

# Trials

## Why Does God Allow Pain?

### Deuteronomy 7:1-2

**FOCAL Deuteronomy 7:1-2** "When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; {2} And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them.

**CONGREGATIONAL READING Matthew 22:37-40**  
... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. {38} This is the first and great commandment. {39} And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. {40} On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Why do we have trials and tribulations? Why couldn't the Lord have just sent the enemies of Israel out of the Promised Land before He sent His people in? In fact, how can a loving God allow such suffering on planet earth? Christian and non-Christian alike have often wondered about what we call "the problem of pain". Why does a Loving God – and the Bible makes it clear that **God is love (1 John 4:8)** – allow pain in this present world? Unbelievers like the ancient philosopher **Epicurus** have said

**"Either God wants to abolish evil, and cannot; or He can, but does not want to; or He cannot and does not want to. If He wants to, but cannot, He is {not all**

## Rock Hill Baptist Church

605 Rock Hill Road  
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Brother David Buffaloe  
731-845-6104

online at [bibleteacher.org](http://bibleteacher.org)



**powerful}. If He can, but does not want to, He is wicked. But, if God both can and wants to abolish evil, then how comes evil in the world?"**

We can find an answer to the question "How can a loving God allow suffering?" when we look – not at God – but *at ourselves*. For instance, look at the nature of snack foods on the grocery shelves. Have you noticed that the candy and cookie industry is now developing new ways to help us *eat more of their products*.

Everywhere I look I see "bite sized" cookies packaged in "easy open" cups. Chips have been repackaged into 100 calorie boxes. Now you can hog food down faster than ever before! It started out as a "cup of soup", now it's a "cup of chocolate" or a "cup of chips". People in other countries are eating locusts and honey. We're eating sophisticated snacks as fast as we can. We're so blessed that we want to be *more blessed* – yet we never thank the Lord Who has made all this blessing possible.

---

Why does a loving God allow trials to come our way? It is because we humans would *never* look toward Him if all we had was blessing.

---

America is the most blessed nation in this entire world. And yet, we are quickly becoming the most godless nation in the world. The more we have, the more we want, and the less we want of God. The hunter and the fisherman, blessed beyond measure in West Tennessee, wake up early Sunday morning to go hunting or fishing. They have no time for the Lord. The momma and the daddy, blessed beyond measure with a beautiful and

healthy family, decide they'll stay home rather than worship the Lord. They're tired after a long week, so they'll watch Jesus on television from the comfort of their homes. Families in America gather around a table filled with food, and yet many take no time to thank the Lord for their bounty. It seems that the more we have, the less thankful we are for it. We are a nation who has received much from God, and in response we want to remove God from our Pledge and our Schools.

God *must* periodically test us, *must* allow trials to come our way *for our sake*. The Bible truthfully says that our hearts are **deceitful above all things and desperately wicked – who can know them? The Lord alone searches the heart and tests it, giving to each person according to His ways (Jeremiah 17:9-10)**. Many parents in this day and age have spoiled their children – and are now coming to regret that spoiling. If you're given every desire of your heart without trial in time you come to expect it from everyone. Some children are now in prison because they never learned the value of suffering. Suffering draws us closer to the Lord. Suffering turns our eyes Heavenward. Suffering may lead the unrepentant sinner to turn to Jesus for salvation. What did Jesus say?

**Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

When you've got plenty you're not looking to Jesus! The Pharisees and religious wealthy men of Christ's day hated the Lord and did everything they could do to mock Him and ruin His ministry. Who sought out Jesus? Who

were Jesus' followers? Look, there's **Matthew, the hated tax collector (Matthew 9:9)**. His best friend was named “Loneliness” until he met Jesus. See over there those two stinking **blind men (Matthew 9:28)**. These men stumbled around in darkness for years begging money until they met Jesus and saw the Light. Yonder is a poor fellow **possessed with a devil, dumb as a post (Matthew 9:32)**. Jesus cast out the devil, while the Pharisees uselessly stood around raising Cain. The man you see working in that field for years was unable to do any work, for his **hand was crippled (Matthew 12:10)**. But once he met Jesus the disease was removed, and that man became an asset to his community. That dear old lady sitting in the front row of the Church, wasn't she the one who had a **terrible blood disease (Matthew 9:20)**? One day she met Jesus and, touching just the hem of His robe, was made whole.

