

DeWitt Branham Teaching Series

A Tested and Tried People

By C.W. "William" Wood October, 1997

Many powerful and wonderful revelations have been given to the Bride from a *message* that God gave to His Prophet. How we do appreciate each one, and how desperately each one is needed. The great types that have been brought to our attention prove that our God knew the end from the beginning, and caused the lives of those in the Bible to portray what would be in our day.

In this message I would like to look at a revelation that I feel has been often overlooked. It has to do with our daily walk before God and the trials that He, Himself, has foreordained that we should experience. The overall teaching of scripture, from Genesis to Revelations, show God's plan to build a character in His children that will be acceptable to Him throughout eternity.

It is His *method* of bringing about this character change that I feel we need more revelation about. Far too often God's people give Satan credit for the circumstances of life, it seems to them that Satan has come to destroy. For those of you who regularly read the Teaching Series, I would refer you back to the message THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. God's control over His total creation is the basis for all Christian faith.

God's method of building *character* is to *test* and *try* His people, and often the trials go past what the carnal mind will be able to accept as having come from God. For this reason there is a desperate need to go to the scriptures and learn of a God that is far different from what our natural, carnal minds have conjured up.

We will use as our beginning scripture a parable that our Lord told in Matt. 13:20-21, "He that receiveth the seed (Word) into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while, for when tribulation or persecution ariseth BECAUSE OF THE WORD, by and by he is offended."

My thought to you concerning these verses is this: God's Word promises that He will PROVE His people by causing them to pass through the fire. Trials and

tests are to be ours as we live for Him and strive to overcome our flesh. But, Jesus said some will not have the revelation that God's Word has promised this kind of hard life. Therefore, when tribulation and persecution come because of the Word (the Word that promised they will come), by and by this man without root (the Holy Ghost) will be offended.

This man without the Holy Ghost will not catch the revelation that God is the one who ordains and controls the trials. His natural mind will therefore conclude that Satan is come to destroy him, and by and by he is offended. He supposes that God should protect him from these hard trials, not understanding that his Father has actually ordained them to produce spiritual growth.

Therefore, the revelation I wish to bring to the Bride is that we must learn of God's ways and of His nature from the scriptures so that we may be able to face the problems of life with real faith and assurance that it is "He that orders our steps." (Ps. 37:23)

I will now quote a prayer that Brother William Branham prayed before he preached the message, "Be Certain of God"

QUOTE: BE CERTAIN OF GOD, (1-25-59), PAGE 2, "And now Lord bless thy Word as it goes forth, and may the Holy Spirit capture our minds and our thoughts, and prepare us for His visitation, as we have asked Him to come. For we do not come to the House of the Lord to be seen, or to see, but to learn of Thee and TO KNOW OF THY NATURE, AND THY WAYS AND THY CAUSES, THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO FACE THE PROBLEMS OF LIFE WITH REAL ASSURANCE----." (End quote)

We seek the "Deep Mysteries" from the message, and that is good, but if we fail to see the very plain fact that God has placed us here to be PROVEN through manifold trials and testing, then it is doubtful if the other revelations will get us up in a rapture. The reason being that we stand a good chance of throwing in the *spiritual towel*, so to speak, not being able to understand the things that happen to us.

Dear Message Believer, have you been OFFENDED lately by some circumstance of life that you supposed Satan had ordered up for you? Have you been giving the enemy credit for upsetting your life that you supposed you had placed in God's hands? Are you harboring a feeling that you have been, and perhaps are being mistreated? Do you have a real problem with PEOPLE misusing you?

Until we rule out all second causes and understand that our own Father orders and measures each trial, and that according to our individual need we will not have peace of mind and will not grow spiritually as we should.

God has ordained that "The Overcomer" shall inherit the promises. Rev. 2:7, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of The Tree Of Life."

Rev. 2:11, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

Rev. 2:17, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna."

Rev. 2:26, "And he that overcometh and keepeth My works until the end, to him will I give power over the nations."

Rev. 3:5, "He that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment."

