



TRIALS  
TEMPTATIONS  
PERSECUTIONS

*Do not confuse them*

F R A N C K   K V A S K O F F

TRIALS, TEMPTATIONS AND PERSECUTIONS, DO NOT CONFUSE THEM



# **Trials, Temptations and Persecutions, do not confuse them**

Franck Kvaskoff

TRIALS, TEMPTATIONS AND PERSECUTIONS, DO NOT CONFUSE THEM

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TRIALS, TEMPTATIONS AND PERSECUTIONS, DO NOT CONFUSE THEM

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## **BIOGRAPHY**

Franck became a born-again Christian in 1986 in Brisbane, Australia at the age of 22.

It was in 2006 in the south of France that God revealed to him His desire to use him to spread His Gospel. Franck then began to seriously study the Bible, and to write his first Bible studies. It is only 7 years later that he created the ministry The Real Good News in Australia as well as “La Vraie Bonne Nouvelle” in France, after having received a solid training from the Holy Spirit.

Franck does not consider himself a writer, but simply a Christian who recounts what he experiences in his personal life. His books in the form of biblical studies are often enriched with anecdotes from his life wherein he does not hesitate to reveal his mistakes along the way; we also sometimes discover situations with his family. He is a person who places great emphasis on loving his neighbor. This is why Franck likes to pray to heal the sick, but also to teach people to help them enter into autonomy in Jesus. His main goal is to see a Church that uses all that God has given us, but also to see as many people as possible go through the new birth.

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**T**here is a huge debate on these areas of Christian life, which are trials, temptations and persecutions.

I have only met very few Christians who have a clear and balanced view of these three areas. Very often the same area of life is sometimes mistaken for a trial, a temptation, or a persecution. As a result, God is given thoughts or actions that He does not have. A poor knowledge of His nature will most often contribute to these kinds of mistakes.

Some passages of the Bible that are misunderstood or incorrectly taught will add to this confusion.

The vast majority of Christians no longer really know where the truth lies. They think that trials, temptations or persecutions are more or less the same thing, because in most cases in these three areas, suffering is the outcome.

There are also those who go through moments of physical suffering. Most of the time, it will lead them to refocus on the person of God. They will pray longer, read more, and listen to more teachings. This is simply because they are suffering and refocusing on the essential. So of course after a few days or weeks, their spirituality is increased. And there, they think it is obvious: God sent them this suffering because a spiritual growth came out of it.

It is only a matter of time before one day you will be confronted with a trial, then a temptation, and finally a persecution, the order stated being not mandatory.

As I often say, if we were to hold a conference on trials, temptations, and persecution, then there would be very little chance of a packed room!

The vast majority of Christians consciously or unconsciously reject these three areas, and most often do not want to hear about them; simply because they do not master them, they fear them. Yet these three areas are part of the Christian life, and avoiding them in their understanding, or even rejecting them

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altogether, will only make our situation worse when we are confronted with them.

In this study, we will deal with all these points in detail and in depth.

Let us begin by defining these three areas that a Christian will not only have the opportunity to face, but is assuredly going to encounter. The question of whether I will ever be confronted with these three circumstances does not therefore even arise. The question would rather be "When will I be confronted with them? ».

The trial:

It is really the dreaded word, or else, used erroneously in most Christian circles. Some people sometimes boast about saying: "Oh I'm going through a trial" when their own mistakes have led them to the situation they are in.

Others think they are more spiritual because they are suffering, and they associate their suffering with a closer relationship with God. There are also those who think they are better appreciated in their Christian environment because they are going through suffering. The common point between all these people is that they all think that God is at the origin, or at least agrees with their condition of suffering.

The definition of a trial is: *"The experimentation or a test that makes it possible to judge the quality of something or someone"*.

We can prove everything in the sense that we may need to judge the quality of everything. The Bible speaks of trials, of people who have been put to the test, in several passages. As a result, it is sometimes a little difficult to find your way around. One wonders why a test would be necessary.

At other times we wonder, "But who sends these trials, where do they come from? »

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Some even mention the fact that trials necessarily generate suffering, and that suffering is necessary for growth.

So many ridiculous statements, and questions that can be heard in some discussions between Christians.

Unfortunately, we can sometimes hear this kind of statement from people who are in charge of teaching in some local churches, or home groups. As a result, and I am thinking especially of people who were recently born again, they no longer know what to think. Try explaining to a person who would like to go through the new birth: *"You know, you will see when you are born again, God sometimes sends suffering into your life, or sometimes He will only allow satan to send you various sufferings, like diseases, or any other kind of problem. These are called trials. But don't worry, it's for your own good, God says you need them to grow"*.

Have we ever heard a person talk like that?

In any case, it seems to me that the person interested in the Gospel would run away, listening to such words.

The Bible does not say that we must proclaim part of the Gospel first, and that another part will be revealed to people once they are Christians. We will develop this subject in more detail below.

I often say that "the trial is a way to see outwardly, what is inwards. In other words, a trial is a test that will reveal a state. A trial in the work environment is a test to see a person's qualities, abilities, and skills.

So we could ask ourselves, who would need to have such information about a Christian person?

Does Satan need to know our degree of faith activation, the level of trust we have in God?

Satan is only driven by evil, selfishness, and hatred of others. It is not my faith that will change his attitude towards me in one way or another. For him all means are good, whether they are favourable or not, he is 24 hours a day on our back looking for a rift to rush in. satan has no strategy, no organization, he acts



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all over the place to lead as many people as possible in his path (for more details on this subject see my study called: The True colours of Satan).

Would God need to test, or have a view on my faith, my trust in Him?

Assuming that God is omniscient, that is, that He knows all things, why should He need to know something He already knows?

It is obvious that God has no need to know what is happening in my inner self, in my thoughts. He does not need a trial to reveal to Him what is going on inside of me. Nor does he need a trial to reveal my spiritual qualities or deficiencies. This makes sense when you think about it a little more deeply.

