

“An Act of God”

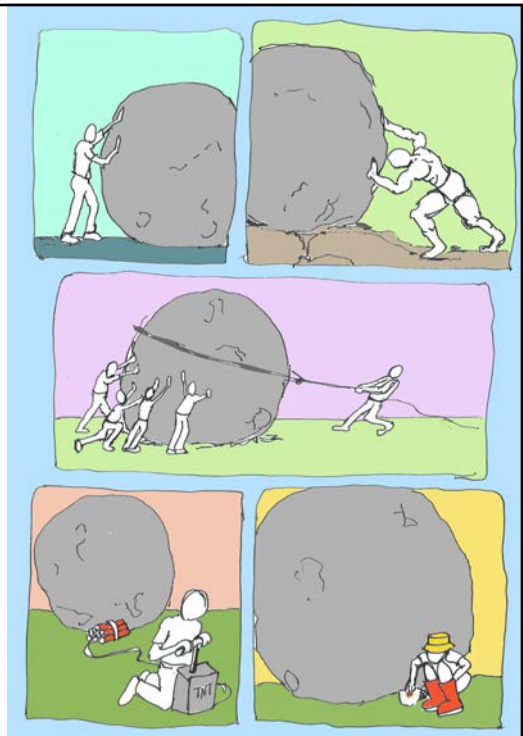
- What is “an act of God”?
 - “A surprising and extraordinary interruption of the usual course of events by natural causes”
 - Examples?
- What might be “an act of God” that is clearly caused by God?

**What do God’s actions usually look like?
Might we be missing them??**

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The Day All History Changed Forever **Luke 2:1-20**

Chinese page 1658
 Spanish page 1297
 English-Green page 699
 English-Brown* page 1026
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The Setting for this Story

High power & honor

- Roman Empire >>>>>>>
- Emperor >>>>>>>>>>>>>
- Wealthy >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>
- Elderly >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>
- Religious leaders >>>>>>>
- Educated >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>
- Live with power people >>>
- Living in a palace >>>>>>>

Low power & honor

- Conquered Jewish people
- Common people
- Poor
- Young (especially infants)
- Common people
- Uneducated
- Are foreigners without power
- Living with animals

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Luke 2:1-20

1-7: Jesus was born: loved yet in poverty and obscurity

8-12: • World ruler versus World redeemer

13-14: • What you see is the opposite of what really is

15-20: • An oppressive decree by an occupying power brought about the fulfillment of God's promises

- Creator of the world

- Loved: wrapped in cloths; firstborn son
- Had nothing: someone else's feeding trough
- Lowest honor:
no room in the house for him

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Luke 2:1-20

1-7: Jesus was born: loved yet in poverty and obscurity

8-12: Angel announced Salvation to lowly shepherds

13-14: • Night shepherds in the field: picture of lowliness

15-20: • Angel appeared with “the glory of the Lord”

- Far more dramatic than for Zechariah or Mary
- Brought greater fear (rightly so!)
- “A Savior, the Messiah, the Lord”
 - Savior = Jesus: rescue people from sin & enemies
 - Messiah = anointed, God-chosen and God-sent
 - Lord = God Himself
- Sign: loved infant in extreme lowliness

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Luke 2:1-20

1-7: Jesus was born: loved yet in poverty and obscurity

8-12: Angel announced Salvation to lowly shepherds

13-14: Angels of heaven filled the skies with praise

15-20: • “Heavenly host” = giant and powerful army

- Evangelistic praise: angels told the wonders of God so that others would join that praise
- God’s glory \leftrightarrow Peace among people
 - Not separate or in conflict
 - Peace on earth comes from the glory of heaven coming to earth in the Son of God
 - Among God’s chosen people (of faith)

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13-14: Angels of heaven filled the skies with praise

15-20: Shepherds believed, saw, and worshiped evangelistically

- Belief led them to see the signs
- These lowly shepherds were God's means of confirming to Mary the meaning of these things
- They told many the words and the actions of God
- The shepherds' joy and worship showed that they had a genuine and deep faith