Dear friends, you may ask “How can a Loving God allow suffering?”, but my question is “How can a Loving God *not* allow suffering?” Suffering is a part of this life, just as our internal sin is a part of this life. You may have been saved by faith in Christ Jesus – and if you have, Blessed Be the Name of the Lord! - but you did not come to be saved while you rested comfortably and assuredly in your armchair at home. Affliction brought you to Christ. Conviction of sin – a sure knowledge given to you by the preaching of God's Word – led you to repent. The Fire of God's Spirit touched your souls and made you know that – if you died lost and undone – that you would spend forever divorced from God in a place called “Hell”. Affliction and discomfort were friends that led you to Christ's side. Though you would make them

enemies, the trials of life are the greatest blessings if they lead us to the Master's side.

## **1. Our Loving God Not Only Allows Trials, He Also Sends Them**

**FOCAL** Deuteronomy 7:1-2 "When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; {2} And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee;

In this text we see two sets of trials – both caused by God. God was sending Israel into a land occupied by unbelieving enemies, so Israel was being tried. But we also see that Israel was going to possess the land of the Canaanites, so Canaan was being tried.

***Our Loving God does sends trials our way. He sends them to both believer and unbeliever. That's what we want to explore today: Why are there trials, and why does God send them?***

The Bible never hides this truth: Our Loving God *does* send trials our way. Our God is awesome, immense in His power. The Bible says that our God **can do anything He wants any way that He wants (Job 42:2)**. Those who believe in God are told:

**Isaiah 26:4 Trust ye in the LORD forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:**

God never gets tired. God is never surprised. Jesus Christ said “**with God all things are possible**” (Matthew 19:26). When we get to Heaven we will hear the shout of the angels as they sing “**Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent – all powerful – reigns!**”. God physically does whatever He wants to do. He even controls the human heart if He so desires. The Bible tells us:

**Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.**

God can do whatever He wants *however* He wants *whenever* He wants. If this statement is not true, then He is *not God*. God reigns!

If God reigns, then *why did He leave the Canaanites in the land?* Why did the Lord tell Israel “**there are seven nations greater and stronger than you in that land**”? Because

Our loving God does send trials. Trials are not there because God doesn't love us. The trials are sent to believers because God *does love us, and wants us to grow in our faith*.

**ILLUSTRATE** A dear friend gave me a wonderful illustration today about trials. This man – a great farmer

– told me that he planted five hills of cucumbers. The plants grew beautifully, and made all kinds of flowers. There was only one problem – not one of the plants had any cucumbers. What good is a cucumber plant without cucumbers? Not much good at all. My friend told me that he had a potted flower on the other side of his property that was really attracting the honey bees. So he took this potted flower and moved it down to where the cucumber plants were. It wasn't long before these same bees found the cucumber flowers – and now he has cucumbers! You see, as pretty as they were, the cucumbers needed to be pollinated. They needed those bees to come in and disturb them, to stir them up, to *try* them so that they could grow. Without trial the cucumber does not bear fruit. Without trial, God's people do not bear fruit.

We must have trials! As a plant needs the beating of the sun's rays, we need light affliction to drive us to the Lord, to bring forth fruit for the Lord.

In early Church days the **local Church at Corinth** spent most of its days fighting one another, sinning great sins, and bringing mockery on the cause of Christ because of their decadent lifestyle. Yet the little **local Churches of Macedonia** exemplified Christ in giving of themselves. Why? Because, the Apostle says,

**2 Corinthians 8:2 ... in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.**

Compare the works of Corinth and Macedonia in the

early Church. Which local Churches brought forth the most fruit? Which causes the Apostle the most grief?

