

Testing: Surrounded by Enemies



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) February 5, 2020

Peter writes: “The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations” (2 Peter 2:9). And in another place, the apostle Paul writes: “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

It is clear that God does not want to keep us in our trials. He doesn’t get any glory from testing his children — but from the results of our testings! There is only one way to escape our trials and that is by passing the test. Think about it. When you were in school, how did you finally “escape”? You passed the final exam — and if you didn’t pass, you were sent back to class.

That was the case with ancient Israel when God brought them to the Red Sea. God was testing his people, trying them, proving them. He brought them to the very brink of destruction, surrounding them by mountains on two sides, a sea in front of them and an approaching enemy bringing up the rear (read the story in Exodus 14).

James’ phrase, “when you fall into various trials” (James 1:2), refers back to Israel’s testings. The phrase means, “being lowered into a pit and surrounded by enemies.” This is what happened with Israel — God dropped them into a humanly impossible situation. He wanted his people to acknowledge their helplessness and say, “We remember how God delivered us from the plagues and from the death angel. God delivered us then and he will do it again! Let us rejoice in his faithfulness.”

You might wonder how God could expect Israel to have that kind of reaction; after all, they were only human. But God wants something from all of us in our times of overwhelming troubles. He wants us to offer him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

James discovered this secret when he admonished, “Count it all joy” (James 1:2). He was saying, “Don’t give up! Make an altar in your heart and offer up thanksgiving in the midst of your trials.” How you react in a crisis determines your walk with God thereafter. So bring to him your sacrifice of thanksgiving!

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