

Sovereignty, Suffering, and Sympathy

Jesus promised that, in this sin-stained world, we “*will have trouble,*” yet He encouraged us to “*take heart*” (John 16:33, NIV). Throughout the waves of life, we all find ourselves, at one time or another, either in the midst of suffering or trying to help someone else who is feeling crushed under the weight of it. How are we to walk in the midst of hardship, pain, agony, and affliction? How can we come alongside and help someone who is hurting? Thankfully, God has not left us without witness. The book of Job, which is both theologically rich and practical, provides these answers and more. Central to Job is the important lesson of how a proper understanding of God’s sovereignty and goodness will lead to hope and comfort in the midst of suffering and produce godly sympathy for others who suffer.

Sovereignty behind the Scenes

Since sovereignty is central to the book of Job, it is useful to begin with a few definitions. What exactly is meant by “sovereignty?” According to the seventh question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, “The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.”¹ Thus, God has a sovereign plan which He freely decreed in eternity past according to His own will and good pleasure. This sovereign plan is actualized in real time through the active and passive providence of God (i.e. His governing of all people, creatures, events, and circumstances). So, in the simplest of terms, God’s sovereignty pertains to the decrees He made before the foundation of the world and His providential execution of those decrees in real time. It also points to Him as the One Supreme Ruler who is in control of everything at all times.

One may ask, “Why does it matter?” or “What does this have to do with comfort in the midst of suffering?” Everything! A proper understanding of the sovereign plan and providence of God is critical for believers to live godly lives that are secure, worry-free, and built upon a rock, even in the midst of severe suffering. Only when these truths are properly understood can believers have genuine hope, which is well founded and sure. Without an appreciation for these powerful, life-changing truths, the believer will be unable to live life to the glory of God.

The book of Job is unique in that it peels back the veil of the spiritual dimension for the reader. The first two chapters reveal that the suffering Job endured served the purpose of proving that true faith will not fail, because it is not conditioned on circumstances. Nor is it related to, or in proportion with, the amount of blessings received. Although the reader is clued in to these facts related to the reason for Job’s suffering, none of the people involved (i.e. Job, his family, or his friends who came to comfort him) had any knowledge of them. Throughout most of the book, the reader is allowed to be “a fly on the wall” as Job and his friends try to figure out why he is suffering. Although none of them knew the answer, one can discern a fundamental difference between Job and his friends – Job had a proper understanding of God’s sovereignty and his friends did not.

Job was described as “*blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil*” (1:1). He cared deeply for God and his family (1:5). God Himself said, “*My servant Job...there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.*” (1:8, 2:3). In the early chapters of the book, Satan proposed that Job only feared God as a result of being blessed by Him (1:9-10, 2:4) and that, upon removal of God’s blessing,

¹ *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Press, 2001), 288.

his reverent fear would turn to cursing (1:11, 2:5). Derek Kidner frames the question in this way, “Does God’s finest servant, his boasted showpiece, Job, serve him for conscience or convenience? It is this that sets the story in motion.”² At the very beginning of the book, we immediately see three extremely important principles at work related to the sovereignty of God.

Principle #1: Much of God’s Plan is Unknown to Us

In order to make any sense of suffering, we must realize that much of God’s plan is and will always be unknown to us. As mentioned above, none of the parties involved in Job knew why Job suffered. Therefore, we should also be very careful about drawing inferences regarding the reason for the suffering experienced by ourselves and others. Kidner wrote, “Once and for all, these opening scenes make it clear that suffering does not necessarily imply any guilt in the victim, nor any failure in his precautions or in his faith.”³ As much as we may try to figure out the plan of God, we never will. At most, we will see “*the fringes of His ways*” (26:14a). God may not reveal a clear reason for the suffering, so we ought to spend our efforts striving to know God, rather than striving to know reasons for our suffering.

Principle #2: God is in Control of Everything, Even Satan

Although many people attribute various measures of dominion, power, or even “legal authority” to Satan, we must remember that Satan was not able to independently smite Job. Doing so required the approval and commission of God (1:12, 2:6),⁴ because “God gives Satan power over Job but only up to a point.”⁵ Thus, although Satan is responsible and accountable for what he has done, he was, in reality, a *secondary* cause. Since God has ultimate authority, He was the initial and *primary* cause. Notice also that God allowed Satan to use forces of nature and people as secondary causes. Satan used the Sabeans (1:15), fire (1:16), the Chaldeans (1:17), and wind (1:19) to attack and kill. Of course, within the providence of God, the Sabeans and Chaldeans acted according to their own will and desire. So we have three layers of causation, (1) God’s ordination, (2) Satan’s directives, and (3) the actions of people. It is critical to understand that God did not use Satan as a puppet. Nor did Satan do so with the the Sabeans and Chaldeans. Although God ordained the work of Satan, and Satan directed the people, each evil party (i.e. Satan and the murderous people) acted by their own volition in accordance with their own evil desires.

