

Sin And Suffering

How are sin and suffering connected, and how do they affect our lives? This answer will be very short as it would be to comprehensive of a work for a sermon. From the scriptures we begin in: **Ge 3:14-20; 14 ¶ "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. 16 ¶ Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 ¶ And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. 20 ¶ And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living."**

We see from God's point of view there is suffering for sin for all parties involved in sinning. The serpent, Eve, and Adam, all received a continuing suffrage of falling in sin and disobeying God. We included verse 20 to point out that all humanity proceeded from Eve and her husband Adam, thus all humanity is born under the same curse for sin, and all share in the consequence of sin, because we are all born with the inherit nature to sin in the flesh. We know this to be true because being driven from the garden before procreating, the bond of communion with God was already broken, which caused us to be dead in trespasses and sins. Thus, from God's point of view, if there is sin, there is suffering, or a price to be paid for each sin. Sin, after the new birth, is a thorn in the flesh to motivate us to purge ourselves from it and be rejoined in communion with God.

We see the inherit nature of sin continuing in scripture and it became so great that God destroyed the earth and all living things, save those in the ark that God commanded Noah to build, because Noah found grace in the eye of the Lord. We see the same inherit sin nature continuing after the flood, as men began to procreate and replenish the earth, they immediately begin to sin. In his divine mercy and grace, God chose to save a nation of people to bear his name on the earth. God gave them commandments and laws to follow to bring them to lead a sinless life before God. However, even this chosen nation of people could not overcome their inherit sin nature and completely follow the laws of God, just as Adam and Eve failed in the garden of Eden.

For failures to keep the laws of God, God exacted a price from Israel for all their sins, sending plagues, and enemies to destroy them. Even removing them from the land of promise. The land of promise was given, for God's people to have a place isolated from the sinful world and give them a place of rest living under God's grace in peace with God. Even under these ideal conditions Israel failed, because of their failure to obey God.

God had made a promise to Abraham, that of his seed all the earth would be blest, which necessitated that there be something done that would eternally save man from this inherit sin nature. This is why Jesus Christ came on the scene in the annals of time. Jesus came to earth in a prepared body of flesh that was sinless, holy, and pure. Jesus, through his life suffering, and through suffering for sin through death on the cross, would free God's people eternally from their sins. This is not a suffering that we participate in in any way. Any suffering we experience in time has nothing to do with our eternal salvation, as it was completed upon the cross by Christ, which is why Jesus said on the cross **"it is finished."** Because of the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross, where our sins were eternally remitted, we can have a conscience clear of sin from the eternal perspective.

When Jesus came, he established a new land of promise on earth, the church of God. Each time a child of God is born again, they are added to this church. However, even when placed in this land of promise, mankind has done no better than Israel did in keeping God's commandments. Therefore, God continues to exact a price for each sin of man in time. We are given the same commandments, except for keeping the sabbath, in the New Testament scripture, with the addition of the higher level of sinning in the spiritual plain after the new birth.

This leads to the question of why we have suffering in this world, even when we are born again? The answer is always sin. Remember there was no suffering before Adam fell in sin. When we are born again, we are given the new nature of Christ, but we do not lose the inherit sin nature in mortality. Because of the inherit sin nature, we still endure suffering, and will until our mortal death is ended, or our change of the body at the resurrection

of the dead in Christ. In the new life in Christ we endure suffering, understanding that Jesus said they, the world and devil, have persecuted me and they will persecute you also. This suffering is brought closer to home with us in the daily warfare between the inherit sin nature and the new, Christ in you, nature.

Another aspect is that God sometimes sends suffering into our lives, to strengthen our faith and trust in him. We see a picture of this in the life of Job. Although Job had committed no sin, through his suffering he did commit sin, by declaring himself righteous in his own eyes, for which God exacted a price from him. Remember how God challenged Job to reveal how he was equal to God in any way? Job admitted that he had sinned and repented. Remember Paul the apostle of Christ, **Ac 9:16 "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."** This is a picture of suffering for sin in time for the cause of Christ, not for eternal salvation.

This then leads to the question of eternal remission of sins. How does this manifest itself to us? The answer is simple: When Jesus hung on the cross, the sins of every person to be saved in eternity were laid upon the sinless mortal Jesus. Remember how Jesus prayed right before his betrayal and suffering? **Lu 22:42 "Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done."** Jesus, the Son of God, knew that he must suffer under the weight of the sins of all he was to die for, to accomplish the will of God the Father. Jesus the mortal man had great dread for the weight of our sins and the consequential suffering that he must endure to alleviate our sin debt. We may think our sufferings, because of sin, are very great. But multiply the weight of your total sin debt, and that of every person who shall be saved, and place that weight on Jesus. We can't even begin to imagine the suffering that Jesus, the mortal man, did on the cross.

Do not get confused in your mind. The suffering for sin that Jesus did is applied to the eternal aspect of our salvation. Just as Adam, Eve, and the serpent, had continuing suffrage for sin in time, and as Israel, God's chosen nation of people, had continuing sufferings for sin in time, so we too, have continuing suffering for sin in time. This helps us to understand, there is no sin that a price is not paid for, and some consequence for it here in time, for the child of God. Just as God set up judicial and civil laws for his people to obey under the law system, so God has set up judicial and civil laws in this age of grace, for the benefit of the body of Christ, the church. When a child of God sins against God, or his fellowman, there is always a consequence and a price to be paid. It may be no more than the laws of God conflicting your conscience, and humbling your heart until you must go to God in repentance and prayer asking his forgiveness. It may also include humbling your heart and soul, so that you go to someone you have sinned against in repentance, and prayer, asking their forgiveness. It may also include some judicial judgment from God to bring you to repentance and humbleness of heart.

If our consciences cannot be assuaged, of the guilt of sin in time, it is an indication that we are not born again. If your conscience cannot be freed of the guilt of sin in time, through repentance before God, you will not experience the joy, of the salvation of God here in time.

The most awful aspect of sin and suffering is that the unsaved are not relieved of their sin debt nor the suffering that accompanies it. Though they may suffer here in time to a degree, that suffering will not cancel the eternal sin debt. They will suffer the eternal price for sin in eternal suffering in the lake of fire. The pain of suffering in the lake of fire, or hell as it is often called, is never diminished. The doom is forever.

Whenever we are suffering, here in time, we should search our actions, the intents of our hearts and minds, to spiritually discern if we are suffering for some sin we have committed, of which we need to repent and ask God for forgiveness. If we find no sin present, we should know that there is suffering for the cause of Christ in time in our lives. If we do not have suffering in our lives, we probably have not been saved. When we are suffering, we should remember what Jesus did on our behalf on the cross. This will help us refocus our thoughts on the suffering of Jesus, which will make our sufferings here seem as nothing, and it will renew our faith and trust in the finished work of Christ Jesus.

All these truths make the hope, of the eternal resurrection of the dead in Christ, more real and desirous to us. After all, this world is not our eternal home. Jesus has gone to prepare a place where sin has never been present, nor never will. A place that is free from suffering. Wherefore, we give praise and thanks to our redeemer God, and Saviour Jesus Christ, for the finished work, of eternal redemption of the sins of God's people, and eternal life in and with Christ, in the New Jerusalem of the new earth and new heaven. Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord! And thank you Lord Jesus!