

God's Underlined Purpose for Trials and Afflictions

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"For momentarily our light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory beyond comparison." (II Corinthians 4:17).

In this verse of Scripture, as the Apostle Paul considered all the trials and afflictions that he was going through for Christ, he was also contemplating all the glory that is to be revealed unto all the elect, and he concluded that his suffering was insignificant in comparison. In Romans 8:18, Paul evaluated his affliction and evil treatment as *ouvk a;xia (ook ahx ee ah)* rendered "unworthy" in comparison to the sufferings of Christ, who in eternity procured the future glory that is eminently awaiting manifestation in God's people. This is not being conveyed in the sense of making light of the fullest extent concerning present suffering but he only compares it with the awesome sacrifice provided by the Lord. It is strictly in this vein that he terms it "light" in Second Corinthians. Here, it must be tersely pointed out that some have incorrectly exegeted II Corinthians 4:17 in the meritorious vein that the sacrifice of suffering procures an eternal weight of glory. Here the statement of this verse is viewed first from the KJV (King James Version), "for our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And now from the (GNT) Greek text, "for momentarily our light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison." This verse actually describes the workings by design of the plan and purpose which God has devised for the suffering and afflictions of His beloved elect.

Unfortunately, this vital message has been lost on the comprehensive intelligence of most of God's people. The pertinent questions are: (1) **what** is the purpose of the elect's suffering? (2) **why** is suffering concomitant with service to God? (3) **why** does God allow those whom He obviously loved from eternity to experience heartache, pain and turmoil? and (4) **why doesn't** He allow those dear to Him to live free from the conflict of trials and tribulations? In the consideration of such questions, it should be indelibly impressed in spiritual mindsets that the total forces of creation march both exclusively and expressively to the drumbeat of God's great, glorious and eternal will, plan and purpose. Also the totality of creation entails the universe of universes, including this galaxy and even this small planet, which is inhabited by human earthly existents but is only a minute part of the entirety of things. As strange as it may seem to some; there is definite design in the province of God embracing every individual entity of creation. Accordingly, everything that functions to do so as components of a gigantic creation, all devised to accommodate the pleasure of His will. In focus on the thought conveyance of II Corinthians 4:17, it is very informative to observe that the Greek verb *katerga,zetai(kaht ehr gah zeh teh)* is rendered "is working." Note, it is in the present tense and middle voice. Here it should become apparent through a close examination of the context that God is forever in control of every operational force whether it is good or evil. It should be perceived from this that all things are subjected to His purpose.

The constant attitude of all those positioned in Christ, facing the diverse challenges of this life, should always be "**Lord not our will but yours.**" Before assessing the situation of the lives of God's people as either victory or defeat; success or failure, what must be evaluated through the contents of the Gospel (Grace Covenant) is the validity of those things that are evident in their lives. As children of God chosen to eternal salvation, the elect have been endowed with a perfect guide, i.e., the Spirit of Truth. There are certain facts that are constantly expressed to His elect, i.e., God has individual plans for individual lives, plus the trials and

vicissitudes of life experiences are the results of the imperfections of depraved creation. Thus, all of the workings of both good and evil have as their ends, the culmination of all things that have been devised to give Him ultimate praise and glory. It is to this end that all actions and occurrences are working and as those who are risen in Christ emotions, aspiration and affections must always be centered on things eternal, heavenly and above (Colossians 3:1-2).

As the Apostle Paul surveys the occurrences of his course in life, his focus is not so much on what is happening to him, as much as the question: what are the workings or developments of his experiences? In other words, his concentration as exemplified by the present tense and indicative mood (factuality) of the Greek verb *katerga,zetai*(*kaht ehr gah zeh teh*) rendered "is working," primarily is focused on what God is manifestly accomplishing, producing, bringing about or working out. In essence, Paul's knowledge of the revelation of the Mystery, i.e., the revealed truth of God's eternal workings, positioned him with the unique view of the full spectrum of his existence whereby he could occupy in the period of time, yet also dwell in the complete workings of God documented in the past, present, and future. Thus his view was always on the total stratum of Eternity, which encompasses that which is void of any sequencing, i.e., all past, present and future occurrences. This can best be termed or described as "the Eternal Now," which can be defined as the entire view of time from the vantage-point of Eternity.

