

**INTRODUCTION**

- \* In 1981, Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a book that would go on to be a "Best-Seller". It was called, "When Bad Things Happen to Good People." In his book, Rabbi Kushner debilitates God by reasoning that God does not cause bad things – afflictions – but is, as well, powerless to prevent them. Regardless of the theology of the book, it sparked a debate and conversation regarding the role of affliction in the life of the "righteous." Sadly, the terms "righteous" and "good people" are often defined from one's own perspective and not from God's.
- \* Yet, the premise of the question remains, why do afflictions arise "to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose"? (Romans 8:28)
- \* In Paul's second epistle to the believers in Corinth, he specifically addresses this topic citing examples from his own life and that of the church of Corinth.
- \* Today, as we begin our study of Paul's second epistle, we consider Paul's thesis statement regarding the purpose of affliction, and the subsequent encouragement from God, to the Corinthian believers.

**INSTRUCTION*****IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO HAVE A BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF ...*****I. THE TERM: "AFFLICTION" ... *What does the Bible refer to as "Affliction"?*****A. The Meaning of the Word:****B. The Usages of the Word (v. 3-6)**

- \* Matthew 7:14; 13:21; 24:9,21,29; Mark 3:9; 4:17; 13:19,24; John 16:21,33; Acts 7:10,11; 11:19; 14:22; 20:23; Romans 2:9; 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; 1 Corinthians 7:28; 2 Corinthians 1:4,6,8; 2:4; 4:8,17; 6:4; 7:4,5; 8:2,13; Ephesians 3:13; Philippians 1:16; 4:14; Colossians 1:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 3:3,4,7; 2 Thessalonians 1:4,6(2x),7; 1 Timothy 5:10; Hebrews 10:33; 11:37; James 1:27; Revelation 1:9; 2:9,10,22; 7:14.
- \* Used 33x in 30v of Paul's letters ... 12x in 11v in 2 Corinthians

- ☞ Matthew 7:13-14; 13:20-21; 24:9-10, 21, 29
- ☞ Mark 3:9; John 16:21, 32-33
- ☞ Acts 7:9-11; 11:19
- ☞ 2 Corinthians 4:8-10; 6:4-5; 7:4-5; 8:2

**II. THE PURPOSE OF "AFFLICTION" (v. 3-6)****A. Through the Afflictions of this World We Have the Opportunity to R\_\_\_\_\_ the Encouragement of God (v. 3-4)**

1. HIS P\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 3)
2. HIS P\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 4a; Matthew 5:4)

**B. Through the Afflictions of this World We Have the Opportunity to D\_\_\_\_\_ the Encouragement of God (v. 3-6)**

1. AS AN INSTRUMENT OF E\_\_\_\_\_ TO THE L\_\_\_\_\_ (v. 3-4; Matt 5:2-16)
2. AS AN INSTRUMENT OF E\_\_\_\_\_ TO THE S\_\_\_\_\_ (v. 5-6)

**III. THE CERTAINTY OF "AFFLICTION" (v. 7; cf. John 16:32-33; Luke 9:23; Philippians 3:10)****INTROSPECTION**

- \* What is your view of troubles and afflictions?
- \* Is God Sovereign, or Limited, in His Affairs with Mankind?
- \* To Whom, or what, are you looking for encouragement and strength during the afflictions of this life?
- \* Are you willing to use the trials and tribulations, which God has allowed you to suffer, to be used by Him as an instrument of ministry in the life of someone else?
- \* Is there a need to change the way you think ... and therefore act?

**INTERACTION ... Thoughts & Questions to ponder for later discussion**

*It may be helpful to re-read the passage before the discussion.*

- \* How can we, as individuals and an assembly, better come alongside other believers in their afflictions?
- \* How can we, as individuals and an assembly, use the trials and tribulations of this world as a tool of evangelism in our community?