

# FORGED IN FIRE: A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO TRIBULATION

## THE CRUCIBLE OF FAITH (THE "WHY")

### TRIALS ARE GUARANTEED, NOT RANDOM

The Bible teaches that believers will face tribulation; it is a required part of the path.

### YOU ARE GOLD IN THE FURNACE

Trials act like a crucible, using heat to bring hidden impurities to the surface for removal.



### THE PURPOSE IS TO TEST YOUR HEART

God uses trials to discover if you will remain faithful and keep His commandments under pressure.

## THE KINGDOM RESPONSE (THE "HOW")

### SHIFT YOUR PERSPECTIVE

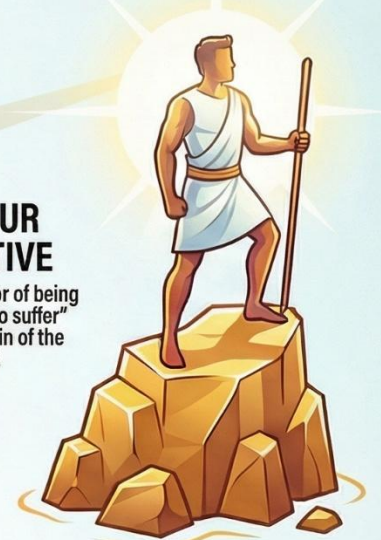
Focus on the honor of being "counted worthy to suffer" rather than the pain of the trial itself.

### COUNT IT ALL JOY

Instead of despair, the scriptural command is to find joy in the opportunity to be tested.

### THE RESULT IS PERSEVERANCE

Enduring trials produces *hupomoné*—the continued effort to follow God despite all difficulty.



## The Book Of James (Part 4) December 13, 2025

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.cornerfringe.com/media/z2vzbsj/the-book-of-james-part-4>

\*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliteration into the English alphabet. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

### The Testing of Faith: Perseverance Through Trial

This transcript of a sermon by **Pastor Daniel Joseph** from **Corner Fringe Ministries** focuses on the Book of James, specifically verses two and three, which deal with the topic of tribulation. Daniel **emphasizes the significant and dramatic nature** of James's opening statement, which immediately instructs believers to "**count it all joy when you fall into various trials.**" This message is paralleled with the teachings of Peter and Paul, arguing that **tribulation is an inevitable part of the Christian life** and serves as a testing process to produce perseverance. The sermon explains that this testing is likened to a **crucible that refines precious metals** by bringing impurities to the surface, and ultimately, a believer's response to adversity, rooted in a "**kingdom perspective,**" determines their character and allegiance to God. Examples from scripture, including the apostles' joy after being beaten and the testing of the Israelites in the wilderness, are used to illustrate the importance of **perseverance and faithfulness** in the face of suffering.

[Daniel Joseph]

Shabbat Shalom, everyone. Well, it's definitely warmer in here than it is outside, so you can be happy we decided not to have service outside today.

We are at week four in our series on the Epistle of James, and thus far, we've gotten through verse one, which means today (*clapping*), and you can clap; that's good. That means today we're going to be pressing into verse two, but not just verse two, verse three as well. And the reason we're doing this is that verses two and three are really a composite of one thought.

And let me preface the message today with the following: What we're about to delve into, what James is going to bring to the table, is so weighty. It's so significant that this is going to take us some time, and so this is going to take several weeks to get through. So, we're going to be hovering over this passage. But I assure you, the hope here is that this is going to be a tremendous blessing to you. It's going to be greatly edifying to the body. Hopefully, this speaks to you in a really powerful way, and you're just going to begin to get a taste of that today.

With that said, I want to jump right into it. We have a lot to look at today. And just for the sake of continuity, we're just going to go back to verse one, and then we'll move in. What the writer does is he

introduces himself as Jacobus, or Yaakov, or—James 1:1—**James, a bondservant of God and of the LORD, Messiah Yeshua, Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Chairein (Χαίρειν), Greetings.**

Now, James is very succinct. He's very direct; there is no... He doesn't add words where you don't need them. He strips everything down to its purest, most direct form, if you will. It's a very short introduction, okay. He gets to the point. But now, after the short introduction, he's going to get into the contents of this epistle, which we read in James 1:2— **My brethren ...** I didn't put this up here, but it's "*Adelphoi mou* (ἀδελφοί μου)" in Greek.