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The Big Idea

When the Son of God
who has greatest glory and power
entered the world

He came as a lowly poor baby
and was announced to lowly poor shepherds
who became God's first messengers
through evangelistic worship

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Applications

- Don't despise seemingly small things in God's hands
 - God chooses the '**weak things of the world**' who trust in Him

despise = treat as not valuable or unimportant

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Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. **But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.** It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

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The Lord is **exalted over all the nations,**
 his **glory above the heavens.**
 Who is like the Lord our God,
 the One who sits enthroned on high,
 who stoops down to look
 on the heavens and the earth?
 He raises **the poor** from the **dust**
 and lifts **the needy** from the **ash heap**;
 he seats them with princes,
 with the princes of his people.
 He settles the **childless woman** in her home
 as a happy mother of children.
 Praise the Lord.

Psalms 138:6

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Listen, my dear brothers and sisters:

Has not **God chosen**

those who are poor in the eyes of the world

to be rich in faith

and to inherit the kingdom he promised

those who love him?

But **you have dishonored the poor.**

James 2:5-6

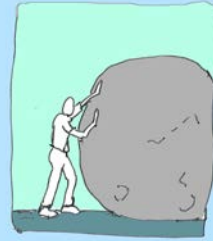
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Applications

- Don't despise the seemingly small things in God's hands
 - God chooses the '**weak things of the world**' who trust in Him
 - the poor, the weak, the foreign, the sick, the lonely
 - the apparently unskilled and unimpressive
 - the small and insignificant

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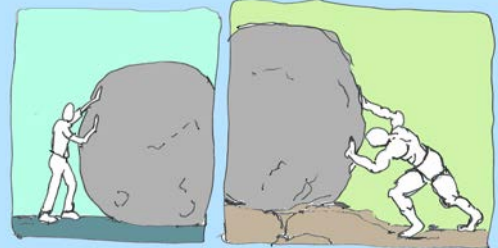
Moving a boulder...



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Moving a boulder...

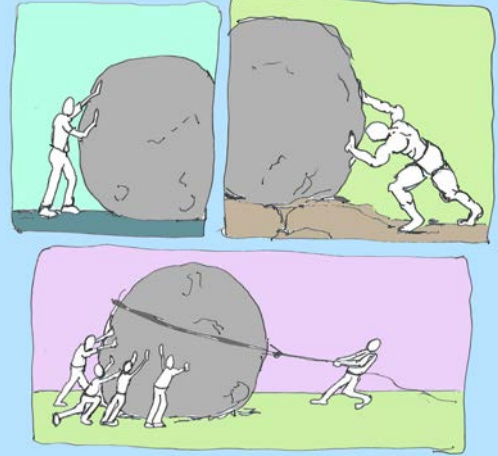
- If only we were stronger



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Moving a boulder...

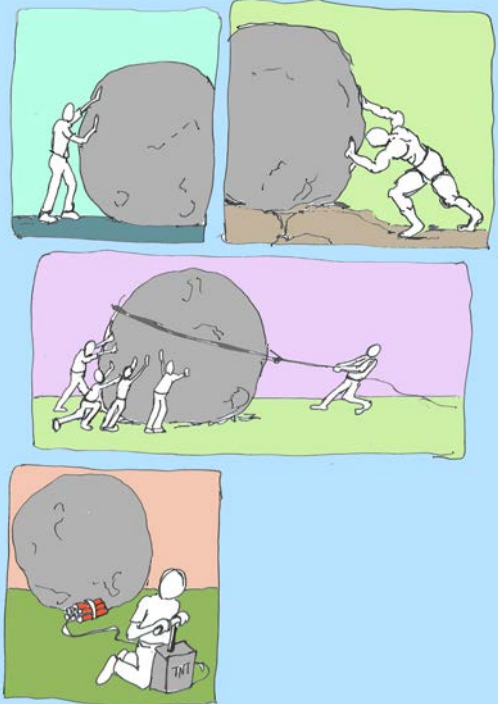
- If only we were stronger
- Or had a better team



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Moving a boulder...

