

# THE SIX TRIALS OF CHRIST

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## Chapter 15

### SPIRITUAL TRUTHS FROM THE STUDY OF THE TRIALS

Each lesson that we have had on the trials of what is recorded in Scripture has revealed many pertinent lessons and truths. We have sought to bring these out as we have moved through Scripture, and it is not our purpose here to review any of these. Our purpose now is to stand off and look at the entire procedure that has occurred and seek to answer the question: Why is so much space devoted to this in GOD's Word? What is the lesson and lessons for us in this study? Knowing the facts of what has occurred is only the means of answering this final and important question.

1. There is one major truth that the HOLY SPIRIT is seeking to establish, and all other truths and lessons are completely subordinate and insignificant in comparison to this one. This one important fact is that JESUS CHRIST is sinless. His whole life was examined and no one accused Him of one wrong word or act: "**Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?**" (John 8:46). He did not sin before the trials. He did not sin in the trials. He did not sin on the cross. Therefore He died sinless: "**The just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.**"

This is why the Epistles write of this One:

He did not sin: "**Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth**" (I Peter 2:22).

He knew no sin: "**For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him**" (II Corinthians 5:21).

In Him is no sin: "**And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin**" (I John 3:5).

Peter addresses Him as the Holy One and the Just: "**But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you**" (Acts 3:14).

The writer of Hebrews attests that he was sinless: "**For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher**

than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26).

Gabriel called Him "holy": "**And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God**" (Luke 1:35).

We need to keep in mind that as we approach this one day of history more and more space and words are devoted to telling us what took place and why than any other period in the life of CHRIST. A total of 13 chapters tells us of this one day.

The reason is all important. The world is searching the life of JESUS CHRIST in order to accuse Him, but they find nothing.

You will remember that Daniel's life was also searched: "**Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him**" (Dan. 6:4).

Our Lord is the greater than Daniel. He had enemies that listened to every word He spoke seeking to trap Him in His speech or His actions, but they found nothing: "**Which also our Fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our Fathers, unto the days of David; Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your Fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your Fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers**" (Acts 7:45-52).

The examination given CHRIST was far more intensive and lengthier than that of Daniel, and yet they found nothing.

It is essential if CHRIST is going to die for others that He be sinless. There is no other way that He may be the Saviour of the world. Since this is so very important, the Scriptures devote much space to it.

The trials examine and re-examine CHRIST from every angle, but find nothing. He, through it all, exposes His enemies' sins, but manifests that He Himself is "**holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners**" (Hebrews 7:26).

He did not need "**to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's**" (Hebrews 7:27). He could offer up Himself as the one sacrifice for sins forever because He was sinless.

The trials reveal then, one important fact: JESUS CHRIST is sinless. The Cross reveals the other significant truth: He is our substitute. His death is vicarious. The one is as important as the other. You must have a sinless Saviour or you have no Saviour at all. His death would have meant nothing more than what modernism says of it, had JESUS CHRIST not been sinless. This is what changes Calvary and the doctrine of the atonement from being merely the death of a martyr dying for a principle for which he held, or any other such inadequate or erroneous concept into a vicarious propitiatory death. Vicarious means He died in the place of the sinner: He was the sinner's substitute. Propitiatory means that He made complete satisfaction for sins to the Father.

What changes Calvary to become a place of propitiation, and the Lord's death vicarious is who He is. We all know what He did. He died on a Cross. This is not in question. Who died on that Cross makes the difference in what happened.

Since GOD was in CHRIST and sinless, He could taste death for every man on the Cross so that all can be saved. He makes reconciliation possible. Yet all goes back to the Person. The trials reveal the Person, His character and nature, and so establish the nature of His work on the Cross.

What more could be said or done to prove the sinlessness of JESUS CHRIST that has not been done in these trials? The answer is nothing.

The HOLY SPIRIT has labored to prove this point simply because it is so essential to our salvation.

All the rest of the instruction and lessons that we derive from these trials is subordinate to this theme. This is primary; all others are secondary.

## 2. The Example of CHRIST for the Christian.

Here is a theme which Scripture itself tells us is for us who are believers in the Lord JESUS CHRIST. CHRIST is our example in suffering.

