

## David's Theology of Suffering

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After studying a number of David's psalms, we can pause for a minute and reflect on his theology of suffering. Here are some points we can discern (note the darkened words):

- Since David believed in a sovereign God, his suffering was in the sovereign plan of God. So God was ultimately **responsible for** David's suffering. That's why David only appealed to God to relieve it.
- David would **not** have said that God **caused** his suffering, even though God could have prevented it. It was often caused either by David's enemies or his own sin. If you look only at God's sovereignty, then to allow suffering is the same as to cause it. But David never made that conclusion. If allows = causes (because God is sovereign), then free will is eliminated. Therefore, God was responsible for David's suffering, but not the sin or wickedness that often caused it.
- Since David always appealed to God to relieve his suffering, and never to his enemies, he assumed that God **had the authority** over his suffering. So, although others may have caused David's suffering, he continued in suffering because God had not removed it. Therefore, God was **actively**, not just passively, **involved** in David's suffering.
- David understood that God is good. Therefore, **the reason** God had not removed David's suffering was good, even though the suffering was not good.
- David understood that God tests everyone, but he did **not** see his suffering as a **test** from God.
- David saw **God as the only one to go to for relief** from suffering. David never saw that the solution to suffering was to deal with the ones who were causing it, whether it was himself (as in self-improvement) or the wicked people surrounding him (as in punishment or justice).
- David understood that **when our sin causes suffering from guilt**, the suffering will not end until we **confess the sin and repent** of it. Suffering from sin cannot be relieved by performing a religious exercise, or changing our lives for the better. *The secular world's answer to suffering is never to learn more about God. It's to learn more about yourself, human nature, and how to use your situation to succeed.* What the secular world cannot understand, or admit, is that, although we have made tremendous progress technologically, we have not changed human nature one bit.
- David did **not** believe that the purpose of suffering was to bring him **closer** to God. When he was at peace, he rejoiced before God. When he was suffering, he cried out to God. There is no evidence David saw himself closer to God because of suffering.