

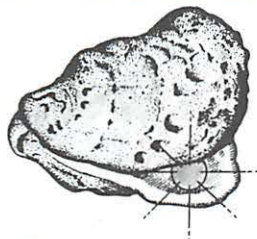
Wisdom Booklet 12



WISDOM QUIZ

Matthew 5:12

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."



How well do you understand the concept of overcoming persecution?

True/False

- 1** The first step toward rejoicing in persecution is evaluating the accuracy of the accusations. ☒ ☐

• Paul warned Timothy that his ministry would not hold up under attack if he did not have faith and a clear conscience. (See I Timothy 1:18-19.) A clear conscience requires honest self-examination on the basis of Scripture and produces the boldness that dispels fear. (See Proverbs 28:1.)

We will experience other emotions besides joy when we "rejoice for doing right." ☒ ☐
(See II Corinthians 4:7-10.)

- 2** The way to defuse verbal persecution is to continue doing good works. ☒ ☐
(Read I Peter 3:16-18.)

• Noah condemned the revilers of his day by finishing the work of the ark. (See Hebrews 11:7.) This example of "condemnation" is to be followed by every servant of the Lord. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 54:17).

We should expect fellow Christians to stand with us when we go through persecution. ☐ ☒
(See Psalm 41:7-11.)

- 3** A Christian who is persecuted for doing right is to rejoice over the very persecution he is receiving. ☒ ☐
(Read Hebrews 12:2.)

• If the persecution is the source of joy, Christians will be tempted to bring it on themselves by inappropriate means. The basis of our joy is not the persecution but the rewards which come from it. Paul was able to discount his sufferings when he saw that they were not even worthy to be compared with the glory that he would receive by going through them. (See Romans 8:18.)

During our time on earth we can expect to experience "exceeding joy" from persecution. ☐ ☒
(See I Peter 4:13.)

- 4** Suffering persecution for the name of Christ is a privilege. ☒ ☐
(Read Acts 5:41.)

• Persecution for righteousness is an indication that we have already begun to apply the first seven beatitudes to our life and that we have achieved a certain level of Godliness, since "... all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12). Persecution also identifies us with the prophets as indicated by Matthew 5:12.

It is possible to experience joy and sorrow at the same time. ☒ ☐
(See Acts 16:23-26.)

Total Correct 7

When We See Christ

1. Oft-times the day seems long, our tri-als hard to bear, We're tempt-ed
2. Some-times the sky looks dark with not a ray of light, We're tossed and
3. Life's day will soon be o'er, all storms for-ev-er past, We'll cross the

to com-plain, to mur-mur and de-spair; But Christ will soon ap-pear
driv-en on, no hu-man help in sight; But there is one in heav'n
great di-vide to glo-ry, safe at last; We'll share the joys of heav'n-

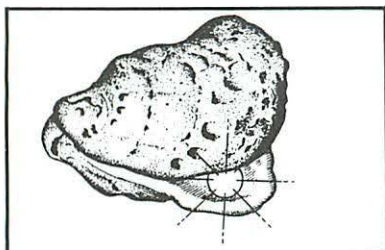
to catch His Bride a-way, All tears for-ev-er o-ver in
who knows our deep-est care, Let Je-sus solve your prob-lem- just
a harp, a home, a crown, The tempt-er will be ban-ish-ed, we'll

God's e-ter-nal day.
go to Him in pray'r.
lay our bur-den down.

WISDOM WORKSHEET ON MATTHEW 5:12



**“REJOICE, AND BE
EXCEEDING GLAD:
FOR GREAT IS YOUR
REWARD IN HEAVEN”**

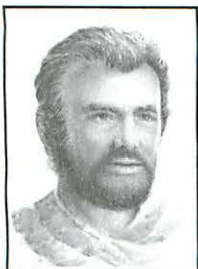


**The pearl is the oyster's response
to inward wounding.**

- An important measure of maturity is how long a person can wait between achievement and reward.
- The ultimate measure of maturity is how long a person can wait between achievement and reward.
- Such rejoicing is only possible when a Christian is living all eight beatitudes, and is focusing on eternal rewards.

“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 SO
PERSECUTED THEY
THE PROPHETS
WHICH WERE BEFORE
YOU.”**



The Prophet Daniel
“A man greatly beloved”

Persecution to a Godly Christian is a diploma in God's training of rulers for His Kingdom.

Linguistics

Languages,
Grammar, Vocabulary,
Communication



REJOICE

Greek: χαίρω (KYE-roē)

DEFINITION: To be calmly delighted, to have a sense of well-being before God.

INSIGHTS: True rejoicing is not a function of our soul but of our spirit. (See Galatians 5:22.) Thus, a Christian can experience joy in his spirit even when sorrowing in his soul.

“As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing . . .”
(II Corinthians 6:10).

Do Resource A.

BE EXCEEDING GLAD

Greek: αγαλλιάω

(ah-gah-lee-AH-oh)

DEFINITION: To exult, to be jubilant, to celebrate, to be elated.

GREAT

Greek: πολὺς (paw-LOOSE)

DEFINITION: Large, abundant, many, numerous, plenteous, much.

REWARD

Greek: μισθός (miss-THOSS)

DEFINITION: Wages, hire, that which is earned.

PROPHETS

Greek: προφήτης (praw-FAY-tace)

DEFINITION: Men raised up of God in times of moral decline and spiritual apostasy. They spoke with power and wisdom, to the heart and conscience of a nation.



**The Prophet
Elijah**

The prophets of Israel are in three categories:

1. Before the exile
2. During the exile
3. After the exile

Can you name them? Check your Time Line Chart.

Do Resource B.

History

Archaeology,
Geography, Prophecy,
Music, Art, Literature



**How did God reward the suffering
of first-century Christians?**

Stephen passed the test of a Godly man. His dynamic life became a threat to Satan's kingdom.



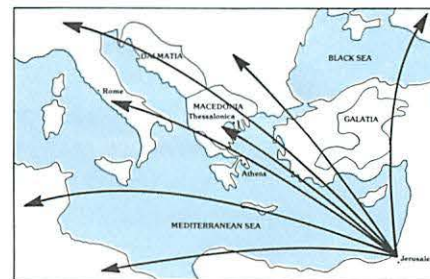
**Stephen
being stoned**

He was falsely accused and condemned to death.

Stephen then gave an amazingly wise and powerful overview of history. It stung the hearts and consciences of his listeners. They dragged him out of the council and stoned him to death.

A man who watched this execution was deeply moved by Stephen's example. That man was later converted, and through his bold witness and inward joy, the first-century A.D. world was turned upside down. (See Acts 6:9-9:31.)

**How did God use persecution to
spread the Gospel throughout
the world?**



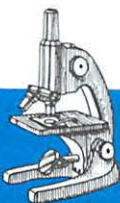
Each one of Christ's disciples willingly suffered to spread the Gospel. They were crucified, slain by the sword, bound and dragged through the streets, burned, condemned to be boiled in oil, imprisoned, and exiled.

Because they were faithful unto death, God gave them the crown of life, and we received the Gospel.

Do Resource C.

Science

Chemistry, Biology,
Astronomy, Geology,
Physics, Mathematics



How does God reward the struggles for life in the world of nature?

A baby chick's life depends on its struggle to emerge from its shell.

A struggle of up to forty-eight hours is required for a chick to break out of its shell. The exhausted chick pants for breath. It is this very panting that helps inflate and clean the chick's lungs.

If a baby chick is helped from its shell, thus avoiding this panting, it seldom shows signs of strength and usually dies in a few days.

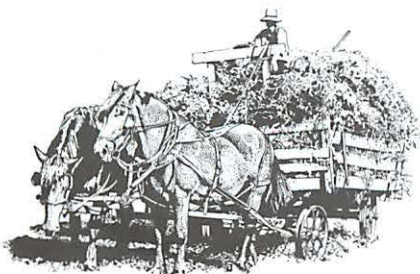


Cecropia moth

The more the moth struggles to get out of its cocoon, the faster the wings unfold. Freedom from this struggle leaves a moth with crumpled wings that cannot fly.

Do Resource D.

How do the laws of the harvest relate to our rewards in heaven?



The laws that govern the harvest illustrate reaping rewards in heaven.

Do Resource E.

Law

Government,
Economics, Logic



How do important political appointments illustrate rewards in heaven?



Robert H. Glaze, Artstreet

Presidential appointments come from the White House.

Even though our finite mind is not able to comprehend the authority structure that will rule the world throughout eternity, we do know that it will involve appointments by God Himself.

We can also be sure that these appointments will carry such honor and authority under the King of Kings that those who receive them will experience tremendous joy.

Paul gives us a clue to the scope of Christians ruling throughout eternity. *"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels? . . ."* (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

How does suffering for Christ win positions of authority in heaven?



The crown is a symbol of authority. Those who suffer with Him shall also reign with Him. (See II Timothy 2:12.)

God also warns us to endure *"... that no man take thy crown"* (Revelation 3:11).

Do Resource F.

Medicine

Health,
Nutrition, Behavior,
Counseling



How does stress in muscles illustrate the value of persecution?

Stress causes the heart to enlarge and increase its capacity to pump blood. The blood increases its capacity to carry oxygen and to remove lactic acid.

The tiny powerhouses of the cell, called *mitochondria*, produce energy more rapidly.

"I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart" (Psalm 119:32).



Muscles that are inactive *atrophy*. If a sudden demand for energy is placed upon these weakened muscles, they may become so filled with lactic acid that they cannot move at all.

The lactic acid forms tiny crystals between the muscle tissues which make the muscles extremely sore.

Do Resource G.



How does the struggle of child-birth increase the vitality of the child?

Before birth, a child's lungs are filled with a fluid that is squeezed out of the lungs during the birth process. After birth, the pressure is released and the chest expands, inflating the empty lungs with air naturally.

Children that are born through Caesarean section do not experience this stress and may take up to twelve hours to breathe normally.



How many of these questions can you answer before studying the resources?

HOW CAN WE REJOICE IN PERSECUTION?



Bible Art Series

- How is it possible to rejoice when we are being persecuted? 455
- What is the consequence of failing to delight in the Lord? . . 456
- What are the eight names for Jehovah? 458
- How does helping our persecutors cause us to prosper? 459
- How was Paul rewarded for glorying in tribulation? . . 460

HOW DOES THE MOOD OF A VERSE AMPLIFY ITS MESSAGE?



- What are the four moods of the Greek language? . . . 464
- Would a command in the optative mood cause you to move faster than one in the imperative mood? 465
- What mood should control our emotions? 465

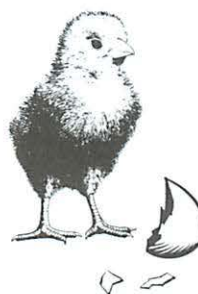
HOW DOES PERSECUTION SPREAD THE GOSPEL?



Foxe's Book of Martyrs

- How did a North African influence a Russian 2100 years later? 466
- What are four marks of a faithful witness? 467
- How did the disciples lay down their lives for Christ? . . 468
- How did God prepare Rome to spread the Gospel? 471
- How did persecution cause the Early Church to grow? . . 474

HOW DOES STRUGGLING AID SURVIVAL?



- Why will a chick die if you help it out of its egg? 476
- Why does the grunion illustrate the need for precise timing in its struggling? . . 478
- What animal has outward freedom as long as it controls an inward struggle? . . 479
- What disaster befalls a butterfly which fails to struggle out of its cocoon? 480

HOW DOES A HARVEST RELATE TO HEAVEN?



- What is a universal law? . . . 481
- What are the seven laws of the harvest? 482
- How did God ensure that each seed produces only its kind? 482
- What determines the time of harvest? 484
- How is the richness of soil measured? 485

HOW CAN PERSECUTION PREPARE US TO RULE?



- Why is suffering a necessary part of the Christian life? 487
- How did suffering prepare Joseph to rule? 488
- How does affliction create a wise leader? 489
- How will Christians who have suffered rule in Heaven? 489

WHAT CAN PAIN TEACH US ABOUT REWARDS?



- Why is no muscle able to move by itself? 491
- Why is oxygen essential for muscle activity? 492
- How do muscles grow weaker with only normal exertion? 493
- What causes cramps during exercise? 493
- What are the special benefits of exercises that hurt? . . 494



DISCOVER THE DISCIPLINES OF REJOICING WHICH ARE NECESSARY IN PERSECUTION.

It just does not seem realistic to “rejoice and be exceeding glad” while going through reviling and persecution. God’s command to do this, however, is based on the larger picture that He sees and which He wants us to begin to comprehend. His perspective is on the future, not only the present.

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II Corinthians 4:16-17).

The following words begin to encompass the scope of rejoicing and gladness which should be ours during and after times of persecution.

Focus on one pair of words in each lesson, and make the concepts behind the words a living part of your life.

SYNONYMS of “Rejoice”

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delight | <input type="checkbox"/> Glory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Praise | <input type="checkbox"/> Sing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bless | <input type="checkbox"/> Exult |

If any of these words and their accompanying concepts are not a vital expression of our lives, we will have varying degrees of the following wrong responses to persecution.

ANTONYMS of “Rejoice”

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Despair | <input type="checkbox"/> Regret |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complain | <input type="checkbox"/> Brood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retaliate | <input type="checkbox"/> Bewail |

STEP 1

Learn the single focus of DELIGHT through persecution.



Bible Art Series, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati

Jacob's delight in Rachel energized him to endure hardships on her behalf.

One of the signs of maturity in the Christian life is the ability to enjoy the fellowship of Christ's sufferings in the same way that we delight in another person.

PRONUNCIATION: de-light (dih-LITE)

DEFINITION: To take great pleasure in; to be greatly pleased by; to enjoy thinking and talking about.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin word *delicere* meaning “to allure or to entice away.” That which we delight in will draw us away from competing interests and concerns.

USAGE: As a verb—(to) **delight**
I **delight** to do Thy will, O Lord.

As a noun—**delight**

Has the Lord as great **delight** in sacrifices as in obeying His voice?

As an adjective—**delightful, delighted** (participle)
God's Spirit is grieved when fellowship with the Lord ceases to be **delightful**.

SYNONYMS:

Verb: to please, to fulfill, to fascinate, to cheer, to satisfy

Noun: pleasure, happiness, joy, satisfaction, enjoyment, fulfillment

Adjective: enjoyable, pleasing, fulfilling

EXAMPLE:



Nehemiah drove the merchants from Jerusalem so God's people could delight in the Lord on the Sabbath.

Nehemiah endured much persecution in rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem and seeking the welfare of God's people. He knew that God's blessing would not continue if the Sabbath were not honored.

In fact, it was precisely because the nation had not kept its Sabbaths that God carried the people into captivity.

When Nehemiah observed people buying and selling on the Sabbath, he contended with the nobles of Judah. "... *What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us... by profaning the sabbath*" (Nehemiah 13:17-18).

APPLICATION:

God promises that if we delight ourselves in Him, He will give us the desires of our hearts. (See Psalm 37:4.)

The first step in delighting ourselves in the Lord is to give Him a day in which we can set aside our work and pleasure and delight in Him and His Word.

Each week God gives us the resource of time. As with our money, He desires that we give the first part back to Him.

Memorize Isaiah 58:13-14. Then list all the activities that you normally do on the Lord's Day. Check off the ones that do not pass the threefold test of the verse.

Look up the following verses to discover what David, the man after God's own heart, delighted in:

- Psalm 1:2
- Psalm 119:16, 24, 35,
- Psalm 40:8
- 47, 70, 77, 174
- Psalm 94:19

The consequence of failing to DELIGHT in the Lord is DESPAIR.

PRONUNCIATION: de-spair (dih-SPARE)

DEFINITION: To be without hope; to give up all hope or expectation of; to be overcome by a sense of futility or defeat, to lose faith in.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Old French word *despirer*, which came from the Latin word *desperare*, *de* meaning "reversal" and *sperare*, meaning "to hope."

USAGE: As a verb—(to)despair

A guilty man often **despairs** of finding God to be merciful.

As a noun—**despair, desperation**

Forgetting the promises and power of God leads a man to **despair**.

As an adjective—**desperate, despairing** (participle)

The **desperate** publican found forgiveness with God as he prayed in the Temple.

SYNONYMS:

Verb: to have no hope, to lose heart, to lose faith in

Noun: hopelessness, discouragement, despondency, gloom, depression, dejection

Adjective: despondent, discouraged, dejected, hopeless, wretched, depressed, gloomy

STEP 2

Learn to give the sacrifice of PRAISE during persecution.

PRONUNCIATION: praise (praze)

DEFINITION: To extol in words or song; to magnify; to glorify on account of perfection or excellent works; to display the excellence of; to give honor to.



Paul and Silas praised God in prison after being cruelly beaten for preaching the Gospel.

ETYMOLOGY: Apparently praise, price, and prize are from the same root, the primary sense of which is to raise, to lift, or to value. In Middle English the root is *preisen*, in Old French *presier*, meaning “to prize,” and in Latin *pretium*, meaning “price.”

The root thought of “praise” involves assigning a thing its true value.

USAGE: As a verb—(to) **praise**

All Thy works shall **praise** Thee, O Lord.

As a noun—**praise**

Offer to God the sacrifice of **praise**.

As an adjective—**praiseworthy**

This is **praiseworthy**, if a man for conscience toward God endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

SYNONYMS:

Verb: to extol, to magnify, to laud, to exalt, to revere, to venerate, to honor

Noun: admiration, respect, adoration, tribute, exaltation, honor, veneration

Adjective: worthy, excellent, exemplary, laudable, meritorious, commendable

EXAMPLE:

Paul and Silas had every reason to complain. They tried to follow God’s instruction, and what happened? They were arrested, whipped until their backs were open, bleeding wounds, and thrown into prison under maximum security.

