

“Why aren’t Things Worse”

Wisdom Literature – Job (pt. 2)

June 29, 2025

Job 1:6-12

...The L.U.T.S. outcome of this heavenly conversation = Job 1:13-22 and Job 2:7-10

...Job is a "Wisdom book" ...so we approach it to receive the unique help that it brings to us!

“...this book’s special contribution to the canon, and to the topic of evil and suffering, is its treatment of what most of us would call irrational evil, incoherent suffering. Such evil and suffering do not easily fit into glib ‘solutions.’ **D.A. Carson**, “How Long O Lord”, p. 136

WHY? ...

“...this is a book of preventative medicine. One of the major causes of devastating grief and confusion among Christians is that our expectations are false. We do not give the subject of evil and suffering the thought it deserves until we ourselves are confronted with tragedy. If by that point our beliefs—not well thought out but deeply ingrained—are largely out of step with the God who has disclosed himself in the Bible and supremely in Jesus, then the pain from the personal tragedy may be multiplied many times over as we begin to question the very foundations of our faith. ...pain may pose the question, ‘Why me?’ That soon gives way to ‘Why are you punishing me?’ or ‘Why are you picking on me?’ And that is only a whisper from far bleaker thoughts, articulated or not...”
D.A. Carson, “How Long O Lord”, p. 11

...Before We try to answer the painful and puzzling question of "Why am I Suffering?" ...I might want to ponder 2 questions: (1) Why is There Suffering? ... (2) Why isn't Suffering Worse Than it Is?

(1) Why is There Suffering?

1 Pet 4:12-19 ¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, ... ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, ... ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

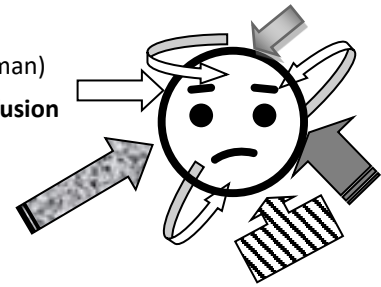
“sufferings” – Gk. pathēma; something undergone, i.e. hardship or pain; subjectively, an emotion or influence [from ‘pathō’, thus “sympathy”]

“suffer” = Gk. paschō; to experience a sensation or impression (usually painful): — feel, passion, suffer, vex

“...no matter what precautions we take, no matter how well we have put together a good life, no matter how hard we have worked to be healthy, wealthy, comfortable with friends and family, and successful with our career—something will inevitably ruin it. No amount of money, power, and planning can prevent bereavement, dire illness, relationship betrayal, financial disaster, or a host of other troubles from entering your life. Human life is fatally fragile and subject to forces beyond our power to manage.” **Keller, Timothy**. *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* (p. 3).

The basic meaning of páschō is 'to experience something that comes from outside,'
(Theological Dictionary of the N.T.)

L.U.T.S. = Original Creation (an existence designed for God to be Present w/ man)
+ Satan + Sin + Futility + Corruption (internal & external) **+ Limitations + Confusion**
+ Redemption



?? – Are These Forces a “NUDGE” or an “Existential IMPLOSION”???

The Contributing Forces of Suffering ...Consider these in the order of their appearance in God's Big Story

- The Force of "Disconnection" (a Void/Black Hole Force) ...Humanities "Design" was configured to have an ongoing, animating exchange between the Life of God and the Life of Man
- The Force of Satan

"Satan is real and terrible. All his designs are hateful." **John Piper**, "Providence", p. 267

1 Pet 5:8-9 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

- The Force of Sin

1 Jn 3:4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

Rom 7:23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

- The Force of Judgment (Gen 3, others)

- **Cursed** (pain, death, difficulty, disease, spiritual conflict, relational conflict, etc.)

- Gen 2:17 "...for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

- Gen 3:14-15 "The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, curse are you...' "I will put enmity between you and the woman"

- Gen 3:16 [Eve is cursed with pain in childbirth and with contrariness to her husband]

- Gen 3:17-19 "cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it... thorns and thistles is shall bring forth ...by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground."