Rev. 3:12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God—."

Rev. 3:21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne—."

In every age it was to the overcomer that the Lord made the promises. Therefore, if we must be overcomers, there must of necessity be things to overcome. The Bride today must have the same powerful revelation that our Brother Job had.

Job 23:10, "But He knoweth the way that I take (This is because He orders our steps.); when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

David understood that it was his God that was sending the trials.

Ps. 66:10, "For Thou oh God, hast proved us, Thou hast tried us as silver is tried." (Who do we give credit for the hard times?)

Zechariah saw the revelation and spoke for God when He said, "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They (the tried ones) shall call on My Name, and I will hear them. I will say it is My people, they shall say the Lord is my God." (Zech. 13:9)

Paul, in teaching about how God tried Abraham, said in Heb. 11:7, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac—."

James said in James 1:12, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation (and is not offended) for when he is tried He shall receive the crown of life."

1 Peter 1:7, Peter said, "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Prov. 17:3, "The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold, but the Lord trieth the hearts."

The Bible is full of Word that tells us we are here to be tested and proven. This is our *proving ground* and our *testing time*.

1 Peter 4:12, "Beloved, think it not strange the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you, but rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's suffering."

But friends, have we not all in times past thought it strange? Have we not all cried and complained and asked, "Why"? Somehow we have been missing the revelation of why we were put here in the first place. Wrong teaching has caused us to expect a life of ease with no bumps in the road.

It is the opinion of this writer that the trials that we have had up to now will seem small indeed compared to what is ahead for the Bride. Brother Branham told us there is a *squeeze* coming. We are even now hearing of it from the news media. The government is planning a war against churches who are outside the main-line denominational groups. Especially are they seeking those who are "Following a man". The Waco, Texas horror and the group suicides in California have set the stage for an all out war on suspicious looking groups such as ours.

If the Lord tarries, we can expect trials such as we read about in the scriptures. This is not to strike fear into our hearts, but to prepare us to be put through the fire and proven. God will send the faith we need to endure whatever trials He allows to come to us. It is during this time of *squeeze* that our prophet said the "Third Pull" (*speaking* the Word) will be manifested in all it's power.

We go about claiming a lot of promises in the Word, but how many Christians do we hear claiming the promises concerning HARD TRIALS, and then rejoicing over them as we are told to do? What is a TRIAL? The definition of the word TRIAL is "The process of trying and testing CLAIMS that are made, causing the person to prove their claims."

A trial is a time of hardship. God has promised us hardships. We, as Christians, claim that we are Believers. God says to us in His Word that He will cause us to prove the claims we have made. Faith that is never tested cannot

as yet prove it's claims. This proving of our faith does certainly involve hardships. It is these hardships that so often stumble us.

And so, we are looking into the scriptures and a prophet's message, to show that this life is our testing time and that we must maintain the right attitude through it all.

Brother Branham gave examples of the trials God puts His people through. One that stands out to me is the widow woman that fed Elijah.

QUOTE: BE CERTAIN OF GOD, PAGE 13, "This poor little woman, she knew that He was God. As the meal barrel went down, down, down, and circumstances got worse and worse all the time. BUT GOD WAS LETTING IT SET THAT WAY. HE JUST LOVES TO DO THAT. He loves to put your faith to the test to see how you act on it. Let you be anointed and prayed for, then make you worse. He said, Satan put him to the test; I know he believes me. I know he took My Word for it. Could He say that about you? He puts our faith to the test to see if we really believe He is God. (End quote)

In our natural mind we ask, "Why would a loving Father want to put me through things like that?" Here is God's answer and we will have to be satisfied with it. Rom. 1:17, "—As it is written the just shall live by Faith." It is a law God made and we must abide by it.

Gal. 3:11, "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God it is evident, FOR THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Heb 10:38, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My Soul shall have no pleasure in him."

