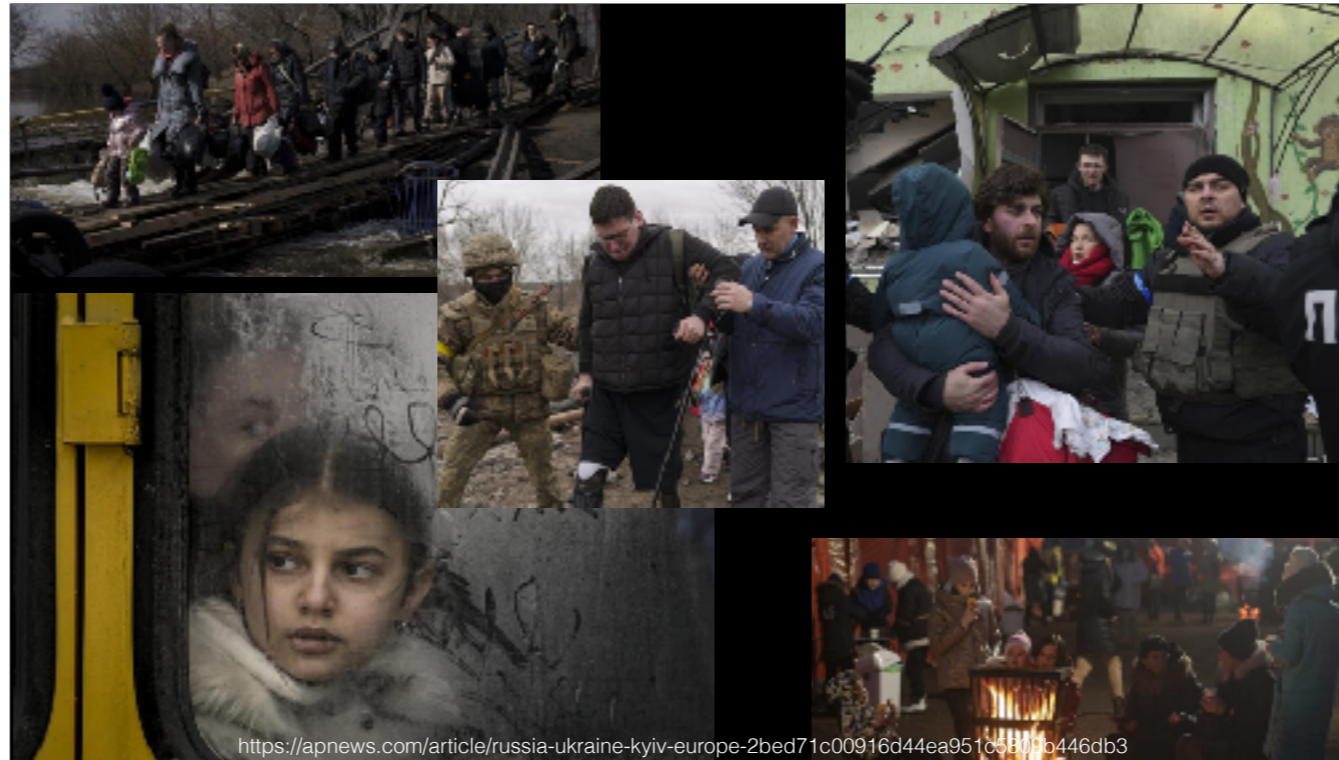




**What About the Children?**

**Exodus 12:37**

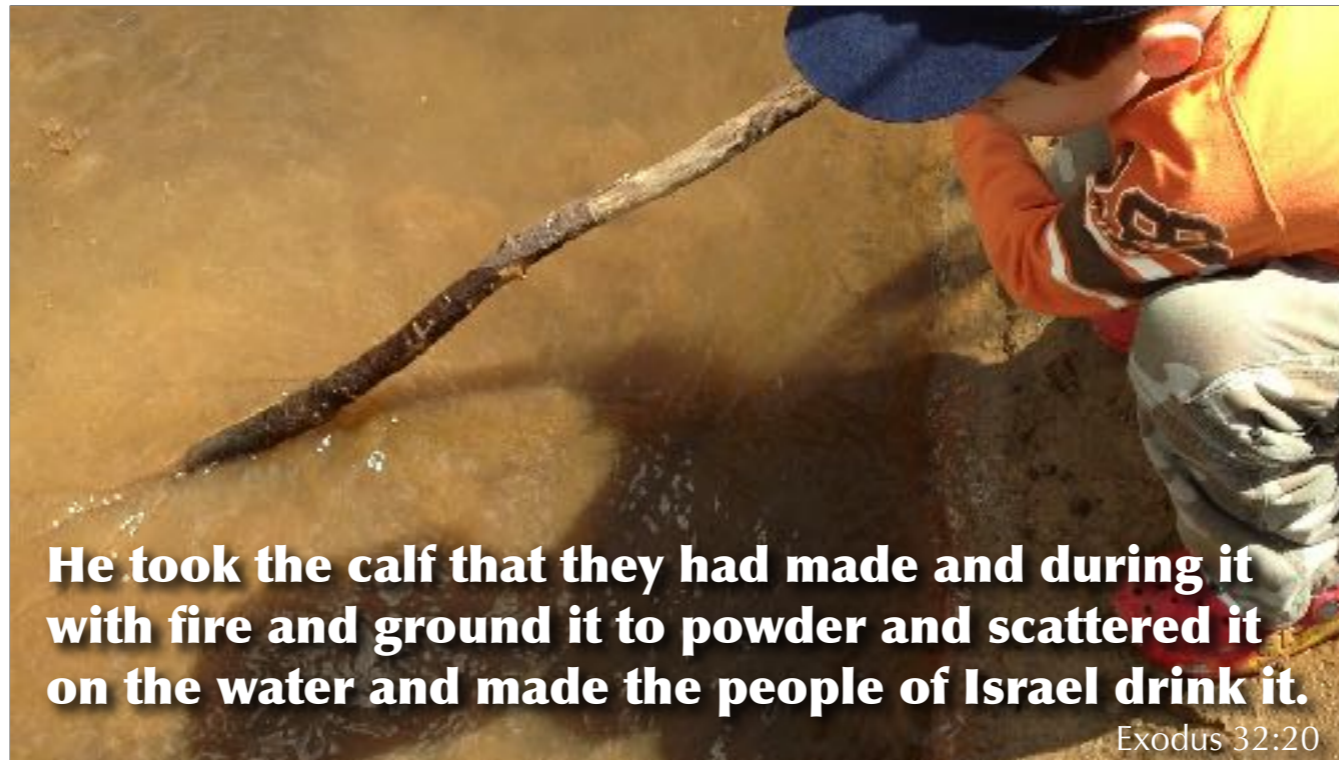
- Exodus 12:37 And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.
- Sometimes this is used to bring emotion into an argument ...
  - But there are times when we need to talk about the suffering of the innocent in this world.
  - Especially since it's often used as an argument against God (and effective).



- The military of Russia has been accused recently of shelling a maternity and children's hospital in Ukraine .... most have responded (rightly) with outrage.
- Of course, all over the world there are innocent children suffering: war, famine, drought, health, etc., etc.
- It's nothing new ... and constantly tragic.
- Associated Press: Airstrike hits Ukraine maternity hospital, 17 reported hurt By EVGENIY MALOLETKA March 9, 2022
-

**Think noble thoughts of God.**  
— Jim McGuiggan

- Think noble thoughts of God - Jim McGuiggan
- That's really hard sometimes
  - We are asked hard questions ... and sometimes there are not simple answers to complex questions. (Simple answers sometimes make things worse.)
  - Sometimes we have hard questions ourselves
    - Whether about the Scriptures
    - Or things that happen in our own lives.



**He took the calf that they had made and during it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.**

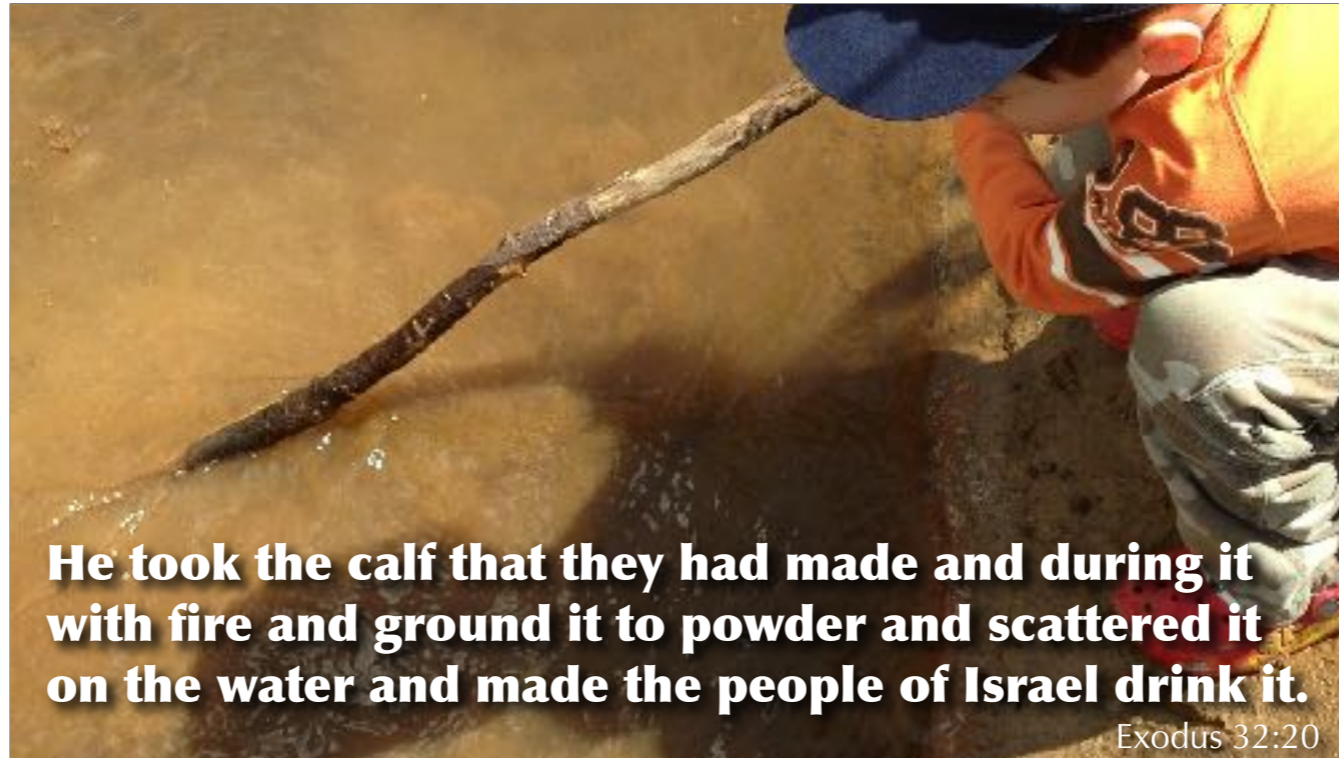
Exodus 32:20

- Exodus 32:20 He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.
- Exodus 32:30 The next day Moses said to the people, “You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”
- Exodus 32:35 Then the LORD sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made.



