

# Suffering and Deliverance

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- I. Suffering, affliction, persecution, tribulation, and trouble are part of the Christian life (**Act 14:22**).
  1. Sometimes God delivers His children from these difficulties.
  2. At other times God allows us to experience them for various reasons.
  3. This study will cover the following topics:
    - A. God is our Saviour, not only eternally, but also temporally.
    - B. When and why God allows us to suffer and doesn't deliver us from it.
    - C. Examples of when God doesn't even deliver His children from death.
    - D. Three possibilities of how judgment will be meted out to a nation.
    - E. Biblical examples of God either delivering a people for the righteous among them or delivering the righteous alone.
    - F. Having hope because of past deliverances, both Biblical and personal.
  
- II. Along with His many other attributes, God is our Saviour (**2Sa 22:3; Psa 106:21; Tit 1:3**).
  1. Saviour *n.* - 1. a. One who delivers or rescues from peril.
    - A. To deliver is to save from something.
    - B. Deliver *v.* - I. 1. *trans.* To set free, liberate, release, rescue, save. Const. *from, out of, of.* a. To release *from* a place. b. Now *esp.* To set free *from* restraint, imminent danger, annoyance, trouble, or evil generally.
  2. First, foremost, and most importantly, God has delivered us from eternal death and punishment in hell and the lake of fire (**1Th 1:10; Rom 5:9-10; Rev 20:15**).
  3. But that's not the only thing God has delivered us from.
  4. There are many different types of deliverances/salvations (**Psa 44:4**).
  5. God delivers us from:
    - A. falling and tears (**Psa 116:8; Jud 1:24; Php 1:6; 2Ti 1:12 c/w Pro 24:16**)
    - B. our enemies (**Psa 44:7; Psa 136:24; Luk 1:71, 74**)
    - C. trouble (**Psa 41:1; Psa 50:15; Psa 91:14-15**)
      - i. Trouble *n.* - 1. a. Disturbance of mind or feelings; worry, vexation; affliction; grief; perplexity; distress.
      - ii. Do you struggle with worry, stress, or depression?
      - iii. Call upon the Lord and He will save you from it (**Psa 116:3-8**).
    - D. violence (**2Sa 22:3**)
    - E. persecution (**Psa 7:1, 13; Psa 31:15; Psa 35:3; 2Ti 3:11**)
      - i. Persecute *v.* - 1. To pursue, chase, hunt, drive (with missiles, or with attempts to catch, kill, or injure). *Obs.* 2. To pursue with malignancy or enmity and injurious action; *esp.* to oppress with pains and penalties for the holding of a belief or opinion held to be injurious or heretical.
      - ii. If you endeavor to live a godly life, you shall suffer persecution (**2Ti 3:12**).
      - iii. But if you trust in God, He will deliver you from it.
    - F. distresses (**Psa 107:13, 23-30**)
      - i. Distress *n.* - I. 1. a. The action or fact of straining or pressing tightly, strain, stress, pressure; *fig.* pressure employed to produce action, constraint, compulsion; less usually, pressure applied to prevent action, restraint. 2. a. The sore pressure or strain of adversity, trouble, sickness, pain, or sorrow; anguish or affliction affecting the body, spirit, or community.

- ii. Are you under pressure and stressed?
  - a. First of all search your heart and your life to see if it's not a result of your own foolish decisions (**Psa 107:17-18**).
  - b. Then cry unto the Lord and He will save you out of it (**Psa 107:19**).
- iii. But don't expect this to happen though if you're not willing to change your lifestyle.

G. death (**Psa 55:18; Psa 116:8**)

- 6. Many times in Israel's history God gave them saviours to save them out of the hands of their enemies when they cried unto Him (**Neh 9:27; Isa 19:20**).
- 7. Though the Lord used other men to be saviours of his people in a temporal sense, God is the only true Saviour (**Isa 43:3 c/w Isa 43:11; Hos 13:4**) of His people spiritually and eternally (**Tit 3:4-5 c/w 2Ti 1:9**).
- 8. Jesus Christ, who is God (**Joh 1:1, 14**), is our Saviour (**Php 3:20; Tit 1:4; 2Pe 1:1**).

III. Sometimes God causes or allows us to suffer and does not deliver us from it for various reasons.

1. Christians are appointed to affliction by God (**1Th 3:3; Act 9:16**).

- A. Affliction *n.* - 1. The action of inflicting grievous pain or trouble. 2. The state of being afflicted; sore pain of body or trouble of mind; misery, distress.
- B. Appointed *ppl.* - 1. Fixed by agreement; settled beforehand. 2. Fixed by authority; ordained.
- C. In the same way that God has given us the gift of faith (**Rom 12:3**), so he has given us the gift of suffering for His sake (**Php 1:29**).
- D. When God chose Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles, He also ordained that he would suffer greatly for Him (**Act 9:15-16**).
- E. The more wisdom, knowledge, and faith that is given to a person, the more grief, sorrow, and chastisement he should expect to receive from God (**Ecc 1:18; Ecc 7:4; Luk 12:47-48**).
  - i. Grief *n.* - 1. Hardship, suffering; a kind, or cause, of hardship or suffering.
  - ii. Sorrow *n.* - 1. a. Distress of mind caused by loss, suffering, disappointment, etc.; grief, deep sadness or regret; also, that which causes grief or melancholy; affliction, trouble.
  - iii. Stripe *n.* - 1. A blow or stroke with a staff, sword, or other weapon, with a missile, with the claws or hoofs of an animal, etc. 2. A stroke or lash with a whip or scourge. Now *arch.*, chiefly in *pl.*
- F. Jesus Christ, our Lord, Master, and Saviour, was a man of sorrows (**Isa 53:3**).
  - i. As His disciples we should expect to suffer like He did (**Joh 15:20**).
  - ii. The multitude of the elect which no man could number that John saw in heaven had come out of great tribulation (**Rev 7:9, 14**).
  - iii. So if you're a Christian, or desire to be one, don't expect to get through this life without suffering.

2. God may permit suffering for the purpose of:

3. punishment

- A. When God's people are living like the heathen, God will punish them with the heathen (**Jer 9:25-26**).

- B. Punish v. - 1. a. *trans.* As an act of a superior or of public authority: To cause (an offender) to suffer for an offence; to subject to judicial chastisement as retribution or requital, or as a caution against further transgression; to inflict a penalty on.
- C. If God's church (which Jerusalem was symbolic of) is living in wickedness, it will not be unpunished when God judges the world (**Jer 25:29**).
- D. God will not completely destroy His people when they are judged with the world, but they will not be left unpunished (**Jer 30:11**).
- E. The LORD chastens whom He loves (**Heb 12:5-8**).
  - i. The chastening is grievous (**Heb 12:11**).
  - ii. But it's purpose is to bring about the peaceable fruit of righteousness (**Heb 12:11**).
  - iii. Wise people will recognize God's punishment, receive it, and correct their behavior (**Pro 9:9**).
  - iv. But fools will be ground to powder and never change (**Pro 27:22**).

#### 4. growth and improvement through suffering

- A. Sometimes God lets us suffer to humble us and strengthen us as we rely on Him (**2Co 12:7-10**).
  - i. Paul had a thorn in the flesh which buffeted him (v.7).
    - a. Thorn n. - 1. A stiff, sharp-pointed, straight or curved woody process on the stem or other part of a plant; a spine, a prickle. 2. *fig.* (or in *fig.* context): Anything that causes pain, grief, or trouble; in various metaphors, similes, and proverbial expressions, as *a thorn in the flesh* or *side*, a constant affliction, a source of continual grief, trouble, or annoyance; (*to be, sit, stand, walk*) *on thorns (a thorn)*, (*to be, etc.*) in a painful state of anxiety or suspense.
    - b. Whatever Paul's thorn in the flesh was, it was a continual source of grief, trouble, and pain for him.
    - c. Buffet v. - 1. *trans.* To beat, strike, esp. with the hand; to thump, cuff, knock about.
  - ii. He suffered with infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distresses (v.10).
    - a. Infirmity n. - 1. Weakness or want of strength; lack of power to do something; inability. Also with *pl.* an instance or case of this. 2. Physical weakness, debility, frailty, feebleness of body, resulting from some constitutional defect, disease, or (now mostly) old age.
    - b. Reproach n. - 1. A source or cause of disgrace or shame (*to* a person, etc.); a fact, matter, feature or quality bringing disgrace or discredit upon one.
    - c. Necessity n. - 1. a. The fact of being inevitably fixed or determined. *Obs.* 10. a. The condition of being in difficulties or straits, esp. through lack of means; want, poverty. 11. A situation of hardship or difficulty; a pressing need or want. (Chiefly in *pl.*)
    - d. Persecution n. 1. a. The action of persecuting or pursuing with enmity and malignity; esp. the infliction of death, torture, or penalties for adherence to a religious belief or an opinion as such, with a view