This is something that you see throughout this epistle. It appears James has this proclivity for literally, you know, addressing his audience in this way specifically; over and over again throughout this epistle, he says, "My brethren, my brethren," and once in a while he takes it up a notch and says, "My beloved brethren." So, you're going to see this all throughout the epistle, and what that shows by saying this over and over again is how much his brothers have his heart. He has a heart for his brethren.

And he says in James 1:2—**My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.** The first thing out of the gate that James comes with is this very intense and dramatic introduction. I mean, you think about this, you know, you can read the Epistles of Paul, some of which you'll notice that Paul has this, if you will, this finesse of; he kind of eases into his epistles. He eases into the letter. He says, "Oh, you know, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Messiah Yeshua. And you know what? I remember you always in my prayers, and I'm encouraged by your faith." He makes statements like this in some of his epistles, and you can feel that he's easing into the epistle.

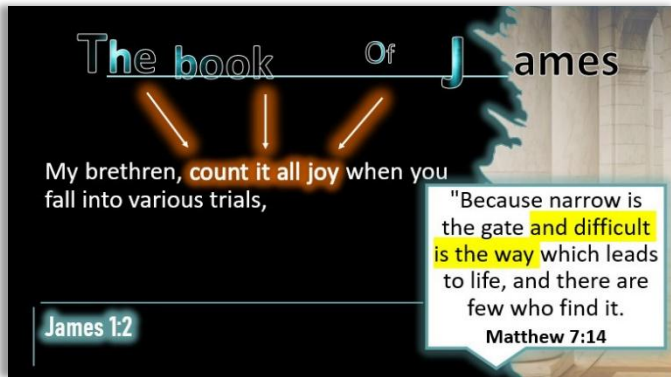
James does no such thing. James is all business. He comes out of the gate to the deepest end of the pool of discussion, hitting you in the heart of hearts with a radically dramatic statement. Why would James come out of the gate like this? And I'm going to tell you this. The gravest concern that James has for his brethren is this very thing: how they are going to respond to tribulation.

In fact, it's interesting; you step back, and you look at the Epistle of James, and what you will notice is he envelops the entire epistle with this framework. He begins right off the bat with how you are to respond to tribulation. And he ends the epistle with the very same framework. Out of all the things in this epistle, this ranks at the top. It's not a coincidence that he comes out with this statement. It receives this idea of how we are called to respond to tribulation and receives the pride of place at the very top.

And here's what I can tell you. This is one of those moments where you want to take this in because you will know these words. In other words, you will know tribulation. Yeshua Himself said, "**In this world, you will**"—not "you might" or "it could possibly happen"; that's not what Yeshua says. He says in John 16:33, "**... In the world you will have tribulation ...**" It is coming for every single one of you. Do not think that any of you will be exempt. You will know it; it's a biblical fact.

The Apostle Paul builds on Yeshua's words, and he says, "We must," not "we could." "We must, through many tribulations." "Many," not "some." —Acts 14:22— **... "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."** Yeshua has these words; He says in Matthew 7:14, **Because narrow is the gate,** and what? **And difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it** (emphasis added). In other words, if you, in your mind, think you are on the path to enter into the Kingdom of God, you are on a path of tribulation. It is a treacherous, difficult path, and you will be confronted with fear. You will know anxiety. You will know despair. You will know discouragement. You'll be confronted with





bewilderment and awe at the things that you're experiencing. You'll be frustrated. You're going to have a lot of emotion on this path that's very difficult and that leads to eternal life. And I'm telling you right now, there's one thing that you need to walk away with, and that is (James 1:2), **count it all joy**. (Emphasis added).

What matters to James is our response. It's not a matter of if you're going to experience tribulation; it's only a matter of when. And

the key component here is, how are you going to respond to that? James tells you to count it all joy. Peter says this in 1 Peter 4:12—**Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you** (emphasis added).