Principle #3: God Acts According to His Plan, Purpose, and Good Pleasure

We must recognize that this statement is true from a global perspective. In other words, although God ordains isolated acts of evil, He does so for the purpose of working them together toward the overall purpose of His plan. One must have an eternal perspective to see this. The cross of Christ is the single greatest example of God ordaining something He hates to accomplish

² Derek Kidner, *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes: An Introduction to Wisdom Literature* (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 56.

³ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴ “Then the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.” So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.” (1:12); “So the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.’” (2:6).

⁵ Rolland McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity* (Allen Park, MI.: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 1:344.

something He loves (cf. Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23, 4:27-28).⁶ Christ's death on the cross was the single most heinous and wicked act in all of history. Yet, without it, there would be no redemption, no salvation, no Savior. Some isolated evil acts are allowed in order to work together toward God's glorious and perfect plan (cf. Romans 8:28).⁷ The temptation to look at an isolated evil act and conclude that God is not good must be avoided at all costs. When we read that "*God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases*" (Psalm 115:3), we must understand that God does not simply operate on the basis of some arbitrary or capricious pleasure, but on the basis of His *good* pleasure (Isaiah 46:9-10; Philippians 2:13).⁸

Sovereignty in Action

After the prologue (i.e. the first two chapters), which give us a bird's eye view of the behind the scenes spiritual activity leading up to Job's suffering, the book presents an extended dialogue between Job and his friends (chapters 3-37).

Background

Prior to an examination of what the participants of the dialogue said, it is of significance to be aware of the fact that Job's three friends came to him "*to sympathize with him and comfort him*" (2:11). They even began quite well. When they saw the magnitude of his affliction, Job's friends wept (v. 12) and sat silently with him for seven whole days (v. 13). Although their motivation was commendable and they started off well, their approach proved to be utterly atrocious. In the end, their efforts only served to torment and insult Job (19:2-3) and kindle God's wrath (42:7). All was good while they sat quietly and wept, but once they decided to open their mouths, it was all downhill from there. Throughout this section of the book, Job's friends do their humanly best job of theorizing and philosophizing about why Job was suffering and how his suffering could be alleviated. Since none of them (including Job) were privy to the happenings described in the first two chapters of the book, they never truly knew the root cause of Job's suffering, yet, they were quite confident that they did.

What was the source of their problem? What caused Job's friends to transition from compassionate companions with good intentions of sympathy and comfort to tormentors of both Job and God? *Bad theology!* Their lack of good theology had a serious practical effect on their ability to do what they had intended to do (i.e. comfort Job). Although they desired to see him relieved of his troubles, their understanding of how alleviate the pain was severely flawed and only served to *add* to his frustration and pain. They had a man-centered theology. Job, on the other hand, maintained a God-centered theology throughout the dialogue. What made their theology man-centered while Job's was God-centered? They did not correctly understand the sovereignty of God, and Job did. There are three principle differences between Job and his

⁶ "*For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!*" (Luke 22:22); "*this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*" (Acts 2:23); "*For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.*" (Acts 4:27-28)

⁷ "*And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*" (Romans 8:28)

⁸ "*Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';*" (Isaiah 46:9-10)

friends in their understanding of God's sovereignty. In the end, their grasp of and confidence in these principles made the difference between blessing and wrath (42:7, 12).⁹

Principle #1: God's Plan is Unconditional and Certain – Throughout the dialogue, Job's friends consistently and persistently make known their misunderstandings about God's sovereignty. In their minds, God's sovereignty consists of Him governing the world in a reactionary manner via spiritual laws of cause and effect. In the physical realm, the law of gravity in operates according to a predicable cause and effect pattern (i.e. what goes up will come back down at a rate of 32 feet per second squared). In a similar way, they concluded that the spiritual realm operates in the same manner (i.e. there is a spiritual law of sin which always elicits a one-to-one punishment in accordance with the degree of the sin). Their view of God and theology was simple: God always rewards good behavior and always punishes bad behavior. Therefore, all suffering is an indication of God's punishment for sin, and all blessing is an indication of God's reward to righteous living. An example of this unbiblical theology can be found in the words of Eliphaz: "*Remember now, whoever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed?*" (4:7). What a dangerous statement this was given the fact that his words described the exact plight of the coming Messiah, who would innocently suffer for the sins of His people (cf. Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 53; 1 Peter 3:18)!¹⁰ This type of cause and effect mentality robs God of His sovereignty and places man on the throne. God is then shrunk down to the role of simply reacting and responding to man based on His "rulebook." To this end, Bildad stated, "*If you are pure and upright, Surely now He would rouse Himself for you And restore your righteous estate*" (8.6; cf. Eliphaz's statement in 22:23 and Elihu's in 34:11). This statement sounds frighteningly similar to those of today's "Word of Faith" movement. Should we really think that God owes us anything and that we are pure?

