

GOD SAID, "IT IS FOR A PURPOSE."

By Jerry & Jo Gilbert

Sometime in the fall of 1998, I had a dream. In this dream, I saw a vertebra floating in the air. I was watching it. It was slowly rotating. It turned to where I could see through it. Then the vertebra turned sideways and I saw that it was broken. A finger pointed to the vertebra and God said, **"See, it is broken. It is broken straight across. It is for a purpose!"**

When I awoke, I wondered about the dream. I thought it was only because Jo's back had been hurting so bad and I had gone to sleep worrying about her.

A few days later I took Jo to the emergency room of United Regional Hospital. They made x-rays and exclaimed, "Did you know that you have a broken back?"

"No, but, I knew my back was hurting awfully bad for some reason".

When I got a chance to talk to the doctor, I asked, "Doctor, how is her back broken?" He put his hand in the air and motioned with his finger and said, "It is broken straight across. Kind of unusual."

I told God, "I know that since it is for Your purpose, that You will take care of us and heal Jo. Please remember we are only humans and have mercy on us. I submit to Your will and Your purpose."

Jo spent 13 days in the hospital. She had some 30 tests made. Six of these tests showed she had cancer at the L5 vertebra in October-November of 1998. She was sent home with a hospital bed and was told to only get out of the bed to go to the bathroom, otherwise stay in the bed and allow the vertebra to heal.

The vertebra would not heal. Her doctor treated her for osteoporosis during the next 27 months, while the cancer, that he had not read his reports on, spread throughout her body. There were even lesions in her skull. This type of cancer is in the bone marrow and eats away the bones from the inside. There is no pain medicine that will completely relieve the pain!

Around February 1, 1999, Jo said, ***"You can send this hospital bed back! I am not going to lie here and die! I want to go back to church!"***

She went to church and played the piano for the next 4 years with a broken back at L5 vertebra, She has been our church pianist for 32 years and receives no pay for her labor. It is truly her labor of love unto the Lord. In the meantime the cancer had almost completely eaten away the L5 vertebra.

In January of 2001, Jo dislocated her clavicle on the right side. That is the little bone that goes from the top of her shoulder to the sternum. I took her to the emergency room. This is when an even greater nightmare began. This is when she was properly diagnosed with cancer.

When Jo asked her oncologist, ***"How long do I have?"***

He replied, "How long have you had it?"

"Over two years, from the reports my husband showed you."

He replied, ***"You have already outlived your life expectancy."***

I told the oncologist, "Doctor, we believe that the God that created this body can heal it." He gave me that, I feel sorry for you being so simple minded, look. I continued. "Doctor, when this lady gets her healing, that would make even you believe in God, wouldn't it?"

He said, "yes."

The Lord is my Shepherd!

"You have cancer and have already outlived your life expectancy", exclaimed my oncologist. My husband was asking many questions, most I don't even remember. I couldn't breathe. Oh God, where are You?

Carmen, our daughter, must have seen my pain. She whispers in my ear, "Mom, you know you've always secretly wanted short hair." We smile through the tears. When my beautiful hair was down, it was almost long enough to sit on. "No", I said, "I love my hair."

Mark, our son, holds my hand and says, "Mom, don't worry. God will take care of you." I hear Jerry saying something about, "We believe The God that made her can heal her."

The doctor started telling us the treatment options. I asked him, "Have you ever successfully treated anyone for Multiple Myeloma?"

He said, "No."

"Then we are going to M. D. Anderson. Even though we believe in miracles, I am going to do everything humanly possible to help her."

The statistics on Multiple Myeloma is: 30% die within 90 days of diagnosis. The other 70% will die within an average of about 2 years. There is no known cure for it. That is what hit my little girl in the face in January of 2001.

Jo and I met at her church in Marshall, Texas. Shelton Young and I were holding a youth revival at their church. Shelton was 17 and I was 15. The first night of the revival this beautiful young lady, (age 12), came up to me after church and introduced herself, "Hi, my name is Jo Jo. In my mind I said, "that is her."

A week or so earlier I had asked the Lord, "I know you have someone very special for me. I can wait on her, but I would like to meet her."

Shelton called me about a week later and said, "Jerry, guess what? They asked me to hold a youth revival at Marshall, Texas and I would like for you to help me."

The revival lasted for two weeks. We did not date. That was not the purpose of being there. Every night after church was over and the young people were standing around talking, Jo always seemed to be at my left elbow or my right elbow. It is still this way, (when she is able). Regardless of what I am doing, she wants to be near me. I sometime call her, "my little elbow girl."

When the revival ended, I had gotten her address. I told her, "You are the little girl that I would like to marry someday." This was in 1955.

