

# **Flying Board (Trust) (Obeying God)**

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.' Joshua 1:9*

## **The Basic Bible Truth**

God asks us to follow Him. That requires trust on our part. We cannot see the future as He does but must accept the fact that He has a plan for our lives and is always going to lead us in a direction that is the very best for us ultimately. Obedience, on our part, must also be a part of the process. Trust is a heart felt belief that God is going to lead us where we need to go. Obedience is putting that trust into action. As Christians, we must have both in play to follow God perfectly.

## **The Object**

A Hardwood Balance Beam With Carrying Handles  
A Blindfold



This object lesson is a classic “trust test” that has been around for many years. A volunteer is told to stand on the beam and four strong volunteers will then pick them up as they balance and carry them around the room. In actuality, they are never more than a few inches off the ground. The volunteer is blindfolded, told to stand on the beam, and given a shoulder to balance their hand on as we “pick them up”. As the 4 start to lift the device a few inches, the “shoulder” person slowly sinks to their knees, giving the volunteer the illusion that they are being lifted high in the air. An additional person can tap the volunteer on the top of the head and remind us all to watch the ceiling as we do this. After a few minutes of this balancing act, the volunteer is told to jump down from their perch onto the floor. Most often, they will refuse at first and must be coaxed down, thinking that it is a very long fall to the ground. Have someone available to catch them in case their descent from their 4 or five inches high position is an ungainly one.

## **The Lesson**

God commands us to have courage and trust Him completely. That sounds much easier than it is. God sees the future with better clarity than we see the present. In fact, the Bible teaches that God has planned our lives in great detail and is ever working to encourage us to make right decisions in accord with His perfect plan. Scripture is filled with stories and examples of people who were called on by God to trust and obey Him. Their part in history was recorded for us to see how even the smallest detail does not escape God's attention. One example of this is found in the story of King Saul and the Amalekites.

The "Six Hundred Year Story" begins in I Samuel 15. Saul was commanded by God to execute judgment upon the Amalekites. The nation of Amalek had proven themselves to be worthy of annihilation. Many years previous to Samuel and Saul, Israel had gained their freedom from Egypt. Led by God through the desert toward the Promised Land and arriving at the border, they sent a group of men over the Jordan to go through the land and bring back a report of what they saw there. Those men returned with a demoralizing description, one based in doubt and a lack of trust in God. The entire assembly agreed that it was indeed hopeless. In response to their disbelief, the Israelites were banished to wander in the wilderness for forty years. During that time, Amalek was an ever-present harassment. Troops from Amalek were known to come up behind the huge nomadic nation of Israel, and pick off inevitable stragglers who lingered behind the main group for one reason or another. Guerrilla tactics were effective from their viewpoint, but extremely offensive from God's view. As Saul took on responsibility as the newly appointed king of Israel, Samuel informed him that he was to devote all of Amalek to the Lord. They and all that was theirs was to be destroyed, totally.

Saul failed at this directive miserably. He did not kill all the people of Amalek. He allowed some to escape, and brought at least one back to Jerusalem—Agag, their king. Neither did he destroy all the livestock. The explicit charge given by God forbade the taking of any articles or animals owned by the Amalekites. Ignoring the clear instruction he had been given, he brought many of them back, using the excuse that he would sacrifice them to God. In our culture, we look back at such incidents with a bit of horror at the bloodshed decreed by God. God is righteous, and the judge of all mankind. Scripture clearly states that those whom God deemed to be destroyed had been given many chances to repent and be forgiven. In failing to do so, they had made the choice to reject His salvation and had earned the wages of death. Samuel arrived on the scene and confronted Saul face to face. Saul, true to his character, made excuse after excuse for his actions. This seemingly simple request made by God concerning Amalek, was not unimportant, or a minor concern. God understood the potential problems in the future posed by this lack of Saul's obedience. Samuel reflected that disappointment in his extreme display of anger. Moved by the Holy Spirit to demonstrate to those present the significance of this offense, Samuel, in righteous anger, hacked Agag to pieces before the Lord. One can imagine the surprise and shock on the faces of the witnesses there as an old man of nearly ninety years old performed a physical feat that in any movie of today would require an extreme warning label.

Agag was now dead, Saul was reprimanded by God, through Samuel, and life went on. But the story was far from over. Years later, Saul faced his final moments. Mortally wounded in battle, with no hope of survival, he attempted suicide by falling on his own sword. He failed, and was found in an awkward predicament, dying, but not yet dead, afraid that he would be found by the enemy and mistreated horribly, probably spending his last moments in torture. Coincidences do not exist when God is involved. The man, who stumbled upon the gasping Saul in the final throes of death, was ironically, an Amalekite! Responding to the request made by Saul, he promptly finished what Saul began, with his own sword.

