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# SOVEREIGNTY

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## Talk 4: God's Sovereignty and Suffering

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust him for his grace;  
behind a frowning providence, he hides a smiling face." *William Cowper*

### A: GOD'S AGENDA

Ephesians 1:9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. 11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will...

1. God's rule involves planning and purpose.
2. God's plan centres around Christ.
3. God's plan involves everything.

### B. GOD'S AGENDA AND THE FUTURE

*Revelation 21:1-8*

#### 1. The New Creation

Continuity

*Genesis 1-2*

Discontinuity

*Genesis 3*

The sea

*Exodus 15*

Isaiah 51:                   10 Was it not you who dried up the sea,  
the waters of the great deep,  
who made a road in the depths of the sea  
so that the redeemed might cross over?

11 The ransomed of the LORD will return.  
They will enter Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy will crown their heads.  
Gladness and joy will overtake them,  
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

## The victory

Col 1:19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

John 12:31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. 32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

Hebrews 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

## 2. The people of the New Creation

God's place

God's people

God's presence

## 3. The promise of the New Creation

## C.GOD'S AGENDA AND THE PRESENT

*Acts 1*



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### **Living in the last days**

The purpose of the last days

*2 Peter 3:8-10*

## The character of the last days

2 Tim. 3:1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power.

John 16:16 “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

1Pet. 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

1 John 2:28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

## D.GOD’S AGENDA AND SUFFERING

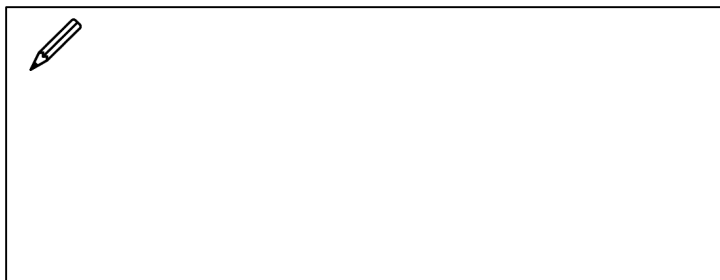
Your best life now?

### 1. Godliness

*Romans 8*

2 Cor 1: 8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

Romans 5:3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope.



1 Peter 1: 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.

## **2. Gospel growth**

*2 Corinthians 12*

*Given*

*Messenger of Satan*

*Flesh*

*Thorn*

*Grace*

## **3. The greater glory of God**

*“God never fails to accomplish what he sets out to do. Creatures may oppose him, to be sure, but they cannot prevail. For his own reasons, he has chosen to delay the fulfilment of his intentions for the end of history, and to bring about those intentions through a complicated sequence of events. In that sequence, his purposes appear sometimes to suffer defeat, sometimes to achieve victory. But...each apparent defeat actually makes his eventual victory all the more glorious.” John Frame, Doctrine of God*

Rev. 5:           13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea,  
and all that is in them, singing:  
                  “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be praise and honour and glory and power,  
for ever and ever!”  
                  14 The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

## RESPONSE

Something I've been reminded of:

Something new I've learned:

Something I need to do or change as a result: