

## Why Is There Suffering?

- I. **The governing context of the entire Bible is God's eternal purpose**—Rev. 4:11; Gen. 1:1, 26; Zec. 12:1
- II. **The origin of suffering**
  - A. **The fall of man**

**Genesis 3:17** Because you listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree concerning which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil will you eat of it All the days of your life. **18** And thorns and thistles it will bring forth for you, And you will eat the herb of the field; **19** By the sweat of your face You will eat bread

**Romans 8:20** For the creation was made subject to vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, **21** In hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now. **23** And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves,
  - B. **The evil intent of Satan**

**Revelation 2:10** Do not fear the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tried,
  - C. **The will of God**

**Hebrews 12:9** Furthermore we have had the fathers of our flesh as discipliners and we respected them; shall we not much more be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? **10** For they disciplined for a few days as it seemed good to them; but He, for what is profitable that we might partake of His holiness.
- III. **Sufferings bring many blessings to the believers**
  - A. **Sufferings working to conform us to the image of Christ**

**Romans 8:28** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. **29** Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

**2 Corinthians 4:16** Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
  - B. **Sufferings purify us**

**Job 23:10** Should He try me, I would come forth as gold.
  - C. **Sufferings establish, strengthen, and ground us**

**1 Peter 5: 10** But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.

**D. Sufferings help to constitute, produce, and form our ministry**

**2 Corinthians 1: 4** Who comforts us in all our affliction that we may be able to comfort those who are in every affliction through the comforting with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

**E. Sufferings for producing and building up the Body of Christ**

**Colossians 1: 24** I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church;

**F. Suffering affording us the opportunity to magnify Christ**

**Philippians 1:20** even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

**G. Sufferings work out for us an eternal weight of glory**

**2 Corinthians 4: 17** For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,

**IV. What the believers should do when they suffer**

**A. “Does anyone among you suffer evil? Let him pray”—James 5:13**

**B. “God is faithful, who will not allow that you be tempted beyond what you are able, but will, with the temptation, also make the way out”—1 Cor. 10:13**

**C. “Rejoice and exult”; “Count it all joy”—Matt. 5:12; James 1:2**