- When Moses comes down from Sinai to see the Israelites partying around an idol, he burns the idol, grinds it into a powder, scatters it in the water and made the people of Israel drink.
- Did the children have to drink the water?
- And later Jehovah sends a plague on the people. (32:35)
  - Were any children killed in the plague?

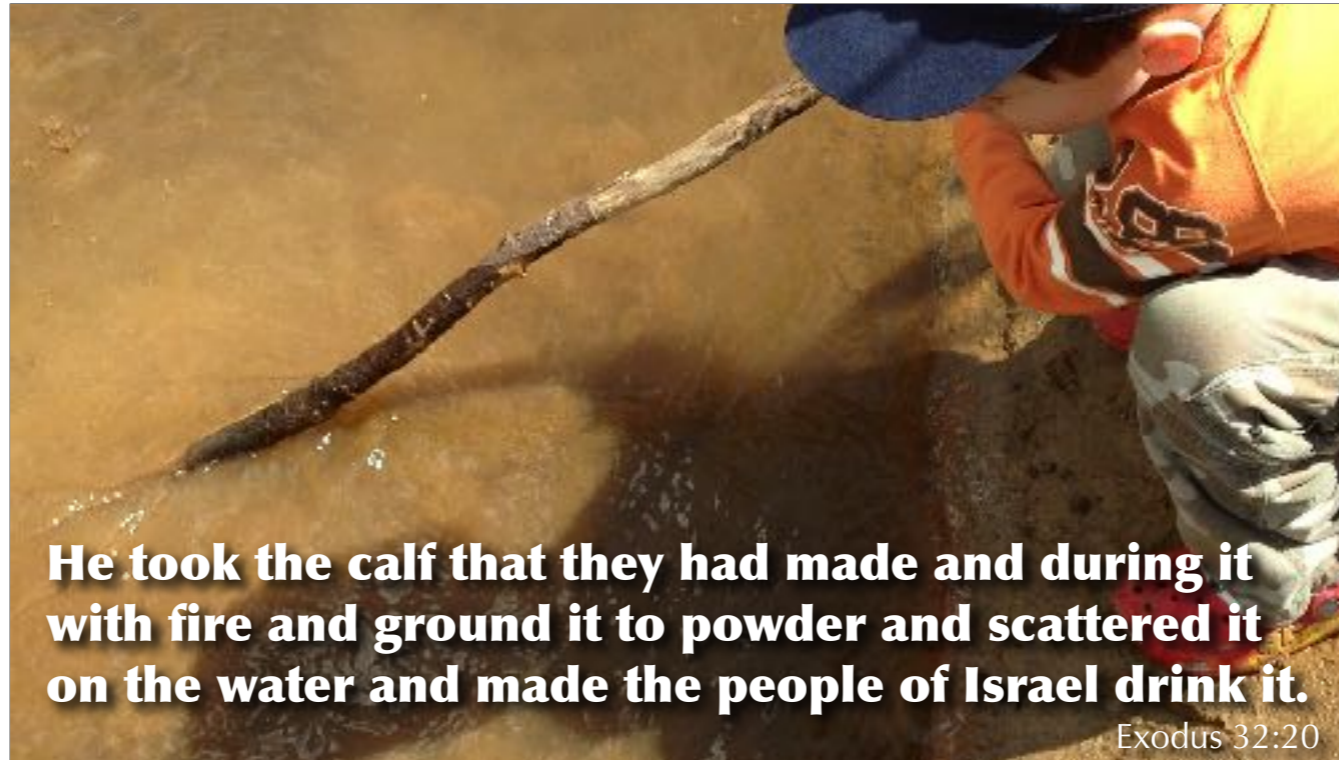




**He took the calf that they had made and during it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.**

Exodus 32:20

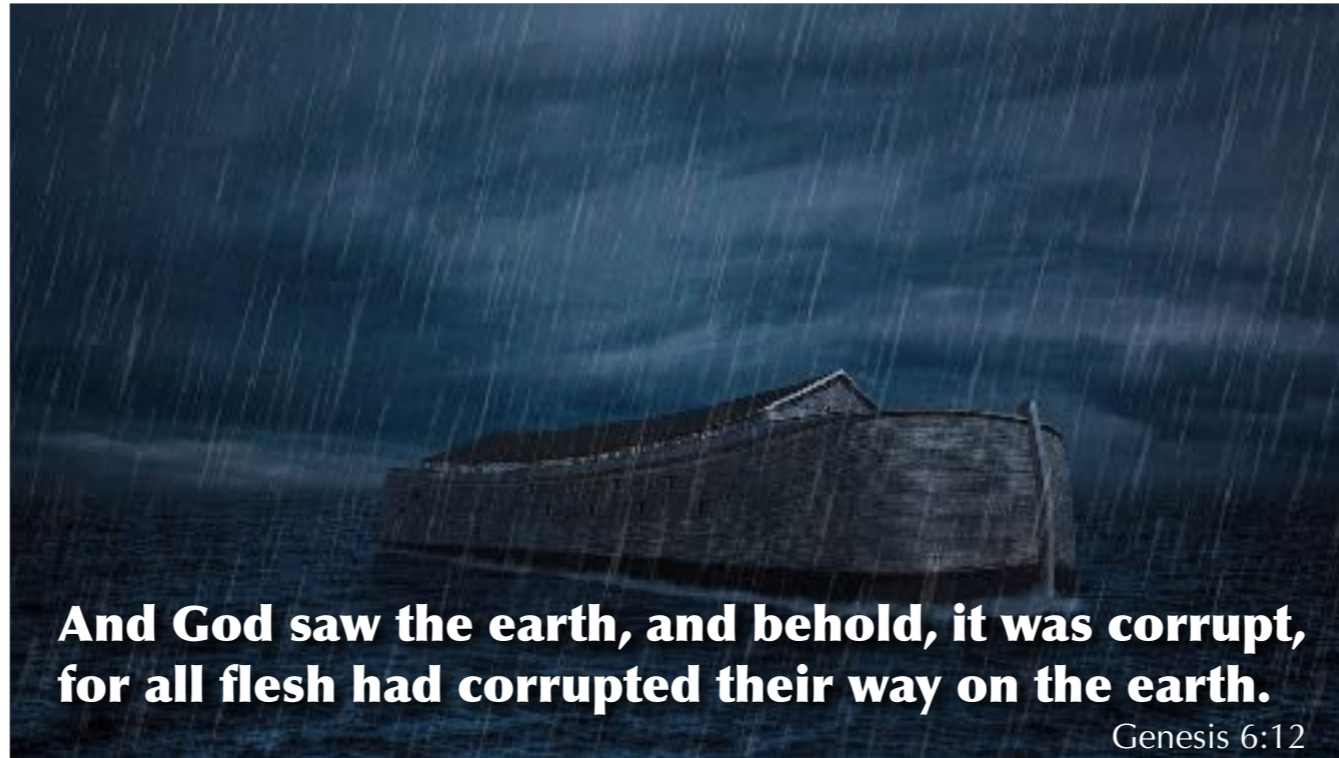
- And that makes me wonder about all that time in the wilderness getting to Sinai.
- What had the children gone through on this journey? Had they not also suffered from the lack of water and food? From the weariness of the journey? From the longing for “home” even though that was slavery (however a child perceived that)?
  - Exodus 17:3 But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”



**He took the calf that they had made and during it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.**

Exodus 32:20

- Why did the children have to suffer?
- Were the children being punished?
- It doesn't seem fair.
- It doesn't seem right.
- They are innocent.