She said, "O. K."

We corresponded for the next two years until I got out of high school and got a car. We lived 50 miles apart. We started dating in 1957 and married June 6, 1959. It has been the most perfect marriage that I have ever seen in the way we have always gotten along. She is still my heartbeat.

"Returning home from the hospital, we sat next to each other holding hands, as we often do, in our beautiful new home that we had built ourselves, with the help of our children and grandchildren and friends. Every thing is so quite. Tears were flowing down our cheeks. I've never seen Jerry, (my husband), so devastated, even when our second daughter died at the age of 5. Finally I say, Babe, we need to talk. We pour out our hearts to each other, expressing our love. Thanking God and each other for our beautiful children and grandchildren. These were things that we've often said many times before, but now, meaning more than ever.

Going outside, we walk around holding hands, as we always do when we walk together. Hearing birds singing, we stop and listen at their song.

Walking down the driveway, two, three, four, five, o'clock in the early morning, we look up at the beautiful sky with so many stars. I told Jerry, "if God should choose to take me home before you, I'll still be around. Look for me in the little bird's song, in the twinkle of the stars. Look out at the early sunrise and at the beautiful sunsets. Listen to music, the gentle rain, the whistling wind, the flowers, the trees and look real close in our children and grandchildren's eyes and their smiles, I'll be there. Hold me close, never let me go"

I really don't think God is through with me, yet. He has something more for me to do. This may be the roughest journey we've ever been on, so we'd better hold on to each other and God's promises."

We went to M. D. Anderson from February through October of 2001. Each trip we would meet at least one couple that was very special. One event was when we were in the waiting room and met this couple from Bossier City, La. We still correspond. We had prayer together and she is still in remission.

Another couple we met in a most unusual way. Jo and I were in a restaurant in Houston. I pulled out my new glasses to read the menu. One of the lenses fell out and onto the table. A man from across the restaurant happened to be looking. He came to our table and told me he had seen us down the hall from their room at our hotel. He said for me to come by their room after we finished eating and he would fix my glasses.

I went by their room and in our conversation found out his wife had just been diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma, also. I invited them to our room. I told him, "The girls will probably have a lot to talk about. This is all so new to us, too." We talked and prayed together until way into the night. They live in Pennsylvania and we correspond. She is still in total remission. God works in mysterious ways. I keep holding on to, **"It is for a purpose."**

We transferred treatment to University of Arkansas Cancer Center in October of 2001. At the University we have met at least one person that was very special on every visit. One such incident was a lady that had quit going to church. Her grandmother was a Pentecostal Preacher back in the early 1900s. I knew the name. We started a conversation in the waiting room while her daughter and Jo were in treatment. She promised she was going to start back to church.

In December of 2001, Jo had her first bout with Pneumonia. While in intensive care her blood pressure at one point went down to something like the 20s and 30s. Again God intervened and I got to bring Jo home from the hospital on Christmas Eve. I cooked a turkey and made dressing and the trimmings and had all of our family, including Jo, home for Christmas. God is still mindful of even the little pleasures of our lives.

After the pneumonia, her cancer markers remarkably went down to 0 and stayed there for most of 2002. In August she was able to have vertebroplasty surgery at UAMS (a bone glue procedure), to stabilize her broken back at L5.

None of Jo's doctors had mentioned the surgical bone glue procedure. In June of 2002 we went back to M. D. Anderson to see her doctor there. He, again, suggested a bone marrow transplant.

When we came home I was praying, "God I need you. We need to make a decision on which way to go. Do we go back to M. D. Anderson for the transplant or keep going to the University of Arkansas Cancer Center?"

The phone rang and I heard Jo saying, ***"How did you get my name?"***

Mr. Hollis Wilson called from Killeen, Alabama. He talked to and encouraged Jo for about an hour. He said her name was on the Internet. I had never put her name on any web-site, except WNOP and they only use your first name.

He said, "Don't worry about the transplant. I am a 16 year survivor"

"Where did you have it done?"

"M. D. Anderson, but I don't go there anymore, when Dr. Barlogie and the transplant division moved to University of Arkansas, I moved with them."

"My back has been broken now for 4 years. It hurts so bad."

"Tell them to glue it back together! I have had mine done that way."

I said, "Thank you God. That was my answer."

We tried to call Mr. Wilson after the bone glue procedure worked so well for Jo. We never could get in touch with him. We wanted to thank him. We called so many times that I began to think he was not real, however, one day when we were at the UAMS I asked if they knew a Hollis Wilson. They said, "Yes, he is a fine old man."

