

"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

The Suffering of the Saints

Part 1

We received this response to our posting on [Joseph Prince](#):

I have read the review you have posted about Joseph Prince. Just for the record, I am a relatively new believer, recently came out of the Roman Catholic Church, and am very much in tune with the Holy Spirit. I have had the Spirit lead me in the interpretation of the Word of God.

Now, God is a good God. He does not want His people to Suffer. I have been studying the Bible and the preachings of pastors for a very long time. One thing I have learned is this- Human understanding is different from divine understanding. many times, I have scorned a particular interpretation of the word, but the spirit tells me to look again, and reveals a lot of things.

All Joseph Prince teaches is that as Christians, we need to look to God for everything in every situation in our lives. That is it. He even said in one of his sermons that he was only a messenger, but not God himself, that people need to be more in tune with God. Now, How is that being an antichrist?

Plus, if how else is He going to get money if not by the work he is doing for God? Would you be happier if he was a pauper? And his name is prince because God said, as believers, we are a Holy priesthood. Are you trying to make him contradict God by calling himself a pauper?

I don't really mind what you are saying, because the true believer in Jesus is not swayed by such reviews, but consider yourselves. God advises us not to judge for certain reasons. From your human judgement, and obviously without complete research, you have judged him evil. But what if he is actually correct? How will God feel? I watch the way I treat, and the way I talk to, believers, wether I believe their doctrine or not because of 2 reasons

- 1) They might be right from God's view, in which case I will consult God about it.
- 2) If they happened to be right, I am scourging God's body/ Christ's body
- 3) If they are wrong, it is not their fault because the Bible teaches that all men are predisposed to be evil without God
- 4) Every true believer will be drawn to God anyway, unless God is so weak that He cannot call on the people He loves, which He is not.

I pray the Spirit leads you to stop what you are doing before it is too late for your own good. May God bless you and be with you.

Victor and Paul's reply:

“For His anger is only a moment; in His favor is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning” (Psalms 30:5 MKJV).

Jennifer,

Thank God He has delivered you from the Roman Catholic Church, a great step in the right direction! If you've read [my testimony](#) and/or [Theo-autobiography](#), you'll find the Lord delivered me out of that organization in 1973 and out of its mysterious and powerful spiritual clutches in 1977 when I thought I had been entirely through with her. What a surprise! You may not be as un-Catholic as you surmise. Read about it at this link and what follows:

[A Strange Occurrence Leading To... Deliverance - Wow!](#)

At heart, you're likely still Catholic, unless having experienced deliverance such as mine.

Yes, God is a good God. Have we said otherwise? Does any Christian say otherwise? You also say, “[He does not want His people to Suffer.](#)”

You're right if you say God doesn't want His people to suffer **for wrongdoing**:

“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or a meddler in the affairs of others” (1 Peter 4:15 MKJV).

However, you're so wrong if you **categorically** believe He doesn't want His people to suffer. It appears you've been misled by the false teacher of prosperity you defend with misguided devotion. Here's what the Scriptures declare about the sufferings of the saints:

“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go! For this one is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My Name before nations and kings and the sons of Israel. **For I will show him what great things he must suffer for My Name's sake**’” (Acts 9:15-16 MKJV).

That was written of the apostle Paul, who wrote in later years:

2 Corinthians 1:5-7 MKJV

(5) For as **the sufferings of Christ abound in us**, so our consolation also abounds by Christ.

(6) And if we are troubled, it is for your consolation and salvation, being worked out in the endurance of the same sufferings which we also suffer; if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

(7) And our hope of you is certain, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also of the consolation.

“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and **the fellowship of His sufferings**, being made conformable to His death” (Philippians 3:10 MKJV).

“Who now **rejoice in my sufferings** on your behalf, and I **fill up the things lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh**, on behalf of His Body, which is the Church” (Colossians 1:24 MKJV).

A testimony from another apostle:

1 Peter 4:12-14 MKJV

(12) Beloved, do not be astonished at the fiery trial which is to try you, as though a strange thing happened to you,

(13) but **rejoice according as you are partakers of Christ's suffering**, so that when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy.

(14) **If you are reviled for the Name of Christ, you are blessed**, because the Spirit of God and of glory rests on you. Truly according to them, He is blasphemed, but according to you He is glorified.

