



## The Book of Job Lesson 4 4Q 2016 God and Human Suffering

### SABBATH

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Thoughts about the title? Have you ever had questions about this? Have you ever had to answer someone else's questions about this?

### TUESDAY

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Read first paragraph, "Despite the hype..." Let's examine some cases:

- A drunk driver runs across the line hits an 18 y/o and the teen dies, the drunk is not harmed. Why?
  - Did God kill the teen?
  - What does it mean that God didn't use divine power to save the teen?
- Two people have cancer, one survives the other doesn't, what does it mean?
  - Did God love one more than the other?
  - Did one have more faith than the other?

Have you ever had the critic, the skeptic of God, bring this up as evidence that there is no God?

Perhaps the classic argument was presented by Epicurus (341-270 BCE):

- Is God willing to prevent evil but *unable* to do so? In that case God is not omnipotent.
- Is God able to prevent evil but *unwilling* to do so? If so, God must be malevolent
- Is God both willing and able to prevent evil? Then why is there evil in the world?

Epicurus goes on to say:

God is either willing to remove evil and cannot, or he can and is unwilling; or he is neither willing nor able to do so; or else he is both willing and able. If he is willing and not able, he must be weak, which cannot be affirmed of God. If he is able and not willing, he must be envious, which is also contrary to the nature of God. If he is neither willing nor able, he must be both envious and weak, and consequently not be God. If he is both willing and able—the only possibility that agrees with the nature of God—then where does evil come from? Or why does he not eliminate it?

How do you answer these questions? How would Martin Luther answer such a question?

This is the highest degree of faith, to believe him [God] merciful when he saves so few and damns so many, and to believe him righteous when by his own will he makes us necessarily damnable, so that he seems, according to Erasmus, to delight in the torments of the wretched



and to be worthy of hatred rather than love. If, then, I could by any means comprehend how this God can be merciful and just who displays so much wrath and iniquity, there would be no need of faith. (Luther, *Bondage of the Will* p. 62)

Do you hear Luther's position? God is not understandable, in fact we shouldn't even try. Faith is believing God is good when all the evidence says He is not good. Sadly, this distorted view of God and this distorted view of faith continues to infect Christianity to this day and many people live with their minds darkened with such beliefs.

What are the elements that Epicurus and Luther are missing?

First and foremost—they don't have a clue about God's law—God's design parameters upon which reality is constructed to operate.

They are viewing the entire question through the lens of human law, imposed law, imperialism. Thus, for both of them it is merely a question of power—for Epicurus if God is good then He uses power to impose His will to eradicate evil. And for Luther, God is assumed to be good and to be powerful and we are to accept that on faith and not ask questions—God is sovereign who are we to question it.

So, how do you answer the critics, what key truths are foundational to understanding the question of suffering and evil in the world?

First we must understand God's design, His laws, His original intent for life and humanity; then we must understand the nature and character of sin, what it actually is, and finally the solution for it.

All of those who struggle with this do so because on some level they don't see and understand what is actually happening, and are most often trying to understand through the false imposed law lens.

What are God's design laws? (Here are a few)

- Law of love—principle of giving (Air, water, food etc.)
- Law of liberty—love can only exist in atmosphere of freedom
- Law of worship—by beholding we become changed
- Law of exertion—strength requires exertion

With these in mind what was God's original design for humankind?

- Was it not an existence of love and perfection?
- Can computers love? No, what is required to love?
- Free sentient beings
- Can love grow and exist without freedom?
- Did God create humankind in His image? Would that include the ability to love? Would that mean genuine freedom? Would genuine freedom mean freedom to disobey—to deviate from God's design?



- Now—the big question—what law lens to you look at disobedience through?
- What happened when humankind deviated from God’s design? Did humankind get into legal trouble with an imperial dictator, or did humankind alter their state and now suffer with a condition of being that is terminal and without divine intervention would suffer and die?

Do we believe God is love?

- Does love inflict harm (not discipline but actually seek to injure and harm)?
- Is love the source of harm, the source of pain, suffering, death?
- No, but when we take this position, people immediately point to suffering in the world around them and then to Old Testament stories such as the first born of Egypt, Korah et al, the platoons that came to arrest Elijah and link the two and conclude God is the source of evil and pain and suffering.
- This linkage causes some to reject God and others to operate like Luther and become thoughtless, mindless, believers. Both are operating on flawed premises.

So, how would you answer the critics or the unthinking believers?

We need to add another piece—What do we understand death to be?