The cancer came back in the later part of 2002. In January of 2003 her doctor advised that it was time for the transplant procedure. The first phase of this was done in March-April of 2003. This entailed placing a triple tube through her chest cavity to thread the peripheral vein into the right side of her heart. This was used to inject several different kinds of chemo directly into the veins. I had to learn how to flush these three lines to keep them from clotting. This was done daily for about 6 weeks. She even went to church with the lines in place and never complained.

When the chemo had brought her white blood cell count down to almost 0 they started to giving her Neuprogen shots to stimulate the growth of new white blood cells. The stem cells are a part of the white blood cells. When her white blood cell count came back up to a certain level they changed the triple tubes for stiffer double tubes. Then she was hooked up to a machine that separated the stem cells out and put the other blood back into her body. Her blood was run through the machine several times during a two-day period. After the stem cell collection we were allowed to come home for a couple weeks rest before starting the second phase of the transplant.

When we went back to UAMS to finish the transplant in April, the UAMS had a new clinical trial that they wanted volunteers for. Feeling that she did not have anything to lose and maybe something to gain, (by not having to go through more chemo and the triple lines again), she signed up for the new drug trial. It did not work. Her back broke at T8, (between her shoulders), and the left 9th rib broke. She had surgery at the UAMS again in August of 2003 to repair the T8 with bone glue. This time, the results of the bone glue was not as good as the first surgery at L5. She still has a great amount of pain in her back and ribs on the left side of her chest.

In September of 2003 Jo passed out in her local doctor's office. She was having to have her blood drawn twice per week for testing. She was taken by ambulance to United Regional Hospital. Her doctor told her, "You feel as good right now as you will ever feel. You may want to consider Hospice for pain management."

"Getting my blood drawn in the doctor's office, I passed out. An ambulance was called. What's happening? My head is swirling. All kinds of tests were made and I was sent home. A few days later I was back in the hospital with double pneumonia again. Tubes were stuck through my chest to pump the fluid off my lungs. So much of this I don't remember. Oh God, I am your child, I trust you to take good care of me."

Again Jo showed her faith in God by refusing the doctor's recommendation. Later that month and early October, she spent 3 more weeks in United Regional with hoses sticking out of her chest draining her lungs. She had developed double pneumonia for the second time. The surgeon, before doing the operation, also suggested Hospice. Again Jo felt that God was not through with her. She loves me, and her family so much, that she has been willing to bear the pain and continue fighting.

While Jo was in the hospital in September of 2003, I received a very unusual phone call. When I answered the phone, a lady asked, "Is this Jerry Gilbert?"

I said, "yes."

She stated, "I am calling from the White House."

I thought, "oh sure, what white house?" I thought she was a telemarketer and started to hang up.

She continued, "President Bush wanted me to call you and ask how your wife is doing."

I said, "Well she is in the hospital at this time and I was getting ready to go back to stay with her."

"President Bush wanted me to find out if it would be O. K. for him to send her a get-well card. Due to the heavy security and screening, he just received your letter of encouragement you mailed him back in February."

I said, "Not only will it be O. K., but we will frame it."

Then it made sense. I had sent a note to our President telling him that the Gilbert family was praying for him. This was just before the Iraq war. I mentioned that my wife has been battling cancer for 5 years and was about to under go her first bone marrow transplant. I told him that I knew he was a praying man and I would appreciate his prayers. Her name is Jo.

After discovering that the phone call was legitimate, I relaxed and we talked for about 30 minutes. She wanted to know all about us.

Jo received the get-well card from President and Mrs. Bush on September 26, 2003. The card had the Presidential Seal and read, **"I am sorry to learn about your illness, and I want to send you a note of encouragement during this difficult time. The First Lady joins me in sending our prayers and best wishes. Sincerely, George Bush."** It was even a real signature!

She got out of United Regional Hospital in October and as soon as she was able to travel we went back to UAMS to continue the bone marrow transplant.

She was in intensive care for 19 days at the UAMS Hospital. This was when one of the greatest miracles that I have ever witnessed happened. Starting on about the 10th day of the transplant procedure she developed pneumonia again. She continued to go downhill. The Chemo had wiped out all of her bone marrow, thus all of her immune system also. On the 17th day surgery was scheduled to put tubes in her lungs the next morning. That evening, I went to our apartment to take a bath and change clothes. I was staying with her night and day in intensive care.

I went to the computer room at the apartment complex to e-mail everyone to pray. Again, I put her name on the World Wide Web for Prayer. While I was doing this a black lady,

by the name of Dianne Woods, came into the computer room to use the copy machine. It felt like an Angel had entered the room. **For some reason I asked, "Lady, do you know how to pray."**
She replied, "I sure do!"