Would I need to have this kind of information about myself? Would I need to know where my faith stands?

No example in the New Covenant shows that a Christian would need to go through a trial in order to have a clear view of his faith, or of his knowledge. There are many other more peaceful ways to see if my faith is activated or not in such or such situation in my life. Suffering is not a mandatory option to reveal who I really am.

In these last three questions asked, we can therefore see that having an inner view of our state is useless for satan, for God, but also for ourselves. We cannot say that there is a test of our faith that would be generated by a person in the lives of Christians.

The trial, or being tested, is also in its definition, being struck by misfortunes that occur in our lives. I believe that everyone will agree that at one time or another, they have experienced a misfortune in their lives. Everyone agrees that suffering crosses our path at some point.

The problem we encounter in a majority of Christian communities is to know where this suffering comes from, who is at the origin of it.

We will see this important point a little later, once we have detailed these three states of trial, temptation and persecution.

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The particularity of being tested, or going through a trial, is that you do not choose the time or nature of the trial. It happens without warning, the vast majority of Christians do not really know where it comes from, so they blame it on God.

I remember when I was a young Christian, I had just been born again in the last few months or so. I had spent the first six months of my new Christian life in Australia in a church where I did not really understand all the teachings in depth because of the language barrier. Of course I had understood everything there was to know in order to go through the new birth, but some deeper aspects of the Christian life were still missing.

So I had returned to France, and I had met a Christian who had been born again for about 10 years. We were good friends, and he would sometimes talk to me about some aspects of the Christian faith. This guy was convinced that God was sending suffering into the lives of His children in order to educate and develop them. I remember he told me a lot of hardships in his life, the diseases he was going through, and the accidents he had been involved in. He thought that the more we suffered, the more we were approved of God, the more problems we had in our bodies, the more God considered us to be important people.

I must say that the local church I attended at the time was part of the Assemblies of God of France. This notion of suffering willed by God was relayed with much less amplitude, but was sometimes evoked nevertheless. I would like to point out here that I have nothing against this movement of the Assemblies of God, but I am simply quoting a fact about the local church I have been attending for more than 20 years. I also learned some very good things there over the years, but not always.

One day I was with my friend, and I told him about my concern to see my father being born again. That day he answered me: *"You know there is a way to make sure that your father can go through the new birth faster and safer"*.

I answered him from the top of my ignorance on this subject that I would like to know what it is all about.

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That day, he said to me: *"It is very simple, with suffering God can do much more powerful things than normal. You have the opportunity to take on yourself some of your father's sins, so he will be free from his sins. But be prepared to suffer, for you will have to take on some of your father's sins. Then you'll see that he'll go through the new birth. But you will have to suffer, so think long beforehand."*

When I heard that kind of talk, I remember hesitating for a few days. I thought about it and re-thought it, then after a while I prayed to God and said to him: *"My God I agree to take some of my father's sins on me so that he can go faster through the new birth"*.

After saying that, I remember expecting the heavens to fall on my head. For the next few weeks, I was a bit under pressure, I expected misfortunes to happen to me. But after a while nothing had happened to me, but my father had not given his life to God either!

After a while and through reading and studying, I realized that these kinds of ideas were not compatible with what the Bible said. It has been more than thirty years today, and it is not because of this prayer that my father went through the new birth. For decades he made fun of God, even of me when I was talking about my faith. But it was only on the day I understood my identity in Jesus Christ and learned to use my authority in Christ that my father passed through the new birth. (For more details on this subject, see my study entitled "I take and use my authority"). He was the first person to go through the new birth through the TRGN ministry by listening to our video teachings.

This shows us that sometimes there can be more eccentric theories than others that circulate in Christian communities. That is why it is important, as I often say, to inquire, to know the life of the person who is teaching you. Are the fruits he (she) bears in his (her) life in conformity with the fruits that the Bible shows us? Too many Christians are mired in ideas that keep them in a spiritual passivity.

In the old covenant, the original word used for temptation is most often MACCAH. But very often we also find the word BACHAN. These two words used in passages are sometimes translated with the same word into English.

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MACCAH gives a dominant notion of temptation, but can also be a test in the sense of trial.

BACHAN gives a dominant notion of trial in the sense of a test.

For example, in the following passages we find the word MACCAH:

**Job 9: 23 (KJV)** *If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.*

**Genesis 22: 1** *Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."*

In these passages we find the word BACHAN, yet also translated as a test:

**Job 7: 17-18** *"What is man, that You should exalt him, That You should set Your heart on him, That You should [a]visit him every morning, And test him every moment?"*

**Psalms 66: 10** *For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.*

This is simply to show that we cannot always literally take passages that talk about trial. Each passage is therefore to be taken on a case-by-case basis, looking at the context, at several translations, but also at the original version. (For more details on this subject see my study: How to understand the Bible).

Sometimes the same difficulties can even be found in the new Covenant.

Let's take this passage of Philippians for example:

**Philippians 2: 22** *But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.*

When we take the French version of this passage, the expression "his proven character" can be taken as two different meanings. French translators chose to use the expression "Put to trials", which can have two radical different meanings. The first meaning can be considered as someone who has the opportunity to prove his character.

The second meaning can be someone who faces trials, or is tested.

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Most French people who read this passage will conclude that the person quoted in this passage has suffered, that he or she has been tested because he or she has dedicated himself or herself to the Gospel. But when you look a little closer, the word translated by test is DOKIM. This word does not mean suffering at all, but to control value. In other words, Paul told the Philippians that this man was considered a worthy Christian when he had the opportunity to serve with Paul.

This shows us that in the New Covenant too, it is very important to check carefully what we read, and not to take up the cause for a definition that advocates that God would send a trial of suffering.