Rather than complain, however, they prayed and sang praises to God. All the other prisoners heard them.

“And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed” (Acts 16:26).

The power of praise was thus illustrated, and the reward of praise came as the jailer fell down trembling before Paul and Silas and said, “. . . Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30).



Bible Art Series, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati

The jailer drew out his sword to kill himself. But Paul said, “Do thyself no harm: for we are all here” (Acts 16:28).

APPLICATION:

The object of our praise during times of persecution should be the name of the Lord:

“Save me, O God, by thy name . . . for strangers are risen up against me. . . . I will praise thy name, O Lord, for it is good. For he hath delivered me out of all trouble . . .” (Psalm 54:1, 3, 6, 7).

In order to praise the name of the Lord, we must first learn more about it.

1. Jehovah-jireh (jeh-HOE-vah JYE-ruh)

Literal: God who provides

Context: Genesis 22:1-14

2. Jehovah-rophe (jeh-HOE-vah ROE-fay)

Literal: God who heals

Context: Exodus 15:22-27

3. Jehovah-nissi (jeh-HOE-vah NISS-ee)

Literal: The Lord is my banner

Context: Exodus 17:15

4. Jehovah-M’Kaddesh (jeh-HOE-vah muh-CODD-ish)

Literal: I am the Lord which sanctifies you

Context: Leviticus 20:7-8

5. **Jehovah-shalom** (jeh-HOE-vah shah-LOME)
Literal: The Lord send peace
Context: Judges 6:1-24
6. **Jehovah-tsidkenu** (jeh-HOE-vah TSEDD-keh-new)
Literal: The Lord our righteousness
Context: Jeremiah 23:1-6
7. **Jehovah-roni** (jeh-HOE-vah ROE-nee)
Literal: The Lord is my shepherd
Context: Psalm 23:1; II Samuel 15:13-37
8. **Jehovah-shamma** (jeh-HOE-vah SHAH-mah)
Literal: The Lord is there
Context: Ezekiel 48:35

As a further means of learning the names of God, go through the alphabet, reciting a name that begins with each letter:

- A. Alpha and Omega, Almighty
- B. Bright and Morning Star
- C. Creator, Comforter, Counselor
- D. Deliverer, Defender
- E. Everlasting Father, Eternal God
- F. Father, Fairest of Ten Thousand
- G. God, Governor Among Nations
- H. Heavenly Father, Holy God
- I. I am, Immortal, Invisible
- J. Justifier, Jesus, Judge
- K. King of Kings
- L. Lord of Lords, Lily of Valley
- M. Mighty God, Master
- N. Never-changing God
- O. Omnipotent, Only Wise God
- P. Prince of Peace, Protector
- Q. Quickener
- R. Redeemer, Righteous One
- S. Shepherd, Savior, Sovereign
- T. Triune God, Teacher, Truth
- U. Uncorruptible, Unchangeable
- V. Victorious One, Victor
- W. Wonderful, Wise God
- X. Christos (Greek)
- Y. Yahweh (Hebrew)
- Z. Zealous God

If we do not **PRAISE** the name of the Lord, we will begin to **COMPLAIN** about the difficulties of our circumstances.

PRONUNCIATION: com-plain (kumm-PLANE)

DEFINITION: To utter expressions of grief; to lament; to murmur and to find fault; to utter words of uneasiness or pain.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin word *plango* meaning “to beat the breast,” and *com*, meaning “to beat together with.” It also carried the connotation of “beating oneself with the hands” as in extreme grief.

The root idea of *complain* is to “beat down,” thereby becoming defeated.

USAGE: As a verb—(to) **complain**

Job said, “I will **complain** in the bitterness of my soul.”

As a noun—**complaint**

Then Job lamented, “Even today is my **complaint** bitter.”

As an adjective—**complaining** (participle)

A man who perverts his own way will develop a **complaining** attitude toward God.

SYNONYMS:

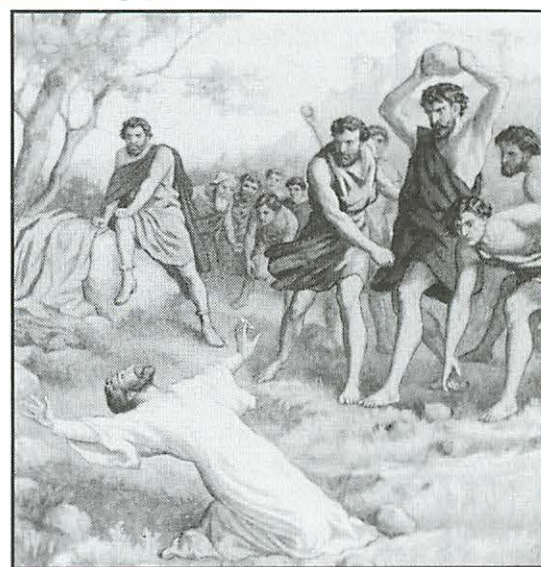
Verb: to criticize, to nag, to whine, to gripe, to state a grievance, to murmur, to express dissatisfaction

Noun: grievance, dissatisfaction, criticism, protest, objection, tirade

Adjective: critical, nagging, whining, griping, discontented, disapproving

STEP 3

Learn the love required to **BLESS** in times of persecution.



Bible Art Series, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati

Stephen said in a loud voice, “... Lord, lay not this sin to their charge...” (Acts 7:60).

PRONUNCIATION: bless (bless)

DEFINITION: To bestow good will or kindness upon; to grant forgiveness and favor to; to desire advantage or benefit for; to cause to prosper.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Old English word *bledsian* meaning “to cover or consecrate with blood,” as from the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament.

In later English, this word became *blessen*, meaning “consecrated.” Thus, when the greeting was given, “God bless you,” what was literally said was, “God bathe you in the protection of His blood.”



Bible Art Series, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati

For the Passover, the blood on the doorposts protected those in the home.

Just as the Israelites were protected when the death angel passed through Egypt if they had the blood of the sacrificial lamb applied to their homes, so Christians are protected by the blood of Christ applied to their hearts.

When God covers our sin with the blood of His Son, that sin is blotted out of His sight. He instructs us in His Word to forgive our offenders in the same way that He has forgiven us. The blood covering signifies the blessing of forgiveness.

Another definition of *bless* is “to praise or glorify for benefits received.” This definition applies to the psalmist’s testimony of blessing the Lord.

USAGE: As a verb—(to) **bless**

Bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you.

As a noun—**blessing** (occasionally, **blessed**)

The **blessing** of the Lord makes rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.

Come, ye **blessed** of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.

As an adjective—**blessed** (participle)

Blessed be God Who delivers us from the hand of our enemies.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.

SYNONYMS:

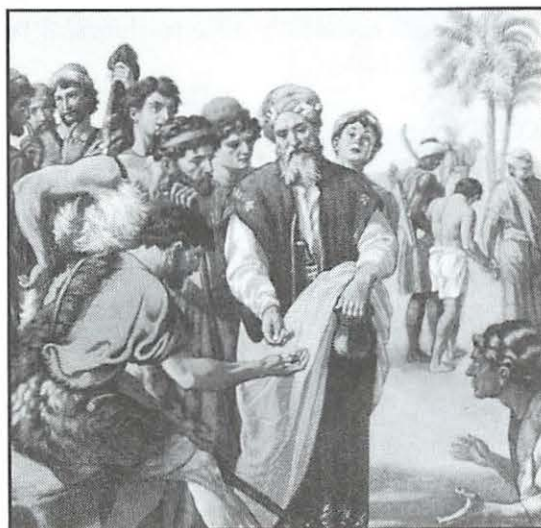
Verb: to favor, to endow, to grace, to give, to oblige, to bestow, to benefit

Noun: favor, sanction, support, regard, good will, benediction, grace

Adjective: favored, endowed, graced, supported. (The adjective *blessed* means “to be envied; happy; spiritually prosperous.”)

EXAMPLE:

Joseph was wronged by his evil brothers and by Potiphar’s wife. As a result, he experienced slavery and imprisonment. In both situations, however, he brought benefit to those around him.



Bible Art Series, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati

Joseph’s brothers sold him as a slave.

After God tested Joseph and raised him up to power, he preserved the lives of his brothers, and after helping them come to true repentance, he fully forgave them.

APPLICATION:

Write down the name(s) of your persecutor(s). Then list some of the needs that you know are in his (their) life (lives).

Ask God to give you creative ways to meet those needs. Write down ideas that you receive and carry them out as God gives you opportunity.

"Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not" (Romans 12:14).

If we do not **BLESS** our offenders, we will concentrate on **RETALIATION**.

PRONUNCIATION: re-ta-li-ate (rih-TAL-lee-ate)

DEFINITION: To return like for like; to repay or requite by an act of the same kind as has been received.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin word *retalio*, re-, meaning "back," and *talio*, meaning "punishment." The word had the connotation of punishment in kind returned for injury or wrong.

USAGE: As a verb—(to) **retaliate**
When we **retaliate**, we cut off God's love to our offenders.

As a noun—**retaliation**
The natural response to persecution is **retaliation**.

As an adjective—**retaliatory**
Offenders are easily able to detect a **retaliatory** attitude.

SYNONYMS:

Verb: to revenge, to avenge, to repay, to requite, to return, to take vengeance, to vindicate

Noun: vengeance, repayment, vindication, reprisal, retribution, malevolence

Adjective: vengeful, vindictive, retributive, malevolent, malicious, spiteful, punitive

STEP 4

Learn what it means to **GLORY** in the midst of tribulation.



PRONUNCIATION: glor-y (GLOR-ee)

DEFINITION: As in "the glory of God," brightness, splendor, magnificence, the highest honor, renown, fame, divine excellence. As an

action, "to glory," to boast, to be proud of, to give direction.

ETYMOLOGY: Many languages have a derivative of the word *glory* in them. In Latin the word is *gloria*; French *gloire*; Spanish and Italian use *gloria*; Welsh *eglur*; and Armorican *gloar*. In all the languages this word has the connotation of "clear" or "bright," and the primary sense seems to be "to open, to expand, to enlarge."

USAGE: As a verb—(to) **glory**
Let him that glories **glory** in the Lord.

As a noun—**glory**
If you are buffeted for your faults, what **glory** is it?

As an adjective—**glorious**
They refused deliverance that they might have a more **glorious** entrance into heaven.

SYNONYMS:

Verb: to rejoice proudly, to take pride, to revel, to boast

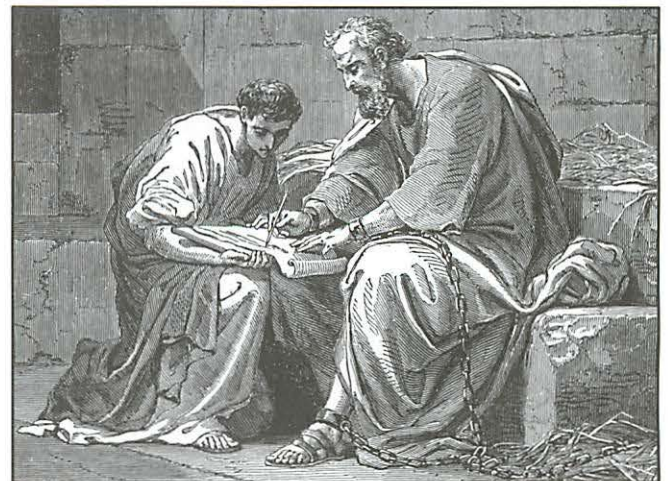
Noun: adoration, homage, eminence, distinction, prestige, grandeur, magnificence, majesty

Adjective: resplendent, glowing, lustrous, celebrated, distinguished, majestic, supreme, grand, radiant, brilliant, illustrious, preeminent

EXAMPLE:

Paul learned to glory ". . . in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (II Corinthians 12:10).

Paul's glorying in the midst of tribulation is based on the abundant desire and power that God



By glorying in tribulation, Paul was given the grace to write the epistles which now benefit us.

gave to him for spiritual achievement. The Lord said to Paul, "... *My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness*" (II Corinthians 12:9).

Paul responded, "... *Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me*" (II Corinthians 12:9).

APPLICATION:

List one or two examples of each of the following in your life:

1. Infirmities (Physical weaknesses)
2. Reproaches (Unjust criticism)
3. Necessities (Daily responsibilities)
4. Persecution (Rejection for Christ)
5. Distresses (Pressures)

Determine how God is using these to develop Christlike character, to reveal deeper understanding and insights from Scripture, and to strengthen your fellowship with the Lord and with others.

The consequence of refusing to GLORY in the Lord is REGRET.

PRONUNCIATION: re-gret (rih-GRETT)

DEFINITION: To grieve, to lament, to be sorry for, to feel distress over a desire unfulfilled or an action performed or not performed.

ETYMOLOGY: From the French word *regret*, taken from the word which meant "to grate." The word had the connotation of uttering a harsh sound, a scream, or cry that reflected deep anguish of mind.

USAGE: As a verb—(to) **regret**
Reacting to persecution will cause us to **regret** our words.

As a noun—**regret**
The presence of **regret** indicates that we have not entered into God's forgiveness.

As an adjective—**regretful**
To suffer without joy is a **regretful** experience.

SYNONYMS:

Verb: to bemoan, to deplore, to mourn, to lament, to be remorseful, to be ashamed of, to rue

Noun: sorrow, grief, remorse, contrition, woe, self-reproach, grievance, repentance

Adjective: sorrowful, grieving, remorseful, contrite, repentant, penitent

STEP 5

Learn why we must SING as we experience persecution.



Dover Publications

Singing is a form of worship and can be a source of strength when properly used during persecution.

PRONUNCIATION: sing (sin)

DEFINITION: To utter with musical modulations of voice; to give praises to in verse (as in poetry).

ETYMOLOGY: The word *sing* originally came from the same root as *say* and *seek*, which all signified "to drive, to press on, to urge, or to strain." Six ancient languages each have a derivative of this root.

USAGE: As a verb—(to) **sing**
Suffering should cause us to **sing** a new song.
As a noun—**singing** (gerund)
Come before His presence with **singing**.
As an adjective—**singable**, **singing** (participle)
A **singing** Christian is a triumphant Christian.

SYNONYMS:

Verb: to hum, to lilt, to melodize, to whistle, to intone

Noun: humming, lilting, melodizing, whistling

Adjective: humming, lilting, melodizing, whistling

EXAMPLE:

Our lives have been enriched because David turned his persecutions into song. In preparation for singing he filled his heart with the statutes, testimonies, and commandments of the Lord. He also learned to play skillfully upon an instrument of ten strings.

In his youth he turned the menial routines of shepherding into opportunities to develop his musical skill. In fact, it was this very skill which brought him into prominence in the king's palace.

Scripture makes it clear that the experience of David is to be reproduced in the lives of Christians. *"Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness"* (Psalm 30:4).

This command is reinforced from Colossians 3:16, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*



Bible Art Series, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati

David returning with the ark

The methods we employ in singing must be according to God's holy standards.

When David brought back the ark in a joyful procession, he used the contemporary method of an ox cart. This method proved ineffective and resulted in death and discouragement. It violated the precise instructions which God gave to His people for transporting the ark.

Similarly, contemporary methods of music which violate Biblical principles will bring spiritual destruction. (See II Samuel 6:3-7.)

APPLICATION:

Adopt a song that you can sing to yourself when you are going through trouble (e.g., "It Will Be Worth It All," "Count Your Blessings," "God Leads His Dear Children Along," and "Faith is the Victory"). Memorize the words and sing them to the Lord.

If you have not already done so, begin developing skills on a musical instrument.

Find a melody with which you could sing the names of God and their meanings to the Lord.

SINGING through persecution will protect us from BROODING.

PRONUNCIATION: brood (brude)

DEFINITION: To remain a long time in anxiety; to ponder moodily; to sulk.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Saxon word *brod* meaning "to warm." German, Dutch, and Welsh roots of this same word also refer to the warming process of a hen sitting on the nest to warm the eggs for hatching.

To brood in one's thinking, then, has the connotation of mentally "sitting" on a hurt until it hatches into bitterness.

USAGE: As a verb—(to) brood

Keeping a count of wrongs forces us to **brood** over hurts.

As a noun—**brooding** (gerund)

Brooding produces bitterness.

As an adjective—**brooding** (participle)

Brooding Christians focus on the offense rather than on God's purposes for the offender.

SYNONYMS:

Verb: to worry, to fret, to mope, to sulk, to dwell on, to mull over

Noun: worry, anxiety, apprehension, agitation, disquiet, distress

Adjective: worrying, fretting, moping, sulking, moody, unhappy, melancholy

STEP 6

Learn what it means to **EXULT** in persecution.



PRONUNCIATION: ex-ult (egg-ZULT)

DEFINITION: Literally, to leap for joy; to rejoice in triumph, to rejoice exceedingly at success or victory; to be glad above measure.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin words *ex*, meaning “up” or “out,” and *salio*, meaning “to jump.” The original meaning was “to jump for joy.”

USAGE: As a verb—(to) **exult**

When suffering causes us to stop sinning, that is reason to **exult**.

As a noun—**exultation**

The **exultation** of martyrs caused many others to become believers.

(Note: Do not confuse *exult*, “to rejoice,” with *exalt*, “to honor.”)