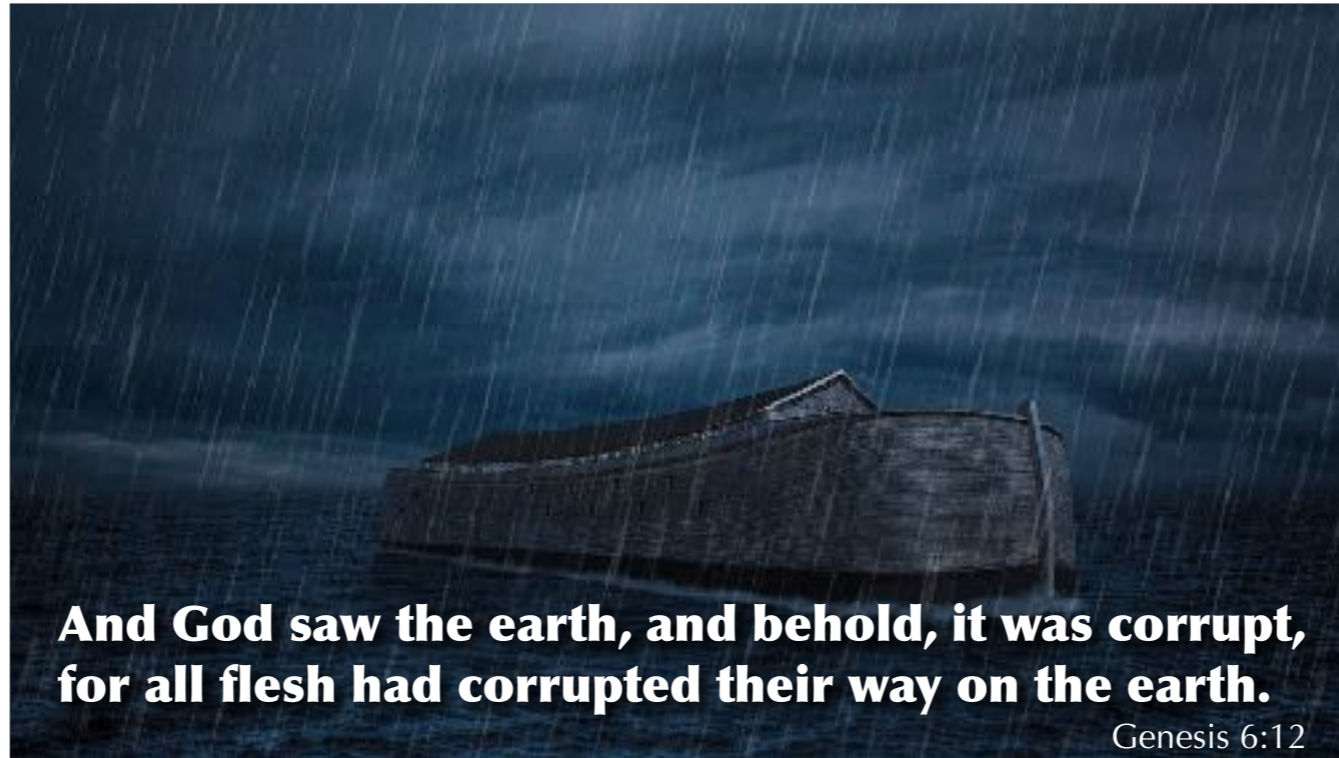


**And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt,  
for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.**

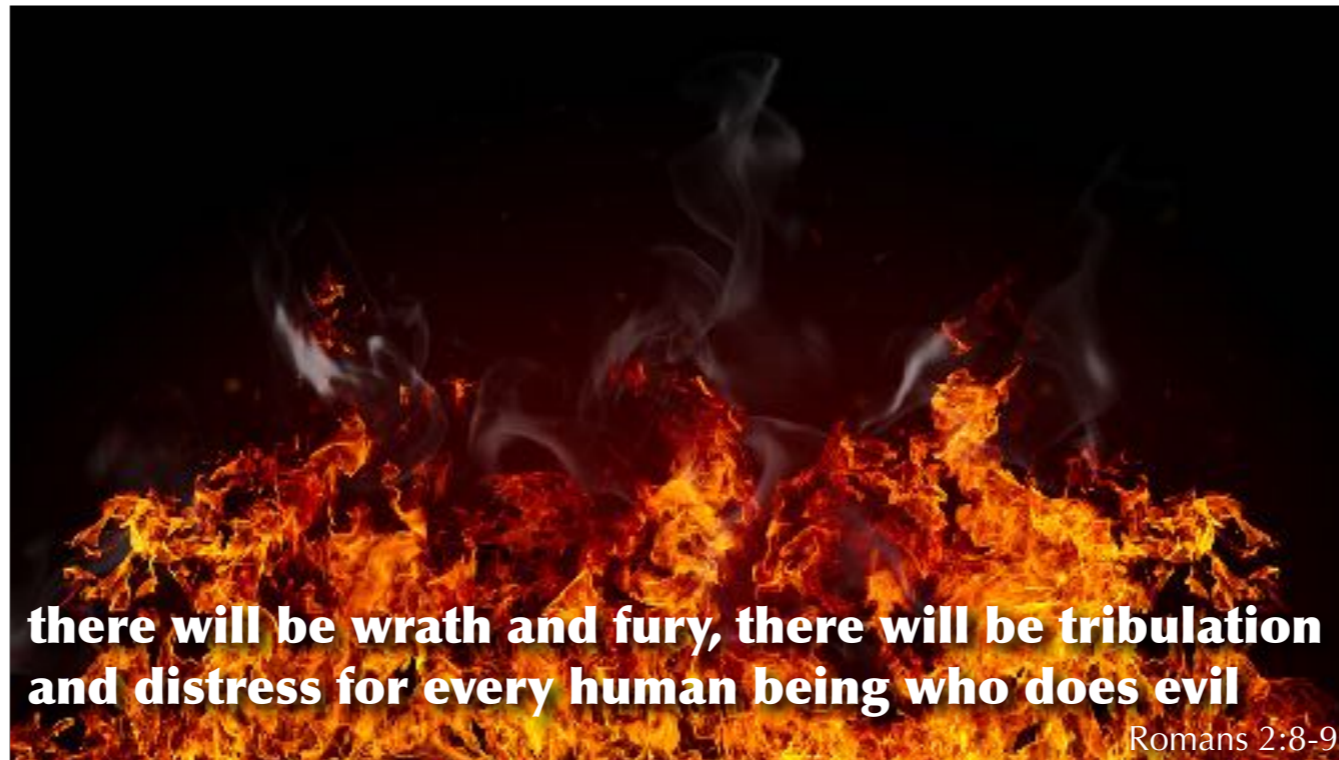
Genesis 6:12

- God makes it clear where sin leads ...
- Adam and Eve eat of the fruit and are forced to leave the presence of God
- Cain kills Abel because of his own actions

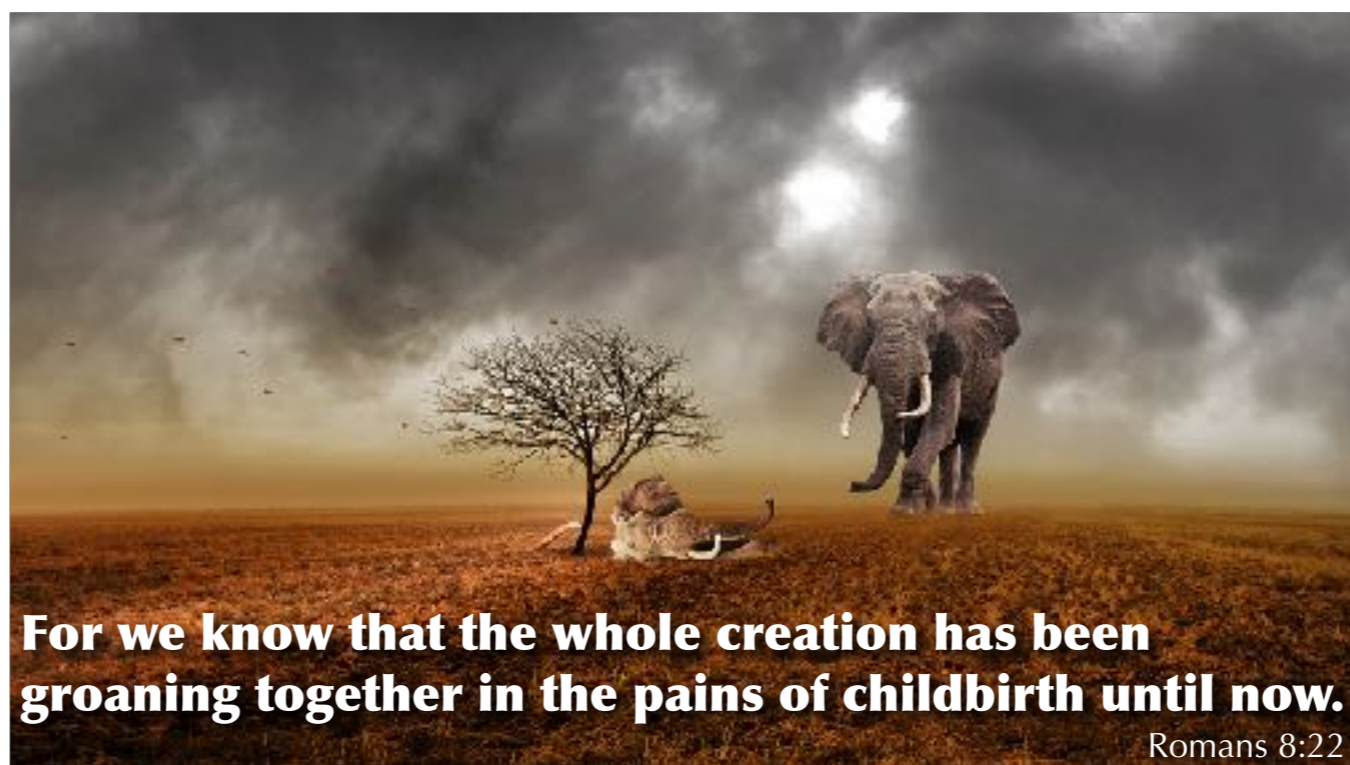




- Genesis 6:5 (ESV) 5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
- Genesis 6:11-12 (ESV) 11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.
  - Children ...