**"For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:20-23).**

In CHRIST's sufferings through these trials, I see at least four important ways in which He is our example. Some of these are interrelated and yet by dividing them up we may see different aspects of what CHRIST's sufferings teach us.

a. We are to be careful not to sin either by attitude, action or word when we go through unjust trials. (I Peter 2:22-23 above).

How easy it is to allow the old sin nature to take control and have the wrong attitude. And when we do it will ultimately show itself in wrong speech and action. The old sin nature cannot remain timid or bashful when it is in control.

We must be very careful in these particular circumstances not to be under the circumstances. When we get out of fellowship we always sin before we get back into fellowship. The reason is this. The only way we learn we are out of fellowship is through sinning, which sin is wrong and must be acknowledged by our confessing it in order to be forgiven, cleansed and restored to fellowship.

Therefore, we are to be careful. The exceeding better thing is not to get out of fellowship in the hour of trial.

b. We are given the example of committing ourselves and our trials to the Lord. **"but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously"** (I Peter 2:23b).

The Lord knew that the Father does not and cannot change. He is immutable.

Since He is the same, and He is righteous before, He commits His trial and all that He is to this One.

**"He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him"** (Psalm 22:8). "He trusted." This is a different word for trust from that used before in the Psalms in verses 4 and 5: **"Our Fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded."** It carries the idea that He rolled Himself and His case on the Lord.

What CHRIST was accused of on the Cross was not sins, but trusting the Lord. They ridiculed Him for His piety.

When our Lord didn't understand why, He trusted. He has given us the example. When we cannot see and understand, we can trust. CHRIST went to the right person with His problem and He trusted in the right One. So He has given us the example. When we have a problem we are to go to Him and we are to roll ourselves and our case on the Lord and trust Him who does all things well.

c. We are shown by the Lord's experiences the divine pattern that is for all believers and pilgrims on this earth.

GOD's program calls for sufferings first, and the glory to follow.

**"Searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"** (I Peter 1:11).

As they did to the Lord they will do to His own.

**"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (John 15:18-20).**

**"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12).**

**"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (II Timothy 2:20).**

**"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" (Romans 8:18).**

**"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17).**

**"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church . . . To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:24, 27).**

Cf. The Tabernacle Lampstand. It is beaten into an object of eternal glory, all from one lump of pure gold. The center shaft is JESUS CHRIST; the branches are the believers. He has already suffered and been glorified; today we are completing the sufferings of the body and we shall be glorified together.

d. These trials reveal more than anything else in Scripture that a Holy GOD must have a future day of reward for the innocent and of punishment for the wicked and the injustice that has been committed.

Righteousness and justice demand it.  
Scripture declares it a reality.

On the basis of this truth, CHRIST is our example of "**patient endurance**." We are to look beyond this present to the future glory. We are not to live for this life, but for the next. This is what CHRIST did, and He is thus our example.

**"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).**

**"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of**

**witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Hebrews 12:1).**

i.e., lack of patient endurance in the midst of severe trials, "**and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith . . .**"

CHRIST is our example in patient endurance and suffering even to death as we strive against sin.

Think of the nature of His sufferings.

1. Intense.
2. Varied.
3. Prolonged.
4. Complete (i.e., to death).

Yet even this does not convey the whole picture.

There were sufferings in body because He was a man.  
There were sufferings in soul because He was a perfect man.  
There were sufferings in spirit because He was the God-Man.

No man ever suffered more; yet through it all He patiently endured, not by the power of His divine nature, but as man yielded to GOD and to His will.

He is our forerunner who wears the victor's crown. There He stands the mighty conqueror.

3. There is one other spiritual truth concerning these trials of the Lord that is of major importance to the believer.

Paul writes in Philippians 3:10, "**That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.**"

We would like to quote this and stop there, and Paul does not. He continues: "**and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.**"

Whatever Paul went in for, he went in with all he had. If it was worth anything, it was worth everything.

When he was in Pharisaism he went in with everything he had.

Notice what Paul had to glory in

**"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as**

**touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Philippians 3:4-6).**

He could glory in family.  
He was a Jew, not a Gentile.