The purpose here is not to take all the passages of the Bible that contain points that are a little more difficult not to amalgamate, but simply to show that this fact exists and that any reader will sooner or later be confronted with it if he wishes to study a bit more deeply. It will therefore be necessary to carefully study each relevant passage in a balanced and thorough manner.

The temptation:

The biggest difference between a trial and a temptation is that the trial happens without warning, we don't really have a choice. In most cases it is necessary to go through it.

But temptation is different. Of course it can also happen without warning, but its particularity is that we always have the choice of succumbing to it or not.

Quite often in the Bible, trial and temptation are very similar in their definitions. As a result, the vast majority of Christians in the world confuse the two, or even sometimes consider them almost identical.

Temptation is the fact of having at least one choice before me that is oriented towards evil. A temptation is like a crossroads that appears before me, and that offers me one or more options to do evil, according to what God says.

***James 1: 12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.***

In this passage Jacques talks about temptation and being tested. This shows us that temptation is also a way to be tested in the sense of revealing our person. Here the fact of being tested does not necessarily refer to an occasion of

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suffering, but simply to revealing my inner self. This revelation can certainly be done without any suffering.

We will explain this passage from the beginning of James' epistle in more detail later in this study.

I was going to say that it is easy to understand that temptation cannot come from God, but yet many in the Church of Christ think that God gives them or sends them temptations. Most of them consider that temptation and trial are two identical things. As a result, they think that God will sometimes send them difficulties in their lives that are there to generate suffering.

Yet the Bible is clear on this subject:

**James 1: 13** *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*

Not only does God not tempt anyone, born again or not, but God does not punish anyone either.

Temptation comes from the devil, it is a fact, because it is satan who is at the origin of all evil. But humans are contaminated by evil. Those who are not born again are totally contaminated, and those who are born again it's only their flesh (soul and body) that is contaminated (for more details on this subject see my study called: Spirit, Soul and Body.)

So there are many circumstances where people put themselves in a situation of temptation on their own.

**James 1: 14** *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.*

I have always explained to my children, especially in their teens, that sometimes you can tempt yourself. All three were already born again in their teens, and therefore had in them the Holy Spirit to guide them. However, there are many occasions when I have been able to speak alone with each of them about temptation. They were not big speeches; I still remember telling them: "To avoid being tempted, you just have to avoid putting yourself in a risky situation". Then I went on to say that there are "universal" risk situations in a way, that is, that these situations will be harmful to anyone. These situations are easy to identify when you are a Christian with a little bit of common sense.

Then things can get a little tricky in the sense that a situation that I will consider a risk for myself will not necessarily be a risk for another person. That's why it's not always a good thing to compare people and situations, and to mix them up.

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For example, a person who suffers from compulsive purchases and who has just gotten away with it should not go shopping during the sales with a credit card. Chances are she still may be a little vulnerable in this area. On the other hand, another of her friends, who has never had this kind of problem, will be able to go to the sales without hesitation, as she will remain balanced in her purchases. This is only a brief example to show that any comparison with the aim of linking people's attitudes would be devastating.

On the other hand, the goal is to be impacted only by so-called "universal" risk situations, as I said earlier.

These universal situations will and must in the long term be the only risky situations in my Christian life. As I move forward in my transformation to become like God, maturity will take root more and more in my mind. Moreover, our weaknesses are not inevitable, we are a new person since our new birth.

As such, this new person must, with the help of faith, develop as a growing plant. Just look at the creation, have we ever seen a tree, any plant stop growing? God created the process of growth in such a way that when it is initiated it never stops until physical death.

The same is true for us Christians, when we have gone through the new birth, our new person enters then into a process of growth. We are engaged in uninterrupted growth in order to become like God, to manifest His nature, His power, His love; in other words, that is what the word "Christian" means. This growth is initially based on a firm decision, then develops simply because I believe it without doubting.

This is why situations that would be at risk for me today and that are not particularly part of the risk situations that I will call "universal", are destined to disappear from my life in the relatively near future.

To give us an idea, the situations of risky temptations that are universal would be, for example, not to be alone with a person who I know has fairly promiscuous morals. Or another example would be not to go out with people I know to be dishonest, or who are used to commit unlawful acts.

Finally, recognizing a universal risk situation is only common sense and nothing else.

I'm not saying that there are places and people that we should avoid at all costs, but simply that sometimes certain situations can involve a significant risk, and in that case, I will not agree to be involved in them.

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The Bible says that the flesh is weak, and when it is not sufficiently renewed by my mind, it can be dragged into harmful situations.

Of course a mature Christian is a strong person who will not let himself be drawn into whatever; but a mature Christian is also a person who is wise. He will not put himself unnecessarily in risky situations.

Such a way of thinking requires balance and wisdom as I have just said, because anything extreme, in either direction, would be ridiculous. In the past, and even today in some denominations of Christian background, we have seen attitudes that are too legalistic: Christians who should not go to the cinema, or who should not use the Internet, etc.

In another sense, some movements encourage young Christians to "live with their time", which means having romantic adventures, participating in parties with more or less alcohol, etc.

Going too far will be equally harmful in either direction. On the one hand, we consider ourselves very spiritual, and we finally live in perpetual prohibitions, and on the other hand, we live in a world that will gradually push us towards the end of the Christian life, or in the best of cases, to live in frustration because we do not always act as our un-renewed flesh tells us.

The persecution:

Far fewer Christians are confronted with it nowadays. It often depends on the country in which I am located. Over the years, Christianity has found places where it is freely practiced, and other places where it is sometimes forbidden.

So of course for a person who has always lived in Western Europe in the 2000s, for example, persecution is very sporadic. France, Spain, Portugal, England, etc., are countries where, fortunately, persecution is very underdeveloped compared to other places on earth.

Countries in the Middle East, or some in Asia, are much more exposed to the persecution of Christianity.

God has warned us about this and gives us a promise through the apostle Paul.

