

Suffering and Sovereignty

But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose. —1 Peter 2:20-21, NAS

In a sense all Christians are chosen vessels, because a Christian is a person chosen by God from the foundation of the world. But there are those Christians raised for a very special work, and we call them “sovereign vessels.” A sovereign vessel is someone chosen by God for special work, and the more special the work, the more specialized the suffering.

Jacob was a sovereign vessel, and we have already seen how he suffered—but he was undergoing the greatest trial yet. All that he went through in running from Esau, all that he endured after being with Laban, and all he suffered in losing Rachel, all of that was eclipsed when he saw the bloodstained coat of many colors. Not knowing that it had been dipped in the blood of a goat, he concluded his son Joseph was dead and he would never see him again. It was the trial of trials.

Perhaps you know great suffering, and just when you think you can't take any more, lo and behold, something happens that turns into the worst ordeal you have ever undergone. Listen. It is a hint from God—you are a sovereign vessel—He doesn't do that without a reason. Deep suffering is a strong hint that God has chosen you for a very special task. It's an honor to be a sovereign vessel. But if you want to volunteer to be a sovereign vessel, don't do it until you're ready for God to deal with the sore spots in your life, for you do have some. Some have sore spots, and it is as though they have them forever and nothing is ever done about them. But if you have been raised up for a special work, God is going to refine you by dealing with the sore spots in your life. You may volunteer to be a sovereign vessel—but don't do it until you are ready

to pay the price. The connection between suffering and a sovereign vessel is inseparable. One day you will look back and see the hand of God in everything.

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