- to the repression or extirpation of it; the fact of being persecuted; an instance of this.
- e. Distress *n.* - 1. a. The action or fact of straining or pressing tightly, strain, stress, pressure; fig. pressure employed to produce action, constraint, compulsion; less usually, pressure applied to prevent action, restraint. 2. a. The sore pressure or strain of adversity, trouble, sickness, pain, or sorrow; anguish or affliction affecting the body, spirit, or community.
- iii. Paul took pleasure in these afflictions because God made him strong through his weakness (v.10).
- iv. Pleasure *n.* - 1. a. The condition of consciousness or sensation induced by the enjoyment or anticipation of what is felt or viewed as good or desirable; enjoyment, delight, gratification. The opposite of *pain*.
- B. Temptations and trials work patience which works in us to bring us to perfection (**Jam 1:2-4; Jam 1:12**).
- i. Patience *n.* - 1. a. The suffering or enduring (of pain, trouble, or evil) with calmness and composure; the quality or capacity of so suffering or enduring.
- ii. Perfect *adj.* - 1. Thoroughly made, formed, done, performed, carried out, accomplished. *Obs.* 2. a. Fully accomplished; thoroughly versed, trained, skilled, or conversant. 4. a. In the state of complete excellence; free from any flaw or imperfection of quality; faultless. But often used of a near approach to such a state, and hence capable of comparison, *perfecter* (= more nearly perfect), *perfectest* (= nearest to perfection).
- iii. Without suffering and enduring pain, trouble, and evil we would never learn to do so with calmness and composure and would therefore not grow into mature Christians.
- C. Tribulation works patience which works experience which brings hope (**Rom 5:3-5**).
- i. Tribulation *n.* - 1. A condition of great affliction, oppression, or misery; 'persecution; distress; vexation; disturbance of life'
- ii. Experience *n.* - 1. a. The action of putting to the test; trial. *to make experience of*: to make trial of. 2. Proof by actual trial; practical demonstration. *to put in experience*: to fulfil in practice. *Obs.*; passing into 3. 3. The actual observation of facts or events, considered as a source of knowledge.
- iii. Hope *n.* - 1. a. Expectation of something desired; desire combined with expectation.
- iv. Hope, along with faith and charity, is one of the three chief Christian virtues (**1Co 13:13**).
- v. In order to have the lofty virtue of hope we must endure suffering affliction, oppression, and misery.
- vi. Hope will save us temporally, enabling us to faithfully finish our course in this life (**Rom 8:24-25**).
- D. The Lord lays affliction on us to prove us and try us as silver is tried (**Psa 66:10-11**).

- i. Prove v. - 1. a. *trans.* To make trial of, put to the test; to try the genuineness or qualities of; to try, test.
  - ii. Try v. - 1. a. *trans.* To separate (one thing) from another or others; to set apart; to distinguish. 2. a. To separate the good part of a thing from the rest, esp. by sifting or straining; hence, to sift or strain. 3. *spec.* To separate (metal) from the ore or dross by melting; to refine, purify by fire; also, to remove (the dross or impurity) from metal by fire.
  - iii. When God tries His children He separates the men from the boys.
  - iv. Silver has to be put through the fire to remove impurities from it (**Pro 25:4**).
  - v. Likewise the Lord tries our hearts to remove sin from them (**Pro 17:3; Mal 3:3**).
  - vi. God tries our work and burns off that which is not profitable in our service to Him and leaves what is (**1Co 3:12-15**).
  - vii. If we purge ourselves of our dishonorable qualities we will be prepared for greater service to God (**2Ti 2:20-21**).
- E. Another way God brings suffering into our lives for the purpose of growth and improvement is through marriage.
- i. Marriage is a great blessing, but it is also a source of trouble (**1Co 7:28**).
  - ii. Trouble n. - 1. a. Disturbance of mind or feelings; worry, vexation; affliction; grief; perplexity; distress.
  - iii. Getting married will bring out carnality and character flaws in you that you didn't know about and which would not have been revealed otherwise.
    - a. Marriage will (or should) greatly facilitate growth in the Christian life.
    - b. It is important for husbands and wives to correct sinful and foolish behavior and tendencies in their spouse because nobody else will.
    - c. When your spouse smites you (figuratively, of course) because of your sinful or foolish behavior, realize that God is using him or her to improve your character, and thank him or her for loving you enough to correct you (**Psa 141:5**).
  - iv. Marriage will give you a graduate level course in bearing trouble patiently and learning to both forgive and ask to be forgiven.

##### 5. an example of suffering patiently to others

- A. God allowed the prophets to suffer as an example to us of how to suffer patiently (**Jam 5:10**).
- i. Example n . 1. A typical instance; a fact, incident, quotation, etc. that illustrates, or forms a particular case of, a general principle, rule, state of things, etc.; a person or thing that may be taken as an illustration of a certain quality. 6. A person's action or conduct regarded as an object of imitation; often qualified by adjs. *good, bad, evil*, etc. Phrases, *to give, leave, set an example*. Also, a person whose conduct ought to be imitated; a 'pattern' of excellence.
- ii. Consider just a few of the prophets.
  - a. Think about prophets like Jeremiah who was persecuted and was imprisoned in horrible conditions for preaching the truth.

- b. Consider Elijah who stood alone against hundreds of prophets of Baal and was persecuted by the king and queen of Israel.
    - c. Think about Micaiah who was persecuted by king Ahab for telling him the truth in opposition to the other 400 false prophets.
    - d. (Details will be given on these prophets later in the study.)
  - iii. The examples which the prophets left us of suffering patiently have provided millions of Christians with hope and courage for thousands of years.
  - iv. Their suffering had a purpose that extended beyond their own lives.
  - v. God allows us to suffer for the same purpose.
- B. God allowed Job to suffer unimaginably as an example for us to endure affliction patiently (**Jam 5:11**).
  - i. Endure *v.* - II. To last; to suffer continuously. 2. *intr.* To last, continue in existence. Also, to persist, 'hold out' in any action, etc. 3. *trans.* To undergo, bear, sustain (continuous pain, opposition, hardship, or annoyance); properly, to undergo without succumbing or giving way.
  - ii. Those who continue in pain, opposition, hardship, or annoyance without giving up are blessed.
  - iii. They are a good example to others.
- C. The Lord allowed Paul, our apostle, to suffer long and endure persecutions and afflictions as an example for us to learn from (**2Ti 3:10-11**).
  - i. Paul's suffering was "fully known" (**2Ti 3:10**) to Timothy and others because he as a minister of God was to serve as our pattern and example (**Tit 2:7; 1Ti 4:12; 2Th 3:9**).
  - ii. Paul was longsuffering (**2Ti 3:10**).
  - iii. Longsuffering *n.* - Patient endurance of provocation or trial; longanimity.
  - iv. He wrote about his tremendous suffering so that Christians would have an example to follow. Consider the things he suffered (**2Co 11:23-28**):
    - a. Paul received stripes "above measure" (v.23).
      - (i) Stripe *n.* - 1. A blow or stroke with a staff, sword, or other weapon, with a missile, with the claws or hoofs of an animal, etc. 2. A stroke or lash with a whip or scourge. Now *arch.*, chiefly in *pl.*
        - 1. Whip *n.* - 1. a. An instrument for flogging or beating, consisting either of a rigid rod or stick with a lash of cord, leather, etc. attached, or of a flexible switch with or without a lash, used for driving horses, chastising human beings, and other purposes.
        - 2. Scourge *n.* - 1. a. A whip, lash. Now only rhetorical, with reference to the torturing of human beings, or to ascetic discipline.
        - 3. Lash *n.* - 1. a. *gen.* A sudden or violent blow; a dashing or sweeping stroke (*obs.*). b. *spec.* A stroke with a thong or whip.
      - (ii) Above *adv.* - 7. Higher in degree; surpassing in quality; in excess of, beyond; more than. *above all*: beyond everything;