In considering the contents or writings of Second Corinthians, note that the Greek verb *katerga,zetai* (*kaht ehr gah zeh teh*) rendered "is working," is found seven times in this epistle (I Corinthians 5:5; 7:10-11; 9:11; 12:12). Thus, the question is **what** is God working out or producing with earthly afflictions? Here the answer is found in the phrase *kaqV u`perbolh.n eivj u`perbolh.n* (*kath ee pehr vol een ees ee pehr vol een*), which is literally rendered "more and more exceeding." The denouement (description of the outcome) is utilized in attempting to give terminology and testimony to the glorious accomplishment of what God is producing, as it almost exhausts the Greek language in a crescendo of superlatives. This conveyance labors to accurately and realistically portray the ultimate glory as there could not be found a more energetic expression than this. Here, it is of note that the Greek noun *u`perbolh.* (*ee peh vol ee*) is transliterated "hyperbole" in English literally meaning "casting or throwing beyond." In II Corinthians 4:7, it is rendered, "excess, excellency or eminence" in the expression "the excellency (KJV) or exceeding greatness (GNT) "of His power." Note that the phrase *kaqV u`perbolh.n* (*kath ee pehr vol een*) alone means "exceeding or super eminently" (Romans 7:13; I Corinthians 12:31; II Corinthians 1:8; Galatians 1:13). Had this phrase been used by itself it would express an intensity of a high degree but it was not deemed sufficient to express the weight or sense of the glory of the inheritance of God's elect. The phrase *kaqV u`perbolh.n* (*kath ee pehr vol een*) is not enough alone to explicate the high expression of this superlative in denoting the quantization of such glorious value. Hence, the phrase *kaqV u`perbolh.n* (*ees ee pehr vol een*) is co-joined to enhance the expression, in that the results of God's workings are not merely eminent but eminent unto eminence or excess. In other words, a hyperbole unto hyperbole or one hyperbole heaped upon another, thus as best as can be expressed, it is "exceeding, exceedingly glorious or glorious in the highest possible degree. Hence, this form of expression is the highest superlative, which is yet insufficientas all human language superlatives fail to express that eternal glory, which is reserved for God's beloved.

Here, the statement is that the eternal glory that God is working for His beloved is infinite and boundless. One may even seek to ascertain its quantity by expressing one degree to another or one sublime height to another but the only quantitative expression that is possible in human terms is infinity, engendering thoughts which are beyond human comprehension. Accordingly, nothing can describe the uttermost height of that glory, as nothing in the realm of human capabilities can express its infinitude. In this view, the underlying question is how does one reconcile present sufferings or what is presently being manifested in time with what God has already actualized in eternity? In other words, in reconciling the enlightenment of the eter-

workings of God, how do they translate in the daily encounters in this present life? Again, the primary focus must be on what God has decreed **in Eternity**, for this is what determines all manifestations **in time**!

What is taught throughout the Grace Gospel is that God has designed all His elect's sufferings for specific purposes. Thus, all trials and afflictions are assigned to God's people according to His sovereign will for their individual lives. This is dutifully executed in the lives of all the elect in varying degrees. Second Corinthians chapter four documents an account of Paul's sufferings and the courage and patience that God provided to him through the challenges that he experienced. Verses eight and nine state from the Greek text "being afflicted in every way but not being distressed, being perplexed but not in despair, being persecuted but not being forsaken, being cast down, but not being destroyed," which focuses on the development process of the elect of God according to His (God's) pleasure. Thus, afflictions and trials are viewed as God's applications of His workings in manifestly formulating that which He has already eternally brought to fruition. The impact of this conveyance is expressed by the implication of the verbs in the context of the verses. Note that the present participles are grammatically tied to the expression *ecomen (ehk o mehn)* rendered, "we have" in verse seven.

Thus, in these successive verses, observe the ascensive order of the seemingly paradoxical and antithetical contrasting nature of the adverse situations versus the corresponding stimulus exhibiting an antigenic immune response. In verse eight, the Greek passive participle *qlibo,menoi (thlee vom eh lee)* rendered "being afflicted," describes one who is caused to suffer trouble and hardship, as it is followed by its conversion reaction, *ouv stenocwrou,menoi (oo stehn okhor oo meh nee)* rendered "not being distressed," which describes one who is caused to function contrary to the negative action imposed upon such one. Continuing the litany the Greek participle *avporou,menoi (ahp oroo meh nee)* in the middle voice, is rendered "being perplexed" which describes one who finds himself in an uncertain situation. It is followed by its conversion reaction *ou evxaporou,menoi (ook ehx ah poo meh nee)* rendered "not being in despair." Verse nine's passive participle *diwko,menoi (thee o kom eh nee)* rendered, "being persecuted", denotes one who is pursued and harassed, yet the conversion reaction is *ouvk evgkataleipo,menoi (ohg kaht ah lee po meh nee)* rendered "not being forsaken" or feeling let down, abandoned or deserted. The litany continues with the passive participle *kataballo,menoi (kaht ahv ahl lo meh nee)* rendered "knocked down," denoting one who is knocked down, hurt badly and abused, yet the conversion reaction is *avpollu,menoi (ook ahp ol lee meh nee)* rendered "not being destroyed" or killed or not caused to perish. These are apparently the workings of deposited knowledge for this purpose. This knowledge of God's plan and purpose is that which is referred to as "this treasure in earthen vessels" (II Corinthians 4:7). Here, as Paul displays his litany of present participles and corresponding humanly uncharacteristic reactions, note the passivity of the expressions ...that in every case, he (Paul) is not the **cause** but the **recipient** of the negative actions imposed upon him as well as his induced positive responses to them. Apparently, the conveyances in verses eight and nine explicate the enablement of God's to veto and overrule the inherent nature of depraved human traits in such situations.

