

# *When the Trial We Feared Happens*

By John Thiel, [mp3](#)

*Scripture reading: 1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it].*

I love the words of Jesus to His disciples when He came to them after they had been without Him for a while; He said to them, *Fear not*. When we come across some experience, some trial, some loss, some threatening doom, as the one which is affecting the world at this present time; when we come across the storms of the last days, then it is that we must hear the voice of the Spirit, saying to us, *Fear not*.

There are many subjects in the Bible that need to be studied for us to be prepared for the terrible realities of the last days; but the understanding of the prophecies which have been given us and which have already been established, are now being questioned. They question what the pioneers taught as pure truth and which we have adopted very firmly. When we meet these different conflicting ideas that have now come about; when they highlight certain things that have already been fulfilled and apply them to the future; when they highlight certain things they claim the pioneers taught (like on the subject of the Godhead, for example), they bring to us subjects that have been firmly established already, but they are bringing something new, something different.

**The Lord wants all to understand His providential dealings now, just now, in the time in which we live. {Ev 199.1}**

This was written in 1896, and we know that Sister White said Jesus could have come about two or three years after 1888. So this statement is applicable to people who were living at the time when Jesus was very soon to come.

**There must be no long discussions, presenting new theories in regard to the prophecies which God has already made plain. {Ibid.}**

We have the prophecies and the doctrines that have already been made plain.

**Now the great work from which the mind should not be diverted is the consideration of our personal safety in the sight of God. {Ibid.}**

What we should be concentrating on and what we need to know, in view of the fulfilment of prophecy in the events that we know, when they come to pass, is the providential dealings of God and our safety in the sight of God.

**Are our feet on the rock of ages? Are we hiding ourselves in our only refuge? The storm is coming, relentless in its fury. Are we prepared to meet it? Are we one with Christ as He is one with the Father? Are we heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ? Are we working in co-partnership with Christ?--Manuscript 32a, 1896. {Ibid.}**

The subject that I concentrate on, is not proving all the time what is already proven. So many people today are trying to do that. My focus, in harmony with what is written here, is to ensure that we have answers for our personal selves, our security, our refuge, so that we can stand and not be overwhelmed by the dreadful things that are coming upon this planet.

## Meeting the Threat

As we and every person on this planet are surrounded, at this present time, with the threat of the coronavirus, we meet this threat with the words of Psalm 91. Here are some precious statements that are necessary for us to engage in, so that when these trials and storms come upon us, we can be at peace.

**Psalm 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, [He is] my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. 3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, [and] from the noisome pestilence.**

“Surely he shall deliver thee from ... *the noisome pestilence.*”

**Psalm 91:4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth [shall be thy] shield and buckler. 5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; [nor] for the arrow [that] flieth by day; 6 [Nor] for the pestilence [that] walketh in darkness; [nor] for the destruction [that] wasteth at noontday. 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; [but] it shall not come nigh thee. 8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. 9 Because thou hast made the LORD, [which is] my refuge, [even] the most High, thy habitation; 10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. 11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. 12 They shall bear thee up in [their] hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. 13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. 14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath**

**known my name. 15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I [will be] with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. 16 With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.**

This is very comforting, isn't it? And we read these things and these promises, and sometimes we read them amiss. Because there is much more in this statement than meets the eye. He is talking here about our *salvation*, not only our protection from the physical danger. There is another scripture which is a very wonderful promise:

**Exodus 15:26 And [God] said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I [am] the LORD that healeth thee.**

So we take these precious promises that the pestilence will not come nigh thee, and that “only with thine eyes shalt thou see the reward of the wicked”, etc. and now we read this beautiful statement that God will lay none of these diseases upon us which He laid upon the Egyptians, and we hear Him say, Fear not when these things surround you. But then something strange happens in our life: The very thing that we have relied upon in those statements, the very thing that we so trustingly relied upon God would not happen to us, happens. The very thing that I feared comes to pass. What are you tempted with? The very words that my wife uttered to me: “I think God has forsaken me.” Because the very thing that she relied upon that would not happen to her happened to her, and she passed away. What do you do with that? Was my fear justified? I actually watched this process taking place in front of me, and I trusted and prayed to the Lord that He may alleviate this problem; but He didn't. Was my fear justified?