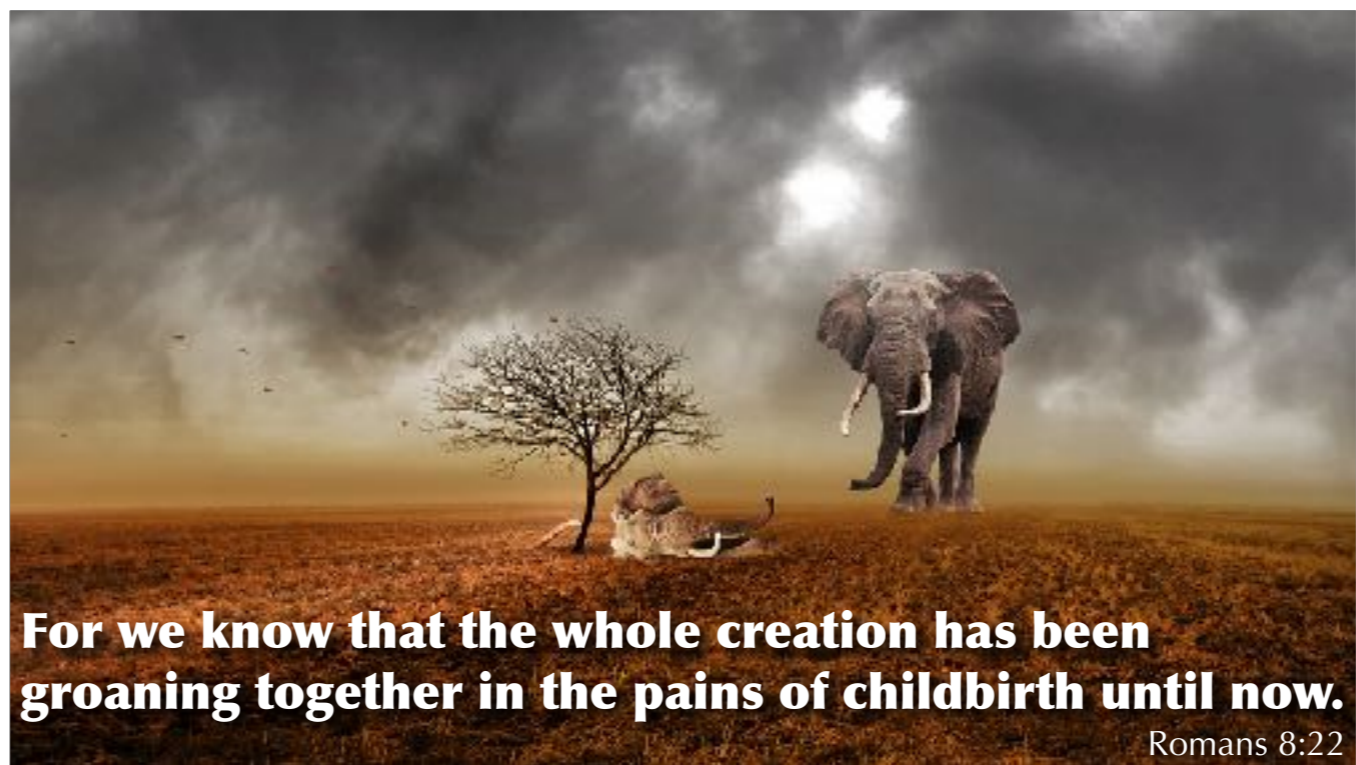
- Eternal consequences:
  - Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
  - Romans 2:8-9 (ESV) 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek,
- This is not the whole picture ...
  - Yet it's often the common way in which God is portrayed both by those who hate him and those who follow him.



**For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.**

Romans 8:22

- Romans 8:19-23
- 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly,
- but because of him who subjected it, **in hope**
  - 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and
  - obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

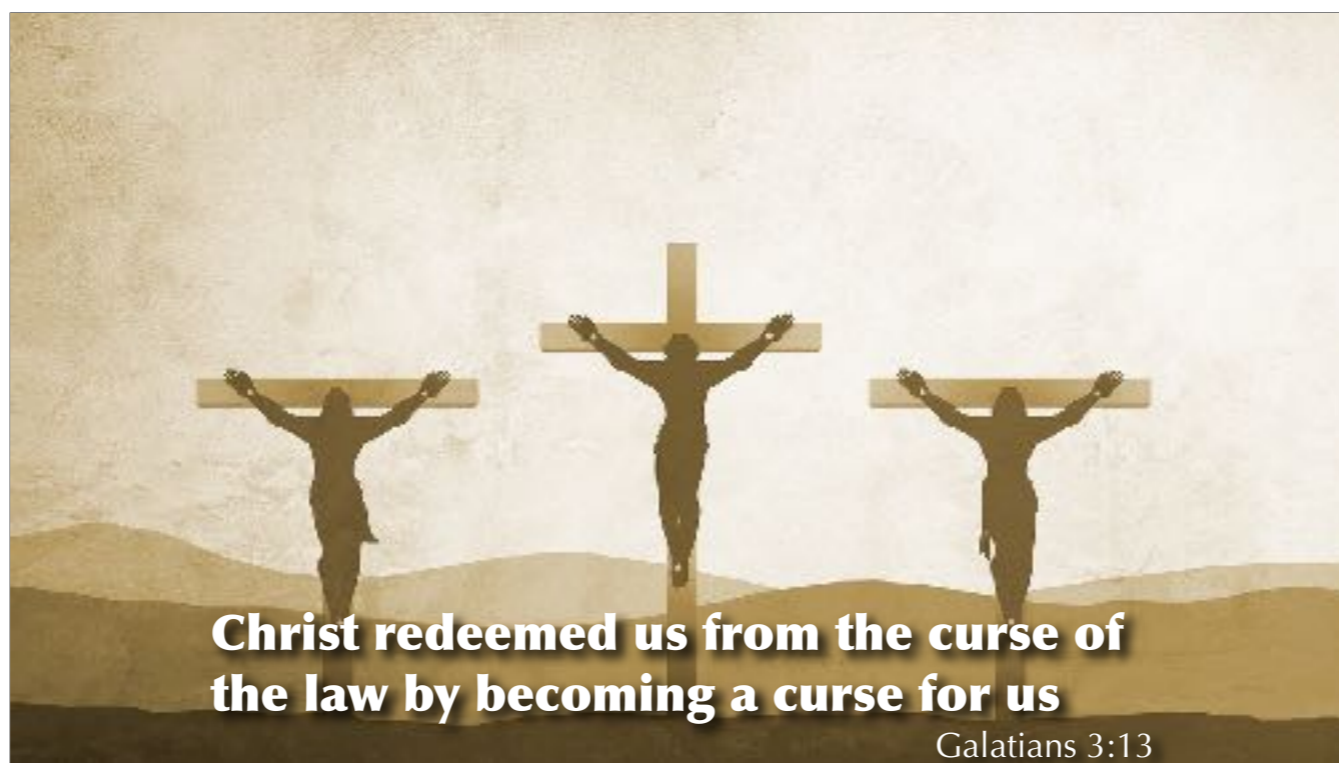


**For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.**

Romans 8:22

- 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.
- 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,
  - groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.





- Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—
  - Our Father did this to his own son ... innocent
- 2 Corinthians 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

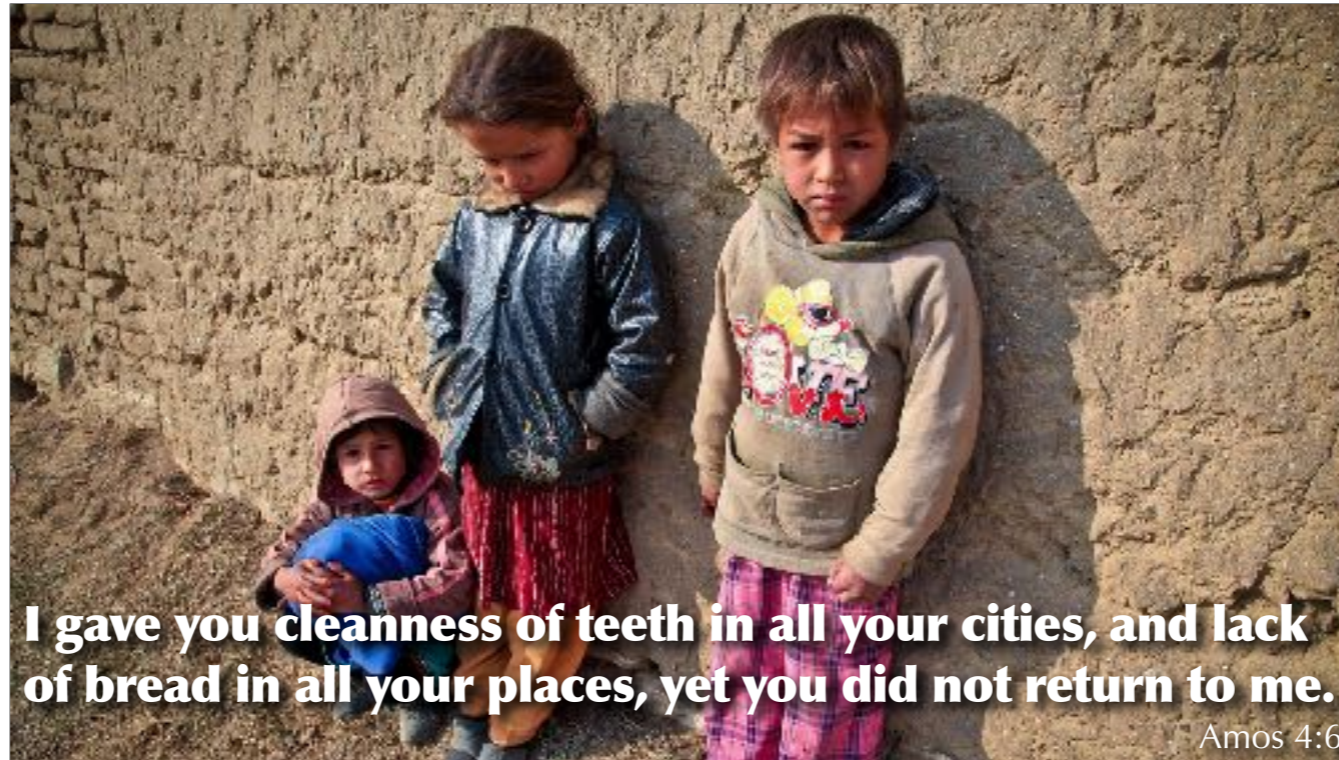


- Matthew 19:13-15 (ESV) 13 Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, 14 but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” 15 And he laid his hands on them and went away.



