

Glorious, Wonderful Tests 3-13-16

1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Gen 22:1 is first time the word “test” is used in the Bible... Gen 22:1

- This, however, is not the first test. (Abraham had 4 before this).
 - It was not difficulty caused by sin or temptation but a trial brought by God.
- Unlike worldly tests, God's testing not designed so God can see if we will pass or fail. Jam 1:13-15
 - But there is always a divine purpose & benefit behind all tests/trials.
- When in midst of various (relational, spiritual, emotional, physical) trials/tests it's hard to believe any good can come forth.
 - It is easy to become bitter & not see God's mercy at work in your life.
 - We question God & wonder if we can make it through to other side.
 - But trials are never so great that, with God's grace, we will not be able to bear up under them. 1 Pet 4:12-13, Heb 4:16, Ps 34:19
 - Trust the Creator is doing something good in you for His glory.

It also Proves/confirms our faith. Jam 2:20-24, 1 Pet 1:6-7

- After God prepped Abraham, He tested his faith to show Abraham & the world that his faith was genuine, not intellectual or useless/dead faith.
 - v. 7 proved genuine ... to see or show what is really there.
 - Trials demonstrate what God has already done in us so that He may be glorified.

Purify us by refining us like gold & silver. Ps 66:10, 17:3, Prov 17:3, 1 Pet 1:6-7

- In tough times hidden sin, selfishness, and ungodliness surfaces.
 - We want happiness; God wants holiness.

He wants to strengthen & mature us spiritually. Jas 1:2-4, Rom 5:3-4, Phil 1:6

- Without trials/tests, we would be weak and immature Christians.
 - If they break butterflies/cocoons or chicks/eggs be weak, sickly.
 - Remember the hard times are when we grew the most spiritually.
 - By the Holy Spirit indwelling, we meet the challenge of tests in His power/strength.

They conform us into the image of Christ. Rom 8:28-29, 2 Cor 3:17-18, 1 Pet 2:20-21

- One reason for testing is the expression of God's love, not His anger.

Trials enable us to more effectively minister to others because we're better able to compassionately relate to others in that type of pain. 2 Cor. 1:3-7

- This occurs even in the midst of the test....ripple effect (people look to you for hope).

Also reconfirms to us that He is sufficient, trustworthy & omnipotent. Jn 16:33, 2 Cor 12:7-10, Jas 1:12

- many times we place our joy (or hope for it), satisfaction, or significance, in people/things.... job, dream, friendship, finances, spouse, family.
 - We sometimes even focus on the past for present hope, "when I was happy".
 - All of this is idolatry.
- God's tests help us to hold people, things, and dreams loosely & draw us closer to Himself and make us more like Jesus.
- They're designed to make us more dependent on Him, not things or people.
 - When we rejoice in God in midst of testing, it shows that God, not other things, is the source of our present & future joy....this glorifies God!