


TIME SERIES NO.21

SUFFERING

**A WESTGATE
MONOGRAPH**

SUFFERING

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph is No.21 in the present series. The treatment buys into the book of Job substantially because the ultimate issue is multifaceted. Job is a very ancient book that some believe may have come from pre-diluvian treasure trove of Noah preserved in Alexandria but it is more likely to have been set in the Jacob-Joseph era. For a fuller treatment of the topic go to my commentary on Job which I guess is amongst the most detailed you will come across. The monograph has a short segment on “filling up the sufferings of Christ” and a concluding chapter on the perceived end of suffering on earth. I do not consider that this monograph should range beyond to the perceived sufferings of the wicked in Hell. That is another subject and as to whether it is punctuated by the judgment of the Great White Throne or summarily ends in the Second Death the best minds of our time differ. That subject I have sought to address in monograph No.10. I have in connection with the final era of our globe rounded off this study with reference to an event that parallels the latter days of Job when great felicity returned to his lovely family- and present the happy event of the golden era of Christ’s rule which leapfrogs the period of warfare ahead when the Lord again deals directly with mankind in judgments which demonstrates that in wrath He remembers mercy and that though God is holy and must truncate times of wickedness He is essentially the only wise God and covenant love is His enduring posture.

Bob the Scribbler Westgate September 2013

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CHAPTER 1 SUFFERING & THE WORLD FAITHS

Suffering plays an important role in a number of religions, regarding matters such as the following: consolation or relief; moral conduct (do no harm, help the afflicted, show compassion); spiritual advancement through life hardships or through self-imposed trials (mortification of the flesh, penance, ascetism); ultimate destiny (salvation, damnation, hell). Theodicy deals with the problem of evil, which is the difficulty of reconciling the existence of an omnipotent and benevolent god with the existence of evil: a quintessential form of evil, for many people, is extreme suffering, especially in innocent children, or in creatures destined to an eternity of torments (see problem of hell).

BUDDHISM

The 'Four Noble Truths' of **Buddhism** are about dukkha, a term usually translated as suffering. They state the nature of suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation (which is the Noble Eightfold Path).

Buddhism considers liberation from suffering and the practice of compassion (karuna) as basic for leading a holy life and attaining nirvana.

HINDUISM

Hinduism holds that suffering follows naturally from personal negative behaviors in one's current life or in a past life (see karma in Hinduism). One must accept suffering as a just consequence and as an opportunity for spiritual progress. Thus the soul or true self, which is eternally free of any suffering, may come to manifest itself in the person, who then achieves liberation (moksha). Abstinence from causing pain or harm to other beings (ahimsa) is a central tenet of Hinduism.

MOHAMMED & THE QURAN

In Islam, the faithful must endure suffering with hope and faith, not resist or ask why, accept it as Allah's will and submit to it as a test of faith (Allah never asks more than can be endured). One must also work to alleviate suffering of others, as well as one's own.

The **Moslem theory of suffering** published on line by UMMA teaching records that "It may be that a person who has experienced great trials in the world faces Allah on the day of judgement with little or no sins. So tests are a way of Allah forgiving a person of their sins so that on the day of judgement they have a much lighter load. Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has called the day of judgement a '**terrible**' day and surely on this terrible day we would want as less(few) sins as possible in our accounts if we are to be successful. Therefore these trials and tests are very important for us because they enable us to be forgiven for countless sins that would be a huge burden on us if it were in our accounts

but due to the huge tests we faced with patience turning to Allah then it may be that we have very little or no sins at all on that day. The greater the trial the more sins fall off us. So know that even a prick of a thorn expiates one's sins."

As to attitude the article continues "We should also approach hardships and tests as in that it is the decree of Allah so we should NEVER ask Allah "Why" has he given us such trials? For questioning Allah why he has decreed something will mean that not only have we gone through so much grief and torment from these trials but that we have actually added to our sins by questioning Allah and we will be accountable for that.

Patience is one of the greatest attributes a person can acquire and Allah is with those who are patient and the reward for Patience is Paradise!

