



Trials

THE TRIAL OF REJECTION

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(Psalm 34:18)

Living in a sin-broken world is painful. Not one person will get through life without facing trials of various types, in varying degrees. Some people face trials in their physical lives; others face trials in their family relationships or friendships; others face financial difficulties. Still others face trials and persecutions simply for being Christians.

The Bible offers God's great promises for us as we face trials. James wrote, "Count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2, 3). Peter wrote that believers who are "grieved by various trials" can trust that God is working through those difficulties to perfect their faith (1 Pet. 1:3-9).

One of the most painful trials human beings can experience is the feeling of being rejected, forsaken, or abandoned. The pain associated with this feeling affects many other areas of life.

RECOGNIZING THE TRIAL OF REJECTION

Some people attempt to protect themselves from rejection by adopting an under-dependent approach to relationships. They refuse to trust anyone or to invest themselves emotionally. Others become over-dependent. They cling tenaciously to relationships to avoid feeling rejected, yet they simultaneously live in fear of it. Most people use some combination of these extremes to cope with rejection.

Following are some traits identified in people who have been wounded by rejection:

- > Difficulty trusting people,
- > Hypersensitivity to rejection.
- > Fear of criticism and anger.
- > Habitually trying to rescue needy people because they doubt that "healthy" people would choose to relate to them.

- > Toleration of disrespect and even abuse.
- > Difficulty trusting God and His Word.

HEALING THE HURT OF REJECTION

Principle 1: Cultivate Increasing Intimacy with God

Despite his obvious failures, David was called "a man after [God's] own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14). David expressed this longing in Psalm 27:4: "One thing I have desired of the LORD . . . that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD." It's no coincidence that this verse comes before verse 10: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take care of me."

When we intentionally cultivate a spiritual environment that fosters intimacy with God, we learn to really know God, not just to know about Him. God's loyal love and eternal presence become more than just theological certainties. They become *experienced realities* in a way that anchors us when trials assail us.

Principle 2: Cultivate Increasingly Balanced Relationships with Others

God's Word contains many relational principles that promote balanced, mutually respectful relationships. Jesus exemplified guidelines for respectful interactions with people. He didn't let people tell Him what to do (Matt. 19:14). He modeled the truth that we don't have to hide our views or values to be congenial or kind. The thought

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of not doing that may sound terrifying—especially if stating a different opinion exposes us to the risk of rejection by people whose approval we value. Again, Jesus models the solution to that painful problem.

Principle 3: Cultivate Increasingly Realistic Expectations of Ourselves, Others, and God

Jesus clarifies this principle in John 16:32, "You . . . will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." Jesus' words summarize two truths that guided His relationships and that hold the key to overcoming the hurt of rejection.

The first truth is that we can't trust people completely. Jesus never put unreserved trust in people because He knew what was in their sinful hearts (John 2:24). All people deserve respect because they bear the image of God, but that respect needs to be realistic enough to know that all people are sinners. People will always disappoint us. Jesus knew that the disciples, who had just declared that they believed He came from God, would soon abandon Him.

The second truth is that dependence on God helps us handle the hurt of rejection. Jesus' confidence in His Father's love created a sense of being "alone but not alone." It's true that Jesus knew God's faithfulness within a uniquely intimate relationship. But as we follow Jesus' God-dependent way of relating, we too will be able to better handle experiences of rejection.

If we've been deeply hurt by rejection, we may face a long process of relearning how to relate to people. We'll know that our relationships are becoming healthier and more God-dependent as we increasingly:

> reach out to others from a deepening sense of fullness in Christ,

- > accept the truth that others can never meet all our needs,
- > recognize that we can't do that for others either,
- > choose to forgive others for their inevitable failings, and
- > determine to acknowledge our inevitable failings and to request forgiveness.

There is but one Source of deep healing from rejection. Only when we find ultimate acceptance and security in God can we experience personal peace, relational rest, and healing from the pain of rejection.

IN CONCLUSION

No matter what trials we face, God cares deeply for His children, promising, "The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth" (Ps. 145:18). Whatever difficulties come into our lives, God is near to us. He is stronger than rejection, stronger than any other trial we can experience. He is able to meet our every need.

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of trials include:

- > Psalm 118:22
- > Isaiah 53:3
- > James 1:2
- > 1 Peter 1:6-9; 2:4-7

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on trials at Psalm 34:18 on page 704. See also the personality profile of Tamar on page 406.

9 Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints!
There is no want to those who fear Him.

10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger;
 But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good *thing*.

