

## A PROMISE OF SUFFERING

*Scripture Reading: Philippians 1:29*

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." What a promise! Many today intimate that every kind of suffering comes about because we are out of the path of the will of God. True enough that we bring many of our troubles on ourselves. However, the very opposite may be the case. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12). Peter has an admonition which is applicable to this subject. "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (I Peter 4:19). It is not presumed in the Word that the salvation which we have by God's grace, brings with it total relief from pain, sickness, disease, trial and puts us on a rose-strewn path. This is the picture which is often painted, but the real world situation does not bear it out. Also the Scriptural viewpoint is a totally different one.

When we are saved by grace, our sins are forgiven; we are in the hands of God; and no one or no thing is able to pluck us out of His hand (Romans 8:38, 39). Nevertheless, we still live in this sin-struck, Godless world and will face suffering and persecution. We are to commit this to our faithful God. We are not to retreat when pressure and trial comes but are to commit all to Him "in well doing." Here is the best tonic for a sufferer. Do what you can well, within the limits of the circumstances, and soon you will forget about your problems. Idleness turns us to self-pity. Well-doing is the best tonic no matter how dark the shadows through which we pass. We can then commit our safe-keeping to our faithful Creator.

*John N. Baker*

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## A PROMISE OF VICTORY

*Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 10:13*

We often think our situation is unique and that we have unusual temptations. Our text shoots that theory full of holes. Let us not blame God for our temptations, however. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (James 1:13-14). Because of our old Adamic nature, we are tempted by our own lusts. This is why temptations are "common to man," and we are all tempted alike because we are all alike—sinners.

God may not take away our temptations; but He will make the proper provisions, so we can stand against them, that we "might be able to bear it." He never promises to remove temptations but promises us victory over temptations. He alone is the great Enabler in every situation. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Man is not faithful, but God is always faithful. We can depend upon Him in all situations of life. David realized this when he said, "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds" (Psalms 36:5). Our great God not only brings us through temptations, but uses them to test us and build character within us. How this should teach us to rely totally upon Him!

We are so apt to become frustrated in time of temptation and feel defeated. However, if we will turn our cares over to God and depend upon Him, being the faithful God that He is, He will see us through every trial and temptation.

*John N. Baker*

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## THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE

*Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1:13*

One of the most comforting verses of Scripture, in Paul's letters, concerning eternal security is Ephesians 1:13. We find that the Holy Spirit of promise is Himself the seal.

So far as our salvation is concerned, it is a finished transaction. It also means He actually owns us. We have become His purchased possession. "We are bought with a price."

We also rejoice to see that in Ephesians 1:13, it should read that we were sealed upon believing. The moment we were saved, we were sealed until the day of redemption. We were translated out of the darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God's love (Colossians 1:13). No one can take us out of the Body of Christ. We have the guarantee and pledge of the Spirit that He will perform His sealing until the day of redemption, and that is when we go in the Rapture of the Church, to meet the Lord in the air. No wonder we have confidence in our salvation, as Paul says in Romans 8. Saved and sealed! All in the same moment—the moment we believed!

There is "nothing that can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." It also was the Holy Spirit Who baptized us into the one Body of Christ. Thanks be unto God for His sure promise of eternal security (Ephesians 4:30). He abideth faithful. Whether we wake, or whether we sleep, we are the Lord's!

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## A BLESSED PROMISE

*Scripture Reading: Philippians 4:6-7*

Our text states, "Be careful for nothing." The idea is, be full of care or anxious about nothing which this present evil world puts in our path. Anxiety has almost become the American way of life. We become anxious about our job, our bills, our taxes, our children, our world political situation, etc. We should have concern about these life involvements but should not be full of anguish and worry about them.

The second part of verse 6 provides God's alternative to anxiety: "But in *every thing* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." In other words, turn all these anxieties over to God, knowing full well that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). Even though we do not know how we are to pray about our concerns (Romans 8:26), we can make our concerns known to God and leave them to Him to work out in our behalf.

If we truly and sincerely leave our cares with Him, we will experience the "peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Turning our cares, concerns and anxieties over to God involves another God-given trait—*patience*. Having turned all over to Him, we must patiently wait upon God to work things out in His way and in His time. We can do this with confidence having the assurance of I Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care [anxiety] upon Him; for He careth for you."

*John N. Baker*

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**CHRIST CONFIRMED THE PROMISES***Scripture Reading: Romans 15:8*

Many see Christ as the beginner of a new order when He appeared. John walked out of the wilderness after 400 silent years to announce that the Kingdom of Heaven was ready to be set up on this earth. Then Christ the King appeared as proof that God was indeed ready to establish Heaven on earth in keeping with all the promises to David of a throne, to Abraham of a progeny, and to others of blessing to the whole earth through His people being the head and not the tail, by keeping the Commandments of God (Deuteronomy 28:10-13).

Our Lord appeared to announce God's being ready to set up the long-promised Heaven-on-earth...nothing new here. Israel was rebellious and crucified the King...nothing new here. They killed the Twelve after our Lord returned to Heaven, proving they did not want His rule over them... nothing new here.

Paul appears in the middle of the Acts to announce he had been sent to the Nations (Gentiles)...Something NEW here! Until Paul, God always had a door open to the non-Jew (Proselyte)...the back door. Now God announces that the front door of heaven is open to Jew and non-Jew on the same basis. Guilty, hell-deserving sinners can now come by faith in the One who paid for their redemption.

Our Lord came to confirm centuries-old and valid promises, but the Acts records Israel's fall to where the non-Jew always was...something NEW!

*Harold Steinbron**Notes:***ISRAEL'S PROMISES***Scripture Reading: Romans 9:4*

A promise is a guarantee of something future. When God promises, His Throne stands behind any statement as to future events. A guarantee is only as good as the word of the one uttering the promise. When God promises, forgetfulness or the press of duties that require His attention will not hinder His keeping what has been spoken. He does not make idle threats, nor does He utter what He has no intention of carrying out.

How amazing that He has recorded so many of His promises for all mankind and all angels and demons to see and keep track of! If only one insignificant one were to fail, a charge of lying could be justly leveled at the One who said, "I am the Truth." No wonder God levels the charge of making Him a liar at those who do not believe what He has written. How lightly men call each other liars, and justly so; but to charge God with lying, how unthinkable!

Some "spiritualize" God's promises to Israel, of a perfect and peaceful earth with perfect climate and peaceful animal and human relations. Isaiah 65 gives such promises, and it is wonderful just to read it because it contrasts with our present experience.

We must divide between Israel's promises of earthly blessing and our promises of blessings in the Heavens with Christ, or else we make both to mean nothing, and God to be a LIAR! May it never be!

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