He could glory in customs.  
He was a Hebrew, not a Hellenist.

He could glory in orthodoxy.  
He was a Pharisee, not a Sadducee.

He could glory in activity.  
He was zealous, not indifferent.

He could glory in ritual.  
He was blameless, not ceremonially unclean.

All of these things would be gain for Paul had he continued in Pharisaism, for he would have probably been as great if not greater than his teacher, Gamaliel.

But the Lord got a hold of Paul, and he did a complete about face. These things of the flesh were no longer what he sought. Now his zeal and all of his efforts were in another direction -- an opposite direction.

**"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:7-9).**

:7 -- In this program there was no place for self-glory whatever, and if any came in, it was loss for CHRIST and for His work.

:8 -- Now Paul was pressing just as strongly in the opposite direction to gain CHRIST and His approval. He was pressing for the top. He was throwing everything into it.

:9 -- Paul wants no mere legal righteousness. He wants faith righteousness, not only for justification but for sanctification. The just shall live by faith.

Paul's desire is now to go on in Christian experience: "That I may come to know Him in experience."

I do not want just to know about Him, but Him. You can know about a person without knowing the person Himself. You can know about them by walking with someone who knows them; you can only know them personally by walking yourself with them.

**"For I know whom I have believed"** (I Timothy 1:12). We are content to say all too often, "I know what I believe." It is important to know what we believe, but it is equally as important to know Who we believe . . . personally.

**"and the power of his resurrection."**

Paul wants to know in experience in his own life also, the power that CHRIST experienced in His resurrection.

The word for power is "dunamis."

It is used in Ephesians 1:19ff.

We have already experienced this power positionally in the Gospel (Romans 1:16), but now Paul wants to experience it in his life in time.

But Paul knows a Scriptural principle. No one can experience resurrection with its glory, without experiencing suffering and death first. Thus the only way to come to know in experience the power of His resurrection is to come to know

**"the fellowship of his sufferings."**

The church at Philippi was fellowshiping with Paul in the spread of the Gospel: **"For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now"** (Philippians 1:5).

Fellowship means "to make common," "to have things in common." It signifies sharing something with someone else. In this sharing one partakes of what the other has or does.

Because of the Philippians financial support of Paul, they were sharing or fellowshiping with him in the furtherance of the Gospel.

A person may fellowship not only in this but with food, ideas, attitudes, etc. Philippians 2:1 mentions **"fellowship of the Spirit."** In this every believer shares in the Person and ministry of the HOLY SPIRIT, and is thus used by Paul as an incentive why there should be unity of mind and direction because of this mutual sharing.

So here Paul wants to share in the sufferings of CHRIST. Only as he shares in these sufferings that CHRIST experienced can Paul come to know in experience this One.

What a contrast between Paul and us. The last thing we want to do is suffer, particularly unjustly. But the believers in the early church were different, and perhaps this is why they turned the world up-side down. They received when they were counted worthy to suffer for the sake of the Lord.

**"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ"** (Acts 5:41-42).

**"And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:23-25).**

**"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (II Corinthians 6:10).**

**"For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Hebrews 10:34).**

**"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" (I Peter 4:12).**

Consider:

**"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (I Corinthians 4:9-13).**

And listen:

**"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 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" (James 1:2-4).**

This suffering that Paul wanted to share in, is something he wants perfected in his life to such an extent that he is through this **"being made conformable unto his death."**

The word signifies "to bring to the same form with some other person or thing."

Paul wanted to know the Lord JESUS in personal experience to such an extent that His resurrection power was his together with the mutual sharing of CHRIST's sufferings so that being completely yielded to the will of GOD and His likeness in meekness and lowliness, he could even die like JESUS CHRIST died.

His is an ambition not many have had.

You cannot throw yourself into anything more than this. Even now in Rome Paul was between life and death: "**According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death**" (Philippians 1:20). where it could be either one of the other.

Paul knew he could never share in CHRIST's atoning sufferings. This is not his desire. He wants to share in the Lord's unjust sufferings for righteousness sake. Thus it is what begins as a spiritual battle in Gethsemane and ends on the Cross. It includes all the sufferings of the trials. This is coming to know Him in experience.

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