And another:

“My brothers, take the prophets who have spoken in the Name of the Lord **for an example of suffering ill** and of patience. Behold, we count blessed those who endure. You have heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is full of pity and of tender mercy” (James 5:10-11 MKJV).

So doesn't a good God want His people to suffer? Here's what He says about those He receives:

Hebrews 12:5-8 MKJV

(5) And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons, “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked by Him;

(6) for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and He scourges every son whom He receives.”

(7) If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father does not chasten?

(8) But if you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then you are bastards and not sons.

Do scourging and chastisement cause suffering? Of course they do. Is any son or daughter of God exempt? No, He scourges **every** child He receives. Who are those who refuse or don't believe in believers suffering, Jennifer? Look at verse 8 again.

Don't you think Noah and his family suffered? Couldn't God have saved them another way?

Didn't the Lord want Jacob to suffer? Jacob suffered much in many ways. By his suffering, his name was changed to Israel, after whom is named the nation.

And where was Israel formed as a nation, if not in the iron furnace of affliction?

“And He said to Abram, ‘You must surely know that your seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs, and shall serve them. And they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also I will judge that nation whom they shall serve. And afterward they shall come out with great substance’” (Genesis 15:13-14 MKJV).

“Behold, I have refined you, but not with silver; I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction” (Isaiah 48:10 MKJV).

“But the LORD has taken you and brought you out from the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be to Him a people of inheritance, as you are today” (Deuteronomy 4:20 MKJV).

The Lord was the One Who directed Jacob to go down to Egypt and even told him the purpose:

Genesis 46:2-4 MKJV

(2) And God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, “Jacob, Jacob!” And he said, “Here I am.”

(3) And He said, “I am God, the God of your fathers. Do not fear to go down into Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation.

(4) I will go down with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again. And Joseph shall put his hand on your eyes.”

Didn't Joseph (Jacob's son) have to suffer in preparation for his calling? Couldn't God have given him an easier way?

What about Abraham, Isaac, and all the prophets, including John the Immerser?

Didn't the Lord want Job to suffer, even though he was perfect, upright, eschewed evil, and feared God? Was it not God Who removed his safety hedge? How can you say God doesn't want His people to suffer? Read Job 1 and 2; read the whole book and tell us what you find. If you're honest, you'll have to admit that your doctrine is directly from the pit of Hell, a doctrine of devils.

Yes, God is a good God indeed, but your concept of “good” isn't God's. It is Joseph Prince's anti-Christ concept. The true saints of God are formed in a fiery furnace of affliction; they are made into God's image through suffering, Jennifer - not something Joseph Prince teaches at all. Suffering and persecution are a necessary part of God's plan.

You follow a clever and charismatic deceiver disguised as a messenger of God, deceitfully coming in the Name of Jesus Christ. You've been duped by one who takes great pride in himself, glorifying himself before all and flaunting his earthly success at the expense of all that is good, godly, holy, and true.

Do you think you won't suffer when baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire?

“For it became Him, for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to perfect the Captain of their salvation through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:10 MKJV).

God is a consuming fire, the Bible declares in Hebrews.

As with the Head, so with His Body, His people, His Church:

1 Peter 4:16-19 MKJV

(16) But if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God because of this.

(17) **For the time has come for the judgment to begin from the house of God.** And if it first begins from us, what will be the end of those disobeying the Gospel of God?

(18) And if the righteous one is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

(19) Therefore let those who **suffer according to the will of God** commit their souls in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator.

What do you think martyrdom is all about? Wine and roses? “Princely” garments and mansions? The Devil persecuting the saints against God’s will? You have it all wrong, Jennifer. Wake up to God’s foreordained reality.

“Yea, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted [you will suffer]” (2 Timothy 3:12 MKJV).

Are you suffering persecution? Is it God’s will that we should live godly in Christ Jesus? Then it’s His will that we should suffer persecution, though not according to your god, Joseph Prince.

You naively write, “[Joseph Prince] even said in one of his sermons that he was only a messenger, but not God himself...”

Really? And you believe him for that? Tell us, Jennifer, how many would Satan expect to deceive by telling people he was God? Any idea?

“For such ones are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. Did not even Satan marvelously transform himself into an angel of light? Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15 MKJV).