When Jesus said at the funeral of the little girl, “she is not dead” was Jesus lying? Was Jesus trying to deceive? What was Jesus doing by saying this?

When Jesus told His disciples “Lazarus is asleep I need to go wake him.” What was Jesus trying to communicate? Why did the disciples say if he is sleeping it is good he will recover?

When Jesus said that those who believe in Him will never die, what did He mean? What happened to James, John and Peter?

Does the term “death” have more than one meaning? Do we mean one thing by that term and God mean something else?

How do we understand it?

- Body—soma—hardware
- Soul—psyche—software
- Spirit—pneuma—energy source

We are tripartite, just like a computer. To be operational must have all three components—if a computer runs out of power what state does it go into? But is your computer dead? No! It sleeps, just like the Bible describes those who “die,” they sleep, but they are not dead. We often say, about our computer, “my battery died” but we know it is not dead, it can be recharged, and the computer itself is not dead, it is merely asleep waiting for more energy. And if you have your computer backed up on the cloud and someone destroys your machine, what do you do?



Jesus said in MT 10:28, don't be afraid of the one who can destroy the body (soma, hardware) but can't destroy the soul (psyche, software).

Note Paul's Description to the Thessalonians:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall **asleep**, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him**. The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first**. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 1Thessalonians 4:13-18

Do you see in one verse we have the dead in Christ coming down from heaven and also arising out of the grave? How? Because when we die:

- the body/hardware (soma) disintegrates to dust
- the spirit/energy (pneuma) returns to God
- the soul/software (psyche) is safe and secure with Christ in heaven stored on the heavenly servers—the Lamb's book of life

Here is an updated version:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those whose hardware have shut down, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus had a hardware shut down and then rebooted and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus the software/individualities of those who trusted in him when their hardware shut down. The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and those whose hardware have disintegrated will arise with upgraded perfect bodies. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 1Thessalonians 4:13-18

What we call death then, is not the death from sin, but an artificial state of suspended animation occurring because God is battling sin in this world.

So, with all of this in mind, how do we understand why bad things happen, why suffering occurs?

All suffering has its roots in the fact that this planet is out of harmony with God's design and His life giving presence. The specific reasons why suffering and death occur are as follows:



- Entropy, the slow gradual decay of order that occurs because we are disconnected from God's constant full presence and care. "in the day you eat of the Tree of Knowledge, dying you will die." (Gen 2:17) Aging and the sleep death occur because of slow decay
- Genetic defects and disease because of entropy and the slow decay of our original design
- Toxins and poisons because of mutations and alterations to God's design—the changes in nature and the manufacture of chemicals and products not original to God's creation
- Evil/selfish actions originating in people who are selfish—Cain killing Abel
- Evil/selfish actions inspired by Satan upon people to hurt others—Judas betraying Christ
- Satan and his agencies affecting nature and causing problems—first chapter of Job
- Good people acting to defend and protect—Abraham rescuing Lot
- Good people acting selfishly and doing bad things—David murdering Uriah—which occurs because of sin in the heart not yet removed
- People, whether good or evil, making mistakes with no intent to help or harm, slipping and falling, auto accident because of ice etc.
- Humans acting on God's orders—kill all the people, women, children, cattle, etc. Why would God give such orders?
  - Remember it was God's original plan to have the hornet and pestilence go before Israel and as the inhabitants abandoned the land the Israelites would have slowly occupied it with no killing. But the people chose to do it there way and so God gave the instructions, if you are going to kill then in order to minimize suffering, death, and traumatize the least number of people and bring peace in a world, wipe them all out and get it over with. Instead, we have had 4000 years of continual fighting, violence and war scaring every generation living in that part of the world.
- God acting to protect, lance, cauterize, keep open the avenue for Messiah—putting people in the grave/asleep, but they will arise again: Flood, first born of Egypt, Platoons that came to arrest Elijah Etc.

## SUNDAY

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The lessons cites Romans 1:18-20:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,<sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Then read first paragraph, "What a powerful..." Do you notice the imposed law slant put on this? Sad, very sad...

Paul is not saying that they can be justly condemned in a cosmic judicial proceeding, but that they have no excuse for their terminal condition—that God's divine nature of love and how He built reality





Then why do so many thinking people continue to choose accident and chance? Because accident and chance are *BETTER* and more appealing than a god who uses imposed law and runs his universe like a dictator runs Rome!

Teaching God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering, a judicial magistrate that says love me or I will torture and kill you, is actually a violation of God's design law, and on some level many people realize this and reject this distorted view of God and thus prefer accident and chance to a life of cosmic slavery.

