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Present Suffering and Future Glory



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #326 ~

Suffering – this is not what the world or your flesh wants, but it is definitely part of God's plan for Christians. Suffering is for God's eternal purposes and glory and results in a believer's eternal glory. I share this with you because it's true and it's personal, and because you need to know that we are living in the end-times, and that the persecution of Christians will increase as we get closer to Christ's coming.

Today, I want to look at some key passages that speak about suffering and glory:
Psalm 22 is about Jesus Christ, that He suffered and died for us and then will be glorified, and the whole world will see His glory. He suffered at His 1st coming – *"A band of evildoers has encompassed Me; they pierced My hands and My feet. I can count all My bones…",* but He will be glorified at His 2nd coming – *"You who fear the Lord, praise Him, all you descendants of Jacob glorify Him, and stand in awe of Him."* Vss. 16-17, 23

Philippians 2:7-11 tells us that Jesus Christ humbled Himself, that He *"became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."* Then *"God highly exalted and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name… so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow… and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."* Christ is our #1 example – and He suffered extremely so, and will be supremely glorified. Hebrews 12:2-3

1 Peter 1:10-12 speaks of the *"sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow."* 1 Pet. 5:1 tells us that Peter was a *"witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glories to follow."* Christ will be greatly glorified and all believers will share in that glory. Col. 3:4 elaborates on this – *"When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."* This is so encouraging, for we will soon be with Christ, and will join Him in experiencing the wonderful glory of God.

Matthew 5:10-12 wants us to know that all believers who suffer, who are insulted, maligned, and *"persecuted for the sake of righteousness"*, will inherit the kingdom of heaven and be greatly rewarded. So it's suffering first and then receiving and experiencing God's amazing grace and glory.

Romans 5:2-3 instructs us to rejoice in two things – we are to *"exult in hope of the glory of God"* and we are to *"exult in our tribulations".* Tribulation and suffering come first, occurring during our life on earth. And in heaven and in the ages to come, we will share in God's incredible glory. All of us should have this hope, this expectation of glory, *"because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit."* Rom. 5:5

Romans 8:18-39 – The first verse sums up the main message: *"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."* Life may be extremely difficult, but our temporary sufferings are nothing compared

to the eternal glory we will experience after our life on this earth. Vss. 19-39 give more details about God's sovereign working with regards to our suffering, and that we can *"overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us",* and that nothing *"will be able to separate us from the love of God."* Vss. 37, 39

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 – *"Momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison."* This theme is repeated, that our suffering, our problems, troubles, and trials result in receiving God's glory. But our suffering is momentary, lasting only a short time compared to an eternity of glory. And our suffering isn't that difficult compared to the weight, the greatness of the glory God gives us. Without question, it's really worth it to suffer for God, for Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:4-10. As Christians, we suffer, we go through afflictions, even great afflictions, for God's glory and our glory. Not long from now, *"He* (Christ) *comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed."* This happens at Christ's return, and is when our salvation is complete, for Christ is *"glorified in His saints,"* meaning that we receive new bodies, ones like Christ's, ones that are powerful, immortal, glorious, and spiritual (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Suffering for Christ results in being spiritually and physically glorified, which is what God planned for us in eternity past. Romans 8:28-30

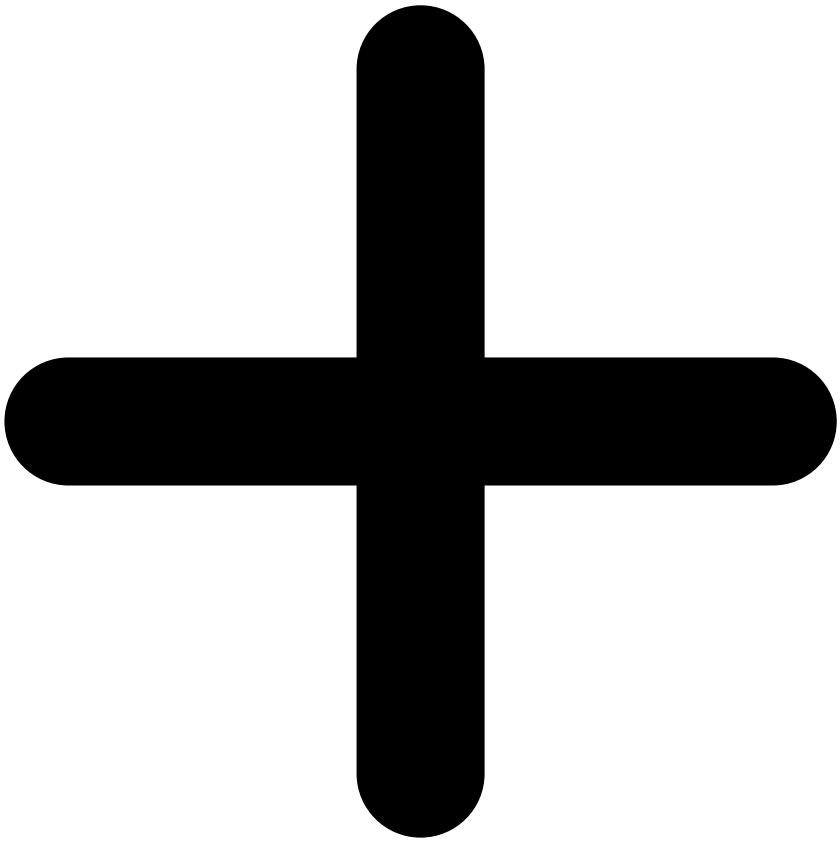
1 Peter 1:3-9 is one of the best big picture passages in the Bible. It says that a necessary part of life is suffering, is going through various and distressing trials, is being *"tested by fire"* – but it's only for a little while. And we have hope, for we know we will get through it and receive an unbelievable inheritance. Indeed, suffering for Christ will *"result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ"* (1 Pet. 1:7). Two keys to having hope and receiving this glory are loving God, and faith, believing God and His promises. 1 Peter 1:8

1 Peter 5:10 again communicates this truth of suffering and glory. *"After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."* Yes, you will suffer, but you will also witness and experience God's eternal glory. In the meantime, God is sanctifying you, strengthening, perfecting, and molding you into Christ's image. All of this is by God's grace, and by His promises and power working in your life. 2 Peter 1:2-4

The Christian life is knowing God and His truth, power, love, goodness, and much more. It's also being humble, seen by serving, sacrificing, and suffering for Him. Living for God like this results in God being greatly glorified, you being glorified, and you receiving His never-ending glory.

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation." 1 Peter 4:12-13

As you truly live for Christ, you will suffer for Him. And that's a good thing, good for God and His glory, and good for you and receiving His glory. Here are two previous posts about suffering and glory – *"The Glory of Suffering for Jesus"* and *"Suffering for Jesus in the End-Times".*



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