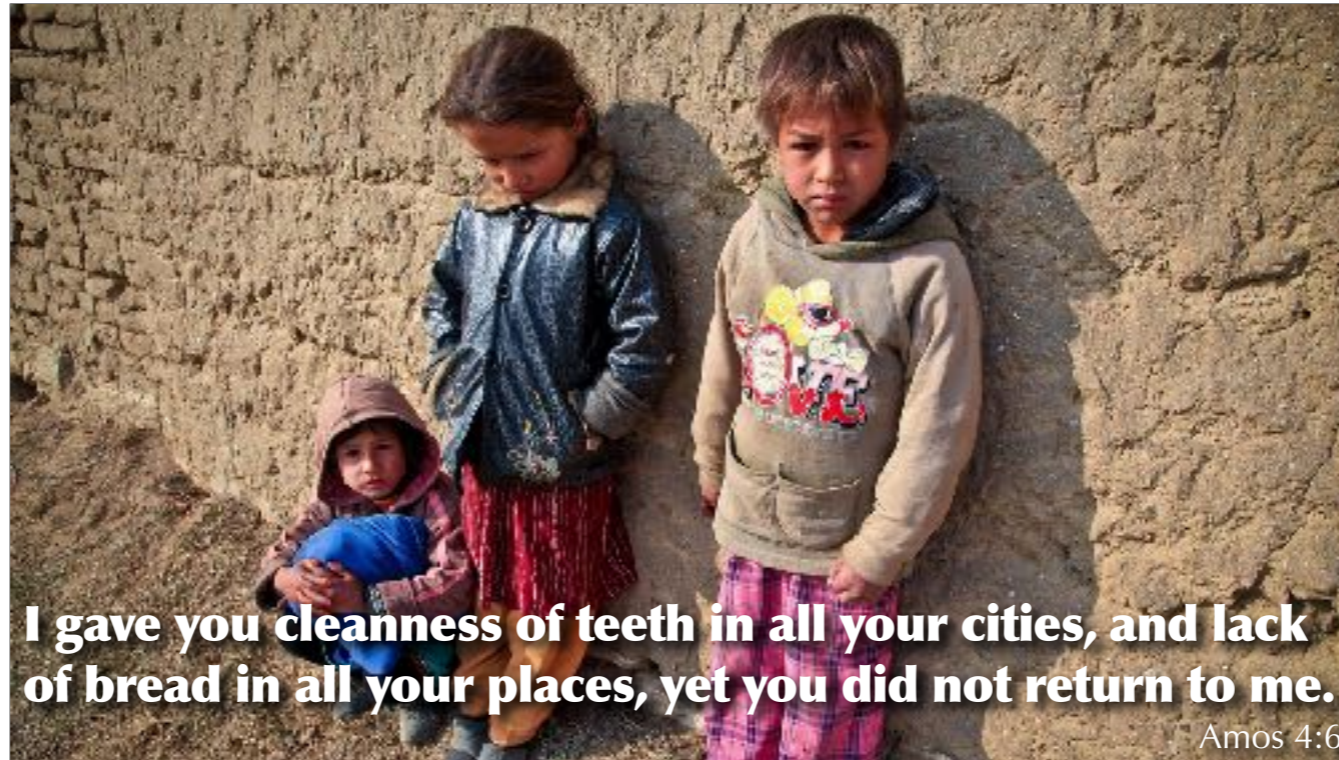
- Romans 9:10-13 (ESV) 10 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 11 **though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad**—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— 12 she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” 13 As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”
- So if it's not the children ... why do they suffer?



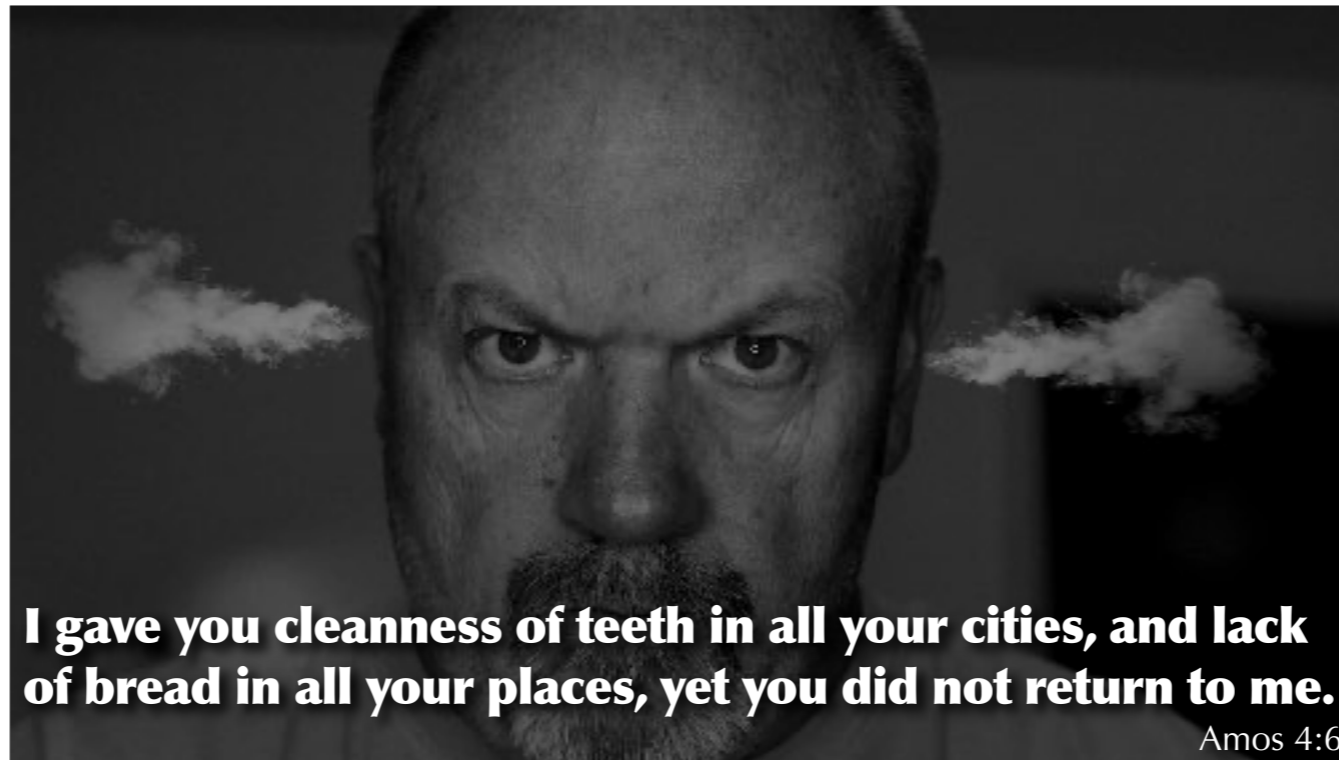


- Amos 4:6 (ESV) 6 “I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me,” declares the LORD.
- Israel was very wicked, God is trying to get them to turn back to them instead of false gods.
  - So he sends a famine.
  - If the adults are starving, are the children starving too?

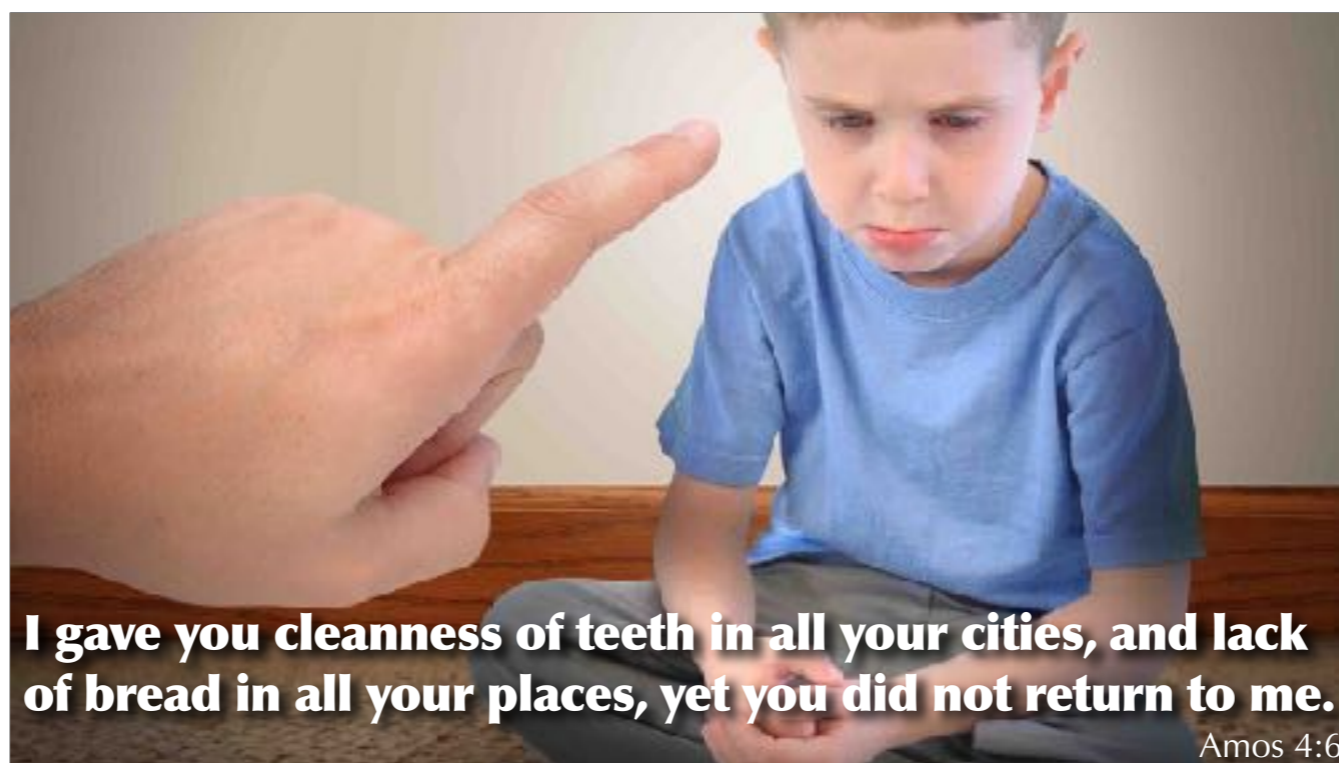




- Why would God do this?
  - “yet you did not return to me”
- Did the adults know why this was happening? Yes, Jehovah their Father, had sent prophets repeatedly.
- So every time that the children look at them, there’s a silent implication.
  - We’re suffering because of you and your insistence on choosing evil. This curse is because of you.