Now, I want you guys to think about it. For any of those of you who've had some serious trials in life, did you find yourself stepping back and asking, "What is going on?" Why is this happening to me? I'm a good person, I go to church regularly, I pay my tithes, and I try to love people. I actually have a prayer life, and I'm excited about the LORD every day. You start going through your mind, all these things. Man, I'm connected to You, and I'm reading the Word, and it says, "I should be blessed." Why are these things happening to me? Why do I feel cursed?

Peter is so brilliant, and he knows how we're going to respond as we sit in awe over this situation, going, "Why?" He said, Do not count it a strange thing. Don't be dumbfounded; don't be perplexed in that moment. Well, what is Peter's advice? It's the same as James. —1 Peter 4:13— **But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy** (emphasis added). I'm going to tell you right now, this is an amazing thing.

I want you to see a pattern throughout Scripture. You look at the apostles and the message that they brought, whether it's James or Peter; you could add the Apostle Paul to the list. They're all coming to the table, and they're talking about tribulation and how we are called to respond to it. We're to have a perspective, a perspective that is not even of this world.

Here's the deal: The apostles are not spinning noble ideas that they've never experienced. They're speaking from a place of experience. They practice what they preach. They know what they're talking about. They've walked this moment out. It's not like they're just conveniently saying, "Hey, I'm going to keep this ridiculousness up on you and put high expectations on you. When it comes to us, it's different. They already set the stage. They are the example.

A perfect example of this is, I mean, the whole Bible; we could go example after example, but Acts Chapter Five, for me, sticks out. In Acts Chapter Five, what we read about is the apostles going forth and spreading the gospel to the Jewish people, and Jewish people are coming in; they're coming into the faith. Acts 5:14 says, **"And believers were increasingly added to the LORD, multitudes of both men and women."** The apostles are moving through the Holy Spirit, and it's powerful, but the council, the leaders of the day, the scribes, the Pharisees, and the chief priests are livid. They're furious that the apostles have the audacity to lead the Jewish people to Yeshua *Hanatzri* (הנצרי), Jesus of Nazareth, to accept Him as LORD and Savior. And so, do you know what they do? They take them, and they throw them in prison.

And I love that the LORD has such a sense of humor. The LORD sends an angel. He sends an angel to literally break them out of prison and sends them back right into the heart of it all, into the temple, saying, "Go and preach the gospel"; that is awesome. His Word will not be chained. And so, He sends His apostles back into the temple, and they are preaching. Could you imagine? Now the leaders catch wind of this; it comes back to them. Yeah, the people you put in prison, they're not in prison; they're actually in the temple preaching the very name you told them not to preach.

So, it was one thing; they were mad before, but now they're losing it, and they call the disciples to them. This is where we're going to pick up the story. —Acts 5:27-29—<sup>27</sup> ... **And the high priest asked them,** <sup>28</sup> **saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"** <sup>29</sup> **But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."**

Now, when you put this into historical context, this is an earth-shattering moment. The apostles see, because when you go back to the Torah, Deuteronomy Chapter 17, you are not to rebel against the council. You are not to rebel against the chief priests and the decisions that they have made, and if you do, you're to be put to death. Peter and the apostles looked at the Sanhedrin and the council and flat out said, We are going to obey God and not man. The text—and I didn't put it up here—but the text actually goes on to say in Acts 5:33, **"When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them."** Immediately, they're plotting to kill them; they're going to take them out.

And what's amazing is that the text talks about this person in Hebrew, Gamaliel. He rises up; he stands up. And just a little backdrop, which is relevant. Gamaliel was the very rabbi that the Apostle Paul studied under. That was his rabbi growing up. To further put this into context, he was the most revered and notable rabbi in that century at that time. In fact, he was so notable that he received the title "Rabban." There are only a few Jewish scholars in history to have ever received that title, and Gamaliel was one of them. And when Gamaliel died, they actually said, and this is recorded in the Talmud, that the glory of the Torah ceased. I want you to think about the reality of that statement and how revered this Gamliel was, and to this day is still identified as one of the most notable Jewish scribes in all of Jewish history.