- first of all; chiefly. *above measure*: beyond or more than what is meet; in excess of moderation; excessively.
- (iii) Measure *n.* - II. Prescribed or limited extent or quantity. 10. What is commensurate or adequate; satisfaction (of appetite, desire, need). *Obs.* 12. a. An extent not to be exceeded; a limit. b. In advb. phr. *beyond (above, without, over) measure*, also *out of measure, out of all measure* (arch.): beyond all bounds, excessively. Formerly (esp. Sc.) used also predicatively = boundless, unlimited, excessive.
- (iv) Paul was whipped and scourged excessively far beyond what was called for for his supposed crimes.
- b. Paul was in prison frequently (v.23).
- (i) First century Roman prisons were dreadful places.
- (ii) They would have been dark, cold or hot, filthy, and very uncomfortable.
- (iii) Prisoners were often put in chains (**Act 12:6; Act 21:33; Act 28:20; 2Ti 1:16**) or in the stocks (**Act 16:24**).
- (iv) Stock *n.* - 17. Stocks, plu. A machine consisting of two pieces of timber, in which the legs of criminals are confined by way of punishment. (Webster's 1828)
- (v) Even when Paul knew that prison time and affliction awaited him, it did not move him because he didn't count his life dear unto himself (**Act 20:23-24**).
- (vi) Paul was an example to us to not be afraid of imprisonment for practicing our faith.
- c. Paul "oft" faced death (v.23).
- (i) Oft *adv.* - a. = often
- (ii) Often *adv.* - 1. a. Many times; at many times, on numerous occasions; frequently. Opposed to *seldom*.
- (iii) He indeed did face death or was nigh unto it often (**2Co 1:9; Act 23:12; Act 27:20; etc.**).
- d. Paul received 39 stripes from the Jews five different times (v.24).
- (i) The Jewish beatings were limited to 40 stripes (**Deut 25:2-3**).
- (ii) It was tradition for them to never exceed 39 stripes.
- (iii) Being beat with 39 strikes of a rod or a whip would be excruciatingly painful.
- (iv) These five beatings were in addition to the "stripes without measure" which he listed earlier (v.23).
- e. Paul was beaten with rods three times (v.25).
- (i) Rod *n.* - I. 1. a. A straight, slender shoot or wand, growing upon or cut from a tree, bush, etc. 2. a. An instrument of punishment, either one straight stick, or a bundle of twigs bound together.
- (ii) These beatings were in addition to the "stripes without measure" (v.23) and the five times he was given 39 stripes by the Jews (v.24).

- f. Paul was stoned once (v.25).
- (i) Stoned *ppl.* - 1. Pelted with stones.
  - (ii) Stone *v.* - 1. a. *trans.* To throw stones at, pelt with stones; esp. to put to death by pelting with stones.
  - (iii) It doesn't take much imagination to know how painful a stoning would be.
    - 1. Have you ever been hit in the head or the body with a stone or even a baseball?
    - 2. Imagine that pain, multiplied by 100, simultaneously.
  - (iv) Paul was left for dead after being stoned in Lystra (**Act 14:19**).
  - (v) After being left for dead, Paul rose up and went to Derbe the next day and preached the gospel there (**Act 14:20-21**).
  - (vi) After preaching the gospel in Derbe and teaching many, Paul returned to Lystra where he had been stoned and confirmed the disciples there and exhorted them to continue in the faith and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (**Act 14:21-22**).
  - (vii) Paul suffered tremendously but nevertheless continued in the faith as an excellent example for us to follow.
- g. Paul suffered shipwreck three times (v.25).
- (i) This would have put him at his wits' end (**Psa 107:23-27**).
  - (ii) He despaired even of life (**Act 27:20**).
- h. Paul spent a night and a day in the deep (v.25).
- (i) He was apparently floating in the ocean for 24 hours after one of those shipwrecks.
  - (ii) That would have been miserable.
- i. Paul spent a lot of time journeying away from home (v.26).
- (i) He spent years away from home during his evangelistic trips.
  - (ii) This would have been wearying and would have made him homesick.
- j. Paul was in perils of waters (v.26).
- (i) Peril *n.* - . a. The position or condition of being imminently exposed to the chance of injury, loss, or destruction; risk, jeopardy, danger.
  - (ii) These perilous times in waters were likely in addition to the three shipwrecks he suffered and the night and a day he spent in the deep.
  - (iii) After these frightening experiences, Paul continued his evangelistic trips because his faith had not been shaken.
- k. Paul was in perils of robbers (v.26).
- (i) Robber *n.* - 1. a. One who practises or commits robbery; a depredator, plunderer, despoiler.
  - (ii) Thieves would not only take the victim's money and possessions, but would often badly wound him in the process (**Luk 10:30**).

- (iii) This would have caused Paul physical suffering as well as emotional suffering due to fear and anxiety.
- l. Paul was in perils by his own countrymen (v.26).
  - (i) Countryman *n.* - 2. A man of one's own country, a fellow-countryman; a compatriot; usually with *possessive*.
  - (ii) His countrymen were the Jews (**Rom 9:3-4**).
  - (iii) The Jews persecuted Paul from city to city trying to have him killed (**1Th 2:14-15; Act 13:50; Act 14:5-6, 19; Act 17:5; Act 18:12; Act 20:3, 19; Act 21:27-31; Act 22:22; Act 23:12**).
- m. Paul was in perils by the heathen (v.26).
  - (i) Heathen *n.* - 1. Applied to persons or races whose religion is neither Christian, Jewish, nor Muslim; pagan; Gentile. In earlier times applied also to Muslims; but in modern usage, for the most part, restricted to those holding polytheistic beliefs, esp. when uncivilized or uncultured.
  - (ii) Paul was not only persecuted by the Jews, but also by the Gentiles.
  - (iii) Sometimes Paul was in danger of being harmed by the Gentiles because the envious Jews stirred them up against him (**Act 14:2, 5; Act 17:5; Act 22:22-25**).
  - (iv) Their problems with him often were a result of his preaching or actions harming them financially (**Act 16:16-24; Act 19:23-30**).
  - (v) Paul fought with beasts at Ephesus which were either Gentiles called beasts or literal beasts which he was thrown to by Gentiles (**1 Co 15:32**).
- n. Paul was in perils in the city (v.26).
  - (i) He experienced numerous perils in the cities he traveled to and preached in.
  - (ii) Paul was assaulted in cities like Lystra (**Act 14**), Philippi (**Act 16**), Ephesus (**Act 19**), and Jerusalem (**Act 21**).
- o. Paul was in perils in the wilderness (v.26).
  - (i) Though it is not recorded, Paul no doubt faced danger from wild animals, rough terrain, severe weather, and thieves as he made his way through the wilderness between cities on his trips.
  - (ii) One example is when he got bit by a venomous snake while warming himself by a fire (**Act 28:3-5**).
- p. Paul was in perils in the sea (v.26).
  - (i) Acts 27 tells the account of one of Paul's perilous times in the sea.
  - (ii) He was shipwrecked three times and spent a night and a day in the water (v.25).
- q. Paul was in perils among false brethren (v.26).

- (i) Peril *n.* - . a. The position or condition of being imminently exposed to the chance of injury, loss, or destruction; risk, jeopardy, danger.
- (ii) Perils can also be of a spiritual nature (**2Ti 3:1-5**).
- (iii) False brethren can cause a pastor and a church much injury and danger.
  1. They creep into the church unawares (**Gal 2:4; Jud 1:4**).
  2. They draw away disciples after them with deceptive false doctrine (**Act 20:29-30; Eph 4:14; Gal 1:6-7; Gal 3:1; 2Ti 2:16-19**).
  3. They will forsake us when times get tough (**2Ti 1:15-16; 2Ti 4:14-16**).
- (iv) False brethren are a great source of suffering for God's people (**Php 3:18-19; Act 20:31**).
- (v) But they're also used by God to help the church grow spiritually and purge it of people who shouldn't be there (**1Co 11:19; 1Jo 2:19**).
- (vi) Paul suffered perils of false brethren as an example to us of how to do so.
- r. Paul was in weariness (v.27).
  - (i) Weariness *n.* - 1. Weary condition; extreme tiredness or fatigue resulting from exertion, continued endurance of pain, or want of sleep.
  - (ii) Weary *adj.* - I. 1. a. Having the feeling of loss of strength, languor, and need for rest, produced by continued exertion (physical or mental), endurance of severe pain, or wakefulness; tired, fatigued. Now with stronger sense: Intensely tired, worn out with fatigue.
  - (iii) Paul was extremely and intensely tired due to many things such as his much studying (**Ecc 12:12**), long journeys, spiritual warfare, preaching the gospel, contending for the faith, and caring for the churches (**2Co 11:28-29**).
  - (iv) Some pastors have killed themselves or nearly killed themselves doing the work of the ministry (**Php 2:30; 2Co 12:15**).
  - (v) Doing the right thing can be wearying, but we must not let it stop us (**Gal 6:9; 2Th 3:13**).
    1. It's worth being weary to do the Lord's work.
    2. God will satiate the weary soul and fill the sorrowful soul (**Jer 31:25**).
    3. God is never weary, and He has plenty of strength to give to the weary so that they will finish running their course (**Isa 40:28-31**).
    4. God's strength is made perfect in our weakness (**2Co 12:9-10**).

