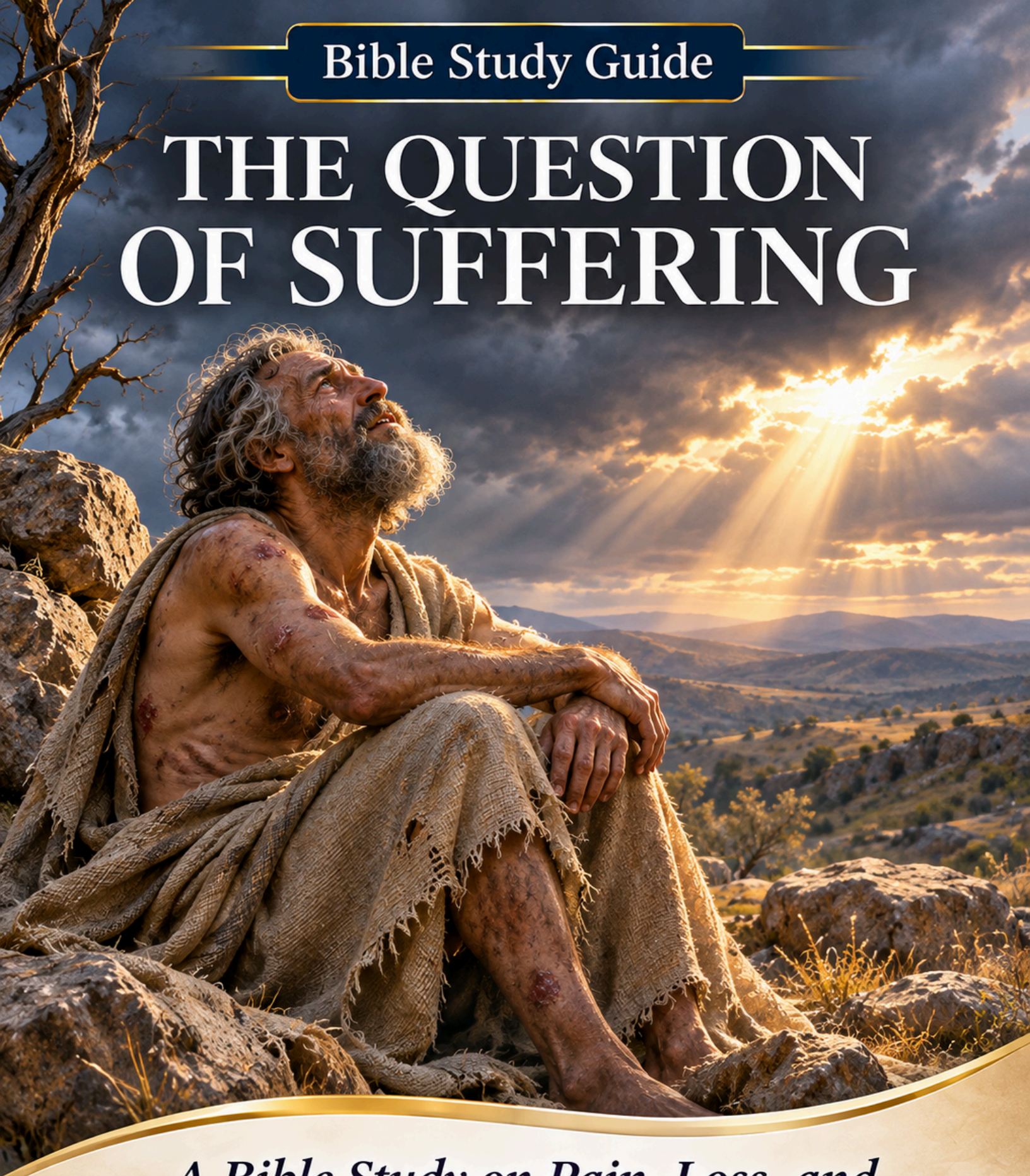
Bible Study Guide

THE QUESTION OF SUFFERING



A Bible Study on Pain, Loss, and God's Purpose in a Broken World

Introduction

Job lost his possessions, his children, and his health. His friends tried to explain his suffering by accusing him of wrongdoing, but the opening chapters of Job reveal a conflict they could not see. Not every sorrow is punishment for personal sin. The Scriptures invite us to trust the character of God even when the causes of our suffering remain hidden.