It is the false law of imperial Rome that infected Christianity and led to horrible abuses to our fellow human beings in the name of Christ and the gross misrepresentation of God in our theologies creating non-sense that has caused thinking people to prefer accident and chance!

We have a message, prophesied in Scripture, to take to the world about the Creator God, whose laws are the very protocols upon which reality is built and which will free people from such distortions!

Sadly, those who oppose our message, do so because they prefer a god who is the source of inflicted pain and suffering. This week one of our friends emailed me a conversation with a conference president who doesn't want our materials distributed in the churches in his conference. He said it is because he believes I teach Moral Influence Theory and to dispute that he referenced an article by the Biblical Research Institute which included the following:

One of the fundamental problems of the moral influence view is that it rejects the substitutionary nature of Christ's death. *The idea that God had to kill the innocent* instead of the guilty in order to save us is considered a violation of justice. (emphasis mine)

This is level four thinking, all based on accepting the lie that God's law functions no different than those sinful human beings make and therefore justice requires the ruling authority to inflict the death penalty. Thus, incredible as it seems, our own church teaches God killed Jesus—could anything be more offensive than this?

God is not the source of death! God is the source of life. Satan and sin, deviations from God's design cause death. Jesus said, Satan was a murderer from the beginning—but now many Christians teach that God is the originator of death—it is a lie! God, was in Christ healing the world from sin and restoring us back to unity with Himself!

The last paragraph states, "Though, especially in its fallen state, nature doesn't reveal the full character of God, it certainly reveals His creative power, and aspects of His goodness, as well."

Is power the question? Is power what Paul was referring to? No, Paul is referring to design, how God built reality to function and the results of rejecting that design for another design.





From *Hard Sayings of the Bible*:

The human condition, which Paul describes in Romans 1:18-32, is not something caused by God. The phrase “revealed from heaven” (where “heaven” is a typical Jewish substitute word for “God”) does not depict some kind of divine intervention, but rather the *inevitability of human debasement* which results when God’s will, built into the created order, is violated. Since the created order has its origin in God, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed “from heaven.” It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of God’s truth (Rom 1:18-20), that is, the truth about God’s nature and will, leads to futile thinking (Rom 1:21-22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24-27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28-32). P 543

The expression “God gave them over” (or “handed them over”), which appears three times in this passage (Rom 1:24,26,28), supports the idea that the sinful perversion of human existence, though resulting from human decisions, is to be understood ultimately as God’s punishment which we, in freedom, bring upon ourselves. P 543

In light of these reflections, the common notion that God punishes or blesses in direct proportion to our sinful or good deeds cannot be maintained... God loves us with an everlasting love. But the rejection of that love separates us from its life-giving power. The result is disintegration and death. P 543

Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Saying of the Bible*, Intervarsity Press, 1996,

This is where we started the lesson, human suffering occurs because we are deviant from God’s design, God is not the author of suffering or death!

## MONDAY

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The title for the day: Nothing Came From Itself. What do you think of the title?

The idea that everything that exists came from nothing is the core to the big bang theory—which in itself doesn’t make sense.

From Nancy Pearcey’s book, page 62:

Secular people often accuse Christians of having “faith,” while claiming that they themselves base their convictions purely on facts and reason. Not so. If you press any set of ideas back far enough, eventually you reach an ultimate starting point—something that is taken as the self-existent reality on which everything depends. This starting assumption cannot be based on prior reasoning, because if it were, you could ask where *that* reasoning starts—and so on, in an





infinite regress. At some point, every system of thought has to say, This is my starting point. There is no reason for it to exist. It just “is.”

If starting premises do not rest on reasons, how can they be tested? Although you cannot argue *backward* to their prior reason, you can argue *forward* by spelling out their implications, then testing those implications using both logic and experience...

We can do this with godless theories and consistently demonstrate that those theories are not as reasonable, not as evidence based, as believing in a God of love. For instance:

While we cannot test the moment of creation nor can we test the big bang in a lab, the premises each view rests upon are testable:

BIG BANG	CREATION
Something came from something	Something came from nothing
Complexity came from chaos without intelligent input	Complexity came from chaos with intelligent input
Life came from living matter	Life came from non-living matter

Notice, in the world in which we live, the premises that support creation are all supported by science, experiment and experience, while science, experiment and experience disprove the Big Bang theory.