**2 Timothy 3: 12** *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

Another Bible version says:



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**2 Timothy 3: 12** *(amp) Indeed, all who delight in pursuing righteousness and are determined to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be hunted and persecuted [because of their faith].*

It is therefore a promise: all those who wish to be faithful to God will suffer persecution in one way or another. As I said, this persecution will take very different forms depending on the country in which I am.

The persecution comes from satan, but he cannot provoke it alone. He needs at least one other being, such as a human or an animal. In the case of an animal or a person who is not born again, satan or one of his demons will be able to enter "physically" into the person's body. But in the case of a person who is born again, he will be limited to simply being able to suggest thoughts hoping that the person will act according to these thoughts.

The Bible shows us that animals can be possessed by demons. Jesus allowed demons to enter swine in a particular case.

**Mark 5: 11-13** *Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." And [a]t once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.*

So satan needs someone to act. Whether in any case, neither satan nor one of his demons can do anything tangible without the help of another human being or animal. For more details on this subject see my study called: "The True Colours of satan".

Persecution therefore comes from him, but it can only take different forms when the devil has succeeded in attracting someone with him in order to implement his thought.

As a result, people may find themselves in various situations in the field of persecution. In most cases, a person will suffer persecution through other people.

It also happens that some Christians think that only those who are very spiritual endure forms of persecution. This kind of idea is often conveyed because of Paul's words to Timothy.

**2 Timothy 3: 12** *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

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Since this word of Paul is often misunderstood, those who misinterpret it think that God says, through Paul, that only those who wish to live their lives according to God will be persecuted. From this misunderstanding, these same people then think that all those who are persecuted therefore live according to God; in other words that they have a powerful and consistent spiritual life.

You only have to look around you, and often depending on the country you are in, to see that things are radically different. In a country where Christianity is allowed for example, cases of persecution will be less ostentatious than in another country where Christianity is not allowed.

In a country where persecution is less prevalent, there will be fewer examples of persecuted people. As a result, people will often think that persecution affects those who are spiritual. But it is easy to see in other countries much more persecuted, that no matter the spiritual level, it is the great majority of Christians who are persecuted there.

Paul therefore never said that it is only those who live according to God who will experience persecution, but simply that those who live according to God can be sure that they will sooner or later experience it. This word does not exclude at all the fact that even Christians who do not have a very deep spiritual life for various reasons, will also suffer persecution.

How many Christians in the world have suffered for years, or have been tortured, sometimes murdered, simply because they are Christians. Those who persecute them do not care at all about the level of their faith, they are simply led by demonic spirits in order to eliminate as many Christians as possible around them. The persecution is therefore not at all proportional to the level of my faith, but is simply related to my position in Christ.

Can satan force a person to persecute a Christian?

Not at all!

The person will always have the choice to comply or not.

As I often say, this Gadarenian who was filled with demons had the choice and strength to run to Jesus in order to throw himself at His feet to be delivered.

***Mark 5: 6*** *When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him.*

Do you think that the demons who were in this man manifested the will to bow down to Jesus?

Certainly not!

On the contrary, they had to do everything they could to prevent this man from running to Jesus.

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The rest of this story can be confusing if it is not analysed in the right way.

**Mark 5: 6-7** *When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore[a] You by God that You do not torment me."*

Let's try to imagine the scene in order to better understand it:

When Jesus got off his boat, He started walking, and we can easily assume without risk that this man with demons saw Him in the distance.

How did he hear about Jesus?

The Bible does not mention this, so it would be pure speculation to give any idea. But what is certain is that this man was running to Jesus. Jesus noticed this man running towards Him, and at one time or another, was informed by the Holy Spirit of the man's condition. It is quite possible that a few meters before reaching His feet, Jesus, knowing the situation, cried out: "Come out of this man, unclean spirit!" (verse 8).

When the Bible refers to this man who bowed down to Jesus, the word translated as worshipping is in the original PROSKUNEIO. This word gives a notion of a sign of reverence. The image given is that of a dog licking his master's hand. It is therefore easy now to understand that this act of bowing down does not come at all from the demons who were in this man, but rather from this man himself who had braved the demonic influence in his body to go beg for Jesus' help.

Then, when Jesus commanded the spirit to leave this man's body, it would strongly seem that the demons spoke out, a little like overriding this man's will. It's finally a bit like a battle where man takes over, then it's the demons' turn, and so on.

This story shows us, among other things, that even if a person is possessed, he will always have the choice at one time or another, to take over, certainly for a moment perhaps, but in any case to assert his own will to be delivered, and therefore not to follow the will and directives of the spirits in him.

This shows us that in a case of persecution, the person involved in the persecution will always have the choice of doing the wrong thing or not.

No one can therefore say that he/she has no choice and that he/she cannot go against persecuting Christians.

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It is important to note that persecution should not be experienced as a fatality. This is in the sense that a person who is persecuted must not accept it simply because God tells us that we will be persecuted. We must fight persecution according to its circumstances, and according to the situation experienced.

Jesus Himself was not persecuted without taking any action. Of course we are not talking here about His arrest and crucifixion because He came for that. But in cases where people persecuted Him, Jesus did not let Himself be persecuted.

***Luke 29: 30*** and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

***2 Corinthians 11: 33*** but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

These two examples, and there are more, show us that Jesus and Paul did not let themselves be taken in the midst of attacks of persecution. If we are in a situation of persecution, it is therefore normal to flee if we have the means to do so.

In the same way, both trial and persecution are often confused with each other. It is then thought that persecution and trials come from God, and that both would serve to make our faith grow. But we now know the different forms trial, as well as persecution, can take.

Now that the foundations have been laid, we can move a little further and determine the source of the trials and the source of the temptation.

As we have said above, temptation will always come from satan. Despite what many Christians think, it cannot be said that trials come into a Christian life through satan, because if that were the case then it would be persecution. On the other hand, God does not need to have a detailed statement of my faith or way of thinking because He is omniscient (He knows all things), satan does not care, he prefers to persecute people rather than test them.