I mean, he was second to none. In fact, some would argue that during Paul's day, he was actually the Nasi of the Sanhedrin. And keep in mind that to further this, this guy is the grandson of Hillel. You know, Rabbinic Judaism was built on two schools of thought, the House of Shammai and the House of Hillel. The prevailing thought in Judaism would be Hillel, and you can map this out in the Mishnah and, furthermore, in the Talmud. This is Gamliel's grandfather. I mean, you're talking about a guy of unbelievable reputation; it's argued by some that he's actually the Nasi of the court. And at this moment, he steps up as the rest of the council are plotting to put them to death, and he tells them, "Men, hold up. You want to stand down here because we've had men step up and spread a certain doctrine, but because it wasn't of God, those men were destroyed. Their doctrine came to nothing; it was dispelled. But if this is of God, you'd better be careful what you do lest you be found to fight against God Himself."

So, the next thing we read is Acts 5:40— **And they agreed with him, Gamaliel, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go** (emphasis added). The point I want to make here is to look at what happened. All they did was go out and do beautiful things for the Kingdom of God. They were walking in righteousness.

They were building the Kingdom of God. They were glorifying the Holy Name of Yeshua, and now they're getting physically beaten and persecuted. Do the apostles respond with contempt? Because you could see in the moment how that would make sense, where the apostles point the fingers at the council and say, "You filthy blasphemers who have come against the gospel that sets people free," they could have unloaded on them. This is the craziest part, and I want to show you how they responded.

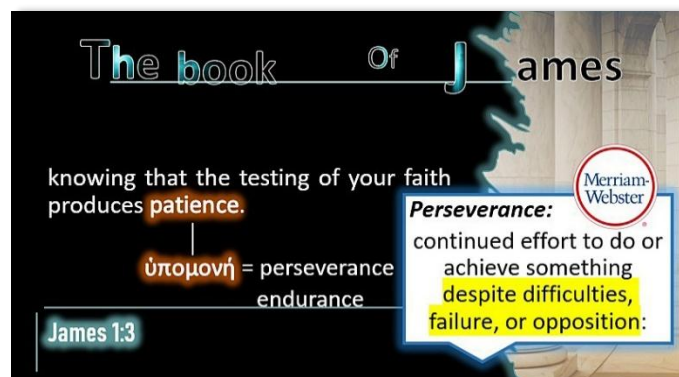
Acts 5:41—**So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name** (emphasis added). Now, you'd better take this in because this is what it's all about. And we want to talk about, "Hey, we're supposed to count it all joy when you enter into trial." That will never happen until you have a kingdom perspective. Your perspective, and whatever trials and tribulations are in your context, your perspective will lead to your response. The apostles in this moment were not focused on the bruises, the bleeding, the torture, or the beating that they took. That didn't mean anything to them. That blows my mind. They're walking away, and they're rejoicing that they were counted worthy. They have a completely different perspective. They're looking in a completely opposite direction from what many of us would have in the moment. That is what I'm talking about.

Luke Chapter 10; think about Luke 10:17 for a second. Yeshua sends seventy men out to minister before Him, and what's recorded is amazing. These 70 men come back, and it says, **"Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.'**" (Emphasis added). "With joy!" They're rejoicing! Why? They're rejoicing; they communicate to Yeshua because even the demons are subject to them in Yeshua's Holy Name. This is the perspective: they're walking away, and they're in awe at that.

Yeshua has to set them straight. You don't have the right perspective; you're not looking at this properly. —Luke 10:20 — **Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.** Assuredly I say, do not rejoice that the demons are subject to you in My name; rather rejoice that your names are written in the Kingdom of God. You're not looking at this situation correctly. This is where we all get in trouble. This is where we will fall short. This is where the enemy will pick us apart and take advantage of us. We need to have that kingdom perspective in the moment, in the trial, and in the tribulation. That's kingdom-minded because that leads to life, and it changes how we respond to it. We need to have this.