Verses ten and eleven shed light as to why all these adverse occurrences or situations happen and will be according to God's purpose and will is in causing them to happen. The conclusive phrases of these two verses when linked together give unmistakable illumination to both the intent and the effectuation of the workings of God. In this regard, these verses state, from the Greek Text: (10) "always carry about in the body the dying of Jesus, that also the life of Jesus might be manifested in our body." (11) "For we who live are always being delivered unto death because of Jesus; that also the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh." In verse ten, note the Greek adverb *pa,ntote (pahn to teh)* rendered "always" or "at all times", as the Apostle Paul identifies the frequency of his endurements. Thus, it should not be strange when one's sufferings are constant. The expression "carry about in the body the dying of Jesus" is basically stating that the suffering of His elect serves as an identification of the counterpart of the suffering of Christ. Hence, the key inference is **identification**, which defines God's ultimate purpose for His beloved. The Greek

word *ne,krwsin (nehk ro seen)* rendered “dying” refers to the dying of Jesus or according to the genitive possessions, the dying that belongs to Jesus. In Paul’s case, he is making reference to the process experienced because he belonged to Jesus or because of his fidelity to the gospel of the Mystery of God’s v (Philippians 1:29; Colossians 1:24; 4:2-3). Hence, this experience of daily dying *pa,ntote (pahh to te* rendered “always,” i.e., continually suffering, is not viewed as negative but rather as that which exude God’s positive purpose. This is illustrated by the latter phrase “that (in order that) “also” *kai (keh)*, the life of Jesus might be manifest in the (our) body of the recipient. Thus, it is to be gleaned from this context that endurance or suffering must be evaluated as part of God’s purpose for His elect. In this sense, God uses His process of identifying such ones with the life of Christ.

In verse eleven, note that the Greek adverb *avei (ah ee)* is also rendered “always,” as derived from an obsolete primary noun denoting continuous duration, exuding that which is incessantly or invariably manifested in any or even every instance. This ingression rephrases the rendering, i.e., “for always, we that are living are being delivered unto death because of Jesus, in order that also the life of Jesus, may be manifest in the mortal flesh of us.” Here, observe the phrase *h`mei/j oi` zw/ntej(ee mees ee zon dehs)* rendered “we who are living” or “we who are living” or who are spiritually living in Christ. Thus, all that are classified in this group are continually being *paradido,meqa (pah rah thee thom eth ah)* rendered “delivered”, denoting those who are given over or handed over to persecution, harassment and slanderous attacks, which in Paul’s case eventually led to his physical death (Acts 20:23; Ephesians 3:13). So the reason that God’s people suffer persecutions is *dia. VThsou/n(thee ah Ee ees von)* rendered, “because of Jesus” or “on account of Jesus” or “for the sake of Jesus”. Hence the information divulged is that believers are delivered unto death or into the perils of death for one supreme purpose, i.e., *ifna kai. h` zwh. tou/ VThsou/ fanerwqh/ evn th/ qnhth/ sau h`mw/n (een ah keh ee zon too Eee ee soo pahh eh r oth ee ehv tee thnee tee sahrk ee ee mon)* rendered “that also, the life of Jesus may be (having been) manifested and displayed in our (their) mortal flesh,” which is conveyed by the completed probability of the subjunctive mood and aorist tense.

Now the most underlined and difficult question of all in this is raised and that is, who is the author or initiator of our trials and afflictions? While the preceding verses explain **what** God is doing **to** **them** and **with them**, the question remains as to **who and what is the origin of them**? Here many who readily respond, “it is Satan, the prince and power of the air, the god of this age.” Here it must be plainly stated that the devil is certainly the prime participator and instigator in the proceedings of the negative and evil forces imposed upon believers but it must be understood that **all** powereven that of Satan is ordained and in subjection to the omnipotence of God (Romans 13:1). Now this fact is distinctly spelled out in Paul’s epistles and corroborated by the accounts in the book of Job. Note that it was God who brought the subject of Job (Job 1:8), and God who issued the challenge, and God who gave permission for Satan’s intervention, and finally, God who set the limitations and boundaries of Job’s afflictions (Job 1:12).

However, a clearer understanding is gleaned from the writings of Paul, which he tersely states in chapter 1 of his epistle to the Philippians. In Philippians 1:21, Paul boldly states (from the Greek text) “for me to live or to die in Christ and to die is gain”. Here, he makes this statement, as he faced the possibility of his death. In Philippians 1:28 he states from the Greek text, “and do not be frightened in anything by the adversaries which is evident of destruction to them, and to you of salvation, and this from God”. Note that the Greek participle *pturo,menoi (ptee ro meh nee)* rendered “frightened” is only used in this instance in the Greek New Testament; in basically denoting what God’s informed people should never be, i.e., terrified or scared persons. The conveyance is that regardless of what the circumstances may be, *evn mhdeni (ee mee theh nee)* rendered “in nothing,” are God’s people to be terrified by *tw/n avntikeime,nwn (ton al dee kee mehn on)* rendered, “the adversaries,” which are the opposing or hostile forces of evil and ill will toward them.