SYNONYMS:

Verb: to jubilate, to be elated, to be in high spirits

Noun: elation, jubilation, ecstasy

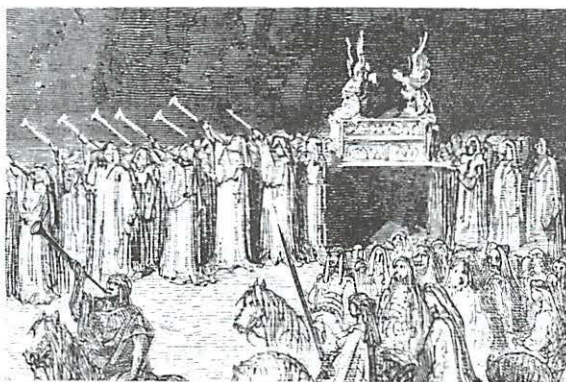
Adjective: exuberant, overjoyed, elated, exhilarated, radiant, ecstatic

EXAMPLE:

A great multitude came against King Jehoshaphat. In response, Jehoshaphat “. . . set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.”

Then he prayed, acknowledging his total dependence upon the Lord: “O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.”

God heard their prayers and gave them instructions: “Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you. . . .”



Doré Bible Illustrations

Jehoshaphat and his army went to battle exulting in the Lord.

As they went out to battle early the next morning, “. . . Jehoshaphat appointed singers unto the Lord.”

When they began to sing and to give praise, the Lord set ambushments against their enemies, and by the time they reached the battlefield their enemies were totally destroyed by each other. (See II Chronicles 20:1–24.)

APPLICATION:

- Identify a situation of deep distress in your life, family, church, friends, or business.
- Set aside a time of prayer and fasting during which this situation is brought before the Lord and He is acknowledged to be the only One Who can work it out.
- Make sure that your hands are clean in the matter. See the attack as being against the Lord and His truth or standards.
- Write out the circumstance and prayer request in your prayer journal.
- If you are assured of God hearing and answering your prayer, begin to exult the Lord in songs of victory, even before the answer comes.
- As God works, record the results.

Ultimately Christians will EXULT in victory, while persecutors BEWAIL their fate.

PRONUNCIATION: be-wail (be-WALE)

DEFINITION: To express sorrow or regret by weeping; to cry over.

ETYMOLOGY: A wail is a loud, sustained, inarticulate, mournful sound. Its root *veila* in Old Norse meant “to moan, lament.” In Middle English the words *wailen* and *weilen* meant “to lament” or “utter a mournful cry.”

USAGE: As a verb—(to) **bewail**

The Israelites **bewailed** their slain children.

As a noun—**wailing** (gerund)

In hell there will be weeping and **wailing** and gnashing of teeth.

As an adjective—**wailing** (participle), **wailful**

The **wailful** cry is not answered in hell.

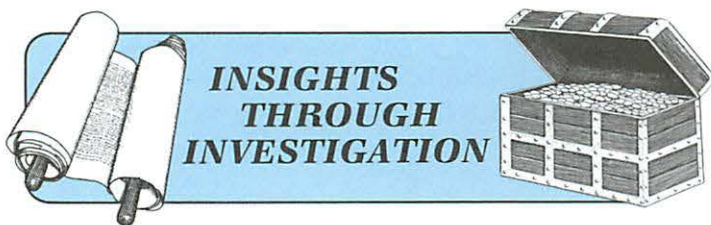
SYNONYMS:

Verb: to cry, to weep, to bemoan, to grieve over, to keen, to whine, to caterwaul

Noun: weeping, moaning, whining, plaint, lamentation, groan, outcry

Adjective: weeping, lamenting, moaning, whining, plaintive, sad, mournful, pathetic

Date completed _____ Evaluation _____



GREEK INVESTIGATION 12

HOW SHOULD THE “MOOD” OF CHRIST’S TEACHING INFLUENCE CHRISTIANS?



Bible Art Series, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati

Jeremiah’s imprisonment for righteousness is an example of the mood of God’s message about persecution.

The Greek language has four different moods. Just as a person’s mood indicates his attitude toward his circumstances, the mood of a sentence indicates the speaker’s attitude toward the truth or possibility of his statement.

If a Christian tells the Lord, “I might be willing to suffer for righteousness’ sake,” he means that it is possible that he will do it; but the possibility is not as certain as if he had said, “I am willing to suffer persecution.”

When we speak of a person’s mood, we use a word which comes from the German word *muth*, which means “mind, courage, spirit.” A person in a positive mood has a positive spirit.

But when we speak of the mood of a sentence, we use a word which is related to *mode*. This word

comes from the Latin word, *modus*, meaning “to measure.” It refers to measuring the extent of an action or condition. The Christian who “might” be willing to suffer for the Lord is not certain to the same extent as a Christian who “will” choose to suffer for the Lord.

THE FOUR MOODS OF GREEK

1. INDICATIVE—He rejoices.
2. SUBJUNCTIVE—He might rejoice.
3. OPTATIVE—He hopes to rejoice.
4. IMPERATIVE—Rejoice!

Each one of these Greek moods measures the amount of certainty in the verb which is chosen to communicate the message.

1 THE INDICATIVE MOOD •

The indicative mood points to an action which actually has taken place, is taking place, or will take place. It is the only mood by which a speaker can communicate certainty. This certainty includes facts or what he believes in his mind to be factual.

INDICATIVE=TO INDICATE

Jesus used the indicative mood to say, “So persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

οὕτως γὰρ ἐδίωξαν τοὺς προφῆτας
 thus for they persecuted the prophets,
 τοὺς πρὸ ὑμῶν.
 the ones before you

2 THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD ?

The subjunctive mood points to an action which probably will take place, but about which there is no absolute certainty. A speaker using it communicates that an action is simply a possibility.

SUBJUNCTIVE=TO SUPPOSE

Jesus indicated the probability of reviling and persecution in the lives of His disciples when He used the subjunctive mood as He said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and shall persecute you."

μακάριοι ἐστε ὅταν ὀνειδίσωσιν
Blessed are ye when they revile
ὑμᾶς καὶ διώξωσιν
you and persecute (you),

3 THE OPTATIVE MOOD ??

The optative mood points to an action which has a slight possibility of taking place, but that possibility is a remote one. A speaker using it communicates that he wishes the action would take place.

OPTATIVE=TO OPT (WISH)

The Apostle Paul used the optative mood to express his desire for the Thessalonian believers to receive guidance from the Lord as they patiently waited for His deliverance. (See II Thessalonians 3:2-5.)

4 THE IMPERATIVE MOOD !

The imperative mood points to an action in which the speaker requires a response from the listener. It gives a command, exerting the speaker's will over the will of the listener.

This request can be stated with varying levels of intensity such as entreaty, direction, or command. While the statement of the command is definite, the listener's obedience to follow it is indefinite.

IMPERATIVE=TO IMPEL

The strength of an imperative verb actually comes from the source of the command. If an important person gives that command, then it is a strong command.

Jesus used two imperative verbs when He taught His disciples how to respond to persecution: "rejoice" and "be glad."

Since Jesus is our Creator and our Lord, these are strong imperatives. The only uncertainty lies in our obedience to them.

χαίρετε καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε,
Rejoice and be exceeding glad,
ὅτι ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολὺς ἐν
for the reward of you [is] great in
τοῖς οὐρανοῖς·
the heavens;

The fact that Jesus used the imperative mood for these words indicates that rejoicing and being exceedingly glad are not controlled by our emotions, but rather by our wills. We also know that joy is a function of the spirit; thus, we are to direct our spirit in willful obedience even when we do not feel like rejoicing or being glad. The mood of the imperative takes precedence over the mood of our emotions!

PROJECT

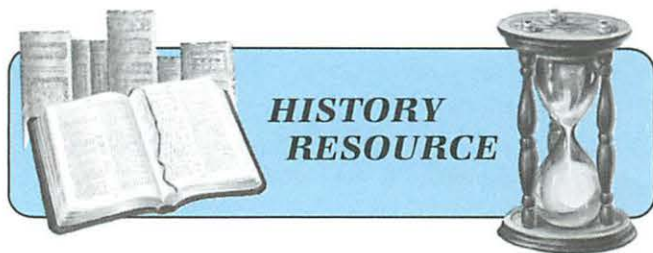


EXPRESSING THE FOUR MOODS

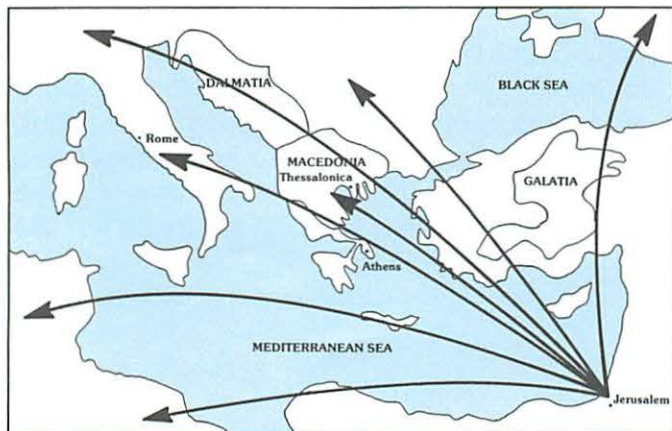
Indicate which mood is being expressed in each of the following sentences.

- I wish I could rejoice in tribulation.
3
- Jesus promised that my reward will be great in heaven.
1
- Rejoice always, and again I say, rejoice.
4
- If Christians rejoice in persecution, their enemies will marvel at their inward strength.
2
- Return not evil for evil.
4
- I willingly accepted the command to rejoice.
1

Date completed _____ Evaluation _____



HOW DOES GOD USE PERSECUTION TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL?



"... And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

THEY GAVE WHAT THEY COULD NOT KEEP TO GAIN WHAT THEY COULD NOT LOSE.

The loud, repeated knock at the door was only too well known by the young people assembled in the room. In the group was a young mother with a nursing child.

She bundled him as best she could and was led out into the custody of the waiting police officers to an ordeal she knew awaited her.

Her father and family members pleaded with her to renounce her new faith in Christ. She replied, "I am now a Christian." This brought a great outburst of anger and cursing against her faith in Christ from her father.

The small group of brave Christians was taken to prison where they suffered many harsh conditions.

After several days the prisoners were hustled to the court. There they met a jeering and insulting mob. Suddenly the father of the young mother rushed up to her and tried once more to convince her to renounce Christ. He held her young son in front of her in a last desperate attempt to persuade her.

With quiet boldness she said, "I am a Christian and cannot deny my Saviour." Angrily, the

judge pronounced the death sentence on all of the Christians.

They met their cruel execution with the joy of the Lord. One of the prison guards was so impressed with the manner and attitudes of the brave group in facing martyrdom for the sake of Christ that he himself became a Christian.

"The more you mow us down, the more we grow: the blood of Christians is the seed."
Tertullian, *Apologeticum*.

The inward peace and changed behavior of a young man and his wife dumbfounded his rebellious brother. Unable to find peace in his own life, the brother carefully examined what had recently happened to his brother and sister-in-law. He responded by turning to Jesus Christ from his sins.

Since he never did things half-heartedly, he became bold in his witness for Christ. His former pagan friends were aghast at his new message and changed attitudes. He boldly said, "If a person lives for Jesus Christ, he should be ready for anything and must be true to Christ to the end."

This young Christian was to experience the reality of those words with shocking suddenness. He, along with his brother, his sister-in-law, and his pastor, were arrested one cold winter morning.

The court could find nothing against them except their faithful commitment for service to Christ. Based on untrue charges, all four were sentenced to prison.

After two weeks in prison, the young Christian's wife and four children received a message that God would use to spread the Gospel in an unanticipated way. Their husband and father was dead.

During the trial he was in robust health. But in the returned casket they found the tortured body of a barely recognizable person.

The authorities had hoped that his torture would intimidate the Christians, but the news of his faithful witness spread like wildfire across that land, giving Christians much encouragement.

WHEN DID THESE EVENTS HAPPEN?

The young woman, named Perpetua, suffered for Christ in A.D. 203 in North Africa. The young man, named Nikolai Khmara, bore faithful witness in A.D. 1964 in Soviet Russia.

"But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer . . ." (1 Peter 3:14-15).



A Song in Siberia

Nikolai Kuzmich Khmara in his coffin following his 1964 torture and martyrdom. His widow and children are in the front row.

WHAT ARE THE MARKS OF THE FAITHFUL WITNESS?

The word *martyr* in the Greek (μάρτυς) means “witness.” Christ’s faithful witnesses through the years have been characterized by a wise understanding of the place that God intends trials to have in the lives of His people.

- **A wise focus on heaven and heavenly rewards**

They place their affection on eternal things, not on the things of this earth. Therefore, they see their afflictions as light afflictions destined but for the moment. Their outward man may perish, but the inward man is renewed daily. (See II Corinthians 4:16–18.)

- **A wise understanding of suffering**

They understand that God is able to use their right responses to afflictions to alert sinners of their need of the Gospel. (See Acts 16:31.)



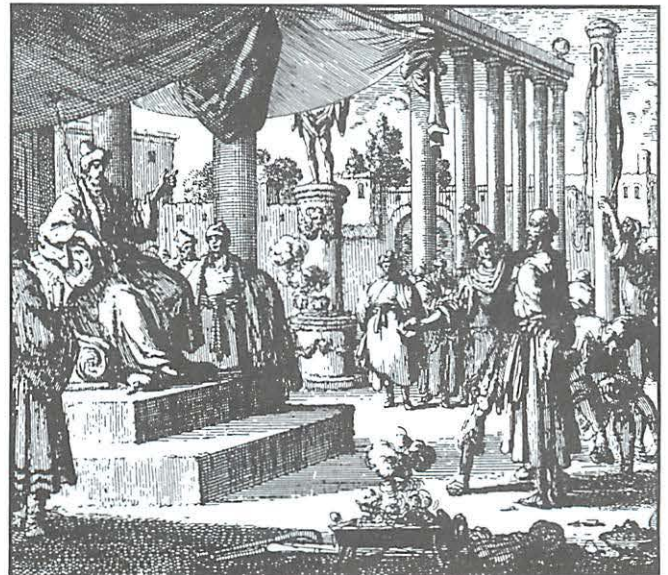
Paul and Silas had been falsely accused, denied a fair trial, illegally beaten, and unlawfully imprisoned. Their backs were bleeding; their ankles were in pain. Their joyful response prompted the Philippian jailer to later ask, “. . . Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30).

- **A wise response to enemies**

Following in the footsteps of Christ, His people love their enemies by blessing when cursed, doing good when hated, and praying when persecuted. (See I Peter 2:19–21.)

- **A wise response to civil authorities**

When brought before governmental authorities, they respond by acknowledging God’s design and purpose for these authorities. This way they may lead a peaceable and quiet life. They pray for the salvation of those authorities, rather than reviling them. (See I Timothy 2:1–4.)



Martyrs Mirror

Second examination of Tharacus

HOW DID THE APOSTLES FOLLOW CHRIST IN GIVING THEIR LIVES?

“. . . Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).

“. . . I bear in my body the marks [στίγματα] of the Lord Jesus” (Galatians 6:17).

The human observer might have asked Jesus, “Why did you choose such a common collection of peasants, townsmen, and fishermen to be Your witnesses and mighty workmen?”

The transformation of the twelve disciples was one of Christ’s greatest miracles. These men would stand as eyewitnesses to the “many infallible proofs” of His resurrection. (See Acts 1:3.) Their ability to rejoice in spite of persecution for the cause of Christ became the foundation of the first-century churches. Their deaths became the “seed of the Church.”



James: The Son of Thunder

During his apostleship, James shared some of Christ's most intimate experiences. This close relationship with the Lord became a training ground for future challenges. After fourteen years of faithful service, James became the first apostle to earn the martyr's crown.

He died at the hands of jealous King Herod in A.D. 44. Although the Book of Acts mentions nothing of James's words, it does record his willingness to lay down his life for Christ. (See Acts 12:2.)

The Church Fathers confirm that the officer who guarded James was so impressed by his courage and spirit that he fell at the Apostle's feet to beg forgiveness. The transformed soldier publicly confessed his faith and was killed with the same sword that beheaded James.

Philip: The Soulwinner

Historians trace Philip's travels to Phrygia with his sister, Mariamne, and his old friend, Nathanael. In the city of Hierapolis, he preached against the idolatrous worship of a giant serpent. When he rebuked the Phrygians, many repented and became Christians. Enraged by his influence, city officials seized Philip, whipped him, and cast him into prison.

The Christians in Asia Minor were inspired to continue in the faith when Philip and his sister were later crucified.

Matthew: The Tax Collector

Christ changed the corrupt tax collector's name to Matthew (which means "gift of God"). He gladly left the wealth of this world to follow a greater king than Caesar.



Bible Art Series, Standard Publishing

Philip ministered to the Ethiopian Eunuch.

Some first-century records limit the Gospel writer to a preaching ministry in Judaea for eight years after the resurrection. Another chronicle follows him into Ethiopia and Arabia. Matthew's life ended when he was slain by an Ethiopian sword. The early church in Africa grew in strength and numbers because of his martyrdom.



Bible Art Series, Standard Publishing

Thomas found confidence in the truth after he examined the nailprints.

Thomas: The Savior's Servant

"... My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). After uttering these words, Thomas began a ministry that would take him to the Near East. As a bond-slave to Jesus Christ, he established many churches in India. His life ended near Bombay when persecutors thrust a lance through his body as he prayed. The Syrian and Indian Christian churches still claim Thomas as their founder.

Peter: The Fiery Fisherman

Christ Himself prophesied Peter's crucifixion in John 21:18. When Peter was brought to the cross he made the request, "Not with my head up: my Master died that way! Crucify me head downward. I die for my Lord: but I am not worthy to die like Him."

