

Walking with God
through Pain & Suffering

Class 4

**Theology of Retribution
and the Cross**

Park Street Church
Fall 2016

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THE REASON FOR GOD and *THE PRODIGAL GOD*

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Tentative Schedule

Oct 2: Suffering, Avoidance, & Secularism

Oct 9: Forgiveness and Suffering (Knight)

Oct 15: The Practice of Lament

Oct 23: Theology of Retribution & the Cross

Oct 30: Why Suffering and Evil?

Nov 13: Suffering & Disability (Warf)

Nov 20: Suffering & Dementia

Nov 27: No Class (Thanksgiving weekend)

Dec 4: Suffering & Evolution (Cahill)

Dec 11: Becoming Worthy Counselor

Today & Next Week's themes

Today: Where is God in suffering? (Bible's focus)

Next week: Why is there evil and suffering in the first place? (speculative focus)

Class 4:

Retribution & the Cross

A. Retribution Theology

- Basis
- Strengths and Weaknesses

B. Innocent Suffering

C. Discussion Question

Retribution Theology ~ Concept of Justice

- To give back, repay, return for prior actions: blessings and curses
- Obedience brings divine favor and blessing, disobedience brings divine anger and curses, i.e., premature death, infertility, disease...
- Embedded within covenantal structure:

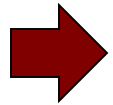
Hittite Treaties	Deuteronomy	Exodus 20-24;
1. Title	1. Title (1:1-5)	1. Title (20:1)
2. Historical Prologue	2. Historical Prologue (1:6-4:43)	2. Historical Prologue (20:2)
3. Requirements A. Basic B. Detailed	3. Requirements A. Basic (4:44-11:32) B. Detailed (12-26)	3. Requirements A. Basic (20:3-26) B. Detailed (21-23)
4. Text A. Storage B. Reading	4. Text A. Storage (27:1-8) B. Reading (27:8-26)	4. Text A. Storage (24:4) B. Reading (24:7)
5. Witnesses	5. Witnesses (30:19)	5. Witnesses (24:9-11)
6. Consequences A. Curses B. Blessings	6. Consequences A. Blessings (28:1-14) B. Curses (28:15-68)	

Covenant with Adam [of works]

Genesis 2	Covenant of Works
Title	Gen 2:4
Historical Prologue	Gen 2:4-15
Requirements	Gen 2:16-17
Text	-
Witnesses	Gen 2:22; 3:1 (?)
Consequences	Gen 2:17

Hosea 6:7, referring to the sins of Israel: “But like Adam they transgressed the covenant”

Covenant with Adam [of works]



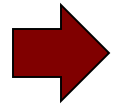
Retribution, curse, or consequence of covenant breaking in Gen 3

14 The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring^[e] and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

Covenant with Adam [of works]



Retribution, curse, or consequence of covenant breaking in Gen 3

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be contrary to^f your husband,
but he shall rule over you.”

Covenant with Adam [of works]

Retribution, curse, or consequence of covenant breaking in Gen 3

17 And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree

of which I commanded you,

‘You shall not eat of it,’

cursed is the ground because of you;

in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;

and you shall eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your face

you shall eat bread,

till you return to the ground,

for out of it you were taken;

for you are dust,

and to dust you shall return.”

Retribution in the Old Testament?

- Deuteronomy 28-30: blessings & curse
- Deuteronomistic history: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings
 - Israel's history told with Deut as framework
 - How Israel failed to keep covenant
 - God's retribution leading to exile

Deuteronomy 27:26 English Standard Version (ESV)

²⁶ “‘Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’”

Retribution in the Old Testament?

Psalm 38:3-4 English Standard Version (ESV)

- **Illness**

- 3 There is no soundness in my flesh
 because of your indignation;
 there is no health in my bones
 because of my sin.
- 4 For my iniquities have gone over my head;
 like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.

Proverbs 6:12-15 English Standard Version (ESV)

- **Calamity**

- 12 A worthless person, a wicked man,
 goes about with crooked speech,
13 winks with his eyes, signals^[a] with his feet,
 points with his finger,
14 with perverted heart devises evil,
 continually sowing discord;
15 therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly;
 in a moment he will be broken beyond healing.