Those who are secured in this thinking and undisturbed by the opposing forces of evil will exhibit *e;ndeixij (ehv thee xees)* rendered, “evidence” or proof, in demonstrating that the workings of God

adversarial forces will only accomplish as their end, their own destruction, perdition or ruin. Hence, the Greek phrase *u`mw/n de. swthri,aj* (*ee mon theh so teer ee ahs*) rendered "and to you of salvation," documents the fact that those undaunted by trials and affliction, in fact display evidence and give testimony to the effectiveness of their salvation. In other words, this phrase clearly demonstrates that one's attitude, demeanor and behavior are indeed significant indicators of one's testimony, as to whether their security in salvation is actually understood by them (I Timothy 1:16; II Timothy 4:5). Here, this verse ends with the statement *h tou/to avpo. qeou* (*keh too to ah po theh oo*) rendered "and this is from God." Here, the question may be posed: "what is from God?" Observe from the grammar, the demonstrative Greek pronoun *tou/to* (*too • to*) rendered "this," as it is in the neuter gender thus necessitating that it modifies a neuter phrase or noun. Hence, a neuter gender in the extended context either stated or implied, gives a description as to what emanates from God.

Note in Philippians 1:29, its reading (from the Greek text), "Because it has been given to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in Him but also to suffer on behalf of Him." Now there are some who offer an explanation in the preceding verse (28) that the noun *swthri,aj* (*so teer ee ahs*) rendered "salvation," is with the demonstrative pronoun *tou/to* (*too to*) rendered "this" refers to and without a doubt, it (salvation) indeed is **from God**, but one must consider that this noun carries the feminine gender; hence it does not meet the grammatical requirement for being the modifier recipient of the pronoun. Others may focus on and extend this to the context of verse 27 and offer the neuter gender of the Greek noun *euvaggeli,ou* (*ehv ahg yeh lee oo*) rendered "gospel" as its modifier recipient. Again, without a doubt the gospel is **of** as well as **from** God but its arrangement in the context does not allow a smooth blend in the flow of the context. But the key to identifying what is found to be contextually and grammatically in synchrony is realized in recognizing that the subordinating conjunction *ofti* (*o • tee*) rendered "for" or "because," is linked to the defining Greek phrase *u`mi/n evcari,sqh* (*ee • meen eh • khah • rees • thee*) rendered, "it has been given to you." Here, from the context, the phrases: "this (which is) from God" and "because it has been given to you" are obviously directly linked. So the answer is in identifying "what" from God has been given to those whom Paul is addressing. Upon close examination, one must observe that the Greek word *evcari,sqh* (*eh • khah • rees • thee*) rendered, "has been given" is the verb form of the noun *cari,z* (*khah • reez*) rendered "grace".

In conjunction to this observation, note the neuter gender and nominative case of the definite articles *to*. (*t*) as they are utilized three times in the verse. In surveying the grammatical structure it is apparent that there are no accompanying nouns with these definite articles. The rule in this structure is: while there are no neuter nouns with nominative cases stated, they are implied. Here in repeating, the noun form *cari,z* (*khah • reez*) the verb *evcari,sqh* (*eh • khah • rees • thee*) notes that it is in the aorist tense and passive voice and may be rendered, "it has been graced" or "it has been freely given" or "it has been graciously bestowed" upon God's people to suffer on behalf of or for the sake of Christ. The nominative case would imply that the subject is the grace that has been given as well as faith to believe, in its phrasing, "not only". This is followed by the Greek phrase *avlla. kai* (*ahl lah keh*) rendered "but also," which infers that in conjunction with this grace, God has given or assigned the suffering for which His people are enabled to endure. There are two aspects to this grace: 1). He (God) grants the willingness of His elect to suffer for Christ and 2). He grants them the stamina to suffer for Him. In this sense, God uses suffering as a testimony of His power to effectuate maturation in His selective ones. The Greek present infinitive *pa,scein* (*pahs kheen*) is rendered "endure or suffering," and refers to the physical and mental pain and anguish inflicted in the impingement of external forces against God's people.

Thus, the workings are: even as the grace of God matures His beloved, He grants them the grace to rejoice while enduring suffering for the sake of Christ. This is demonstrated in Colossians 1:24 (from the KJV), "we now rejoice in my suffering for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh: for His body's sake, which is the church". And from the (Greek text), "now I rejoice in my suffering on behalf

you and do fill up (or continue to the completeness of) what is needed or absent of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh on (for) His body, which is the assembly (called out ones).” Here the apostle states that he presently rejoicing, in that the Greek word *nu/n(neen)* rendered “now” expresses the fact that *tu pahq,masin (tees pahth•ee mah seen)* rendered “the suffering,” i.e., His endurance, as well as others, was the sake of their ministering to God’s people. Here notice how Paul’s attitude (his rejoicing) is formed by interpretation of it in relation to the Body of Christ. Because of his commission, he understood that he was destined to suffer (Acts 9:16), thus he deemed it as having positive value. In this light he counted it a privilege to function in his role of struggling to fulfill the needs of conveying the mystery that had been revealed unto him regarding the church (Ephesians 3:1-9).

