promises are there to keep us firmly grounded as life's circumstances rise and fall around us. Circumstances will ebb and flow in our lives like waves on the seashore, but through it all our hope is anchored in God—hope based not on our emotions but on the Word of God.

The old saying goes, “If you can't face a problem, just turn around.” The trouble with that philosophy is that problems keep recurring. Even if we ignore one for a time, another concern or trial will arise in the future. And it's always been that way.

Such is life. All it takes is an illness, a microscopic virus, an international incident, a natural disaster, or a change in political agendas to release a cascade of spark-like effects that ignite more troubles wherever they land.

David knew that to be true. He had enough problems to ignite an entire forest. Yet he also had an unshakable faith that God was with him—that God had not, and would not, forget about him. In that, David was correct. Though his time in the wilderness was long and filled with trials, it eventually came to an end. David was anointed as king in Jerusalem and ruled with passion and integrity for decades.

No, David was not perfect. Certainly he made his fair share of mistakes. Yet he never took his eyes off God's character, which is why he is known to this day as a man after God's own heart.





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You and I can learn much from David and from his confidence in God's loving care. When we trust the way David trusted, we will say along with him, "I will sing to the LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me" (Psalm 13:6).