If one is patient, and is among the ones described in the following manner in the Qur'an (**Baqarah, 2: 256**)

Who say, when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return":-

Then here are the rewards Allah will give that person (**2:157**):

The Rewards of Patience are:

1. Blessings from Allah: The patient person is blessed by Allah.
2. Mercy of Allah: When Allah gives someone His Mercy, He will let him enter paradise with His Mercy.
3. Guidance of Allah: A patient person will be guided by

Allah in this world until he meets Him on the Day of Judgment. (*Islam on-line*)

SUFFERING SIN AND TRIAL

An article in the Pathaeos library by Beth Davies Stofka contextualises the Moslem view usefully as follows: “The monotheistic faiths must consider the problems of suffering and evil within the context of God's power and mercy. In Islam, there are two views of suffering, both of which resemble views held by its sister faiths, Judaism and Christianity. Suffering is either the painful result of sin, or it is a test.

In the latter view, suffering tests belief; a true Muslim will remain faithful through the trials of life. But suffering also reveals the hidden self to God. Suffering is built into the fabric of existence so that God may see who is truly righteous. In other words, God not only allows the various agonies and struggles of life, but has a purpose for them. Suffering opens up the soul and reveals it to God. God uses suffering to look within humans and test their characters, and correct the unbelievers.

SUFFERING CONNECTS WITH SIN

Suffering is also a painful result of sin. In Islam, sin is associated with unbelief. Muslims surrender to God's will, and find peace in that surrender. Sometimes people forget to listen to the prophets, and fail to serve God in all that they do. This is the state of unbelief, called *kufr*, which literally means to forget through hiding of the truth. Therefore someone who is a kafir is someone who has purposefully forgotten the Lord. They become preoccupied with their own particular needs and their passions. Islam does not condemn human passions or human needs, seeing them as a necessary part of a full and

useful life. But when people forget to serve God, these needs and passions can enslave them. They begin to misuse their divine gifts of intelligence, will, and speech. Enslaved by lust, and by cravings for wealth and pleasure, they do evil and destructive things. These moments of unbelief can happen to anyone, and when people realize their mistake, they suffer. Seen in this light, suffering is not only painful, but a lesson. It reminds humans of the truth of God's revelation.

Although all people are imperfect and vulnerable to *kufur*, Islam does not teach that they are essentially evil. When they realize their sin and make amends with true remorse, God forgives the sin. Genuine repentance is all that is needed to restore humans to a sinless state. However, individuals are always vulnerable to it, and sin and suffering are serious matters. The great struggle, or *jihad*, of human life is the struggle *to perfect one's heart and live in total submission to God*. It is possible to be a perfect Muslim, since God does not ask anyone to do anything that is beyond his or her ability. But perfect Muslims, like prophets, are very rare individuals. Most must be vigilant and always begin with the intention to do good.

SUBMISSION PATIENCE AND POSITIVITY

Islam teaches the endurance of suffering with hope and faith. The faithful are not counseled to resist it, or to ask why. Instead, they accept it as God's will and live through it with faith that God never asks more of them than they can endure. However, Islam also teaches the faithful to work actively to alleviate the suffering of others. Recognizing that they are the cause of their own suffering, individuals work to bring suffering to an end. In the Islamic view, righteous individuals are revealed not only through patient acceptance of their own suffering, but through their good works for others. And if

suffering is a consequence of unbelief, then good works will relieve pain.

JIHAD AND SUFFERING

Islamic states have a reserve power under the teaching of the Quran to declare Jihad against other powers and within the bounds of Shariah the life of infidels is required. There is a substantial dossier of cases worldwide involving possibly multiple thousands of lives lost through the unfavourable and sometimes criminal acts of Jihadists and rogue governors who are compliant with misinformation and defy natural justice to put innocents to the sword. This special and sinister type of suffering results from the disjunction of ethics and doctrine and may involve young zealots committing suicide and murder for legally and ethically inadmissible aims. Recent events in Kenya and North West Pakistan bring home the terrible mis-fit between Islamic theology and widespread practice of Moslem militants today.

MOSES AND CHRIST

The Hebrew writer tells us that Moses suffered affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of Egypt for a season. Moses and numerous OT saints suffered largely on account of their profession to believe in Yahweh and follow Him to the detriment of their peace and in face of the persecution of the followers of idolaters who tried to force them into their mould.

VICARIOUS SUFFERING

Christ suffered at the hands of wicked men as He brought the power of the kingdom of God to bear on obedient lives. His utter goodness and total obedience to His mission to serve mankind and provide a ransom brought him into conflict with

the traditions built up over centuries and the rule of Satan which contested both His right and claims though it could not withstand His power or deny and diminish His authority. Jesus Christ suffered vicariously as the prophet Isaiah proclaims in his great message recorded in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah in the bible.

