

Feb 23, 2003

## **“OH NO! ANOTHER TRIAL!”**

**I Peter 1:3-7**

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It seems like the TV news finishes with one big trial and begins coverage of a new one. The trials I'm talking about though are not the courtroom kind. I'm talking about the trials we go through in life like pain, misery, adversity, ordeals, worry, heartache, accidents, etc. There is also another kind of trial that means testing, putting to the proof, like doing a test run of a new car or vacuum cleaner. The Bible is full of stories about those closest to God going through the most difficult kind of trials - Moses, Joseph, Job, Daniel, Peter, Paul, John, and of course, Jesus.

Awhile back I got an E-Mail message about another famous person who went through all sorts of life's trials, some of which we may experience. Within a period of ten years he lost his job, was defeated in a political election, failed in his business, his sweetheart died, a year later suffered a nervous breakdown, two years later was again defeated for a political office. In the next ten years he was defeated seven more times for a variety of elective offices to include the Vice President of the United States. In 1860 he was elected President of the United States, which precipitated the Civil War. Abraham Lincoln has not only gone down in history as one of our greatest presidents, but also one of our giants of faith.

The Bible never says God's people will have life easy. In fact, we may have it more difficult. Trials force out the best and worst in us. They push our greatest strengths to the surface, and expose our most vulnerable feelings and beliefs. As many in our community leave Korea for a new place, many more will come to Korea as a new place. Korea has always been a difficult testing ground for faith and life for those who come here and those who live here. The question will always be *what* we do when the trials come. For the Apostle Peter there was only one reason, one answer, he would give for life's trials - to test our faith. So why should God test our faith so much? Read the text for today. The answer Peter gives may not make us feel better or seem good enough; it may even make us angry.

If we read the Bible closely, though, just about anything having to do with God and us hinges on faith, from Genesis through Revelation. Trials in Korea and elsewhere will do one of two things - demonstrate our faith from within or drive us to numb ourselves from without. It is always a personal and individual choice. Sometimes we succeed and sometimes we fail. Abe Lincoln will never be viewed as a sick, ugly failure; his faith and courage is what shone most brightly in the end. I think that is what Peter is trying to say to us. Maybe God keeps giving us opportunities to shine brightly in the end, in the place He has already prepared for us. I pray we all have a week where faith wins. Hang in there!