

## How God Uses Adversity

### I. Testing

- A) Gen 22
- B) Whole Book of Exodus
- C) Deut 8:2
- D) Deut 8:16
- E) Deut 13:3
- F) Judges 2:21-23
- G) Proverbs 17:3
- H) Whole Book of Job
- I) Zech 13:9
- J) Matt 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13
- K) Heb 3:8
- L) Jam 1:3
- M) Jam 1:12
- N) Rev 3:10, Rev 5-22

### II. Punishing sin leading to repentance

- A) Isaiah 1
- B) 2 Samuel 11 and 12
- C) Book of Micah
- D) Psalm 78:31-35
- E) Psalm 119:66-67
- F) Psalm 119:75-77

### III. Punishing sin leading to death

- A) Zephaniah 1
- B) Genesis 6 and 7
- C) Acts 5:1-11
- D) 2 Sam 6:5-7
- E) Numbers 14:26-30
- F) Book of Revelation

### IV. Developing fruit of spirit

- A) Romans 5:3-5
- B) Galatians 5:22-23
- C) Hebrews 12:4-11

- D) Eph 5:9
- E) 2 Cor 12:7
- F) James 1:2-4
- V. The suffering/death of Jesus brought about salvation
  - A) Isaiah 53
  - B) Luke 9:22
  - C) Mark 15:16-39
  - D) 2 Cor 5:21
  - E) 1 Peter 2:24
  - F) 1 Peter 3:18
- VI. Persecution of Christians
  - A) Matt 5:10-12
  - B) 2 Tim 3:10-12
  - C) 1 Peter 4:1-2
  - D) 1 Peter 4:12-19

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From Miriam Webster

Definition of adversity

: a state or instance of serious or continued difficulty or misfortune

## Part I, Adversity for the Purpose of Testing

Testing Provides a Choice

Deut 30

15 *“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; 16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. 17 But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship*

*other gods and serve them, 18 I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, 20 by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”*

Joshua 24:15

*‘And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.’*

John 1:12 *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God*

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The very first test we encounter in walking with God, is the test of choosing life, or choosing death. Before we receive salvation, we live as the world lives: sinning, not acknowledging God or what He has done for us. We are all set on a course for death and Hell. God’s people, the Israelites, were given the choice of cursing or blessing, life or death. People now have the same choice, accept God’s amazing offer of redemption, or not and accept the consequences. It is generally adversity that encourages people to make a choice. For me personally, God’s Holy Spirit started working on me, convicting me of sin, until I was broken and realized I needed a savior. Russell often says that all conversions are foxhole conversions. If the adversity didn’t come, I would

have just kept going as I was, creating destruction all around me and eventually wound up in Hell. So I am glad for the adversity that helped get me off of that path.

*James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

James 1:12

*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.*

1 Corinthians 4:2 “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”

*Hebrews 10:36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.*

*James 5:10 As an example, brothers and sisters, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.*

Next we are tested to see if we will remain faithful under trial. Job was living an exemplary life. Satan came to God and suggested that Job was only faithful because God protected and blessed him so much. So God agreed to let Job be tested. And what a test this man had! He lost his children, all his livestock, everything. He was given sore all over his body. He was transformed into a miserable wretch. When he endured the trials and still remained faithful to God, he was blessed with more than he had lost.

The Bible is full of accounts of people being tested. Abraham was tested. Joseph was tested. Rahab the harlot was tested. Daniel and his three companions were tested.

I have come to see this world and this life as a test for the next life. Will we turn to God, cling to Him, live for Him even despite all the tests we are put through. Will we acknowledge His goodness in doing this? Will we serve Him? Will our citizenship be in Him and not in this world. Russell pointed out the definition of citizen:

From Miriam Webster

Definition of citizen

: a native or naturalized person who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it

So will we give our allegiance to God, and look to Him for our protection?

In the picture of the Jewish Wedding, a couple was wedded, in what we would now call a betrothal period. They were expected to remain pure during this time, remaining faithful in the unconsummated marriage. Mary and Joseph were in this period when Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit with Jesus. I think we are in this period with Jesus. We drank the cup with him and became betrothed to him at our salvation, but we are expected to remain faithful to him until he comes and takes his bride. He Himself was tested and remained faithful, but we must be tested also.