- (vi) If you are weary from doing things God never told you to do, or, worse yet, from doing things which God told you not to do in His word, then come unto Jesus, live your life under His easy and light yoke, and you will find rest (**Mat 11:28-30**).
- (vii) Paul suffered weariness as an example to us of how to do so.
- s. Paul was in painfulness (v.27).
  - (i) Painfulness *n.* - 1. The quality of being fraught or attended with pain; distressingness. Also in passive aspect: The condition of suffering pain; distress, affliction.
  - (ii) The stoning, beatings, the imprisonments, and all of the stress and mental anguish Paul endured was very painful.
  - (iii) As the old saying goes though, "no pain, no gain."
  - (iv) The pain Paul endured facilitated his growth as a Christian and a minister.
- t. Paul was in watchings often (v.27).
  - (i) Watching *n.* - 1. The action of the verb *watch* in various senses. *lit.* and *fig.* 2. The state or condition of being awake, wakefulness; often, wakefulness from disinclination or incapacity for sleep; an instance of this.
  - (ii) Watch *n.* - I. Wakefulness, vigil. 1. a. The state of being awake; voluntary or involuntary going without sleep; wakefulness.
  - (iii) Watch *v.* - 1. a. To be or remain awake.
  - (iv) Often *adv.* - 1. a. Many times; at many times, on numerous occasions; frequently. Opposed to *seldom*.
  - (v) Paul was awake at night frequently.
  - (vi) This was likely because of all of the perils he faced which either kept his mind racing at night, or required that he stay up to watch for danger.
- u. Paul was in hunger and thirst (v.27).
  - (i) He suffered the lack of his most basic needs of food and drink.
  - (ii) God allows His people to suffer hunger at times to prove them and make them rely on Him (**Deut 8:3, 16**).
  - (iii) Despite allowing Paul to suffer hunger and thirst for a time, God supplied all his need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (**Php 4:19**).
- v. Paul was in fastings often (v.27).
  - (i) Fasting *n.* - 1. The action of the vb. *fast*; abstinence from food; an instance of this. 2. A season of abstinence from food, a fast.
  - (ii) Paul afflicted his soul and chastened himself with fasting often as well (**Dan 9:3 c/w Dan 10:12; Psa 69:10**).
- w. Paul was in cold and nakedness (v.27).

- (i) Nakedness *n.* - 1. The state or condition of being unclothed or destitute of clothing.
- (ii) It was common for prisoners to be stripped of their clothes before being beaten (**Act 16:22-23**).
- (iii) Paul was in prison without his cloak (a loose outer garment) and asked Timothy to bring it to him before winter (**2Ti 4:13, 21**).
- (iv) He no doubt suffered many a cold night in a cold prison.
- v. All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (**2Ti 3:12**).
- vi. A pastor is to be an example to the church in all areas of life (**1Ti 4:12**).
  - a. Therefore, it follows that a pastor will suffer persecution and affliction as an example to the flock.
  - b. Pastors should expect to suffer more than others since they are supposed to be examples.
- D. Paul and Silas were falsely accused, beaten, and cast into prison for casting a spirit of divination out of a young woman (**Act 16:16-24**).
  - i. In prison they prayed and sang praises to God (**Act 16:25**).
  - ii. What a wonderful example of suffering patiently they were for us!
- E. Paul himself was comforted by the faithful suffering of the Thessalonian saints (**1Th 3:3-4, 6-7**).
  - i. Paul gloried in the Thessalonian saints in the other churches for how they patiently and faithfully endured persecutions and tribulations (**2Th 1:4-5**).
  - ii. Their patient suffering was a source of inspiration and encouragement to the apostles and the other churches.

#### 6. learning to trust in God instead of ourselves

- A. God will sometimes bring such intense suffering into our lives that we cannot possibly bear by our own strength which makes us trust in Him instead of ourselves (**2Co 1:8-9**).
  - i. Pressed *ppl.* - 1. Subjected to pressure; forced or squeezed into a smaller volume or denser consistence than the ordinary.
  - ii. Measure *n.* - 1. a. The action or process of measuring, measurement. 12. a. An extent not to be exceeded; a limit. Now only in certain phrases, as *to set measures to, to know no measure* (see also b and c). b. In advb. phr. *beyond (above, without, over) measure, also out of measure, out of all measure* (arch.): beyond all bounds, excessively. Formerly (esp. Sc.) used also predicatively = boundless, unlimited, excessive.
  - iii. Above *adv.* - 7. Higher in degree; surpassing in quality; in excess of, beyond; more than. above all: beyond everything; first of all; chiefly. above measure: beyond or more than what is meet; in excess of moderation; excessively.
  - iv. Strength *n.* - 1. The quality or condition of being strong. a. Power of action in body or limbs; ability to exert muscular force. b. Bodily vigour in general; efficiency of the bodily powers; esp. in contrast with the weakness due to illness, fatigue, age, immaturity, etc. c. Power in general, whether physical, mental, or due to the possession of resources; ability for effective

action; efficiency, vigour (of mental faculties, etc.). d. Capacity for moral effort or endurance; firmness (of mind, character, will, purpose); power to resist temptation or fulfil a difficult duty; fortitude as one of the cardinal virtues. Freq. in phr. **strength of character**. **in one's own strength**: in reliance on oneself and not on divine grace.

- v. **Despair** v. - 1. *intr.* To lose or give up hope; to be without hope. Const. *of* (with indirect passive *to be despaired of*)
  - vi. Substituting the definitions, Paul was under excessive pressure which was beyond all bounds surpassing what he was able to endure mentally and physically to the point where he had given up hope that he would even live.
  - vii. In that condition all self-trust and self-reliance is gone, and we are forced to trust in God alone for deliverance.
- B. By suffering great troubles, fightings, and fears we learn to rely on God's comfort which only He can provide (**2Co 7:5-6**).
- i. **Comfort** v. - 1. *trans.* To strengthen (morally or spiritually); to encourage, hearten, inspire, incite.
  - ii. God strengthens us by sending others to encourage us in our time of trial.
  - iii. When I was enduring the greatest trouble I have ever faced as a minister, God comforted me by sending my best friend to visit me who had no idea that anything was going on.
- C. When David was greatly distressed he encouraged himself in the LORD his God (**1Sa 30:6**).
- i. **Greatly** *adv.* - 1. To a great extent, in a great degree; extensively, exceedingly; highly; much, very.
  - ii. **Distressed** *ppl.* - Afflicted with pain or trouble; sorely troubled; in sore straits. Applied spec. to a person living in impoverished circumstances.
  - iii. **Strait** *n.* - II. Strict, rigorous. 6. a. Of conditions, sufferings, punishment, etc.: Pressing hardly, severe, rigorous.
  - iv. Were he not in such dire straits he might not have looked to the LORD for help (**Psa 30:6**).
  - v. We must follow David's example and look to the LORD from whence cometh our help (**Psa 121:1-2**).
- D. God will put us in trying situations which we have no ability to get ourselves out of, nor do we even know what to do, so that we will set our eyes upon Him for deliverance (**2Ch 20:12**).

7. making us draw nigh to God

- A. When we suffer adversity we draw nigh to God and know Him in a deepness that we would not otherwise (**Psa 31:7**).
- B. God knows our way and tries us to purify us (**Job 23:10**).
- C. Jesus was tempted and tried just like us and therefore knows our soul in adversity (**Heb 2:18**).

8. making us look beyond this life to the next life in eternity

- A. The affliction we endure in this life makes us look beyond the temporal to the eternal (**2Co 4:17-18**).

