

- e. Job's experience shows us that God is in sovereign and complete control of all events in the universe. He has a great Plan; it encompasses all things; and our present suffering is part of that Plan. It is important to know that our suffering is not a surprise to God, but has been fully anticipated; and to know that because He has anticipated it, He is already working together with everything associated with it to bring glory to Him and good to us.

C. What is the Meaning of Christ's Suffering?

1. What did Christ's suffering mean for Him?

Christ suffered in life and in death. He suffered physically and mentally. He suffered threats, persecution, and rejection. He suffered in His body and in His spirit. He experienced the limitation of finiteness and humanity, and placed self-limitations on His exercise of power. He partially veiled His glory by choosing the path of humiliation and by taking on the role of a servant. He suffered hunger, thirst, and weariness. He allowed men to mock Him, strike Him, beat Him, scourge Him, and nail His hands and feet to a cross.

2. What does Christ's suffering mean for our suffering?

- a. We know that Christ has actually entered into the experience of suffering. He has been there!
- b. We know that Christ can sympathize and empathize with our suffering. He knows what we are experiencing, and He knows it by experience!
- c. We know that, because Christ loves us as His brothers and sisters for whom He has sacrificed His life, He cares for us even while we are in the midst of suffering. The depth of His care is measured by the depth of His love.
- d. Because Christ knows what suffering is, empathizes with us in it, and loves and cares for us in the midst of it, we can without reservation trust Him to do what is best for His glory and our highest interests. In the depths of suffering, when we need all of our strength just to bear it, and have no strength to reach out in active faith or love to God, we can leave it all in His strong hands and rest in His faithfulness and His love, knowing that He will hold us, never let us go, and bring us safely through. And we can do this in complete confidence, knowing that He has bound Himself to the fulfillment of His great and precious promises, none of which has ever failed or ever will!