You know what that means? **The more they suffered, and the more they responded by drawing closer to Jesus, the greater their ministry was.** There are several ways you can respond to a trial. You can:

1. Have a “Pity Party”, demanding of the Almighty that He *give you an account as to why He dares do what He has done*, or
2. You can get mad at God and stomp away from His Infinite blessing and His Church, or
3. You can try and fix the problem yourself, or
4. You can draw closer to God, trusting Him, and glorifying Him no matter what.

May I say that **option 4** is the only way to go? When a trial comes your way, dear Christian, rather than rail against God try *drawing closer to Him*. Spend more time in *prayer and listening*. Open your Bibles and read them. Ask God what He is trying to show you. Stop trying to *figure it out* and just trust God. Why?

All trials belong to God! Give yourselves to God in the midst of the trial, and grow in your faith. You will give your body to a fallible doctor and lay on a cold table trusting him --- why will you not trust yourselves to

God?

Look at what God told Israel:

**FOCAL (Deuteronomy 7:1a)** "When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it" ...

GOD is bringing them into the land to possess it.

**FOCAL (Deuteronomy 7:1b)** "... and hath cast out many nations before thee "...

Who's going to **cast out the nations**? God said "**I am going to cast them out before YOU**". The trial is God's trial, not your trial! You're just along for the ride, dear friend.

Look further:

**FOCAL (Deuteronomy 7:1c)** ... **seven nations greater and mightier than thou;**

We see all kinds of “hints” here. The Lord specifically says “**these seven nations are greater – BIGGER – and mightier – STRONGER than you are**”. Well if God is sending His people into a hopeless and helpless situation it must be because He expects them to *trust Him and not themselves*. Look at the word “**seven**”. My commentaries tell me that there were actually *more than seven unbelieving nations* in the Promised Land. God

used the number “seven” for a reason. You see,

---

In the Bible “seven” is a number signifying God's hand.

---

God created the earth and all that is in it in six days, and *rested on the seventh*. There are seven lamps of God around His Heavenly Throne. Jesus opens a seven sealed book which releases judgment on the earth at the end of time. God said “**there are SEVEN nations mightier than you are**”. Then He said:

**FOCAL** (Deuteronomy 7:2) **And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee;**

Whose trial was it? It was God's! He said “**the Lord thy God shall deliver them BEFORE thee**”.

## **2. Our Loving God Shares The Trial With His Believers**

**FOCAL** (Deuteronomy 7:2) “... when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them;

God never sends the trial without being nearby. He told Israel **when the Lord thy God shall deliver them**. God does not send a trial then stand afar off. He does not allow affliction to come, then take a vacation. What did the Psalmist say?

**Psalms 46:1-3 ... God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. {2} Therefore will not**

**we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; {3} Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.**

---

**God is our refuge.** A “refuge” is a place you run to in times of trouble.

---

Our God is our Refuge, the place where His people can hide. Yet our God is not a far away Refuge. The Psalmist said that He is “**a Very Present Help in trouble**”. God saved Israel from Egypt. Why would He save His people, then abandon those whom He saved? The answer is “He wouldn't”. God does not save to abandon. The Apostle Paul said:

**Romans 8:35-37 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? {36} As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. {37} Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.**

No matter what came his way Paul knew that God is in control. Paul knew that

---

What God sends to His people, He shares with His people.

---

**It was Israel's job to smite the Canaanites as God commanded – but it was God's job to deliver the Canaanites to Israel.**

The ancient Apostles saw trials – not as an evidence that God *was not there*, but as an evidence that *God is there*. They felt His Presence at all times, and this was why they could say:

**2 Corinthians 4:8-9 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; {9} Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;**

Trials struck at God's best men, and yet never struck them down. Troubled, but not distressed. Perplexed, but never in despair. Persecuted, but they were never forsaken. They were cast down, and yet never destroyed. Why? Paul goes on to say:

**2 Corinthians 4:10-11 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. {11} For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.**

As the trial afflicted the Apostle he drew closer to the Lord. As he drew closer to the Lord he – in essence and reality – became *more like Jesus*. **That the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.** A loving God sends trials to His people so that they will draw closer to Him and – by doing so – will be more like

Jesus.