But then who sends the trials if it is not God nor satan?

We are in a world that is constantly in motion. Life on earth has been more or less well organized since creation. After the fall of Adam and Eve, satan had an

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advantage. For thousands of years before being driven out of heaven and deprived of all his powers (Luke 10:18 / Colossians 2:15) he took advantage of the opportunity to destabilize our world as much as he could. Dysfunctions of the human body, animals, plants, etc. All creation has been impacted.

A little later, when progress appeared, it developed a whole series of dysfunctions such as bacteria, viruses, food modifications, etc., through human beings who played witchcraft apprentices. This strategy still works today despite the fact that satan has lost all his powers; he has therefore chosen human beings to do the work for him. To all this we can add the fact that the vast majority of human beings are not born again, and therefore do not always act in the best way. Murders, wars, manipulations, lies, etc., are attitudes that add to the disorganization of our world.

Of course I am not saying that all people who are not born again do evil, quite the contrary. Paradoxically, we can sometimes see people who have not been born again, having much better attitudes or words than some Christians in the same situation.

This is simply to say that everyone at their level participates on a larger or smaller scale in the disorganization of this world.

As a result, and through the life that has been organized, our world is in what I call a constant movement. People come and go, billions of people move every day, the cause-and-effect relationships that follow one another make evil, risks and insecurity in all areas develop in our world.

I am not depicting a negative and hopeless world, not at all, but this description is simply there to help us better understand that life has organized itself on earth and that it sometimes generates evil without anyone necessarily pulling the strings.

There are also wonderful things happening on earth, in our world, but we are describing here only one facet, in this case negative, but that does not mean that we should consider that our world is only evil and tormented, not at all.

This being said, we now have a slightly clearer view of life on earth that has been organized for more than 6000 years. There are inevitably, through this life in motion, and through the evil that has inserted itself into it, situations and circumstances that will generate suffering in the lives of certain human beings. We can therefore say that the life that has been organized on earth, in which every human being is fully included, will sometimes generate all kinds of very good things, but also all kinds of suffering and accidents that can sometimes even lead to death.

It is therefore what is more commonly called "life on earth" in general, the free will of man that sometimes generates and sends various trials into people's lives.

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Sometimes we may realize that we have suffered because of our bad choices, our nonsense, etc. And in this case, you can only blame yourself after all. Some people will learn from their mistakes, but others do not choose this option, and sometimes continue to suffer in their lives, always because of their bad choices, or their stupidity.

There are also cases where a person has not done anything special, has not made bad choices, has not made any known mistakes, and yet is going through a trial in his or her life. This life that is on earth therefore makes no sense. An earthquake, tsunami, accident, disease, sickness, and many other things are events that are sometimes part of those things that happen in our lives. These things are not, however, to be taken as inevitability when you are born again.

A question that everyone is asking themselves, and that you, the reader, have probably been asking yourself since you read this study:

But what does God do in all this, why doesn't He prevent these things from happening?

We will now take the time to answer this question.

***Genesis 1: 28*** *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that [a]moves on the earth."*

This word that God gave to Adam and Eve is still valid today. Do you think our world would be in the same state as it is if God was 100% in charge?

It is because of this thought that many people wrongly think that God is a poor manager of this world. It is because many Christian denominations have taught, and still teach, that God has total control over all this world that too many people today do not want to hear about God.

When you think about it, it's quite normal!

Who would accept in his life a God who would be manager and therefore responsible for 100% of everything that happens in this world?

Very few people, and we understand them!

God has therefore given the management of the earth to humans. Humans are largely responsible for what happens in everyday life. This observation would not

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be balanced if we did not talk about the creation that has been forfeited, not because of its act, but because of sin.

***Romans 8: 20-21 (AMP)*** *For the creation was subjected to frustration and futility, not willingly [because of some intentional fault on its part], but by the will of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from its bondage to decay [and gain entrance] into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

The elements are disorganized, disasters regularly occur on earth and sometimes cause thousands of deaths. Because creation is left to the power of the nought, these disasters happen, famines also because there is no more water in some places. Other translations speak of the land that is handed over to vanity. In the original this word translated as "vanity" gives the notion of something that does not give its full potential, something that is depraved, that lacks strength. Depravity is like a loss of means, of strength. It is therefore obvious now that the earth does not give absolutely all its potential, creation does not give at all the fruits, the results it should as when God created it.

All this mixed with a human nature perverted by evil, produces all this suffering, and these lives that end more or less suddenly. Some statistics say that there is enough food and water for everyone on earth, if they were distributed in the right places. Everything is therefore a question of distribution and balance, but the system on earth is unfortunately not organized in this way.

Wouldn't God be in control of 100% of everything that happens on earth?  
No, He is not.

But then God is not sovereign on earth?

No He is not in all areas.

Would that mean that God does not know everything in advance, that what is happening on earth is somehow slipping away from Him?

No, not at all!

God knows exactly what is happening and what will happen on earth. He is certainly not in a kind of situation where He has been dispossessed of His powers, or overtaken by events. God is God, and nothing and no one can place Him in a situation that He Himself did not wish for.

However, it is very important that everyone understands exactly what is happening about this issue.

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We could imagine this situation on earth where God is not sovereign. I would like to add before describing this image that by definition we could say that: In His sovereignty, God has chosen not to be sovereign in certain areas of this world in which we are.

So let's consider a man who has a large company. He decides to give a subsidiary of this company to one of his children for management. To do so, he told him this: *"I give you the responsibility of managing this subsidiary company. You will have to take care of it yourself, because I will not interfere under any circumstances. I will never interfere in your management no matter what you do, and regardless of what the results are. This subsidiary company remains my property, but I choose not to take care of it and leave you in charge. Be sure to manage it wisely, but remember that I will not interfere, you will have to face all the consequences of your choices, whether they are good or bad."*

This is basically what is happening on earth today between God and men.