Going back to James, he says in James 1:2-3—<sup>2</sup> **My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ...** Now we get the benefit, the blessing of James telling us why. Count it all joy, <sup>3</sup> **knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience** (emphasis added). In Greek, "*hupomoné* (ὕπομονή)" means perseverance. We're to rejoice; we're to count it all joy because the testing of our faith produces something. Something beautiful is about to happen, and that is "perseverance."

And that word, what's interesting, "*hupomoné*" elsewhere, and you'll even see this today, is actually translated "perseverance." I would argue that this is probably the best term we have in English to extract the intent of what *hupomoné* is conveying—its perseverance—and to fully appreciate this when we go to the English



and look at what perseverance is. We read this in *Merriam-Webster*— It's a [continued effort to do or achieve something](#)—a continued effort in our context. It's our continued effort to walk in that difficult, narrow path filled with trials and tribulations, to enter into the Kingdom of God, to cling to Yeshua, and to keep His commandments. This is the call; it's the continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, despite that—despite the failure.

You know, I think of Proverbs 24:16, which says, "[For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again ...](#)" In other words, they brush themselves off. I screwed up, I'm brushing myself off, I'm repenting, I'm confessing sin, and I'm moving in righteousness. A righteous man does not tolerate sin in his life. He moves forward into righteousness.

So, we see this beautiful definition of perseverance, despite difficulties, failure, or even opposition. — Ephesians 6:12— [For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.](#) We fight, we war, and we do not give up. That's what warriors do. That's what those who are sold out and radical for the name of Yeshua do.

The apostle Paul says this in Romans 5:3— [And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations](#); here we go again. They're all talking about it—[knowing that tribulation produces hupomoné](#), it produces [perseverance](#) (emphasis added). He's saying the exact same thing. And this is a tidbit of irony because there are some historically, like Luther, who tried to say that James has a completely different message than Paul, and yet what we're going to see is the exact opposite. They say the same things. So, I'm going to enjoy pointing out those moments as we go through the Epistle of James, and this is one of those moments. Paul is saying the exact same thing James is; they're on the same page, it's "*hupomoné*."

And he doesn't even stop here, but Paul goes on, and he shows this domino effect of what happens. — Romans 5:4—[and perseverance develops character; and character, hope.](#) I want to say something. There is no opportunity to actually persevere in anything unless you're in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. How do you persevere when you're on the high hills of blessing? That's not perseverance. When you're cherishing those moments, those great moments of blessing, you're walking on Easy Street; there's no opportunity to persevere. You know nothing about it. Oh, but when you hit trial and tribulation, when you're dragged into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, that's when we find out.



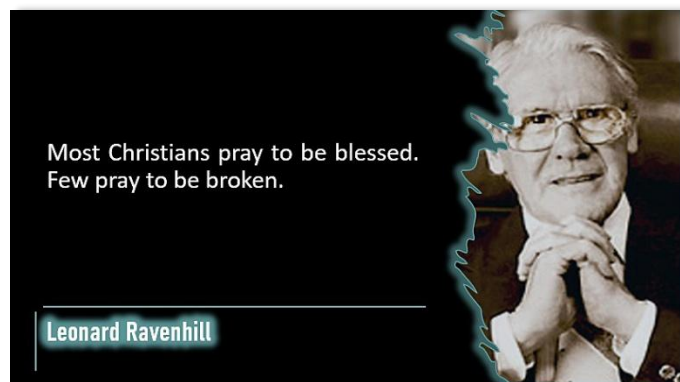
In fact, that's your crucible, that vessel that you put those precious metals in, of gold and silver, and you heat those metals up to an insane temperature. And when you do, something interesting happens. All the impurities that you could not see that are embedded within those precious metals start to come out, and they float to the surface so that you can scrape all the dross off.

This is the beauty of trial and tribulation in your life. All those things the devil has implanted in you, all the things of the world that have been implanted in you that people don't see. When you enter into trial and tribulation, I'm going to tell you those things; the LORD will heat you up hot, and those things will start to come out. And it's for the

benefit of being able to scrape it. All the lies, all the deceptions that you've bought into (1 John 2:16), **the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life**—all of those things begin to get scraped.

