

# GRACE & PEACE

An E-periodical For spiritual enlightenment, edification and encouragement.



Page 9 |  
God's Providence

Page 1 |  
Believers' Sufferings

## IN THIS ISSUE :

Perspective	Anecdote:	Study	Practical	Outline	Exhortation:
Believers' Sufferings	Shaping of a stone	The Brazen Altar – Part 6	The beautiful flavor of life	Tears Shed by Different Persons	God's Providence even when His people are Troubled
<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>

# BELIEVERS' SUFFERINGS

 By Nelson Thomas

“Why do bad things happen to good people?”, has been an age-old puzzling question. In spite of their devotion, godliness, and clean life, when saints passed through untold agonies, they asked in frustration, “why me?” or “how long?”. The story of Job, the confusion of Asaph in Psalm 73 and the perplexing questions of Prophet Habakkuk are some of the examples of this dilemma.

## THE REALITY :

**1** *As part of  
Adamic generation.*

Ever since Adam fell into sin, everyone born into his generation is bearing its consequences. All the pain and sorrow, even death resulted basically due to sin (Genesis 3:17 – 19; Rom. 5:12). Even though we have been liberated from the bondage of sin and enjoy all the blessings of the heavenly places in Christ, we continue to live in this cursed earth and environment. Further, we live in a body that is frail and decaying.

**2** *As part of the  
new creation.*

Tribulation is also part of the divine process by which we are being prepared for God’s kingdom. (Acts 14:22; 1Thess. 3:3; 1Peter 4:12) God in His wisdom allows various forms of trials to teach, mould, and purify His people. As a loving Father, He chastens us to correct when we go astray (Hebrews 12:5 – 8).

**3** *As part of the  
body of Christ.*

Another reason behind the inevitable sorrows of the saints is the satanic opposition to the body of Christ. Satan hates Christ our Lord and His people. He finds it more convenient to attack the body of Christ than the Lord Himself who is in glory today.

## THE RESPONSE :

In the midst of such bitter, tearful experiences, God's people persevered joyfully (James 1:2; 1Peter 1:6, 8). Their 'manifold trials' did not diminish their 'unspeakable joy' (Acts 5:41; 2Cor. 6:37; Hab. 3:17, 18). In fact, troubles only strengthened their faith and hope in the Lord. Apostle Paul poignantly stated, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2Cori. 12:10).

We have plenty of examples in the scripture that reveal how the godly took the time of weeping as a time to rejoice!

In Psalm 13, the psalmist begins with desperate questions, "How long?". It seems David, in his prolonged afflictions, earnestly sought the Lord for deliverance. But seeing no answer he concluded that God has forgotten him or hidden His face and there will be no end to his sorrows. He also anticipated his utter humiliation before the enemies (vs. 1, 2).

However, by the end of this short psalm, we see him confident, happy, and even singing (v. 5, 6). This is in fact the blessed privilege of every born-again Christian. In the midst of innumerable miseries, the Lord graciously allows them to find comfort and strength to face every tribulation triumphantly (cf. Psalm 30: 5, 6, 11).

## THE REASONS TO REJOICE

What made David to change from his words of complaint to confidence and praise? According to Psalm 13, we can notice he realized three valuable truths. If we too comprehend these three realities, our worries and grievances will be changed to worship and reassurance.

### 1

#### *The Sovereignty of God, Psa. 13:3*

"O LORD my God" - David acknowledged who the LORD God Almighty is for him. Wholeheartedly accepting God's authority over us removes all our fears and anxieties.

On another occasion, David wrote, "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all." (1Chron. 29: 11, 12).

Because our Lord is sovereign and does everything according to His perfect will and time, we only need to trust and wait for Him. Of course, this demands humility and patience. And in reality, these are the two valuable traits our God wants to inculcate in every believer.

## 2

### *The frailty of man, Psa. 13:3*

“Enlighten my eyes” – David also accepted his limitations. He did not understand everything. That’s why he is seeking divine enlightenment.