Do you now have a better picture of the situation?

Do you understand that God remains God, and that He has chosen not to use His sovereignty in certain areas of our world, to leave the reins to man?

It would be ridiculous to say that God agrees or allows everything that happens on earth in our world. Either you're in charge or you're not, there's no alternative.

If I let you drive my car, I'll sit next to you. I remain the owner of my car, but I choose for a moment (while you drive it) to no longer be the master of how it is driven. I am no longer in control of speed, I am no longer in control of the risks taken on the road, I am no longer in control of the fact that my car is driven with caution, or without care.

Am I being subjected to this situation against my will?

Not at all, because I chose to let you drive!

Do I necessarily agree with your conduct?

Not necessarily!

Do I agree with the speed at which you have chosen to drive?

Again, not necessarily!

Can I say that I am being forced to live this situation?

Not at all, because I have chosen it!

If God were in control and sovereign of everything that happens in our world, then He would accept and agree with theft, rape, murder, greed, torture, manipulation, earthquakes, and disasters of all kinds.

He even could be the cause of the accident you had?



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Or the cause of your illness?  
 Perhaps even the cause of the sudden loss of a loved one?  
 He who allows, accepts what he allows.  
 Personally, I don't need such a God in my life.

We have already mentioned the causes and origins of what I call life in motion. I will therefore not come back to this subject.

God does not agree at all with 100% of everything that happens on earth, but He never takes back His word. What is said is said; neither does He regret it, for man needs this free choice in order to be able to access salvation.

That is why it is a serious mistake to say that God is responsible for the condition of our world. It is also a grave error to say that God allows everything that happens in our world.

The one who allows agrees with... because in a sense what he allows is convenient in one field or another. Otherwise, and if he has the power, that person would prevent what he disagrees with.

God is certainly not at the origin, nor does He allow the evil that happens on earth!

This conception of a God who allows suffering, or who sends disease for various reasons, often comes from Old Testament readings. In some passages we can read situations where it is written that God is angry, that He is avenging, allowing or even sending disease, and many other things.

It is important to understand what God's wrath is for us in the New Covenant.

What is the wrath of God?

Most Christians associate God's wrath with that of our world, expressed by humans. I can understand that when you read some of its consequences, particularly under the law; but studying things makes it easier to understand the truth. It is very important to never compare God with a human being.

When a human being is angry, in most cases, this same anger, after a while, takes over the person, and he no longer controls himself... it is anger that controls him. But this is not at all the case with God.

Could we imagine God overwhelmed by anger (as some may think), taking the planets and throwing them away, or sending disasters to the earth...

God is Holy, He is love, and He does not change, that is what the Bible says about Him.

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Yet we must face the facts, there are sometimes consequences of His anger that have fallen on humans. We can see them in a very concrete way under the law, for example. Under grace, it is a little different, because divine anger will be manifested in the form of judgment at the end of time.

***Romans 1: 18*** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*

***Ephesians 5: 6*** *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.*

***Colossians 3: 6*** *Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,*

Each of these three passages talks about people who were not born again, and who, if they persist in their ways, will miss Jesus' offer out of simple self-sufficiency and pride. As a result, they will suffer the wrath of God, which is eternal destruction.

We can therefore say that Divine anger (this is the exact translation), has taken shape under the law in a tangible way but remains a shadow of what is to come. This anger of which it is spoken in the New Testament is therefore the fact of suffering the final and eternal judgment for not having accepted the position of a child of God.

There is an important fact that must not be forgotten. Before the cross, the world was in a certain dispensation with very different rules and laws from those of today in the dispensation of grace. Not that God has changed His mind from one dispensation to another, but all these eras have a purpose and are all part of the plan of salvation that God established since the fall of Adam and Eve. For more details on this subject see my study: "The Personality of God".

The cross has therefore changed many aspects of our current relationship with God today. It is very important not to confuse situations that would have happened before the cross with others that could happen after the cross. Christians often put everything in the same basket, and come up with ways of attributing attitudes to God that He never had.

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If life and the world around me are largely responsible for the trials that happen in my life, then why do so many Christians think that God sends disease to educate them?

There is a pattern that comes up very often and that I have heard many times in the mouths of Christians. Unfortunately, I myself had the same erroneous deduction years ago.

Like everyone else, I got sick and was forced to stay in bed for a while. I also had accidents in my life that caused me to spend some time in hospitals. As I said, it's the same pattern every time.

When I was bedridden because of an illness, I often had nothing to do during the day. We never wanted to have a television in our room, and I must say that at that time there were no mobile phones. I was not what you would call a diligent Christian, I read the Bible maybe once or twice a month, I prayed once or twice a week for 5 minutes. But after a few days in bed, I started reading my Bible for several hours, praying for long minutes. And of course after a few days of this kind of treatment, my faith was revived. I felt that my relationship with God had progressed. Once healed, I then said to myself: *"It was God who allowed this disease and this immobilization in my bed so that I could restart a consistent life with Him"*.

Other times when I had to stay in hospital for several days because of accidents or operations, it was the same pattern: I read more, I prayed more. And in this case, there was the fact that I sometimes talked about my faith to a person on a bed next to mine. So when I got out of the hospital, my first reaction was: *"It was God who allowed me to have this accident"*, or *"God did a good thing by making me go through this operation"*. I thought that, being sick, I had been able to start reading the Bible again much more than usual, and my relationship with God was now much stronger. Or in another situation: that this time in hospital had allowed me to talk about Jesus to such and such person.

The fact is that every time I have been lying down for several days due to illness or other reasons, my spiritual life would go back up for a while. I could see the effects for a few more weeks after I was back on my feet, but it was only a matter of time before everything would return to its previous level. The situation was exactly the same when I spent time in a hospital.