Note, Paul’s declaration that their efforts, as sacrificial as they may have been viewed to so were *u`sterh,mata (ees • tehr • ee mah tah)* rendered “lacking, i.e., absent of fulfillment or incomplete”. The thought conveyance is that the entire spectrum of their struggles that were involved in planting, developing, nurturing, instructing, teaching and overseeing the work of the ministry, was far from being adequate in full application. Notice the comparison of human afflictions with *tu/n qli,yewn tou/ Cristou (tu thleep•seh•on too Khees•too)* rendered, “the afflictions of Christ,” which depicts the tribulations involved in justifying those who are placed in the Body of Christ. Thus, what he understood was that in spite of the fact that his pressures and circumstances of suffering were on behalf of the church, it is by God’s design that his afflictions were only partial contributions to the entire gamut in the establishment and continuation of the ministry. Accordingly, he took pleasure in the knowledge that God had favored him to suffer in this capacity howbeit many others should follow in their assignments. Here in focusing on spiritual growth or maturity is defined as the ever increasing enablement to know God, as such growth is always motivated by our desire to be like Him. Spiritual maturity in this sense is a never-ending voyage of development into the nature of God. In essence it is the process of one that has been rescued from the plight of depraved humanity developing a profound and intimate relationship with the Divine Savior. It is a reflection of one’s nearness to Him and a measure of the loving care of God for His beloved ones.

As one progresses in this realm, it entails the enhancement of one’s ability to view things in recognition of the truth in their meanings and internalize the goodness of God in all occurrences. Through this is demonstrated the gradual elimination of one’s selfish agenda, as one maximizes one’s awareness of the will of God. The realistic view of God’s Eternal Decree instills a sense of security that is unavailable outside of dwelling in His purpose. In this vein, the thrill and comfort of His divine presence becomes increasingly clear to our consciousness. This in fact is the reality of the spiritual maturity, which results and allows for His devised plan for one’s improved receptivity for the Divine wisdom of God. This in effect unifies one’s personality alignment with God, as it increasingly yields a peace, which passes or defies all human understanding must be thoroughly comprehended that God is the source of all understanding and thus all knowledge invariably is tied to Deity. The function of the Truth is to mediate between spiritual and physical things, the indispensable medium for communications. Hence the spiritual mind invariably seeks to coordinate with that which is spiritual and thus its influences are always dominant over physical things. The Spirit of God indwells one’s mind (spirit) and causes it to depend upon Him for expressions of the spiritual realization of the Truth, which enhances one’s spiritual growth. Accordingly, it is what one’s mind comprehends rather than what it desires that will ensure development and growth. The enlightenment of the Gospel of the Mysteries advises that Eternity entails non-material, spiritualized, glorified bodies and minds, even though there is the obvious retention of those earth-memories that possess spiritual meaning and value as those blessings that God manifestly in time bestowed upon His elect.

Thus, all spiritual and intellectual development will have become complete from the point it was interrupted by one’s transformation (I Corinthians 13:12; II Corinthians 3:18; 5:7; Philippians 3:10-18). One’s earthly intolerance for endurance or suffering can be attributed to unfounded expectations of the depraved creature in which one lives. The sobering fact is that the present residence of existence is neither a friendly nor

accommodating universe. This is so because the present environment is sinful and physical rather than holy and spiritual. Thus, the accommodations for serenity and peace, i.e., all things working in a harmonic pattern, are reserved for Eternity rather than Time. It is in the Eternal setting that focal energy and absolute existence are primordially (existing from the beginning) and preemptively harmonized, as God is established and supportively manifested, as the creator of an everlasting universe. As humans view the original creation and then what it manifestly evolved into, the focus should rest on its ultimate rather than its current state. Life in the Eternal realm is not invested in the endless unrest of idleness or selfless unease but rather ceaseless progressions in grace, truth and glory. Thus, the manifested future sphere is permanent existence wherein life is designed and prepared for the children of light to go from glory to glory in the Divine estate of spiritual perfection, even as God is perfect in all things (Hebrews 13:21).

