

THE PURPOSE OF SUFFERING

1 Peter 1:6, 7: "In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith - of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire - may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed."

With these words the apostle Peter teaches us the reason why the faithful on earth have often to endure suffering and affliction. The reason is that the Lord wants to free us more and more from the ties of sin which bind us, and to simultaneously connect us more firmly to Him.

To explain this Peter uses the well-known image of gold being purified. To purify the gold it has to be put in the smelting furnace in which the gold and the low-grade core are separated from each other at an extremely high temperature.

This is now also, according to Peter, God's purpose with suffering and affliction in our lives. There are so much sinful waste in our lives. Think about our connectedness to earthly possessions, our haughtiness, pride and aspiration for personal reputation/

honour. All of those are obstructions in the way of the gold of faith in Jesus Christ to shine brightly in our lives.

But it should not be like that! Our faith should shine out of our whole life. To achieve that, God also places us in the smelting furnace of suffering and ordeal to separate the faith and the sinful waste from each other.

If suffering and trying times thus come into your life, do not become rebellious and begin to protest or blame in a sulky mood. God has a purpose with those. He wants to purify you as one of his precious stones of gold. He wants you in fact to grow in your faith so that you will know with certainty that you will be allowed to enter the eternal heavenly glory at the second coming of Jesus Christ.



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