

I. Unwelcome experiences



- I. Unwelcome experiences
- II. Unexpected reversals



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- III. The Church's response

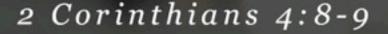


"What was the way in which the people experienced God's anger? It was in the hiding of his face from them. Was it not in the terrible cruelties of the siege and destruction? Was it not in being dragged from their homes and being forced to settle in a strange place? Yes, it was all of these and more. Yet those are all expressions of something deeper and more important: the absence of the presence and favor of God."

John N. Oswalt, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, p. 421



<sup>8</sup>We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;





<sup>27</sup>For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband."

Galatians 4:27



"But the Bible knows a higher law than hot indignation or even calm justice. That is the "law" of hesed (love, vv. 8, 10). No single English word can encompass all the connotations of this Hebrew word, but its basic idea is of passionate loyalty, especially of a superior to an inferior. In its basic usage it refers to the obligations of covenant, but in the biblical experience of God it comes to express that loyalty which goes far beyond any



legal obligation in a passionate concern for the well-being of the other. It is this that God has for his people, which expresses itself in "grace," "mercy," "unfailing love," "kindness," and several other similar English words."

John N. Oswalt, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, p. 420



<sup>8</sup>The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. 9He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. 10 He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. "For as high as the heavens are above the earth,



so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. <sup>13</sup>As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. <sup>14</sup>For he knows our frame;



he remembers that we are dust. Psalms 103:8-14



<sup>10</sup>And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, "having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates,



and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed-- 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14And the wall of the city had twelve foundations,

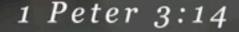


and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Revelation 21:10-14



¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,

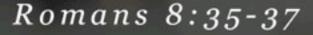




35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup>No,



in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.





<sup>13</sup>Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

Isaiah 49:13



"The hearers are called to sing for joy, to expand their tents, and to live in confidence. For what reason? Because the childless, rejected wife is going to be restored to the arms of her loving husband, who promises that nothing can prevent him from loving her, and she will have enough children to fill the earth. Here indeed is cause for praise: abundance for emptiness, honor for shame, and eternal love for lonely despair. This is our God."

John N. Oswalt, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, p. 415

