

The Furnace Of Affliction

ISAIAH 48:10

10. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

I PETER 4:12-13

12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

REVELATION 2:9a I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty...

CHURCH AGE BOOK

Now the Lord God Almighty says, "I KNOW." There He is walking in the midst of His people. There He is, the Chief Shepherd of the flock. But does He hold back the persecution? Does He stem the tribulation? No, He does not. He simply says, "I KNOW your tribulation--I am not at all unmindful of your suffering." What a stumbling block this is to so many people. Like Israel they wonder if God really loves them. How can God be just and loving if He stands by and watches His people suffer?

CHURCH AGE BOOK

You see, they could not figure out God's love. They thought that love meant no suffering. They thought that love meant a baby with parental care. But God said that His love was "elective" love. The proof of His love is ELECTION--that no matter what happened, His love was proven truly by the fact they were chosen unto salvation (because God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth). He may commit you to death as He did Paul. He may commit you to suffering as He did Job. That is His prerogative. He is sovereign. But it is all with a purpose. If He did not have a purpose, then He would be the author of frustration and not of peace. His purpose is that after we have suffered awhile we would be made perfect, be established, strengthened and settled.

JAMES 1:2-4

2. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;
3. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.
4. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

ROMANS 8:18

18. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

II TIMOTHY 2:12a *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him:*

CHURCH AGE BOOK

Unless we suffer with Him we cannot reign with Him. **You have to suffer to reign.** The reason for this is that character simply is never made without suffering. **Character is a VICTORY, not a gift.** A man without character can't reign because power apart from character is Satanic. But **power with character is fit to rule.** And since He wants us to share even His throne on the same basis that He overcame and is set down in His Father's throne, then we have to overcome to sit with Him. And the little **temporary suffering** we go through now is not worthy to be compared to the tremendous glory that will be revealed in us when He comes. Oh, what treasures are laid up for those who are willing to enter into His kingdom through much tribulation.

CHURCH AGE BOOK

The church that is not suffering, and is not being tried, hasn't got it--it **isn't of God.**

II TIMOTHY 3:12

12. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

I PETER 1:6-9

6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

CHURCH AGE BOOK

The cloudy skies and storms of life are no signs of God's disapproval. Neither are bright skies and still waters signs of His love and approval. His approval of any of us is only IN THE BELOVED. His love is elective which He had for us before the foundation of the world. Does He love us? Ah yes. But how shall we know? **We shall know because He SAID SO,** and manifested that He did love us for He brought us to Himself and gave us of His Spirit, placing us as sons. And how shall I prove my love to Him? **By believing what He said, and by conducting myself with joy amidst the trials that He in His wisdom allows to come to pass.**

II CORINTHIANS 4:8-9

8. We are **troubled** on every side, yet **not distressed**; we are **perplexed**, but **not in despair**;

9. **Persecuted**, but **not forsaken**; **cast down**, but **not destroyed**;

II CORINTHIANS 4:14-17

14. Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. 15. For **all things are for your sakes**, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

16. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17. For our **light affliction**, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

II CORINTHIANS 11:23b-30

23b. ...in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

24. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

25. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

30. If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

ROMANS 8:31

31. What shall we then say to these things? **If God be for us, who can be against us?**

ROMANS 8:35-39

35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37. Nay, **in all these things we are more than conquerors** through him that loved us.

38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.