This is another essential reality that we ought to accept in the midst of adversities. Unless God Himself reveals to us, we can never fully comprehend God and His purposes (Job 8:9; John 13: 7; 1Cor. 13:12; 1John 3:2).

## 3

### *The goodness of the Lord, Psa. 13:6*

“He has dealt bountifully with me”. Though David did not fully understand God’s dealings with him, he had no doubt about God’s mercy or His salvation (cf. v.5). He was fully assured that all that God does is only for good and that too in abundance.

Remember, we see only one side, but God looks at our entire life from an eternal perspective. When we accept this difference in the human and divine standpoint, we are reassured (Isa. 55:8, 9).

As a Master Potter with a long-term plan God is working on us (Jer. 18:6). We may not fully comprehend all that He plans and does with us, but rest assured, He does everything well (2Cor. 4:18; Rom. 8:28).

He may break us to make us afresh (Jer. 18: 4). He may also lead us through unpleasant ways to mould and teach us. Even when the Lord allows our adversaries to unleash atrocities against us, still the sovereign Lord makes it for our own good.

Sometimes God would use the afflictions of one of His chosen ones for the encouragement and comfort of many others. Realizing this truth Apostle Paul wrote, “Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.” (2Cori. 1:4).

## TEMPORARY

Nonetheless, no agony is forever. Writing to the suffering saints, Apostle Peter says, “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials.” (1Peter 1:6). “But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” (1Peter 5:10).

Paul also wrote similar thoughts, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2Cor. 4:17).



## CONCLUSION

Even as the wisest among men remain confused at the question of pain and suffering, let us be assured of our Lord's perfect plan for us and patiently yield to it. He will not withhold any good from His people. Whatever unfavourable circumstances we experience today will be beneficial to us in the course of time. Not only will we have an increased Christlikeness but fruitfulness too, exhibiting the glory of the Master.

### ANECDOTE:

## SHAPING OF A STONE

 Daily Bread

An evangelist narrated the following story:

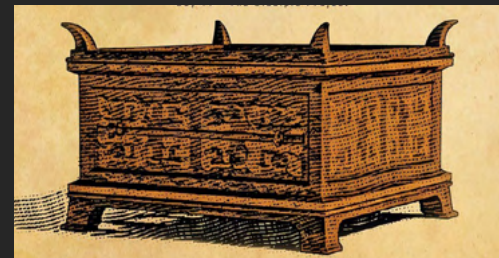
“I have a friend who in a time of business recession lost his job, a sizable fortune, and his beautiful home. To add to his sorrow, his precious wife died; yet he tenaciously held to his faith -- the only thing he had left.

One day when he was out walking in search of employment, he stopped to watch some men who were doing stonework at a large church. One of them was chiseling a triangular piece of rock.

‘Where are you going to put that?’ he asked. The workman said, ‘Do you see that little opening up there near the spire? Well, I’m shaping this stone down here so that it will fit in up there.’

Tears filled my friend’s eyes as he walked away, for the Lord had spoken to him through that laborer whose words gave new meaning to his troubled situation.”

## STUDY :



### Notes on Tabernacle – 15

# THE BRAZEN ALTAR – PART 6

 By Charles E. Wigg, Australia

#### *The Horns:*

We are told in Exodus 27:2 that there were four horns, one on each of the corners of the altar. These were places where the guilty could come and plead for mercy, as we see in 1 Kings, 1:50, and 2:28. The blood of the sacrifices was placed on those horns. All represents our coming to Christ and His cross, when convicted of our sin, to plead for mercy, but mercy based on the righteous sacrifice of our Substitute. “Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling”.

#### *The rings and staves:*

In verse 6 and 7, we are told about the staves of acacia wood, which were overlaid with bronze, and the rings of bronze into which they were inserted. These were then used for carrying the altar from place to place.

