

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: Difficulties

Why Me?

Bill Brinkworth

Even if a person is well-educated, lives a good life, has wealth, and may be able to protect themselves, but lives in a bad neighborhood, it does not guarantee they will be exempt from lawlessness. It is a crime-ridden neighborhood, and all who reside there will most likely have terrible things happen at some time.

It is the same for good Christian people in this world. Earth is a sin-infested place where we reside. All who live here will be affected or involved in iniquity because of the "neighborhood" where they reside.

The hardships encountered by living here may include financial, health, accidents, social, and many other areas. There will be problems that happen to all of us at some point in our lives. Many of the difficulties and bad experiences are because we live in a cursed residence.

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:17-19

"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." Isaiah 24:5-6

Christian souls may be saved, and we may be doing much better than our neighbors, but all will encounter the consequences of iniquity from our own weaknesses or those committed by others. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that followers of Christ will not have problems as a result of sin.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" Romans 3:23

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12

Do not expect not to have problems. We are all born sinners; that is why we need to be saved. All will be affected by sin's side effects.

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." Job 14:1

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12

So, why are bad things happening to you? Not only are you a sinner and possibly reaping the repercussions of your iniquities, but you live in a sin-oppressed world. Sin hurts everyone, even the innocent. Believers are not exempt from its terrible consequences.

“For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.” Ecclesiastes 2:23

As overpowering as the plague of sin on all is, Christians can have protection during iniquity’s storms. We can limit what happens to us by living a God-centered and God-lead life.

If waves from wickedness do crash spray over your life’s bow, it is a time to draw near the Master of the Sea to help you through sin’s gale. He may be using that trial to make you a stronger Christian. It is not time to abandon ship!

“He who knows no hardships will know no hardihood. He who faces no calamity will need no courage. Mysterious though it is, the characteristics in human nature which we love best grow in a soil with a strong mixture of trouble.”

— Harry Emerson Fosdick

The “Bad” Times

Bill Brinkworth

No one likes troubles, trials, and tribulations, but we all will or have had them. Since we will all encounter them in our lives, it only makes sense to view them properly.

God often sends “bad” incidents to make us into what He desires us to be. They will teach us lessons in life’s school that will never leave us the same. It can be for this reason that God preserved the words in James 1:2-4: *“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; [trials] Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”*

We are to take these challenging times as a “joyful time”? How can anything as miserable as some have experienced be joyful? Usually, the lesson is learned and thankfulness is appreciated after the fire is passed through and when we’re out on the other side of calamity. It is then that we can have “joy”.

After one goes through so many “temptations” and remembers how they benefited from those experiences, one can easily develop the right attitude the next time unpleasantness comes into view. “Ah, I don’t like the class, but the lesson I will learn will be worth it.” That is joy.

The Bible gives us many different reasons why hard times come into our lives. Those amidst trials learn many lessons. Some did not learn their lesson the first time they took the “course.” Later on, they faced more difficult training further down life’s path because they had never learned it previously.

Sometimes tempestuous times are meant to strengthen us. We can be made stronger when we are awed at His deliverance from the impossible. When we get to that point, we can look back

and say, "Only God could have gotten me through that".

"He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen." Deuteronomy 10:212

At other times, our turbulent trials build our faith after we see what God has done. After passing through enough testing and remembering how we were delivered in the past, we have faith that He will guide us through the next time.

"Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you." I Samuel 12 24

Part of what happens when our faith is strengthened is that we are taught. We learn more about Him, what He can or will not do, and His other character traits when we see God work in our lives.

There are many lessons to be learned from life's trials. When Israel was led through the wilderness, they learned to fear and follow God. Jonah's experience also taught him to obey – the first time.

Paul's blinding experience on the road to Damascus taught him that there is only one way to please God, and that it is God's way, not the traditions or religions of man. After Jesus healed a blind man from a lifetime of darkness, the man came to know of His power.

All these events changed the lives of those going through what they initially thought were unwanted times. What would they have been like if they had not experienced them?

Reading the Scriptures, one can easily see how hard times were used to teach God's people how He could protect them. God has used hornets, earthquakes, darkness, disease, fear, and water, to name a few, to guard and direct His own. What an unforgettable lesson must have been learned when they got to see the mighty works of their protective Father.

Hard times can also direct us. The trials we go through often change the direction we are going and put us on the course God desires – much like the road detour no one likes.

If our route had not been changed, we would have ended up in the construction workers' freshly dug trench, possibly damaging our vehicle and ourselves. The many extra miles were worth the aggravation we could have faced in the body shop or even in the hospital. When we look back on what could have happened, we can be joyful about what did not occur and are thankful for His direction.

Certainly, tough times can change us. Jonah's attitude was surely changed after his stay in the whale's belly. Saul had a new perspective about persecuted Christians after he was one.

Joseph was certainly appreciative of all the hardships he endured after recognizing how they prepared him for his future. We can lose all our self-righteousness and self-worth in a short hurry when we face trials and realize that in those times, only God can make a difference.

Not all trials are punishment of God, but some are. Our miseries can be an act of God to correct us when we do wrong. A proper punishment will change wrong behavior and quickly.

When God's people were doing wrong, God sent enemies, bondage, plagues, and other deterrents to change their mindset. Parents sometimes have to punish their child for wrong behavior; our heavenly Father sometimes needs to do so also.

Not too many people get excited when terrible things happen to them, but if you have not already learned, there is much to be learned from the "bad times." Not one spiritual, close-to-God Christian got that way without going through a lot of heartache. Sometimes the most spiritual have gone through the most. Hard times can have a positive effect on us if we learn our lesson properly.

A Shelter in The Time of Storm

Vernon Charlesworth

*The Lord's our rock, in Him we hide,
A shelter in the time of storm;
Secure whatever ill betide,
A shelter in the time of storm.*

Refrain:

*Oh, Jesus is a rock in a weary land,
A weary land, a weary land;
Oh, Jesus is a rock in a weary land,
A shelter in the time of storm.*

*A shade by day, defense by night,
A shelter in the time of storm;
No fears alarm, no foes affright,
A shelter in the time of storm.*

Refrain:

*The raging storms may round us beat.
A shelter in the time of storm
We'll never leave our safe retreat,
A shelter in the time of storm.*

Refrain:

*O rock divine, O refuge dear,
A shelter in the time of storm;
Be Thou our helper ever near,
A shelter in the time of storm.*

Refrain:

"To be angry is often to revenge the fault of others upon ourselves." — *Antinomy*