

"Trials From The Lord"

Psalm 105:19 *Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him.*

Introduction: This verse in Psalm 105 is referring to Joseph and his ordeal in Egypt. We can remember from the account in Genesis that he had dreams of his brothers bowing down in submission to him (Genesis 37). His brothers, jealous of his place in his fathers heart, sold him to Ishmaelite traders who sold him in Egypt. If we look at all of the things that happened to him while he was there, we can see that it looked as if he was somehow being punished by God for some wrong he had done.

This is a commonly held belief, that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people. This was what Job's three friends insisted was the cause of his hardship, they believed he was guilty of some unrepented of sin. This belief is not supported in Scripture. Although God speaks of the punishment of the wicked, He also promises hardship to His followers as well. Although some hardship is of the sort we can understand, persecution by evil men for instance, some hardship is of a more perplexing nature. We sometimes seem to suffer even though we are doing our very best to serve God. Sometimes it seems that He is treating us with contempt instead of love. Often we find ourselves feeling alone when we need God the most.

The following is an exposition on this one small verse in the Psalms. I have chosen to present it because I feel this is a topic that many Christians can relate very closely to.

Who hasn't at times felt that they were being subjected to something they didn't deserve, while noticing that others who seem less committed to God get by with an easier, more prosperous path. There is much to digest in this reading. The language is more archaic than many are used to, but patience will have it's reward. So if you have ever suffered while doing the right thing, look here for some wisdom as to why this can happen, and comforted by that wisdom find the strength to endure it.

Treasury of David Exposition by Charles Hadden Spurgeon

Ver 19.-- Until the time that his word came.

God has his times, and his children must wait till his "until" is fulfilled. Joseph was tried as in a furnace, until the Lord's assaying work was fully accomplished. The word of the chief butler was nothing, he had to wait until God's word came, and meanwhile the word of the Lord tried him. He believed the promise, but his faith was sorely exercised.

A delayed blessing tests men, and proves their metal, whether their faith is of a precious kind which can endure the fire. Of many a choice promise we may say with Daniel "the thing was true, but the time appointed was long." If the vision tarry it is good to wait for it with patience. There is a trying word and a delivering word, and we must bear the one till the other comes to us.

How meekly Joseph endured his afflictions, and with what fortitude he looked forward to the clearing of his slandered character we may readily imagine: it will be better still if under similar trials we are able to imitate him, and come forth from the furnace as thoroughly purified as he was, and as well prepared to bear the yet harder ordeal of honor and power. *Charles Spurgeon*

Explanatory Notes And Quaint Sayings

Ver 19--. Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him.

This verse forms the key to the whole meaning of Joseph's mysterious trial, and at the same time illustrates a deep mystery in the spiritual life of man. By "the word of the Lord" that "tried him," the psalmist evidently refers to the dreams of his future destiny which were sent to Joseph from God; and in saying that they tried him "until his word came," he evidently means that his faith in those promises was tested by his long imprisonment, until the day of his deliverance dawned. Consider for a moment his position, and you will see the purpose of that trial. A youth educated amidst all the quiet simplicity of the early patriarchal life, he was haunted by dream visions of a mighty destiny. Those visions were mysteriously foretelling his government in Egypt, and the blessings, which his wise and just rule would confer on the land; but while unable to comprehend them, he yet believed that they were voices of the future, and promises of God.

But the quietude of that shepherd life was not the preparation for the fulfillment of his promised destiny. The

education that would form the man who could withstand, firmly, the temptations of Egyptian life with its cities and civilization; the education that would form the ruler whose clear eye should judge between the good and the evil, and discern the course of safety in the hour of the nation's peril—all this was not to be gained under the shadow of his father's tent; it must come through trial, and through trial arising from the very promise of God in which he believed. Hence, a great and startling change crossed his life, that seemed to forbid the fulfillment of that dream promise, and tempted him to doubt its truth.