This temporary life is obviously designed to prepare His elect for the eternal life to come. In this sense, grace and mercy characterize God's latitude of love for His individual designees, whereas the culmination of things in Him solely motivates His attitude for the whole. The material universe is the arena wherein physical activities and beings ascend and work on physical spheres of "material reality;" consequently, mortal (depraved) man is inertly spiritually void. The depraved human mind is a personal-energy system existing estranged from the Divine Spirit of God as it functions in a material environment. Such a separation of carnal minds from the Holy Spirit constitutes the universe's potential of conflict and personalities. The covenants of the Old Testament basically teach self-sacrifice while the Grace Covenant teaches self-mortification and self-realization of depraved creatures. The covenants of past dispensations were motivated by fear-conscientiousness, whereas the Grace Dispensation's focus is guided by true conviction of the eternal purpose, will and plan of God. All everlasting relationships, though not fully understood by God's people, abide in eternity, are made manifest to His elected ones through time but from the beginning are designated and focused on Eternity.

The Word of God teaches that the trials and vicissitudes of life experiences, which are the results of the imperfections of depraved creation, are more than matched by the knowledge given by God to overcome each challenge. There are times when the earth seems cruel and desolate and life inconsequential, when one feels that nothing has security as life invokes an aura of weakened and vulnerable stress towards collapse. Life's vagaries (erratic or unpredictable occurrences) often cause one to feel insecure. This insecurity, in some cases, evolves from situations that may be real or even at times imagined. No human is immune to stress but the knowledge of God's designed workings provides an inner stability that imparts joy and peace in the midst of all capricious (sudden, impulsive, seemingly unmotivated notions, actions or unpredictable conditions, changes, or series of changes) circumstances of life.

Those who solely depend upon the comforts and pleasures of this life are destined to experience bitter disappointment. It is only through one's enduring relationship with God and the dictates of ascertaining the combination of His love and power that one realizes the meagerness of humanity. It is from this viewpoint that one is privileged to comprehend the bounty (grant of encouragement) of God's infinite provisions, they overshadow one's illusion of insecurity. In essence, no God-comprehending mortal can ever permanently be disillusioned. Confusion arises from immaturity in the face of the multiplicity of human philosophies and the surface influences of the logic appearing to justify them. This is more than offset by ongoing spiritual revelations from the Word of God, which are designed to dissipate these transitional debilitations.

Doubt is even more sinister than confusion in that "all that (is) not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Doubt rationalizes the logic of human depraved thinking over God's devised course of trust and commitment. Doubt is the denial of God's presence in one's mind, which contradicts the most concrete entity in the eternal life. Doubt is the abandonment of one's highest value of love, truth, service, hope and faith. Doubt directs one to the nothingness or emptiness of physical dependency toward the void that exists in the absence of the Holy Spirit of Truth directing His beloved toward the radiance of God's love. Hence, doubt is the natural

aberration, whereas faith is the spiritual heartbeat believing. Faith is gifted from God and received accordi to His will to all of His chosen ones. It brings the spirits of its recipients into the upward stream of the Sp of Truth that God aligns in all whom He loves and has caused to believe Him. Through this, one is privileg to comprehend the difference between the nothingness of doubt and the expansiveness of faith, which is or entrance into the joy and peace of serene spiritual communion. This in essence provides positive proof God's presence in one's life, in that belief in His word is structured to cause one to resist doubt a withstand fear.

In venturing back to the theme of the prime thought conveyance, the information, which was gleaned in Corinthians 4:17 flows over into II Corinthians 4:18, in noting the reading of this verse, first from the (KJ "While we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things which ; not seen are eternal." Now from the Greek text, "we are not looking at the things being seen but at the thir not being seen; for the things being seen are temporal but the things not being seen are eternal." Here observing the sentence structure of this verse, note the usage of four present participles rendered "bei seen" or "being perceived"; plus the fact that two of them are preceded by the negat participles *mh (mee)* rendered "not being seen or perceived". In addition to this we also focus on the fact th two of the verb participles are in the accusative case in the former part of the verse, while the latter p encompasses two participles in the nominative case. These designees certify their usages respectively as t direct objects (accusative) and the subjects (nominative). This verse begins with the negative particle a present participle conjoined, *mh. skopou,ntwn h`mw/n (mee skop • oon don ee mon)* rendered, "we are r looking", which denotes those who are not prioritizing or dwelling on things, which are being seen or t visible things. Note that the Greek participle in each of the four usages of *ta. blepo,mena (t vlehpe • om • eh nah)* translated "the things being seen" is in the present tense and passive voice. Th informed minds are caused to shift from prioritizing and continuously dwelling on physical things, wh God has made visible to all men, in contrast to the invisible things, which are spiritually visible to only so (God's elect).