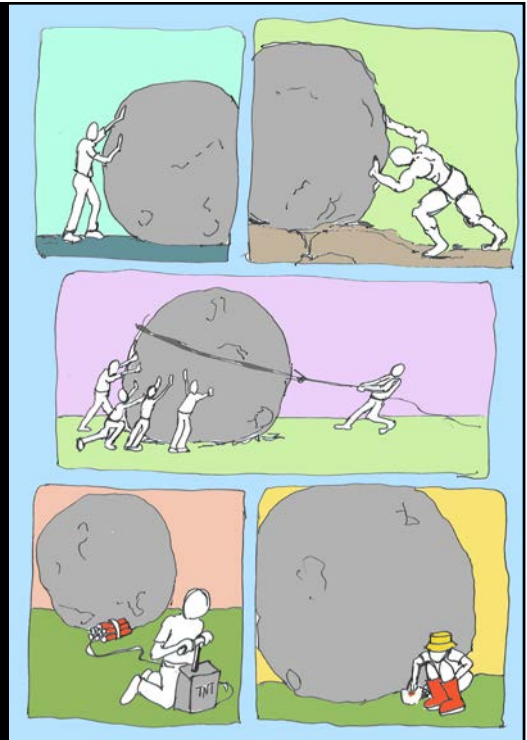
- If only we were stronger
- Or had a better team
- Or better technology and techniques



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Moving a boulder...

- **If only we were stronger**
- **Or had a better team**
- **Or better technology and techniques**
- **Or a simple seed planted by a small child**

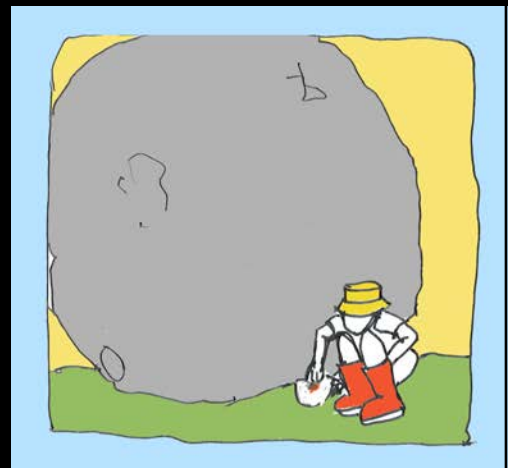


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“God’s Kingdom is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.” *Mark 4:31-32*

“Mustard seeds” of the Kingdom

- God-honoring actions that seem to have little power in themselves
- Like prayer, humility, kindness, trust, patience, growth in holiness, worship, obedience, ...



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 - the poor, the weak, the foreign, the sick, the lonely
 - the apparently unskilled and unimpressive
 - the small and insignificant
 - Plant the “mustard seeds” of the Kingdom of God
 - be kind, pray, trust, obey, serve, and other “small” actions

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Applications

- Don't despise the seemingly small things in God's hands
 - God chooses the 'weak things of the world' who trust in Him
 - the poor, the weak, the foreign, the sick, the lonely
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 - Plant the “mustard seeds” of the Kingdom of God
 - be kind, pray, trust, obey, serve, and other “small” actions
 - God does this “to shame the wise”
 - Repent from (turn away from) our pride in worldly values
 - Judging others
 - Judging ourselves

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Applications

- Don't despise the seemingly small things of God
- Publicly worship, beginning where you are now
 - Evangelistic worship:
 - Praise God in the hearing of people for His words and His actions
 - As an invitation for them to join your praise
 - Like the angels and the shepherds
 - Tell and show many people the words and the actions of God
 - Intentionally, especially when you celebrate Christmas!

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The Big Idea

**God does great works among people
when lowly people
take simple steps of faith and obedience
to the Son of God
who did God's greatest work
in lowliness and obscurity**

**What do God's actions usually look like?
"Small" actions of trust and obedience
as words and actions of worship to our great God**

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