Sold into Egypt as a slave, cast into prison through his fidelity to God, the word of the Lord most powerfully tried his soul. In the gloom of that imprisonment it was most hard to believe in God's faithfulness, when his affliction had risen from his obedience; and most hard to keep the promise clearly before him, when his mighty trouble would perpetually tempt him to regard it as an idle dream.

But through his temptation, he gained the strong trust which the pomp and glory of the Egyptian court would have no power to destroy; and when the word of deliverance came, the man came forth, strong through trial, to fulfill his glorious destiny of ruling Egypt in the name of God, and securing for it the blessings of heaven. Thus his trial by the word of the Lord—his temptation to doubt its truth—was a divine discipline preparing him for the fulfillment of the promise. And looking at it in this aspect, this verse presents us with a deep spiritual truth: The promises of God try man, that through the trial he may be prepared for their fulfillment. Our subject then is this: The trial of man by the promises of God.

This verse suggests three aspects of that trial.

1. God's promises must try man. Every promise of the Lord is of necessity a trial. Now, this necessity arises from two sources; from man's secret unbelief, and from God's purposes of discipline.

A. God's word must try man by revealing his secret unbelief.

We never know our want of faith till some glorious promise rouses the soul into the attitude of belief; then the coldness and unfaithfulness of the heart are lighted up by that flash of belief, and the promise is a trial.

Thus Paul with his profound insight into the facts of spiritual experience, says, "The word of the Lord is sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

In illustration of this we may observe that many of the promises of the Lord come to us, as they came to Joseph, like dream visions of the future. Visions come to the Christian soul, as grand and wonderful as those which came to the Hebrew youth of old; and they too, are prophecies of what we are destined to be. There comes a time when the voice of God is more clearly heard, and the great inheritance revealed. No dream of the night—no spirit of the dead—has visited us; but like a spirit some truth of God has entered the soul's presence chamber and summoned it to noble aspiration and Christ like endeavor. Then the earnest of the future gleams on life's horizon.

The Sabbath of eternity, with all its balm and music, seems near, and rapt with its glory, we are roused to all surrendering zeal.

But I appeal to your experience whether it is not true that such revelations of the promise rapidly become times of trial. Then the mocking voice of unbelief tells us that the aspiration is vain. The cold crosscurrents of indifference chill the fiery impulses of the heart. We are in prison like Joseph, by no material bars indeed, but by the invisible bonds of unbelief; and we find it most hard to keep the promise clear and bright, while tempted to believe that our aspirations were merely idle dreams. And there is that arousing, by the promise, of the soul's hidden unbelief, which makes every promise an inevitable trial.

B. Again: God causes his promises to try our nature that he may accomplish his own purposes of discipline.

It is a law of our nature that no belief in any unseen thing can ever pass into the active form of strong endeavor to attain it, until we are tempted to disbelieve it.

Thus the great idea of an undiscovered land across the wastes of the Atlantic smote the soul of Columbus; but it remained a dreamy faith until by opposition and ridicule he was tempted to regard it as a dream, and then it became heroic endeavor, and the land was found.

Thus with all men of genius. They stand in front of their age, with thoughts, which the world can not understand; but these thoughts are dreams until suffering, and scorn try the men, and then they are awakened into effort to realize them.

Hence God leads us into circumstances in which we are tempted to doubt his promises, that by temptation he may discipline faith into power. There is a wilderness of temptation in every life, and like Christ, we are often led into it, from the solemn hour when we heard the voice, "Thou art my son;" but like Christ, we come forth strong, through the long, silent wrestling with temptation, to do our Father's will.

2. God sends the Hour of Deliverance: "until the time that his word came." When the discipline was

perfected, Joseph came forth ready for his mission. But our deliverance does not always come in this way. Take from the Bible histories the four great methods by which God sends deliverance.

A. Sometimes by death.

Thus with Elijah weariness, loneliness, failure, had wrung from by death the strong man to cry, "Take away my life for I am not better than my fathers." The temptation was becoming to strong, and God sent deliverance in the chariot of fire.