11 Come, you children, listen to me;
 I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
 12 Who is the man *who* desires life,
 And loves *many* days, that he may see good?

13 Keep your tongue from evil,
 And your lips from speaking deceit.
 14 Depart from evil and do good;
 Seek peace and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the LORD *are* on the righteous,
 And His ears *are open* to their cry.
 16 The face of the LORD *is* against those who do evil,
 To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 *The righteous* cry out, and the LORD hears,
 And delivers them out of all their troubles.
The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart,

And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

19 Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous,
 But the LORD delivers him out of them all.
 20 He guards all his bones;
 Not one of them is broken.
 21 Evil shall slay the wicked,
 And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.
 22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants,
 And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

PSALM 35

THE LORD THE AVENGER OF HIS PEOPLE

A Psalm of David.

1 Plead *my cause*, O LORD, with those who strive with me;
 Fight against those who fight against me.
 2 Take hold of shield and buckler,
 And stand up for my help.
 3 Also draw out the spear,
 And stop those who pursue me.

also Ps. 51:17



Trials

KEY PASSAGE

TESTED FAITH

(34:18)

Trials are inevitable. Everyone experiences problems and pain. The Bible figuratively describes it as rain falling "on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). Believers can look at their trials in a different light, however. They know, as this psalm says, that "the LORD is near to those who have a broken heart." Even more, however, believers can rejoice in their trials:

- > "Count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2, 3).
- > "You have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:6, 7).

Through trials, God can work in our lives to make us more like Christ.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about trials on pages 706, 707. See also the personality profile of Tamar on page 406.

7 He gathers the waters of the sea together
as a heap;^a
He lays up the deep in storehouses.

Let all the earth fear the LORD;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand
in awe of Him.
For He spoke, and it was *done*;
He commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The LORD brings the counsel of the
nations to nothing;
He makes the plans of the peoples of no
effect.

11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
The plans of His heart to all generations.

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the
LORD,
The people He has chosen as His own
inheritance.

13 The LORD looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men.

14 From the place of His dwelling He
looks

On all the inhabitants of the earth;

15 He fashions their hearts individually;
He considers all their works.

16 No king is saved by the multitude of an
army;
A mighty man is not delivered by great
strength.

17 A horse is a vain hope for safety;
Neither shall it deliver *any* by its great
strength.

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those
who fear Him,

On those who hope in His mercy,

19 To deliver their soul from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waits for the LORD;
He is our help and our shield.
For our heart shall rejoice in Him,
Because we have trusted in His holy
name.

22 Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us,
Just as we hope in You.

PSALM 34

THE HAPPINESS OF THOSE WHO TRUST IN GOD

*A Psalm of David when he pretended
madness before Abimelech, who
drove him away, and he departed.*

1 I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise *shall* continually be in my
mouth.
My soul shall make its boast in the
LORD;

The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.
Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.

I sought the LORD, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.
They looked to Him and were
radiant,

And their faces were not ashamed.
This poor man cried out, and the LORD
heard *him*,
And saved him out of all his troubles.
The angel^a of the LORD encamps all
around those who fear Him,
And delivers them.

8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good;
Blessed is the man *who* trusts in Him!

33:7 ^aSeptuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *in a vessel*. 34:7 ^aOr *Angel*

SOUL NOTE



Our Strength (34:17-22) No one wants troubles, whether they are from loss, disappointment, physical ailments, or just everyday frustrations. Like the psalmist, God's people can "cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles." David knew from experience that "the LORD is near to those who have a broken heart." Believers can turn to God in their times of difficulty, knowing that He hears, cares, and will help them. When we are weak, He is strong. **Topic: Trials**

ISRAEL'S SUFFERING IN EGYPT

1 Now these *are* the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: ²Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; ³Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; ⁴Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. ⁵All those who were descendants^a of Jacob were seventy^b persons (for Joseph was in Egypt *already*). ⁶And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. ⁷But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

⁸Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we; ¹⁰come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and *so* go up out of the land." ¹¹Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. ¹²But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. ¹³So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. ¹⁴And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve *was* with rigor.

¹⁵Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one *was* Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; ¹⁶and he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see *them* on the birthstools, if it *is* a son, then you shall kill him; but if it *is* a daughter, then she shall live." ¹⁷But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them,

but saved the male children alive. ¹⁸So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?"

¹⁹And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women *are* not like the Egyptian women; for they *are* lively and give birth before the midwives come to them."

²⁰Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. ²¹And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them.

²²So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born^a you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive."