## **Making Sense of Unanswered Prayers**

Recall all those precious promises how that God would protect His people. Look at the Dark Ages, the fear that threatened God's people—death, torture, and everything that they suffered. Over 50 million people who were martyred. Don't you think they prayed that God would protect them? But they received no protection. What about John the Baptist? He knew who Jesus was, and yet, there He was, in prison, and he thought, Well, my Saviour will save me. Did He? The Spirit of Prophecy actually tells us that what happened to John the Baptist was a source of encouragement to those who would die during the Dark Ages; they realised that although Jesus honoured John richly, yet He permitted him to die under persecution, and so it was for God's people in the Dark Ages.

Here it is then, there is something for us to understand; and it is this: When the trial that we have been fearing would come to us, actually does come, against all our hopes that it wouldn't come, what can God's word help us with?

These fears of disaster and suffering have to do with trials and temptations. They are trials indeed, aren't they? Very heavy trials at times. And the temptations that we all meet include apparent disappointments of God's promises not coming our way.

**1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it].**

What is the answer of God's word when the temptation comes to doubt God because the promise didn't take place, because my prayers were not answered according to what I asked of Him? We meet all

sorts of conflicting thoughts here, because there is someone who has his prayer answered in a miraculous way, and someone else doesn't, even though he has prayed just as believably. We've had that experience. I myself have seen real miracles. And there is one in our midst who knows the miracle that happened in his life, and another as well. We know God has answered our prayers in a very special way. Yet why didn't the Lord do a miracle for another person, like we have experienced, and like I have experienced in the past?

**Each one has his own battles to fight, his own Christian experience to gain, independent in some respects from any other soul; and God has lessons for each to gain for himself that no other one can gain for him. {OHC 323.2}**

Here is the preparation of the thought that we want to look at. When certain things happen to one person and different things happen to another person, there is a reason for it, because each one has their own individual needs and battles and temptations to pass through.

**Our heavenly Father measures and weighs every trial before He permits it to come upon the believer. {Ibid.}**

You notice? “He *permits it* to come upon the believer.”

**He considers the circumstances and the strength of the one who is to stand under the proving and test of God, and He never permits the temptations to be greater than the capacity of resistance. If the soul is overborne, the person overpowered, this can never be charged to God, ... but the one tempted was not vigilant and prayerful and did not appropriate by faith the provisions God had abundantly in store for him. Christ never failed a believer in his hour of combat. The believer must claim the promise and meet the foe in the name of the Lord. {Ibid.}**

As we were reading before, He makes with the temptation a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.

**Oh, there is a great work to be done for the people of God, ere they are prepared for translation to heaven! {OHC 323.3}**

Am I prepared for translation to heaven? Much work has to be done to prepare us for that.

**The heat of the furnace upon some must be severe to reveal the dross. Self will have to be crucified. When each believer is to the very extent of his knowledge obeying the Lord, and yet seeking to give no just occasion to his fellow men to oppress him, he should not fear the results, even though it be imprisonment and death.... {Ibid.}**

I should not fear the results of what I am doing in following the Lord's guidance in my life and the oppression that He may permit.

**The tender compassion of God is toward His people. Faith, wondrous faith--it leads the people of God in straight paths. Without this faith we shall certainly misunderstand His dealings with us, and distrust His love and faithfulness. {OHC 323.4}**

We will misunderstand His dealings with us when He permits something to happen in our life that His promises say won't happen. It says this pestilence will not come my way; but what if I do get sick? I say, Cancer is not going to get me; and what if I do get it?

*Whatever may be the trials, we must not distrust His love and faithfulness, and we must not misunderstand His dealing with us.*

**Whatever may be the trials and sufferings, ... let there be no faint-heartedness, no peevish repining, no complaining.... {Ibid.}**

**A single ray of the evidences of the undeserved favor of God shining into our hearts will overbalance every trial of whatever character and however severe it may be. {OHC 323.5}**

Do we deserve the favours of God? The reality of what we are reading here from these words of inspiration is that God is dealing with us according to our individual personality. What is one person's experience, God has carefully handled that person for their particular preparation to be able to be translated; while another person rides through without any trials for a long time and can look back at the other and say, Maybe this person who has died didn't really trust the Lord. Have you ever been tempted to think that way? And even in your own experience? "Maybe I'm lost..." "Maybe I'm lost, because my prayers aren't being answered." These are the trials and temptations that come our way.

## **The Purpose of It All**

What are these trials and temptations designed to do? What are these experiences of negativity that, for example, John the Baptist experienced? What are these things for? When things happen that are contrary to what I am comfortable with, what is it for?

**Malachi 3:2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he [is] like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3 And he shall sit [as] a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.**

What does God want us to offer Him? *An offering in righteousness*, of beautiful obedience to Him, of submission to Him in perfect righteousness. That is the purpose of the fire.