Christianity is committed to living at peace with all men and our Lord bade Peter put away the sword. States ruled by basic natural principle may be deeply influenced by Christian principles but nevertheless bear the sword and as such may from time to time act severely or in concert against evil-doers. In the bible Job's reflections on the nature and meaning of suffering has respect throughout the Judaeo Christian world.

CHAPTER 2

WHY DO THE GOOD SUFFER?

THE POPE

Pope John Paul II wrote "On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering". He argued that "the meaning of suffering revolves around the notion of *redemptive suffering*."

GHANDI

Mahatma Gandhi exhorted in a manner not antithetical to faith and Christ's lifestyle saying "Let the first act of every morning be to make the following resolve for the day:

- I shall not fear anyone on Earth.
- I shall fear only God.
- I shall not bear ill will toward anyone.
- I shall not submit to injustice from anyone.
- I shall conquer untruth by truth. And in resisting untruth, I

shall put up with all suffering.”

BONHOEFFER

Dietrich Bonhoeffer published his *Letters and Papers from Prison* in which he writes out of bitter experience but without acrimony and highlights the central lesson that “We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer.”

O DONAGHUE

John O’Donaghue in “A book of Celtic Wisdom named *Anam Cara* says “There is the solitude of suffering, when you go through darkness that is lonely, intense, and terrible. Words become powerless to express your pain; what others hear from your words is so distant and different from what you are actually suffering.” John Green in “*Looking for Alaska*” says “The only way out of the labyrinth of suffering is to forgive”.

VICARIOUS SUFFERING

The foregoing reflections demonstrate that thoughtful people wrestle to understand suffering. Like greatness it is thrust upon some whereas others endure it from birth. Rarely do men and women go out to seek suffering. Paul refers to such people as the small set of people through history who are willing to “die for others”.

The consideration of “Why the good suffer?” must begin with Christ because any others in this set who made it their aim to suffer considered to endure suffering from some point in their lives and thereafter had days or years of suffering. Christ stands at the head of this set because He undertook from before the foundation of the world to be born to suffer vicariously. That is not to say that every day He was

engrossed in personal suffering but He did come under the burden of the suffering of others willingly and ease it –indeed His own vigour or virtue was constantly sapped by this ministry. When He healed the woman with the issue of blood he said “Virtue went from me”.

JESUS - THE MAN OF SORROWS

Isaiah calls Jesus “the man of sorrows” or more precisely “A man made to bear sorrows”. Jesus was not gloomy but He was uniquely capable of understanding those who suffered and everywhere acted in relief of suffering. Jesus did not suffer as such every day but certainly during His ministry He came under its burden very frequently and “sighed deeply” in face of it as was the case in His dealing with the deaf mute and Lazarus. This is in full concert with His substituting Himself on the behalf of sinners.

THE DIALECTIC

Jesus during His life gave notice that He would ultimately end suffering. He engaged Satan as the cause of much suffering and evil. He drove out resident rebellious spirits, He healed broken bodies and He forgave sin and taught others how to forgive. At the same time Jesus obliged His followers to endure suffering on behalf of others like that which He exemplified. Thus whilst our Lord relieved Satanic bonds of suffering He initiated in the Christian call to discipleship the filling up of the sufferings He endured that the world might learn how He loved us and how we love others. Jesus must be credited with spearheading through Christianity a movement which through its members acting in a plethora of ways and with a myriad of institutions has contributed more to the relief of suffering than anything else on earth.

INHERITED DISABILITY & CONDITIONS

The second set of sufferers are those who in a strange sense suffer naturally. Some would argue that they suffer according to God's will. There are indeed such cases as that of the blind man whom Jesus healed. He was not suffering because of his own sin or that of his parents. Nevertheless blindness was not allowed before the fall. There are numerous syndromes and conditions of the human mind and body that come with birth. These do not always present with pain but manifest themselves by disability. It is not possible to indemnify the human genome against weakness which began at the fall and has spread progressively through the ages - until that glorious moment when God determines that death shall be swallowed up of life and sin and sickness shall be no more.