In order to emphasize the contrast between what informed minds should not be prioritizing or dwelling versus what should be prioritized, the Apostle Paul uses the strong adversati conjunction *avlla (ahl lah)* translated "but." Here the implication is that "but" we should be "looking at" "dwelling on" the things not seen. Note that there are two distinct spheres available to dwell on, namely t visible-physical and the invisible-spiritual. In terms of their locations, these two spheres are describes Colossians 3:1-2 respectively as that which is above (spiritual or unseen), and on the Earth (physical or see God dwells in the above sphere commonly referred to as Heaven (Colossians 3:1).The reasoning behind t is founded in the fact that all the physical or seen things of the Earth are temporary and transitory, as all this category are in a state of rapid or steady decline or slow dissolution. On the other hand, the reasoning prioritizing the unseen-spiritual things is because they are *aivw,niroj (eh o • nee ah)* rendered, "eterr everlasting or unending." This gives reaffirmation and substance to the contents of II Corinthians 4: namely that "our momentarily (light) afflictions are working for (on behalf of God's people) an eter weight of glory beyond all comparison". Hence, in the midst of all difficult physical circumstances, inform spiritual minds are continually focused on the eternal glory, which belongs to Christ. The ultimate end God's eternal purpose for called ones is glorification together in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:28-30). The ultim aspiration of the Mystery, the Gospel of Grace is "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

In isolating the terms temporal and eternal, observe that the Greek word *pro,skairoj (pros keh ros)* is litera translated "for a while, not long and un-enduring." Things that are ephemeral, i.e., certain plants that grc flower and then die within a few days best demonstrate this expression. The depiction is that which last very short time. Synonyms giving description to this condition are: fleeting, fugacious, fugitive, momenta passing, short- lived and episodic. The most sober expression of all is evanescent, as it defines things th tend to vanish like vapor and disappear. In strong adversative contrast to this, the Gre

word *aivw,niōj* (*eh v nee os*) is literally translated "eternal" or "everlasting," thus describing that which without beginning and end or that which always has been and will be or that which will never cease to i.e., unendingly abiding.

The most miraculous phenomena are those who dwell in the realm of the "everlasting now". Yes, even though God's people are abiding in the created entity of time, they are yet positioned in the essence Eternity in their glorified state. The only ones, who can contemplate this are those who walk (live) by faith. Outside of this, no one can internalize eternity from the human plateau of the depraved state of ones present abode, for the everlasting now is the current view of time from the vantage-point of eternity. By faith, God elect not only discern these unseen things and their great distinction from the physical sphere but by faith, God also, the prioritized spiritual that is chiefly regarded as the end of the scope of existence. Now, this is not designed to escape present evil or even obtain present worldly good, both of which are temporary and transitory but it definitely guarantees escape from future evil and entails future good. Thus, hope is invested in the eternal future realm of the unseen, which is more realistic and certain or as Hebrews 11:1 states (from the Greek text), "And faith is the assurance or confidence of that being hoped for, the verification (certainty) of matters being unseen".

The human mind cannot accommodate the conflict of double allegiance. This is corroborated by the statement of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13 wherein it is conveyed that "no man can serve two lords, for either he will hate and despise one and love and be beholden to the other"; "he cannot have equal affections for both." Hence, ones love for both physical and spiritual things cannot possibly abode on an equal plane. When earthly possessions of health and wealth are promoted as maximum blissfulness, this mindset is always prevalent at the expense of focusing ones priority on physical rather than spiritual blessings. It is impossible to amalgamate (blend) them or interchangeably refer to them as equal and/or the same. Regardless of how some may view it, the obtaining of money and the healing of diseases are physical, **not** spiritual blessings. Even though it is not predominantly taught, spiritual blessings are consigned to the unseen and abstract things of the Heavens rather than the seen and materialized things of the Earth.

The confusion resulting from such misunderstanding causes gross disillusionment among God's people. The basic facts are: (1) God is inherently kind to those who are the objects of His love, grace and mercy and (2) the process of evolutionary creation is beset by certain inevitabilities; the greatest is the conclusion of the manifested present-physical culminating in the future-spiritual. When these heights of maturity are attained, they are always accomplished through the correct conception of eternity. Thus, physical healing is not tantamount to salvation or deliverance from the essence of sickness. God could of course, heal all human illnesses by just speaking the word but to do so would violate the physical laws of His ordaining a depraved creation to accommodate depraved mankind. In actuality, neither the feeding of the masses on the shores of Galilee nor the healing of those at Capernaum is comparable to the glory that resides in the church, the Body of Christ.

With a distorted conception to the contrary of this, some when viewing perpetual afflictions have questioned God's love for them. Some even question His sovereignty in such instances but it must be understood that God's divers' individual plans of detailed progression entail sickness, as well as other painful circumstances. In this light, the existence of suffering rather proves that God has devised through the consequences of a depraved nature, His workings wherein the tribulation visited upon His beloved brings about a transformation in their maturity into the unseen and eternal realm (Romans 12:1-2). Such a process may appear to be harsh to some but the gain is more than worth the pain in developing the faithful ones who believe in true spiritual values. Astonishingly, this is accomplished in the midst of so much that is humanly conceptualized to be totally contrary to all that is good, beautiful and true.