My problem is that I had not made a firm decision to simply move forward in my faith. So of course I saw the effects of a kind of more or less forced consecration, but my flesh quickly regained the upper hand after a while.

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God does not use suffering to propel us forward in our faith. Nor does He allow problems or suffering in my life to educate me.

Why?

Simply because it doesn't work!

At that time, my wife and I attended a church where these kinds of ideas were often advocated. So having people around me confirming these ideas only reinforced these erroneous thoughts in me. But if I believed them for years it was only because of me, no one forced me, it was my fault.

**Romans 10: 8-10** *But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Paul tells us in this statement that salvation and justification are included in the action of being saved.

What does it mean to be saved according to the Bible?

If we take the word in the original Greek translated as "saved" it is the Greek word SOZO. This word has the particularity of including several conditions.

When we are saved, as the Bible says, it is not simply a matter of having eternal life. Here is what the word "saved" in the New Covenant includes in the definition of the original word:

- to save, to be saved, to be healed.
- save, keep safe, deliver from danger or destruction someone (of harm or peril)
- to save someone who suffers from decline, that is who suffers from disease, to heal him, to restore his health
- to protect from destruction
- to save in the biblical technical sense
- to deliver sentences from the Messianic judgment, to save from evils that hinder the Messiah's deliverance

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We can therefore say without taking any risk that being saved as the Bible says includes:

- To have eternal life
- To be in good health
- To be safe
- Not to miss the essentials of life

It would now be difficult to continue to affirm that God would send us diseases, or allow us to have accidents, or that He would allow or send various sufferings into our lives to help us move forward, or to educate us.

This simple idea is in total contradiction with the fact of being saved, with this salvation that God Himself has set up for us.

God is not schizophrenic!

We might wonder why we can read in the old covenant that God has tested some people.

Did God have memory problems in the old covenant that He would not remember the value and qualities of people?

Not at all!

Would God have changed between the old and the new covenant?

No, still not!

The Bible says that God is stable and does not change.

***Deuteronomy 8: 2*** *And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.*

If we put this situation in context, the Hebrews left Egypt to go to the land God had reserved for them. It took them about 4 months to cross the desert and arrive to the limit of the Canaan region. Spies, including Joshua, were sent in the country. They were absent for a few weeks, as they had to walk about 200 km from the Hebrew camp, which was at a safe distance from the land of Canaan. These spies did not simply stop at the border of Canaan country, but entered the country in order to be able to give a report when they returned. In total, it is almost 400 km to and from the land of Canaan. The Bible tells us about 40 days of absence in Numbers 13: 25.

The story shows us that the decision was made not to enter this country that God gave them. The Hebrews decided to refuse the plan God had prepared for them.

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Did God get angry and exterminate all the people?

Not at all!

He patiently waited until the end of this doubtful generation to re-propose to the people to enter into the Promised Land.

We cannot compare a Christian today who would refuse the plan that God has conceived for his life with this refusal of the Hebrews to enter into this plan that God had intended for them.

Why?

Simply because God's plan for the Hebrew people would influence all of humanity. This people had to be the guarantor of the given law so that the Savior Jesus Christ could be sent. This plan was crucial, because the salvation of humanity depended on it. So there was no choice but to make the Hebrews comply, by reiterating things with the next generation.

We now get into the context of this passage from Deuteronomy 8: 2 which is described above.

God could very well have forced the Hebrews to enter the country despite their reluctance. But it would have been useless, because the full collaboration and faith of the Hebrews was necessary in order to reach the end of these 1400 years of the period of the law, by applying it in accordance with God's will.

Let's look at this same passage in the Amplified version:

***Deuteronomy 8: 2 (AMP)*** And you shall remember [always] all the ways which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, so that He might humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart (mind), whether you would keep His commandments or not.

The Hebrews could only blame themselves if they had to go round and round in the desert for 40 years. This is not what God originally intended. All this suffering, hunger, hardship was not at all what God wanted for His people.

This Amplified version helps us a little better to understand God's thought in this situation.

Do you think God needed to know what the Hebrews had in their hearts?

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Do you think that God needed to test the Hebrews in order to discover their inner nature?

Of course not!

Yet God put them through the test, through this revelator.

It is written: *"to know what was in your heart (mind), whether you would keep His commandments or not."*

Who needed to discover what was in their hearts?

The Hebrews of course, certainly not God because He knows all things!

The Hebrews needed to experience certain situations in order to know the condition of their hearts.

When reading this paragraph, some may say to themselves: "But then Franck says that God puts us through various trials, through sufferings, and that they are necessary for us. God therefore sends trials and suffering to His children! ».

If we only looked at the period under the Law of Moses, then we might have the impression that God sent these sufferings through these trials to His people. But looking at the whole story since its beginning, God had not foreseen at all this outcome for His people. And throughout the period of the law we find exactly the same pattern.

*"If you obey my commandments, you will live happily."*

God repeated these kinds of sentences hundreds of times throughout the period of the law.

It was the Hebrews who chose not to go in the direction God indicated to them, and they suffered the consequences.

So of course in this case the law applied like a bombshell without any feeling. For more details on this subject see my study "The Personality of God". It is not that God would say, *"I want you to obey my commandments because I am God"*. Not at all, when God expresses Himself in this way, He says in other words: *"I give you the way par excellence, then choose the best way, the one I show you"*.

There was no other way to show this people what they had in their hearts. God did not dwell in them, the Holy Spirit was not given permanently, the new birth was not yet possible. Humans did not have the means to have a revelation as we can have today. God did not abide in them permanently as it is the case for us

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today. The Hebrew people had to change their mindset if God wanted His plan of salvation to come to pass. But unfortunately, the existing generation had to pass before the people could agree to follow God's plan and enter the Promised Land.

If God imposed a 40-year march, it was because the Hebrews refused to walk in the right direction. In this case there was no choice but to make them walk in the desert until they agreed to enter the Promised Land. It was the Hebrews who put themselves in this painful situation, God, Him, had no other choice.