His writings, his personal leadership, and his courageous acceptance of persecution helped to encourage countless first-century believers.



Peter being crucified upside down

Martyrs Mirrors

Andrew: The First to Follow

Bringing others to Jesus would characterize Andrew's ministry. According to Polybus, the Greek historian, Andrew ministered to cannibals and pirates near the Black Sea. He has also been called the missionary to the Russians. The church at Byzantium (Constantinople) claims Andrew as its founder.

In A.D. 60, he was martyred in Greece on an X-shaped cross. After the conversion of the governor's wife, Andrew was cruelly crucified when she refused to deny her faith in Christ. He hung alive for two days, exhorting the people all through his suffering to remain true to the Lord. Fearing a revolt, the governor ordered Andrew's removal from the cross.



Martyrs Mirrors

Andrew the Apostle crucified at Patras

Paul: The Missionary Martyr

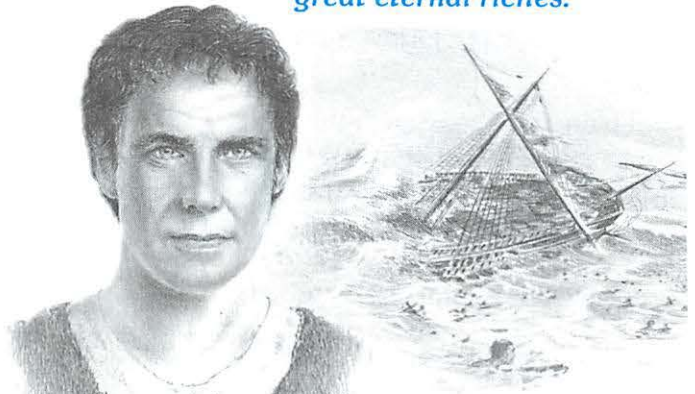
A clear record of the cities and individuals that Paul influenced during his three missionary journeys is preserved in the Book of Acts and his own epistles. Paul was the "Apostle to the Gentiles" and had an unequalled impact on the growth of the early Church.

His term in the Philippian jail with Silas still serves as a classic illustration of Christian joy in spite of outward circumstances. With tremendous devotion and gladness, he counted every loss a gain. (See Philippians 3:8.)

Paul died in Rome in A.D. 68. He was condemned by Nero, but because he was a Roman citizen he escaped crucifixion. As the axe fell, he joyfully anticipated heaven. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

Thousands of first-century believers continued in the faith because of Paul's willingness to suffer for the cause of Christ.

Paul forsook all for great eternal riches.



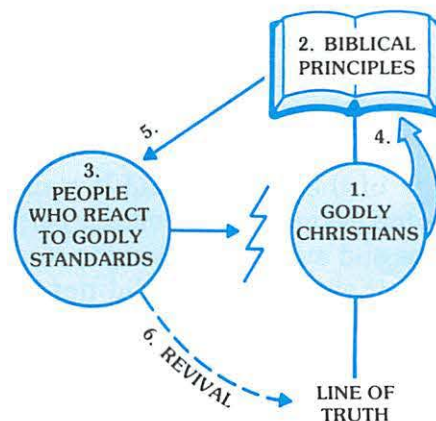
"Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck . . . In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often . . . in cold and nakedness" (II Corinthians 11:25-27).

WHY IS PERSECUTION NECESSARY TO BRING A NATION TO RIGHTEOUSNESS?

When Christians illustrate the character qualities of humility, meekness, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, forgiveness, and inward purity, they will become very effective witnesses for Christ.

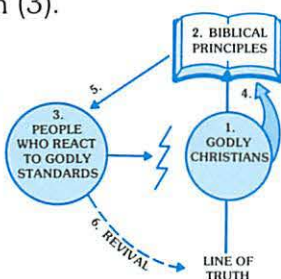
Because of their effectiveness, their witness will cause reaction. However, a right response to reaction can produce revival. This is because . . .

WHAT ONE GENERATION FIGHTS AGAINST, THE NEXT GENERATION TENDS TO ACCEPT.



The previous diagram depicts a group of dedicated Christians (1) who are committed to building their lives, marriages, families, education, and businesses around the principles of God's Word (2). They are reviled and persecuted by those who have rejected God's truth (3).

If Christians react with the same methods which the world uses against them, the Christians will lose their effectiveness and will become like their persecutors. (See Proverbs 26:4.)



They or their children will soon accept the wrong philosophy of their persecutors because what one generation fights against, the next generation tends to accept.

If, on the other hand, Christians respond in love and patience and stand their ground without compromise, their critics will soon move in their direction because of the same principle.

If Christians go several steps further by rejoicing in tribulation and directing their critics to the principles of God's Word upon which they stand (4), the critics will realize that they are fighting God's Word, not just Christians.

By fighting truth, critics only establish their responsibility to it (5).

This often creates a pendulum effect which is increased by the initial response of moving toward the Christians, whom they have persecuted. The result can be a major spiritual awakening (6).

THE GREAT REWARDS FROM REVIVAL

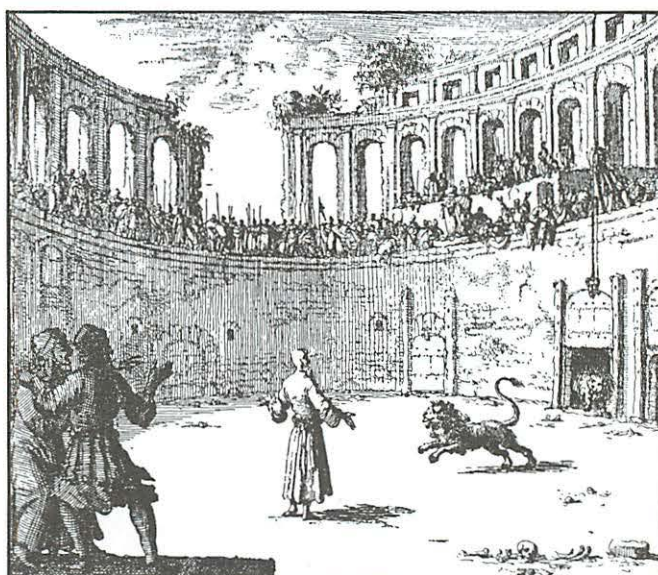
When we are used to turn many to righteousness, we gain for ourselves great glory and rewards to be enjoyed throughout all eternity.

It is for this reason that the Apostle Paul was able to say, "... 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).

The life of the Apostle Paul is a dramatic illustration of this diagram. He relentlessly persecuted the Christians and even assisted in the stoning of Stephen, but these Christians did not react in carnal ways.

Soon it was revealed to Paul that he was actually fighting against Christ, and this brought about his conversion. (See Acts 9:1-6.)

HOW DOES THE TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY CHURCH HELP US TO REJOICE IN PERSECUTION TODAY?



Martyrs Mirrors

"Jesus is Lord" was the simple statement of the martyrs.

Driven into the arena, torn by wild animals, dragged on the horns of bulls, and crucified, they responded with joy that they were counted worthy to suffer for their Lord.

During Nero's madness many were covered with pitch and burned alive to light the walkways of his courtyards. They influenced many to decide to follow Jesus.

"Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination when daylight had expired."

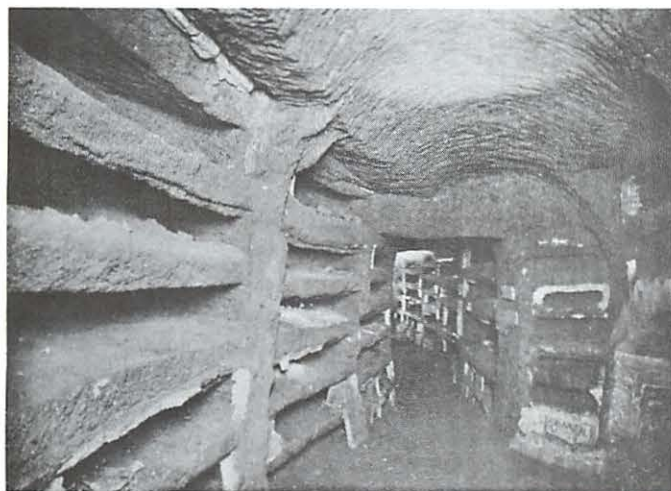
Tacitus

In the midst of a mockery of Christian faith, the mime Genesius was suddenly convicted by the Holy Spirit of his sin; to the disbelief of the crowd, he suddenly cried, "I want to receive the grace of Christ that I may be born again and be set free from the sins which have been my ruin."

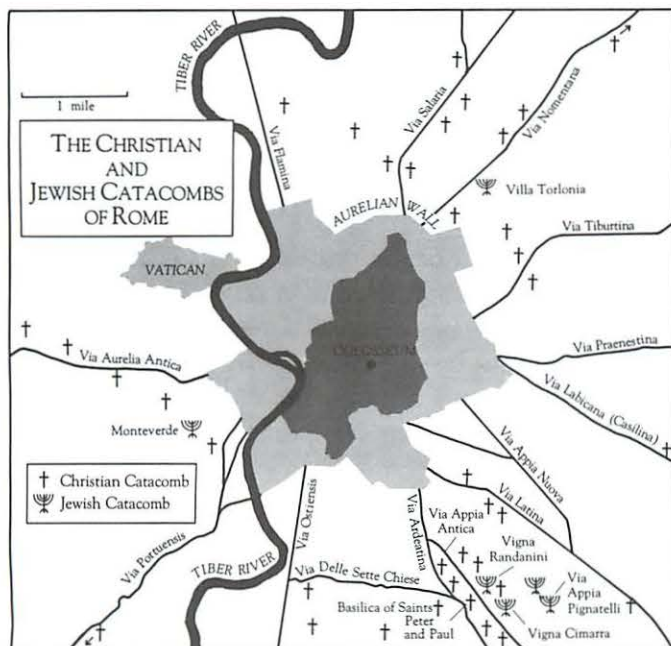
When the cruel Roman emperor Diocletian understood what was happening, he ordered Genesius martyred. In his last moments he kept repeating, "There is no king except Christ."

Why would a government extend such hostility toward Christians? The emperor saw himself as the

mediator between the gods and the people and the source of the life of the State. Hence, his birthday "was the beginning of the good news (*evangelion*) of State salvation (*soteria*).” Thus, a confrontation with those who worshiped the Creator Who sent His Son to be the Savior of the world was unavoidable.

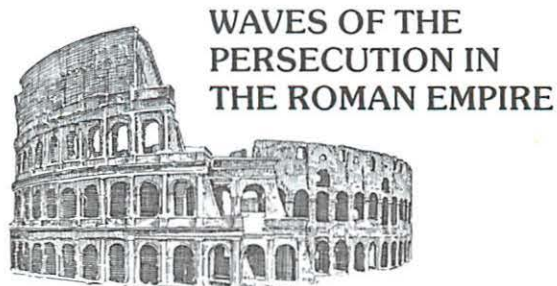


A view in the catacombs at Rome, showing *Loculi*, or wall-tombs. Christians buried their dead in the walls of the catacombs and actually lived there to hide from the brutal Roman persecution.



The underground network of catacombs covered about 600 acres on the outskirts of Rome. Since the Romans held any burial place to be sacred, they would not molest Christians there.

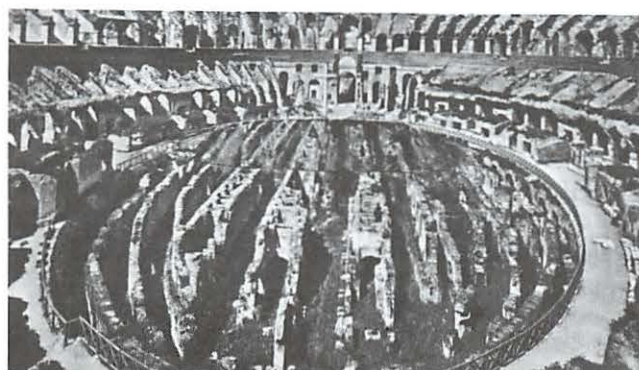
In wave after wave of persecution, the emperors tried to force a confession from Christians that Caesar was lord.



The Colosseum seated almost fifty thousand.

1 Nero, A.D. 54-68

In the persecution during 64-68, Paul was martyred at Rome with a huge multitude of Christians on the false pretext that they had set fire to Rome.



Pictorial Introduction to the Bible, Baker Book House

Under the floor of the Colosseum was an extensive labyrinth of rooms for gladiators, cells for prisoners, and cages for the wild beasts used in the persecutions.

2 Domitian, 81-96

A number of Christians were put to death under the charge of "atheism," among them Flavius Clemens, consul and cousin of the Emperor, and his wife Domitilla.

3 Trajan, 98-117

In A.D. 112, he instructed Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia, that:

[1] Christians were not to be sought out and anonymous accusations were to be neglected.

[2] Those who were regularly accused and acknowledged themselves Christians were to be punished.

[3] Those who said they had never been Christians or had ceased to be Christians and proved it by sacrificing were to be pardoned.

This rescript guided the procedure against Christians for a century until Septimius Severus. Ignatius was martyred during this time.

4 Antoninus Pius, 138-161

This emperor repeated the first and second provisions of Trajan's rescript in Macedonia, Thessaly, and Greece. Polycarp of Smyrna was martyred.

HOW DID POLYCARP INSPIRE THE CHRISTIANS OF HIS DAY THROUGH HIS LIFE AND HIS DEATH?

The might of Rome and the emperor's desire to be worshiped as god reached into Asia Minor in the middle of the second century. This fiery trial touched many of the new Christians, including one of John's disciples, Polycarp.

At the time of the persecution, Polycarp was very old and had served as one of the major Christian leaders and teachers throughout Smyrna and the western end of Asia Minor. The mob at his trial shouted in uncontrollable rage, "Here is the schoolmaster of Asia—the father of the Christians—the destroyer of our gods—the one that teaches the multitude not to sacrifice or do reverence!"

After torturing a slave to find Polycarp's home, the Roman guards finally located him. His quiet manner and kindly attitude surprised the Roman officer that this elderly gentleman could be the "dangerous" criminal whom they sought.

"May the will of God be done" was the response of the faithful Christian statesman. After offering the hospitality of his home and a time of prayer, he willingly went with them.

The hostile roar of the crowd in the amphitheater greeted the entrance of Polycarp. The governor demanded, "Swear by the genius (religious authority) of the emperor. Recant . . . curse Christ!"



Israel Office of Information

Built by Herod the Great, the Roman Theater in Caesarea was also a place of persecution.

Polycarp answered, "For eighty-six years I have been His servant, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme against my King and Saviour? . . . I am a Christian."

Though he was unconcerned about the favor of the mob, Polycarp understood the place of God's authorities. He said, "For we have been taught to pay respect to the authorities and powers that God has assigned us (for this does not harm our cause)."

After repeated attempts to persuade the aged and faithful Polycarp to renounce his Savior had failed, he was sentenced to die the fiery death of a martyr. The raging mob cheered.

During his last moments he lifted his eyes and uttered this prayer:

"O Lord . . . I bless You because You have thought me worthy of this day and this hour, to have a share among the number of the martyrs in the cup of Your Christ, for the resurrection unto eternal life of both the soul and the body . . . Hence I praise You, I bless You, and I glorify You above all things, through that eternal and celestial High Priest, Jesus Christ. . . ."

5 Marcus Aurelius, 161-180

This emperor repeated the third provision of Trajan's rescript. Among the martyrs under his rule were Carpus, Justin, the Scillitan Martyrs, and the Martyrs of Lyons.

6 Septimius Severus, 193-211

A new era began and from this time forward persecution was regulated by a series of new edicts. Christians were not accused by private prosecutors, but sought out by the state.

The martyrs Saturus and his pupils Perpetua and Felicitas and their companions suffered in this wave.

7 Maximinus Thrax, 235-238

Persecution was directed against leaders, but extended to others by mob violence and the cruelty of certain governors.

8 Decius, 249-251

In the edict of 250, certificates of sacrifice were demanded of all Christians in town and country alike. Punishment included exile with confiscation of goods; torture and imprisonment were used to induce repentance. Death was seldom inflicted; persecution was worldwide. Many leaders perished.

EMPERORS OF ROME WHO RULED DURING THE PERSECUTIONS



AUGUSTUS

Augustus
Tiberius
Caligula
Claudius



TIBERIUS

27 B.C.-14 A.D.
14-37
37-41
41-54



CALIGULA



CLAUDIUS



NERO

Nero 54-68
Galba 68-69
Otho 69
Vitellius 69
Vespasian 69-79
Titus 79-81
Domitian 81-96
Nerva 96-98
Trajan 98-117



DOMITIAN



TRAJAN

Hadrian 117-138
Antoninus Pius 138-161
Marcus Aurelius 161-180

Lucius Verus 161-169
Commodus 180-192
Pertinax 193
Didius Julianus 193
Septimius Severus 193-211



HADRIAN



SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS



CARACALLA

Caracalla 211-217
Geta 211-212
Macrinus 217-218
Elagabalus 218-222
Severus Alexander 222-235
Maximinus Thrax 235-238
Gordians I, II, III 238-244
Philippus 244-249

Decius 249-251
Valerian 253-260
Gallienus 253-268
Claudius Gothicus 268-270



DIOCLETIAN



JULIAN THE APOSTATE

Aurelian 270-275
Tacitus 275-276
Florian 276
Probus 276-282
Carus 282-283
Carinus 283-285
Diocletian 284-305
Maximian 286-305
Constantius I 305-306
Galerius 305-311
Constantine, Licinius 307-324
Constantine 324-337
Julian the Apostate 360-363

Adapted from Moses Hadas, "The Men Who Ruled the Empire," *Imperial Rome* (NY: Time-Life Books, 1965), page 64.