Fill in the blanks from the KJV text, then read the brief explanation.

Bible Study Questions

1 **How does God describe His ways compared with ours?** (Isaiah 55:8-9)

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways _____ than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

We do not possess God's complete understanding. Faith can trust His wisdom without pretending to know every reason for suffering.

2 **How did Job respond to his initial suffering?** (Job 1:22)

"In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God _____."

Job did not know the heavenly controversy, yet he refused to charge God with wrongdoing.

3 **What does perfect love cast out?** (1 John 4:18)

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out _____:"

God's kingdom rests on love, not the torment of fear. The cross reveals His heart amid the conflict with evil.

4 **What assurance does the Father's gift of His Son give us?** (Romans 8:32)

"He that spared not his own _____, but delivered him up for us all,"

The gift of Christ is the deepest evidence of God's willingness to save.

5 **Where did the conflict between Christ and Satan begin?** (Revelation 12:7)

"And there was war in _____: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon;"

Scripture describes a cosmic conflict that preceded its full manifestation on earth.

6 **To whom did Jesus commit Himself when He suffered?** (1 Peter 2:23)

"Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that _____."

Christ's response shows that faithful suffering need not become bitterness or retaliation.

7 **What should those who suffer according to God's will do?** (1 Peter 4:19)

"commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful _____."

Even in unexplained suffering, believers can entrust themselves to God.

8 **What did David ask God to reveal in him?** (Psalm 139:23-24)

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any _____ in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Trial may bring hidden weaknesses to light, though it is not evidence that a sufferer is guilty of a particular sin.

9 **What image does the psalmist use for being tested?** (Psalm 66:10)

"For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as _____ is tried."

Refining illustrates how God can develop character through trials without delighting in suffering.

10 **What can the trying of our faith produce?** (James 1:3)

"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh _____."

God can use trials to strengthen perseverance without delighting in our pain.

11 **What does Paul invite believers to give in every circumstance?** (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

"In every thing give _____: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

We may thank God for His presence and promises while honestly grieving the evil we experience.

12 **How did Jesus respond to grief at Lazarus's tomb?** (John 11:35)

"Jesus _____."

Christ's compassion shows that genuine faith does not require denying sorrow.

13 **Whom does the Lord discipline according to Hebrews?** (Hebrews 12:6-7)

"For whom the Lord _____ he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

The Father's discipline aims at restoration and growth, not cruelty. This does not mean that every tragedy is a disciplinary act.

14 **What fruit may godly discipline produce afterward?** (Hebrews 12:11)

"nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of _____ unto them which are exercised thereby."

God's discipline is restorative, not evidence that every hardship is punishment for personal sin.

15 **What is hope compared to?** (Hebrews 6:19)

"Which hope we have as an _____ of the soul, both sure and stedfast,"

God's promise anchors faith when life's circumstances threaten to overwhelm it.

16 **What title does Paul give God in connection with our troubles?** (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all _____;"

God's compassion strengthens us to minister to others who suffer.

17 **Why does God comfort us?** (2 Corinthians 1:4)

"that we may be able to _____ them which are in any trouble,"

Comfort received from God is meant to be shared with those who suffer.

18 **What will God remove from the restored creation?** (Revelation 21:4)

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more _____,"

God's final restoration brings the reign of sin and suffering to an end.

Appeal

Will you trust the Father of mercies in the unanswered questions of life, allow Him to strengthen your faith, and extend compassion to others who suffer?

Commitment

I choose to entrust my life to God in suffering and to share the compassion and hope He gives me.

_____

Signature

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