

Hang in There

“Take brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the endurance of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful” (James 5:10-11).

The influence of an example cannot be overlooked, whether the example is good or bad. The Apostle Paul expressed such, concerning Israel, saying, “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” And again, “Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come” (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11).

There are numerous examples in the scriptures to encourage the child of God to do well, saying, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1), as well as to shun evil, saying, “Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication, and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 7).

When James said, “Take brethren, for an example,” (James 5:10), he encouraged brethren to “take,” i.e., to “lay hold of” (Vine’s), information pertinent to being beneficial to their continued faithfulness. These “brethren,” men with whom we share a brotherly relationship, are appealed to in an effort to encourage the child of God, so that, their hearts be not unstable, but rather established: “to fix, make fast, to sit” (Vine’s).

When James appeals to these brethren he identifies them as “the prophets.” The prophets were men chosen of God for His purposes. Jeremiah was a prophet, to whom Jehovah said, “Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee” (Jeremiah 1:8). There were in his life men, of whom Jeremiah said, “devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered” (Jeremiah 11:18-19). These were men with such hatred for Jeremiah that they consulted together to remove from Jeremiah his life, his name, his work, and the memory of him. Such being the case with men of such caliber as Jeremiah, should we expect less in our lives? The Apostle Paul, in an effort to encourage the evangelist Timothy, said, “But thou didst follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings; what things befell me at Antioch, at

Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: and out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:10-12).

Remember the words of the Hebrew writer, saying, “Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry. But my righteous one shall live by faith: And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul” (Hebrews 10:35-39). ret