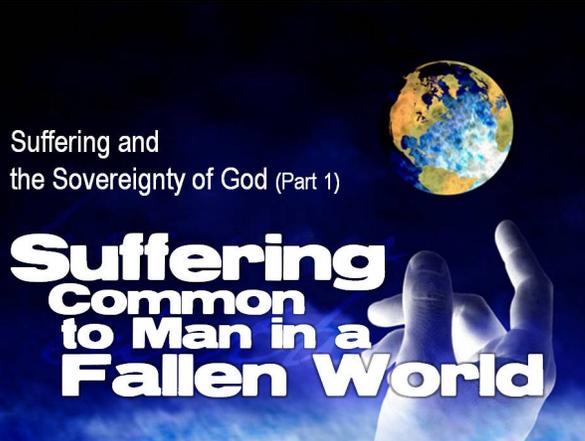




Suffering and the Sovereignty of God

1. Suffering Common to Man in a Fallen World
2. Suffering for Righteousness Sake
3. Common Issues and Questions



Suffering and
the Sovereignty of God (Part 1)

**Suffering
Common
to Man in a
Fallen World**



INTRODUCTION

Deuteronomy 29:29
The **secret things** belong to the LORD our God, but **those things which are revealed belong to us** and to our children forever, that we may **do** all the words of this law.



INTRODUCTION

1 Corinthians 13:12
For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. **Now I know in part**, but then I shall know just as I also am known.



INTRODUCTION

The **PURPOSE** to understand about **Suffering and the Sovereignty of God** is for us:

- (A) To develop a correct view of **God** and Christian **living**
- Proverbs 23:7
- (B) To live **victoriously / successfully / prospering / overcoming** as spelt out in the scriptures
- John 16:33 John 10:10



INTRODUCTION - Two Qualifications

- (1) There is one **exception** and that is **martyrdom**.
But this is **not** for all believers.



INTRODUCTION - Two Qualifications

(2) We may never know fully what happened to other believers.
This message is for us to get our theology correct i.e.

(i) know and understand God and His Word.
- Jeremiah 9:24



INTRODUCTION - Two Qualifications

(2) We may never know fully what happened to other believers.
This message is for us to get our theology correct i.e.

(ii) live victoriously (more abundant life) by accessing the glorious riches of the Grace of God provided for us believers in the Divine Exchange.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23



I. **“The Sovereignty of God”**

A. It is His:

1. Omnipotence
2. Omniscience
3. Omnipresence
4. Foreknowledge
5. Wisdom and Power, etc



B. The language of the OT attributes everything under the final, absolute authority and command of God.

Hebrews 4:13
And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.



Example 1 : Exodus 4:10-12
10Then Moses said to the LORD, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”
11So the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?” 12Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”



B. The language of the OT attributes everything under the final, absolute authority and command of God.

Example 2 : Exodus 10:27
But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let them go.

Ezekiel 33:11 2 Peter 3:9



Example 3 : 1 Samuel 18:8-9
8Then Saul was **very angry**, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" **9**So Saul **eyed** David from that day forward. **10**And it happened on the next day that the **distressing spirit from God** came upon Saul ... So David played music with his hand, as at their times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand.

Ephesians 4:26-27



B. The language of the OT attributes everything under the final, absolute authority and command of **God**.

Example 4 : Isaiah 45:6-7
6That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is **none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; 7I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things.**



A basic theological principle that I believe is sound, is that if the **entire weight of the Scriptures says one thing**, and there are portions of scripture that seem to say otherwise, I would **base the principle on the entire weight of the Scriptures**.

Psalm 119:160
 the entirety / sum of the scriptures is truth.



The other important principle is to know the **difference between the Old Covenant and the New**.

EG 1 : The Cross of Jesus Christ and the **atonement of sins** - Hebrews 10:1-18

EG 2 : We now have the **indwelling Holy Spirit**
 - Ezekiel 36:26-27 Jeremiah 31:33-34



John 14:6-7, 9b
6Jesus said to him, "I am **the way, the truth, and the life**. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
7If you had **known Me**, you would have **known My Father also**; and from now on you know Him And have seen Him.
9 ... He who has seen Me has seen the Father ...

1 John 1:5b James 1:17



C. He has set laws and principles of **life** on this earth.

1. God's Word is **law** and He Himself will abide by it.
 Psalm 89:34
2. These laws and principles of life apply to **all** men - believers and unbelievers.
 Isaiah 55:11



C. He has set laws and principles of **life** on this earth.

3. These laws are perfect and **complete** in and of themselves. It **always** works.

They will take their **courses** accordingly.