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## Part 2: Adversity for the Punishment of Sin Leading to Repentance

*Psalm 78: The anger of God rose against them  
And killed some of their strongest ones,  
And subdued the choice men of Israel.  
32 In spite of all this they still sinned  
And did not believe in His wonderful works.  
33 So He brought their days to an end in futility,  
And their years to an end in sudden terror.  
34 When He killed them, then they sought Him,  
And they returned and searched diligently for God;  
35 And they remembered that God was their rock,  
And the Most High God their Redeemer.*

*Psalm 119:66  
Teach me good discernment and knowledge,  
For I believe in Your commandments.  
67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,  
But now I keep Your word.*

*Psalm 119:75 I know, Lord, that Your judgments are righteous,  
And that You have afflicted me in faithfulness.  
76 May Your favor comfort me,  
According to Your word to Your servant.  
77 May Your compassion come to me so that I may live,  
For Your Law is my delight.*

*Isaiah 1:18 “Come now, and let us debate your case,”  
Says the Lord,  
“Though your sins are as scarlet,  
They shall become as white as snow;  
Though they are red like crimson,  
They shall be like wool.  
19 If you are willing and obedient,*

*You will eat the best of the land;  
20 But if you refuse and rebel,  
You will be devoured by the sword.”  
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*

*Isaiah 1:24 Therefore the Lord God of armies,  
The Mighty One of Israel, declares,  
“Ah, I will have satisfaction against My adversaries,  
And avenge Myself on My enemies.  
25 I will also turn My hand against you,  
And smelt away your impurities as with lye;  
And I will remove all your slag.*

Like a good father, God disciplines his children. In the story of David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11, 12), David sinned greatly by committing adultery with Bathsheba, and then killing her husband in order to cover the crime. David was punished with the death of their child. David repented and God spared him from some of the punishment. God used the adversity to bring David back to Himself, and to get him to quit the sin.

It was the same many times over with the Israelites. God would punish them and the Israelites would repent and return to their God. It was/is a purification process: *will also turn My hand against you, And smelt away your impurities as with lye; And I will remove all your slag.* God was cleaning them, as He does for us. *Revelation 19:7-9 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.* He wants His bride to be pure and righteous, so our impurities must be burned out of us.

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### Part 3: Adversity for the Punishment of Sin Leading to Death

*Numbers 14:26 The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron again, saying, 27 “How long shall I put up with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel which they are voicing against Me. 28 Say to them, ‘As I live,’ declares the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you; 29 your dead bodies will fall in this wilderness, all your numbered men according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. 30 By no means will you come into the land where I swore to settle you, except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.*

God’s judgment comes on those who repeatedly disobey. At some point they have lived in sin for so long and so willfully that God just punishes them. They have run out of room for repentance.

*2 Samuel 6:6 But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, because the oxen nearly overturned it. 7 And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.*

*Acts 5 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and kept back some of the proceeds for himself, with his wife’s full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles’ feet. 3 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.” 5 And*

*as he heard these words, Ananias collapsed and died; and great fear came over all who heard about it.*

These examples show how sometimes the judgment of God falls quickly. These things seem to have happened as an example to the rest of us. Don't take God's instruction lightly, but obey. The consequences for disobedience can be fatal. The Bible tells us that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Examples such as these encourage fear of the Lord.

*Genesis 6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of mankind was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. 6 So the Lord was sorry that He had made mankind on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 Then the Lord said, "I will wipe out mankind whom I have created from the face of the land; mankind, and animals as well, and crawling things, and the birds of the sky. For I am sorry that I have made them."*

In the account of the flood, the wickedness of mankind grew so great that God decided to destroy everyone. He saved only Noah and his family in the ark. This was to punish the sin of mankind and wipe out the wickedness from the earth. People had the time that Noah was building the ark to repent, but they did not, and they all died.

God said He will again judge the whole earth soon. Many places in the Bible describe this time, but mostly in the book of Revelation. He will bring great calamity on the earth. It will be the worst time in human history. Some people will have the chance to repent, and this appears to be the reason the judgment lasts 7 years. But most people will die suddenly, or will be ineligible for repentance and salvation due to taking the mark of the beast.

