

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

So, why does God, allow any person to suffer? Is it because He realises that for many people, it is the only time that they will ever give Him, a second thought, and it is only then that that person will be drawn closer to Him, when all else has failed? Well, that maybe so in some cases, but that notion is probably cold comfort to those who are *really* suffering with a serious, permanent illness or disability and it is suggestive and presumptuous of the idea that they have disregarded any or all other attempts by the Lord, to get their attention when in fact just the opposite may have been the case. We all suffer, mentally, physically, spiritually, and yes, some suffer and endure more than others, but let`s try and be objective about our own and other`s suffering rather than be subjective or over moralistic or finger-pointingly self righteous by associating a person`s suffering with it being a form of divine punishment . Let`s remember what Jesus Christ had to say about the things that happen to people, we can find it in **Luke 13: 1-5.** *There were present at that season some that told Him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said to them, Do you think that these Galilaeans were sinners who sinned more than all other Galilaeans because they suffered such things? I tell you, no, but except that you repent, you shall all likewise perish. And what about those eighteen who perished when the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, do you think that they were sinners whose sins were worse than all other sinners that lived in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish.* We should have an empathy towards each other`s suffering, *and unless we have suffered ourselves* then this is not possible. Of course anybody can have sympathy for another person`s predicament, but more often than not this lacks depth of understanding and cannot provide *real* hope of an acceptable outcome. It is an inescapable fact that when the misery of grief, or pain and /or illness fills our everyday lives, that for most of us, it will dominate and suppress all normal drive and thinking and even love, instead, in their place may come self-pity, bitterness, anger and hatred. And these self destructive feelings, when not directed inwards towards the sufferer themselves, are often directed outwards towards fellow men and family but more often than not they are directed towards the only One who can ever really heal and help any of us, they are directed (however inadvertently) towards the Lord God. With suffering usually comes the (for humans) unanswerable question of `why me?` which, more often than not, is then followed by the feeling of being `hard done by` and of unfairness and this in turn begins to generate an overall hatred of life itself and then by extension, a hatred of the very Creator of life. (Although in atheists this hatred can be transferred to the `sufferer`s` parents as they are perceived as the `creators`)

Sometimes (and by no means always) there can be an inherent feeling of guilt and of being punished for whatever wrong that a suffering person might have committed, either recently or somewhere in their past, and the easiest way for a lot of people to deal with this guilty feeling is `guilt transfer`, and as always, the easiest `person` to blame is the Lord God. Now I`m not trying to suggest for one minute that any true Christian will start to blame the Lord, the moment that tragedy in any way shape or form strikes them, but the tendency for the everyday `Christian` is to firstly go to their doctor for help and then when that does not achieve the desired result, they will then think to pay a visit to their minister or priest and see what they can `do` for them either through `second hand` prayer or some sort of man-made `religious` ceremony, and when none of this achieves the desired result it`s time (and for many, the first time) to turn to the Lord and question Him, and His motives. Many people who suffer begin to hate God, because they think that He has cast them aside and abandoned them in favour of the wicked who never seem to

