

QUOTES and NOTES – Understanding Suffering in the 21st Century

5/15/22 – Bert Turner

²Why should the nations say,
“Where is their God?”

³Our God is in the heavens;
he does all that he pleases.

Psalm 115:2-3

“The ancient man approached God (or even the gods) as the accused person approaches his judge. For the modern man the roles are reversed. He is the judge: God is in the dock. He is quite a kindly judge: if God should have a reasonable defence for being the god who permits war, poverty and disease, he is ready to listen to it. The trial may even end in God’s acquittal. But the important thing is that Man is on the Bench and God in the Dock.”

C.S. Lewis

12 Ah, the thunder of many peoples;
they thunder like the thundering of the sea!

Ah, the roar of nations;
they roar like the roaring of mighty waters!

13 The nations roar like the roaring of many waters,
but he will rebuke them, and they will flee far away,
chased like chaff on the mountains before the wind
and whirling dust before the storm.

Isaiah 17:12-13

3 The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up their voice;
the floods lift up their roaring.

4 Mightier than the thunders of many waters,
mightier than the waves of the sea,
the Lord on high is mighty!

Psalm 93:3-4

Theodicies

- Soul-making theodicy Ecclesiastes 7:15
- Free-will theodicy Romans 3:10-11
- Process or limited knowledge theology

God's nature

- God is Sovereign and free – Psalm 115:3
 - God cannot lie or break a promise – Numbers 23:19
 - God cannot be tempted by evil – James 1:13
 - God cannot deny or contradict his perfectly righteous and holy nature – 2 Timothy 2:11-13
– 1 Peter 1:16
-

⁸“Remember this and stand firm,
recall it to mind, you transgressors,
⁹ remember the former things of old;
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me,
¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose,’

Isaiah 46:8-10

19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; 20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.

1 John 3:19-20

“Human beings operating within the immanent frame have far more confidence in their reasoning powers and their ability to unlock the mysteries of the universe than did ancient people. The belief—that because we cannot think of something, God cannot think of it either—is more than a fallacy. It is a mark of great pride and faith in one’s own mind.”

– **Walking with God through Pain and Suffering by Timothy Keller**

⁶Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

⁷For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

Ps 95

Biblical doctrines on Suffering

1. We serve a personal, wise, infinite, and inscrutable God

Romans 11: 33: Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

Ecclesiastes 3:10-11: 10 I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

2. God, himself, in the person of Jesus Christ came to earth to sacrificially suffer with and for us.

Hebrews 5:7-9: 7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

3. Because Christ suffered on the Cross for us, we have great assurance of his love and care.

Romans 8:31-32: 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

4. There is a coming bodily resurrection from the dead for all who believe. God will be fully seen. He will wipe away every tear. We will become like him.

1 Corinthians 15:50-53: 50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

1 John 3:2: 2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

5. God ordains suffering in order to reveal his mercy to us and his glory in us.

Romans 8:18-23: 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

1 Peter 2:21: 21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.