- i. **Rain** - Matthew 5:45
- ii. **Seed Time Harvest; Seasons; Day and Night**
- Genesis 8:22
- iii. **Giving and Generosity** - Proverbs 11:24-25



C. He has set laws and principles of **life** on this earth.

3. These laws are perfect and **complete** in and of themselves. It **always** works.

They will take their **courses** accordingly.

- iv. **Pride - Fall** - Proverbs 16:18
- v. **Man will reap what he sows** - Galatians 6:7



D. God does **not** unilaterally, randomly and haphazardly intervene.

He is God of **order**.

He is always **love, just** and **righteous**.

Jeremiah 9:24



E. God intervenes based on His Word and when His people **prays** accordingly.



II. In God's **Sovereignty**, He gave man a **free** will and complete **ownership** of the **earth** realm.

A. It is within God's Sovereignty to give man a free **will**.



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Genesis 1:26
Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them **have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, **over all the earth** and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."



B. It is within God's Sovereignty to give man complete **ownership** and **responsibility** over the earth realm.

Genesis 1:28
Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the **earth** and **subdue it**; **have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the **earth**."



B. It is within God's Sovereignty to give man complete **ownership** and **responsibility** over the earth realm.

Psalm 115:16
The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's; but the **earth** He has **given** to the children of **men**.

Psalm 8:6
You have made him to have **dominion** over the works of Your hands; You have put **all things under his feet**



C. It is within God's Sovereignty to place **laws** and **principles of life** that will affect man and the earth accordingly.

Genesis 8:22
While the earth remains, **seedtime and harvest**, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night **shall not cease**."



C. It is within God's Sovereignty to place **laws** and **principles of life** that will affect man and the earth accordingly.

Galatians 6:7
Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; **for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap**.



D. God's Sovereignty does **not** violate our free will.

Deuteronomy 30:19
I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore **choose** life, that both you and your descendants may live



E. His foreknowledge does **not** nullify the exercising of our will nor negate our choices - **Psalm 139**

Ephesians 1:4-5
4just as **He chose us** in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, **5**having **predestined us** to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will



E. His foreknowledge does **not** nullify the exercising of our will nor negate our choices - **Psalm 139**

Ephesians 1:13
In Him **you also trusted**, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, **having believed**, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Philippians 2:12-13



III. Two **sources** of suffering in this world affecting **all** mankind.

A. **Fallenness** of Man - Man rebelled against God and **fell**.

Romans 3:23 - for all have **sinned** and **fall short** of the glory of God

Romans 6:23 - For the **wages of sin is death**,



III. Two **sources** of suffering in this world affecting **all** mankind.

B. Man's Fallenness caused him to **lose his ruler-ship** over this **earth** to the **evil one**.

1 John 5:19b - ... and the **whole world** lies under the sway of the **wicked one**.

John 10:10a - The **thief** does not come except to **steal**, and to **kill**, and to **destroy**.



The fallenness of **man** and works of the **evil ones** results in:

1. All kinds of **conflicts** between man.

Exploit the Ignorant	Fights	Quarrels	Murder
Envy	Covetousness	Offenses	War
Robbery	Hatred	Arguments	Unforgiveness
Jealousy	Taking Advantage of Others	Sins of the flesh - Galatians 5:19-21	
Greed and its Consequences			



The fallenness of **man** and works of the **evil ones** results in:

2. Physical **death**:

A. **Hundreds** of years [Adam+]

B. to **120** years [Noah+]

C. to **80** years [Moses to now]

i. **Aging Process** [affecting life-span]

ii. **Sickness** and **Disease**

iii. **Corruption** and **Mortality** of the physical body.



The fallenness of **man** and works of the **evil ones** results in:

3. Fracture of the physical **earth** and corruption of the **environment**.

Romans 8:22
For we know that the **whole creation groans** and **labors** with **birth pangs** together until now.

Droughts and Floods	Tsunamis
Earthquakes	Extreme Weather resulting in Hurricanes
Volcanic Eruptions	Tornadoes
	Typhoons



The fallenness of **man** and works of the **evil ones** results in:

4. The curse of **toil** in man's labor.



Genesis 3:17-19
17Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "**Cursed is the ground** for your sake; in **toil** you shall eat of it all the days of your life. **18**Both **thorns and thistles** it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. **19**In the **sweat** of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."