B. Sometimes by transforming the height of trial into the height of blessing.

The three youths in Babylon had clenched their nerves for the climax of agony, when the fire became a Paradise. So, now, God makes the climax of trial the herald of spiritual blessedness. By suffering we are loosened from the bonds of time and sense; there is one near to us like the Son of God; and deliverance has come.

C. Sometimes by the glance of love on the falling soul.

Thus with Peter. The temptation was mastering him; one glance of that eye, and he went out weeping and delivered.

D. Sometimes by continuing the trial, but increasing the power to endure it.

Thus with Paul. After the vision of the third heaven came "the thorn in the flesh," The temptation made him cry thrice to God; the trial remained, but here was the deliverance "my grace is sufficient for thee." The suffering lost none of its pressure, but he learned to glory in infirmity; and then came his delivering hour.

3. God makes the Trial by Promise fulfill the Promise itself. In Joseph the temptation to doubt the word of God silently meetened him for its fulfillment So with us all. We hope not for an Egyptian kingdom, our dream vision is of a heavenly inheritance, and the palace of a heavenly King.

But every temptation resisted, every mocking voice of doubt overcome, is an aid upwards and onwards.

Trials, sufferings, struggles, are angels arraying the souls in white robes of the heavenly world, and crowning it with the crown that fadeth not away. And when the end comes, then it will be seen that the long dreary endeavor to hold fast the dream promise—the firm resolute "no" to the temptation to disbelieve, are all more than recompensed with "the exceeding and eternal weight of glory." *Edward Zuscombe, in "Sermons preached at Kings Lynn" 1867.*

Ver 19--The word of the Lord tried him. As we try God's word, so God's word tries us; and happy if, when we are tried, we come forth as gold; and the trial of our faith proves more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire.-- *William Jay.*

Ver 19-- Tried him. I doubt not that Joseph's brethren were humbled; yet Joseph may be more, he must be cast into the ditch, and into prison, and the iron must enter not only into his legs, but into his soul. He must be more afflicted in spirit, because he had greater work to do for God, and was to be raised up higher than the rest, and therefore did need the more ballast. *Thomas Shepard, in "The Sound Believer" 1649.*

Ver 19-- Tried-(tsaraph-Hebrew), assayed;

Psa 7:6 "Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment thou has commanded."

Psa 17:3 "Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress."

Psa 18:30 "As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler(defender) to all that trust in him."

He came out of the ordeal, as gold from the fining pot, more pure and lustrous. *William Kay*

Ver 19-- Tried him. "Made him lord of his house." Joseph's feet were hurt in irons, to fit him more delicately in the King's Palace at Zoan; and when the Lord's time was come, by the same stairs which winded him down into the dungeon he climbs up into the next chariot to Pharaoh's. Few can bear great and sudden mercies without pride and wantonness, till they are hampered and humbled to carry it moderately. *Samuel Lee in "The Triumph of Mercy in the Chariot of Praise" 1677.*

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Ver 19—The duration of our troubles, the testing power of the promise, the comfortable issue which is secured to us.

Conclusion: As we can now see, men through the ages have stopped at this verse and contemplated the weight

of it's truth. The insight that many have gained over their own trials are left here for us now to share in. The blessing of trial, the necessity of it is discussed often in Scripture. The Psalms themselves dwell heavily upon this subject of trial. The New Testament is full of promises of struggle and difficulty as well. We know that God allows us to be tempted in order to refine us, we are tempered like steel through what we endure. We need to go through the fire now, if we hope to escape it later.

I hope that you have received a blessing from this lesson. I hope it has awakened in you a thirst for knowledge that only God's Word can fulfill. When we think about the Word of God being living and active, we understand that we get what we need from it. In times of prosperity, it is hard to relate to what is taught here, it loses its edge. But in times of trial, we find refuge in verses such as this one...it offers hope when we most desperately need hope. God's Word is alive in this way, it is no ordinary book. I hope that we can remember to stop at this verse in Psalm 105, and remember the importance of what this one little verse has to teach us. I hope we can learn to see each and every verse in the Bible as a little gem in a great big crown. Instead of rushing through them



our way to someplace else, let us take our time as we read and enjoy the Word of God.