Yale University, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

A photograph of an actual *libellus* from the reign of Decian. Translated from Greek, this document reads: "To the superintendents of offerings and sacrifices at the city from Aurelius. . . . It has ever been my custom to make sacrifices and libations to the gods, and now also I have in your presence in accordance with the command poured libations and sacrificed and tasted the offerings together with my son Aurelius Dioscorus and my daughter Aurelia Lais."

9 Valerian, 253-260

Peace was restored until 257, when the first edict of persecution ordered bishops and priests to worship the gods and forbade Christians under pain of death to frequent the cemeteries or hold meetings for worship.

The second edict in 258 ordered that bishops, priests, and deacons who refused to sacrifice should be put to death at once. Christians of noble birth should have their property confiscated. Having lost the privileges of noble birth by the loss of fortune or property, men were punished with death and women with exile. The Caesariani (slaves and freedmen of the imperial house) should lose their property, and be made slaves of the soil. Cyprian, among many others, suffered martyrdom.

10 Diocletian, Maximian, Constantius I, and Galerius, 292-304

In 303, Diocletian, under the influence of Maximian, issued the first edict. Churches should be destroyed, and sacred Scriptures burned. Christians of position should lose their honors, and those of lower rank their liberty. Death was not pronounced as a penalty, but many died.

The second edict caused leaders of the Christians to be thrown into prison.

The third edict imprisoned clergy who refused to sacrifice and caused them to suffer cruel tortures.

The fourth edict in 304 decreed that all Christians everywhere in towns should sacrifice on threat of being put to death in a war of extermination.

The fifth and sixth edicts under Galerius tried to force idolatry on the Christians by sprinkling all articles to be sold with sacrificial water.

Eusebius records his experience,

"It was then that we observed a most marvellous eagerness . . . as soon as sentence was given against the first, another would leap up . . . and confess themselves Christians, paying no heed when faced with terrors and the varied forms of tortures . . . so that with joy they sang and sent up thanksgivings to the God of the universe even to the very last breath."



Pictorial Introduction to the Bible, Baker Book House

The Arch of Constantine in Rome

In March 313, Constantine gave complete freedom to the Christians by the Edict of Milan. The victory of faithful suffering filled the Empire with Christians during the first 300 years of the Church's history and earned for the martyrs a crown of life that fades not away.

Adapted from E.C.E. Owen, "Summary of the Persecutions in the Roman Empire," *Some Authentic Acts of the Early Martyrs* (New Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1927) pages 27-30.

HOW THE FIRE OF PERSECUTION HAS WARMED THE HEARTS OF MILLIONS

George A. Young, a skilled carpenter and preacher, spent his life ministering to small churches in rural areas. Often Pastor Young and his family labored among congregations that were too poor to supply even their basic needs. Yet, they served faithfully and trusted God for these provisions.

Finally the day came when with great sacrifice and by working extra hours, the Youngs were able to build a small home of their own. Because they were building it themselves and were committed to doing only as much as funds would allow, it took several years to complete their "dream" home.

Moving day seemed too good to be true! The Young family praised God for His care by singing the Doxology and dedicating their home to the Lord's service.

But there were those who were not happy about God's provision for Pastor Young. While the Youngs were away holding special meetings, someone not in sympathy with the Pastor's ministry set fire to the special home.

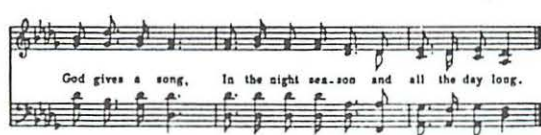
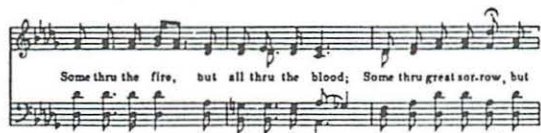
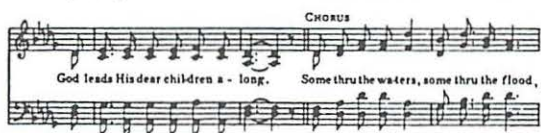
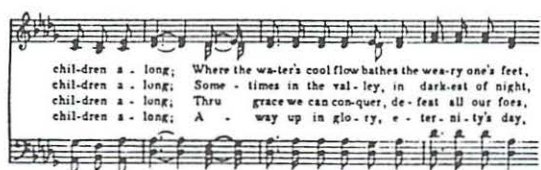
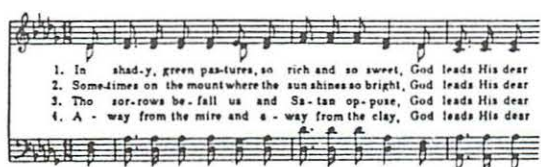
Everything was lost! As George Young viewed the desolate picture before his eyes and reflected upon the many priceless treasures he possessed in the Lord, the words of what would become a new song came to his heart.

"Some through the fire, but all through the blood . . . God leads His dear children along."

God Leads Us Along

G. A. Young

G. A. Young



Al Smith's Treasury of Hymn Histories

- Learn to sing George Young's song with your family.

HOW GOD USES THE WRATH OF MEN TO PRAISE HIM

Thousands of Christians have been burned at the stake because they would not deny the Lord Jesus Christ. Because they were faithful unto death, hundreds of thousands of bystanders were drawn to the Savior.

An officiating attendant, watching a Christian being burned at the stake and observing the results of his testimony on the crowd that watched, rushed into the presence of the ruler and shouted, "We must stop burning these Christians. Their smoke affects the people in the village and causes them to become Christians."



Foxe's Christian Martyrs of the World

A bookseller burned to death with his Bibles tied around his neck

John Hus was named the "Morningstar of the Reformation." As a boy, he read the accounts of earlier Christians who had given their lives to bring the Gospel to him. Deeply moved by their witness and desiring to follow their example of courage, he lit a candle and put his finger over the flame to see if he could stand the heat of the fire if he were called upon one day to follow in their footsteps.

John Hus was burned at the stake in 1415. His testimony, in turn, influenced Martin Luther and other reformers, who influenced millions of other lives.



John Hus

PROJECT

Go into your closet and shut the door. Kneel down and thank the Lord for all those faithful Christians throughout the centuries who gave their lives so that you could hear the Gospel. Then purpose that you will follow their example of living for the Lord, whatever the cost.

Date completed 2-15-99 Evaluation what does mean?



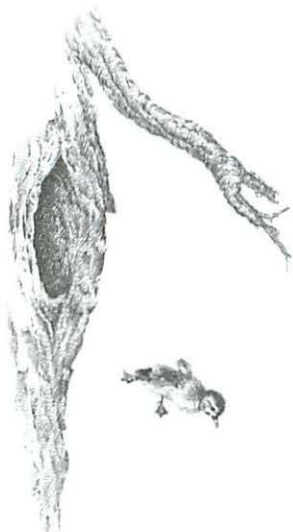
SCIENCE RESOURCE

HOW DOES THE WORLD OF NATURE ILLUSTRATE THE BENEFITS OF STRUGGLE?

Every creature struggles at birth in one way or another. Baby opossums, for example, weigh less than 1/250th of an ounce at birth. They are blind, hairless, and only partially developed. Yet, they must struggle through a long and arduous three-inch quest to find their mother's pouch. Inside that pouch is nourishing milk that keeps the tiny opossums alive. They remain in the pouch until they are mature enough to be on their own.



"Swimming" motion
of its crawl to pouch



The wood duck's
jump is proportionate
to a man jumping
from the roof of a
forty-story building.

Young wood ducks leap from their nests when they are only one day old. Their reward is survival and protection. A baby otter struggles to learn to swim, soon becoming as capable in the water as any fish.



The struggle of each newborn is different, having its own purpose and its own reward.

These struggles and rewards have specific applications to our spiritual lives as we seek to grow in the Lord.

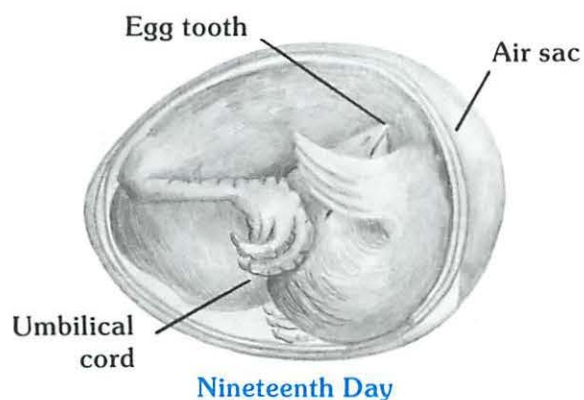
For more information about the opossum, wood duck, and otter, see the *Character Sketches* series. OPOSSUM, Volume II, page 170, WOOD DUCK, Volume I, page 154, OTTER, Volume I, page 116.

1 STRUGGLES ARE PERFECTLY SEQUENCED TO ACCOMPLISH GOD'S PURPOSES.

It takes twenty-one days for a chicken egg to hatch. On the fifteenth day, the tiny chicken begins to twist and turn so that its head is facing towards the large end of the egg. This is the end that contains the air sac from which the chick will take its first breath of air.

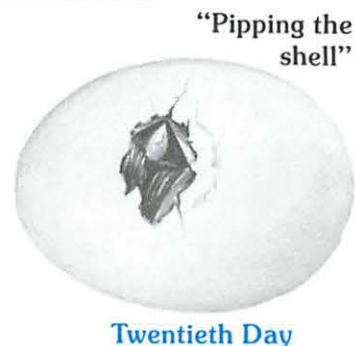
CHICKEN

SEQUENCE OF A HATCHING EGG



The chick's long struggle assures that there is plenty of time for the yolk to be absorbed slowly without tearing the umbilical cord.

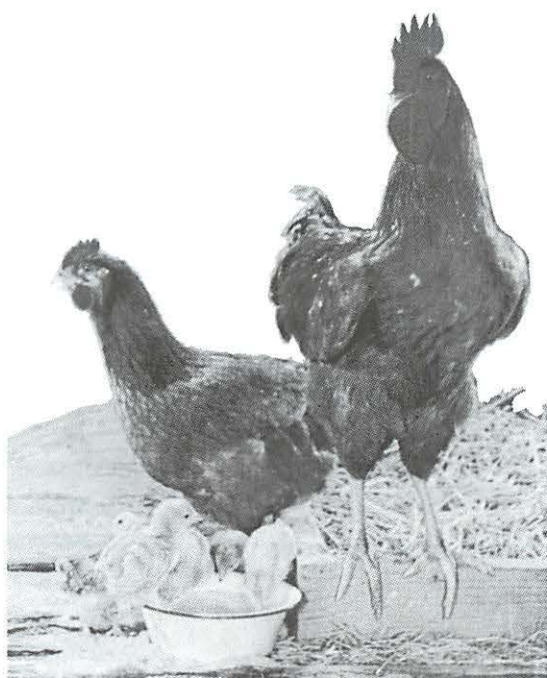
It also allows the lungs to mature in stages rather than being exposed all at once to the hazards of "outside" air.



On the nineteenth day, the chick stretches its tiny head forward and breaks the inner membrane of the shell. Moist air from the egg's air sac enters the chick's lungs, preparing them for the "fresh" air that will soon be needed to keep the chick alive.

On the twentieth day, the chick begins cutting a circle around the large end of the egg. In two to five hours the chick will have cut far enough around the shell that it begins to push on the egg cap with all its might. Every muscle in its body strains to break open the egg.

For forty minutes the chick exhausts itself in one last struggle to be free. When the egg cap finally pops off, the chick tumbles out, completely exhausted.



GOD HAS SHORTENED THE TIME OF OUR STRUGGLE SO THAT WE MIGHT ENDURE TO THE END.

Even though a young chick is equipped with a special tooth, thousands of pecks are required for it to break through its tough shell. Even more would be required if it were not for the acid which forms inside the egg.

The acid eats away at the calcium which makes the shell hard. By the time the chick is ready to hatch, the shell is weak enough to be broken. Without the acid, even the strongest chick might not be able to break out of its shell.

The calcium that the acid dissolves from the shell is used by the embryo to build strong bones. This is the only source of calcium that the chick has inside the egg.

2 STRUGGLES THAT ARE AVOIDED RESULT IN LASTING CONSEQUENCES.

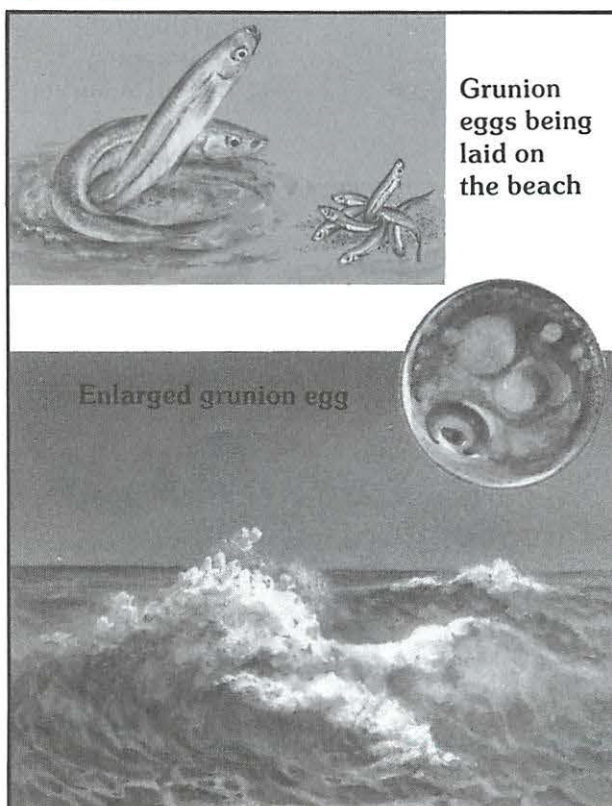
At the beginning of the drawn-out hatching process, the yolk of the egg is slowly pulled inside the body of the chick. The yolk provides the baby chick's first food and water for up to seventy-two hours.

If the chick hatches too quickly, the umbilical cord that connects the chick to the yolk may be torn before the yolk enters the chick's body. This may cause the chick to bleed to death.

Another struggle in nature which cannot be avoided is that of the grunion. One of the strangest sights in the whole world is the sight of grunion struggling to shore. They fight against the waves until they are free of the surf and then flop and squirm their way up the beach. There the female buries herself tail first in the sand and lays her eggs. Sandy beaches are foreign territory for grunion, which must return to the ocean in a matter of minutes because they cannot breathe out of water.

The eggs develop over the next two weeks and then wait for the next spring tide. As the waves work their way up the beach, their vibrations signal the incubating grunion fry to begin struggling. They must break out of their egg shells and work their way to the surface of the beach in time to be washed out to sea by the rising tide.

GRUNION



Grunion eggs being laid on the beach

Enlarged grunion egg

3 STRUGGLES MUST FOLLOW GOD'S CYCLES OF LIFE.

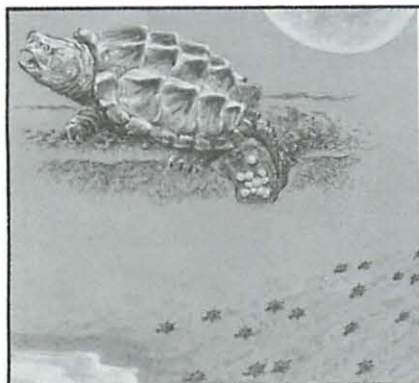
Grunion eggs must be laid at precisely the right moment. If they are laid on the shore several days early, the eggs will be washed out to sea by the next higher tide.

If the eggs are laid even several hours too early, they may be stranded on the beach too high for the next spring tide to reach them. If the eggs are laid too late, they will not have enough time to incubate.

Another creature that must follow God's cycle and timing is the alligator snapping turtle. An alligator snapping turtle lays its eggs in soil sometimes as much as a quarter of a mile from the nearest water. The female digs a deep hole and lays her eggs in one large bunch. Then she covers them up and leaves them to incubate in the sun.

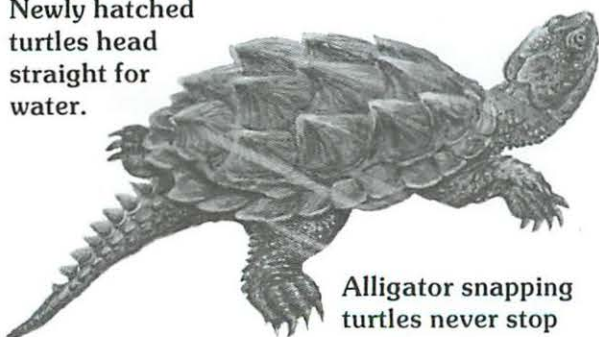
When the eggs hatch, the young snapping turtles have to dig themselves free. Sometimes the ground becomes so hard that they are trapped. Then, regardless of how much they struggle, their tiny claws cannot loosen the ground, and they must wait for rain to soften the ground before they can escape.

ALLIGATOR SNAPPING TURTLE



Alligator snapping turtles bury their eggs in deep holes which they dig with their back legs.