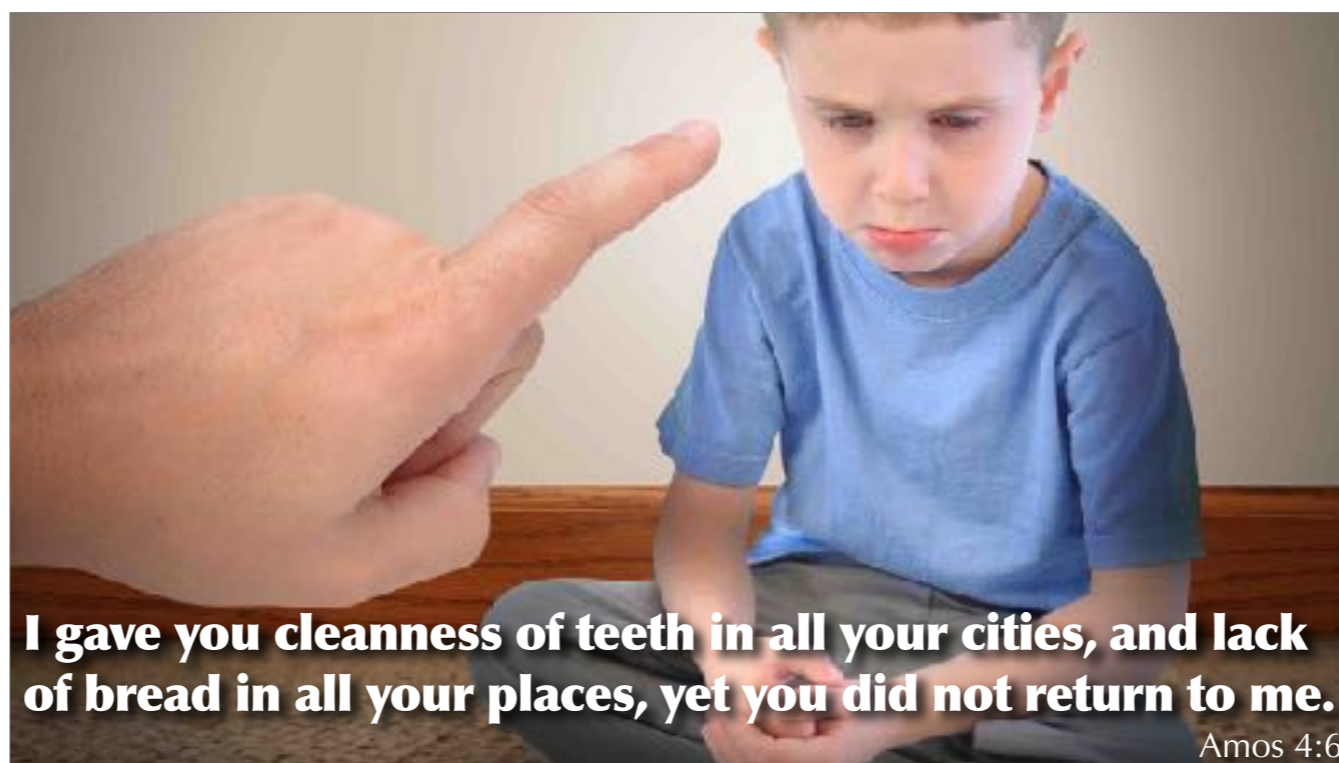
- God's judgment against our sin is not vindictiveness or spite!
- It isn't that we sin and God burns the children.



**I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me.**

Amos 4:6

- He's a relentless lover pursuing us with the intention of giving us the fullness of a glorious life.
- To do that, he has brought a curse down on us all, not only because of our sin, but also because of his ceaseless and loving longing for us.
- Hosea 11:1 When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.
  - Jesus!

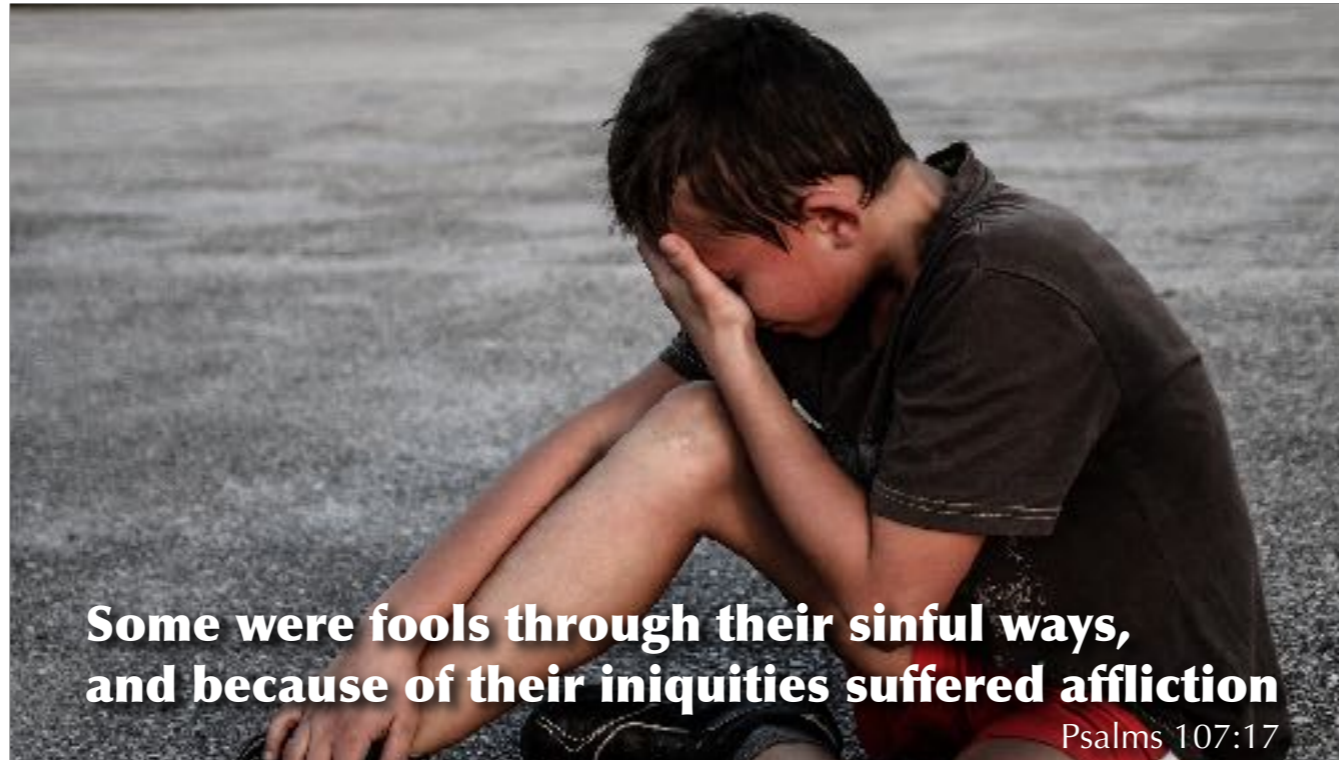


**I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me.**

Amos 4:6

- Hosea 11:8-9 (ESV) 8 How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim?
  - My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. 9 I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.
- Our guilt has brought God's curse not only on the guilty but also on the innocent: Jesus Christ and a host of innocents.

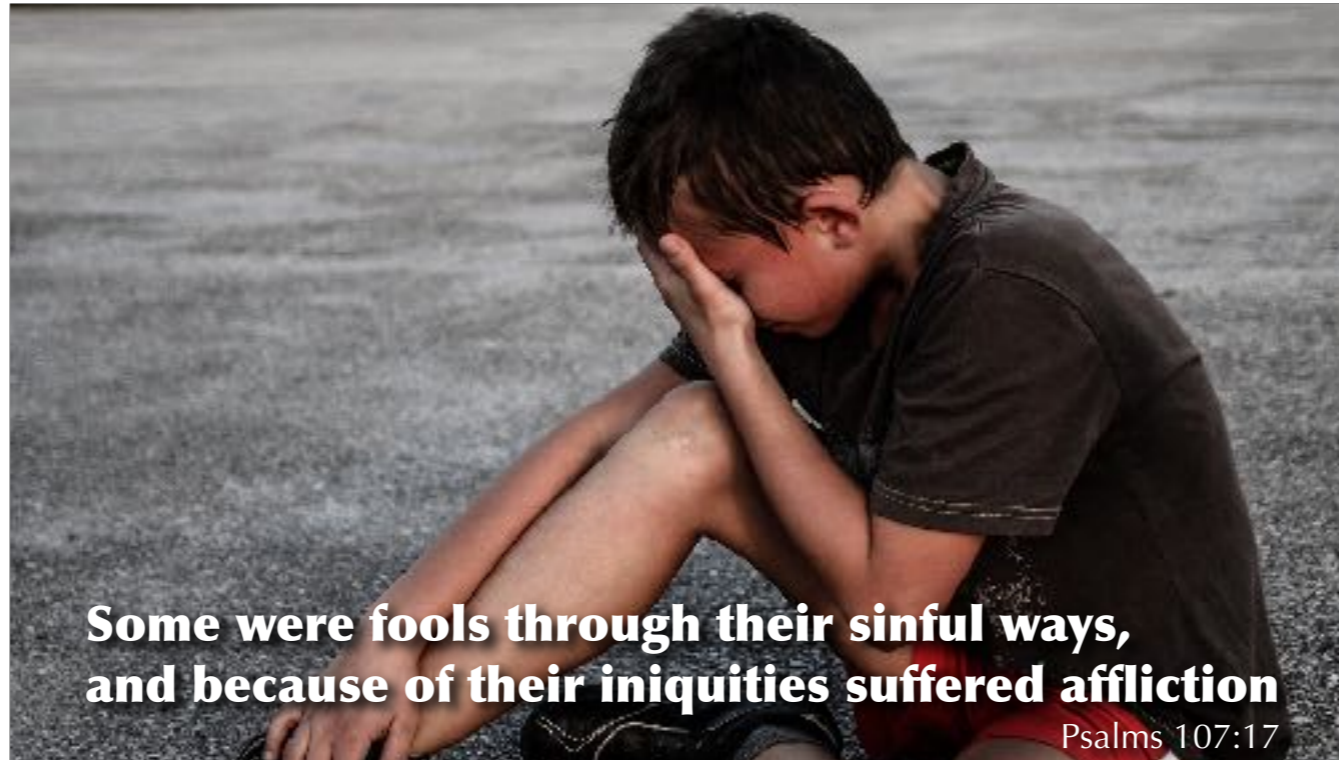




**Some were fools through their sinful ways,  
and because of their iniquities suffered affliction**

Psalms 107:17

- The curse is one of God's ways to deal with sin.
  - Psalms 107:17 Some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction;
- As long as we make suffering the supreme calamity, we're ignoring something God thinks is more basic — the sin factor.
- As long as we make suffering the supreme concern,
  - the astounding sacrifice of the countless innocents is lost on us.