It would seem that no mechanical means were used to transport the altar, even though because of its large size, and its construction, it would have been very heavy. It was to be carried on the shoulders of the Levites.

This would teach us, that as we move on in the testimony of God, we are to carry all that the brazen altar represents, in our hearts. This calls for spiritual strength and energy which can only be gained by feeding on the right kind of food, the strong meat of the deeper things of the word of God. (Heb. 5; 11-14.)

The strong meat is rich in protein, and calcium, which build muscle and bone. So many today have no appetite for the deeper things of the word of God, which they consider to be too dull, boring, and too heavy. They want the light and sweet things that please the palate of the flesh. They want to live on spiritual “candy floss”, such will never develop muscle and bone. That’s why so many are weak and are unable to accept responsibility, or to stand for Christ.

#### *The limit of the people’s approach:*

Only the priests and the Levites were permitted to advance further than the brazen altar. Today there are so few who ever get beyond the knowledge that their sins are forgiven. This is of course a wonderful knowledge to have, but there is much more for us to enjoy than that.

The brazen altar brings all that to mind, but it also emphasizes the worth of the person of Christ, what He means to the heart of God.

As believer-priests, we all have the privilege to enter the Holy place, to “draw near to God”. Let us not be content just to know that our sins are forgiven. Let us enter into the full enjoyment of all the privileges that God has bestowed upon us, through Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit!

## THE BEAUTIFUL FLAVOR OF LIFE

 By Joy Murickal Issac, Kerala

One of the most interesting facts is life has many flavors to color it and make it fruitful. There are many joys, luxuries, sufferings, fellowship, loneliness, etc. Among these, several people have the experience that sufferings are the best.

I don't think anyone in this world survive without suffering. Afflictions and sufferings are essential for nurturing human beings. As an example, if you want to study anything, you have to sacrifice your time and many comfort zones. The people who have knowledge take this as quite natural.

*Understand different kinds of suffering and take measures to mitigate them.  
The following are the different kinds of suffering:*

**1** *Sufferings for a positive result*

**2** *Sufferings for a negative result*

**3** *Sufferings due to illicit acts, wrong motivation, unhealthy practices, etc.*

**4** *Sufferings due to natural processes such as old age, childhood, austerity, etc.*

Apostle Peter has written much about suffering, presenting the sufferings of Jesus Christ as an example (1Pet. 2:21; 3:18). Often, we do suffer for positive things and everyone enjoys the

results. For example, hardships in connection with our education, construction of a house, profession, child-rearing, innovations, etc., are taken gladly. We must strengthen and train up our minds for the same, knowing the purpose and the final result.

Sufferings from negative things bring a lot of bad experiences in our life. Peter says it is possible to suffer for bad things too (1 Peter 4:15). Evildoers make many schemes and tricks and interfere in other matters. They spend time and resources on unwanted matters and finally reap the bad effects. Avoid unhealthy practices such as gluttony, laziness, indifference, etc.

### *Attitude Matters*

When it comes to natural suffering, we may not be able to avoid that. However, meditating and practicing God's word brings in us a good attitude, easiness, and understanding. Many people normally say there is no meaning in the past. That is not true; actually, our past has a great influence on the present. So, lead a good life today to ensure a great future. Improve our planning and administrative skills to mitigate normal sufferings.



Essentially a Christian can suffer for more rewarding purposes. Christian sufferings result in endurance forever. Make sure our sufferings are as per God's will. Jesus suffered to bring people to justification, sanctification, and redemption (1 Peter 3:18). Jesus Christ is our role model. Peter writes, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21) .

Finally, brethren suffer as much as possible to bring people to God. It is a great mission and the most rewarding hardship if we do it with purity, faithfulness, and a great mind. May God bless us to suffer with grace and have abundant rewards.