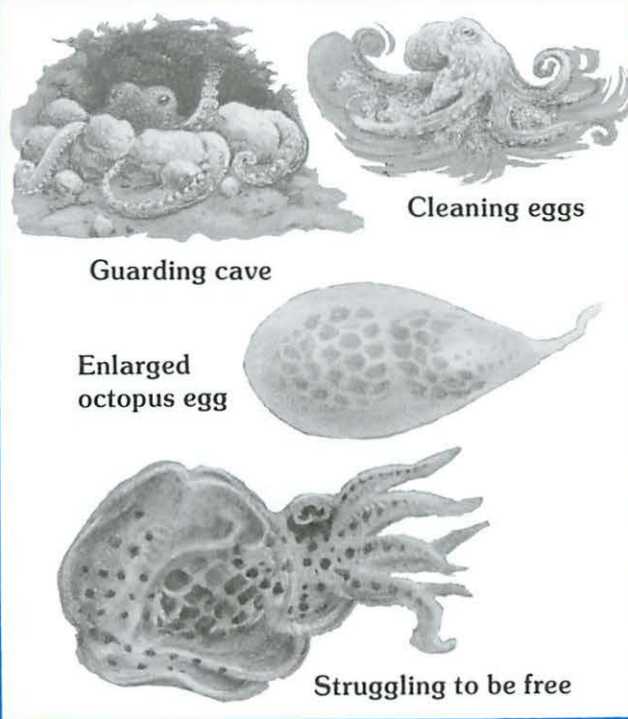
Newly hatched turtles head straight for water.



Alligator snapping turtles never stop growing. Some have weighed up to several hundred pounds.

Young turtles know instinctively which direction to travel to find water. Even though there may be tremendous obstacles like logs, fields, or roads, they can find their way straight to the nearest body of water. While there have been many experiments with turtles of all kinds, no one knows exactly how they are able to find water.

OCTOPUS



4 STRUGGLES AND SACRIFICE ARE REQUIRED TO REPRODUCE LIFE.

A female octopus may lay more than 150,000 eggs. The eggs are clustered together on stalks that are hung from the ceilings of small caves on the ocean floor. If left unattended, the eggs would die from lack of oxygen or might be eaten by their own father.

For a period of about thirty days the female does nothing but care for her eggs. She washes them with jet streams of water, vacuums each individual egg with the suction cups on her tentacles, and keeps a watchful eye out for male octopods that could destroy the whole brood in just a few minutes.

During this time, the female does not eat or leave the cave for any reason. She is literally a prisoner in her own home. By the time the eggs hatch, she is usually so thin from starvation that she dies soon after her young leave the cave.

A baby octopus experiences the same struggle that many other animals experience when they are born. With its eight legs neatly wrapped inside the egg like a straight jacket, the octopus must fight its way out.

However, unlike most other animals, the octopus expresses the strain of its struggle by changing color. It will turn bright red, green, yellow, blue, and orange. The more it struggles, the more it flashes its colors, changing instantly from one color to another.

5 STRUGGLES TO BE STILL ARE OFTEN THE MOST DIFFICULT.

The white-tailed deer's primary defense is its swift legs. Its keen nose and sharp ears allow it to flee from danger even before the enemy approaches. Yet young fawns must struggle against this inner drive to flee. They must remain motionless for the first three days of their lives. During these seventy-two hours, their legs are not strong enough to flee from their enemies. If a fawn loses the struggle and jumps to its feet, it is certain to be easy prey for a coyote, dog, or bobcat.



The scent of a young fawn is almost impossible for a coyote to detect.

Protective coloration



By lying still, a fawn cannot be detected by its enemies.



More than 300 white spots help a fawn blend in with its surroundings.

6 STRUGGLES OFTEN REQUIRE A SUSTAINING EFFORT UNTIL THE GOAL IS ACHIEVED.

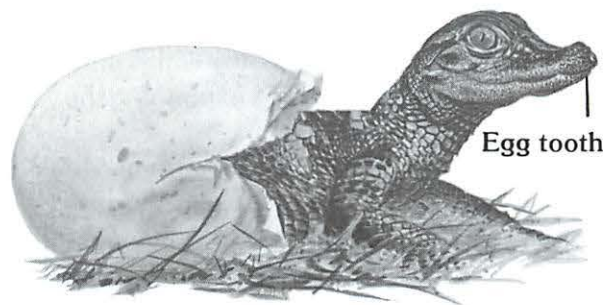
A baby alligator must break through two shells before it can hatch. The first is a soft, rubbery shell that lines the inside of a tough, leathery outer shell.

Just like a baby chick, God gave the alligator a special tooth located on the tip of its snout. The tooth helps cut through the shell and then disappears after it has served its purpose.

Once an alligator hatches, its struggles are just beginning. Waiting to intercept it before it can return to the water are raccoons, herons, egrets, and snakes. Even fish and bullfrogs will pursue the hatchling.

However, as long as the alligators are near their mother, they have no reason to fear.

ALLIGATOR

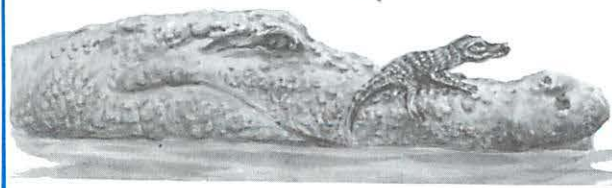


Egg tooth



Mother's protection is more than ample.

The baby alligator has many enemies. Even a large bullfrog may feed on it.



7 STRUGGLES ARE REQUIRED FOR EACH NEW STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT.

The monarch butterfly begins its struggle from a caterpillar to a butterfly by weaving a mat of fibers on the underside of a twig. The caterpillar hangs upside down and anchors itself with a set of tiny hooks called a *cremaster*.

As its skin splits down its back, the caterpillar wriggles and squirms to shake itself free from its last caterpillar skin.

The head and body slip out easily, but the point where the tail is anchored is a different matter. The caterpillar must slip the cremaster through the last bit of skin without letting go of the twig.

Inside the chrysalis is a complete butterfly with six long legs, beautiful orange and black wings, body, long antennae, and a long tongue. Because of the cramped space inside the chrysalis everything is neatly folded into place. Each wing is folded more than one hundred times.

As the monarch works itself free, fluid is pumped into its wings like air being pumped into an inner tube. At first, the wings are limp and wet, but as the fluid fills their veins, the wings unfold and the creases are smoothed out, expanding the wings to their full adult size.

It is with a great deal of struggle that the caterpillar enters into the chrysalis, and it is with even more struggle that the butterfly escapes. But once it has passed through these periods of struggle, the monarch is indeed a glorious creature. It can fly at up to twenty-five miles an hour and can average more than eighty miles a day when migrating.

Some have flown non-stop from the tip of Florida all the way across the Gulf of Mexico, a flight of more than 650 miles. Once the monarchs reach Mexico, they gather together by the millions and cover acres of trees and shrubs like decorations. The picture of these butterflies is one of the most glorious sights in all the earth.

PROJECT

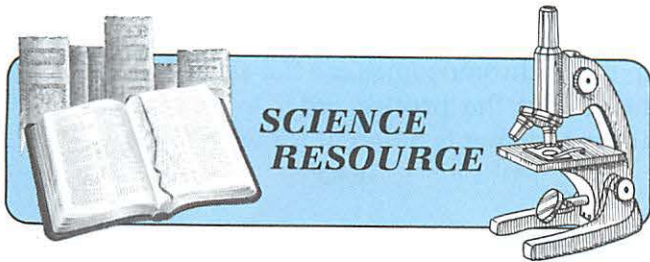
Relate each of the above aspects of struggle in the world of nature to your growth in the Christian life.

Read more about these animals in the *Character Sketches* series. GRUNION, Volume III, page 182, ALLIGATOR SNAPPING TURTLE, Volume III, page 306, OCTOPUS, Volume III, page 56, WHITE-TAILED DEER, Volume II, page 30, ALLIGATOR, Volume II, page 364, MONARCH BUTTERFLY, Volume III, page 344.

Date completed _____ Evaluation _____

MONARCH BUTTERFLY





SCIENCE RESOURCE

HOW DO THE LAWS OF THE HARVEST RELATE TO OUR REWARDS IN HEAVEN?



Harvesting wheat with a threshing machine

For every important spiritual truth, there are clear analogies in the world of nature. The rewards that Christians will receive in heaven are illustrated by the laws of the harvest. God combines these two in the following Scripture passage:

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7-8).

One of the important benefits of actually seeing God's truths worked out in nature is that they continually confront our lives with bold and dramatic reminders of the reality of God's ways. The fact that God has established laws related to

our rewards in heaven gives us fresh hearts to not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up.



The Library of Congress

A steam-powered threshing machine in the late 1800's

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A LAW

A law is a law because it is universal, because it takes place without exception under the same circumstances, because it is timeless and knows no cultural boundaries, and because it is absolute and operates whether or not man knows about it or acknowledges it. With these facts in mind, consider the seven laws of the harvest.

1 WE REAP ONLY WHAT WE HAVE SOWN.

All harvests come from seeds which have been sown in the past. The seed may be carried by man, by birds, or by the wind. Regardless of method, the seed must be planted, nourished, and rooted before it will grow upward and bear fruit.

It is possible for a farmer to enter into a harvest which was actually sown by another. It is also normal for a farmer to be hindered in his harvest by competing crops of thistles, thorns, and weeds as God predicted after the fall of Adam and Eve.

Some crops are perennial, and others are annual. A good crop must be nurtured. A crop of thistles and thorns will flourish without care.

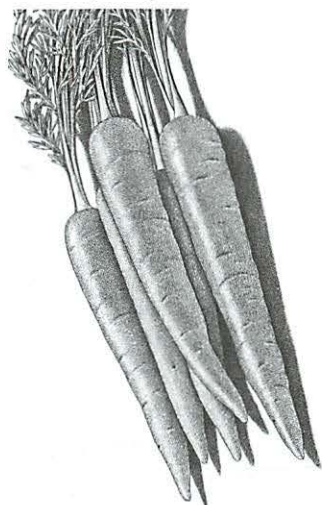
2 WE REAP IN KIND AS WE HAVE SOWN.

The second law of the harvest is that all things bring forth after their own kind. Pumpkin seeds always bring forth pumpkins. They never produce tomatoes. Cows always give birth to calves,

never horses. Bees hatch from bees. Dogs have puppies, not kittens. And, ears of corn grow only on corn stalks. Corn stalks are never found weighed down heavily with hundreds of pea pods.

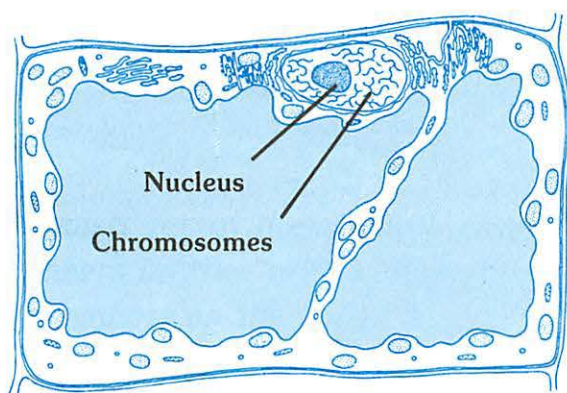
God keeps "kinds" separate by giving each "kind" of plant or animal its own unique set of blueprints that cannot be interchanged with any other kind.

If you want a harvest of carrots, you must sow carrot seeds. If you sow any other kind of seed, it will not bring forth a harvest of carrots.



HOW DOES GOD ENSURE THAT EACH SEED BRINGS FORTH ONLY ITS OWN KIND?

The mechanism for ensuring that each kind brings forth only its kind is found in the nucleus of every living cell. The nucleus contains long strands of nucleic acids called *chromosomes*. The sequence in which the acids in the nucleus are linked together makes up coded bits of information which every cell "understands." This information acts like a blueprint to ensure that each new cell is an exact replica of its parent.



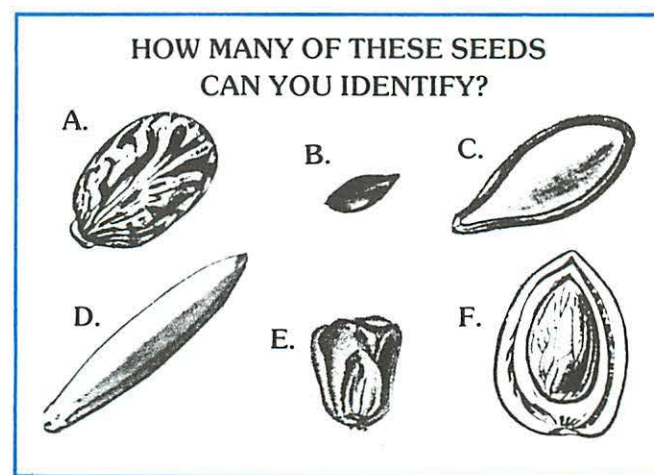
A "typical" plant cell

Each kind of plant or animal, as well as man, has its own distinct arrangement of these chromosomes. Man has 23 pairs of chromosomes, making a total of 46 strands of coded information. Crayfish have 100 pairs of chromosomes. Rabbits have 22 pairs. Horses have 32, and peas have only seven.

The basic structure of chemicals that make up these chromosomes are the same for all living things. But the precise order in which they are strung together is different for each "kind."

HOW MANY KINDS OF SEEDS DID GOD CREATE?

It is estimated that there are more than 250,000 different kinds of seeds. Because the chromosomes of these 250,000 "kinds" are so different from one another, none of them can be mixed together. Each "kind" brings forth only its own "kind."

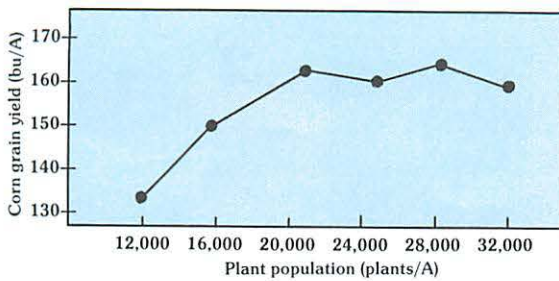


3 WE REAP ONLY IN PROPORTION TO WHAT WE HAVE SOWN.

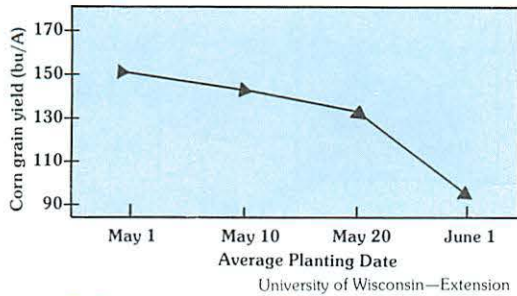
The third major law of the harvest is that the magnitude of the harvest is proportionate to the number of seeds that were sown. Stated simply, this law means that if you sow sparingly, you shall also reap sparingly. On the other hand, if seeds are sown bountifully, an abundant harvest will be gathered.

For example, corn farmers know that planting more acres increases the overall harvest. A farmer who plants 500 acres is more likely to reap a greater harvest than a farmer who plants only 100 acres.

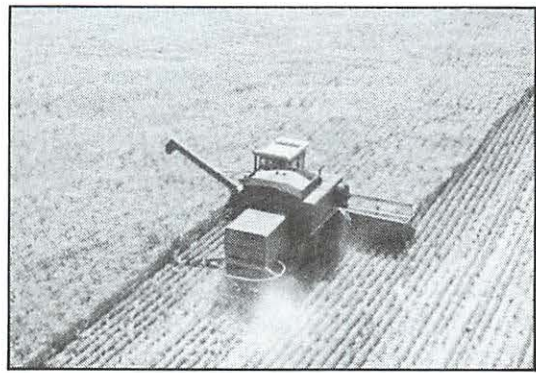
Farmers also know that planting more seeds per acre also results in a greater harvest per acre. Planting 14,000 seeds per acre yields a harvest of about 80 bushels of corn per acre. But planting 21,000 seeds per acre results in a harvest of over 100 bushels of corn per acre. The optimum number of seeds depends on the soil, water, fertility, planting date, and particular crop. In general, however, the more seeds that are sown, the more fruit will be reaped.



Sowing generously brings forth an abundant harvest.



Failing to sow at the proper time brings forth a sparse harvest.



Fields of wheat cover more of the earth's farmland than any other food crop.

conditions are unfavorable.* The average corn producer sows 24,000 seeds per acre and harvests more than 8,870,000 seeds per acre in the fall. That is an average return of 360* seeds for every one that was planted.

(*State average for Illinois in 1984.)

Farmers do not just reap what they sow. They must count on reaping many times more seeds than they sow. Their "profit" depends upon a manifold return on every seed that they plant.

4 WE REAP MORE THAN WE HAVE SOWN.

The fourth law is that the process of growth and maturation multiplies that which was sown. This means that the harvest returns many times more seeds than were sown. For example, a single soybean seed under ideal conditions can mature into a soybean plant that will bear more than 1,000 soybeans at harvest time.

Field corn multiplies the harvest even more. Under ideal conditions, one tiny kernel of corn can produce three or more ears of corn. Each ear has up to 14 rows, and each row often has more than 40 kernels. That means that one kernel of corn can return well over 1,500 kernels.

There would be no point in planting and harvesting crops if one kernel of corn never yielded more than one replacement kernel. The beauty of the harvest is that one kernel multiplies itself many times over until it produces a manifold harvest.

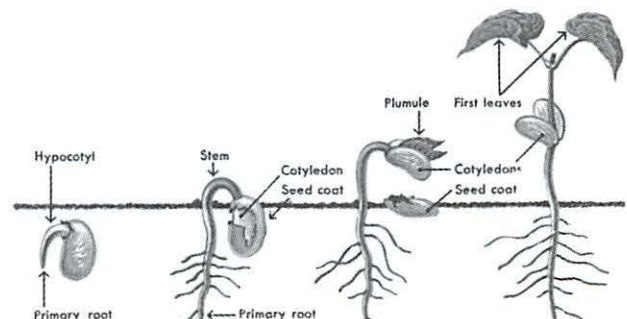


Dent Corn

The average farmer sows approximately one bushel of soybean seeds per acre in the spring and harvests more than 42 bushels of soybean seeds in the fall. That is a return of 42 to 1 even when

5 WE REAP IN A DIFFERENT SEASON THAN WE HAVE SOWN.

The first step toward maturity is the process of germination. Germination time may vary, depending on moisture and temperature. The process takes much longer during cold, dry periods. Yet during even moist, warm springs, some seeds may require as long as three weeks just to emerge from the soil. Other kinds of plants, such as radishes, germinate in just a few days even in cold weather.