For most people of that day, the issues represented in this story, and the actions displayed, were probably disregarded over time. But God was still interested. The story was not yet over. Six hundred years later, everyone but God Himself had forgotten. As the seventy years of Israel's captivity in Babylon drew to an end, the issue was rekindled. God would have His judgment fully realized six centuries and eight hundred miles from where it all began.

A new cast of characters is introduced in Esther. The place is Babylon. Immediately following the end of the Jewish captivity there, anyone who wished could return to Jerusalem. Some chose not to go back. Our "Six Hundred Year Story" continues here. The king of Babylon made a choice to put aside his current wife and find another. Those close to him recommended that he begin by collecting a huge harem made up of young ladies to be found in the kingdom. He could make his choice from this group. Esther was one of the girls forced into the palace harem. The king took a special liking to her and proclaimed her queen. She happened to be Jewish, but told no one this fact because her adopted father, Mordecai, had told her to keep her background a secret. He was a part of the inner court of the king, with access to some levels of government. At one point, Mordecai was privileged to information that exposed an assassination threat to the king of Babylon. Esther informed the king of the plot, giving Mordecai credit for the intelligence.

Haman appears in chapter three. A politically ambitious person, he was arrogant, proud, and despicable. His anti-Semitic feelings came to the forefront immediately. Mordecai showed him no reverence. Responding to the apparent disrespect, Haman made plans to have him put to death and destroy the Jews as well, because Haman knew Mordecai was a Jew.

The stage was now set to play out the final judgment of God upon Amalek. Six centuries are nothing to an eternal God. But a moment has passed for Him. His justice will not be postponed or delayed any longer. What has transpired here is not a random series of events with little or no significance. The characters in this story were specifically chosen by God, their positions not accidental, and their ancestry of special importance. Mordecai is introduced in the beginning of Esther as a son of Kish. Kish was Saul's father. That places him directly into the same family tree as Saul, most likely a descendant of one of Saul's brothers. Haman is labeled as an Agagite, a direct descendant of the king of Amalek, whom Samuel so efficiently dispatched six hundred years previous. Only God could orchestrate something this complex and perfect. The confrontation between Saul and Agag commences once again, this time with Mordecai and Haman, but with dramatically different results.

The plan put in place by Haman denoted a special day on which Jews could be killed at will. He had presented them to the king as a nuisance to be eliminated, and the king, ignorantly respecting his opinion, agreed to his plan. Esther was informed of the heinous proposal through Mordecai, and in response, invited the king and Haman to a banquet. Her secret intention was to ask for relief for the Jews. Haman was puffed up by the invitation, completely oblivious to the impending disclosure, and had a wonderful time the first evening. Esther put off the question that night, and extended a second banquet invitation for the following evening. Haman was elated and agreed to attend. He went home in high spirits until he remembered Mordecai. Through the night, Haman had a construction crew working to build a gallows seven stories tall, a challenge for any contractor during the daytime, and much more so at night. By morning, the project was finished.

Humor is not absent from the character of God. Irony and comedy mesh as the story unfolds. Haman had made plans to have Mordecai hanged publically on his brand new gallows. As he stepped into the king's presence to request a public execution, he found that the king had suffered through a sleepless night. To combat his insomnia, he had a servant read the annals of his reign to him, and found that Mordecai was a hero who had never been rewarded for his actions. Before Haman could ask anything, the king looked to him for suggestions on how to honor a hero. Thinking that the king was referring to him, he recommended some wonderfully public appreciations, only to find out that the man who would be the recipient of all this fanfare was Mordecai. Adding insult to injury, he was the one responsible for implementing it all. (Now, is that a wry smile creeping across your face?)

Haman spent that day leading Mordecai around as a VIP. By the end of the day, he was mortified at the turn of events, but did not have much time to reflect upon it before he was whisked off to the second banquet with Esther. At the banquet, Esther shocked the king and Haman with her statements as she

explained the problem with the newly implemented Jewish extermination program. She also surprised the king with the fact that she was a Jew. The king was furious with Haman and left to get guards. Haman, in pure terror, attempted to beg for his life. He stumbled as he began walking towards Esther, who was seated at the table, and fell on her just as the king walked back into the room! (That smile is getting bigger.) Haman's fate was sealed, and he was hung on the very gallows that had been built for Mordecai.

That ends the "Six Hundred Year Story". There are many lessons to be learned in the study of these scriptures. Through this story, we meet people of dubious character who failed, and we also encounter others worthy of admiration, those who succeeded in doing the will of God. The book of Esther is a shining example of a notable characteristic of God—His purpose and perfect will cannot be frustrated or stopped. He will accomplish that which He desires, and we can rest assured that God's attention to details is capable of spanning centuries.