The fallenness of **man** and works of the **evil ones** results in:

5. **Accidents** due to man's carelessness, blind spots, malfunction of machines, etc.
 - Wrong Time Wrong Place



The fallenness of **man** and works of the **evil ones** results in:

6. **Spiritual** Death of Man.

Romans 6:23a - For the wages of sin is **death** ...

Romans 5:12
 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus **death** spread to all men, because all sinned—



IV. Suffering in this Fallen World.

A. This suffering affects **both** the believer and the pre-believer in this fallen world.

John 16:33
 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. **In the world you will have tribulation**; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."



- "Good" things may happen to "bad" people.
- "Bad" things may happen to "good" people.
- "Good" people may suffer whilst "bad" people may not suffer.

Ecclesiastes 8:14
 There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are **just men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked**; again, there are **wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous**. I said that this also is vanity.



B. Therefore when someone dies from a **sickness** or an **earthquake**, it is due to the fallenness of man in a fallen world.

God is **NOT** the direct source of sickness or all the evil, accidents, wickedness and calamities on the earth.



C. **Avoid** saying: "God allows".

1. This statement is intended in the **passive** sense but received in the **active** sense.
2. This statement suggests God "**permits**" whatever is the happening when He is **not** the direct source of it.
3. In the NT, the only thing that God will **not** allow / permit for the believer is for him to be in a trial / trouble he cannot overcome - 1 Corinthians 10:13



D. Rather say "God is **Sovereign**".

This means:

1. I don't know but **God** knows.
2. I may not fully understand my suffering but **God** does.



D. Rather say "God is **Sovereign**".

This means:

3. I seem to lose control when bad things happen to me but my **God** knows, He is in-charge as I commit my situation to Him.
4. The question "**Why did this happen**"? should follow with the question "is **God** with me in this situation"?



E. Understand clearly the difference between the **direct judgment** of God and the **reaping** and **consequences** of man's actions.

Direct Judgment of God =
Finality - the end - no more chance

2 Peter 2:9 - until the **day of judgment**
Hebrews 9:27 - death then **judgment**



i. **Direct Judgment of God:**

- a. In the OT, the nations and in Israel.
e.g. Numbers 16 - **Earthquake on rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.**
- b. On the **Lord Jesus Christ** at Calvary.
- c. In the early church
- Acts 5:1-11 - **Ananias and Sapphira**
- Acts 10:21-23 - **Herod**



i. **Direct Judgment of God:**

- d. Judgment **Seat** of Christ.
- e. Great White **Throne**.
- f. Judgment when all the **books** open.

← OT Time | Window of **Grace** | →

Calvary / Early Church ↓ Final Judgments

Reaping of **Consequences**

↓

Grace expires at our **last breath** or Jesus' **2nd** Coming!



ii. Everything else that happens on earth and to man negatively are **consequences** of the actions and decisions of Man directly and indirectly and the **reaping** of what has been sown:

- a. **Personally**
- b. **In the family and connected relationships**
- c. **In society**
- d. **Nationally**
- e. **Globally**



F. At the individual level, man will **reap** what he sows according to the respective laws of life in:

Finances	Sins	Health	Thoughts	Parenting
Marriage	Work	Relationships	Accidents	

Mistakes - Carelessness in relationships and handling physical areas



F. At the individual level, man will **reap** what he sows according to the respective laws of life in:

James 5:19-20

19 Brethren, if anyone among you **wanders from the truth**, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the **error of his way will save a soul from death** and **cover a multitude of sins**.



F. At the individual level, man will **reap** what he sows according to the respective laws of life in:

1 John 5:16-17

16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a **sin which does not lead to death**, he will ask, and He will **give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death**. There is **sin leading to death**. I do not say that he should pray about that. 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.



F. At the individual level, man will **reap** what he sows according to the respective laws of life in:

Ecclesiastes 7:17

Do not be **overly wicked**, nor be **foolish**: Why should you **die before your time**?



G. In these last days, there will be an **increase** of earthquakes, wars, famines and pestilences and lawlessness according to the scriptures.

This is due to the deteriorating **corruption** of man and the earth.

Matthew 24:8 (NIV)
All these are the beginning of **birth-pangs**.