suffer much in this life at all, let's have a read of **Psalm 73: 3-9**. `For I was envious of the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride surrounds them as a chain, violence covers them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than their heart could wish for. They are corrupt and speak wickedly about oppression, they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth.` and now we'll read **verses 14-19**. `For all the day long have I been stricken, and punished every morning. If I say, I will speak thus, behold, I should offend against the generation of Your children. When I thought to know this, behold it was too oppressive for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God, and then I understood their final destiny. Surely, You did set them in slippery places, You cast them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.` With perhaps the majority of `God fearing` people, there sometimes arises in the background of their belief, the nagging question of, `I know that the Lord God, *can* heal me, but instead, He appears to be adding to my daily sufferings, how much more of this do I need to endure and for how long?` I think that we have all `been there` and that we should expect throughout our Christian lives to `be there` whenever and wherever it happens. It is how we deal with any given situation, including suffering, that helps build our character, that is to say the person who we will eventually in this life, turn out to be. I think that from time to time we all question God's, motives, we are after all just feeble flesh and blood beings, and suffering, especially pain, either constant or regularly occurring, will in time, weaken the spirit. So, what can be done? whom or what should we turn to? Are there any biblical examples of how we should react to tragedy, pain and even wavering faith and to the ultimately `soul destroying` (but understandable) attitude of `I thought that I knew you Lord, and that You, knew me, but now I'm beginning to think that I don't know You at all, or that I can *ever* get to know You.` We should all remember however, that the Lord God, if He knows us, looks upon us as His children, and as we know, any good parent will not allow a child to suffer *needlessly*. **Hebrews 12: 5-8**. `And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to children, My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked by Him. For whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening then God deals with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chastens not? But if you do not receive chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then you are counted as bastards and not sons.` So let's now look to the scriptures for an example or two of people who have suffered many things and in varying degrees of hardship, misery and pain. We'll start with the book of Job, which we can `take on board` as an example of the fact that a person does not have to be an out and out evil sinner in this present life in order to suffer. **Job 1: 1**. `There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and shunned evil.` And we can know that it is the Lord who is stating that Job, is `perfect`, because in **verse 8**. the scripture states `And the Lord said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a *perfect* and upright man. . .` On continuing to read this scripture, we can find that Satan, disputes and challenges this statement of the Lord's, saying that Job is, and only ever will be perfect up to a certain point, take him beyond that point, give him a hard time, make him suffer and then, as Satan tells the Lord, he (Job) will curse You to Your very face. So the Lord, takes up Satan's challenge, and poor old Job's tremendous misery, heartbreak and suffering, begins. Now let us consider, can we assume that the Lord knew Job's character and ability even better than Job knew it himself, and that this being the case, the Lord would also know that He,

was `backing a sure winner` when He let Satan `loose` on Job? After all, the Lord created Job, and I think that in the book of Job, the Lord is not only demonstrating to Satan, but also to all who are witnessing this event and who will continue to read of it until the end time, that He (the Lord) knows exactly who and what He has created and what they are capable of. (but do not always do!) I can recall the words of Albert Einstein when asked what he thought about the probability of all creation just being a matter of chance, his reply? "God does not play dice!" By allowing Job to suffer, God knew that although Job was `perfect` in His eyes, he may have been lacking a bit in the `personality department`, and that the suffering, although awful to endure at the time, would eventually create in Job a more `rounded` and experienced character. Bear in mind also this scripture, **Hebrews 2: 9-10.** `But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels to experience the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He, by the grace of God, should experience death for the sake of every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation (Jesus Christ) perfect (mature) through sufferings.` Within the scriptures we can read of another being who was created perfect, let`s read **Ezekiel 28: 14-15.** `You are the anointed cherub that covers, and I have established you so: you were on the holy mountain of God, you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you.` Yes, the most evil, lying murderer that is, Satan, was created perfect! Can we perhaps presume to think that by inflicting misery and suffering on another created being who was also perfect in the Lord`s eyes (Job) that he, Satan, could `prove a point` by turning Job against the Lord? Well, how cheated and `peeved` Satan must have felt when all of his efforts to turn Job, (mere weak flesh and blood), against the Lord God Almighty, failed! Flesh and blood Job had succeeded were powerful spirit being Satan, *had failed once again!* Let`s consider, maybe if Job had not been allowed to suffer at the hands of Satan, he would not have remained perfect in the Lord`s sight, and this could be yet one more example of how the Lord God, does not waste any opportunity or the chance to create an opportunity to better a person`s (beloved of the Lord) character. Lucifer was created perfect, and we all know, I think, what happened to him. He let his vanity and pride and his arrogance allow him to suppose that he was better and ultimately more powerful than his Creator, Almighty God, but he was to find out the hard way that he was not, even losing his original name to be replaced by a new one, that of Satan. Suppose that the Lord, suspected that the same thing could happen to Job, after all, Job`s sin was, as we find out when reading his story, self righteousness, just a step away from being arrogant and proud. Job suffered terribly at the hands of Satan, losing all of his children and the possibility of him having any grandchildren. He lost almost all of his possessions acquired over many years and finally his health and the respect of his friends who as most of us know, turned out to be very poor comforters to him indeed! Even his wife was repulsed by his body which was covered in vile, suppurating boils, and his foul, stinking breath was probably bad enough to make a person want to vomit. So what did poor old Job have left? Well, he had his integrity and he had the Lord, although eventually Job even complained bitterly against Him. Job must have felt that he was totally isolated against anything worth living for or for that matter, even dying for, because if the Lord God was cruel to him in life, what would He be like to him in death? But the Lord was with Job, He had not abandoned him to his fate. So now let`s turn to what I consider to be very encouraging words about our great God`s, way of doing things, let`s read **1 Corinthians 10: 13.** `There has no trial taken you but that which is common to all men; but God is faithful, He will not allow you to be tested above that which you are able to bear, but will with the trial make