THE GOD OF HOPE AND LOVE

Since the fall and despite the events (including a distinct period of savage violence and satanic corruption of mankind) prior to the deluge which unmasked it and thereafter alongside the long interim of human government and failed theocracy God subjected the creature to vanity in Hope (Romans 8.20). The emptiness of birth to death and the notion of all returning to nothing (vanity) must be read in the light of the divine purpose that in this shortened life man will secure his destiny through love in response to God's love in Christ for without love life is valueless. King Solomon who wrote about life thought in terms of vanity and love in contrast. The fact that hope exists within God's own heart is indicative of the love He showed to mankind. God cannot be wanting in Hope while history as we know it lasts.

NOAH'S DAYS

As I have already stressed in the last paragraph God is not well pleased with the suffering that man inflicts on man-suffering that is nothing short of willful violence against the person. W.B.Yeats spoke about “man’s inhumanity to man” which makes countless thousands grieve. As in the days of Noah so in the end times this manner of suffering and violence will again be promoted by leading nations and the bestial supremo whom Satan inspires according to the wisdom God has set forth in the Apocalypse (Apocalypse 17-19). In these coming days divine wrath will overwhelm the wicked as in Noah’s flood but this time the element of judgment will be fire. Subsequently according to the prophets and as stated in Revelation 20.

CHAPTER 3

JOB’S COMFORTERS

When suffering comes responses vary. Kind people send cards. Concerned people pray for the sufferer. Practical people put themselves about to offer concrete help in the form of the ministry of their presence or the preparation of occasional meals or regular visits and transportation where this is appropriate.

Suffering is more bearable where there are friends around. “Job’s comforters” is a name for people who bring cold comfort, people whose ministry is more a problem than a help. In four rounds of conversation the original comforters of the ancient eastern ruler who suffered devastating personal loss of family and possessions literally in four fell swoops of storm and enemy violence and raids united to visit him and sat with him whilst they brought to bear their philosophy of suffering.

THE SOURCE OF JOB'S AFFLICTION SATAN'S ACCUSES JOB

Satan said to God as I translate the Hebrew 'Age-long Mighty One I implore you if you send out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh will he any longer bless you to your face? And the LORD said to Satan "Behold he is in your hand but definitely preserve his life. And Satan shot out of the presence of the LORD and struck Job with hot ulcers from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head. And he (Job) took a potsherd...'*[vrj - a broken piece of an earthenware jar - possibly a wine-jar. Like the "sherd" his own life was broken and appeared to be of very little value any more]*...to scrape himself constantly and he was sitting in the middle of the ashes.

ROUND ONE OF TALKS ON SUFFERING: ELIPHAZ' VISION A DEEP LESSON OF THE SPIRIT

The oldest comforter was in those days considered wisest. He declares a vision that he was given that is supposed to explain what's happening to Job.

'To me a matter was brought secretly and my ear took in a sound bite *[xmv - The Rabbis use the term for "a very little" - a "smattering of knowledge" a "sliver of truth"]* of that I might have got or was meant to get.

In **dream thoughts** *[myp[c]* of night visions when deep sleep *[mdr]* falls upon men. Fear cried out or called me and evil trembling *[d[r]* and caused the multitude of my bones to quiver. *Eliphaz gives us a vivid picture of his 613 bones shaking.*

Then a Spirit revived or came against my face with hostility. The hair in my flesh **bristled over and over again** *[Piel of rms - "to stand on end"]*

It stood there but I could not make myself discriminate or recognise it by sight. Another type of Being [*hmmmt-Gesenius traces the word to nym* “form” or “appearance” or “species” was before my eyes and I heard a gentle whispering voice of calm.

“Will man be righteous apart from God? Or apart from His maker will a married man be pure? Behold He did not have confidence in His servants; and he imputed profanity to his angels. Further those who reside in houses of baked clay brick or mortar, whose foundations are in the dust of the earth will be crushed before the faces of **Ursa Major - the roaming bear** [*v[named because the Bear prowls about by day and night marauding] As the bear crushes the sheep so men fall under the hand of a Satanic oppressor. Despite the A.V. reference to clothing and the moth in 13.28 I believe the reference is to an attack on the fold of God by Satan - signified by a reference to the bear. From morning until evening have they not been crushed to pieces? They perish for want of thinking purposefully about eternity. [jzn]* Surely the remainder or what is left of them breaks up camp or removes. They die and not in the house of wisdom.”
This vision is very apt. While it is usual for those who sympathise to refer to their own experience rather obtusely this is certainly relevant to Job’s condition and suggestive of why Eliphaz did some radical thinking.

ROUND TWO: THE EXPERIENCE OR ILLUMINATION OF ELIPHAZ

‘Listen to me I will continually declare while I breathe [*Jwj a like the prose dygh*] and this that I have seen in experience or prophetic revelation I will also recount or write down for you- that which the spiritually wise have expounded and not continued to keep concealed from their fathers’ *time*. For

them to whom alone the earth gave itself or for whom it was made and no stranger passed in their midst. *Eliphaz is accounting of a world without Satan and anyone foreign to man's welfare without reference to Satan.*

The rebellious wicked is a man twisting and writhing in pain all his days and the number of years belonging to **the terrorising tyrant** conceal themselves.

Eliphaz is unprepared to hazard a guess as to how and when Satan began to affect the issue of man and he compiles a dossier of thoughts on Satan which he proposes to write down for Job.

- (1) A voice of dread or terror is in his ears.
- (2) In peaceful prosperity **the destroying one** will arrive with him. He is not confident that he will return from the region [ym] of darkness and
- (3) He is keeping watch for or expecting the sword. *The term "Watch" may be read as a Hebrew Kal Plural so that "they are watching him for the sword" is a possible rendering.*
- (4) He is wandering about for bread - O where? He knows that the day of darkness is prepared or appointed by His [God's] power or hand.
- (5) Painful adversity [rx] and urgent distress [qwx] continually alarm him suddenly. [t[b]
- (6) He will be overpowered as a bold king in battle or as a king breaking up camp at the onset of troubling battle **for he has stretched out his hand to touch or strike God** and he has been a warrior to Shaddai.
- (7) And he (Satan) runs upon him at his back or neck - at the obscure curve or edge of his shield because he covers his face with his best *protection* and he makes grease a protection of his loins.

- (8) He dwells in cities that have been going to ruin or been hidden and in houses in which nobody lives that have been destined or ready for carrying away or made bare and are about to disappear.
- (9) He shall not be rich; he will not raise his power and he will not expand his wealth in the land.
- (10) He shall not turn away from or on account of the darkness when the flame dries up his suckers and with a RUACH or breathing of his mouth he departs. **Let not him that is apostate or wandering astray [h[t] be confident in mischievous design** or empty noise for empty crashing or ruin will be the change he undergoes or his reward [rwm]
- (11) Not in the house of his day or in his lifetime shall it be completed or fulfil itself and his palm branch [hpk] shall not flourish. *The image speaks of the end of prosperity.*
- (12) He shall shake off [Smj] his sour fruit as the grape and cast off [Jl v] his flower as the olive. For the congregation of the hypocrite or apostate [*The rabbis frequently translate the term pñj as “hypocrite”*] is famished hard or sterile.
- (13) And fire shall swallow up the tents of the swarthy or youth. They conceive toilsome evil and birth iniquity and their belly prepares craft or deceit.

SYNOPSIS

- (a) *The questions of Eliphaz – Do the wise know the Spirit? Is argument like this useful? Why act like Adam as if you were there at the beginning? Don't wink & be so shrewd - why confront God. Can a man of flesh be pure?*

(b) The philosophy of Eliphaz. Man writhes in pain - Satan for unknown duration terrorizes man. The rebel man puts forth his hand against God. Satan looks for a weak spot. Man runs to a hideout in the ruins. An apostate has but a future of sour grapes and a life like a fading flower or sterile earth. A fiery end awaits the rebel.

To all this Job replies “You could be a bit gentler’

ROUND THREE: SEVEN SOCRATIC QUESTIONS OF ELIPHAZ

The third round opens as Eliphaz the Temanite answers

(1) “May a strong man be a valuable familiar to God in his strength because he is a valuable familiar among his own by practical and spiritual wisdom?”

(2) “Is there pleasure or delight to Shaddai because you are righteous?”

(3) “And is there gain to him when you complete your journey or are perfect in your path?”

