**Tribulation, Perseverance, Character, and Hope**

*Romans 5:1-5*

**Introduction**

1. In the first 3 chapters of Romans, Paul confined all under sin **(cf. Romans 3:23)**.
2. The actions of sin committed by both Gentile and Jew aroused the wrath of God **(cf. Romans 1:18; 3:5-6)**.
3. The latter part of chapter 3 discussed the plan of righteousness by God in Christ Jesus who became the propitiation for sins.
   1. Men can be justified by God in a just way by the shedding of Christ’s blood.
   2. This propitiation is reached through faith **(cf. Romans 3:25-26)**.
4. Chapter 4 was a discussion on accounting (impute – take into account) righteousness to the one with faith apart from the works of the law with Abraham as a prime example. The chapter concludes with the wonderful inclusion of ALL who believe **(Romans 4:23-25).**
5. **Romans 5:1-2** – This satisfaction of God’s wrath in the death of Christ brings peace between God and the man who gains access into that gift by faith. This is cause for much rejoicing.
6. Yet, we are even more impressed with the magnitude of this blessing as we look to its ability to rejoice, and cause the Christian to endure even in tribulation 🡪
7. Tribulation
8. The Reality of Tribulation
   1. *thlipsis;* pressure (Strong); "a pressing, pressure,” anything which burdens the spirit. (Vine)
   2. “in Biblical and ecclesiastical writings, a Greek metaphor, oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits” (Thayer) (**cf. 2 Corinthians 4:8** – hard-pressed but not crushed.)
   3. There is an inherent connection the new life in Christ has with tribulation:
      1. **2 Timothy 3:12** – if we strive for godliness we will be persecuted.
      2. **John 15:18-20** – we will be treated as such because the One we followed was.
         1. **(v. 19)** – hated because we are not of them.
         2. **Galatians 6:14** – when we decided to follow Christ we put the world to shame, and they feel the same about us.
      3. **1 Thessalonians 3:1-4** – We are appointed to afflictions and tribulation, and should not be shaken.
   4. While the context seems to suggest the tribulation that is especially the company of Christianity, there is also the NORMAL TRIBULATION ALL SUFFER – even with this the one who has hope in Christ has a new perspective on tribulation 🡪
9. The Christian Perspective on Tribulation
   1. **Romans 5:3** – The Christian glories, i.e. rejoices in tribulation.
   2. Why can we, and must we rejoice?
      1. We can rejoice because of He who has overcome – **John 16:33; 1 John 5:4-5**
      2. We rejoice because such persecution is a blessing – **Matthew 5:10-12**
      3. We rejoice because of the fellowship enjoyed with Christ in such – **Philippians 3:7, 10; 1 Peter 4:12-13**
      4. We rejoice because of the growth it causes – **James 1:2-3; Hebrews 12:11**
10. Perseverance
11. The Correct Response to Tribulation
    1. The easiest response to tribulation would be to quit. However, that is not God’s will for us.
    2. To quit is to fall from grace – **Hebrews 10:32-39** – The Hebrews had allowed tribulation to wear them down, but they are encouraged to endure lest they lose that for which they’ve worked.
    3. Quitting is what Satan wants us to do – **Job 1:11; 2:4-5, 9-10** – Satan afflicted Job so he would quit, and curse God. Job did not.
    4. **We are to “persevere:”**
       1. *hypomonē;* cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy; steadfastness, constancy, endurance. (Strong)
       2. One with “perseverance” “under a great siege of trials, bears up, and does not lose heart or courage…[the term] does not mark merely the endurance, . . . but the . . . brave patience with which the Christian contends against the various hindrances, persecutions, and temptations that befall him in his conflict with the inward and outward world” (Trench 198).
       3. “The connotation is brave, manly courage without discouragement or weakening.” (Lenski)
       4. **Acts 20:22-24; 21:4, 10-13** – Paul going to Jerusalem, and in Jerusalem exhibited great perseverance of this manly type.
    5. ***“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.” (1 Corinthians 16:13*** – NASB)
12. The Increasing Nature of Perseverance
    1. When we set our hearts to persevere through tribulation, this virtue waxes greater. It is only when we relinquish our forward press that we digress and become weaker.
    2. **James 1:2-4** – We are to let “patience,” or endurance, have its “perfect,” or complete work.
       1. Physically, getting in healthy shape is a process of enduring workout regiments.
       2. If someone only worked out once, or even twice, they would not grow in their endurance.
       3. However, those who are consistent in their exercising, and endure when the going gets tough, they will build greater endurance and be stronger for it.
    3. **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** – Paul’s thorn in the flesh – we cannot endure unless we put our faith and trust in Jesus, and the power He provides. It is then when we become stronger as we let His power push us through.
13. Character
14. The Purpose of Tribulation
    1. All tribulation tests our faith and character – often a pair, “trial and tribulation.”
    2. **1 Peter 1:6-9** – The genuineness of our faith is going to be tested with tribulation – this is necessary.
    3. **James 1:12** – The road to the reward is littered with tests for our character. (**cf. Acts 14:22** – After Paul was stoned)
    4. We need to meet every tribulation, whether it be from persecution in the cause of Christ, or simply life under the sun, with the understanding that this is a test.
    5. ***“If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small” (Proverbs 24:10).***
15. The Result of Perseverance
    1. Perseverance during tribulation manifests proven character:
       1. *dokimē*; test (abstractly or concretely); by implication, trustiness. (Strong)
       2. ***“And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character” (Romans 5:3-4*** – NASB).
       3. **cf. Philippians 2:22** – Paul speaking of Timothy – proven character.
    2. Not only is character tested by tribulation, and proven by perseverance, but it is also strengthened by the two – **Hebrews 12:7, 10-13** – the chastening of the Lord comes through the medium of tribulation, and strengthens us if we endure it.
16. Hope
17. The Hope of the Faithful
    1. The implication of **Romans 5:4** is that hope is only possessed by those who persevere through tribulation, thus proving their character.
    2. The one who perseveres does so because of the hope which drives him – **1 Peter 1:3-5** – living hope.
       1. The prospect of hope is motivating enough to endure.
       2. The power of God keeps us through faith, i.e. the power of the resurrection of Christ – we have faith in such, and are driven by the thought of our own prized possession.
    3. The one who proves their faith and character with perseverance in tribulation has their hope furthered, and strengthened. 🡪
18. The Assurance of Hope
    1. **Romans 5:5** – This hope does not disappoint – we will not be ashamed for it, but it WILL be consummated and realized.
    2. **Hebrews 6:11-12** – We press on with diligent faith and patience to the “full assurance of hope.”
    3. **Hope** – *elpis*; expectation (abstractly or concretely) or confidence. (Strong)
       1. “favorable and confident expectation” (Vine)
       2. **Romans 8:24-25** – Called hope because not seen, not because it is not certain. We “wait” for it – matter of time, not a matter of if…
    4. The reason for this assurance of hope which does not disappoint:
       1. **Romans 5:5** – God has given us the HS.
       2. **Ephesians 1:13-14** – The confirmation of God’s word by spiritual gifts, and the promises given through the inspiration of the HS are down payments of that which is to come.
       3. **Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:16-18** – God cannot lie, so His promises are certain. We can be assured of them.

**Conclusion**

1. Christians should be a people of joy – **Philippians 4:4**
2. While we rejoice in the forgiveness of sins, and the hope of heaven, we can and should also rejoice in tribulation.
3. In such, we are to persevere so as to prove our character, and possess and assurance of hope until the end.