

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." Lk. 9:23-24.

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft." 2 Cor. 11:23.

***"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves."* 2 Cor. 1:7-8.**

Sunday, January 14, 2007

"But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." 2 Cor. 1:9-10. Gill: "Many interpreters have been of opinion, that the tumult raised by Demetrius at Ephesus is here meant, when Paul and his companions were in great danger of their lives, Acts 19, but this uproar being but for a day, could not be a reason why. It seems to be rather some other very sore affliction...that is not recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

"The greatness of this trouble is set forth in very strong expressions, as that we were pressed out of measure. The affliction was as a heavy burden upon them, too heavy to bear; it was exceeding heavy, even to an hyperbole, beyond expression; and above strength, that is human strength, the strength of nature; but not above the strength of grace, or that spiritual strength communicated to them, by which they were supported under it; the apostle adds, "insomuch that we despaired even of life;" they were at the utmost loss, and in the greatest perplexity how to escape the danger of life; they greatly doubted of it; they saw no probability nor possibility, humanly speaking, of preserving it (human life).

"And to this extremity they were suffered to be brought by the wise counsel of God...to learn to lay aside all self-trust and confidence."

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”

2 Tim. 2:12.

“If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Rom. 8:16-18.

John Bunyan: “There also shall you be clothed with glory and majesty, and put into an equipage fit to ride out with the King of glory. When he shall come with sound of trumpet in the clouds, as upon the wings of the wind, you shall come with him; and when he shall sit upon the throne of judgment, you shall sit by him; yea, and when he shall pass sentence upon all the workers of iniquity, let them be angels or men, you also shall have a voice in that judgment, because they were his and your enemies.”
1 Thes. 4:13-17; Jude 14; Dan. 7:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:2-3.

Arnold: “I cannot trust myself to read the account of Christian going up to the Celestial Gate, after his passage through the River of Death; to wit:

Bunyan: ‘The talk they had with the Shining Ones was about the glory of the place; who told them that the beauty and glory of it was inexpressible. There, said they, is the Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Heb. 12:22-24. You are going now, said they, to the paradise of God, wherein you shall see the tree of life, and eat of the never-fading fruits thereof; and when you come there, you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of eternity. Rev. 2:7; 3:4; 22:5.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

‘You are now going to Abraham, to Isaac, and Jacob, and to the prophets – men that God hath taken away from the evil to come, and that are now resting upon their beds, each one walking in his righteousness. Isa. 57:1-2; 65:17. You must there receive the comforts of all your toil, and have joy for all your sorrow; you must reap what you have sown, even the fruit of all your prayers, and tears, and sufferings for the King by the way. Gal. 6:7. In that place you must wear crowns of gold, and enjoy the perpetual sight and vision of the Holy One, for there you shall see him as he is. 1 Jn. 3:2. Your eyes will be delighted with seeing, and your ears with hearing the pleasant voice of the Mighty One. There you shall enjoy your friends again, that are gone on before you, and receive with joy those who follow after you.’ See, *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

"The God of all comfort."

There is a direct correlation between suffering for Christ and being "comforted of God."

Supernatural comfort and consolation. Our sufferings and tribulations and troubles *for* Christ, are the sufferings, etc., *of* Christ. All of which constitutes solid objective evidence that our calling and election is sure. (2 Pet. 1:10: "*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*") Which is a big part of our consolation and comfort – whereby we are able to comfort our fellow suffering saints – as we are ordered to do. Spot these principles in 2 Cor. 1:3-5. To wit:

2 Cor. 1:3-5: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

Spot these suffering/consolation/evidence-of-election principles in familiar verses. To wit:

Heb. 11:24-26: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

1 Pet. 4:12-13: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."

2 Cor. 4:17: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Psa. 34:17-19: "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Mat. 28:18-20.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...(and)... that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Eph. 6:10.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Eph. 6:12. Please also read: Eph. 6:10-20.

“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” 1 Jn. 4:4.

Our power in this glorious conflict infinitely exceeds the power of all our adversaries.

Henry: “We have no sufficient strength of our own. Our natural courage is as perfect cowardice, and our natural strength as perfect weakness; but all our sufficiency is of God. In his strength we must go forth and go on. By the actings of faith, we must fetch in grace and help from heaven to enable us to do that which of ourselves we cannot do, in our Christian work and warfare. We must stir up ourselves to resist temptations in a reliance upon God’s all-sufficiency and the omnipotence of his might.” Therefore, in the Name and Power of our omnipotent God and Savior:

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” 1 Cor. 16:13.

Josh. 1:5-9: “*There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage...Only be thou strong and very courageous...Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*”