(4) “From His reverence of you will he decide your destiny or chasten you?” *These questions are like the familiar issues dealt with in hyper - Calvinism. Eliphaz is saying that God is not obliged in any way to man for His actions. He is also arguing that God need not lighten His punishment because of Job’s good living. His argument suggests strongly that God does not delight in the righteous but because Christ’s death enables that righteousness God does absolutely delight in the righteous.*

(5) “From reverence of you will God go with you through judgment?” *Eliphaz is arguing in a Socratic style by these seven questions. This one lays down a principle that the judge does not appear on the side of the convicted - but again by the principle of mediatorial justification God does exactly this.*

(6) “Is not your wickedness and calamity great?”

(7) “Also is it not so that your iniquity has not yet ended?”

Eliphaz is charging Job with questioning God and impugning His righteous ways. The A.V. text in using the idea of “infinite iniquity” plays out in the NIV as “endless” though the argument is that Job has not ceased to argue with God and Eliphaz takes this to be insolence and iniquitous.

ROUND FOUR: A YOUNG MAN PRODUCES HIS THEORY OF SUFFERING

ELIHU'S FIRST DIATRIBE

1. Behold God is **Great**... *This word *rwbk* is used of a pleated goats' hair mattress for its long-lasting qualities and its strength besides which it has the added capability of affording rest ... and He will not reject and condemn. This theological approach is sensitive and quite striking in its equivalence to N.T. teaching. Christ offered rest to those who would come to Him and expressly said He did not come to condemn the world but to save.*

2. He long continues great in strength and compassion of heart.

3. He will not be unjust and affords righteous judgment freely to the poor.

4. He will not lessen or diminish the concentration of his eyes or watch-care of the righteous and *those who are* kings that belong to **the throne** and He will cause them to return for perpetuity and they shall be exalted.

5. And when there are those bound in fetters in linked chains
[qqz]

6. And those who have got caught or trapped themselves in bonds or unions of affliction.

7. He will also show them their productive undertaking to attempt [/ [p] and their faults or broken covenants because they will have been strengthened or enabled to prevail.

8. He will also encourage them to listen [*literally “open their ear”*] to discipline and doctrine and will speak with light for they will turn back from evil.

9. When they shall obey and serve Him they will endure or be permitted their days in prosperity and their years in sweetness pleasantness and grace [*m[n cf Ps.90.17 and Zech 11.7 where “grace” is allied to “beauty” and “brightness”*].

Elihu has set forth a prospect which came substantially with the advent of Christ. To declare these principles long before their promulgation in the gospel is curiously prophetic. This is good theology with the highest ethics embedded in it.

ELIHU'S SECOND DIATRIBE

THE ETERNITY AND INSCRUTABILITY OF GOD

Behold God is great [*agv “to be celebrated with praises” or “triumph from C*] and we would not know the number of His years and there is no searching or examination. *God is of unknown eternity and inscrutable in being.*

THE DIVINE CONTROL OR SOVEREIGNTY OF NATURE

For He continually draws up or attracts the distillings of water [*symbolic of the “prophetic declarations”*] *Elihu is saying that God controls the water cycle which involves a series of outpourings and then evaporation. It is the drawing up of sea and ground water by the wind that is first emphasised. They will pour forth rain according to the light or belonging to the lightning or shining brightness. There is a direct connection between the sun and rainfall especially in the mid-east. As the*

summer sun burns cloud from the mid-eastern sky so the sun effects evaporation and promotes rainfall at other times. The power of lightning in time of storm provides heavy release of rain. Even so spiritually the blessings that shower on man come from God's revelation.

THE WORLDWIDE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT AND ASSOCIATED DWELLING OF GOD WITH MAN.

The clouds distil *this* rain and pour it upon man heavily. Furthermore whether is there any who will understand or try to understand the breaking up of cloud - the crashing thunder of his tabernacle? *This may be rendered "Lo He will understand...etc etc". The seasons of rain as the former and latter speak of the acts of Pentecost and the latter day outpouring and the tabernacle speaks of God's dwelling - in the sense of dwelling in heaven and on earth.*

ELIHU'S THIRD DIATRIBE

THE CLOUDS AND LIGHTNING SPEAK OF JUDGMENT

Behold He spreads over it His light and covers the roots or lowest part of the sea for with them He brings peoples or nations to judgment.

