



Biblical Understanding of Suffering (Part 1)  
Sunday September 04, 2005

Overview:

Understanding God's Heart in the light of His original intent  
Suffering – A Present Reality  
Three realms in which we experience suffering  
Different reasons for suffering  
Suffering according to the will of God  
Why does God allow me to suffer?  
What should I do when I face suffering?  
The Believers Mindset Towards Persecution  
Enduring hardships

Today:

Understanding God's Heart in the light of His original intent  
Genesis 1:31

Genesis 2:9

The tree of life – to perpetuate life, strength and wholeness.

Revelation 21:1-4    Revelation 22:3

Suffering, pain, sorrow, tears, anguish – these were not part of God's original design for the human race. These were not present in the Garden of Eden, prior to the Fall, and neither will these be part of the new heavens and new earth that will be in the future.

We must therefore understand the heart of God in the light of His original intent – that it is not God's desire for people to suffer! Hence we must be very careful that we do not accuse God for our pain and suffering!

Prior to the Fall, Adam and Eve had no knowledge of evil – they only had knowledge of the good things that God had created.

The only evil that existed prior to the Fall was Lucifer and his fallen angels – who had been cast out of heaven (Luke 10:18) and did not have a place in the earth, because the earth was created for man (Psalms 115:16).

Adam and Eve prior to the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil did not have the knowledge of evil – of Lucifer, his demons and their wickedness.

Satan assumed the form of a serpent, (hence he is called that Old Serpent in Revelation 12:9), trespassed into the Garden and deceived Eve and got both Adam and Eve to disobey God.

By one man's disobedience (Romans 5:19) sin entered the world and through this death gained entrance.

Sin opened the door to all kinds of evil.

Sin and its consequences are not part of God's original intent for the human race.



For example, death was not part of God's original intent for the human race. Genesis 2:17 God required obedience to a specific instruction. Disobedience would result in both spiritual and physical death. One day, death will be eliminated and there will be no more death.

Understand God's heart – that it is not the original intent of His heart, nor is it His desire for people to suffer.

Jeremiah 9:23,24

God executes everything in loving kindness, justice and righteousness on the earth.

God does judge people – but even in judgment we can see that God is right (righteous) and see the mercy of God.

### **Suffering – A Present Reality**

However, we realize that ever since the Fall, between the Garden of Eden and the new heavens and the new earth, the human race has to endure the consequences of sin and its associated evils.

John 16:33

Tribulation = a pressing, pressing together, pressure and therefore metaphorically refers to oppression, affliction, persecution, hardships, distress, trouble, etc.

### **Three realms in which we experience suffering**

- Spiritual – intense satanic oppression
- Emotional
- Physical

Usually these are tightly interconnected. Suffering in one realm usually affects and manifests in another realm.

We cannot say that suffering in one area is more painful than the other. For example, a person may not suffer physically – but can face intense pain and hurt emotionally.

### **Different reasons for suffering**

1. Suffering due to the “bondage of corruption”
2. Suffering due to one's own actions
3. Suffering due to satanic oppression
4. Suffering due to other peoples actions including persecution
5. Suffering due to divine judgment
6. Suffering due to willing sacrifice

### **1. Suffering due to the “bondage of corruption”**

Romans 8:17-23    2 Corinthians 4:16 – 2 Corinthians 5:5

- The Bible makes it clear that all of creation is in bondage/subjection to corruption (Romans 8:21-23).
- Creation went into subjection to corruption at the time of Adam's Fall.
- Ever since that time, all of creation has been in a state of decline, deviating from the original state of perfection, tranquility, order in which God created it.
- God did not allow this willingly but in hope or anticipation (Romans 8:20) that this will also be reversed. He knew the end result – that creation one day will be delivered from this bondage.



- Creation is yet to be delivered from its subjection to corruption and it will be in the future.

This explains:

- Why our bodies get old – our bodies get old not because the devil is making it old – but because creation is in bondage to corruption. Outward man is perishing.
- Why there are tsunamis, earth quakes, hurricanes, etc – Not all of these are caused by God or by the devil. Unless God has revealed clearly that He is judging some group of people, we must NOT say that God cause that catastrophic weather condition. Similarly, unless it is clearly revealed by the Holy Spirit, that satan is behind it, we cannot blame the devil. IN MOST CASES – these things happen because all of creation is in subjection to corruption – steadily moving away from their original state of order and perfection in which they were created.

God by His power steps in and reverses in certain situations the effects of this bondage to corruption. We call this a miracle! This happens by the power of God's Spirit.

The good news is that there will come a time when creation will be delivered from its present bondage to corruption. There will be new heavens and a new earth. 2 Peter 3:5-14 Revelation 21:1-5



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