**Trials are Christ's workmen to perfect the Christian graces.... These tests are not to sink the believers' faith, but raise it equal to the occasion, that unto all it may be made to appear more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire. Every trial permitted is designed to exalt the truth to a higher appreciation, that praise to God alone shall be upon the lips of the true disciple of Christ. {UL 324.5}**

So as I go through this trial, it is designed to make me appreciate the truth more fully than I had ever before. And as I go through a particular experience, it is designed to direct my praise, not toward something that has helped me, but to Him alone.

**And the growth in grace is to the honor and glory of God at the appearing of Jesus Christ, "whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: ..." (1 Peter 1:8-10). {Ibid.}**

**The bright and cheerful side of our religion will be represented by all who are daily consecrated to God.... We do not want to dishonor God by the mournful relation of trials that appear grievous. {UL 324.6}**

*The mournful relation of trials that appear grievous—It's grief; but don't talk about it in a *mournful* state of mind.*

**All trials that are received as educators will produce joy. The whole religious life will be uplifting, elevating, ennobling, fragrant with good words and works. The enemy is well pleased to have souls complaining and stumbling their way along, depressed, downcast, mourning, and groaning; because Satan wants just such impressions made as to the effects of our faith. God designs that the mind shall take no low level.--Manuscript 70, Nov. 6, 1897, "Diary." {Ibid.}**

The *mind* is to take no low level. So it has to do with the mind, not only the circumstances of our life. The mind is to be filled with joy in the midst of the trials.

## **Even Sickness or Death?**

I ask the question now: Is even sickness involved here? Is even sickness involved in the trial? And is even death involved in the trial?

**The Christian is subject to sickness, disappointment, poverty, reproach, and distress. {OHC 9.4}**

Who is subject to sickness? *The Christian*. So this is included in the trials.

**Yet amid all this he loves God, he chooses to do His will, and prizes nothing so highly as His approbation. In the conflicting trials and changing scenes of this life, he knows that there is One who knows it all, One who will bend His ear low to the cry of the sorrowful and distressed, One who can sympathize with every sorrow and soothe the keen anguish of every heart. . . . {Ibid.}**

I am sorrowful, I am distressed, and I know, if I am a Christian, that God knows it all. Sister White went through a terrible experience here in Australia, of painful lack of sleep for 6-8 months; so she knew what she was talking about.

**Amid all his affliction, the Christian has strong consolation. And if God permits him to suffer a lingering, distressing sickness before he closes his eyes in death, he can with cheerfulness bear it all. {OHC 9.5}**

What? I'm going to die because I am sick and I have a lingering disease? And I can bear it all cheerfully? Hmm...

**He contemplates the future with heavenly satisfaction. A short rest in the grave, and then the Life-giver will break the fetters of the tomb, release the captive, and bring him from his dusty bed immortal, never more to know pain, sorrow, or death. Oh, what a hope is the Christian's! Let this hope of the Christian be mine. Let it be yours. {*Ibid.*}**

This is why I am sharing this message. So that whatever is coming in the future, whatever is going to strike any one of us individually, maybe even a lingering illness, or as it said, a distressing sickness, we may be able to endure it.

“Why is God permitting sickness to come upon me, when I have prayed and trusted His promise that He wouldn’t let that happen? I’ve followed health reform with great strictness, and I am still sick...” How do you deal with these conflicting thoughts?

## **James White’s Sickness**

**My husband's last sickness came upon him in consequence of bearing burdens which God had warned him he ought not to bear. {PH043 38.2}**

God had warned him: Don’t bear these burdens; but he continued, and then he got sick—his last sickness—and he died of it.

**Nature could not bear up under the pressure, unless God should work a miracle. My husband trusted too much to his own strength and wisdom, and the Lord permitted sickness to come upon him, that he might realize his own weakness. {*Ibid.*}**

Wow. In order for us to learn to be prepared to be translated, to realise our own weakness fully, God permits certain things to come our way.

Peter himself was shown his own weakness through a painful experience. Whatever the experience needs to be, every person has their own, and God knows it, so He permits things to happen. And what is written in reference to Elisha, this great man of God?

## **Elisha's Lot**

**It was not given Elisha to follow his master in a fiery chariot. {PK 263.3}**

Interesting. Here was Elijah; he went straight up to heaven. Can we see that we are not to compare ourselves with anyone else? Elisha, even though he did this wonderful work that Elijah didn't do, did not get to heaven.

**Upon him the Lord permitted to come a lingering illness. During the long hours of human weakness and suffering his faith laid fast hold on the promises of God, {Ibid.}**

What promises could these have been if he didn't get healed?