THE SAME CLOUDS SPEAK OF VAST FOOD PROVISION

He supplies food in heavy abundance. *Elihu testifies to divine providence*

THE FUTURE STORM AND ITS EFFECT FOR THE SHEPHERD AND SHEEP

In bringing his thoughts together from the first diatribe on "greater punishment and expiation" than Job can undertake

*and from the second diatribe on heavens supply of earth's needs and the former and latter rains Elihu under the Spirit of God concentrates all power in the **hands** of the Saviour who in the fashion of Habakkuk 3.4 has horns of light in his hands - this vision of Habakkuk may have drawn on that of Elihu and their tenor and substance is one and the same.*

Upon the palms of the hands [myrk] He hides His light and He will appoint His ascension along with the assailing or attack (a manner of speaking of "the cross" by which means the hands are wounded). **He will sound a proclamation of His rising of His shepherd [r]or His pasturing sheep** (both truths are housed in the wording of the text as both our resurrection and that of our Saviour are secured by Christ's expiation). **Also He will proclaim the wealth (of cattle) after ascending.** The Passage is tortuous but the punctuation of CAPHIM makes it very clear that it is not "clouds" but "hands" which are intended. Also in v.32 MAPGIA means "battle" and has nothing to do with "coming between" and the pointing of REAO in verse 33 renders the word "Shepherd" unmistakably. The connection with Job's experience is the fire of God from heaven which burned the sheep in 1.16. **The greater battle** or attack of this passage is that upon the Shepherd, Christ. With His sheep He rises again and His ascension heralds the wealth of the church and its faith. The notion of the production of clouds by evaporating and ascending moisture is taken up twice in this unique passage to allude to the gathering of Christ's saints to glory along with their ascended LORD. Thus the third theological dialogue contains definitive foreshadowing in its Hebrew form of the glory of the crucified Lord whose suffering exceeded that of Job along with His glorious resurrection and reversal of estate in the attainment of spiritual wealth.

Because there is just so much man does not understand God Himself finally speaks to Job and convinces the sufferer that He is sovereign over all and can bring Job to finer days than he has ever known. Job's life much like our own falls into segments. The names of his daughters serve to highlight the changes in his life. Job called the name of number one **Jemimah** [*“dove” reflecting his days when the sign of God stood above his tent and the Spirit of God gave him such peace and prosperity*] and the name of the second **Keziah** [*“scraped or peeled” reflecting his days following the distressful crises when he scraped himself with a potsherd*] and the name of the third **Keren-Happuch**. [*“A horn of light of radiant change or beautiful colour (paint)” reflecting his recovery of brightness and the change in his friends and family and comforters for which he earlier prayed and lived close to God as an intercessor*].

These extracts supply something of a genuine if early attempt by the ancients to bottom the problem of suffering which has its highest exposition in the vicarious death and great mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ who through the discipline of suffering was made complete.

CHAPTER 4

FILLING UP THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

Paul and Peter who died within a few years of one another spoke plainly about that type of suffering we call “suffering for the sake of righteousness. Such suffering might be described as “carrying the cross” or “suffering on the behalf of Christ and His kingdom”. Today many, many Christians worldwide are called on to suffer penalties ranging from prison to death for owning Christ as God's Son and teaching that He is the world's Saviour. In a range of statements

[quoted below] Paul and Peter highlight this suffering as integral to following Jesus.

- (1) “I reckon that the sufferings of the present are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us”(Romans 8.18) *Paul dismisses any “marks” on the body or similar consequences of Christian obedience as nothing compared to the glorious body the Lord will give us.*
- (2) “As the sufferings of Christ abound in us so our consolation also abounds in Christ (2Cor.1.5) *Peterson renders “We get a full measure of consolation too!”*
- (3) “I count all things but dross that I may know Him(Christ) and the power of the resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering and be conformable to His death”(Phil. 3.10) *Paul is speaking of the perfect discipline and completion of Christian testimony.*
- (4) Paul rejoices where Christians stand loyal to the cross and “fill up that which is behind in the afflictions of Christ in the flesh for the church His body(Col.1.24). *This is a key statement and it comes from Paul in the Mamertine prison(where also Peter spent time). Peterson explains as he translates “There’s a lot of suffering to be entered into in this world- the kind of suffering Christ takes on. I welcome the chance to take my share in the church’s part of that suffering.”*
- (5) *Barnabas writing in Hebrews says “the captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering” (Hebrews 2.10). suffering tests moral character rigorously.*
- (6) *Peter who says he was “in on the suffering of Christ”(1 Peter 5.1- Peterson) writes “To suffering we are called for Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example[lit. HUPOGRAMMON - a copperplate top line to*

copy-that you should follow His steps.”(1Peter2.21)
He further explains “When He was reviled He reviled not again and when He suffered He threatened not but committed Him to Him that judges aright. Peter interestingly associates “grief” with suffering wrongfully [1Peter2.19 & Isaiah 53.10]

As Beza the French Reformer said to Henry of Navarre, “Sire it is truly the lot of the Church of God to endure blows and not to strike them. But may it please you to remember that is is *an anvil which has worn out many hammers!*”

CHAPTER 5.