## TEARS SHED BY DIFFERENT PERSONS

 By W.J.M

1. *The Saviour's Tears, Luke 19:41; John 11: 35*
2. *The penitent sinner's tears, Luke 7: 38 – 44*
3. *The saint's tears, John 20: 11; Acts 20:37*
4. *The servant's tears, Acts 20: 19 – 31; Phil 3:18*
5. *The backslider's tears, Luke 22: 62*
6. *The lost sinner's tears, Matthew 8:12; 22:13*

## WORTHY QUOTES:

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.”

- Helen Keller

“Religious zealots may invite suffering by acting impulsively without divine guidance.”

- William MacDonald

“Suffering also is a tool God uses for building godly character”

- Warren W. Wiersbe

## GOD'S PROVIDENCE EVEN WHEN HIS PEOPLE ARE TROUBLED

 By Dr. Jaison Jacob, Kerala

Once the disciples asked the Lord Jesus, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” (Mark 4:38). Christ was sleeping peacefully in the midst of a great windstorm and waves, but the apostles were very much frightened and doubted the Lord’s care for them.

Similarly, Martha too questioned with bitterness and perplexity, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore, tell her to help me.” (Luke 10: 40).

Both these examples show us that either due to adverse circumstances or even while serving the Lord we may get tired and feel exhausted, sometimes to the point of doubting the Lord.

The scripture reveals that our Lord does care for us and there is no need to doubt or question His thoughts for us (Psa. 40:5). He does everything well for us at the right time. Remember, in the midst of confusion and anxiety, our trust and

confidence should be in the providence of God alone. If anything else is the basis of our hope and rest, we become restless in its absence.

The regular study of God’s word enlarges our view of God and His purposes. And such a high view of the Lord and His care helps us to face life’s trials without any frustration and bitterness. The book of Esther highlights the providence of God and beautifully illustrates how our Lord prepares everything in advance for His people. In Chapter 2, we notice three things in connection with the providence of God.



### A. The Providential Protection Of Esther.

God graciously protected and provided for this captive orphan girl in a foreign land.

### B. The providential promotion of Esther.

God prepared the situation in such a way that Esther found favour and kindness before the king (2:17). This ensured her safety, sustenance, and exaltation.

### C. The providential preparation of Mordecai.

God prepared Mordecai in advance for his unique ministry (2: 21, 22). How wonderfully God made it possible for Mordecai to be in the right place at the right time!

## EIGHT LESSONS ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE

### 1 Providence of God may permit hardship of every kind in the lives of His people. (Esther 2:7)

God in His reducing providence took away Esther's parents and even her homeland. God's compelling providence led her to experience much suffering in her personal life. All these were part of the divine program to protect God's people in a marvelous manner.

### 2 Providence of God may allow our good deeds to be forgotten for a season. (Esther 2: 21 - 23)

Mordecai's wise and prompt action actually saved the life of the king. However, there was no immediate acknowledgment or reward for his exemplary work, except for recording it in the book of the chronicles. But we know that God had planned to reward Mordecai at the right time.

We don't need to expect any recognition or appreciation for what we do for the Lord today. Of course, it is true that it's an encouragement to know how others benefit from our efforts. Nevertheless, we should keep on doing good for all without expecting anything in return (Gal. 6:9, 10).

On a related note, what is the greatest good that we can give to others today? In Mordecai's case, it was saving the king from death. For us, the greatest good deed is to save perishing souls by presenting the gospel of Christ (John 5:24). Never be discouraged at the poor response to this noble service; at the right time God will reward (Heb. 6:10).

### 3 Providence of God may allow a proud person to occupy a position and power. (Esther 3:1)

Naturally, we may hope, in chapter 3 the story would be of how the king honoured Mordecai who saved his life. But on the contrary, we see Haman a proud and haughty man promoted to a high position (cf. 3:5).

### 4 Providence of God may record seemingly insignificant gestures. (Esther 3:2)

When others knelt down before Haman, Mordecai refused to do so. This seemingly unimportant action of Mordecai is recorded, which shows we should be careful even in apparently trivial matters (Genesis 18:12).