**...and he beheld ever about him heavenly messengers of comfort and peace. As on the heights of Dothan he had seen the encircling hosts of heaven, the fiery chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof, so now he was conscious of the presence of sympathizing angels, and he was sustained. Throughout his life he had exercised strong faith, and as he had advanced in a knowledge of God's providences and of His merciful kindness, faith had ripened into an abiding trust in his God, and when death called him he was ready to rest from his labors. {Ibid.}**

Are you picking up something important here? When we go through these perplexing disappointments, when we go through experiences of

God not answering my prayers according to the promises I claimed, how can I pass through these and still be happy?

## Carrying the Weight

**No temptation comes to us that Christ has not withstood, no trial that He has not borne. He knows each one of us by name. When a burden is placed on us, He stands by to lift the heaviest weight. {ST, July 27, 1904 par. 4}**

I love reading that, because it is my experience. I've shared this with you before. When I felt the terrible loss of my dear wife, I carried a burden; and Jesus came close to me and said: I'm still here with you; all the good that you saw in her was Me. He is carrying my burden with me.

So when sickness comes, and even death, Jesus Himself met it and bore it for me. And that is what carries me through. *When a burden is placed on us, He stands by to lift the heaviest weight*, because He met everything. He met everything.

**Isaiah 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.**

This is what people do, isn't it? They see someone suffering, and they say, God must've forsaken him. And that's what they said to Jesus when He was there hanging on the cross: Where is your God? Save yourself! This is the evil mentality of the flesh, of the human reasoning: When someone is going through a bad experience, they think there's a reason for it, and they assume that he must've been bad somewhere. And that's why the Pharisees said that about Christ, that God has afflicted Him.

*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.* What sort of griefs did He bear? Everyone of them. Sickness as well? Death, yes; but did He bear the grief of sickness in His body? That's an interesting question.

**Matthew 8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare [our] sicknesses.**

He bore our sicknesses. He felt our sicknesses, bore them, and carried the victory against them by His dependence on God the Father. And the Father, because of His obedience, helped Him through, so that He could continue. But at the end, the burden was so heavy that He died of a broken heart, which was a disease! which was a sickness. We get sick with our hearts when we are under stress. Remember the scripture: "*Men's hearts failing them for fear*". Whoa. What did Jesus suffer when His heart broke? So much to think about.

So when I go through my experience and I have the knowledge of these things, then whether it be sickness, or death, or persecution, or anxiety that wants to get me by the throat, I have Jesus carrying the weight. So when that which I feared might come, actually comes, Jesus says, Fear not. Whatever it is, don't fear. Carry through with it. Let Me be with you and carry the weight. And show the world that, in spite of your extremely negative experience, you can be joyful; you don't have to be morose because your prayers are not being answered according to your wish. Accept everything with unrepining surrender.

## **Surrender of an Unexpected Nature**

It requires a surrender that is different to what we often expect. Here is given to us the true source of rest, the true source of comfort in the midst of negativity. Where can I get it? How can I get it?

**Rest is found when all self-justification, all reasoning from a selfish standpoint, is put away. {OHC 97.6}**

You want to have rest, but you don't like the terrible trial you're going through? The *selfish standpoint* is, "Lord, please, take away this terrible experience." That is the selfish standpoint. And it won't go away, so I'm not going to rest? No; rest is when self-justification is put away, when *all reasoning from a selfish standpoint is put away*.

**Entire self-surrender, an acceptance of His ways, is the secret of perfect rest in His love. . . . Do just what He has told you to do, and be assured that God will do all that He has said He would do. . . . Have you come to Him, renouncing all your makeshifts, all your unbelief, all your self-righteousness? {Ibid.}**

This goes back to James White. He had to learn that; and he learned it in his last sickness.

**Come just as you are, weak, helpless, and ready to die. {Ibid.}**

**What is the "rest" promised?--It is the consciousness that God is true, that He never disappoints the one who comes to Him. His pardon is full and free, and His acceptance means rest to the soul, rest in His love. {OHC 97.7}**

He knows it all, and He knows what I am going through. He knows what Elisha went through; He knows what John the Baptist went through, and He was there to comfort them, although there was no relief from the trial. Comfort *in* the trial. Finding perfect peace and rest in the midst of negatives that you didn't want. This is the secret.

May we indeed know what it means to make a complete resignation and find complete rest in our inward souls. I praise God that such a

thing is possible. I know it; Sister White knew it, and that is why she wrote it.

Amen.