

## Why Do We Suffer?

### Commentary for January 15, 2024 — How Can I Make Sense of Suffering?

Suffering occurs to all of us, and at differing times in life. Occasionally, the pain can be great. Fortunately, now and then, the anguish has a more limited, or diminishing, effect.

### *How Can I Make Sense of Suffering?*

The **greatest** suffering we have learned of, was that of Jesus Christ. **"They crucified Him"** (Matthew 27:35).

In "[Chapter 21, The Manner of Jesus' Crucifixion](#)," of Dr. Ernest Martin's book, *Secrets of Golgotha*, Jesus was subjected to extensive **beatings** and **whippings**. Jesus carried the upper crosspiece (*patibulum*) to the tree of crucifixion. It was to this wood plank that Jesus' arms or wrists were **nailed** and affixed. Both apostles, Peter and Paul, inform us that Jesus was nailed to a *tree*. Jesus' lower legs were nailed to the trunk of the tree. [**"Who His own self, bore our sins, in His own body, on the tree"** (1 Peter 2:24).]

Note to what extent God allowed His only-begotten Son to suffer:

**"There were many who were appalled at Him — His appearance was so disfigured, beyond that of any human being ... His form marred BEYOND human likeness."**

• *Isaiah 52:14*

**"He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering ... familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces ... He took up our pain and bore our suffering ... He was pierced for our transgressions ... crushed for our iniquities."**

• *Isaiah 53:3-5*

**"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter ... By oppression and judgment, He was taken away. Yet, who of His generation protested?"**

• *Isaiah 53:7-8*

**"Yet, it was YHWH's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer ... After He has suffered, He will see the light of life and be satisfied ... Therefore, I will give Him a portion among the great, and He will divide the spoils with the strong, because He poured out His life unto death ... For He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."**

• *Isaiah 53:10-12*

**"For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered **FOR us**, leaving us an example, that YOU should follow His steps: Who did no sin ... Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not."**

• *1 Peter 2:21-23*

Suffering for righteousness is a sign of a mature believer.

Others that followed Christ, also suffered immensely. **"And [Herod] sent, and beheaded John [the Baptist] in prison"** (Matthew 14:10). **"They stoned Stephen"** (Acts 7:59).

The hurt and hardship are guaranteed. It is inescapable. **"In the world, you shall have**

**tribulation** [affliction]" (John 16:33). However, we are comforted by other assurances. **"Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but, YHWH delivers him out of them all"** (Psalm 34:19).

### **Why Do We Suffer (Even for Some, So Much)?**

**"Everyone who wants to live a Godly life in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted."**

**• 2 Timothy 3:12**

**"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal [eonian, age-lasting] weight of glory."**

**• 2 Corinthians 4:17**

God permits us to undergo and endure **suffering**, as:

- **trouble draws us near to YHWH**

(you seek help, search for answers, attempt to grasp understanding through God's Word and prayer) **"I [King David] sought YHWH, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears"** (Psalm 34:4).

- **hardship enables us to better understand and assist in the pain experienced by others**

**"Blessed be ... the Father of mercies ... Who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.**

**• 2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

- **suffering strengthens our capacity**

(you are exceedingly equipped to respond, manage, and resolve conflict) **"God equips you with everything good for doing His will"** (Hebrews 13:21).

An interesting **response to suffering** is that of the apostles, as expressed in Acts 5:40-42:

**"When they [the high priest, captain of the temple, and chief priests] had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And [the apostles] departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."**

James 1:2-4 puts it this way:

**"Count it all joy ... when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."**

If suffering produces **completion** within us, then the suffering we shall continue to bear:

**"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal [eonian, age-lasting] glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."**

**• 1 Peter 5:10**

We strive to become mature Christians. The cost(s) come with it. Yet, in suffering, we are being perfected.

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