We fail to understand how much of a trial our Lord will call on us to bear sometimes. In preaching about this characteristic of God that we find so hard to understand Brother Branham said, QUOTE: BE CERTAIN OF GOD, PAGES 6-7, (Still speaking of the widow woman that fed Elijah), "And then we find out that no doubt she had prayed night after night all night as

she began to see that meal barrel going down and down. DEATH was coming right into the gate at her door. For there was no way of getting any more (meal) the whole nation was starving. She must have got real sincere about her praying. She could look at the pale lips of her little boy and she could see her own bones dwindling away. And it must have been a terrible thing, this mother seeing these things."

"And yet with her hands up before God praying day and night. You know it's a strange thing, may God let this soak into everyone of you, if you never hear me preach again. Let this be a message (to you). It's strange, most strange, that sometimes God does things that way."

"When we've confessed our sins and made all the wrongs right. Done everything that we know how to do, and yet He lays there silent. He just won't answer us. That's when you've got to be sure that He is God."

Page 8, "May this go way down deep, and never move from you Branham Tabernacle. If you have met God's requirements, and in your heart you believe that HE IS, (then) God is only testing your faith, for He loves to do that." (End quote)

To make a place for faith to work and be tested, the Lord has to allow hopeless looking circumstances to come on us.

Ps. 105:17-19, "He (God) sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant. Whose feet they hurt with fetters. He was laid in iron until the time that His Word came. The Word of the Lord TRIED HIM."

Joseph was a spiritual man. He heard from God. He walked in the spirit, yet God saw fit to put him through great trials. Friends it is the Elect of God that He will PROVE through the furnace of affliction. It is the death of SELF in us that our God requires and He will not stop short of that in dealing with His Bride.

Rev. 3:18, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." He is saying let me try you and test you and prove Myself to

you. "Buy of me" or let Me put you through the fire and don't be afraid and don't complain. I will bring you through it." "Buy of Me". Don't resent the trials. Just understand that they are from Me and trust Me.

Little Bride, we can actually learn to welcome a trial so that we can flex our *faith muscles*. It is not abnormal for a born-again person to be tried and tested; it is the NORMAL thing.

QUOTE: POSSESSING THE ENEMY'S GATE, PAGE 6, "He lets diseases come on you to test you and prove you. To show the world (that's always watching every move we make) that you are truly the seed of Abraham. He permits it by His own will. He permits disasters. He permits friends to turn against you. He permits all these things and turns the devil loose to tempt you. He will do all but take your life. We are taught they are more precious than gold." (End quote)

QUOTE: POSSESSING THE ENEMY'S GATES, "Stand alone. Walk out there and say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. That's the seed of Abraham—the testing and the trials." (End quote)

QUOTE: ADOPTION, PAGE 65, "People don't know what depressing times come with this type of ministry. I got real depressed yesterday and I said to the wife, I wish I could just go on. She said, "Why do you say that, Bill?" I said, "Here I have my troubles and things." And seemed like the Holy Spirit said to me, "Are you trying to bypass them?" I said, "No I said, just let me stand right up in the face of all of it and face it out." (End quote)

Are we (who may not have understood in times past) catching the revelation? This earthly journey is our *testing time*. Can we see this revelation in the Scriptures in the way the Lord dealt with His people? He put His obedient servants through trials.

Paul was beaten, stoned and jailed for obeying God about preaching the Gospel. A natural mind would seriously question that kind of reward for obeying the Lord. But Paul was no fair weather Christian. He had the revelation we are

speaking of. He knew he was on earth to prove God to the people by his life of submission.

The whole Bible is the story of the testing and trials and hardships of God's people in a sin-cursed world. How could we possibly have missed the revelation that our character must be refined in the furnaces of trials? But many have completely missed this truth.

Moses was born to deliver the Israelites. His mother taught him about God's call for his life. He grew up knowing he was to deliver his people. But what trials he was to suffer in the process. He was charged with murder and had to flee for his life.

After forty years on the backside of the desert, God sent him back to Egypt where his faith was tried mightily as his own people wanted to stone him, blaming him for their extra burden of having to provide their own straw for brick. This great servant of God experienced trial after trial as he led the people through the wilderness.