©World Book, Inc.

After a seed germinates, it must grow to maturity. Each kind of plant requires its own season of growth before it matures. Asparagus requires 1-2 years before it can be harvested. Bush beans take 70-80 days, while parsley is usable in only 30 days. Radishes can be pulled after 25 days, but

many watermelons are not ready to be harvested for almost 90 days.

Because the length of growing seasons varies geographically, not all plants can grow in all areas. Plants that take a long time to mature require long growing seasons. Hybrid sweet corn, for example, has been cultivated so that some varieties mature in only 65 days. Most other varieties require 85 days or more. In northern climates where the growing season may be only two and a half months, "early" varieties are all that will mature soon enough to be harvested. Those that require a longer season freeze before they mature.

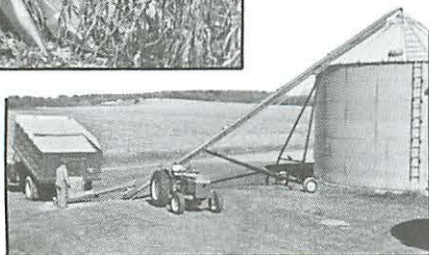
HOW IS THE APPOINTED TIME OF HARVEST DETERMINED?

The harvest time for sweet corn and grapes is determined by its peak period of sweetness. Tomatoes and chili peppers are ready to be eaten when they turn deep red. Most grains such as wheat, oats, barley, and rye, however, are not ready for harvesting until their seeds have dried out. For these grains, moisture content is the determining factor at harvest time.

Grain that is harvested before its kernels have dried out tends to rot while it is stored. Moisture in rye, for example, promotes the growth of a bacteria that can cause hallucinations if it is eaten. Field corn that is harvested too early must be either air dried in open cribs or blown dry using large heated fans before it is ready for storage.



Failing to harvest a crop at the appointed time may spoil the entire harvest.



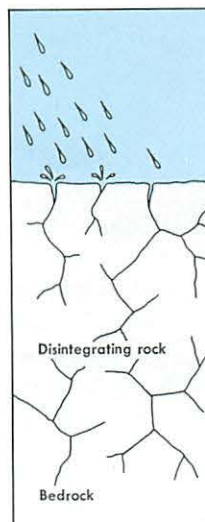
John Deere

6 WE REAP IN RELATION TO THE QUALITY OF SOIL IN WHICH WE HAVE SOWN.

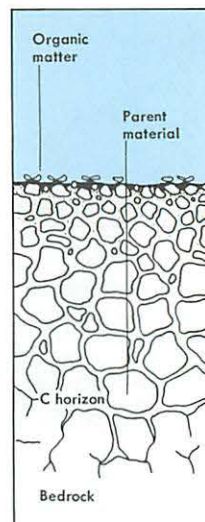
Soils are classified according to their color, particle size, consistency, and chemical composition. Color ranges from dark black to light yellow. The color often gives clues to what minerals are in the soil. Iron, for example, makes the soil red.

HOW SOIL IS FORMED

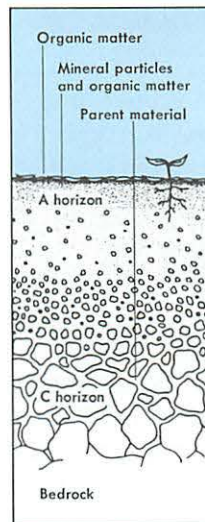
1



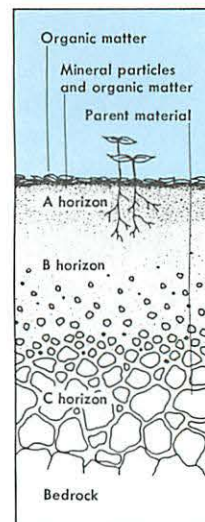
2



3



4



World Book, Inc.

The action of freezing water breaks rock into smaller and smaller particles. As plants begin to grow and die, their remains add organic nutrients to the soil.

The particle sizes of soil range from the microscopic grains that make up clay to the large grains that make up sand. Particles that are in between these two sizes are called *silt*. Most soils are combinations of these three types. Soils that are mostly clay hold water and are often muddy. Sandy soils, on the other hand, allow water to drain quickly, leaving the top soil dry.

The structure of soils is determined by the way the particles stick together. Some soils form thin sheets. Some make clumps that look like miniature columns. Other soils stick together like toy building blocks, and some soils do not stick together at all.

Chemicals in the soil determine how many nutrients are available to plants for their growth. Important nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus,

potassium, calcium, magnesium, sulfur, and iron make soils rich and fertile. But it is the acidity of the soil that determines how readily these nutrients can be absorbed by plants. Most minerals are easily absorbed when the soil is neutral or just slightly acidic. If the soil is neglected and becomes very acidic, plants starve from an inability to absorb the soil's nutrients.

HOW IS THE RICHNESS OF A SOIL MEASURED?

The three most important minerals in the soil are nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium (potash). Fertilizers are graded by the amount of each of these minerals they contain. The richness is indicated by three numbers which indicate the percentage of each mineral that the fertilizer contains. For example, a fifty-pound bag of 10-6-4 fertilizer contains ten percent nitrogen, six percent phosphorus, and four percent potassium. A bag of 10-20-10 has twice as much phosphorus as it does nitrogen or potassium.

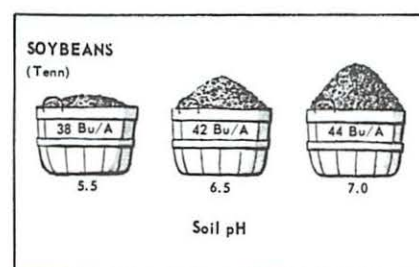
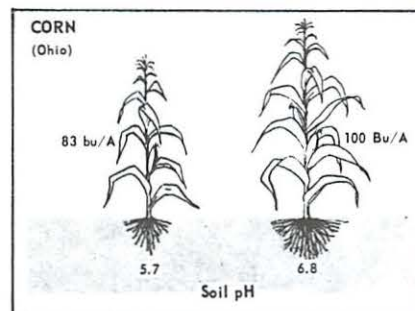
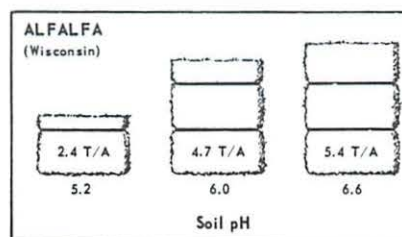
Soil tests can be used to determine if any of these minerals are missing from the soil. Poor soils may require large amounts of fertilizer to allow them to produce healthy crops. Any fertilizer that is added must be worked into the soil, where it is available to the plant's roots. Fertilizer that remains on the surface does not do plants any good.

HOW ARE NUTRIENTS RELEASED FROM THE SOIL?

As nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium dissolve in water, they form positively charged particles. Soil that is neutral or only slightly acidic holds these nutrients in the soil and prevents them from being washed away by rain.

Highly acidic soil is also positively charged and actually repels the positively charged nutrients. This reaction allows them to be leached out of the soil. Highly alkaline soils are negatively charged. They hold so tightly to the nutrients that they cannot be absorbed by a plant's roots.

Lime is often added to acidic soils in order to "sweeten" them. Lime is an oxide of calcium which reacts with acids in the soil to neutralize them. Soil tests can indicate exactly how much lime is required to adjust the pH of the soil, so that nutrients are released for crops to use.



University of Wisconsin—Extension

The benefits of maintaining a balanced soil

HOW CAN HARD-PACKED SOIL DIMINISH THE HARVEST?

When soil is tilled with heavy equipment, only the surface is broken and softened. Just beneath the depth of the plow, a hard layer called a *plow pan* may develop. This layer of hard-packed soil promotes disease, drought, and flooding. Unless it is broken up, the soil's hardness can severely limit both the size and quality of the harvest.

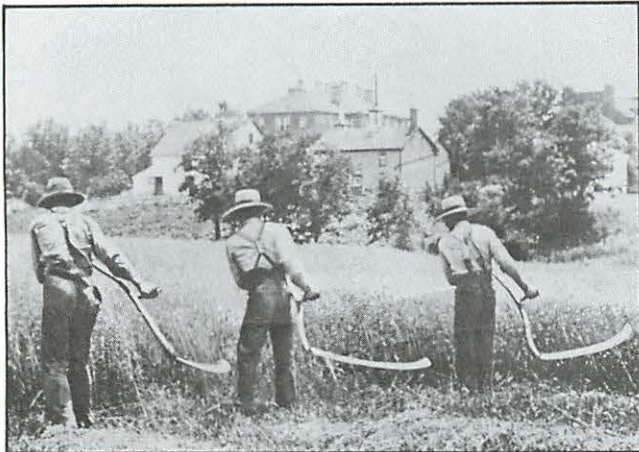


International Harvester

Plowing loosens only the topsoil. It packs the soil beneath the surface.

7 WE REAP ACCORDING TO THE INCREASE GOD GIVES.

Farmers have learned to plant, fertilize, irrigate, cultivate, and harvest, but they have never learned how to make a seed grow. Only God is able to give the increase that causes plants to mature and bear fruit.



International Harvester

The actual process of growth has been studied for years, yet it still remains a mystery. The more man learns, the more puzzling the process becomes.



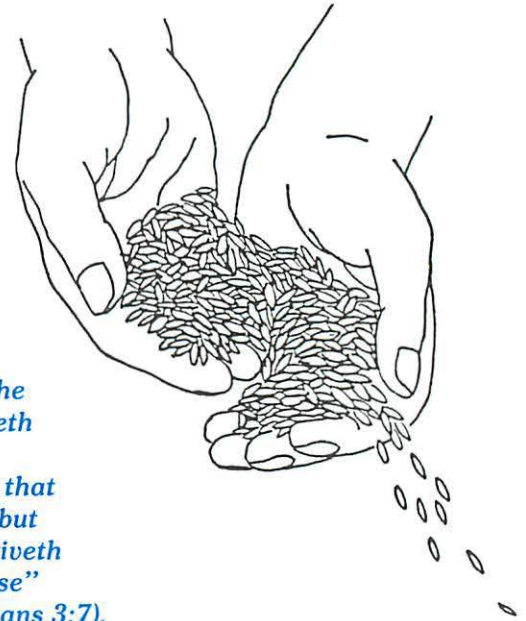
European

Swarms of locusts can destroy an entire crop.

Hailstorms, drought, floods, insects, and frost destroy millions of acres of crops every year. All of these perils are beyond man's control. Recently, hailstorms in one midwestern state destroyed the flowers of both the state's potato and cranberry crops in just a matter of hours. Once the flowers had been damaged, there could be no pollination

and no fruit in the fall. There is simply no way to protect a crop from the consequences of the curse that is upon the earth.

Because God ultimately controls the increase of the harvest, it is essential that farmers obey His principles of farming. It is also important for Christian farmers to honor Him with the fruits of all their increase. In return, God promises: "*So shall thy barns be filled with plenty . . .*" (Proverbs 3:10).



"So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (I Corinthians 3:7).

PROJECT

Memorize Galatians 6:7-8.

Recall one illustration of sowing to the flesh and reaping corruption in accordance to the laws of the harvest.

Then recall examples of sowing to the Spirit and reaping the joy of life in Christ for yourself or for others.

1. I have reaped in my life only what has been sown by me or by others.
2. I have reaped in kind as I have sown.
3. I have reaped and will reap in proportion to what I have sown.
4. I will reap more than I have sown.
5. I have reaped in a different season than I have sown.
6. I have reaped in relation to the quality of the soil in which I have sown.
7. I have reaped only as God gave the increase.

Date completed _____ Evaluation _____



LAW RESOURCE

HOW DOES PERSECUTION PREPARE US FOR THE WORK OF RULING IN GOD'S KINGDOM?



British Crown Copyright courtesy H. M. Stationery Office

The rewards for faithfulness through persecutions are various types of crowns. A crown symbolizes a conqueror, position, rank, responsibility, and authority.

When Jesus told His disciples to rejoice through persecution, He based His message on the rewards which would be received in heaven and enjoyed throughout all eternity.

We know that these rewards are beyond our comprehension because, “. . . Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

God has, however, given us glimpses of those rewards through His revelation to us by the Spirit. The more we comprehend what He has revealed, the more joyful we can be when we are privileged to suffer persecution for righteousness' sake.

1 Persecution perfects us for the marriage covenant with Christ.

The ultimate purpose of history is the exaltation of Christ. Related to His final glory is His marriage to His Bride—all the believers that make up the Church.

As Scripture explains God's program with reference to Christ, every event in history relates to the objective of preparing a spotless Bride for Him, and every circumstance of life is designed to contribute to that goal.

In terms of God the Father, the purpose throughout history has been the calling out and preparing of the nation of Israel to be His faithful wife. Scripture assures us that Israel, though now separated from God because of their rejection of His Messiah, will one day return to Him in belief. (See Romans 11:25.)

When the Jewish people are restored, they will go through great persecutions which will perfect and prepare them to be united with a Holy God.

Christians in preparation for becoming the Bride of Christ must go through persecution since suffering, which is a consequence of the fall, will produce the character and disposition required for our fellowship with Christ throughout eternity.

This sharing of Christ's suffering is emphasized in Scripture and with good reason. Christ is love, and genuine love cannot operate without suffering.

If we are to have fellowship with Christ throughout eternity, we must share in the fellowship of His sufferings here and now.

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Philippians 3:10).

“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” (1 Peter 4:13).

2 Persecution prepares us to sit with Christ on His throne and rule with Him.



Because we are the Bride of Christ, and because it is His eternal responsibility to rule over heaven and earth, we have the awesome privilege of reigning with Him.

However, even as suffering is a preparation for fellowship in marriage with Christ, persecution is a prerequisite for reigning with Him. *"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him . . ." (II Timothy 2:12).*

Faithfulness through suffering signifies overcoming the evil one. God promises, *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21).*

WHAT ASPECTS OF OUR RULING WITH CHRIST WILL HELP US REJOICE IN PERSECUTION?

1 Persecution develops in us the character required of a judge.

God established strict character requirements for those who would deliberate matters of judgment among His people. These are listed in Deuteronomy 16:18-19.

"Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment."

- *"Thou shalt not wrest [pervert] judgment;"*
- *"Thou shalt not respect persons,"*
- *"Thou shalt not take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous."*
- *"That which is altogether just shalt thou follow. . . ."*

Notice how persecution for righteousness will prepare a Christian to fulfill these requirements in his ministry on earth and his rulership in heaven.

- Persecution for righteousness occurs when justice has been perverted. As we experience the hurts and disillusionment of perverted judgment, we learn how others feel when we misjudge them.

Since God is at work preparing every Christian to reign with Him, we can be confident that when we are misjudged, falsely accused, or wrongly treated by those in authority, we are receiving special training for future leadership.

This profound truth has many illustrations in Scripture, one of which is the life of Joseph. As he was wronged by his brothers, Potiphar's wife, and the neglectful butler, he was being carefully trained by God to rule effectively.



Bible Art Series, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati

Joseph was trained for rulership by the unjust suffering he endured.

The judicial systems which God established among His people and in the Church are patterns of the ideal system which He will carry out in His kingdom. *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).*

A further need for persecution in preparing us to be judges in the universe is the relationship of persecution to the growth of love. Jesus explained that the entire law by which His kingdom is to be governed is fulfilled in two statements. *" . . . Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).*

This love does not come naturally; it is the fruit of tribulation. Thus, *" . . . We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5).*

With our focus on the goal of love, we can rejoice in the truth of Philippians 1:28-29. *"And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."*

The character which suffering produces was supremely demonstrated in Christ Himself, “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:7-8).

The theme of developing character through fiery trials is emphasized and illustrated throughout Scripture. Its value is “that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7).



Foxe's Christian Martyrs of the World

John Philpot praying before martyrdom

A sixteenth-century martyr demonstrated the ultimate expression of Godly character by forgiving those who were about to kill him. God promised, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

2 Persecution gives us the wisdom that is needed by a judge.

The need to make the principles of God's Word a living expression of the mind, will, and

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?...” (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

emotions becomes clear as we understand the responsibilities we will be given in heaven.

Paul used these amazing truths to reason with the Corinthian church. Some of the members of the church had suffered at the hand of fellow Christians. In their desire for immediate justice, vindication, or retaliation, they sued their offenders in a court of law.

At this point Paul sensed that it was important to give them an eternal perspective for the suffering which had come to them. This was an opportunity for the church to develop the maturity necessary for spiritual leadership in the kingdom of God.

“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Corinthians 6:1-3).

Certain aspects of wisdom that are required for leadership are only learned through affliction. David emphasized this in Psalm 119:71. “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.”

3 Persecution earns for us a higher rank in the Kingdom of God.

Those who suffered much affliction and endured it with joy were those who clearly understood the relationship between persecution in this world and eternal glory in the next world. When the two are compared, the greatest possible persecution fades into insignificance.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17). It is for this cause that we faint not.

This promise gives us reason to rejoice when we go through a fiery trial, “. . . Inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (1 Peter 4:13-14).