There was a prayer that I just read recently by King David; it's in Psalm 39:4. David prays this prayer: **"LORD, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am."** Think about that. Think about what David is praying. Are you serious? He is praying, Break me, bring me to a place where I have that perfect clarity that I am totally codependent upon You. It is there that I realize the importance of Your deliverance, of Your mercy, of Your grace. Make me know my end. I dare you to pray that prayer. I dare you to pray that prayer and find out what happens. And I'll warn you, be prepared because we're told in Scripture—1 John 5:14-15—<sup>14</sup> **Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.** <sup>15</sup> **And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.** If you want to pray that prayer, get prepared. It's a prayer you need to pray; there's no question about it.

I love the evangelist Ravenhill, probably the most, or one of the most notable evangelists of our lifetime. He said this: — Leonard Ravenhill— **Most Christians pray to be blessed. Few pray to be broken.** Who wants to pray to be broken? When was the last time you prayed that prayer? Nobody wants to be dragged into the Valley of the Shadow of Death; that doesn't come naturally.



But when you start looking at the righteous men of God, they're all in. They pray to be broken. They pray, whatever it takes. Heat me up and burn it out. Those things that are hidden within us that are messed up. Those fears that control us, the foolishness of the world, the covetousness, the pride of life, all of this filth—I'm telling you, pray David's prayer, **"Make me to know my end,"** and He will do it. And be prepared. But that is a prayer of life. If it matters to you to inherit eternal life, you pray that prayer.

Going back to James 1:2-3—<sup>2</sup> **My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,** <sup>3</sup> **knowing what? That the testing of your faith produces patience.** I want to zero in on this testing aspect because again, this is not a matter of if; it's only a matter of when. Every single one of you will be tested, and God will see to it Himself. This is not my opinion; this is Scripture. — Proverbs 17:3— **The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold;** this is the crucible. You put the precious metals in there to extract the impurities. And look at what it says in conjunction with the crucible—**but the LORD tests the hearts.** (Emphasis added). You will be tested. It says in Psalm 11:5—**The Lord tests the righteous ...** Do you believe that you're a believer? Do you believe that you are righteous? You will be tested.

We're going to find out; the LORD is going to find out who you are; Job is a good example of this. We read in Job 23:10-11—<sup>10</sup> **But He knows the way that I take;** Job is saying the LORD knows the way that I walk **when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.** What he's saying is, I will come forth purified and holy when He has tested me. Now, Job affixes a statement to this time of tribulation, a time of being thrown into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and it's this: <sup>11</sup> **My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside** (emphasis added). That's what the LORD is looking for when He heats you up.



When you are tested, are you going to hold the line? We read in the Torah in Deuteronomy 8:2—**And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, oh, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart ...** (Emphasis added). Think about this. The blood of the lamb is shed. Israel receives true deliverance and freedom from the bondage of Pharaoh—from Satan—and is taken out, but He doesn't plop them in the Promised Land. No, no, no, no. After Israel comes into the faith and the realization of true deliverance through the blood of the lamb, what does He do? He tests them; that's what happened. He brought them out into the wilderness and tested them. Why? He wants to know what is in their heart.

The only way to know what's truly in your heart isn't while you're on the high hills of blessing; it's when you're thrown into the crucible, and it's hot, it's uncomfortable, and you're hanging by a thread. Only then do we find out who you are. That's how God finds out who you are. Whether or not you're going to be faithful. And what is it that He's looking for? If it says He wanted to know what was in their heart, what does that mean in God's speak? It means—Deuteronomy 8:2b—**whether you would keep his commandments or not.**

Do you understand that you'll be pushed to the brink, and the principalities and powers will be waiting in the wings at that vulnerable moment when you're at your weakest? And they're going to try to convince you to compromise. You don't have to face this adversity. You don't have to go through this if you just walk away from the commandments, and all will be well. You had better believe that's going to come. You better believe Satan is going to give you a way out. Don't take it. Under any circumstance, under no context, can we forsake the Holy Name of Yeshua or walk away from the commandments of God? We cannot; we must hold the line. We can't allow our context, whatever it may be, to define our character. The only thing that should be defining our character is our faith in Yeshua and our allegiance to His Word—period.