Job, on the other hand, understood that God's plan was more than a conditional reward system. He realized that God independently chooses when to give and when to take away (1:20-22),¹¹ that both good and adversity are from God (2:9-10), and that God can do all things and cannot be stopped (23:13-14; 42:1-2; cf. Psalm 33:11).¹² This is true, because God is immutable (i.e. unchanging), and so is His plan. The theory that God changes His mind when man decides to "clean up his act," places God in a box and relegates Him to a position lower than man. Although Job's friends were of this persuasion, Job speaks many of words which flatly contradict and refute their arguments (12:6; 21:7-9) and affirm his trust in the unconditional sovereignty of God (e.g. 9:5-12; 12:9-25; 19:21b; 31:23).¹³ In contrast to Job's trust, the finger pointing of his friends degenerated to the level of making up false allegations against Job (22:5-

⁹ "It came about after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has." (42:7); "The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys." (42:12)

¹⁰ "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;" (1 Peter 3:18)

¹¹ "Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. ²¹ He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." ²² Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God." (Job 1:20-22)

¹² "But He is unique and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, that He does. ¹⁴ "For He performs what is appointed for me, And many such decrees are with Him." (Job 23:13-14); "Then Job answered the LORD and said, ² "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted." (42:1-2)

¹³ "Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this, ¹⁰ In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind" (12:9-10);

10) and arguing that Job's children were murdered as a result of their sin against God (8:4). So much for compassion!

Principle #2: God's Plan is Comprehensive and Eternal

Without the understanding that God's plan is comprehensive and eternal, one is left with the myopic view that God's plan depends upon his daily actions. Instead of having an eternal perspective that see beyond the temporal to the eternal (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18), he is left with a focus on "the here and now." The fact that God's plan is comprehensive necessarily implies that it is also universal and all-inclusive (see Ephesians 1:11 and Proverbs 16:4).

Hope has been defined as "confident expectancy...not wishful thinking, but a firm assurance about things that are unseen and still in the future."¹⁴ When one constantly lives under the theological assumptions of Job's friends, there can be no hope, because all reliance is placed upon one's own ability to please God through self effort, which is futile. To the contrary, the Bible teaches that, although we do not know what tomorrow brings (James 4:13-15), we can take comfort in God's plan, because we know it results in God's glory and our good (Romans 8:28). This is why Job could confidently say, "*Though He slay me, I will hope in Him*" (13:15a). Unlike his friends, who could not see past their noses, Job had an eye toward redemption, his Mediator, and the consummation (19:25-29).¹⁵

Principle #3: God's Plan is Directed Toward His Glory

Ultimately, everything God does is for His own glory (Isaiah 42:8, 43:7; 1 Corinthians 10:31).¹⁶ When God is viewed as one who simply reacts and responds to man, God's freedom is denied in the name of man's freedom. Consequently, God loses glory, because His glory fully depends on the works of man instead of His independent actions. Unfortunately, some of the disciples of Jesus were influenced by the same type of popular "cause and effect" theology as Job's friends. When approached for healing by a blind man, "*His disciples asked Him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.'*" (John 9:2-3). Jesus made it abundantly clear that the man's blindness was not as result of his sin or anyone else's; it was God's gracious gift to him that God's glory may be seen through him. Job understood the same regarding his own suffering. Immediately after his trials began, he "*fell to the ground and worshipped*" (1:20) recognizing and exulting in the Lord's sovereignty, saying "*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD*" (v. 21). Through all of the suffering, while his friends were preoccupied with some imaginary sin of his, Job maintained an acute awareness of his human sinfulness, weakness, and mortality (e.g. 10:15).¹⁷ This awareness served to direct his focus to his need for and trust in his mediator, the Messiah (9:32-35; 16:19)¹⁸ who had sovereignly determined all of

¹⁴ R.F. Youngblood, F.F. Bruce, R.K. Harrison, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995).