- i. Temporal *adj.* - 1. Lasting or existing only for a time; passing, temporary. Now *rare* or merged in 2. 2. Of or pertaining to time as the sphere of human life; terrestrial as opposed to heavenly; of man's present life as distinguished from a future existence; concerning or involving merely the material interests of this world; worldly, earthly. (Opp. to *eternal* or *spiritual*.)
      - ii. If God didn't allow us to suffer, we would be like the carnal man who minds only earthly things (**Php 3:19; Rom 8:5**).
      - iii. We might forget that our conversation is in heaven (**Php 3:20; Pro 15:24**).
      - iv. We might fail to set our affections on those things which are above (**Col 3:1-2**).
    - B. The sufferings of the present time focus our attention on the glory that awaits us (**Rom 8:18-19**).
    - C. The weeping we endure now because of God's chastisement makes us look for the joy that awaits us (**Psa 30:5**).
    - D. The tears we shed while sowing faithfully give us hope of the joy we shall reap in eternity (**Psa 126:5-6; Luk 6:21; Mat 25:21**).
9. showing ourselves approved as the ministers of Christ
- A. God allows his ministers to suffer afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watchings, fastings, dishonor, and evil reports to prove to the brethren that they are approved of God (**2Co 6:4-10**).
  - B. Patience *n.* - 1. a. The suffering or enduring (of pain, trouble, or evil) with calmness and composure; the quality or capacity of so suffering or enduring.
  - C. Affliction *n.* - 1. The action of inflicting grievous pain or trouble. 2. The state of being afflicted; sore pain of body or trouble of mind; misery, distress.
    - i. We have already studied the long list of afflictions that Paul suffered patiently (**2Co 11:23-28**).
    - ii. These sufferings showed that Paul was approved as a minister of Christ.
  - D. Necessity *n.* - 1. a. The fact of being inevitably fixed or determined. *Obs.* 10. a. The condition of being in difficulties or straits, esp. through lack of means; want, poverty. 11. A situation of hardship or difficulty; a pressing need or want. (Chiefly in *pl.*)
    - i. This is what Paul referred to by "having nothing" (**2Co 6:10**).
    - ii. True ministers sometimes find themselves in financial hardship.
    - iii. They don't get a predetermined salary from the church.
  - E. Distress *n.* - I. 1. a. The action or fact of straining or pressing tightly, strain, stress, pressure; *fig.* pressure employed to produce action, constraint, compulsion; less usually, pressure applied to prevent action, restraint. 2. a. The sore pressure or strain of adversity, trouble, sickness, pain, or sorrow; anguish or affliction affecting the body, spirit, or community.
    - i. Pastors are often under a lot of stress and pressure because of their work.
    - ii. When this happens it is evidence that they are approved as the ministers of Christ.
  - F. Tumult *n.* - 1. Commotion of a multitude, usually with confused speech or uproar; public disturbance; disorderly or riotous proceeding.
    - i. Paul was the victim of numerous tumults during his ministry.



- ii. The Jews caused an uproar in Thessalonica because of Paul's effective preaching (**Act 17:4-5**).
  - iii. There was an uproar in Ephesus because Paul preached Christ which was a threat to the worship of Diana (**Act 19:28-34, 40**).
  - iv. In Jerusalem the Jews stirred up the people and caused a tumult to try to kill Paul (**Act 21:27-36**).
  - v. The fact that huge crowds were against Paul was not a sign that he was wrong, but that he was right.
  - vi. This was just another indication that Paul's ministry was approved by God.
- G. Labor *n.* - 1. a. Exertion of the faculties of the body or mind, esp. when painful or compulsory; bodily or mental toil.
- i. Toil *n.* - 1. Verbal contention, dispute, controversy, argument (obs.); also, battle, strife, mêlée, turmoil (arch. or merged in 2). 2. With *a* and *pl.* A struggle, a 'fight' (with difficulties); hence, a spell of severe bodily or mental labour; a laborious task or operation. 3. a. Without *a* or *pl.* Severe labour; hard and continuous work or exertion which taxes the bodily or mental powers.
  - ii. Labor is difficult and is a source of affliction.
  - iii. So much so that some ministers work themselves to (or nearly to) death (**Php 2:30**).
  - iv. Pastors labor in the word and doctrine (**1Ti 5:17-18; 1Co 15:10**), in prayer (**Col 4:12**), and in building churches (**1Co 3:8-9**).
  - v. They also sometimes have to labor at other work to provide for their needs or the needs of others (**Act 18:3; Act 20:33-35; 1Co 4:12; 2Th 3:8**).
  - vi. When ministers suffer in labor and toil they show themselves approved by God.
- H. Evil report
- i. Evil *adj.* - I. Bad in a positive sense. 1. Morally depraved, bad, wicked, vicious. 2. Doing or tending to do harm; hurtful, mischievous, prejudicial. Of advice, etc.: Misleading. Of an omen, etc.: Boding ill. 3. Uses partaking of senses 1 and 2: c. Of repute or estimation: Unfavourable. evil tongue: a malicious or slanderous speaker.
  - ii. Report *n.* - 1. a. Rumour, common talk. b. With *a* and *pl.* A rumour; a statement generally made or believed. *the report goes*: it is commonly said.
  - iii. Paul was the subject of lying rumors and slander (**Rom 3:8**).
  - iv. Slander and rumors are one of the many ways that pastors suffer which shows that they are approved by God.
  - v. See <https://pastorwagner.com/praise> for examples of evil reports.

#### 10. making us identify with the sufferings of Jesus Christ

- A. When we suffer for Christ, we identify with Him and know Him in a way that we could not otherwise know Him (**Php 3:10**).
- i. We have fellowship with Christ in His suffering when we suffer for Him.
- ii. Fellowship *n.* - 1. a. Partnership; membership of a society. Also, in political sense, alliance. *Obs.* b. Participation, sharing (in an action, condition, etc.); 'something in common', community of interest, sentiment, nature, etc.

- iii. We are made conformable unto His death (**Php 3:10**) when we die to ourselves (**Rom 6:6-8; Gal 2:20; Gal 5:24; Gal 6:14**) and are willing to die for Him (**Act 20:24; Act 21:13; 2Ti 4:6**).
  - iv. Conformable *adj.* - 1. According in form or character to (a standard or pattern); similar, resembling, like. Const. *to*.
- B. The more we suffer for Christ, the more our consolation abounds (**2Co 1:5**).
- i. Consolation *n.* - 1. The action of consoling, cheering, or comforting; the state of being consoled; alleviation of sorrow or mental distress.
  - ii. Abound *v.* - 1. To be present in overflowing measure; to be plentiful; to prevail widely.
  - iii. It seems counterintuitive that suffering for Christ would bring us alleviation of sorrow and mental distress, but it makes sense when we realize that suffering for Christ draws us closer to Christ.
- C. When God allows us to be troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, and cast down we bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus because we are suffering as He did (**2Co 4:8-10**).
- i. Troubled *ppl.* - 1. Physically agitated; of the sea, sky, etc., stormy; of water, wine, etc., stirred up so as to diffuse the sediment, made thick or muddy, turbid. 2. Disturbed; disquieted; disordered; agitated; afflicted.
    - a. Jesus was troubled on every side.
      - (i) His natural brethren caused Him grief (**Joh 7:3-5**).
      - (ii) His disciples caused Him grief (**Mat 17:14-20; Mat 26:51-54**).
      - (iii) His followers caused His life to be disquieted (**Mar 6:31-33; Mar 5:25-31**).
      - (iv) The Pharisees caused Him grief (**Luk 11:53-54**).
      - (v) The authorities caused Him grief (**Luk 13:31-32; Joh 19:1-3**).
    - b. When we are troubled on every side, we are identifying with the sufferings of Jesus.
  - ii. Perplexed *ppl.* - 1. Of a person: Involved in doubt or anxiety on account of the intricate character of the matter under consideration; bewildered, puzzled: see *perplex* *v.* 1.
    - a. Jesus was amazed (**Mar 14:33**).
    - b. Amazed *adj.* - 1. Driven stupid; stunned or stupefied, as by a blow; out of one's wits. 2. Bewildered, confounded, confused, perplexed. Of things: Thrown into confusion.
    - c. Jesus marveled (**Mar 6:6**).
      - (i) Marvel *v.* - 1. *intr.* To be filled with wonder or astonishment; to be struck with surprise.
      - (ii) Wonder *n.* - II. 7. a. The emotion excited by the perception of something novel and unexpected, or inexplicable; astonishment mingled with perplexity or bewildered curiosity.
    - d. When we are perplexed, we are identifying with the sufferings of Jesus.