I explained the seriousness of Jo's condition and told her that unless God under takes for my wife, I am afraid she will not make it through the night. She said, "not only will I pray, but, I will call all of my friends and my pastor to pray." I found out that she was a member of a Pentecostal Church in North Little Rock. She was staying at the apartment complex for only a few days due to storm damage to her house!

That night at about 2:30 a. m. Jo could breathe well enough to go to sleep. At about 5:30 a. m. she was sleeping so well, I was afraid she had slipped into a coma. I woke her up and asked, "Don't you need to get up and use the bath room?" She had the 3 IV lines in her chest that were going again.

She woke up completely alert and said, "I sure do. I'm glad you woke me up."

At about 8:30 a. m. her doctor came by and listened and listened to her lungs, then exclaimed, "**YOUR LUNGS ARE CLEAR!**"

The surgeon came by a little later and said, "I hear your lungs have cleared. Let me listen." After listening she suggested a CT scan stating, "We need to see where all that fluid went to." After the CT scan she stated, "**It just seems to have dissipated!**"

This was on Wednesday morning. Thursday morning she not only was dismissed from intensive care, but, was told that she would not need to stay in the hospital. We went to our apartment on Thursday morning. She was to stay in town for further testing for another week.

All of the nurses on the floor, (about 12), were hugging us and talking about the "miracle" that happened. I sent Bible Studies to two of them. One teaches at his church, the other Bible study went to a nurse's husband who teaches the Bible, (on a voluntary basis), at a drug rehab center. These Bible studies had been pre arranged during Jo's 19 days in intensive care. We had prayer with several of her nurses. You get very close to each other in that period of time.

Jo had an appointment with her main doctor at the UAMS on Friday. She went by for some blood tests before seeing him. He read the results and asked, "Mrs. Gilbert do you want to go home?"

"Well, sure I do, but, I am supposed to stay around for another week so they can watch me."

He smiled real big and said, "**NO, GO HOME!**"

So we came home. This was about the middle of November of 2003.

The next time we were in Little Rock we called Sister Dianne Woods, (the lady from the computer room that knows how to pray). After telling her who I was I told her there is someone here who wants to personally thank you for your prayers. I told her that she was my Angel that night and had given me encouragement. Jo told her about the miracle. Sister Woods started crying. We both talked to her for a long time.

She said, "Well, today you are my Angel. I have just been told. 'You have tumors the size of a basket ball that must come out immediately'. I told my doctor to let me pray about it and I will let you know. That was what I was doing when you called."

We had prayer with her over the phone and put her name on the Web for prayer. We received a letter from Sister Woods a few weeks ago that said, "The doctor was amazed. The tumors shrunk without surgery! I don't have to even go back for 6 months. God is so good."

Jo's cancer markers came right back. The first bone marrow transplant had only knocked them back some. The original plan at the UAMS was to do two transplants, back to back. So she started her second one February 1, 2004. This time she was well enough to tolerate this second transplant as an outpatient, even though they gave her a more massive dose of chemo. We went to the treatment center twice each day at first, then, she was allowed to start skipping days because she was doing so well.

The test results of her bone marrow biopsy after the transplant stated in capital letters: **NEGATIVE: NO RESIDUAL/RECURRANT PLASMA CELL MYELOMA.** Each test after the second transplant in February shows she is still clear.

You may be thinking, "This was after three and one half years of chemo and two transplants."

That is right. God sometimes allows man to participate in his miracles. The healing of her double pneumonia overnight, **God did this solo!** The transplants he allowed doctors and medical science to participate.

God is the source of all knowledge. He allows doctors to help in the healing process of their patients. He made everything that all of the medicines comes from. God allowed Moses to participate when God parted the Red Sea. God allowed Joshua to participate in the collapse of the walls of Jericho. He allowed Gideon and a few good obedient men to participate in destroying several armies of the enemies of Israel that were camped in a valley waiting to attack Israel. All Gideon and his men had to do was to break some lamps and shout. God put confusion in the enemy's camp and they destroyed each other. God does the heavy lifting. He always has and always will.

In the book of Genesis 1:1, God created the heaven and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. The account of creation in our World Book Encyclopedia states that the earth came from a black hole, it had no form and nothing could live on it. This much of science pretty much goes along with the Bible account of creation.

Let us look further at the similarities. The Bible states, "In the beginning." It does not state when that beginning was. God is from Everlasting to Everlasting; and since he created the heaven and earth in the beginning, the earth would have to be very, very old. Science states it may be as much as 450 billion years. I see nothing in the Bible account to refute this statement. The sun, moon and stars were not created until the fourth period of creation, (Genesis 1:14). They were made for seasons, days and years. Until then there was NO measurement of time except God's time.