¹⁵ "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. ²⁶ "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; ²⁷ Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!" (19:15-17)

¹⁶ "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images." (Isaiah 42:8)

¹⁷ "If I am wicked, woe to me! And if I am righteous, I dare not lift up my head. I am sated with disgrace and conscious of my misery." (10:15)

¹⁸ "Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, And my advocate is on high." (16:19)

the days and months of his life (14:5; cf. Psalm 139:16).¹⁹ In quiet recognition of God's grace, Job uttered, "*You have granted me life and lovingkindness; And Your care has preserved my spirit*" (10:12). In contrast, his friend Elihu, in unwavering focus on man's efforts, uttered, "*For He pays a man according to his work, And makes him find it according to his way*" (34:11). As one would expect, these two diametrically opposed views provide vastly different motivations for personal holiness and obedience to God. A God-centered view furnished Job with resolve toward personal holiness for the right reasons (27:3-4; 28:23-28).²⁰

Sovereignty Confirmed, Yet Concealed

After thirty five chapters of dialogue between Job and his friends, God spoke out of the whirlwind to Job (chapters 38-41). Although "*the LORD answered Job*" for four chapters, He never gave any hint as to why Job suffered. He did not offer any reasons to Job or his friends. Instead, He only confirmed that He is sovereign, wise, and good. Robert Reymond wrote:

And the some seventy to eighty questions God...addresses to Job in chapters 38-41 are staggering in their depth of penetration, and the number of spheres over which he claims to exercise his sovereignty is awesome (see Job 42:2).²¹

After speaking to Job, the Lord rebuked his three friends saying, "*My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has*" (42:7). This verse marks the entirety of the record of God's rebuke of Job's friends. Thus, it is critical to notice the reason the Lord's gave for why His wrath was kindled against them: they had not spoken accurately about God as Job has. The Septuagint²² says it this way: "...you sinned, and your two friends, because you did not speak that which is true before Me, as My servant Job did." Wow...the comforters were dead wrong about God, and their declaration of false doctrine was considered to be sin! When we step back and examine what the friends actually said, we find that they had a lot of good and true things to say about God, but the specific errors they propounded proved to be quite harmful and worthy of rebuke by God Himself. All of their misunderstandings about God were centered on His sovereignty. As a result, they misdirected Job and offered bad counsel on the basis of their poor theology. Although they initially intended to comfort him, they eventually proved that they were more interested in winning an argument than helping their friend. Of course, this only served to frustrate their ailing friend. Throughout the discourse, they acted as "*worthless physicians*" (13:4-5), "*sorry comforters*" (16:2), tormentors, crushers, insulters, wrongdoers (19:2-3), and unwise counselors (26:2-3).

Although God declared to Eliphaz that Job spoke the truth about Him (42:7), He also rebuked Job for speaking "*words without knowledge*" (38:2). So, despite the fact that Job spoke accurately regarding God and His sovereignty, he spoke without knowledge. What does this mean? Job himself explained during his confession before God: "*I have declared that which I*

¹⁹ "*Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; And his limits You have set so that he cannot pass.*" (14:5)

²⁰ "*For as long as life is in me, And the breath of God is in my nostrils, My lips certainly will not speak unjustly, Nor will my tongue mutter deceit.*" (27:3-4); "*And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.'*" (28:28)

²¹ Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 358.

²² The Greek translation of the Old Testament dated more than two centuries before Christ.

did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know" (42:3). Perhaps Job's proper understanding of God's sovereignty was taken as a bitter pill (7:11; cf. Jonah 3:10-4:3, 11), because he did not see it in the light of God's goodness (e.g. 30:20-21). When a person sincerely believes that God is wholly good and infinitely wise, he accepts by faith that everything God does is good, because God is good. Then, instead of bitterly asking "why" as Job did (e.g. 7:20b), he embraces the trial in humble dependence on Christ. In the midst of being beat over the head with the bad theology and compassionless accusations of his friends, Job's frustration got the best of him, and bitterness gripped him. This was the reason why God spent four chapters highlighting His goodness and wisdom as He rebuked Job.

Lessons Learned

In the end, Job provided a good example of humility. Although his bitterness was evidence that he was far from perfect, he maintained a God-centered theology and disproved Satan's accusations that his faith would fail. When confronted by God, Job quickly repented for his bitterness and lack of knowledge regarding God's goodness. Although he still did not know why God subjected him to so much suffering, Job now rested in God's goodness, as well as the sovereignty he had embraced all along. Then, at the point when he accepted his plight and stopped asking "why," God restored and exceedingly blessed him. Thankfully, even Job's friends repented after being rebuked for their man-centered theology and horrible counsel.