- iii. Persecute *v.* - 1. To pursue, chase, hunt, drive (with missiles, or with attempts to catch, kill, or injure). *Obs.* 2. To pursue with malignancy or enmity and injurious action; esp. to oppress with pains and penalties for the holding of a belief or opinion held to be injurious or heretical.
  - a. Jesus was persecuted (**Joh 5:16; Joh 15:20**).
  - b. When we are persecuted, we are identifying with the sufferings of Jesus.
- iv. Cast down -
  - a. Jesus was man of sorrows (**Isa 53:3**).
  - b. He experienced extreme heaviness (**Mar 14:33**).
  - c. Heavy *adj.* - VII. Weighed down mentally or physically. 27. a. 'Weighed down' with sorrow or grief; sorrowful, sad, grieved, despondent.
  - d. When we are cast down and depressed, we are identifying with the sufferings of Jesus.
- D. If we suffer physically in our flesh by being whipped, beaten, etc. which leaves scars on our bodies like Paul, we bear in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus (**Gal 6:17**).
  - i. Jesus suffered bodily and was left with scars.
    - a. Jesus' hands, feet, and side (**Luk 24:39; Joh 20:25, 27**) and back (**Isa 50:6; Joh 19:1**) were scarred.
    - b. Jesus' face was scarred.
      - (i) He was struck in the face (**Luk 22:64**), crowned with a crown of thorns (**Mar 15:17**), and had his beard plucked off (**Isa 50:6**) leaving his visage marred more than any man (**Isa 52:14**).
      - (ii) Visage *n.* - 1. The face, the front part of the head, of a person
      - (iii) Marred *ppl.* - c. Disfigured, mutilated.
  - ii. Paul suffered the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for the sake of Christ's church (**Col 1:24**).
  - iii. We, like many, have never resisted unto blood (**Heb 12:4**).
  - iv. But if God ever allows that to happen to us, we will be especially close to the Lord Jesus.
- E. When we suffer for Christ we are made partakers of Christ's sufferings (**1Pe 4:12-14**).
  - i. This draws us close to Jesus having had a similar experience with Him.
  - ii. Jesus said if they persecuted Him they would persecute us (**Joh 15:20**).
  - iii. When we suffer persecution for our faith in Christ we have assurance that we belong to Him (**2Ti 2:12**).

11. being a witness for Jesus through our suffering (2Co 4:11)

- A. When God allows us to suffer for Christ we make the life of Jesus manifest in our suffering.
- B. Manifest *adj.* - 1. a. Clearly revealed to the eye, mind, or judgement; open to view or comprehension; obvious.
- C. When we suffer for Christ, we show the world that Jesus Christ is the Living God.

12. learning obedience

- A. Jesus Christ learned obedience by the things He suffered (**Heb 5:7-8**).
- B. So obedient was Jesus that He obeyed the Father even unto death (**Php 2:8**).
- C. God likewise will make us suffer that we may learn to obey Him.

13. obtaining a blessing in this life and a reward in the next

- A. When we are persecuted for righteousness' sake and for Christ's sake we are blessed now and have a great reward awaiting us in heaven (**Mat 5:10-12**).
- B. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (**Rom 8:18**).
- C. Never forget that God has a purpose in our suffering, and it is ultimately for our good.

IV. Sometimes God *doesn't* deliver His children *even* from death.

1. The Lord does this for the following reasons:

- A. God is glorified in their death (**Joh 21:19**).
- B. In some cases the martyr is spared greater suffering than others must endure (**Isa 57:1**).
- C. The death of His saints is precious in God's sight (**Psa 116:15; Rev 14:13**).

2. Such examples are:

A. Abel

- i. Abel was the first martyr.
- ii. Abel was a righteous prophet (**Mat 23:35; Luk 11:50-51**).
- iii. He made his offering by faith to God (**Heb 11:4**).
- iv. He was murdered for it because of envy (**Gen 4:8 c/w 1Jo 3:12**).
- v. God didn't spare Abel's life even though he was righteous and did nothing to deserve death.

B. Zechariah

- i. Zechariah was the last prophet in the Old Testament to be killed (**Mat 23:35**).
- ii. Zechariah was martyred because he condemned the people of Judah for their idolatry (**2Ch 24:18-22**).
- iii. Like Abel, he did nothing wrong, but God nevertheless allowed him to be martyred.

C. John the Baptist

- i. John the Baptist was the first New Testament martyr.
- ii. He was the greatest prophet to ever live because he was the forerunner of the Messiah (**Luk 7:26-28**).
- iii. He rebuked the king because of his sin and was put in prison for it (**Mat 14:3-4**).
- iv. He was beheaded because of a foolish oath Herod made (**Mat 14:6-10**).
- v. John the Baptist was a great prophet and a faithful Christian who did nothing wrong, but God nevertheless allowed him to be martyred.

D. Jesus Christ

- i. Of course the most important martyr of all is our Lord Jesus Christ.

- ii. He was sinless (**1Pe 2:22**) and had no legitimate crime or offence laid to His charge (**Joh 8:46; Joh 18:38**).
  - iii. Convince v. - II. To convict, prove, demonstrate. 4. To prove (a person) to be guilty, or in the wrong, esp. by judicial procedure; to prove or find guilty; to convict of, rarely for, in (an offence or error); = *convict* v.
  - iv. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners (**Heb 7:26**).
  - v. He always did what pleased God (**Joh 8:29**).
  - vi. He pleaded with God to spare Him the suffering and death that was awaiting Him (**Luk 22:42**).
  - vii. They set up false witnesses against Him (**Mar 14:55-59**).
  - viii. He was beaten (**Mar 15:15**), spit upon (**Mar 15:19**), mocked (**Mar 15:20**), humiliated, and crucified (**Mar 15:25**).
  - ix. Despite doing nothing wrong, nevertheless God allowed Him to be martyred.
- E. Stephen
- i. Stephen was a good man and full of faith (**Act 6:8**).
  - ii. He earnestly defended the faith and his wisdom was not able to be resisted (**Act 6:10**).
  - iii. So his enemies suborned witnesses to falsely testify against him (**Act 6:11-14**).
  - iv. He enraged them with his defense, so they stoned him (**Act 7:54-60**).
  - v. Like the other martyrs before him he did nothing worthy of death, nevertheless God allowed him to be martyred.
- F. James
- i. James was an apostle (**Mat 10:2**) and one of Jesus' three closest friends (**Mat 17:1; etc.**).
  - ii. He was killed by King Herod when he persecuted the church (**Act 12:1-2**).
  - iii. Despite being an apostle and one of Jesus' closest friends and having done nothing wrong, God nevertheless allowed him to be martyred.
- G. Paul
- i. Paul was the chiefest of the apostles (**2Co 11:5; 2Co 12:11; Rom 11:13**).
  - ii. He wrote half of the New Testament (Romans through Hebrews).
  - iii. He made several evangelistic trips all over the known world and started numerous churches.
  - iv. Notwithstanding all of the selfless work that he did for Jesus Christ, God still allowed him to be martyred (**2Ti 4:6**).
- H. Peter
- i. Peter was an apostle (**Mat 10:2**) and one of Jesus' three closest friends (**Mat 17:1; etc.**).
  - ii. He boldly preached the gospel in the face of persecution (**Act 4:18-21; Act 5:28-29; Act 5:40-42**).
  - iii. He was used of God to open the door of faith unto the Gentiles (**Act 15:7**).
  - iv. Despite his great zeal and love for Jesus Christ and the fact that he did nothing to deserve death, God nevertheless allowed him to be martyred (**Joh 21:18-19**).

V. When a nation is in need of judgment, there are four possibilities of how it will be meted out.

1. God will spare the entire nation for the sake of the righteous minority.
  - A. God would have done this for Sodom and Gomorrah if there would have been even ten righteous among them (**Gen 18:24-26, 32**).
    - i. This should give us hope because God might spare this nation for the sake of His few faithful churches within it.
    - ii. This may be the reason that this nation was not destroyed long ago.
  - B. The LORD spared the nation of Judah for a long time for the sake of the remnant (**Isa 1:9**).
  - C. God said that he would pardon the city of Jerusalem if they could find *a man* who executed judgment and sought the truth (**Jer 5:1**).
  - D. Remember this the next time things look hopeless: you could be the reason that God spares our nation, state, city, or town.
  