In one breath you tell us, “I am a relatively new believer,” then you say, “I have been studying the Bible and the preachings of pastors for a very long time.” Which is it? What is a “very long time” to you? Are you saying you’ve been studying the Bible far longer than you’ve been a believer? If you’ve truly learned that we need divine understanding, how have you learned that without being a believer and having the Lord’s Spirit to interpret the Scriptures for you?

You ask, “Plus, if how else is He going to get money if not by the work he is doing for God?” Are you saying Prince can’t make tents? Are you saying one must charge for preaching the Gospel? Can you show us anywhere in Scripture where men of God asked for pay for, or determined to make a living from, preaching, or where they received a requested and expected reward from those benefiting from their ministry?

How well did Elisha’s servant, Gehazi, do with such thinking, Jennifer?

2 Kings 5:15-27 MKJV

(15) And [Naaman the Syrian] returned to the man of God, he and all his company. And he came and stood before him. And he said, “Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel. And now please take a blessing from your servant.”

(16) But [Elisha] said, “As the LORD lives, before Whom I stand, I will receive none.” And he urged him to take it, but he refused.

(17) And Naaman said, “Please shall there not then be given to your servant two mules’ burden of earth? For your servant will from now on offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD.

(18) In this thing may the LORD pardon your servant, that when my master goes to the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he is supported by my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon; when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, may the LORD pardon your servant in this thing.”

- (19) And he said to him, "Go in peace." And he went away from him a little way.
- (20) And Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "Behold, my master has spared Naaman the Syrian, in not receiving at his hand that which he brought. But, as the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him."
- (21) And Gehazi followed after Naaman. And Naaman saw him running after him, and descended down from the chariot to meet him. And he said, "Is all well?"
- (22) And he said, "All is well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Behold this now, two young men from Mount Ephraim of the sons of the prophets have come to me. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing.'"
- (23) And Naaman said, "Be content, take two talents." And he urged him and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothing. And he laid them on two of his servants. And they carried them before him.
- (24) And he came to the hill, and he took from their hand and stowed them in the house. And he let the men go, and they departed.
- (25) And he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, "Where from, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant did not go here or there."
- (26) And he said to him, "Did not my heart go with you when the man turned again from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive silver and to receive clothing and olive-yards and vineyards and sheep and oxen and menservants and maidservants?"
- (27) And the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your seed forever." And he went out from his presence as leprosy as snow.

Are we saying men of God shouldn't ever receive money or gifts from those to whom they've ministered? Not at all. The Scriptures clearly teach otherwise:

1 Corinthians 9:7-11 MKJV

- (7) Who serves as a soldier at his own wages at any time? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who feeds a flock and does not partake of the milk of the flock?
- (8) Do I say these things according to man? Or does not the Law say the same also?
- (9) For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox threshing grain." Does God take care for oxen?
- (10) Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? It was written for us, so that he who plows should plow in hope, and so that he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.
- (11) If we have sown to you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

We receive [offerings](#), but it's the message and example Joseph Prince gives that makes all the difference. He has deceived you, and we've clearly laid out how he is a deceiver. You don't get it, bringing up points that really aren't the issue, and we don't make them the issue. The issue is that he does all that he does for himself, independent of God, Whom he claims to serve, and you are blind to it. Yes, he speaks true things, but isn't that how Satan operates to deceive, snare, and destroy? (Read [The Nature of Deception](#).)

Do we expect men of God to be paupers? That is a foolish question coming from an unlearned woman. For one who is supposed to have some understanding from the Lord, you demonstrate very little, Jennifer, in almost everything you say, ask, or boast about. Rather,

we expect godly paupers to be saints of God, with treasure in Heaven. Joseph Prince teaches that when paupers believe, they are destined for earthly riches.

John the Immerser and all the apostles must have been false teachers according to Prince.

“But Peter said, ‘**Silver and gold have I none**, but what I have I give you. In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!’” (Acts 3:6 MKJV)

All their followers who remained poor in this life were deceived or didn’t believe, according to Joseph Prince. How foolish you are, Jennifer, in all your darkness, drinking in lies told by a prince of darkness!

You worshipfully defend your god with, “**And his name is prince because God said, as believers, we are a Holy priesthood.**” Did you name yourself “White Phantom” (Jennifer) because you’re the Lord’s? Is he not presumptuous naming himself “Prince”? Perhaps not - we say he’s a servant of the prince of this world. Isn’t it ironic that he should be telling his worshippers something true about himself, while laughing at your naivety all the way to the bank?