The Hebrew word YOM is the same as the English word day; however, in addition to meaning a 24 hour day, the time between sunrise and sunset, an indefinite period of time, (such as we sometime state, "in his day"); it can also mean an indefinite period of time climaxed by a certain event. I feel this is the reason that the statement at the end of each period of creation ends with the event that was the climax of that period of time. "God said, let there be light and there was light.---- And the evening and the morning were the first day." Why would the first day start in the evening unless the dawn of creation was before, even God, started any measurement of time?

If you believe God made the heaven and the earth in 6 days of 24 hour periods that is not the important thing I am driving at. I believe he could have spoke them all into existence in a millisecond. The main point is, **He was the Creator!**

Science states that creation all started with a vapor of gas. The Bible states in Psalms 33:6 "By the **word** of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the **BREATH** of his mouth." Hebrews 11:3, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the **word of God**, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The worlds were made from absolutely nothing! God simply spoke creation into existence!

Evolution is only a theory. I highly disagree with science on their theory of things evolving and man evolving from monkeys. On any contradiction we must believe the irrefutable Word of God.

Genesis 1:11 states, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit **after its kind**, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so." I also state that it will always be so. You can plant an orchard with pears, apples, plums and all manner of fruits, and every tree will yield fruit **after its kind**. A pear tree will never bear apples. Even though a pear tree and an apple tree stands side by side, when you plant their seed, the tree that comes up will be **after its kind**. These plants were made even before God made the Sun, so you do not need sunlight to grow plants. You only need God!

The fourth day or period of time God created the sun, moon and stars. Before that time the earth floated somewhere in space without anything to control its actions except God. It even brought forth plants before there was a sun! What a mighty God we serve! He controlled the earth while it was floating in space; however, we, as mankind, have a hard time trusting him to control us. Our lives would be a lot better and certainly more beneficial to His Kingdom and others if we would ask God to run us by his remote control system and then allow him to do so.

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Genesis 1:24-25 states that **cattle, creeping things and beast**, God commanded to be brought forth **from the earth**. He also stipulated that they be, **after his kind**. To prove that this is still God's law let us look at the stubborn mule. A mule is a cross between a horse and a burro. The mule cannot reproduce!! Why? Because it is God's law to produce after their kind! The horse can only procreate horses and a burrow can only procreate burrows. Any attempt man makes to alter this rule fails. A forced cross between a horse and a burrow can produce both male and female mules; however, neither can produce an offspring. They are both sterile.

Acts 1:8 Jesus said, "But, ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you:"

Luke 24:49 Jesus said, "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be **endued** with power from on high." The word **endued** means so much more than endowed. The word endowed simply means to give. **Endued** means to provide with a quality or power, to make alive with, to furnish or supply. Example is, the jungle answered as if **endued** with life, by waving its boughs.

St. John 20:22 Jesus appeared to his disciples, "*And when he had said this, he **breathed on them, and saith unto them Receive ye the Holy Ghost.***"

When we receive the Holy Ghost we are **endued**, (made alive with), power. Jesus **breathed** on his disciples and said, "**Receive ye the Holy Ghost.**" **THIS IS THE SAME CREATIVE BREATH OF GOD THAT SPOKE THE WORLD INTO EXISTENCE.** It dwells in us through the power of the Holy Ghost! The very **creative breath of God!**

Mark 16:18 "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

This commission was not for the ministers only. This promise and being endued with power, is for EVERYONE THAT BELIEVES!

This is getting back to the Early Church where THEY, (everyone), went from house to house. How much more effective would our churches be if every member, that has the Holy Ghost, would pray for the sick wherever they were at. Pray for your friends, your neighbors, and your family members. When you visit the sick, ask if they would like to have prayer, before you leave. Ask the question, "Do you believe that the God that created this body can heal it?" If they say, "yes," then lay YOUR hand on them and pray for their healing. God will do the rest.

WHEN GOD SPEAKS, IT WILL COME TO PASS! God made the earth from nothing, then, hung it on nothing and yet it still hangs there in space where God placed it. All of this was from nothing. In our bodies, regardless of the problem, at least he has something to start with. **NO PROBLEM IS TOO HARD FOR GOD!**

I really don't know what further to say except, I need your prayers and the prayers of our friends and church family. I am not ready to make funeral arrangements, yet. They promise that will be done when the time comes. I have received hundreds and hundreds of cards and many, many gifts and phone calls since then. I feel so loved.

God said, "It is for a purpose." So to God be all of the Honor and Glory now and forever. Amen!

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