### 5 Providence of God controls even chance events. (Esther 3:7)

When Haman cast lots to choose a suitable date to destroy the entire Jewish community, the lot fell on the 12th month. God wonderfully used that one-year gap to delay the evil design of Haman. (cf. Pro 16).

### 6 Providence of God may enhance the power and authority of His enemies for a time. (Esther 3: 8 - 11)

Haman's words to the king show his satanic attitude. He mixed truth with error to make false allegations against Jews. His false humility further attracted the king, who promptly rewarded him with absolute authority to do whatever he wants.

As it happened, Haman's exaltation was his execution warrant. Just as God exalted him, God can bring him down, like He did with Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:33). So, there is no need for us to be troubled at the exaltation of anybody in this world.

Solomon's words are appropriate at this juncture, "If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them." (Ecc. 5:8).

## 7

Providence of God may allow documents to be written and published against His people. (Esther 3:12 – 14)

Haman made sure that letters were written and sealed with the king's signet ring, reaching every corner of the country. It was the king's own decree, that on the 13th day of the 12th month everyone should be ready 'to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jews and also to plunder their possessions'.

Naturally, 'the City of Shushan was perplexed'. (v. 15) Jews and even the locals were confused at this mind-numbing erroneous ruling.

Chapters 4 – 7 describe the response of the Jewish community to this difficult situation. They wept, fasted, and prayed to cast all their cares on the Lord who cared for them. (1Peter 5:7).

## 8

Providence of God will reverse any situation for our good. (Esther 8:15)

In our helplessness and pressure, God's providence becomes more visible. His providence in persecution and pressure works from behind the scene.

God in His providence took away the sleep of the king and caused him to read the book of the chronicles and the rest is history (6:1ff).

When God's providence was unfolded, confused Shushan began to rejoice (3:15 cf. 8:15). "The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor." (8:16). All because God's careful eyes were upon them, even though they were in captivity.

In God's providence, we may see the enemy prosper and our prayers continue to go unanswered. But when we know that our God is sovereign and still on the throne, it comforts and strengthens us. He will give us light peace and honour at the right time (Psa. 16:11; John 12: 26).



## READERS' RESPONSE:

### Reader Response



*The introductory article in the last issue was so apt. Today's believers have almost forgotten that they are in warfare and that's why they don't lead a victorious Christian life nor do they experience the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**P. P, MH**

### Reader Response



*Hi brother NTK,  
I am very thankful to 'Grace & Peace e-periodical' that I have enjoyed for so many years through you since we left IBCM conference in Wiednest, Germany in 2007. This material helped me to grow since then. And also for the encouragement of the small flock of God I serve in my country. Blessings*

**Tumuhairwe Reuben**



# GRACE & PEACE

An E-periodical For spiritual enlightenment, edification and encouragement.

## GRACE & PEACE - ONLINE



Join our WhatsApp group:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/BC6SOk36FeR6lkxqmNKSS>



Access both HTML and pdf files:

<http://gracepeace.net/gap/gap.htm>



Read and comment:

<https://welovegod.org/guide/forums/forum/gracepeace>

*'Grace & Peace' is an electronic periodical, sent out monthly, aiming the overall spiritual growth of Christian Believers. You can reproduce this e-periodical fully or in part in any medium, provided it is unedited, and retain the original author / copyright information and a reference to our website [gracepeace.net](http://gracepeace.net)*

*For further details contact:- [gracepeaceu@gmail.com](mailto:gracepeaceu@gmail.com)*

*Prepared, and posted by Nelson Thomas Kumaramparampil (NTK) for the Glory of God & the Joy of the saints.*

*Editorial assistance : Tom Jacob*

*Design & Layout : Jiju Mathew*

*Visit:- [www.gracepeace.net](http://www.gracepeace.net)*