

Theologian of the Cross **Part 2: Who is the God of the Cross?**

God is Independent

Look up the following texts: Romans 11:33-36, Acts 17:24-25, Exodus 3:14.

- Concerning Exodus 3:14, Wayne Grudem writes, “the implication is that God’s existence and character are determined by _____ alone and are not dependent on anyone or anything else.”¹

God is Unchangeable

Look up the following texts: Psalm 102:25-27; James 1:17

Can God be Impacted by Anything?

Can God be acted upon, then? Can He suffer the pains of this world with emotion?

- Some in church history have taught what is called the doctrine of impassibility. It is “the doctrine that God is not capable of being acted upon or affected emotionally by anything in creation.”²
- Our problem is we believe it. John Stott says we think of God, “lounging, perhaps dozing, in some celestial deck-chair, while hungry millions starve to death. We think of him as an armchair spectator, almost gloating over the world’s suffering and enjoying his own isolation.”³
- It is the statement the nation of Israel says in Isaiah 40:27: “My way is hidden from the Lord, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God.”
 - Read Isaiah 40:21-26. What is the emphasis of these verses?
 - Read Isaiah 40:27-31. Who does Isaiah say God gives his strength to?

Since When Did God Feel My Pain?

Look to the revelation of God, Jesus Christ (also see part 1 of study), which shows God in the flesh was affected by people and this world:

- What did God do? John 1:1-3, 14
 - “The Word was God...the _____ became _____...”
 - Jesus has two natures: _____ and _____

- What are some examples of the effects of his incarnation?
 - Matthew 4:2, “And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.”
 - John 4:6, “So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well.”
 - In Luke 2:41-51, at age 12, he was misunderstood by his parents, but he still obeyed them.
 - 2 Corinthians 8:9, “...though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”
 - Can you think of any more?
- Read Isaiah 53:1-12. In what ways does Jesus empathize with us in this passage?

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Look at how Jesus associates with suffering and us now:

- Acts 9:4
- Luke 24:39-43; Revelation 5:6
- “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which translated means, ‘ _____ _____ _____.’”

— Matthew 1:23

“I am with you _____, even to the end of the age.”

—Matthew 28:20

- The question that comes up because of suffering is usually, “Why?” But the right question to ask we see is not “Why?” But “Where?” or “Who?”

Who? Jesus, God in the flesh

Where? The Cross

¹ *Systematic Theology*, (Leicester, Great Britain: Inter-Varsity Press and Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 161.

² G.R. Lewis, “The Impassibility of God,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. ed. Walter A. Elwell. Baker Book House, 1984: 553 in Glenn M. Penner, *In the Shadow of the Cross: A Biblical Theology of Persecution & Discipleship* (Bartlesville, OK: Living Sacrifice Books, 2004), 88.

³ John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (InterVarsity Press, 1986), 329 in Glenn M. Penner, *In the Shadow of the Cross: A Biblical Theology of Persecution and Discipleship* (Bartlesville, OK: Living Sacrifice Books, 2004), 87.