The first-century Christians comprehended the greater glory that was to be given to those who went through special persecutions. Therefore, they refused deliverance from torture because they desired the greater glory which would be theirs throughout all eternity.

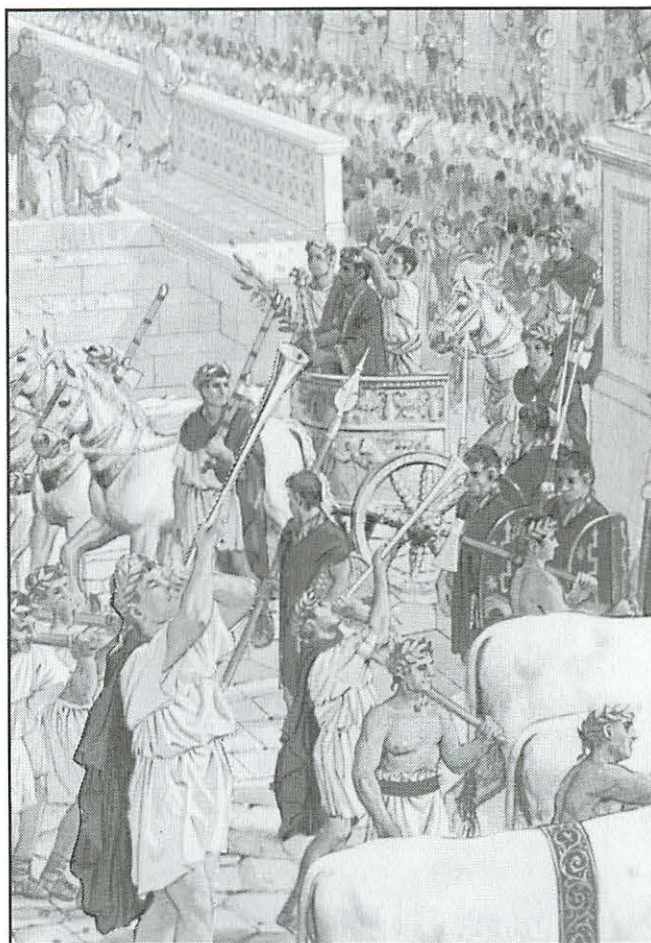
"... Through faith [some] subdued kingdoms... stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. . . . And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:33-35).

When God chooses a Christian for special suffering, He gives that person the grace to go through it. This has been the testimony of thousands of martyrs down through the centuries.



Foxe's Christian Martyrs of the World

The burning of Reverend Lawrence Sanders under Queen Mary of England. When sentenced to die, he said, "I am the unworthiest man to be chosen for this sacrifice, but I doubt not that my gracious God and Father is able to make me strong enough for it." His last words were, "Welcome, the cross of Christ. Welcome, everlasting life."



Peter Connolly, The Roman Army

A triumphal entry of a Roman conqueror

The "better resurrection" which martyrs have chosen involves a greater glory. This glory is no empty achievement. It is worth whatever pain and sacrifice is required for it.

All of God's training and testings are designed to prepare the believer for his co-rulership with Christ, with all of its accompanying glory!

"For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Psalm 66:10-12).

PROJECT

Assuming that crowns represent greater character and higher rank, study the following verses and their contexts. ☐ II Timothy 4:8 ☐ James 1:12 ☐ Revelation 2:10 ☐ I Peter 5:4 ☐ I Thessalonians 2:19-20

Date completed _____ Evaluation _____



MEDICINE RESOURCE

HOW DOES PAIN FROM EXERCISE ILLUSTRATE THE REWARD OF PERSECUTION?



Athletes who desire to win must embrace the prospect of months and years of painful exercise and training. Without pain, muscles will not develop or become strong, and without strong muscles, athletic goals cannot be achieved.

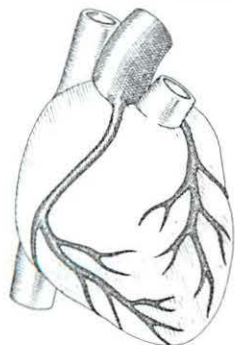
The comparison of muscles and painful exercise to Christians and persecution for righteousness is seen in the following facts about muscles.

1 EACH MUSCLE HAS A DISTINCT PURPOSE.

The body contains more than 600 muscles that help the body to move, to swallow, digest, and eliminate food, and to pump body fluids from one place to another. Each muscle of the body has its own unique purpose. No two muscles do exactly the same thing.

Muscles are divided into three kinds. *Striated* (STRY-ay-tid) muscles move the bones of the body. They can be controlled voluntarily. *Smooth* muscles make up the stomach, intestines, and blood vessels. Most of the smooth muscles are involuntary; that is, the brain does not consciously control their movement.

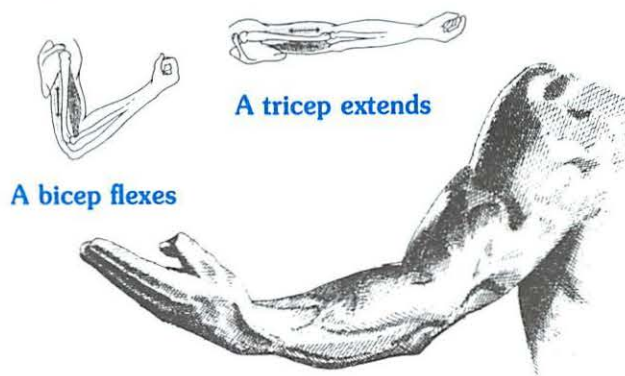
The third kind of muscle is the *heart*. It has characteristics



of both striated and smooth muscles. The heart is also both voluntary and involuntary. It is connected directly to the head through the vagus nerve and is affected by our thoughts and emotions. Yet, it is able to beat continually without conscious control, even when we sleep.

2 NO MUSCLE IS ABLE TO PRODUCE MOVEMENT BY ITSELF.

It takes at least two muscles to accomplish movement of the arm. One muscle causes the arm to extend, and another muscles draws the arm back to its original position.

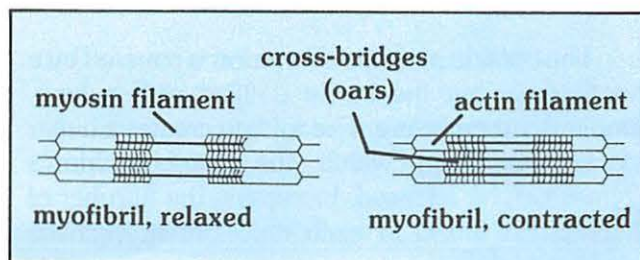


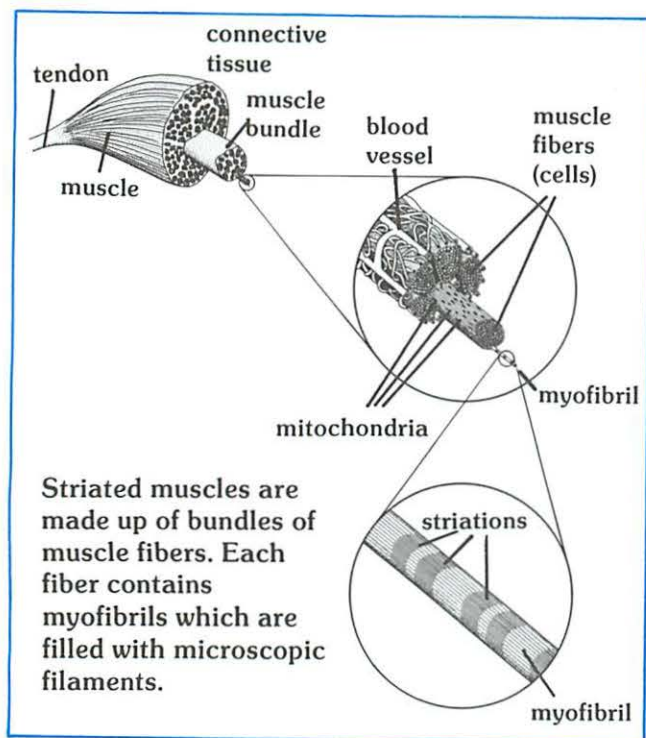
Muscles are said to be “antagonistic.” One pulls against the other to get controlled motion.

A *flexor* muscle, such as the *bicep*, bends the joint, and an *extensor* muscle, such as the *tricep*, straightens it. When a flexor muscle contracts, the extensor must relax. If both contract at the same time, or if they both relax, there is no movement. Altogether, more than fifteen muscles are required to move the arm through its full range of motion.

3 A LARGE MUSCLE DEPENDS ON INDIVIDUAL FIBERS WITHIN IT.

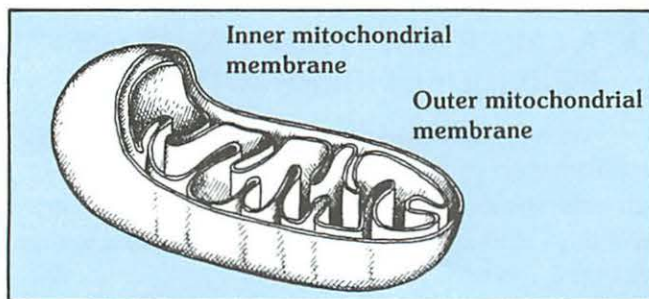
Within each muscle are tiny filaments called *myofilaments* (my-oh-FILL-uh-ments). Some are thin and some are thick. The thick myofilaments have tiny “oars” attached to them that resemble the oars on a rowboat.





When the muscle is stimulated, these tiny oars move back and forth against the thin myofilaments, drawing the ends of the filament closer together. As the muscle relaxes, the oars stop “paddling,” and the muscle stops contracting. A second muscle must contract in order to pull the first muscle back to its original position.

The power source for these oars is thousands of tiny *mitochondria* (mite-uh-KONN-dree-uh). Mitochondria are small, rod-shaped structures that produce enzymes which control the release of energy within a cell. The word *mitochondria* comes from the two Greek words *mitos*, meaning “thread,” and *chondros*, meaning “granule.”



The outside of a mitochondrion is covered by a smooth coat, but the inside is filled with a long, folded inner membrane. The folding creates a larger surface area from which the mitochondrion's enzymes can be released. Increasing the number of mitochondria found in each myofibril strengthens the entire muscle.

4 INDIVIDUAL FIBERS CONTRACT EITHER FULLY OR NOT AT ALL.

Each muscle fiber must contract all the way when it “fires.” Muscles exert differing degrees of force by changing the number of muscle fibers that fire rather than how much each fires. If a delicate touch is required, only a few muscle fibers contract. The rest remain relaxed. If greater power is required, more and more muscle fibers join the effort.

During light exercise, the “working” muscle fibers tire and other fibers take over the work load. This alternation allows a muscle to work smoothly for long periods without fatigue. Only when a muscle is pushed to its maximum capacity do all of its fibers work at the same time.



A muscle can show more than a thousandfold increase in the force it exerts.



5 MUSCLES QUICKLY TIRE WHEN THEY LOSE NOURISHMENT.

Muscles were designed to work strenuously all day with only a little rest required during the night. As long as a muscle receives enough oxygen and enough nutrients, it can continue indefinitely. For example, the heart beats approximately 86,400 times per day, 604,800 times per week, and 31,449,600 times per year. Its only rest comes between beats.

When enough oxygen is made available to a muscle cell, energy is released by molecules of *adenosine triphosphate* (uh-DENN-uh-senn try-FOSS-fate), abbreviated ATP. Glucose plus oxygen are converted through a series of three complex chemical reactions (*glycolysis*, *Krebs cycle*, and *hydrogen transport*) into carbon dioxide, water, and ATP energy.

This is called an *aerobic* (ehr-OH-bick) *reaction*. Aerobic means “with oxygen.” During rest, *adenosine diphosphate* (uh-DENN-uh-senn die-FOSS-fate), abbreviated ADP, is converted back into ATP to prepare the body for more activity.

As long as a muscle receives enough oxygen and nutrients during exercise, it fatigues very slowly.

When exercise is so strenuous that the heart and lungs can no longer supply enough oxygen to keep up with the aerobic reaction, a type of fermentation begins to take place. This is called an *anaerobic* (ann-uh-ROE-bick) reaction.

Lactic acid is then given off as a waste product. As lactic acid builds up in a muscle, the muscle swells and becomes tired.

6 THE NOURISHMENT OF MUSCLES DEPENDS ON THE HEART.

Muscles depend on the heart to pump a continuous flow of blood throughout the body. Blood carries oxygen and nutrients for power, and at the same time, removes waste products as they accumulate.

A strong heart pumps enough blood to prevent fatigue. A weak heart, however, may not even be able to pump enough blood for its own use. When it tires, it fails to supply enough blood for the rest of the body. This, in turn, causes all the members of the body to also become tired.

7 FAILURE TO CLEANSE AWAY WASTE PRODUCTS DURING EXERCISE WILL RESULT IN CRAMPS AND SORENESS.

The waste products that are left in a muscle after it has run out of oxygen form tiny crystals between the muscle fibers. These crystals have sharp points that scratch the inner linings of the myofibrils and block the action of the "oars" that make a muscle move. This irritation results in soreness and stiffness. It may take several days for these crystals to be flushed away.

8 MUSCLES ARE NOT STRENGTHENED BY ORDINARY ACTIVITY.

Normal activity does not increase muscle strength. In fact, normal activity may even allow muscles to *atrophy* (AT-tro-fee), meaning to grow weaker. A muscle does not grow stronger unless it is pushed to its maximum capacity. Even then it develops only as long as the stress is repeated. It appears that no amount of exercise can create new fibers. Exercise can, however, increase the number

of myofilaments and mitochondria within each muscle fiber.

The more mitochondria a cell has, the more energy the cell can release, and the more powerful the muscle becomes. The more myofilaments a cell has, the more tiny oars there are to pull the ends of the muscles together.



One advertisement for pain relievers suggests: "PAIN IS A PART OF THE GAME."

9 THE HEART ATROPHIES UNLESS IT IS REGULARLY PUSHED TO ITS LIMIT.

Heart rate must be increased to approximately seventy to eighty percent of its maximum rate and held there for at least twelve minutes three times a week before it will grow stronger.

To determine what this "training rate" is, measure your resting heart rate. Count the number of times your heart beats in one minute. (You can also count the number of beats in six seconds and multiply by ten.)

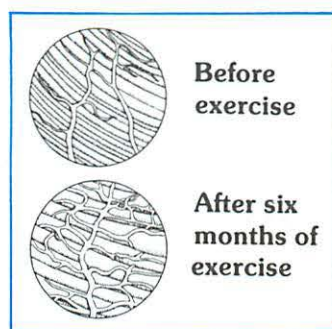
Next, determine your maximum heart rate, which is 220 minus your age.

$$\left[(220 - \text{Age}) - \text{Resting heart rate} \right] \times 70\% + \text{Resting heart rate} = \text{T.R.}$$

To find the training rate, subtract your resting heart rate from your maximum heart rate. Multiply that number by seventy percent. Then add your resting heart rate again, and you will have the training rate at which your heart will grow stronger. If your heart is not pushed to that rate at least three times a week for no less than twelve minutes each time, your heart is growing weaker.



Capillaries that carry oxygen into muscles actually get larger so that oxygen and waste products can be exchanged more rapidly.



It is easy to avoid the pain from exercise. Just do not exercise. When muscles are not exercised, however, they not only lose strength, but they also become stiff and inflexible, ache after the least amount of exercise, are more susceptible to injury, fatigue quickly, become filled with fatty tissue, and increase blood pressure.

There are many excuses for avoiding that which is painful, but without pain there is no growth.



10 AS MUSCLE STRENGTH INCREASES, STRESS MUST ALSO BE INCREASED.

If a muscle is not used, it begins to atrophy. For example, a broken arm that is set in a cast is noticeably weaker in just a few weeks. It will stay in that condition unless it is exercised and stimulated to grow stronger.



Like the heart muscle, skeletal muscles must also be stressed to seventy to eighty percent of their maximum capacity before they will grow stronger. In weight training, a new student begins by determining the maximum weight that he can lift comfortably. He then works out with at least seventy percent of that weight.



A student's muscles stop growing within a few weeks if the weights are not increased. As the muscles increase in strength, the "old weights" are too light to stress the "new muscles" to seventy to eighty percent of their maximum.

PHYSICAL REWARDS FROM PAINFUL EXERCISE

- **Endurance.** This results from the more efficient use of resources, enabling more work to be accomplished with less energy.
- **Flexibility.** This allows a greater freedom of movement throughout the entire body.
- **Strength.** This increases our ability to carry heavier loads with ease.
- **Confidence.** This results from the reduced threat of injury or high blood pressure.
- **Alertness.** This comes because there is a greater responsiveness to the commands of the mind.
- **Health.** This increases because the appetite for "junk" food decreases.

PROJECT

See how many of the following analogies you can relate to your own Christian life. Write out a personal example for each one.

1. No two Christians are alike; each one has a distinct purpose.
2. No Christian is able to produce a spiritual movement by himself.
3. The strength of a local church depends on the actions of the individual Christians within it.
4. Christians should never give a partial response to God. They should give all or nothing (either be hot or cold).
5. Christians tire quickly when they lose their source of spiritual nourishment.
6. The nourishment that Christians receive depends on the strength of their hearts.
7. Failure to cleanse away evil on a daily basis will result in spiritual "cramps."
8. Christians are not strengthened without persecution.
9. The strength of a Christian's heart decreases unless it is regularly pushed to its limit.
10. As the strength of Christians increases, their burdens must also increase, or they will stop growing.

Date completed _____ Evaluation _____