God himself led them to the Red Sea and right into a death trap. With Pharaoh's army behind them, the Red Sea before them, and mountains on each side, there was no natural way of escape. How could a loving God possibly reward a people who had been willing to follow His leader out of Egypt with such a dangerous set of circumstances? It was because He had set out to prove them according to His promised Word.

Have you wondered how a loving God could possibly have allowed your steps to end up in some of the circumstances you are facing? It is for the same reason; he has promised to prove us and cause us to have rapturing faith.

Daniel in Babylon was a spiritual man, a praying man. He had refused to defile himself with the food and life style of the unspiritual Egyptians. The king passed a law that forbid praying to Daniel's God. Daniel opened his window and continued to pray in obedience to God, rather than obey Pharaoh. For his obedience he was thrown into a den with starved lions. What kind of a reward was that for a man who had

obeyed God? God did not save him FROM the trial, but rather delivered him OUT of it.

This is exactly our position, Little Bride. God will not lead us around all the trials, but He will surely go with us through them, and eventually save us out of them.

Joseph in Egypt was charged with rape because of his strict obedience to God. He would have nothing to do with the ruler's wife who desired to commit adultery. For his obedience he was put in the federal prison for several years. What kind of treatment was that for an obedient servant of God? Again, it was God keeping His promise to test His people.

Paul, after the ship he had been on was wrecked by the storm, and after he had been in the cold ocean many hours, he crawled out on the beach. In the process of gathering wood for a fire he was bitten by the most poisonous snake on the island. What kind of reward was that for an obedient servant of God? Again, it was God keeping His Word to test His people, and cause them to live by faith.

The three Hebrew children, obeying God in that they refused to bow to the image of a man, were led up to a white hot furnace. I believe they were human just as you and I. I also believe they were praying for God to keep them out of the furnace. How would you and I have been praying?

But the Lord did allow them to be thrown in. Would our faith have withered as we were traveling through the air toward the open furnace door? Would we have thought, "What kind of reward is this I am receiving, because I obeyed God?"

Dear Bride, there is no right place to stop trusting God. Even when He allows us to go right into a death trap, He expects us to trust Him still. He has the keys of death, and He is the controller of life. If he slays us, we should leave this world praising Him and thanking Him for His love and mercy.

God gave Jeremiah a message for the king and his governors. The prophet obeyed God and delivered the message. For his obedience he was placed in a death cell in the dungeon. Jer. 38:6, "There was no water but mire, so Jeremiah sunk in the mire." What a test for a man who had obeyed his God! How he must have suffered day after day, and night after weary night, in that mud and stench. He was there so long, that being afraid he was close to death, his friend talked the king into releasing him. God did not keep His servant from the trial, but he did deliver him out of it.

In our carnal minds we manufacture a God for ourselves. We suppose we know how a loving God should conduct our lives and handle our affairs. We think that His godly love toward us will not allow us to do any suffering. But that is not the God of the Scriptures!

Brother Branham made a statement that we would do well to remember. Quote — "They thought God's love meant no suffering." II Tim. 2:12, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him (that He leads us through suffering), He will also deny us."

QUOTE: THE MASTER PIECE, PAGE 1, "Give us the desires of our heart, for we truly have this desire to

serve you. In our weakening condition and afflictions and things of the world (that come on us) that are put on us to perfect us, He said think it not strange that these trials come. They are only working for our good, to perfect us and bring us into that place. These great deserts of experiences, where righteous men are made into Saints. We thank Thee for these experiences Lord. We would in no wise want to do contrary to your will. We pray that in these (trials and troubles) we will be brought closer to you."

"And when the burdens are so heavy we can't go any further, then we raise our hands and scream for our Father. Then hear from heaven Lord. Heal us and make us well, for the Kingdom of God's sake." (End quote)

Yes, the burdens are heavy and will no doubt become heavier, but if we can understand that we are delivered out of the hands of the enemy and that our lives are, "Hid with Christ in God" and that every trial is measured by His loving hands, we will be able to stand.

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