for you a way to escape it, so that you will be able to bear it.` I now find another question has arisen concerning Job`s suffering, we know that his suffering had to have an end, but did Job think that he would have to suffer until he got well or did he expect to suffer until death (whenever that would occur) relieved him of his pain and misery? And if this was the case, then I suspect that Job would have given up totally the rest of his suffering existence into the hands of Almighty God. Therefore another question arises, did utter despair of any `earthly` salvation from his misery, make Job`s faith in the Lord God, complete? Let`s go back to the beginning of Job`s suffering, a suffering which, it must be said, he did not do in silence, we`ll start with **Job 3: 1.** `After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day.` A common enough thing to hear in our present time is somebody bemoaning their lot by saying, `Oh, how I wish that I had never been born`, well Job, said it first. Let`s read **Job 6:2.** `Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together.` In this part of the scripture we find that Job is talking to his friends but really, I suspect, he is also crying out by way of advantage, to the Lord, telling Him just how bad and hard to bear this whole thing has become for him. Job is saying that nobody who has ever lived could ever have suffered so much and for so long as he is having to suffer. When Job spoke these words he had already been suffering for months, we can know this by the reading of **Job 7: 3.** `So, am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me` Months without any let- up of easing of pain, months without a restful night`s sleep and of living with the grief of having lost all of his children and the close affection of his wife. All this and also the `burden` of his friends who have no understanding of his condition and therefore no words of comfort for him as we can find out when Job answers them in **Job 8: 2.** `How long will you speak these things? and how long will the words of your mouth be like a strong wind?` It seems like Job`s friends are more self righteous than Job ever was! Even though the self pity welling up inside of Job is battling to get out, he continues steadfastly to try to keep on the `right side` of God, fighting down the urge to tell God, that he just doesn`t deserve any of this unfair and uncalled for treatment and therefore why is he suffering it? Let`s read **Job 9: 32-35.** `For He is not a man as I am, so that I should answer Him, and we should come together in a court of judgment. Neither is there any mediator between us, that may lay his hand upon us both. Let him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear terrify me. Then I would speak and not fear Him, but it is not that way with me.` Just to pick up on a point here, when Job states, `Neither is there any mediator between us. . .` should we assume that the Lord listened to, or rather even prompted Job to utter these words as a precursor or harbinger of that which is written in **Isaiah 59: 16.** `And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor (mediator) . . `? Now, for all of his sufferings, Job, stubbornly refuses to accept that he is anything less than perfect towards God, we can read of this in **Job 12: 3-4.** `But I have understanding as well as you, (meaning his friends) I am not inferior to you, who is there who doesn`t know this? I am as one who is mocked by his neighbour, who calls upon God, and He answers him; the just, upright man is laughed to scorn.` And Job goes on to re-iterate these sentiments in **Job 13: 1-3.** `Look, my eye has seen all this, my ear has heard and understood it. What you know, I also know, I am not inferior to you. Surely I would speak with the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.` Notwithstanding this, Job has had enough of suffering and he is ready to `throw in the towel`. **Job 17: 1.** `My spirit is corrupt, my days are extinct, the grave is ready for me.` Further on in the book of Job, in chapter 19, a kind of insanity brought on I would suppose by despair, overcomes Job, and in his eyes the Lord God has now become a bully, even an enemy, let`s read of it in **Job 19: 6-19.** `Know now that God has overthrown me, and has encircled me with His net. Behold, I cry out of