### WEDNESDAY

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Read Job 6:4-9:

The arrows of the Almighty are in me,  
my spirit drinks in their poison;  
God’s terrors are marshaled against me.  
<sup>5</sup> Does a wild donkey bray when it has grass,  
or an ox bellow when it has fodder?  
<sup>6</sup> Is tasteless food eaten without salt,  
or is there flavor in the white of an egg?  
<sup>7</sup> I refuse to touch it;  
such food makes me ill.  
<sup>8</sup> “Oh, that I might have my request,  
that God would grant what I hope for,  
<sup>9</sup> that God would be willing to crush me,  
to let loose his hand and cut me off!

What do you hear? What is Job saying? What is the core problem?



Job doesn't truly understand God, nor the Great Controversy, nor the problem with sin, nor the true cause of pain and suffering.

- Is God the one inflicting pain on Job? No
- Does God terrorize Job? No
- Does God cause Job's experiences to be bland, tasteless, without pleasure? No
- What is Job's state of mind? Job is depressed, grief stricken, and lost joy in life. He wants someone to be responsible and he lays this at God's feet. He has become despondent and hopeless and longs to die to relieve himself from his pain.

Would realizing God did not do this to him mean the pain of losing his children, estate, employees, etc. would be less? No—but what might it do? It might open Job's heart and mind to a source of comfort and hope which his current mindset prevents.

Remember the song *It Is Well With My Soul*?

This hymn was written after traumatic events in Horatio Spafford's life. The first was the death of his son at the age of 2 and the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which ruined him financially (he had been a successful lawyer and had invested significantly in property in the area of Chicago that was extensively damaged by the great fire). His business interests were further hit by the economic downturn of 1873, at which time he had planned to travel to Europe with his family on the *SS Ville du Havre*. In a late change of plan, he sent the family ahead while he was delayed on business concerning zoning problems following the Great Chicago Fire. While crossing the Atlantic, the ship sank rapidly after a collision with a sea vessel, the *Loch Earn*, and all four of Spafford's daughters died. His wife Anna survived and sent him the now famous telegram, "Saved alone ...". Shortly afterwards, as Spafford traveled to meet his grieving wife, he was inspired to write these words as his ship passed near where his daughters had died.<sup>[3]</sup> Bliss called his tune *Ville du Havre*, from the name of the stricken vessel.<sup>[4]</sup>

The Spaffords later had three more children. On February 11, 1880, their son, Horatio Goertner Spafford, died at the age of four, of scarlet fever. Their daughters were Bertha Hedges Spafford (born March 24, 1878) and Grace Spafford (born January 18, 1881). Their Presbyterian church regarded their tragedy as divine punishment. In response, the Spaffords formed their own Messianic sect, dubbed "the Overcomers" by American press. In 1881, the Spaffords, including baby Bertha and newborn Grace, set sail for Ottoman-Turkish Palestine. The Spaffords settled in Jerusalem and helped found a group called the American Colony. Colony members, later joined by Swedish Christians, engaged in philanthropic work among the people of Jerusalem regardless of their religious affiliation and without proselytizing motives—thereby gaining the trust of the local Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities. During and immediately after World War I, the American Colony played a critical role in supporting these communities through the great suffering and deprivations by running soup kitchens, hospitals, orphanages and other charitable ventures. The colony later became the subject of *Jerusalem* by the Nobel prize-winning author, Swedish novelist Selma Lagerlöf.<sup>[3]</sup>



## **THURSDAY**

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Read first paragraph, “Quoting Psalms 51:4...” Is this what Paul was referring to—understanding the goodness of God in the face of evil? Was there evil occurring throughout the universe when Lucifer rebelled? When Lucifer raised questions about God was there evil happening in the lives of the angels in heaven?

Paul is speaking of something more than this, but it includes this. Paul is speaking of God being judged to be true over the lies Satan has told about Him, all the lies, even before any beings were suffering.

Read bottom pink section, thoughts?

## **FRIDAY**

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Read and discuss questions



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**Calendar:** Come and Reason now has a Calendar of Events on our Website. If you would like to know what is coming up or where Dr. J is speaking or who is teaching a particular week, check out the calendar.

*The God-Shaped Brain* is now available in Korean and is available at this website: [http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book\\_detail.nhn?bid=9519886](http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886)

*The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase*—FREE for ios and android systems.

**The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

**October 14-16:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

**October 19, 20:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

**October 21, 22:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Somerset West, South Africa

**November 4:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Fall Summit at the Calvary Chapel in Naperville, IL.

**January 20, 21, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven in St. Helena, California