You say, “**From your human judgement, and obviously without complete research, you have judged him evil.**” You accuse us of judging after the appearance, which is how you judge us, Jennifer. How good or wise is that? How do you know we aren’t judging righteous judgment? How do you know we aren’t discerning by the Spirit of God, while you judge after the appearance, as for example believing in Prince’s integrity when he says he isn’t God? You don’t know, and we do.

Here’s proof from your own lips:

“**But what if he is actually correct? How will God feel?**” You don’t know, do you, Jennifer, that is, *really know*? Admit it. Yet, you *should* know; for your life, you *need* to know, and if you had the Lord’s Spirit, you *would* know.

If you had understanding, you couldn’t say the things you’re saying about the Lord, yourself, Joseph Prince, or the Bible. You are in darkness, and you assume it to be light. You go on exposing yourself:

“**1) They might be right from God’s view, in which case I will consult God about it.**”

One, you say “**they might be right.**” You don’t know.

Two, you say you will consult God. So, why haven’t you? The truth is you don’t know because you haven’t heard from the Lord.

You say, “**2) If they happened to be right, I am scourging God’s body/Christ’s body.**”

“If.” So you can’t discern good and evil, you can’t tell false brethren from true - Christ’s Body from the harlot church - and therefore you dare not reprove works of darkness. And what is the problem with scourging God’s Body? Haven’t we established that He does that with every son He receives, those making up His Body? But what you really mean is that you would be falsely accusing, as you do with us.

You prefer to believe liars, just in case they aren’t lying, is that it? You want to hedge your bets. You’re not a saint or daughter of God, Jennifer; you’re a gambler and opportunist.

Have you never heard that not only *can* you know who's true, you *must* know, for your life?

Matthew 7:15-23 MKJV

(15) Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

(16) You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?

(17) Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit.

(18) A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruits, nor can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

(19) Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

(20) Therefore by their fruits you shall know them.

(Speaking truths are not the fruits. Satan speaks truths all the time, which is how he appears as an angel of light.)

(21) Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord! Lord!" shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven.

(22) Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord! Lord! Did we not prophesy in Your Name, and through Your Name throw out demons, and through Your Name do many wonderful works?"

(23) And then I will say to them, "I never knew you! Depart from Me, those working lawlessness!"

When one is in unbelief, the Scriptures, though studied night and day for years, yield nothing at all. It's like you've never read the Bible, Jennifer; your unbelief keeps you in darkness. You're in the lusts of your flesh, idolatry, and foolishness. The prince of this world binds you at his pleasure.

"For of these are those who creep into houses and lead captive silly women loaded with sins, led away with different kinds of lusts, ever learning and never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:6-7 MKJV).

You're a "relatively new believer," but you've been "studying the Bible and the preachings of pastors for a very long time." "Ever learning and never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth." You just don't know. We do, however, because we've been brought through the fires; we have suffered and do suffer for His sake, which sufferings bring us to knowledge of the Truth in Him.

You haven't suffered, nor have you ever learnt from men of God, receiving sound doctrine from true ministers. You don't know the Lord; you hear from another Jesus.

You say, "3) If they are wrong, it is not their fault because the Bible teaches that all men are predisposed to be evil without God."

My, are you in darkness for one who speaks so boldly! Have you ever read the Bible without blinders, Jennifer? The Bible is full of examples and instructions to reprove the works of darkness, to rebuke the ungodly (believing or otherwise), and to not have fellowship with unbelievers, but you perceive none of that.

With your doctrine (which we can readily see coming from Prince, it being his mentality and

soft, attractive touch on the ignorant masses), you disregard any option of correction and punishment.

Your doctrine wouldn't permit Peter to speak against Simon (who believed and was baptized - Acts 8:18-22).

Your doctrine wouldn't permit Paul to say, "But even if we or an angel from Heaven preach a gospel to you beside what we preached to you, **let him be accursed**" (Galatians 1:8 MKJV).

You wouldn't permit Paul to rebuke Peter for his wrong with the Jews and Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-16).

You wouldn't allow John the Immerser to speak as he did to the people:

"Then he said to the crowd that came forth to be baptized by him, 'O generation of vipers! Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?'" (Luke 3:7 MKJV)

And you certainly wouldn't allow Jesus to speak to the Pharisees and scribes as He did in Matthew 23. You may say, "Well, that was Jesus! You're not Him! Who do you think you are?" We repeat His words to us, which you've never heard spoken to you:

"Then Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you. As My Father has sent Me, **even so I send you.**' And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. **Of whomever sins you remit, they are remitted to them. Of whomever sins you retain, they are retained**'" (John 20:21-23 MKJV).

