

● **A refuge in time of trouble**

* Psalm 9:9-10, 27:5, 32:6-7, 34:1-22, 41:1-3, 46:1-3, 71:19-21, 91:1-16, 94:12-13, 116:1-6, 138:7

God is concerned about our trouble. As we turn to him in our distress he will help us to bear our burdens.

* 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

What kind of God is he? _____

* Isaiah 53:1-12 * Matthew 27:46 * Hebrews 5:7-9

What did he do to identify with our sufferings and to carry them?



The suffering of God through Jesus is the ultimate answer to trouble.

What trouble do you have at the moment?

Bring it to the father of all comfort and to the son who suffered for you.

trouble

extra thought and discussion

• **Suffering and persecution**

In the New Testament, the idea of suffering mainly applies to suffering for the gospel. Jesus brought trouble upon himself because he faithfully spoke the truth, demonstrated the power of God, helped the needy and exposed evil and hypocrisy (Matt 16:21). For this he was nailed to a cross. All through history righteous people have suffered at the hands of the wicked - it began with Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-8, Heb 11:4, 1 John 3:12-13, Matt 23:33-36).

As Christians we can expect to experience persecution as we stand for the gospel, righteousness and truth.

- Jesus promised that persecution was part of discipleship (Mark 13:9-13) - this is the meaning of "carrying your cross" (Luke 9:23-27).
- Persecution may come from the world around (John 15:18-21), from earthly governments (Matt 10:17-20, Acts 12:1-3), religious authorities (Acts 5:17-18), and even your own family (Matt 10:21-23).
- Paul suffered much physical hardship, trouble and persecution because he faithfully followed Jesus (2 Cor 1:8-11, 2 Cor 6:3-10, 2 Cor 11:23-28, 2 Tim 2:9, 2 Tim 3:10-12). However he experienced joy and triumph in his sufferings (Rom 5:3, Rom 8:31-

39, 2 Cor 7:4), knowing the power of God and being privileged to share in the sufferings of Christ (Rom 8:17, Phil 3:10, Col 1:24). The sufferings in this world are only temporary, making way for eternal glory (2 Cor 4:16-18).

- We should pray and support those who are being persecuted (Eph 6:19-20). We are called to persevere in persecution (Heb 11:32-12:3) and God has promised to help and comfort us (Heb 13:6).
- The book of 1 Peter is good reading for those who are being persecuted.

• **The end of the age**

At the end of the age we can expect an increase in general trouble in the world and increased persecution of Christians (Matt 24:1-35, Rev 6:1-17:18). The Bible finishes with the return of Jesus, the destruction of evil and eternal trouble-free existence for the redeemed (Rev 18:1-22:5).

• **Learning through trouble**

Although trouble is generally a bad thing, it can be used for our benefit. We can learn patience, humility and love, becoming more sympathetic to others as we go through difficult times ourselves. We are encouraged to endure hardship as discipline from our loving father and to use everything that happens as a learning experience of life (Heb 12:4-13). Sometimes going through trouble will bring us to serve God in a new way - don't forget the vows you made when you were in trouble (Ps 66:13-14)! Times of testing can increase faith (James 1:2-4).

trouble

* Genesis 3:16-19 * Job 14:1

What is the origin of our trouble?

Trouble is universal to human beings and a significant part of our existence. Much of the Bible is devoted to trouble.

Tick the troubles which you have come across personally or which you have been close to.



