

Rick Joyner: Our Trials Have a Purpose

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:8, MEV).

Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last. An alphabet is the basis of a language, and Jesus is the basis of the language of God—He is the Word of God. He is the whole Word of God, from the beginning to the end. The book of Revelation continually reminds us of this because it is a revelation of Him. When we stray from the revelation and purpose of God, we stray from the centrality of Christ in all things.

We continue with Revelation 1:9:

“I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.”

First, John begins with how he is a fellow partaker in the tribulation, kingdom, and perseverance that are in Jesus. These three are connected. When we commit ourselves to following the Lord, we should expect tribulation to come. Tribulation comes with every life on earth, but in Christ, we can expect more because we live a life contrary to the age and the will of the prince of this present age, the devil.

Even so, as Christians, our trials have a purpose. God causes all things to benefit us, not to mention the comfort of the Holy Spirit that He has given to us. Consider how difficult this life would be without our hope and comfort in Him and the meaning that He gives to every trial.

A teaching contrary to Scripture implies that our lives will be easy, or our trials will be over, when we come to Jesus. This false teaching has caused many to backslide when this turns out to be untrue.

This causes those who came to the Lord on such premises to doubt the rest of what they have been taught about Christ. From the beginning, when someone came to Christ, they knew that they may have to forfeit their life for identifying with Him. Throughout the age, many have.

Persecution was a great filter and tended to weed out those with selfish ambition who would have been toxic members of the body. Identifying with Christ was not a pathway to advancement but an almost sure path to oppression and attacks. When this changed in the fourth century A.D., and being a Christian became an asset for political, social, and business advancement, the worst corruption of the faith came with it—as we will see later in this study.

Persecution is the normal state of Christianity, attracting only the greatest souls—those who love God and His truth more than their own lives. Basic discipleship requires that we not only love not our lives even to death, but that we take up our crosses and die daily to this world. True Christianity is a life of sacrifice, not a basis for attaining the things of this age. Rather, it is for the ultimate attainment in the age to come. If we live for the Lord's sake, and not just for the benefits we might get, we will find true life and the kingdom.

Trials come upon everyone who lives. Without Christ, these trials can turn a castle into a dungeon of misery. When we learn to live in the kingdom, as John did, we can live in a dungeon but still experience unfathomable glory and wonder.

Even so, abiding in the kingdom takes perseverance, just as John wrote. Perseverance is one of the greatest treasures we can possess, and it leads to the greatest spiritual treasures,

as is testified throughout the Scriptures. The following are a few examples:

“But the seed on the good ground are those who, having heard the word, keep it in an honest and good heart and bear fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15, MEV).

“To those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality will be eternal life” (Rom. 2:7, MEV).

“Not only so, but we also boast in tribulation, knowing that tribulation produces patience, patience produces character, and character produces hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:3-5, MEV).

“Truly the signs of an apostle were performed among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds” (2 Cor. 12:12, MEV).

“So we boast about you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you are enduring. This is evidence that God’s judgment, being righteous, will count you worthy of the kingdom of God for which you are suffering” (2 Thess. 1:4-5, MEV).{eo}

Rick Joyner is the founder and executive director of MorningStar Ministries and Heritage International Ministries and is the senior pastor of MorningStar Fellowship Church. He is the author of more than 40 books, including *The Final Quest*, *A Prophetic History*, and *Church History*. He is also the president of *The OAK Initiative*, an interdenominational movement that is mobilizing thousands of Christians to be engaged in the great issues of our times, being the salt and light that they are called to be.

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