We are given to understand and deal with the sins of others and to remit or retain them. Now we deal with yours.

You may believe you're counted among the priesthood of believers, Jennifer, but you've never received His Spirit and heard those words, have you? No, you haven't. You've never been salted with fire.

Look, Jennifer, it isn't a problem that you know little or nothing. We don't condemn or fault you for that. Your problem is that you speak as though you know something when you don't. Didn't Jesus rebuke people for that?

"Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no sin. But now you say, We see. Therefore your sin remains'" (John 9:41 MKJV).

Claiming to see and understand, you write in all foolishness and ignorance:

"4) Every true believer will be drawn to God anyway, unless God is so weak that He cannot call on the people He loves, which He is not."

True believers have already been drawn to God, or they wouldn't be true believers. You're confused. And shall God not send His servants to preach the Truth, whereby people are brought to salvation?

"How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preaching? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet

of those who preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:14-15 MKJV)

Shall God not rebuke and reprove by His servants? Where did you get your Bible, Jennifer? You got it from the prince of this world, who has deceived you by his servant, Joseph Prince.

You boast that you’re “[very much in tune with the Holy Spirit.](#)” How can you make such a statement unless you’re entirely in self-righteousness? You’re wrong, Jennifer, and the Lord has brought you here to us so you may hear the truth of God.

You preach to and rebuke elders without authority, knowledge, or understanding, not knowing what you’re doing. You think you’re a mature and godly woman, Jennifer, but the truth is you’re impertinent, presumptuous, ignorant, and proud. You have never learned from the Lord as you think. You need to tear your garments, put on sackcloth, pour ashes on your head, fast, and pray.

You need to confess your sins and repent of your pride and your lusts, which have led you to worship a man instead of God. Doing this while professing Christ makes it even worse, because you’re taking His Name in vain. For this you aren’t held guiltless, as the Third Commandment says.

Good to come out of Catholicism, but not much good if you come away from worshipping one man (the Pope of Rome) only to worship another (Prince of this world). Yes, you *do* worship Joseph Prince, know it or not.

Still, may the fire of God purge and deliver you from your idolatry. It will when your time comes, as sure as the sun rises and sets each day. It begins today by His Word of Truth we speak to you, which is like fire.

Victor and Paul

Part 2

Victor wrote to those gathered with us:

Good Sabbath, everyone!

Mariko writes: “I often wonder if I will ever get to the promised end but it is great to know there is an end. In the meantime, I just try to do whatever is required and enjoy what I am doing. Thank You, Lord for your mercy. Praise the Lord!!”

Mariko, perhaps when you wrote these words, “I just try to do whatever is required and enjoy what I am doing,” you meant to speak of acceptance and thanksgiving; however, I wish to clarify for the sakes of all because I think it’s important to discern a difference.

The Lord is faithful and will bring all those who *endure, not enjoy*, to the end, into the Promised Land of Rest. It is very good and I would say, *highly necessary*, to thank the Lord, not only for His mercy and the good things He doesn’t “withhold from those who walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11), but for all things, including those things we suffer and don’t

enjoy, but must **endure**. It certainly isn't that the Lord would have you be generally miserable (God forbid), but it is also as certain that He isn't expecting those He receives, scourges, and chastens to **enjoy** everything, either.

The saints like Abel, Noah, Shem, Enoch, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, Leah, Rachel, Joseph, Judah, Reuben, and Jacob's other sons, Moses, David, Job, Daniel, his three friends - Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael - the children of Israel as a nation, every one of the judges and prophets, John the Immerser, and all the apostles and saints had very difficult times they weren't expected to enjoy.

Even Solomon found that the things of this world were what? Matters of enjoyment?

"Vanity of vanities, says the preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2 MKJV).

"I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 1:14 MKJV).

"I said in my heart, 'Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore consider and behold goodness'; this also is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 2:1 MKJV).

"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit; and there is no profit under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:11 MKJV).