WHEN WILL IT ALL END?

The Apocalypse is full of trauma in which Satan has a part for he comes down subsequent to a war in heaven to steer the world toward Antichrist and the Beast. A third world struggle climaxes with what appears to be frightful and nuclear weaponry in use. The divine wrath falls upon mankind in seven vials of judgment until that moment when Christ rides into the vortex of the struggle when nations assault Jerusalem in the end times of this era. By the breath of His mouth the Lord conquers and sets the nations before His judgment throne. After as Shepherd He casts the inveterate enemies of righteousness into everlasting fire! [*Matthew 25.46 ‘The goats will be herded to their eternal doom but the sheep to their eternal reward’ - Peterson*].

The sequel is the “peace on earth” that Shiloh (peacemaker of Genesis 49.10) alone can guarantee. With that will come a literal 1000 years of wonderful peace. Let me conclude on the happy note of the joyous paradise regained that the Lord has in mind for these glorious days. Let me quote from The Westgate Commentary on Isaiah 11.

HAPPY DAYS

"The tawny evening wolf shall sojourn and wander with the lamb (during) one to three years (*Hebrew cbk indicates a young sheep over a 3 year period of its growth – when this "strange bedfellow companionship develops*) **The spotted leopard will lie with its feet under**(*Hebrew zbr*) **it alongside the kid. The calf of the first year** (*Hebrew lgl*) **the shaggy young lion**(*Hebrew rypk*) **and the fatted calf will be one united bunch** (*Hebrew djy is used of the inseparable "trinity"*)**and a small youth will guide and conduct them.** Again *Isaiah* comes up with "the child". As a father himself – conscious of the safety of his children in a period when animals retained the killer instinct he is assuring us that the latter days it will be a wonderful world to be brought up in. **The heifer and the bear will feed together on pasture, their young will be a united clutch lying with their feet under them; and the lion will eat fodder** (*Hebrew nbt "threshed straw"*) **like the ploughing bull or ox. The child still taking suck will caress with delight above the hole of the viper.** A further scenario presented in this prophetic message features children and predicts that a baby will stroke the viper above its nest where there would be a family of serpents. **And the weaned child will put his hand down the hole of the viper and her brood where light shines** In normal days this would be a grave danger – the shadow of the intruder would be spotted and a lethal thrust would follow. *Isaiah* has crowned these days with wonder and glory showing that even the serpent which was earliest used by Satan is tame and considerate of the man child. **They shall do no evil no destroy in all my holy mountain for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge by intimacy with the LORD as the waters keep covering the sea.** This awareness will not be as in the first paradise soon destroyed – it will swell and cover every area of the earth for long ages As *Leonard Elliott Kinns* noted from his reading both *Virgil*(eclogue 4) and *Horace*(Epodes 16) mention 'the

loss by animals of their blood-thirsty habits as a mark of the Golden Age..**And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse who will be ministering as a banner (Hebrew *sn* a sign of guidance) seen afar for the peoples. And the Gentiles shall follow Him step by step and His place of rest or residence shall be glorious.”** *The city of the King will surpass any that ever was in glory.*

The bible takes us even beyond those days when in the heavenly city New Jerusalem we shall dwell eternally with the Lord(Apoc.21.4) . In that eternal context “There shall be no more death or mourning or crying or pain **for the former things shall have passed away.**” Everything will be made new.

Beyond the sunset O blissful morning,
When with our Saviour heav'n is begun
Earth's toiling ended, O glorious dawning,
Beyond the sunset, when day is done.

Beyond the sunset no clouds will gather,
No storms will threaten, no fears annoy;
O day of gladness, O day unending,
Beyond the sunset, eternal joy!

FINIS

Bob the Scribbler
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