<p>Natural disasters</p> <input type="checkbox"/> earthquake <input type="checkbox"/> volcano <input type="checkbox"/> floods <input type="checkbox"/> drought <input type="checkbox"/> famine <input type="checkbox"/> storms <input type="checkbox"/> hurricanes <input type="checkbox"/> pests <input type="checkbox"/> fire <input type="checkbox"/> epidemics	<p>Violence</p> <input type="checkbox"/> war <input type="checkbox"/> civil unrest <input type="checkbox"/> crime <input type="checkbox"/> robbery <input type="checkbox"/> injury <input type="checkbox"/> bullying <input type="checkbox"/> harassment <input type="checkbox"/> threats <input type="checkbox"/> abuse <input type="checkbox"/> rape	<input type="checkbox"/> addictions <input type="checkbox"/> losing things <input type="checkbox"/> arrest <input type="checkbox"/> trial <input type="checkbox"/> disgrace <input type="checkbox"/> shame	<input type="checkbox"/> death <input type="checkbox"/> bereavement <input type="checkbox"/> suicide
<p>Accidents</p> <input type="checkbox"/> travel accidents <input type="checkbox"/> home accidents <input type="checkbox"/> injury <input type="checkbox"/> fire	<p>Personal troubles</p> <input type="checkbox"/> loneliness <input type="checkbox"/> poverty <input type="checkbox"/> unemployment <input type="checkbox"/> drinking	<p>Health and death</p> <input type="checkbox"/> illness <input type="checkbox"/> disease <input type="checkbox"/> injury <input type="checkbox"/> pain <input type="checkbox"/> mental illness <input type="checkbox"/> depression <input type="checkbox"/> breakdown <input type="checkbox"/> disability	<p>Relationships</p> <input type="checkbox"/> loss of friends <input type="checkbox"/> arguments <input type="checkbox"/> disagreements <input type="checkbox"/> family breakdown <input type="checkbox"/> divorce <input type="checkbox"/> wrongly accused <input type="checkbox"/> misunderstood

Other: _____

How would you rate your share of trouble in life?

- lots some not much hardly any

What is the worst trouble you have experienced?

What do you blame for your troubles?

- yourself other people society God the devil
 nature bad luck other _____



● Job's troubles

* **Job 1:1-2:10** What troubles did Job have?

What was the origin of Job's troubles?

What was Job's immediate reaction to his troubles?

● Job's friends — a simple explanation

Three friends come to visit Job in his distress. They have a simple explanation for his troubles. What is it?

Eliphaz (4:7-9, 5:17-18) _____

Bildad (8:1-7, 20) _____

Zophar (11:13-17) _____

* **Proverbs 11:8, 11:17, 12:13, 12:21, 13:21, 13:25, 28:14**

What is the message of these proverbs?

* **Deuteronomy 28:1-68**

What is the message of this chapter?

What kinds of trouble are forecast for the wicked?

The teaching of much of the Bible is that we get what we deserve. If we are wicked and disobey God then we bring trouble upon ourselves (*Psalm 7:14-16*). We also put ourselves outside the protection of God and may be punished or disciplined by him through trouble.

Job's friends were using these arguments to convince him that he must be a sinner. There was a simple solution — he needed to repent.

Were they right or wrong (Job 42:7)? _____

Why? _____



● Job's reply — it's not that simple!

Job was not convinced by his friends' arguments (*Job 19:21-22*)!

* **Job 7:17-21** * **Job 9:2** * **Job 23:10-12** * **Job 31:1-40**

What point is Job making in these verses?

Job does not think he is perfect but his suffering is quite out of proportion to his relatively righteous life. He challenges the justice of God. The fact is that many righteous people suffer and their suffering is not simply related to their behaviour (John 9:1-3).

* **Job 21:4-16**

What further point is Job making here?

This is a common complaint (*Psalm 10:2-13, 73:1-14, Jeremiah 12:1-2, Habakkuk 1:2-4, 12-17, Malachi 3:14-15*).



● God's reply — you will not always understand!

* **Job 38:1-42:6**

The book of Job finishes with a declaration of the power, wisdom and justice of God. What was Job's response to this revelation?

● Reacting to trouble

How did these people react to trouble?

2 Chron 28:22 _____

Job 3:1-26, Jer 20:14-18 _____

1 Kings 19:1-5 _____

Job 10:1 _____

Ps 10:1, 22:1 _____

Ps 55:6-8 _____

Ps 88:1-18 _____

Ps 25:16-21 _____

Ps 42:1-2 _____

Ps 77:10-12 _____

Ps 18:1-50 _____

Lam 3:1-26 _____

How do you react to trouble?

Can you identify with any of the above?

* **James 5:13** What should you do? _____