All of us, at some time or another, will find ourselves either suffering or trying to minister to someone who is. How are we to walk in the midst of hardship, pain, agony, and affliction? How can we come alongside and help someone who is hurting? Central to Job is the important lesson of how a proper understanding of God's sovereignty and goodness will lead to hope and comfort in the midst of suffering and produce godly sympathy for others who suffer. A summary of seven key lessons pertaining to sovereignty, suffering, and sympathy in Job follows.

First, as believers, we are to demonstrate true faith and hope in God regardless of the outcome and not conditioned on circumstances. This faith and hope is rooted in a God-centered knowledge of and trust in the sovereignty of God.

Second, in order to have a God-centered understanding of sovereignty, we must embrace the following seven beliefs: (1) God foreordains everything that comes to pass; (2) Much of God's plan is unknown and will always be unknown to us; (3) God is the supreme ruler who is in control of everything; (4) God always acts in accordance with His own plan, purpose, and good pleasure; (5) God's plan is unconditional and certain; (6) God's plan is comprehensive and eternal; (7) God's plan is directed toward His own glory.

Third, we must realize that God does not owe any of us anything. It is His prerogative give and take away, and it is our duty to trust without question or blame. We must, therefore, endeavor to have a high view of God and a sober view of man. This entails seeing with the eyes of faith and trusting in God's wisdom and goodness and accepting whatever He providentially brings. It also entails knowing that we live by grace and being thankful for it.

Fourth, believers must maintain an eternal perspective, as opposed to being caught up with the here and now. Regardless of what happens on earth, we have a place prepared for us in heaven. Additionally, we ought to consider how God can use our trials to advance His kingdom on earth and bring glory to Himself.

Fifth, sitting quietly with people who are grieving, suffering or afflicted is a loving and compassionate way to show them care and sympathy. Spouting out bad theology which points fingers and incorrectly blames them for their condition generates frustration and fails to minister

the grace of Jesus Christ to them. Instead, we ought to encourage them toward an eternal perspective regarding their trial in light of God's sovereignty, goodness, and wisdom as well as the grace of Jesus Christ in the gospel. Instead of knocking them down, we need to lift them up and help them see with the eyes of faith and trust.²³ Thomas Murphy argued that this "is the minister's splendid opportunity for imitating the example and manifesting the spirit of Christ."²⁴

Sixth, it is imperative that we recognize the danger of bad theology and endeavor to have an accurate view of Scripture. Without an appreciation for these powerful, life-changing truths, believers will be unable to live life to the glory of God, let alone comfort others.

Last, when we are wrong about something (and we will be), we must demonstrate a humble, teachable spirit by immediately repenting and confessing our sins.

When we believe, understand, and apply these seven key lessons from Job regarding sovereignty, suffering, and sympathy, we will walk victoriously through hardship, pain, agony, and affliction and be able to help others do the same. Rick Holland provides a fitting conclusion:

Heaven is the time and place where all believers will enjoy the absence of all evil and suffering and the presence of unmitigated joy. The problem of evil is the cry of the soul for that experience. It is placing upon this world expectations that can only be met in heaven. Considering our unworthiness in light of the infinite tributaries of God's goodness, sovereignty, wisdom, grace, and mercy can reset the troubled heart with the power of perspective. The realities of heaven and hell bring evil and suffering into sharp focus...God uses the troubles of our lives, culminating in the inevitability of our own deaths, to pry our grips off this world and refocus our hearts on what lies ahead with Him...If a believer can keep his mind on God, no evil in this world can steal his peace. And that will enough till heaven.²⁵

²³ Note that one must be a believer in Jesus Christ in order to exercise faith in the midst of trials. The greatest comfort possible for the unbeliever is to lovingly present gospel of Jesus Christ by which they can be saved and transformed. Apart from the life-changing gospel, the unbeliever has no genuine hope.

²⁴ Thomas Murphy, *Pastoral Theology: The Pastor in the Various Duties of His Office* (Willow Street, PA.: Old Paths Publications, 2001), 239.

²⁵ Rick Holland, "Sorrow, Suffering, and the Sovereignty of God," in John MacArthur et al., *Right Thinking in a World Gone Wrong: A Biblical Response to Today's Most Controversial Issues* (Eugene OR.: Harvest House Publishers, 2009), 187.

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