Know that the Lord and His prophets and disciples never once directed or expected any of the saints to **enjoy themselves**. Think about it. Take Peter, John, Stephen, James, Paul, and Silas, for examples:

Jesus said to Peter: "Truly, truly, I say to you, 'When you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you wished. But when you grow old, you shall stretch forth your hands and another shall gird you and carry you **where you do not wish**'" (John 21:18 MKJV).

The apostles:

Acts 5:40-42 MKJV

(40) And calling the apostles, beating them, they commanded not to speak in the Name of Jesus, and let them go.

(41) Then indeed they departed from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be shamed for His Name.

(42) And every day in the temple, and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching the Gospel: Jesus Christ.

Stephen: Acts 7.

The saints and Paul:

Acts 9:13-16 MKJV

(13) And Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints at Jerusalem.

(14) And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your Name."

(15) But the Lord said to him, “Go! For this one is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My Name before nations and kings and the sons of Israel.

(16) For I will show him what great things he must suffer for My Name’s sake.”

James and Peter:

Acts 12:1-4 MKJV

(1) And at that time Herod the king threw on his hands to oppress some of those of the church.

(2) And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.

(3) And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he went further to seize Peter also. (And they were days of Unleavened Bread.)

(4) And capturing him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four sets of four soldiers to keep him; intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover.

Even the most powerful angels and greatest in authority in Heaven must suffer things (Jude 1:9). And Jesus, the Glorious Express Image of God and Perfect Example, suffered most of all, on our behalf. How did His perfection come? Was it by enjoyment?

Hebrews 5:7-9 MKJV

(7) For Jesus, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong cryings and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared,

(8) though being a Son, yet **He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.**

(9) And being perfected, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him.

What did Paul and Silas teach the saints?

“And preaching the Gospel to that city, and having made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, calling on them to continue in the faith and that **through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God**” (Acts 14:21-22 MKJV).

And what happened to Paul and Silas?

Acts 16:19-24 MKJV

(19) And when her masters saw that the hope of their gain went out, having seized Paul and Silas, they dragged them to the market before the rulers.

(20) And bringing them near to the judges, they said, “These men, being Jews, are exceedingly troubling our city.

(21) And they teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive nor to do, being Romans.”

(22) And the crowd rose up against them. And tearing off their clothes, the judges ordered them to be flogged.

(23) And after laying on them many stripes, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailor to keep them safely;

(24) who, having received such a command, thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks.

Is it about enjoyment, or is it about accepting our circumstances and giving thanks to God? Here is Paul's and Silas' response in their very trying circumstances:

“And toward midnight Paul and Silas prayed and praised God in a hymn. And the prisoners listened to them” (Acts 16:25 MKJV).

In his old age, John suffered exile on Patmos, an island for outcasts and prisoners, I believe. Did he enjoy it? Not likely, but we believe he accepted it and gave thanks.

We have a record from the Hebrews writer of what happened to many of the saints. Do read Hebrews 11 and ask yourself if they enjoyed themselves or endured; whether it be those who, on the one hand, conquered by the shedding of blood by the sword, like David, or on the other hand, were persecuted, suffered great hardships, and were slain.

In the end, what did Solomon have to say was the key of life? Enjoy yourself?

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. **Fear God, and keep His commandments. For this is the whole duty of man.** For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it is good, or whether evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 MKJV).

Here's a psalm that gives a balanced perspective of rejoicing in the Lord (not the same as enjoying) and giving thanks by faith, though suffering:

Psalms 30:1-12 MKJV

- (1) A psalm and song at the dedication of the house of David. I will praise You, O LORD; for You have lifted me up, and have not allowed my foes to rejoice over me.
- (2) O LORD my God, I cried to You, and You have healed me.
- (3) O LORD, You have brought up my soul from the grave; You have kept me alive, so that I should not go down to the pit.
- (4) Sing praises to the LORD, O you saints of His, and give thanks at the memory of His holiness.
- (5) For His anger is only a moment; in His favor is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.
- (6) And in my blessedness I said, “I shall never be moved.”
- (7) O LORD, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong; You hid Your face, and I was troubled.
- (8) I cried to You, O LORD; and I prayed to the LORD.
- (9) What profit is in my blood, in going down to the pit? Shall the dust praise You? Shall it tell of Your truth?
- (10) Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me; LORD, be my helper.
- (11) You have turned my mourning into dancing for me; You have torn off my sackcloth, and have clothed me with gladness,
- (12) so that my glory may sing praise to You, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

Victor Hafichuk

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