2. God won't spare the nation for the sake of the righteous.
  - A. This happened prior to the Babylonian captivity when the wrath of the Lord arose until there was no remedy and He destroyed the nation (**2Ch 36:16-17**).
  - B. Judah became so wicked that God said that even if Moses and Samuel would have stood before God and interceded for them their destruction would not be averted (**Jer 15:1-9**).
  - C. When a nation fills up the cup of its iniquity and judgment has been determined upon it, even the repentance of the king will not stop God from destroying that nation (**2Ki 23:24-27**).
  - D. They that are often reprov'd and continue to harden their necks will be destroyed without remedy (**Pro 29:1**).
  
3. God will only spare the righteous minority.
  - A. When a nation is too far gone in backsliding and sin God will only spare the righteous within it when He judges it (**Eze 14:13-14**).
    - i. In such a case, God will not even deliver the children of the righteous, but only the righteous themselves (**Eze 14:15-20**).
    - ii. God has no grandchildren.
  - B. Jeremiah and Ebedmelech were both spared death because of their faithfulness while the rest of the nation were judged (**Jer 39:11-18**).
  - C. Jeremiah's remnant were spared and treated well by the enemy when they were conquered (**Jer 15:11**).
  - D. Those that seek the LORD, righteousness, and meekness may be hid in the day of God's anger (**Zep 2:3**).
    - i. God's children should seek to save themselves from this untoward generation (**Act 2:40**).
    - ii. They can do so by repenting of their sins, getting baptized into the church, and living a godly life (**Act 2:38-42**).
  - E. God shortened the days of the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD for the elects' sakes, otherwise they too would have been killed (**Mat 24:22**).

F. God spared a remnant that escaped the sword of Nebuchadnezzar when He destroyed Jerusalem by him the first time (**Eze 6:8**).

4. God will not spare the nation *nor* the righteous minority.

A. When a nation is ripe for judgment, there are times when God will destroy both the righteous and the wicked in it (**Eze 21:3-5**).

B. Pray that our nation will not get to that point.

VI. An examination of Biblical examples of God either delivering a people for the righteous among them or delivering the righteous alone.

1. Enoch

A. Enoch lived only three generations prior to the great flood in the days of Noah (**Gen 5:21, 25, 28-29**).

B. The earth was corrupt and filled with violence in Noah's day (**Gen 6:11**).

i. The earth likely did not turn wicked overnight.

ii. It was likely an evil place when Enoch walked the earth a few generations prior.

iii. Enoch prophesied against the ungodly which he probably personally witnessed in action (**Jud 1:14-15**).

C. Enoch walked with God (**Gen 5:22**).

D. Because of this God took him to heaven to be with him (**Gen 5:24 c/w Heb 11:5**).

i. Translate *v.* - I. 1. a. *trans.* To bear, convey, or remove from one person, place or condition to another; to transfer, transport; *spec.* to remove a bishop from one see to another, or a bishop's seat from one place to another, and, in Scotland, a minister from one pastoral charge to another; also, to remove the dead body or remains of a saint, or, by extension, a hero or great man, from one place to another. b. To carry or convey to heaven without death; also, in later use, said of the death of the righteous.

ii. He was one of only two people in human history who was taken to heaven without dying first (**2Ki 2:11**).

E. Enoch was delivered from the evil to come that he would have witnessed in his lifetime (**Isa 57:1-2**).

F. There are some lessons we can learn from this.

i. Godly men throughout history have lived in evil times, so we are not experiencing something new (**Ecc 1:9-10**).

ii. Godly men condemn the wickedness around them, not conform to it.

iii. We can and should walk with God, even when living in an evil generation.

iv. Those who walk not in the counsel of ungodly, but delight in the LORD, are blessed (**Psa 1:1-2**).

v. If we walk closely with God like Enoch, God may likewise deliver us from this evil world by taking us out of it early by death.

2. Noah and his family

A. Noah lived in an exceedingly wicked generation (**Gen 6:5, 11-12**).

- B. The cup of the world's iniquity was full, and the LORD had determined to destroy it (**Gen 6:6-7**).
- C. Noah was a just man who found grace in the eyes of the LORD (**Gen 6:8-9**).
- D. Noah obeyed God and built the ark by faith (**Heb 11:7**).
- E. God saved Noah and his seven other family members from death (**2Pe 2:5**).
- F. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
  - i. Truth doesn't lie in numbers.
  - ii. It pays to hold fast to the LORD even if the entire world is against you.
  - iii. Going along with the crowd will bring you destruction.
  - iv. It pays to do what God says, even if it seems like a gargantuan task.
  - v. It would have seemed impossible by human reasoning for God to destroy the earth and the entire human population while simultaneously saving eight faithful people, but God did it.
  - vi. God can easily deliver the faithful while destroying those around them.
  - vii. Take comfort, brethren, because God is well able to do the same for us.

### 3. Abraham

- A. Abraham grew up as an idolater (**Jos 24:2**).
- B. The LORD delivered him from his false religion by calling him out of Ur away from his family where he grew up (**Gen 12:1**).
- C. God called Abraham alone (**Isa 51:2**).
- D. In his case, some of his family came with him and they were delivered from their idolatry as well (**Gen 12:4-5**).
- E. Abraham obeyed God by faith and was blessed for it (**Heb 11:8-10**).
- F. Abraham was not delivered from physical death or suffering, but being delivered from false religion is far more important than those things.
- G. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
  - i. Where you came from is not nearly as important as where you're going and where you will end up.
  - ii. Our past is no excuse for not following God in the present.
  - iii. God often calls people to follow Him as individuals, not as families or groups.
  - iv. God can use one faithful man to save his family from false religion.
  - v. God will richly bless those who will forsake all and follow Him (**Mar 10:28-30**).
  - vi. Never forget how incredibly blessed you are to have been delivered from the lies and bondage of false religion.

### 4. Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of Lot

- A. When Abraham and Lot decided to part company, Lot went to live in Sodom (**Gen 13:8-13**).
- B. Sodom and Gomorrah went to war with the nations who had previously subjugated them and were spoiled by them (**Gen 14:8-11**).
- C. Lot was also taken captive (**Gen 14:12**).
- D. Lot was a just man who was vexed by the sinners of Sodom (**2Pe 2:7-8**).



- E. When Abraham heard that Lot was captured he armed his 318 trained servants and smote the kings that had taken him captive and delivered him and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah from them (**Gen 14:13-16**).
- F. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
  - i. God will sometimes deliver a wicked nation for the sake of a righteous man among them.
  - ii. Remember that you could be that righteous person for whose sake the LORD could deliver our wicked nation.
  - iii. God sometimes decides to deliver His disobedient children from trouble.
  - iv. But God does not always do so, so never presume on the mercy of God (**Rom 3:8**).

## 5. Lot

- A. After Sodom and Gomorrah were delivered from their oppressors by Abraham they continued in their wicked ways, and God was ready to destroy them (**Gen 18:20-22**).
- B. This is an example of the wicked being shown favor but yet not repenting (**Isa 26:10**).
- C. Abraham bargained with God and got Him to agree to spare the cities if there were but ten righteous within them (**Gen 18:23-32**).
- D. There were not ten righteous people in those cities because God did end up destroying them (**Gen 19:24-25**).
- E. Lot was a righteous man who made poor decisions and was vexed by the wicked whom he chose to live near (**2Pe 2:7-8**).
- F. God delivered Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters (**Gen 19:15-16**).
- G. This is a case of only the righteous and those around him being delivered from destruction, but not the community or nation as a whole.
- H. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
  - i. God would have delivered Lot's other daughters and sons in law if they would have heeded the warning (**Gen 19:12-14**).
    - a. Failure to heed God's warnings which He gives through His messengers can result in destruction.
    - b. God may deliver one of your family members, but not you if you disregard His admonitions.
    - c. Don't assume that you will be delivered from calamity just because your family member (husband, wife, father, mother, etc.) is obedient to God (or somewhat obedient in the case of Lot).
  - ii. The LORD was merciful to Lot and dragged him out of the city before He destroyed it (**Gen 19:15-16**).
    - a. God is not always so merciful, so don't ever assume that if you delay to obey that God will miraculously save you.
    - b. Don't assume that because Lot was a pathetic follower of God, but was nevertheless delivered, that you will be too.
    - c. God rewards those that diligently seek Him (**Heb 11:6**), so if you want assurance of God's deliverance you should serve God fervently.

