

# Stricken, but NOT Destroyed

## Looking to the Eternal, Pt. 2

Every trial and tribulation will put our trust in God to the test. By design, they challenge our beliefs in His reliability and ability; they expose our fundamental ideas about His character and ways. With each test, we must decide whether we believe God is who He says and whether He will do what He claims (Hebrews 11:6).

Trials are intended to test and purify our faith; to reveal and remove wrong ideas or obstacles that prevent us from maturing in our relationship with God (1 Peter 1:7). Until our faith is tried, it remains only a hypothesis, sustained by feelings and blessings.

But if we will endure to the end, allowing our faith to be purified and proven, it will *"be found to praise, honor, and glory"* (1 Peter 1:7) Jesus Christ when we finally stand before Him.

Psalm 119:75 says, *"I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me."* *"In due season, [I] will reap if [I] do not lose heart"* (Galatians 6:9).

### **Confidence**

1. Define faith, first as a noun, then as a verb.
2. Read Hebrews 11:1. What elements are key to faith?
3. According to Hebrews 11:6, of what two things must a man be confident? (Consider verse 13.)
4. What is man's responsibility?

5. Can you trust an individual if you do not know him intimately? How is this accomplished? See Romans 10:17.
  
6. What aspect of faith do men tend to focus on?
  
7. Until faith is exercised it remains an idea; until it is tested it is unproven. (James 2:14-26) Do you agree with this statement? If so, why must faith be tested and tried?
  
8. Consider this: Return to the story of Job and read 1:9-11. Of what did the adversary accuse Job? Was Satan's accusation against Job true? How would the allegation be proven?

What was the adversary's intention? Why did God allow the test?

9. Although God's purposes for suffering differ from person to person, what can be accomplished through suffering?
  - a. Romans 5:3-4
  
  - b. Review 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
  
  - c. Review 2 Corinthians 1:9
  
  - d. Review 2 Corinthians 4:7-11
  
  - e. 2 Corinthians 12:7

f. 2 Corinthians 12:8-9

g. Hebrews 12:3-11

h. James 1:2-4

i. 1 Peter 1:3-7

j. 1 Peter 4:1-2

### ***Exposed***

First Peter 1:7 revealed that trials are intended to test and purify our faith; to reveal and remove wrong ideas or obstacles that can prevent us from maturing in our relationship with God. Although they are intended for our benefit (Romans 8:28), trials can have the opposite effect (Matthew 13:21).

As you are reading the accounts below, consider the following: **How did the trial affect the individual? What belief about God, or obstacle to greater trust in Him was exposed? Why did this error need correcting?**

10. Consider Job's wife. What did the tragedy reveal about her fundamental beliefs in God? (See Job 2:9-10.)

Contrast her belief with Habakkuk 3:17-18.

11. How is Job's wife similar to the Rich Young Ruler found in Luke 18:18-23? What prevented this man from deeper intimacy with Christ? (Also consider Matthew 13:22.)

12. In Deuteronomy 8:6-20, what were the Israelites cautioned against? How would God turn their hearts back to Himself?

13. Return to Ruth 1 and reread 19-21. How did Naomi's trial affect her trust in God?

Read Psalm 73:23-26. How does the psalmist's faith differ from Naomi's?

14. Read Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21. What was this man's faith based upon?

15. Now read Matthew 7:24-27. Why did this individual "fall" when tribulation struck? What was his faith built upon?

16. Read Matthew 26:31-35, then 26:69-75. What did adversity reveal in Peter's life? Why did this error need correcting?

17. Identify additional hindrances to trust or obstacles to greater trust.

Why is it necessary that these are removed from a believer's life?

18. How has the present trial affected you? What has it revealed about your trust in God? Are there obstacles that need to be removed? If so, what are they?
  
19. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, what trials and tribulations did Paul face?
  
20. How did he respond? Read Romans 8:35-39, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, and Philippians 4:11-13.
  
21. Why did he welcome adversity? (2 Corinthians 12:10)
  
22. What characteristic is necessary to experience the benefit of trials? Read James 1:12 and 5:11.
  
23. What One thing remains constant and unchanging throughout our afflictions?

In closing, "Faith has to be worked out in actualities," wrote Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest*. In John 16:32, Jesus told His disciples that the hour was coming when they would be scattered each to his own. "He was not rebuking His disciples, as their faith was real. But it was disoriented and unfocused and was not at work in the realities of life. The disciples were scattered to their own concerns and they had interests apart from Jesus Christ." Like the disciples, "we will be scattered, not into service but into the emptiness of our lives where we will see ruin and barrenness, to know what internal

death to God's blessings means. Are we prepared for this? It is certainly not of our own choosing, but God engineers our circumstances to take us there. *Until we have been through that experience, our faith is sustained only by feelings and blessings* (emphasis mine). But once we get there, no matter where God may place us or what inner emptiness we experience, we can praise God that all is well. That is faith being worked out in actualities." (April 4. Compilation of original and revised versions.)