Retribution in the New Testament?

- Reap
& Sow

Galatians 6:7-9 English Standard Version (ESV)

⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

- Sin

John 5:8 English Standard Version (ESV)

⁸ Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk."

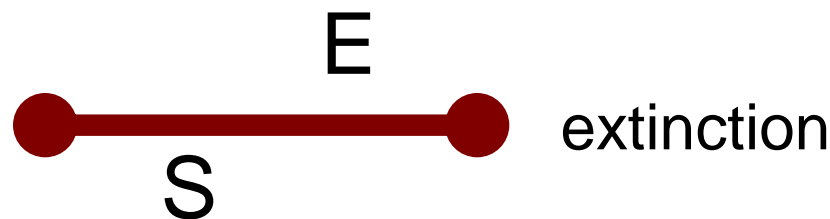
¹⁴ Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you."

Hinduism?

- Karma – Lit. ‘Work’
- Moral Law Of Cause And Effect
- As Every Physical Event Has A Cause & Effect, So Every Spiritual Event
- Each individual wholly responsible for his or her present condition and will have exactly the future he or she is now creating (H. Smith *The World's Religions*, p.64)
- Axiomatic, unbreakable rule

Strength of Retribution Theology

1. Affirms moral universe & full future justice
2. Secular views
 - No Restitution for victims (Holocaust)
 - No retribution for evil (Hitler)
 - 'Evil' itself is a human construction
3. Human 'justice' is
 - Individual deterrence & rehabilitation
 - Immanent system to improve for others
4. 'Religious'-like = material, soul-less human



Problems With Retribution Theology

1. Evil & suffering often disproportional

Jeremiah 12:1 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jeremiah's Complaint

12

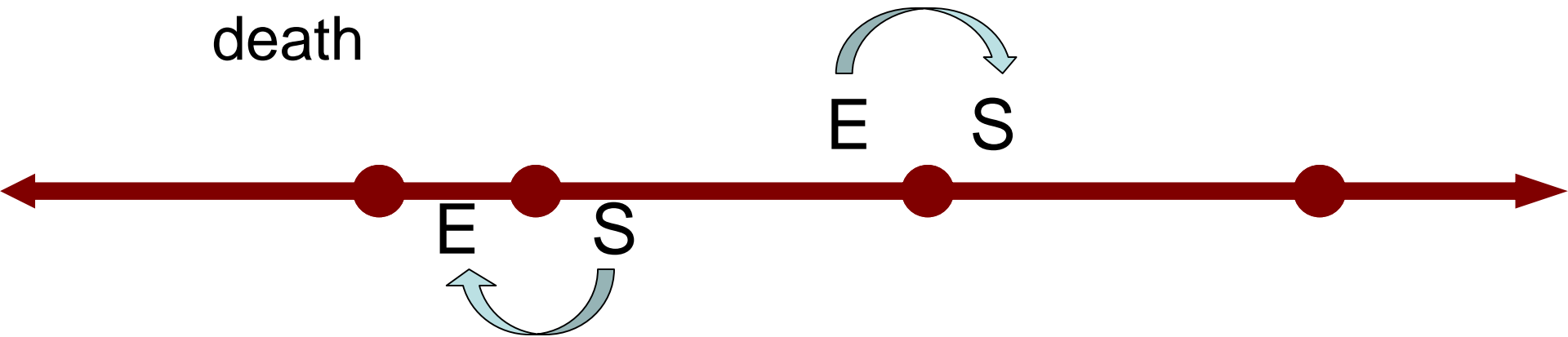
Righteous are you, O LORD,
when I complain to you;
yet I would plead my case before you.
Why does the way of the wicked prosper?
Why do all who are treacherous thrive?



Problems With Retribution Theology

2. Evidence and counter evidence for karma

- Moral cause-&-effect widely experienced
- Disproportion explained by time beyond birth-death



- False accusation ~ common human experience
 - Purposeful mis-construal for *accuser's gain*
 - Misperception of reality based on finitude
- False accusation micro, but not in macro level
- No account for moral 'false positives';
- Falsely accuses innocent sufferers (e.g. Jesus)

Problems With Retribution Theology

3. Affirmation of Innocent Suffering

- Joseph, Israel, Moses, Tamar, David, Job
- “innocent blood” (23x)

Sacrificial system: innocent animal

- Innocence enables transference
- Scapegoat



Retribution in Book of Job

- Does Job suffer because of sin?
No but yes
- Does the book overturn retribution theology?

