

Sep 11-17, 2023

## 2 Corinthians 1–7

“BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD”

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**Summary:** *2 Corinthians 1. God comforts and cares for His Saints—The Saints are sealed and given assurance by the Spirit in their hearts.*

*2 Corinthians 2. Saints should love and forgive one another—They always triumph in Christ.*

*2 Corinthians 3. The gospel surpasses the law of Moses—Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

*2 Corinthians 4. Gospel light shines on the Saints—Mortal trials are nothing as contrasted with eternal glory.*

*2 Corinthians 5. Saints walk by faith and seek tabernacles of immortal glory—The gospel reconciles man to God—God’s ministers carry the word of reconciliation to the world.*

*2 Corinthians 6. Now is the day of salvation—God’s ministers must walk uprightly and bear all things—Saints should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.*

*2 Corinthians 7. Godly sorrow for sin leads to repentance—The sorrow of the world leads to death.*

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### Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

#### How important is suffering?

On one occasion, a professor of religion went to the Western

(wailing) Wall, microphone in hand, and began asking religious Jews why they thought that they were chosen. One responded, “We are chosen to suffer.” Later, in making a point, about the suffering of the Savior, the professor said, “No one is chosen to suffer other than the Lord.” Yet, the difficulties, calamities, and sufferings of the Jews will ultimately bring them closer to the Lord who covenanted to remember and save His people. Our sufferings bring us closer to Him and those that have the highest responsibilities of serving Him often suffer greatly. We “sink to new heights.” Notice the principle in Paul’s teaching that suffering helps us comfort others who suffer. “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who

comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” **(2 Corinthians 1:3-5)** (emphasis added)

#### How does suffering bring us closer to the Savior?

Well-being is measured by comparing it to the opposite. The principle of looking at opposites helps us to understand affliction, trials of faith, tribulation, and the difficulties of life. Hence, God in His wisdom lets us experience opposites so that we may learn to be more like Him. Our focus must be on Him or we may lose hope. This principle must have been taught in the original religion. Echoes of which we read in Jewish writings. “One of the most serious challenges to religion is the problem of suffering. If God is all-powerful and good, as Judaism claims He is, how is it possible that He allows His

creatures to suffer? This is not a new problem. The Bible is aware that suffering and pain are characteristic of human existence and many of the books of the Bible are concerned about the theological issues involved. The Book of Habakkuk, when it deals with one of the aspects of the problem, says that "the righteous man must live by his faith." This seems to mean that it is beyond the ability of human intelligence to understand the question and that man must have faith that God is doing the right thing." "The rabbis of the *Talmud* (written Jewish biblical interpretations) and the medieval Jewish philosophers were also troubled about the problem of suffering. Some thinkers suggested that the innocent suffer in this world so that their share in the world to come will be greater, but other philosophers rejected this idea. Another solution suggested was that suffering comes on a man in order to warn him to mend his ways and that "when a man sees that he is suffering, let him examine his deeds." The rabbis of the *Talmud* believed that it is a great religious virtue to bear one's suffering "with love," i.e., patiently and without becoming rebellious." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **What is my responsibility in considering suffering?**

"Whatever the solution to the theological problem of suffering, Judaism absolutely forbids inflicting suffering on other people and even on animals. Also, no man may ignore the suffering of others but must do everything in his power to help remedy the situation. This applies to physical suffering, to poverty and to psychological suffering. Furthermore, no man has the right to enjoy himself if the rest of the community is suffering." ". . . The sufferings of the righteous are also a sort of test, "afflictions of love" which develop in them patience and complete faith. The Book of Job and other biblical sources support this view." "The sages of the

*Talmud* spoke of poverty in terms of both good and evil. On the one hand it is seen as an affliction which robs life of its joy and deprives man of the leisure necessary for the study of *Torah*. On the other hand, poverty tests a Jew's faith and induces him to be more pious. It also stimulates generosity and sympathy in others." "Like the prophets, the rabbis were exceedingly perplexed by the problem of the "righteous who suffers." Among the solutions they proffered was one which made reward and punishment applicable both to man's life in this world and his existence in the world to come (*ha-olam ha-ba*). The righteous suffers on earth for the sins he committed, so that his reward in the next world may be total and complete. The rabbis also developed the notion of *yissurin shel ahavah*, afflictions of love, which explained the suffering of the one who has not sinned as a measure, accorded by God, of increasing the reward of the righteous in the world to come." "In traditional Judaism, the Messiah will be a human being --- albeit it a perfect one --- who will come and bring harmony to the world. He will not have a divine aspect other than having been chosen by God for his task. The Hebrew word for Messiah, *mashi'ah*, means "anointed" and indicates that the Messiah has been chosen by God. The coming of the Messiah therefore has come to mean the redemption of the Jewish people and an end to its suffering and tribulations." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **What makes it possible for me to be reconciled with God the Father?**

Being reconciled to God requires us to recognize Him and what He does for us. We must also recognize ourselves and what we can do for Him. The concept of being chosen to represent God is supported in the scriptures. Both Jews and Latter-day Saints consider themselves to be the House of Israel, and as chosen. Some of the most important

characteristics of reconciliation are mercy and forgiveness. "How odd of God, to choose the Jews." W.N. Ewer, who wrote this jingle, could not understand why Israel is God's Chosen People. Moses, in **Deuteronomy 7:7--8**, explains it thus: "The Lord did not set His love upon you because you were more in number than any people . . . but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn to your fathers." The rabbis insist that Israel was elected because it voluntarily accepted the Torah whereas other nations would not. Mercy and forgiveness, says the Talmud, are distinguishing characteristics of Abraham and his seed, and these characteristics motivated God to choose Israel as His people." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The value of forgiving and being forgiven affects the entire health of a person. God the Father sent His Son, The Lord, to atone for us, and requires us to forgive because He forgives us.

### **How does memory help me to be reconciled with God?**

There is a mistaken idea that if one truly repents and truly forgives that he will forget. The scriptural verses about remembrance indicate that the Lord is the one who will forget our mistakes. Apparently, we need to have memory, because it is from our memory of good and bad that we learn. As we remember our sins and the sins of our forefathers, we can prevent ourselves from repeating

the same mistakes. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

(**Jeremiah 31:33-34**) There is great value in being reconciled with God through the process of remembering. It leads us to seek forgiveness and imbues in us a sense of forgiving. "And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (**Doctrine & Covenants 122:7-8**) Once reconciled to God, the adversity in life brings His peace, resulting in a spirit of fulfillment, completeness and serenity that enables us to comfort and bless others in their difficulties.