- **The Force of Futility**

- Ecc 1 – ² "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!" ...⁸ "All things are full of weariness"

- Rom 8:18-21 "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time..." "For the creation waits with eager longing..." "For the creation was subjected to futility..." "in hope, that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption"

The Forces of This Fallen World (Life Under the Sun) Introduce us to the Functioning Presence of Evil & Depravity

- **The "Mystery of Evil's Reign"** ...From the Garden Scene of Gen. 3, to the Heavenly Conversation of Job 1, to the 1st Century Christians in Thessalonica, to the Suburbs of America—there are Mysterious Forces at work in our L.U.T.S.

2 Thess 2:7-10 ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

- There is "the mystery of lawlessness at work" ...What is this?—
- There is "the activity of Satan" ...We are to associate and understand that Satan is real and Satan is Active!

..."Evil" = the alternative to God's Righteous & Harmonious Rule Over Creation. ... "Evil"= the Void/Condition that characterizes the World, Human Beings and Heavenly Beings "Disconnected" from God's Life Animating Presence

Rom 1:21, 28-31 ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ...²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

...THIS is what comes "flooding-in" to fill the Void left by God's alienation/absence

..The Doctrine of "Total Depravity" is worthy of being studied and understood. ...it answers THIS question: How Far Did Man Fall? ...How bad did things become, when man rejected God's life presence, centrality, and rule? ...It was NOT merely a "decrease in speed" (from 100 mph to 60 mph ...ie, Man's just not as "good" as he used to be)

(1) Man was plunged into a DIFFERENT EXISTENCE—from Light to DARKNESS!

Eph 4:17-19 ¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

"in the Bible, sin is not an aspect of man's created nature. It is not simply part of what we are. It is rather the disruption of a personal relationship. ...and it brings further disruption." **John Frame**, (Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief)

"So sin is a radical disruption in the core of our being. In sin, we turn from God's good commandments, his kingdom and glory, faith, and love. It embraces rebellious disobedience, the kingdom of Satan, and evil attitudes (hatred, immorality, strife, jealousy, anger, envy, and so on).1155 ...Thus, sin is irrational." **Wayne Grudem**, (Systematic Theology)

(2) Man has turned loose a harmful, destructive, spiritual being ...who has deceived man and stolen his birthright as "Vice-regent" or Ruler over the earth (he is now called "the god of this world", the "ruler of this world")

1 Jn 5:19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

2 Cor 4:4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Acts 26:16-18 ¹⁶ But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, ¹⁷ delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you ¹⁸ to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God

(2) Why isn't Suffering Worse Than it Is?

...SO ...given these conditions--with JOB as our source of "Insights"—why aren't things WORSE than they are on planet earth?

INSIGHT: A Theology of Gracious RESTRAINT!

Job 1:9-12 ⁹ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “Does Job fear God for no reason? ¹⁰ Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.” ¹² And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

...Behold! ...What does Satan do when he gets things in his evil hands? ...He steals, kills, and destroys! ...What does “sin” (the mystery of lawlessness) do when it exerts its force?... it corrupts and makes everything crooked and dark

- Job lives in a Fallen, Corrupted, Evil World ...Explain all the blessing in his life!! (Job 1:1-3)
- Explain what was happening in Job's Life up till v. 12?? ...Divine Restraint!!

2 Thess 2:7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.

Jn 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

Given the Biblical Wisdom/Insights about L.U.T.S. — our question becomes—Why isn't everyday of Job's life (or ours) characterized by the Rampant Rulership of Evil—over the Sabeans, Chaldeans, weather, tragedies, & health!?? ...When I see Job at his absolute "earthly worst"—why doesn't my heart fill up with Gratitude for all the days of protection, blessing, and redemption that are in this story?

“...this is a book of preventative medicine. One of the major causes of devastating grief and confusion among Christians is that our expectations are false.” **D.A. Carson**, “How Long O Lord”, p. 11

“...the great burden of the gospel is that our situation is infinitely more serious and critical. We will never properly understand the work of God which takes place in the Christian life unless we first of all have some kind of grasp of why we need the grace of God.” **Sinclair Ferguson**, “The Christian Life”, p. 9

2 Cor 4:8-10 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed {WHY?}; perplexed, but not driven to despair {WHY?}; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed {WHY?}; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

1 Pet 4:19 ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.