You take that with you in whatever context. There'll be times you're on the high hills of blessing; take it with you. And there'll be times when you'll be thrown in the crucible; you'd better take it with you because that's the time when you're going to be tested. We read this; check this out in Revelation 14:12—**Here is the patience;** oh, look at this, "*hupomoné*." Here is the perseverance **of the saints.** What is the perseverance of the saints? **Here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus** (emphasis added). That's *hupomoné*. That's perseverance.

To the church at Smyrna, Yeshua says this in Revelation 2:10—**Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison ...** Just as he did with the apostles. In fact, I will argue just as he did with Joseph back in Genesis because Joseph rejected the advances of Potiphar's wife. He stood in righteousness. He kept the commandments of God, and because of it, he was thrown into prison. And Psalm 105:19 actually says there, "**The word of the LORD tested him.**" There the LORD tested him. Well, that's interesting because with what we're going to read with Yeshua's words here (Revelation 2:10), the devil's about to throw some of you into prison "**that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days.**" (Emphasis added). And it doesn't mean literally; it's talking about the set time. The devil is going to move, and the LORD is going to allow him. I mean, we read in Revelation Chapter 13 that the saints are given into the hands of the antichrist to do horrible things.

It doesn't matter. The context doesn't depict our character. It's our faith in Yeshua; it is our allegiance to His Word. We die on that hill of perseverance. You must be willing to die, and Yeshua gives that very

advice to Smyrna. He says (Revelation 2:10b), "**Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**" (Emphasis added). If you compromise, you'll never have the crown of life; it'll never happen.

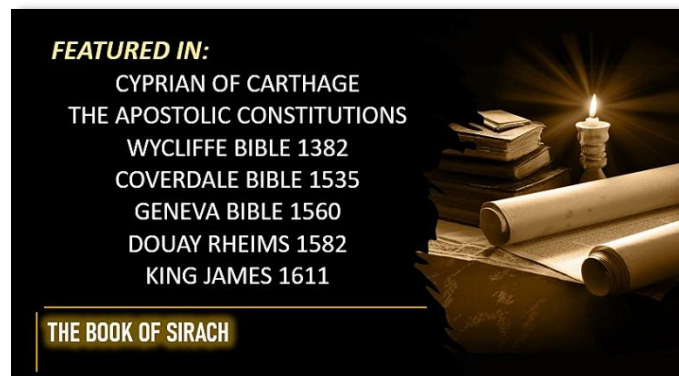


I want to close with the Book of Sirach. And I always do this introduction tutorial because this is not in our 66-book canon. But I do want you to understand that Sirach is part of the Apocrypha, and all throughout Christian history, this book has been read by Christians. But for some reason, which I won't get into now, we don't see value in it. At least traditional evangelical Christianity, sadly enough. But historically, the very first Bible that Christianity ever had was the Septuagint. And that was the only Bible, the

Septuagint tradition; more accurately said, Sirach was included in that. Until the Vulgate came on the scene and became the reigning champion for the Bible and for the Christian church for over a thousand years. The book of Sirach is included in that. I mean, we just go back to the earliest times.

The New Testament— I could do an entire message on how many times we see quotes from Sirach in the New Testament; it's really uncanny. In the Didache, there are no direct quotes, but there is a plethora of allusions to it where you can set Sirach next to the Didache, and they're preaching the same message. They're saying the same things. However, when you come to Clement of Alexandria in the second to the third century, he absolutely quotes it as Scripture. Hippolytus of Rome, in the second to the third century, draws from it. Origen actually uses those special words that we read in the New Testament, "It is written," when it comes to Sirach.

And then you move to Cyprian of Carthage again, you know, getting into the third century, then the apostolic constitutions, third to fourth century; that's a compendium of authors drawing from it. Then you have the Whitcliffe Bible, the pre-Protestant Bible of 1382, which bears Sirach. Coverdale has it. Geneva Bible, not to be surprised. Douay-Rheims, but more importantly, the King James. All throughout Christian history, Christians have been reading this.