With unfolding and progressing science medicinally solving the problems of diseases, one must yet take comfort solely in God's workings in afflictions. When all within human understanding has been done

ameliorate (improve) certain situations of life and it becomes apparent that it is not in God's will to al them; one must then be content to align with His will (Philippians 4:11; I Timothy 6:8). When ones eter relation to God as a member of the Body of Christ is the focus of existence, material considerations are relegated to their proper subordination. This present life inevitably involves suffering but those who are privileged to comprehend God's greater purposes behind this veil will experience sustaining inner peace which enables one to rise above any perceived deprivation that might be encountered.

There are certain facts that must be inculcated in the hearts (minds) of God's people and they are: (1) the eternal God is the only refuge, (2) no stock should be invested in the transient and ever changing emotions of joy and sorrow in this world, (3) what most refer to as probabilism is not and (4) the endowment of imperfect beings with the latitude to express their freedom of depravity invariably entails tragedy. When flush with the so-called success of earthy accomplishments, it is natural to bask in the illusions of comfort and imagined security but it is quite challenging to search for such in the shattered rubbles of ones fondest dream and expectations. Discouragement and defeat often follow sad circumstances insinuating it's no use, the battle is lost anyway rendering one helpless by the undertow of evil and pain in this imperfect world. In these instances, discouragement has succeeded in perpetrating needless impressions of distress based upon ones lack of understanding of God's workings. Before one uses such perceived failure and defeat to evaluate the validity of blessings or curses, one must ascertain whether or how the circumstances align in accordance with God's plan. What is mostly lost in translation is that ones will must always conform to the will of God per the example of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, i.e., Lord, "not my will but yours (must be done)" (Matthew 26:39; Luke 22:42).

In most cases, God's people are discouraged when they do not realize the benefit of their own will against a desire. In other words, when one does not realize ones desires or humanly perceived needs, disillusionment ensues, as one feels arrayed against the on-moving course of reality itself. However, when the Word of God properly informs one, it imbues the assurance that is evident through the knowledge that His (God's) prescribed goals and means for His people are acceptable occurrences in His sight. Thus, one must conform to anything that would tend to deflect from His process and concomitantly reject human characterization of failure in favor of the occurrences apparently following the dictates of His Divine Decree. In light of this comprehension, one must aggressively and enthusiastically continue in encouragement despite all indications to the contrary, allowing nothing to be discouraging in ones life course. In effect, proper communications of God's love for His people lessen the impact of the struggles and empower one to willingly walk in the ways of His loving will.

The bottom line of this sphere is exemplified in understanding that ones everlasting relationship, though not fully understood by most human cogitation, was conceived (decreed) in eternity, is made manifest to the elect of God through time but from the beginning, was designated and focused on eternity! It is in this light that one must dedicate ones life to the ministry of the eternal things. Life has no defined meaning apart from an everlasting relationship with God. The goods and thrills of this vainglory existence are spiritually meaningless; thus failing to satisfy the deepest and truest reality in the spirit (mind). The Word of God is geared to impart the message that the world that is now, is not the world that is to be, thus ones existence now is not the existence to be. Except for the operations of the principles of God's purpose, the fact of material existence must simply be accepted as merely manifestations in that respect. In this sense, prayers do not change or determine things, hence all petitions to God must be properly in alignment with His determinately decreed plan. One must accept God's direction in each and every one of life's problems, whether they are perceived as big or small, in knowing that He even works tragedies for His good.

As one dwells in God and fellowship in the Spirit of Truth, His presence energizes ones deposited faith hourly. In this realm, one is lifted to a high plateau from which the breadth of life's problems is viewed momentarily light when compared to the glory of His power and presence. In this elucidation, one can ascertain how God has arranged the incidents of ones afflictions with the design of His purpose. T

knowledge positions each of the elect as an individual part of His all-encompassing plan, wherein all the beloved of God are transformed into the advancement of the entire entity of the Body of Christ. From this illumination, one will learn how to suffer through this life's sorrows and disappointmentshasten toward the day when God's manifested beloved will eternally dwell in Christ.

The conclusion of this discourse reverts to and refocuses on Romans 8:18 and its reading, again from the Greek text, "For I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory about to be revealed unto us." Here in noting the earlier translation of *logi,zoma* (*loy ee zom eh*) rendered, "reckon" and "count;"in light of all the gleanings garnered, the rendering "evaluate" is proffered in view of the total exegeted context. Thus, the evaluation is that the sufferings that we presently endure are not worthy to be compared or considered on an equal basis with the glory that is eminently poised to be revealed unto God's elect. The fact that this verse continues to emphasize the greatness of the glory that is to be revealed unto God's people is additional evidence favoring the view that the phrase "heirs of God" in Romans 8:17 also refers to the glorified state. Glorification together in Christ is the ultimate object of all God's people in the present church age (Romans 8:30). Accordingly, the focus and priority must be on the glory whereof none are *a;xia* (*ah xee ah*) rendered, "worthy," which indicates that these sufferings are not of equal value and do not have the same weight, hence they are not worthy enough to be compared with the eternal state future glory, which when internalized, comprehends **God's Underlined Purpose for Trials and Afflictions!**