## 6. Jacob

### A. Jacob was delivered from Esau.

- i. Jacob had swindled Esau out of his birthright (**Gen 25:29-34**) and his blessing (**Gen 27:35**).
- ii. Esau hated him for it and vowed to kill him (**Gen 27:41**).
- iii. Jacob fled for his life, and after being away for many years he decided to go back to his home land.
- iv. He sent messengers to Esau telling him he was coming back and was seeking grace in his sight (**Gen 32:3-5**).
- v. He was told that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men which greatly frightened Jacob (**Gen 32:6-7**).
- vi. Jacob made preparations to protect his family from Esau (**Gen 32:7-8**), and then he prayed to God for deliverance from Esau, reminding God of His promises (**Gen 32:9-12**).
- vii. When he met Esau, the Lord softened Esau's heart, and he received Jacob in peace (**Gen 33:1-5**).
- viii. "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." (**Pro 16:7**)
- ix. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
  - a. Do what God tells us to do, even when it looks like danger might lie ahead.
  - b. Press on, and never turn back from doing what God has commanded because of fear.
  - c. Make preparations to limit the harm or loss that we might incur in a battle.
  - d. Remind God of His promises, and humbly ask Him to deliver us according to them.
  - e. Humble ourselves when facing an enemy more far more powerful than ourselves and seek peace if doing so doesn't compromise obedience to God (**Luk 14:31-32**).

### B. Jacob and his family were saved from dying in the great famine.

- i. Near the end of Jacob's life a terrible seven year famine afflicted the land (**Gen 41:54**).
- ii. Jacob and his family got food from Egypt (**Gen 42:1-3**) and then later moved down into Egypt to be sustained there during the famine (**Gen 45:9-11**).
- iii. In order to experience this great deliverance (**Gen 45:7**), Jacob had to first undergo tribulation (**Rom 5:3-4**).
  - a. Jacob's sons sold their brother Joseph, his favored son (**Gen 37:3**), into slavery in Egypt because they hated him (**Gen 37:4 c/w Gen 37:28**).
  - b. They made Jacob believe that Joseph had been killed (**Gen 37:31-33**).
  - c. Jacob had to suffer the terrible pain of thinking that Joseph was dead for years (**Gen 37:34-35**).

- d. Joseph ended up becoming the Prime Minister of Egypt and was put in charge of the food program during which he laid up food to bring them through the famine (**Gen 41:41, 46-49**).
- iv. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
  - a. God will often allow us to suffer great affliction after having delivered us from trouble in the past.
  - b. The elderly (even those who are godly) are not exempt from suffering calamities in life, so if you do someday, know that you are not alone.
  - c. Sometimes our present suffering is the means by which God will deliver us from greater suffering later.

## 7. Joseph

- A. Joseph was delivered from being killed by his brethren.
  - i. As we saw in the previous section, Joseph's brethren conspired to kill him because they envied him (**Gen 37:11, 17-20**).
  - ii. They devised a wicked way, but the Lord directed the thoughts of Ruben who suggested that they throw him into a pit instead of killing him (**Gen 37:21-22 c/w Pro 16:9**).
  - iii. The Lord put it in Judah's heart (**Pro 21:1**) to sell Joseph instead of killing him (**Gen 37:26-27**).
  - iv. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
    - a. Our greatest foes will often be of our own household (**Mat 10:36**).
    - b. God can change the hearts and minds of our enemies in order to deliver us.
    - c. Our deliverance may not come in the form that we had hoped for.
    - d. If we remain faithful, better days lie ahead, which the rest of Joseph's story shows.
- B. Joseph was delivered from prison.
  - i. While overseer of Potiphar's house, Joseph was cast into prison because he was falsely accused of attempted rape (**Gen 39:17-20**).
  - ii. The Lord was with Joseph in prison and put him in charge of the inmates (**Gen 39:21-23**).
  - iii. Joseph was in prison for at least two years (**Gen 41:1**).
  - iv. God gave Joseph the power to interpret dreams which ended up being his ticket to be released from prison to become the Prime Minister of Egypt (**Gen 41:9-16, 37-41**).
  - v. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
    - a. We will sometimes suffer for doing righteousness and being falsely accused.
    - b. If we serve God faithfully in bad circumstances, God will be with us and reward us, making the unfortunate situation more easy to bear.
    - c. Sometimes God will let us suffer patiently for a long time before delivering us.

- d. If we are diligent in our business, even while suffering in prison, God will take notice and may deliver us out of it to serve in high places (**Pro 22:29**).

## 8. Moses

### A. Moses was delivered from death as a baby.

- i. After the death of Joseph the children of Israel were afflicted by the Egyptians, which only caused them to multiply (**Exo 1:12**).
- ii. Note: the church always grows under persecution.
- iii. To reduce the population the king of Egypt commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill all the baby boys that were born (**Exo 1:15-16**).
  - a. Note: abortion, ethnic cleansing, and population control are not new concepts.
  - b. The midwives disobeyed the order, saved the baby boys' lives, and then righteously lied about it, for which God blessed them (**Exo 1:17-21**).
    - (i) This was the first act that God did to deliver Moses from death before he was born.
    - (ii) Remember that God is well able to deliver us even when we are in a completely helpless condition.
- iv. Pharaoh then charged the people to cast every son that was born into the river (**Exo 1:22**).
  - a. Moses' mother disobeyed the wicked order of Pharaoh and hid Moses for three months (**Exo 2:1-2**).
  - b. When she could hide him no longer, she made an ark, placed him in it, and put it in the water near the bank of the river, and his sister watched to see what would happen (**Exo 2:3-4**).
  - c. Pharaoh's daughter found baby Moses in the ark, knew he was the son of one of the Hebrews, and had compassion on him (**Exo 2:5-6**).
  - d. Moses' sister asked her if she wanted her to go find him a Hebrew wet nurse, which she agreed to; so she went and got their mother (**Exo 2:7-8**).
  - e. Pharaoh's daughter paid Moses' mother to nurse him until he was weaned at which time he became the son of Pharaoh's daughter (**Exo 2:9-10**).
- v. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
  - a. God can use women who are weaker vessels to deliver his children from death.
  - b. God uses people who are brave enough to defy ungodly government laws to save life and blesses them for it.
  - c. When we are helpless and our helpers are unable to help us any further and the situation looks impossible, God can use an unlikely person to deliver us.
  - d. God can use people who are near the highest places of government to deliver us.

- e. God sometimes allows us to undergo great danger and deliverance because He has special plans to use us in the future.
- B. Moses was also delivered from death after he killed an Egyptian.
  - i. After Moses' was grown he went out to see his Hebrew brethren and saw an Egyptian attacking a Hebrew, whom he defended, killing the Egyptian (**Exo 2:11-12 c/w Act 7:23-24**).
  - ii. Word got out, and Pharaoh sought to kill Moses, but he escaped to the land of Midian (**Exo 2:13-15**).
  - iii. This is the second time that God delivered Moses from death.
  - iv. When he got to Midian, God providentially provided him with a wife and family (**Exo 2:16-22**).
  - v. Moses lived in Midian until God called him to go back to Egypt to lead His people out of Egypt to the promised land.
  - vi. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
    - a. Sometimes God will deliver us by having us flee.
    - b. Even if the king of the most powerful empire in the world tries to kill you, if God has plans for your life, He will deliver you from him.
    - c. God sometimes will use the heathen to give his people a place of refuge until He is ready to use them for great things.

## 9. Israel from Egypt

- A. The Israelites were slaves working under hard bondage, and they cried unto the Lord for deliverance (**Exo 2:23**).
- B. God heard their cry and had mercy on them because of His covenant He made with their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (**Exo 2:24-25**).
- C. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and told him He would send him to Pharaoh to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt (**Exo 3:10**).
  - i. Remember that Egypt was the most powerful empire in the world, and Pharaoh was its king.
  - ii. The children of Israel were Pharaoh's slaves.
  - iii. Escaping their bondage in Egypt was humanly impossible.
  - iv. Their situation seemed as helpless as could be.
- D. Nevertheless, God promised to smite Egypt with His wonders and bring Israel out with great wealth (**Exo 3:20-22**).
- E. After destroying Egypt with ten plagues, the Lord brought out Israel with a mighty arm and with silver and gold in their hands (**Act 7:36; Act 13:17; Exo 12:35-36**).
- F. Just as God had promised, He brought them out with silver and gold in their possession (**Psa 105:37-38**).
- G. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
  - i. Even when we are weak, God can deliver us.
  - ii. When our situation seems impossible, God is still able to deliver us.
  - iii. God can deliver his people who are living under the most oppressive government tyranny.
  - iv. Powerful governments and kings are no match for God.
  - v. God can provide wealth and sustenance to those who have nothing.