It's a profound work, but it really speaks to our message today, which is why I want to close out with the wisdom that is given here. And this is what he says in Sirach 2:1—**My child, when you come to serve the LORD, prepare yourself for testing** (emphasis added). All I need to do is read the Bible, and I can see that. All I need to do is read the Torah and look at the Exodus. God delivers them; they are redeemed by the blood of the lamb, and they are hurled into the great and terrible wilderness, the crucible, filled with serpents and scorpions, no food, and no water.

The sad thing is, there are a lot of Christians not getting the memo. I mean, seriously, they come into the faith, and there is absolutely no perspective of what you're coming into. Now, understand, the expectation is persecution. All who seek to live godly in the Messiah Yeshua will suffer persecution. Do you understand if you want us to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Do you understand what it's going to cost you? Are you willing to die? Count the costs now. This is something that should be conveyed. You have to be willing to die for Him. Nothing less is acceptable. You have to be willing to die for the faith.

**Prepare yourself for testing.** Sirach 2:2—**Set your heart right and be steadfast, and do not be impetuous;** don't be reckless and careless **in time of calamity.** In other words, when that fear, that anxiety, the frustration, the despair, and the hopelessness come in because you've been thrown in the crucible, do not fall apart. Do not bend, do not break, do not crack, hold your position, and have an accurate perspective of what is going on. You're in a situation with an opportunity now to show the LORD how much you love Him. You now have an opportunity to persevere.

And he goes on, and he says in Sirach 2:3—**Cling to him and do not depart, so that your last days may be prosperous.** Now I'm going to tell you, this is not Sirach's mind; this is Deuteronomy Chapter 30. He's literally pulling this out of the Torah, where Moses commands Israel (Deuteronomy 30:20), **"that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days ..."** It's amazing; you see the structure of the faith. "Put your faith and trust in the LORD God. Keep His Word, keep His commandments, and you will prosper." That's the message. This is the *hupomoné*; this is the perseverance of the saints. And listen to this in Sirach 2:4—**Accept whatever befalls you, and in times of humiliation be patient.** In other words, persevere. And in those times of humiliation, when you're thrown in the furnace of humiliation, you persevere and accept whatever befalls you.

You know, it's interesting; when Job's wife is looking at Job sucking wind, he's on his deathbed and in agony. She tells him (Job 2:9), **"Curse God and die!"** And Job's response is, Wait a second. (Job 2:10) **"Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?"** These things we forget. We forget these things. And that's why I love this wisdom. Accept whatever befalls you. Knowing what Job did, we could read other passages like Ecclesiastes as well.

Sirach 2:5—**For gold is:** think about the saints; those believers are **tested in the fire**, they're put in the crucible, **and those found acceptable, in the furnace of humiliation** (emphasis added). Whether you're acceptable or not, whether you're worthy or not of the Kingdom of God, will be determined by how you respond to tribulation. That's where God's going to find out your heart.

*[Closing prayer]*

Abba Father, we just give You praise and glory for Your faithfulness, for the beauty of the Word that Your servant James has brought. The beauty of the Word that Your servant Peter has brought to us, that Your servant, the apostle Paul, has communicated, is that we are to glory in tribulation (Romans 5:3-4), **knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character; and character, hope.**

LORD, I pray in the moments of that suffering, that pain, where we're confronted with hopelessness and fear and anxiety, I pray in those moments we have Holy Spirit perspective that we may respond the way Your servants have responded. To have that perspective of the opportunity to show You, no, we're going to be faithful, we're going to love You. Even when we're faced with adversity, we will love You still because You are worthy.

LORD, I thank You for Your Word that gives us life. Your Word (Hebrews 4:12) **is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword**. There's nothing like it; it's absolutely incredible. And so, I thank You, LORD, for Your faithfulness, for Your mercy and grace, and for that deliverance that only comes through Yeshua the Messiah.

And LORD, I do; I pray that this community trains its hands for war and its fingers for battle. That we are not weak, that we don't become complacent, and that we will not compromise in the face of adversity, but we will double down in our love for who You are. And we just pray all this in the mighty name of Yeshua. Amen.