---

It is God's will that we be more like Jesus.

---

It was Christ's prayer – just before He went to the Cross – that we “**may be one as the Father and the Son are one**” (John 17:11). How can we possibly be *one with God* if we will not work through the trials with God? If we bail out on God every time the slightest trial comes our way we stay in a state of Christian babyhood – and never learn to produce fruit for God. James said it this way:

**James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; {3} Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. {4} But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.**

How can one be **perfect and entire, wanting nothing** as a Christian and as a Church? By **counting it all joy when you are brought to a place where your faith is tried**. Peter said:

**1 Peter 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:**

Beloved, the trials of life are the hand of your loving God making you more like Jesus.

**ILLUSTRATE** I have a beautiful white Eskimo Spitz that I dearly love – and Friday is bath day. Scooter has long, beautiful white fur, and we try to keep him clean. But Scooter is a dog who likes to roll in the dirt and play with other dogs. As a result he gets fleas and flea eggs embedded deep in his fur. The only solution is the Friday bath!

When Scooter hears me coming his first response is to crawl under the bed. You see, he doesn't know that what I'm doing is for his own good. He thinks I'm trying to make his life miserable. And it does take a while to bathe him, to get water all through that luscious fur coat. As I wash him I see dead fleas and eggs come off and go down the drain, but all Scooter sees is the water. When we're done he's a whole lot cleaner, though he always gets me wet in the process. You see, I have to be there to give him his bath.

In the same way God stays with us as we go through trials. He is there as the suffering hits. He calls us to trust in Him, to ...

**Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. {6} In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.**

That is what God calls us to do. When the Prophet Job was afflicted by God he said:

**Job 19:25-26 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: {26} And though after my skin worms destroy**

**this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:**

### **3. True Love Ultimately Has To Make A Decision**

I can't possibly leave this section without discussing these verses:

**FOCAL Deuteronomy 7:2 "... when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them.**

**God specifically ordered Israel to smite the Canaanites, to utterly destroy them ... and not show mercy to them.** Why? I would be lying to you if I didn't say that these words are disturbing to me. In this present age suicide bombers and religious loonies kill themselves while attacking innocent people. How can we reconcile the Biblical concept of a Loving God with what we read above?

---

The problem is not with God, but with the unbelieving. The problem in this particular passage is not that God does not love, but that True Love *does have boundaries*.

---

Love without boundaries is lust, not love. Love – true love – always has boundaries. The Bible tells us that God has made Himself known to every person. God reveals Himself to mankind in both nature as well as by the still small voice He sends to the human heart by the conscience. The Apostle wrote:

**Romans 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:**

**God's eternal power and Godhead are *clearly seen*.**

God has given a clear witness of His power and His will in His Word. God is long suffering, and His love reaches out and calls all to salvation. Yet Canaan and its inhabitants continued to reject God. The Canaanites had went so far away from God that they began to *sacrifice their own children on flaming fires to false gods*.

When a nation becomes so perverted, it can no longer be reached by our Loving God. The best thing God could do was to eradicate the evil – like a cancer to cut it away from the land – lest they infect the whole world.

Sin destroys. Sin rots. Sin brings death. Jesus Christ came for this purpose **“The Son of God was made manifest to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).**

The Lord came to save you from sin. He came to **“seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10)**. What does the Scripture say?

**John 3:16-18 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him**

**might be saved. {18} He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

**“He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already”.** If you turn away from Jesus, if you refuse to give your heart to God, then sin will rule you. In ruling you it will eventually destroy you.

Come to Jesus. Come to Him by faith. Jesus said, **“Whoever comes unto Me, I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37)**. Will you not come? If not, love ultimately has to make a decision.

---

God cannot allow Israel to abide with Canaan in the earthly Promised Land, neither can He allow the unbeliever to abide in the Heavenly Promised Land with His believers. If you leave this life without Christ you will go to an *eternal devil's hell*. Period! Love demands it! God's Love for His own would not allow otherwise.

---

May God touch your hearts with His Word.