

## BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN SUFFERING

1. Our profound ignorance and limited cognitive capacity
2. A worldview issue; need an absolute basis for judgments of good and evil
3. The whole creation is under a curse and waits for the day of its redemption (Romans 8:19-23)
4. The nature of a physical world
5. A matrix of human choices that lead to greater vulnerability to natural disasters
6. We should not be surprised at evil and suffering; the history of the world
7. We are all terminal; about 30,000 people die every day – in the larger scheme, how does a greater number of deaths on one day change the rules?
8. The reason we lose our trust in God is spatial and temporal proximity to suffering; we are not really troubled by the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 or by modest disasters in other parts of the world today
9. In addition to a fallen physical world and the consequences of human decisions, there is the reality of a cosmic spiritual warfare
10. The Galileans and the tower in Siloam (Luke 13:1-5)
11. The human heart does not change; the problem is internal, not external (Mark 7:20-23)
12. Proximate and ultimate causality
13. God's omnipotence and mercy, judgment and grace, transcendence and immanence, wrath and love – are all equally ultimate
14. Scripture affirms both divine sovereignty and human responsibility – we must live in this tension (cf. physical mysteries like the wave and particle characteristics of light or the mystery of how biochemical sequences produce instincts and physical attributes)
15. The Book of Job and the nature of God's sovereignty as opposed to glib explanations; Job never got an explanation from God, and he did not know what happened in chapters 1-2
16. God's greatest display of His wrath and mercy, and of His judgment and love was in the suffering of His Son
17. Christ underwrote the consequences (death, disease, pain, sorrow) of human sin
18. An eschatological solution; we cannot judge the play until it is over (e.g., movies that seem weak in the first half but come together in the second half; a Divine Comedy)
19. Called to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, but no assurance of what will happen during the journey
20. A matter of perspective; in 1976, heavyweight champion John Tate from Knoxville fought Mike Weaver. Weaver lost every round, but with 20 seconds left in the 15<sup>th</sup>, he knocked out Tate. The Scriptures reveal the "15<sup>th</sup> round" (Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

21. Transformation versus substitution; in His sovereignty, God transmutes temporary evil into permanent good