V. The spiritual world cannot intervene in the natural world unless there is a **connection**.

A. This applies **both** to the believer and the non-believer.



V. The spiritual world cannot intervene in the natural world unless there is a **connection**.

B. The demonic world can **influence** and **control** to the extent of the **ground** given [**doorway**, **foothold**].



B. The demonic world can **influence** and **control** to the extent of the **ground** given [**doorway**, **foothold**].

Ephesians 4:27 - nor give **place / ground** to the devil.

Ephesians 2:2 - in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of **disobedience**.



C. In the case of the **believer**, the Grace of God comes to him as he **prays**.

God does **not** unilaterally, randomly, or haphazardly intervene in the affairs on earth unless His people **prays**.

- ❖ **Matthew 6:10**
- ❖ **Matthew 16:19**
- ❖ **Matthew 18:18-19**



C. In the case of the **believer**, the Grace of God comes to him as he **prays**.

1. Our **prayers** lay the tracks on which the train of God's Grace runs.
2. Our prayers are earthly license for **heavenly** intervention.
3. Our prayer is the altar we build to **connect** earth to heaven.



C. In the case of the **believer**, the Grace of God comes to him as he **prays**.

4. Our prayers “**create**” the **ladder** on which God commands the angels to descend and ascend to minister to us.

5. If we don’t pray, the spiritual world cannot **connect** with the natural world.



C. In the case of the **believer**, the Grace of God comes to him as he **prays**.

6. If we don’t pray, then everything reverts to the **natural** laws of life.

e.g. 1 : **un-clean food vs sanctified food**

e.g. 2 : **healing - natural or accelerated**



D. For the believer who perseveres to trust in God, the outcome can be **positive** while he is **on** this earth which is

Romans 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Genesis 50:20a - But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good ...



E. The exception is **persecution** and **martyrdom**.

Hebrews 11:35b-40

35 ... Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. **36** Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. **37** They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—



E. The exception is **persecution** and **martyrdom**.

Hebrews 11:35b-40

38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in dens and caves of the earth*. **39** And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, **40** God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.



VI. God is good and is **consistently** good all the time.

Psalm 34:8

Oh, **taste** and **see** that the LORD is good; **blessed** is the **man** who **trusts in Him!**

Exodus 33:18-19a

18 And he (Moses) said, “Please, **show me Your glory**.”

19 Then He said, “I will make **all My goodness** pass before you, and I will **proclaim the Name of the LORD** before you ...



VI. God is good and is **consistently** good all the time.

Exodus 34:6-7a
6And **the LORD passed** before him and **proclaimed**,
 “The LORD, the LORD God, **merciful** and **gracious**,
longsuffering, [**slow to anger**] and **abounding in**
goodness and **truth**, **7keeping mercy** for thousands,
forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin ...



Jeremiah 32:38-41
38They shall be My people, and I will be their God; **39**then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, **for the good of them** and their children after them. **40**And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away **from doing them good**; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. **41**Yes, I will rejoice over them **to do them good**, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.’



VI. God is good and is **consistently** good all the time.
 God is good and is always good all the time.

- ❖ The Goodness of God **reaches** out to man in his fallen state.

HOW? 



VI. God is good and is **consistently** good all the time.

A. He sent **Jesus** to die to pay the penalty for our sins so that we can be reconciled with Him and **be saved** from spiritual death
 i.e. **saved from eternal separation**.

John 3:16 Romans 6:23



VI. God is good and is **consistently** good all the time.

B. When Jesus was crucified and died, He made provision for our **healing** by taking upon Himself all our sicknesses and diseases.

Acts 10:38 Matthew 8:16-17



VI. God is good and is **consistently** good all the time.

C. He made available His Abundant **provision of grace** to us who believe.

Romans 5:2
 through whom **[Jesus]** also we have **access by faith into this grace** in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

**2 Corinthians 5:21 2 Corinthians 8:9 Galatians 3:13
 Philippians 4:6-7 Romans 8:1-2**



CONCLUSION

Otherwise:

- doom to life of despair
- tragedy becomes senseless
- adversity becomes endless frustration
- faith turns to doubt, anger and bitterness

1 John 1:5 - God is light and in Him is no darkness at all!

James 1:17 - every good and perfect gift from Father God, no shifting of shadows!



CONCLUSION

Do **NOT** judge **God's Goodness**
by your **circumstances**

See the Goodness of God at **Calvary's Cross!**

He is the **God of how much more!!**

Luke 11:13 **Romans 8:32**