Job 22:4-11 English Standard Version (ESV)

Job 1:1
Job 42:1

4 Is it for your fear of him that he reproves you and enters into judgment with you?
5 Is not your evil abundant?
6 There is no end to your iniquities.
7 For you have exacted pledges of your brothers for nothing and stripped the naked of their clothing.
8 You have given no water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry.
9 The man with power possessed the land, and the favored man lived in it.
10 You have sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless were crushed.
11 Therefore snares are all around you, and sudden terror overwhelms you, or darkness, so that you cannot see, and a flood of water covers you.

10 And the friends. All to him all bread with him for all gave him 12 And the had 14,000 female

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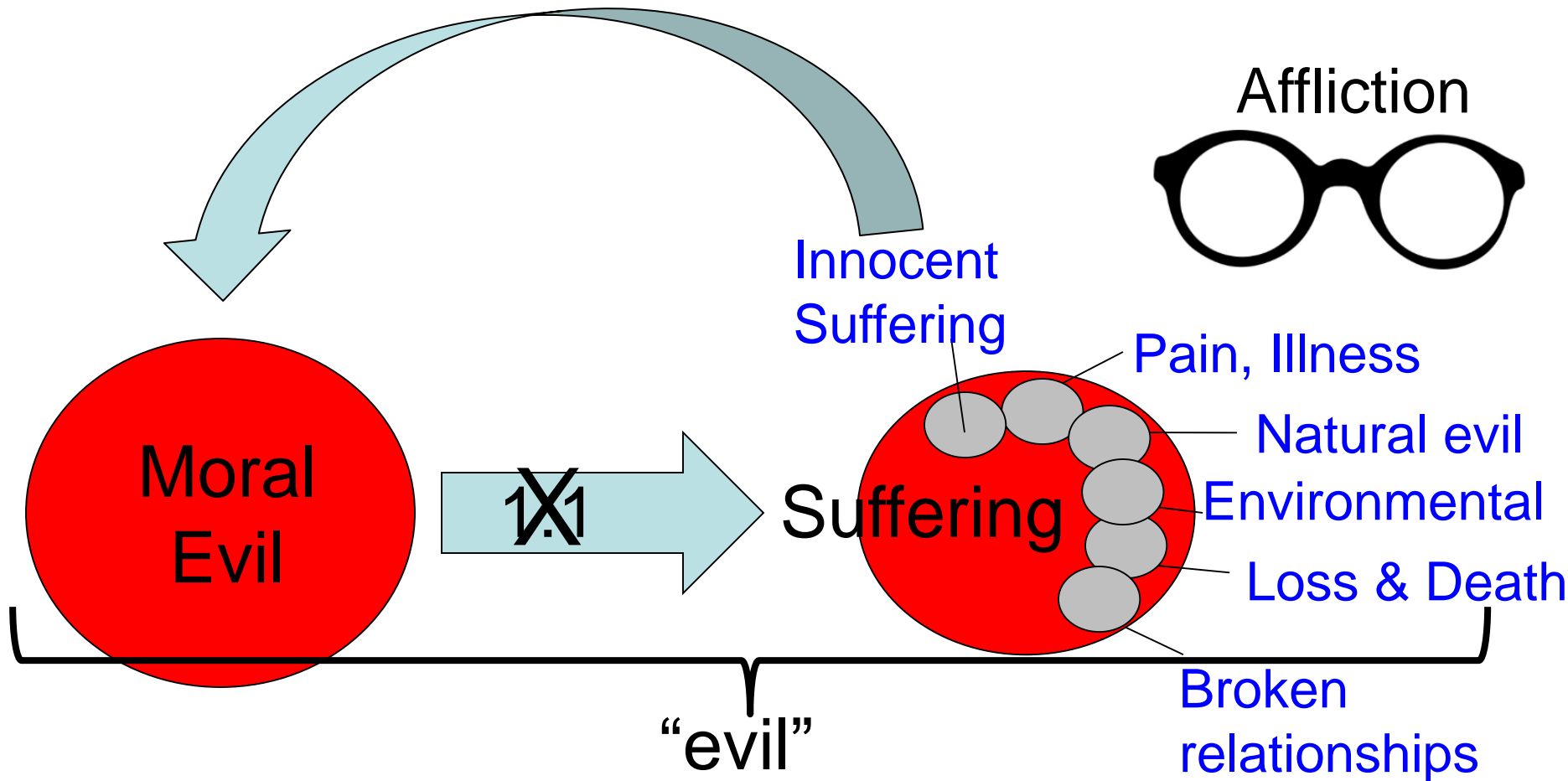
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Conceptual Model of Suffering



