

When all Fails

By Steve Pruitt

Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

Habakkuk 3:17-18 ESV

In The Revelation of Jesus Christ, the Apostle John introduces us to a great multitude of people standing before the throne of God and the Lamb. We learn that this multitude is dressed in white robes and has palm branches in their right hands. John is told by one of the elders that this multitude consists of saints who have come out of the great tribulation and washed their robes white in blood of the Lamb.

This great multitude may have come out of tribulation, but as saints of God we know that they also went through tribulation. Their response in the presence of God is worship. No doubt they learned to worship during times of pressure and affliction.

The Greek word used for tribulation in this Revelation passage means pressure, affliction, anguish, burdened, persecution, and trouble. Using this definition can we say that Jesus suffered tribulation during his earthly ministry? Yes! If Jesus suffered tribulation so will we if we are his disciples. The Apostles Paul and Barnabas preached to the converts in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch that through many tribulations they would enter the Kingdom of God.

A look at the Hebrew words used in Habakkuk's acclamation reveals that this was no ordinary worship service. The word used for rejoice in verse eighteen is *guwl*. *Guwl* means to spin around (under the influence of any violent emotion). *Alaz* is the Hebrew word translated joy. It means to jump for joy. Regardless of the conditions around him, Habakkuk made a choice to radically worship God. He worshiped with song, music and dance realizing that the Lord was his strength.

Worship moves the heart of God, and he comforts us in our tribulation. Worship elevates us into God's presence. It puts our focus on the one who controls the circumstances. When we are in his presence we can see our circumstances from his point of view. Though the circumstances may not change we will be changed in our circumstances. We are changed as we focus on him.

Are you experiencing a time of tribulation in your life? Have you turned to God in worship or have you just complained about your circumstances? Ask God to give you a heart to worship him even when all around you fails.

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Scriptures for meditation:

- John 16:33
- Job 1:21
- Psalm 77:6