MOSES IS BORN

2 And a man of the house of Levi went and took *as wife* a daughter of Levi. ²So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he *was* a beautiful *child*, she hid him three months. ³But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid *it* in the reeds by the river's bank. ⁴And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

⁵Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. ⁶And when she opened *it*, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

1:5 ^aLiterally *who came from the loins of* ^bDead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *seventy-five* (compare Acts 7:14). **1:22** ^aSamaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Targum add *to the Hebrews*.

SOUL NOTE



Seeing God in Suffering (1:11) A thirst for God often grows from suffering.

The Israelites became slaves, were forced to build great cities for Pharaoh, and were brutally afflicted by their taskmasters. God is not the author of evil. He allows it sometimes, however, to His own people—not to destroy them but to bring about a greater good. God would soon perform great miracles on behalf of Israel. The suffering they had experienced brought them to complete dependence on God, who alone could free them. **Topic: Trials**

16 Do not be overly righteous,
Nor be overly wise:
Why should you destroy yourself?
17 Do not be overly wicked,
Nor be foolish:
Why should you die before your time?
It is good that you grasp this,
And also not remove your hand from the
other;
For he who fears God will escape them
all.

19 Wisdom strengthens the wise
More than ten rulers of the city.
20 For *there is* not a just man on earth who
does good
And does not sin.

21 Also do not take to heart everything
people say,
Lest you hear your servant cursing you.
22 For many times, also, your own heart
has known
That even you have cursed others.

23 All this I have proved by wisdom.
I said, "I will be wise";
But it was far from me.
24 As for that which is far off and
exceedingly deep,
Who can find it out?
25 I applied my heart to know,
To search and seek out wisdom and the
reason of things,
To know the wickedness of folly,
Even of foolishness and madness.
And I find more bitter than death
The woman whose heart is snares and
nets,
Whose hands are fetters.

He who pleases God shall escape from
her,
But the sinner shall be trapped by her.

"Here is what I have found," says the
Preacher,
"Adding one thing to the other to find out
the reason,
28 Which my soul still seeks but I cannot
find:
One man among a thousand I have
found,
But a woman among all these I have not
found.
Truly, this only I have found:
That God made man upright,
But they have sought out many
schemes."

Who is like a wise man?
And who knows the interpretation of a
thing?
A man's wisdom makes his face shine,
And the sternness of his face is
changed.

OBEY AUTHORITIES FOR GOD'S SAKE

²I say, "Keep the king's commandment for
the sake of your oath to God. ³Do not be hasty
to go from his presence. Do not take your
stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever
pleases him."

⁴ Where the word of a king is, *there is*
power;
And who may say to him, "What are
you doing?"
He who keeps his command will
experience nothing harmful;
And a wise man's heart discerns both
time and judgment,

SOUL NOTE



No More Tears (7:13, 14) Some things cannot be fixed this side of heaven. Solomon observed that there are times when the crooked cannot be made straight: Some people stricken with cancer will die; some disabilities will never be healed. Solomon advises people to expect both good and bad in life—to enjoy the days of prosperity and be prepared for the days of adversity; No one goes through life without facing difficulties and problems. God never allows our journey here on earth to become so easy that we lose sight of heaven, where God promises to wipe every tear from our eyes (Rev. 21:4). **Topic: Trials**

says the LORD: "You have burned this scroll, saying, 'Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and cause man and beast to cease from here?'" ³⁰Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: "He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night. ³¹I will punish him, his family, and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring on them, on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah all the doom that I have pronounced against them; but they did not heed." ' ' "

³²Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the instruction of Jeremiah^a all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And besides, there were added to them many similar words.

ZEDEKIAH'S VAIN HOPE

37 Now King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. ²But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land gave heed to the words of the LORD which He spoke by the prophet Jeremiah.

³And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "Pray now to the LORD our God for us." ⁴Now Jeremiah was coming and going among the people, for they had not yet put him in prison. ⁵Then Pharaoh's army came up from Egypt; and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

⁶Then the word of the LORD came to the

prophet Jeremiah, saying, ⁷"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Thus you shall say to the king of Judah, who sent you to Me to inquire of Me: "Behold, Pharaoh's army which has come up to help you will return to Egypt, to their own land. ⁸And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city, and take it and burn it with fire." ' ' ⁹Thus says the LORD: 'Do not deceive yourselves, saying, "The Chaldeans will surely depart from us," for they will not depart. ¹⁰For though you had defeated the whole army of the Chaldeans who fight against you, and there remained only wounded men among them, they would rise up, every man in his tent, and burn the city with fire.' "

JEREMIAH IMPRISONED

¹¹And it happened, when the army of the Chaldeans left the siege of Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, ¹²that Jeremiah went out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin to claim his property there among the people. ¹³And when he was in the Gate of Benjamin, a captain of the guard was there whose name was Irijah the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "You are defecting to the Chaldeans!"