Bad News



Isaiah 64:5-7 English Standard Version (ESV)

- 5 You meet him who joyfully works righteousness,
those who remember you in your ways.
Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;
in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?
- 6 We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
- 7 There is no one who calls upon your name,
who rouses himself to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have made us melt in^[b] the hand of our iniquities.

Good News ~ spiritual exchange

Isaiah 53:4-6 English Standard Version (ESV)

- 4 Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
- 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

1 Peter 4:13. <sup>All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned — every one — to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.</sup> But rejoice insofar as you now
share the sufferings of Christ, so that when his
glory is revealed, you may also rejoice and be
glad. ^{might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.}
(*koinōneite* | *κοινωνεῖτε* | pres act ind 2 pl)

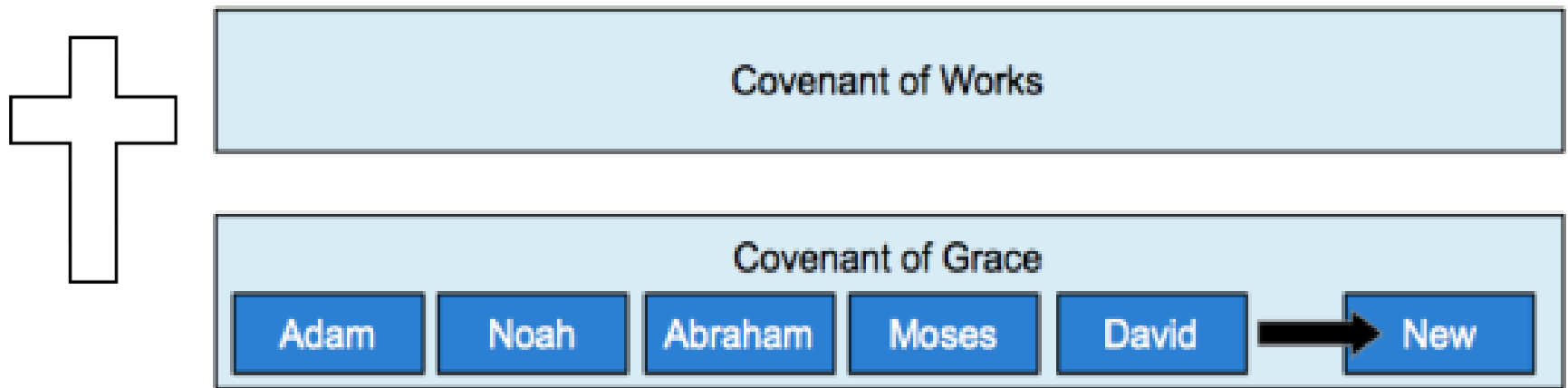
Where is God in Suffering?

1. Retribution is Scriptural axiom based in covenantal blessing and curse
2. Secular approach = justice is elusive
3. Hindu approach = blames the victim
4. Innocent suffering deals with covenant retribution
5. Philosopher's question vs. Scriptural Response
 - Evil is real and knitted into our very soul
 - God is love and suffers Himself in our stead

1 John 4:10 English Standard Version (ESV)

¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Covenantal Structure of Redemptive History



- Christ fulfills the covenants
- Covenant of works:
 - Active obedience fulfilling covenant obligations
 - Passive obedience – satisfaction of covenant retribution

Group Discussion Question

Have you ever been falsely accused?

Was it painful?

Did any good come from it?