wrongdoing, but I am not heard, I cry aloud, but there is no justice. He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass, and He has set darkness in my paths. He has stripped me of my glory and has taken the crown from my head. He has destroyed me on every side, and I am gone; and my hope He has removed like a tree. He has also kindled His wrath against me, and He counts me as one of His enemies. His troops come together and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my habitation. He has put my bretheren far from me, and my acquaintances are estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in my house and my maids, consider me a stranger, I am an alien in their sight. I called my servant and he ignored me, I entreated him with my mouth. My breath is offensive to my wife, though I entreated for the children`s sake of my own body. Yes, young children despised me, I arose and they spoke against me. All my closest friends abhorred me, and they whom I loved are turned against me.` In verses 25 -26, we can read of how Job`s emotions swing back towards the love of his God, his Creator, **Job 19: 25-26.** `For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms will destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.` The reader can almost feel for themselves the battle that is raging inside Job. His carnal flesh cries out against a `cruel and merciless God`, whilst his spirit keeps bringing him back to the reality that, when all the screaming and raging is finished, when all the accusing and finger pointing is over, when the smooth easiness of death is finally recognized as an unacceptable way of escape. . .*then only God is left.* But then, unrelenting, in a see-saw battle, the carnal flesh comes to the fore and cries out once again, let`s read **Job 23: 3-7.** `Oh that I knew where I might find Him, then I might even come to His seat! I would set in order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguements. I would know the words with which He would answer me, and understand that which He would say to me. Will He plead against me with His great power? No, but He would put strength in me. There the righteous might dispute with Him; so should I be delivered for ever from my Judge.` And so throughout the book of Job, the see-sawing continues, and the reader of this scripture might like to note that by the time they are nearing the end of the book, they might also find themselves see-sawing between siding with Job, against God, (as it were) or siding with Job`s friends who appear to represent God`s feelings concerning the whole matter. However, the final arbitor and judge and wrong righter in the whole matter is the Lord, Himself. **Job 38: 1-3.** `Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, for I will demand of you, and answer you Me.` By the reading of this scripture in Job, it would seem that Job`s friends have been right in their condemnation of him, approaching him as one accursed of God, and therefore deserving of no understanding or real comfort, but this notion is wrong. Let`s read further on and find out exactly what the Lord thinks of Job`s friend`s words towards him and of their attitude, **Job 42: 7-8.** `And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite; My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as my servant Job has. Therefore take to you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burned offering, and My servant Job shall pray for you, for him I will accept, less I deal with you after your folly, in that you have not spoken of Me the thing which is right, like My servant Job.` And so when all is said and done, what did Job stand to gain from this whole terrible experience of personal suffering and loss, what did he learn that otherwise would have eluded him? Well, who better to tell us than Job himself. I think that he sums it all up in **Job 40: 3-4.** `Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold, I am vile, and what can I answer You? I will lay my hand

