

## **9-C** II. Tests, Trials, Persecution & Suffering Because We Are Christians

1. **ACT 14:21** And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, **“We MUST through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”**

### **When Bad Things Happen: Study II. Tests, Trials, Persecutions & Suffering** **Because We Are Christians**

**The Scriptures speak of three types of "Trouble" for the believer:**

- I. Temptations or Attacks from Satan
- II. Tests, Trials, Persecutions, Suffering Because We Are Christians
- III. Discipline, Judgement, or Rebuke from the Lord

So is this present trouble the Hand of the Lord in direct rebuke, or the promised testing of our faith, or are we being "had" by Satan? We should know, so we can respond accordingly.

|                | TEMPTATION        | TEST / TRIAL             | DISCIPLINE        |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| FROM           | World/Satan/Flesh | God or World/Satan/Flesh | God               |
| RESULT OF      | Pride or Exposure | Following God            | Disobedience      |
| HOW TO DISCERN | Leads Astray      | Proves Faith             | Fits Crime        |
| RIGHT RESPONSE | Resist!           | Persevere!               | Repent!           |
| DO NOT         | Fall Into         | Shrink Back              | Make Light of     |
| GOD IS SAYING  | The Flesh is Weak | His Name is In Us        | We Are Sons       |
| END WITH       | Sin or Victory    | Death and Glory          | Fear and Holiness |

2. **JAM 1:12** *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the victor's crown, the life God has promised to those who love him.*

#### **TESTS—**

3. **DEU 8:2** Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to TEST you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. 3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.
4. **GEN 22:1** Some time later God TESTED Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. 2 Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.”
5. **EXO 20:20** Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to TEST you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”
6. **PSA 66:8** Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; 9 he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. 10 For you, O God, TESTED us; you REFINED us like silver. 11 You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. 12 You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.
7. **ISA 30:26** The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds He inflicted.

#### **TRIALS—**

8. **1PE 4:12** Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful TRIAL you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.
9. **1PE 1:6** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of TRIALS. 7 These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.
10. **JAM 1:2** Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face TRIALS of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

## PERSECUTION—

11. **JOH 15:18** “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ **If they PERSECUTED me, they will PERSECUTE you also.** If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

## SUFFERING—

12. **1PE 4:1** Therefore, **since Christ SUFFERED in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.**
13. **2TI 1:8** So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But **join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life**—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

## "FOLLOW ME... "

14. **1PE 2:19** For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of **unjust suffering** because he is conscious of God. 20 But **how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.** 21 To this you were called, because **Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that YOU SHOULD FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS.** 22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, **He entrusted himself to him who judges justly.**

1. **There is a difference between Christ’s SUBSTITUTION for us in suffering, and His EXAMPLE in suffering. We FOLLOW His example for the latter in suffering, but He suffered FOR us in the former. The principle is IDENTIFICATION & SUBSTITUTION.**
2. **Christ’s sufferings are different from suffering caused by our own disobedience,**
3. **And these may be different from suffering related to trials or temptations which result from attack or influence through our flesh, Satan or his demons, or the world system.**

15. **JOH 16:1** “All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. 2 They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, **a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.** 3 They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. 4 I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.

## DESTINY—

16. **1TH 3:2** **We sent Timothy,** who is our brother and God’s fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, **to strengthen and encourage you in your faith,** 3 **so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that WE WERE DESTINED FOR THEM.**
17. **2TI 3:12** In fact, **EVERYONE who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus WILL be persecuted,**

## THIS IS GOOD NEWS ?

15. **1PE 1:6** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.
16. **2CO 4:16** Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For **our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.**

## SPIRITUAL SURFING—

- **Oswald Chambers:** "The [wave] that distresses the ordinary swimmer produces in the surf-rider the super-joy of going clean through it. Apply that to our own circumstances, these very things - tribulation, distress, persecution, produce in us the super-joy; they are not things to fight. We are more than conquerors... super-victors, with a joy we would not have but for the very things which look as if they are going to overwhelm us... The saint knows the joy of the Lord not in spite of tribulation, but because of it."

## REJOICE !

17. **COL 1:24** Now **I REJOICE in what was suffered for you,** and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.
18. **ROM 5:3** Not only so, but **we also REJOICE in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;** 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

19. **ROM 8:18** I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.
20. **HEB 10:32** Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. 33 Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. 34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. 35 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. 36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. 37 For in just a very little while, “He who is coming will come and will not delay. 38 But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.” 39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.
21. **1PE 4:16** However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” 19 So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

#### **ADVICE FROM JESUS--**

22. **LUK 12:4** “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.
23. **JOH 16:33** “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
24. **1JO 5:3** This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

#### **THE BIG PICTURE--**

25. **ROM 8:28** And we know that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
26. **ROM 8:31** What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### **BELIEVING THE GOSPEL--**

27. **1CO 15:1** Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, IF you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,
- **A.W. Tozer:** "As long as we remain in the body we shall be subject to a certain amount of that common suffering which we all share with the sons of men. But there is another kind of suffering, known only to the Christian: it is voluntary suffering deliberately and knowingly incurred for the sake of Christ.  
"Such is a luxury, a treasure of fabulous value. And it is rare as well as precious, for there are few in this decadent age who will of their own choice go down into this dark mine looking for jewels. God will not force us into this kind of suffering; he will not lay this cross upon us nor embarrass us with riches we do not want. Such riches are reserved for those who apply to serve in the legion of the expendables, who love not their lives unto death, who volunteer to suffer for Christ's sake and who follow up their application with lives that challenge the devil and invite the fury of hell.

"Such as these have said good-bye to the world's toys; they have accepted toil and suffering as their earthly portion. The marks of the cross are upon them and they are known in heaven and in hell. But where are they? Has this breed of Christian died out of the earth?"

### WHAT CAN WE DO ?

**When tempted or tried, we should not run from God, but TO God. He is ALWAYS the way out!!**

28. **1PE 5:7** **Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.** **8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.** **9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.** **10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.**
29. **MAT 26:41** **Watch & pray so that you will not fall into temptation.** The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.
30. **LUK 21:32** **"I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.** **33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.** **34 "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.** **35 For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.** **36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."**
31. **EPH 4:11** **It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.** **14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.** **15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.** **16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**
32. **GAL 4:19** **My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,**
33. **EPH 4:26** **"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.**
34. **2CO 2:10** **If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him.** **And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.**
35. **2TI 2:24** **And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.**
36. **JAM 3:2** **We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.** **3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.**
37. **EPH 6:18** **And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.**
38. **JAM 4:4** **You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.**
39. **1CO 10:11** **These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.**

**Anyone who refuses the refining fire on earth will spend eternity in the lake of fire. Anyone who will not bow their knee to Jesus while on earth WILL bow their knee at the judgement.**  
**Anyone who does not confess the Lordship of Christ on earth WILL do so at the judgement.**