¹⁴Then Jeremiah said, "False! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans." But he did not listen to him.

So Irijah seized Jeremiah and brought him to the princes. ¹⁵Therefore the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and they struck him and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe. For they had made that the prison.

¹⁶When Jeremiah entered the dungeon and the cells, and Jeremiah had remained there many days, ¹⁷then Zedekiah the king sent and

36:32 ^aLiterally from Jeremiah's mouth

SOUL NOTE



Wherever and Whatever (37:15) Jeremiah teaches that circumstances are irrelevant where the Lord's work is concerned. After being thrown into prison, Jeremiah continued to minister (37:16, 17), to fulfill God's role for him. Our responsibilities as the Lord's followers do not change with our circumstances.

God does not call us to serve Him only when the conditions are right. The apostle Paul said, "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound," but he concluded, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). **Topic: Trials**

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- Why do we deal treacherously with one another
By profaning the covenant of the fathers?
- 11 Judah has dealt treacherously,
And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem,
For Judah has profaned
The LORD's holy *institution* which He loves:
He has married the daughter of a foreign god.
- 12 May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob
The man who does this, being awake and aware,^a
Yet who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!
- 13 And this is the second thing you do:
You cover the altar of the LORD with tears,
With weeping and crying;
So He does not regard the offering anymore,
Nor receive *it* with goodwill from your hands.
- 14 Yet you say, "For what reason?"
Because the LORD has been witness
Between you and the wife of your youth,
With whom you have dealt treacherously;
Yet she is your companion
And your wife by covenant.
- 15 But did He not make *them* one,
Having a remnant of the Spirit?
And why one?
He seeks godly offspring.
Therefore take heed to your spirit,
And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.

- 16 "For the LORD God of Israel says
That He hates divorce,
For it covers one's garment with violence,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"Therefore take heed to your spirit,
That you do not deal treacherously."
- 17 You have wearied the LORD with your words;
Yet you say,
"In what way have we wearied Him?"
In that you say,
"Everyone who does evil
Is good in the sight of the LORD,
And He delights in them,"
Or, "Where is the God of justice?"

THE COMING MESSENGER

- 3 "Behold, I send My messenger,
And he will prepare the way before Me.
And the Lord, whom you seek,
Will suddenly come to His temple,
Even the Messenger of the covenant,
In whom you delight.
Behold, He is coming,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
- 2 "But who can endure the day of His coming?
And who can stand when He appears?
For He is like a refiner's fire
And like launderers' soap.
- 3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;
He will purify the sons of Levi,
And purge them as gold and silver,

2:12 ^aTalmud and Vulgate read *teacher and student*.

SOUL NOTE



Refined (3:2, 3) Sometimes the only way to get rid of impurity is to use a powerful soap or a refining fire. God would be to Israel "like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap," ready to clean and purify His people. Such cleansing often comes through hardship and trials. God allows difficulties to come into our lives so that the heat of these hardships can burn off impurities. Red-hot fire, pelting sand, and strong soap are harsh, yet good, for they accomplish the desired cleaning. In the same way, life's trials can wash away what is impure in our lives, making us more pure for God.

Topic: Trials

GREETING TO THE ELECT PILGRIMS

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ²elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

A HEAVENLY INHERITANCE

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸whom having not seen^a you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

¹⁰Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, ¹¹searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹²To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us^a they were ministering

the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

LIVING BEFORE GOD OUR FATHER

¹³Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, "*Be holy, for I am holy.*"^a

¹⁷And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; ¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. ²⁰He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you ²¹who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

THE ENDURING WORD

²²Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit^a in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, ²³having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,^a ²⁴because

1:8 ^aM-Text reads *known*. 1:12 ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *you*. 1:16 ^aLeviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7 1:22 ^aNU-Text omits *through the Spirit*. 1:23 ^aNU-Text omits *forever*.

SOUL NOTE



Refiner's Fire (1:6-9) When subjected to intense heat, gold is refined.

Impurities are burned away and pure gold remains. Like gold, faith tested by the fire of trials and difficulties is strengthened and purified. Believers learn that their faith depends on God alone. Such faith is precious to God. When we face trials,

we can "greatly rejoice," for we know that God will strengthen our faith if we continue to hold on to Him. **Topic: Trials**