upon my mouth.` Humility. From the reading of the life of Job before tragedy struck him and his household, humility appears to have been lacking within him. He was just too self righteous. Before his suffering I don't think that Job could ever admitted to himself, let alone say it out loud, that compared to almighty God, he, Job, was `vile`. Job goes on to verbally underline his previous thoughts about himself in **Job 42: 1-6.** `Then Job answered the Lord and said, I know that You can do every thing, and that no thought can be withheld from You. Who is he that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have uttered that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, things of which I knew not. Hear, I beseech You, and I will speak, I will demand of You, and declare You to me. I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Wherefore I loathe myself, and I repent in dust and ashes.` Now, Job has humbled himself before God, because he has finally realised just exactly what he is compared to his God and Creator. Job now feels more complete as a person as he has now come to know the Lord God more intimately than he could ever had hoped to have his life continued along the smooth and easy path that it had been on. I think that it would be right to come to the conclusion that had it not been for the Lord's intervention in Job's life, then Job would have carried on in his own self righteous and spiritually incomplete ways, never coming to the realisation that he was, deep down, at fault in the eyes of the Lord. Myself and possibly millions of other people have been or are in the `same boat` as Job, although the great majority of us will not be as perfect in the Lord's eyes as Job was, and we shall all have to `suffer` in ways that will be beneficial to our own individual needs as regards our final acceptability before our God. **Zehariah 13: 9.** `And I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on My Name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is My people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God.` The temptation for Job to take the easy way out of his sufferings must have been very great, even his own wife told him to take this way out when she uttered the words in **Job 2: 9.** `Then said his wife to him, Do you still retain your integrity? curse God, and die.` Yes, the Lord tested Job to his very limit, but instead of cursing the Lord, Job humbled himself before Him. Job knew in his heart, that all things are in the hands of the Lord, and that if any of us freely and in faith give ourselves into His hands, then ultimately, He will not forsake or disappoint us. Job's faith in the Lord's judgment and healing did not go unrewarded as we can read of in **Job 42: 12-13.** `So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning, for he had fourteen thousand sheep and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He also had seven sons and three daughters.` Well, briefly, that was the story about the sufferings of one man, Job. Now there are the obvious sufferings of our God Creator, Jesus Christ, and let's just think about these for a moment, because I think that the majority of professing `Christians` do not relate to them as they should. For many think that Jesus `only` suffered for six hours or so on the `cross`, (He suffered every day of his ministry, the culmination of which was torture and death on the cross) and some even dare to presume to think that because He was (and is) the Son of God the Father, that the Father did not allow Him to experience any sort of pain or discomfort during His agonizing torture unto death! Well, not so, *not so*, that is a lie, and as we should realise, all such lies are perpetrated by Satan and espoused by those whose futile intentions are to try to undermine and play down the success and triumph over the agony, suffering and death that Jesus Christ accomplished, sufferings which our Lord Jesus *volunteered* to undergo so that our miserable sinful lives might ultimately have at least a chance of redemption from the wages of our sins which is death. **Hebrews 9: 22-26.** `And almost all things are by the law, purged with blood. And without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. It was therefore necessary that the pattern of

things in the heavens should be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places that have been made with hands, which are but representations of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Not that He should offer Himself up as a sacrifice often, just as the high priest enters into the holy place every year with the blood of animals. For if that be the case then He would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the ages; but now once, in the end of the ages, He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ` Although there is no account of Jesus ever having been sick or ill or of having any disability, we know that in the flesh He suffered, perhaps daily, let`s read **Isaiah 53: 3-4**. `He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were, our faces from Him, He was despised and we had no respect for Him. Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our pains, yet we looked upon Him as stricken, as one smitten of God and afflicted.` I can honestly say, that I would rather suffer the colds and sneezes and the `knocks` of everyday life and grow old with all it`s associated infirmities than live a healthy, short life which would then be terminated in it`s prime by an agonizing, slow death on an occupying Roman army`s (the equivalent these days would be the Nazis!) torture cross-piece. Jesus Christ, before He actually *became* Jesus Christ, when He was God in heaven, knew that once He had made the decision and then commit to become flesh and blood and be the final atonement, the ultimate sacrifice for our sins, that there would be no turning back! *It was either succeed or fail*. He knew that God the Father, would not in any way be swayed to `take away the cup` from which His only begotten Son had chosen to drink. God the Son as Jesus the man knew this, but even so, when the time drew near for Him to face the excruciating agony of being slowly tortured to death, He desperately wanted that `cup` taken from Him. But, although He pleaded with His heavenly Father for the `cup` to be removed, the Father did not allow it to be. So, did Jesus then start to revile His heavenly Father and try to somehow blame Him for the predicament in which He found Himself ? No. If we look in the book of Luke, we can read a scripture that tells of the Lord Jesus` pleading with his heavenly Father, it`s in **Luke 22: 42-44**. `Saying, Father if You be willing, remove this cup from Me, nevertheless, not My will but Thy will be done. And there appeared an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He began to pray the more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.` And if we turn to the book of Hebrews we can read this, **Hebrews 5: 7-8**. `Who in the days of His (Jesus) flesh had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared. Even though He were a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things that He suffered.` Jesus did not feel `hard done by` because of His Father`s decision to remain steadfast in the plan that they had both agreed on who knows how many years beforehand. That is a true measure of the Man that was Jesus Christ! Yes, even very God Himself in the shape and form of the Man, Jesus Christ, was *denied* an alternative of having to suffer whilst down upon this earth, and it was not because God the Father is heartless and cruel, just the opposite in fact, let`s read **John 3: 16**. `For God (the Father) so loved the world (the people) that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have (access to) everlasting life.` Our heavenly Father knew that the suffering experienced by His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, would establish and make Him a *perfect* high priest for humankind. He could now empathise with us and truly contradict anybody who would be mindful to say that He is God, and therefore can have nothing in common with the temptations and the sufferings of ordinary, human flesh and blood, let`s read **Hebrews 2: 17-18**. `Wherefore in all things it was best for Him to be made like His bretheren so that He may be a

merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, (the Father) in order to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted (tested), He is able to help them that are tempted.` This one off, never to be repeated time of suffering and tempting was such an important event for God the Son to have to undergo on our behalf, that even though He was (is) God, He could not ignore it and He did not refuse to undergo it. Although we all, in our own lives, have muttered and complained about this and that, we have all suffered to one degree or another and experienced grief and pain and loss, we should take comfort in the knowledge that our very Creator has suffered likewise, and in the vast majority of cases to a far greater extent.(And also God the father, He had to let His beloved Son undergo an horrific experience and resist the temptation of any `interference`) We`ll have another look at Psalm 73, we can read the whole of it at our leisure but at the moment let`s read **Psalm 73: 3. and 12-14. and 26-28.** `For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world, they increase in riches. Truly I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long I have been stricken, and punished every morning. My flesh and my heart fails, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For lo, they that are far from You shall perish. You have destroyed all them who have been unfaithful to You. But it is good for me to draw near to God, I have put my trust in the Lord God, so that I may declare (by my example) all of Your works.` So we who hold fast to the Lord and who try to keep His commandments, can take comfort from the fact that our sometimes or permanent (in this life only) weak and sorry physical condition is, when compared to the oftentimes carefree and `healthy` lives of the wicked, all going to be worthwhile. For we have the promise that our suffering is to lead to an eternal, loving, peaceful and constructive future life, whereas the suffering that the wicked have yet to endure will only lead to their mutual destruction. This life of testing that we undergo is ultimately beneficial not only for the future time but also for now. If we reflect on years gone by, we should be able to understand just how much more of a `rounded` person we have become over the passage of time and how, because of our own often times difficult life experiences, we are now much more able to relate to other`s troubles and predicaments. Let`s face it, most of us are going to suffer in this life so why not `suffer for being `good`? **1 Peter 3: 17.** `For it is better, if by the will of God, that you suffer for well doing rather than for evil doing.` We true Christians can, if we have to, bear our suffering in the knowledge that our rewards are going to be unimaginable! We should also take on board and understand that the Lord God is allowing us through and because of our various trials and tribulations, to create something that is totally unique to each and every one of us and this something is *character* . Character is something that we have to create for ourselves, it makes us the individuals that we are, and I should think that we all know just how obnoxious a spoilt brat of a child can be who has known nothing but the fine and safe and secure things in life, and who has been given everything that his or her heart desired, and just how useless and defenceless they are when things start to go wrong and `pear shaped`. Let`s have a read of **Romans 5: 3-4.** `And not only so, but we glory in troubles also, knowing that trouble works within us patience. And patience, experience, and experience, hope.` And now **Romans 8: 18-26.** `For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the anxious longing of the creature waits for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to futility, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption (the decay of death) into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers in pain

together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan inside ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope, but hope that is experienced is not hope, for what a man has already experienced why should he still hope for it? But if we hope for that which we have not yet experienced, then we patiently wait for it. Likewise the spirit also helps us to bear our infirmities; for we do not know how to pray for that which we should pray for, so the spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be spoken. And He (Jesus Christ) that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints, according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. And so there it is, we suffer but we have the knowledge that our suffering is part of the creation process and we have the hope that what is created within us will ultimately be acceptable to our Lord, our God. *And when we have hope, we never despair or give in!*