

the cauldron in Act IV, Scene 1 of Shakespeare's "Macbeth." The rest of the line is "Double, double, toil and trouble; Fire burn and cauldron bubble."

I'm certainly not advocating Bill Shakespeare's fictitious concept of witches and cauldrons producing problems in our lives, but do you ever feel as if you've received more than your share of difficulties? Or to switch metaphors, that "Murphy's Law" was written about you? Does it seem as if anything possibly could go wrong, it does?

Some troubles and difficulties happen to everyone. They happen to "good" and "not-so good" people alike. There is no doubt that some "troubles double" because we "*sow to the flesh*" and then "*from the flesh reap corruption*," Gal.6:7-8. But there are also some "storms of life" that we neither conjure nor cause- but they come crashing down upon us anyway.

I. Trials and Troubles, v.6

A. Come in *Various* Forms, v.6c.

The Greek word *poikilos* is translated as "*various*" by the NASV; it literally refers to *various colors, variegated; or of various sorts*. And *trials* comes from a word (*peirasmos*) which refers to circumstances or conditions by which one is *tried; a proving; an experiment to test the integrity of a substance*- like heating metal to *test* or *prove* its strength

While they certainly *can* and *will* make us miserable if we allow it, they do not *have to* do so. Note the first verse, "*In this you greatly rejoice...*" Peter was only inspired writer to proffer this notion, cf. Jas.1:2 (don't overlook Matt.5:11-12 either!). These are *obstacles*- it is our *reaction* or *over-reaction* that determines the outcome.

II. So, how should we deal with the trials the cauldron stirs in for us?

A. Realize that most are *temporary*, and even though they are not eternal unless we make them so, v.6d

In life, as in weather, it seems the worst of "storms" come and blow out quickly, 2Cor.4:17. The most beautiful sunrises and sunsets seem to occur after the worst of storms. Sometimes "storms" sometimes seem to blow away all the clouds and leave us with what is really important: *faith, hope and love*. 1Cor.13:13.

But even those *trials* which seem to last for years or even all of our lives, pale in comparison to the everlasting joy of "eternity," 1Pet.5:10 (see also Rom.8:18).

These problems only become eternal if we make them so by allowing them to rob us of our spiritual destiny, Jas.1:8.

We must also remember that 1Cor.10:12-13 teaches important lessons related to overcoming these trials:

- 1) Everyone is capable of failure, v.12;
- 2) I'm not a "special case," v.13a;
- 3) God will not allow me to be *tempted beyond* what I can withstand, therefore everyone is also capable of success v.13b;
- 4) There is always a "right" thing to do, v.13c; therefore,
- 5) If I fail to overcome this *trial*, it is nobody's fault but mine because I could have, and should have, overcome it!

Trials are not to *weaken* us, but to make us *stronger* for whatever is yet before us in life that we may be prepared for eternity 1Pet.1:8-9.

III. So...

- Understand that *trials* come in many forms, including, but not limited to, persecution;
- Realize that you don't *have to be miserable* even when facing difficult trials, we choose to be so by seeing obstacles rather than opportunities;
- Know that *trials*, like everything else in this life, are only temporary, and will pass (especially if we handle them