**Some were fools through their sinful ways,  
and because of their iniquities suffered affliction**

Psalms 107:17

- God puts them to grief so that we might repent with deep contrition,
  - so that we might shoulder the responsibility for the fragmentation and hurt of all the world.
- Some of us are suffering greatly, consequences of our own sins
- Some among us are suffering greatly.
  - Not because of their own sin.
  - Sometimes the suffering is because of chance in the world.
  - But because of evil of other people, evil in the world that's pervasive



- They plead with us to open our hearts as well as our eyes.
- They call us to see suffering as a fruit of humanity's willful rebellion against God.
- They call us to see how we've "driven" an infinitely holy lover to pursue us with pain,
  - not because he foams at the mouth in vengefulness,
  - but because he can't bear to see us go to eternal destruction.
- To keep us from eternal loss, he subjects us to the terrible rigors of the curse.



- Before we protest that the curse is overkill,
  - before we complain that the whole of humanity should not be put to grief just to deal with the sin factor,
- we need to remember what God is after —
  - the redemption and glorification of an entire humanity.
- And he isn't simply interested in fine-tuning our lives, he's interested in saving us —
  - saving us eternally and clothing us with an internal and external glory that's beyond our comprehension.



**And those whom he  
predestined he also  
called, and those  
whom he calls he  
also justified, and  
those whom he  
justified he also  
glorified.**

Romans 8:30



- Romans 8:28-30 (ESV) 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

**an inheritance that  
is imperishable,  
undefiled and  
unfading, kept in  
heaven for you**

1 Peter 1:4

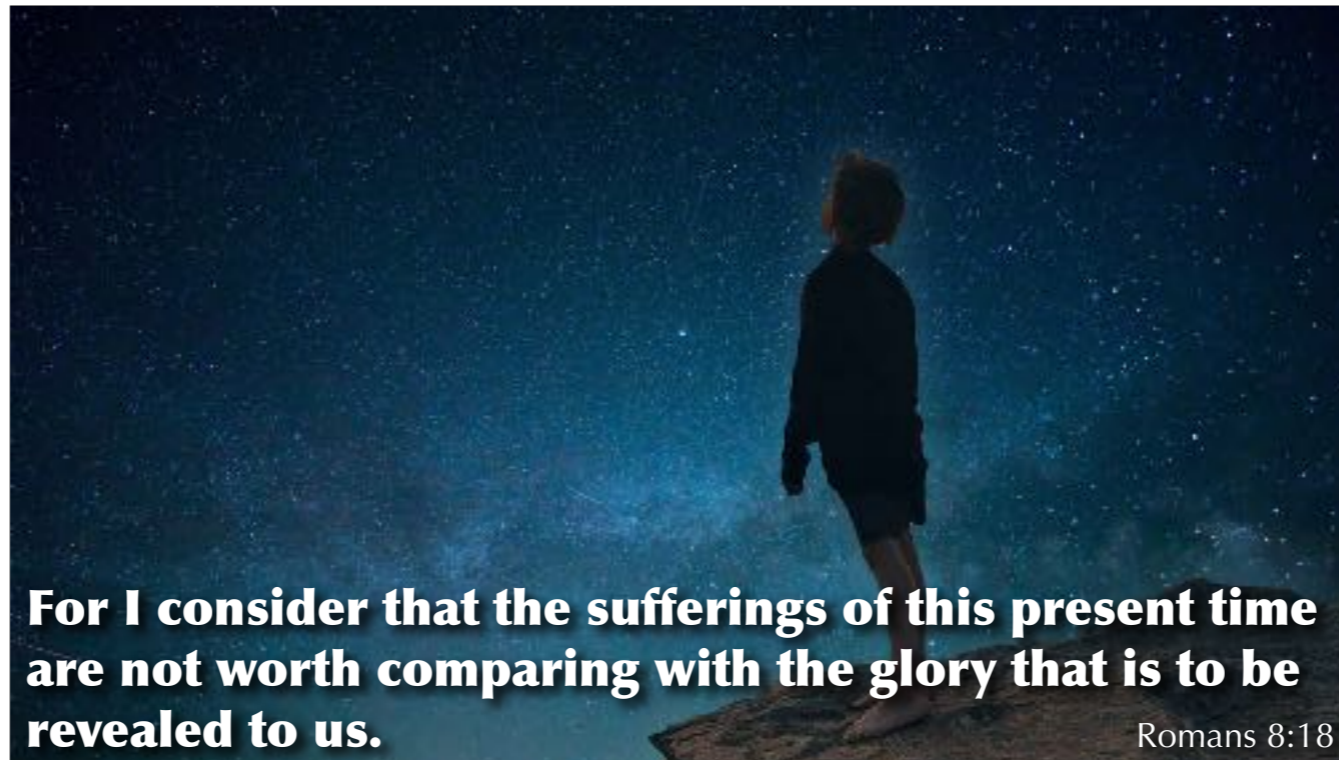


- 1 Peter 1:3-9 (ESV) 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.



- In the end we've got to say that if God thinks the glory-filled end justifies the grief-laden means, the the choice is clear:
  - We can trust God and justify him as we make our pilgrimage through this wilderness life,
  - or we can tell him we aren't prepared to accept his redemptive scheme and rage against him at every turn.



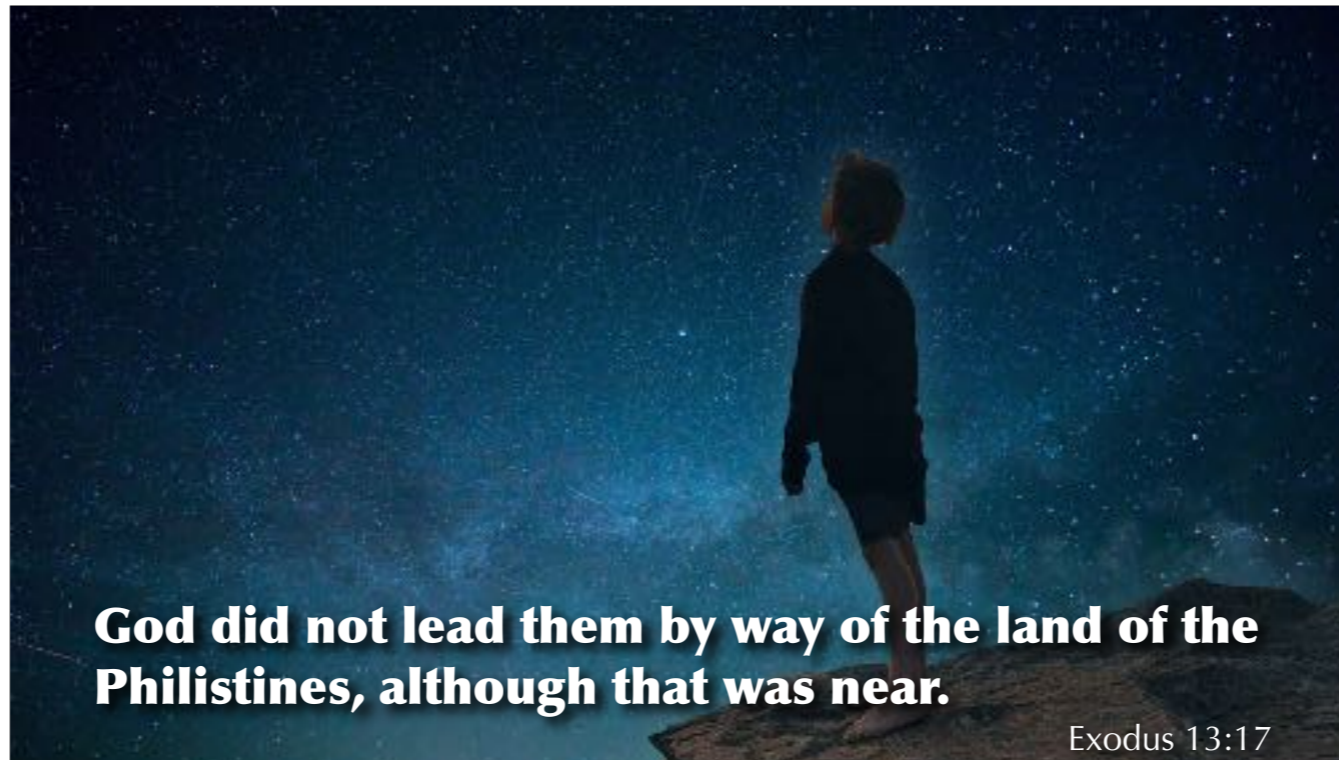


**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**

Romans 8:18

- Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
- This is not easy ... perhaps this will help
  - God purposefully took Israel into the wilderness: hunger, thirst, tired