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## Part 4: Adversity Leads to Developing Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

Ephesians 5:9 *(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth)*

Rom 5:3 *And not only this, but we also celebrate in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

Hebrews 12:4 *You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons. "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are punished by Him; 6 For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He punishes every son whom He accepts."*  
7 *It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 For the moment, all discipline*

*seems not to be pleasant, but painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*

*James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

*2 Corinthians 12:7 Because of the extraordinary greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in distresses, in persecutions, in difficulties, in behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Trials are painful, but they lead to our growth. They keep us humble, as the thorn Paul’s flesh. The testing of our faith produces endurance. Through the trials we develop the peaceable fruit of righteousness. In enduring them, we crucify our flesh, just as Jesus was crucified. Pray for patience, and God will give you an seemingly endless stream of things that try your patience! But in the end, you will become more patient.

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The suffering of Jesus brought about salvation

*Isaiah 53:4 However, it was our sicknesses that He Himself bore,  
And our pains that He carried;*

*Yet we ourselves assumed that He had been afflicted,  
Struck down by God, and humiliated.  
5 But He was pierced for our offenses,  
He was crushed for our wrongdoings;  
The punishment for our well-being was laid upon Him,  
And by His wounds we are healed.  
6 All of us, like sheep, have gone astray,  
Each of us has turned to his own way;  
But the Lord has caused the wrongdoing of us all  
To fall on Him.*

*Isaiah 53:9 Yet He was with a rich man in His death,  
Because He had done no violence,  
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.  
10 But the Lord desired  
To crush Him, causing Him grief;  
If He renders Himself as a guilt offering,  
He will see His offspring,  
He will prolong His days,  
And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.  
11 As a result of the anguish of His soul,  
He will see it and be satisfied;  
By His knowledge the Righteous One,  
My Servant, will justify the many,  
For He will bear their wrongdoings.  
12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,  
And He will divide the plunder with the strong,  
Because He poured out His life unto death,  
And was counted with wrongdoers;  
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,  
And interceded for the wrongdoers.*

*Luke 9:22 “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be  
rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed  
and be raised on the third day.”*

*2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

*1 Peter 2:24 and He Himself brought our sins in His body up on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; by His wounds you were healed.*

*1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all time, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit*

We earned death through our sins, but Jesus took our punishment on himself so we wouldn't have to endure an eternity in Hell. He died our death for us so when we repent, believe Jesus and follow Him, we can have eternal life. We suffer some things in this world, but for a purpose and it has an ending. Hell is forever, and Jesus made a way for us to avoid that.

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## Part 6. Persecution of Christians

*Jesus said in Matthew 5:10-12, "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in this same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

*Heb 11:35 Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; 36 and others experienced mocking and flogging, and further, chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they*

were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented 38 (people of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts, on mountains, and sheltering in caves and holes in the ground. 39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

2 Timothy 3:10 Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! 12 Indeed, all who want to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

1 Peter:4 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human lusts, but for the will of God.

2 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though something strange were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that at the revelation of His glory you may also rejoice and be overjoyed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory, and of God, rests upon you. 15 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And if it is with

*difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? 19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God are to entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.*

*John 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.*

*John 16:33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*

*Acts 14:22 Strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*

*Revelation 2:10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

*2 Corinthians 4:8-12 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.*

*John 16:2 They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.*

*Matthew 10:22 And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.*

*Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*

To follow Jesus means to do what He did. He was persecuted so we will be persecuted also. Through this we are saved, we enter the kingdom of God, we have the Spirit of Glory resting on us, we get the crown of life, we might obtain a better resurrection.

*Luke 21:12 "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, turning you over to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors on account of My name. 13 It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. 14 So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; 15 for I will provide you eloquence and wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to oppose or refute. 16 But you will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, other relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death, 17 and you will be hated by all people because of My name. 18 And yet not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your endurance you will gain your lives.*

*Revelation 21:10 "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down, the one who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.*

History teaches us that persecution of Christians helps lead others to Christ. We can overcome by the word of our testimony. How

many have come to Christ by witnessing the faithful endurance of His saints? When we are tortured, beaten, lose everything, but refuse to turn from our God, it has a huge impact on people.

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A lot of people are told that once you become a follower of Christ, everything will be peaches and cream. Nothing bad will ever happen to you. You'll be blessed, rich, always happy. This is true, in a way, because you will have these things in eternal life. But first you have to go to the school of life and be tested to see if you're going to pass!

