

## **Suffering and the Sovereignty of God**

The Bible teaches us that God is sovereign in his reign and controls all things (Psalm 135:6; Isaiah 46:9-11; Daniel 4:35). Every atom of creation is within the spheres of God's knowledge, power and presence.

But what about the world of human relationships and the world of principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12). The tension between this world and God's sovereignty is sometimes more difficult to process.

God's sovereignty over the frustrations, difficulties and calamities that we face in this world comes up often in Scripture. We see it in the story of Job; over human depravity (Job 1:15, 17), and natural disasters (Job 1:16, 19). The Preacher in

Ecclesiastes tells us what God "has made crooked" we cannot make straight (Ecclesiastes 7:13).

Paul also tells us that God has subjected the world in which we live to vanity (Romans 8:20). These scriptures, and others like them, echo the text of Genesis 3 where God outlined how suffering would manifest itself in the life of humanity; specifically identifying the physiology of the woman, the work-life of the man and in the relationships of both (Genesis 3:16-19).

Think of it this way; when Adam sinned in the garden the manner in which he fell and the form of the misery in which he landed was according to God's sovereign purposes. In short, God has built pain, difficulty and frustration into the fabric of our world and all creation and humanity groans under it (Romans 8:22-23).

Only the power of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ can bring sense to this suffering and frustration.

It is the gospel alone, that provides the perspective of wisdom and knowledge to navigate the rough terrain of a fallen world, and in a strange and often inexplicable way, provides incomprehensible peace and inexpressible joy in the midst of it all

(Ecclesiastes 2:26; Philippians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:8). In his sovereignty, God redeems the calamities, frustrations and pains of the world for his own glory and for our good (Romans 8:28).