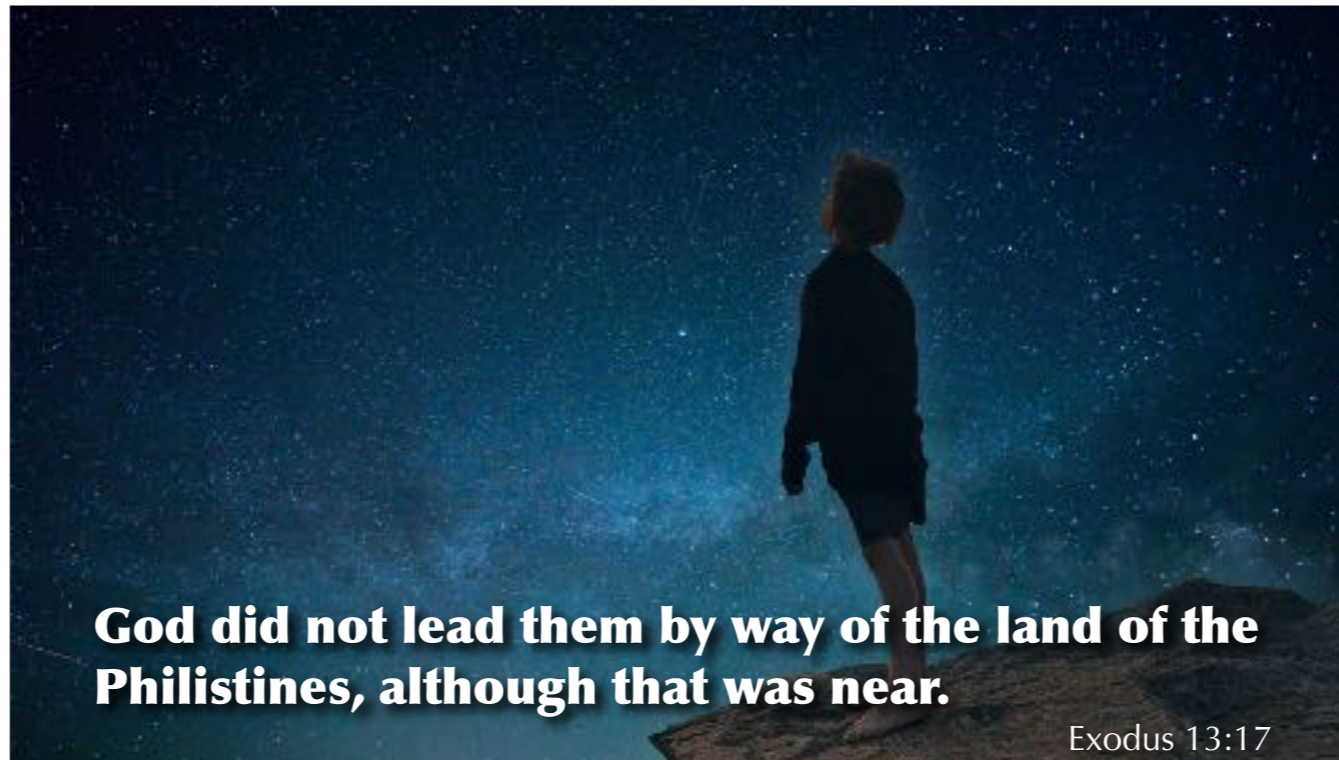




**God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.**

Exodus 13:17

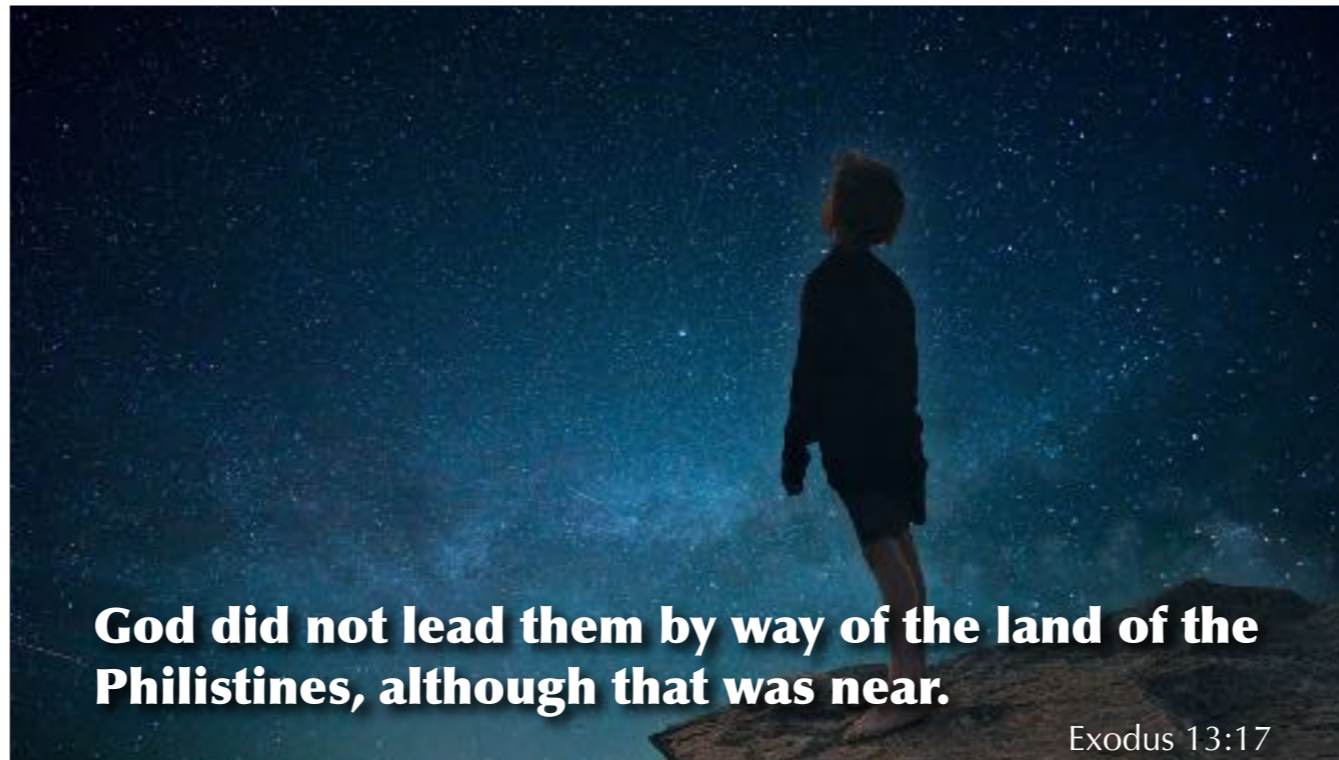
- Exodus 13:17-18 (ESV) 17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.” 18 But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.



**God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.**

Exodus 13:17

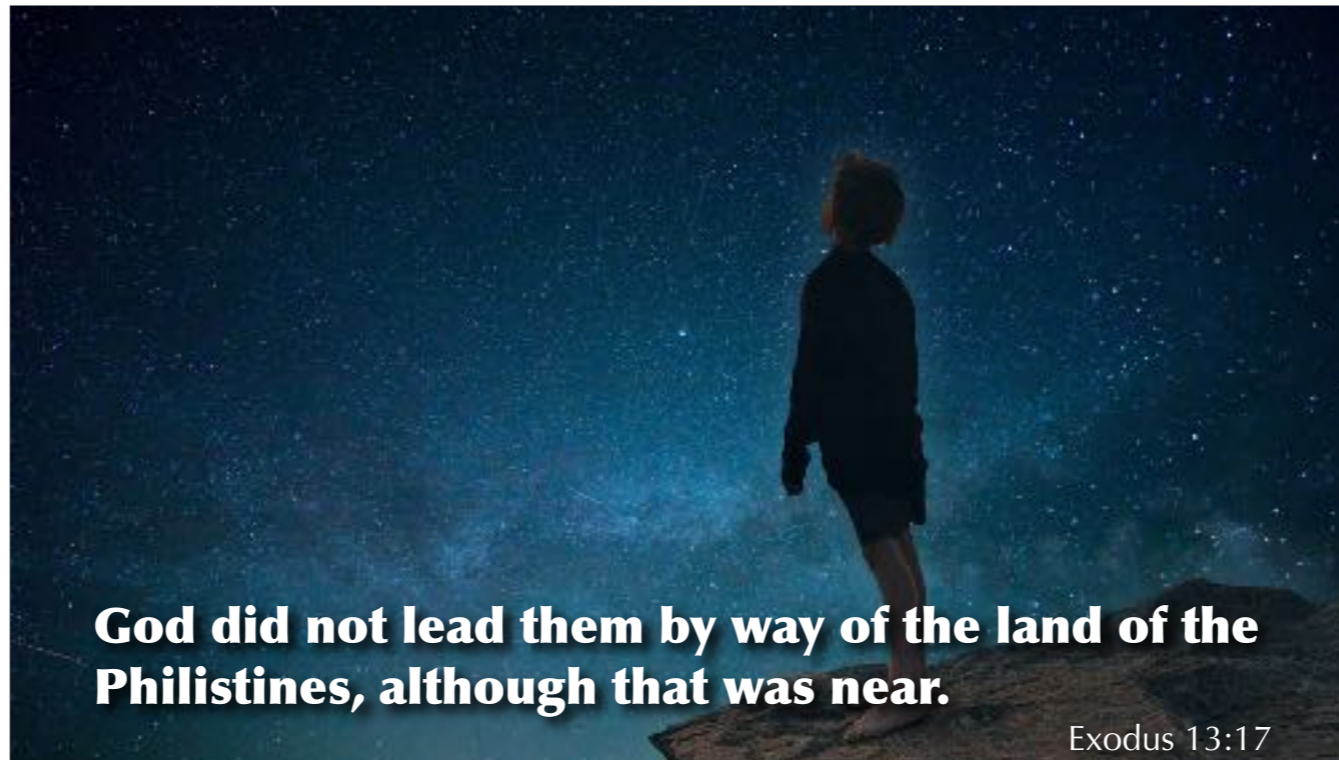
- We tend to idealize the quicker, easier ways of getting things done.
  - Short cuts are always good.
  - Minimize any possible difficulties.
- Yet God realized that even the “near” way was going to be difficult: war
  - And bad enough that they would want to quit and go home.



**God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.**

Exodus 13:17

- We often wonder why anyone would actually chose to take the hard way.
  - By definition is harder.
  - Slower.
  - God chose the wilderness ... and it was hard.
    - And the people still wanted to go back.
    - And the children suffered.



**God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.**

Exodus 13:17

- Do you trust that Jehovah had a purpose in choosing the wilderness over the near path?
  - His purpose was greater than just getting the people as quickly as possible to the promised land.
  - His purpose was to create a treasure, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. (Ex. 19:5-6)
    - (Not just any nation).
- Can we not see that his plan for mankind was even greater for redemption





- We are passing through a wilderness.
- Some of us are suffering more than others.
  - Some may feel lost, and confused.
  - Some of us may have questions we want to ask of God ...
    - Why?
    - How long?
    - Where are you?
- Trust God. He loves humanity. He loves you. He wants to save you for eternity.

**We implore you on  
behalf of Christ,  
be reconciled to God.**

**2 Corinthians 5:20**

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## What About the Children?

Exodus 13:17-18

Synopsis: On the journey through the wilderness, undoubtedly the innocent children suffered. Why does God allow the innocent to suffer? Why does he not act? With no easy answers, we must consider God's love and his purpose.

(With apologies to Jim McGuiggan. Much of the thoughts and direction of this lesson are based on his thoughts in his book: Celebrating the Wrath of God: Reflections on the Agony and Ecstasy of His Relentless Love. Chapter: God's Curse and Little Children. (Nook edition, p. 31-35))

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**“Let all that you do be done with love.”**