In His love for them, He fed them, led them, and kept their shoes and clothing in perfect condition.

How could God on the one hand send suffering, and through this suffering show His love, it doesn't make any sense. God does not suffer from a double personality!

Christians who only read these kinds of passages in the Old Covenant without analyzing them, will, if they have a poor knowledge of God's nature, think that God makes people suffer in order to educate them, and that in this suffering He shows love.

Love does not have its source in suffering.

Today things are completely different.

Would God have changed His mind?

Not at all!

The Bible says that God remains the same, that He does not change.

***Malachi 3: 6 For I am the Lord, I do not change;...***

A person who changes his attitude or his mind will do so for three main reasons.

- He realizes he was wrong.
- He had not anticipated a change in the future.
- He's not stable in his thoughts.

God cannot experience such things.

He's perfect, how could He be wrong?

He knows the future, how could He not anticipate it?

God has always been love according to the image of His person throughout this period. As we said earlier, it was the Hebrews who put themselves in this



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situation where, for forty years, they wandered in a desert, at times suffering from heat, hunger, or cold. God did not say that things should last forty years, not at all. Things could have stopped in a few weeks if the Hebrews had agreed to repent of their way of thinking, deciding to trust God. We finally realize that those who refused to trust God had to die with their generation, so that others could take over, agreeing to continue to move in the direction of the plan of salvation that God had developed to save humanity.

It is very interesting to read the rest of this passage from Deuteronomy 8:

**Deuteronomy 8: 3-10** *So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. You should [a]know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you.*

*"Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you.*

By refusing to enter this country, the Hebrews have somehow expressed their desire to remain in the desert. There were only two solutions: to stay in the desert, or to enter the Promised Land. The option of returning to Egypt could not be considered because all would have been massacred upon arrival, by the pharaoh and his army.

When it is written in the passage above "...So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna,...", we might think that God voluntarily made His people suffer from hunger. But if we look more closely, we can see that it was as soon as the people ran out of water and food that God intervened to provide for them.

It would be ridiculous to think that God would voluntarily starve His people to give them manna and quail miraculously.

Similarly, during these forty years, their clothes and sandals did not wear out.

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Many times God has said throughout this exodus that His people would live a happy life if they did what He recommended them to do.

We can now correctly answer this question: "Why did God test His people?".

***Deuteronomy 8: 2*** *And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.*

***Deuteronomy 8: 2 (God's Word translation)*** *Remember that for 40 years the Lord your God led you on your journey in the desert. He did this in order to humble you and test you. He wanted to know whether or not you would wholeheartedly obey his commands.*

It is very important not to make any confusion between the dispensation of the law and that of grace. The vast majority of Christians around the world believe that everything that is written in the dispensation of the law, that is, during the period of the law given to Moses, is also applicable in the period in which we live, which is the dispensation or the period of grace.

Today things are totally different in many ways.

Under the law, no one was born again. God did not come to make His dwelling in each of the members of His people. When a person was possessed by a demon, there was no way out of deliverance. The people did not have a relationship with God as a Christian can today, not to mention the authority we have in Christ. At that time, we needed a person who was close to God to consult Him on his behalf.

***Exodus 18: 15*** *And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God."*

Today, we have this opportunity to speak with God in prayer, through the words He gives us, through His Holy Spirit who dwells in us permanently. Under the law these things were not possible. This is why the people had to go through particular circumstances in order to know their degree of spiritual involvement.

To this we can add a very important fact.

The period, or dispensation of the law was part of God's plan of salvation to save humanity, to restore the kind of relationship Adam and Eve had with Him. Everything had to be done, nothing could get through. It was essential that this

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period of the law should be able to unfold in the way God had conceived it so that grace could ensue later on. The law had no feeling, it applied to the letter according to the expected consequences.

But it is easy to see that God has shown love for His people throughout this period. Those who have passed through death have unfortunately done so because they did not follow the instructions of the law and the instructions given by God.

**Exodus 23: 20-24** *Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him. But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars.*

Today the period of the law is over.

Would that mean that God's law no longer applies?

No, not at all.

But today we no longer live with 613 rules and 10 commandments.

Some may be shocked to read this, saying that the 10 commandments are still in effect. Yes, of course they are and the whole law with them, but since the resurrection of Jesus on the cross, another law has come as covering and fulfilling the law given to Moses.

**Matthew 22: 37-40** *Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”*

The whole law and the prophets have been summarized in these two attitudes that Jesus gives us. The simple fact of integrating these two thoughts into our lives makes us fulfill all the law of God given to the Hebrew people.

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We now understand that it would be totally useless for God to put one of His children to the test today.

Our condition is totally different from that of the Hebrews.

We are not in a period where specific facts must be accomplished, so that a major event such as salvation through Jesus Christ can be triggered. This period of grace is a bit like a truce in God's plan, a time when things are at a standstill so that anyone who wishes can become a child of God.

Would this mean that God no longer acts and that nothing happens in the spiritual world?

Not at all!

But this period of grace is a proposal that God gives to humanity. Jesus came to fulfill the law, now I would say that it is up to humans to decide whether or not to accept Jesus' offer on the cross.

All this explanation of grace being a period as if at a standstill, helps us to understand that God does not have at all the same purposes as when the law was given.

Under the law, this same law had to be followed and continued so that Jesus could come and fulfill it.

Under grace this kind of pressure on the people no longer exists. God has created a space-time for a fixed period of time that He alone knows where each human being has a choice to make.

The fact that men give their lives to Christ and go through the new birth or not, will not change the fact that Jesus will return at the moment when God chose it in His wisdom. It is not the fact that there are such and such a number of people saved or not saved that could prevent Jesus' return. No, Jesus will come back no matter what.

This situation during which God tested the Hebrews in the desert is only one example among many others that can be found under the law, and in other dispensations. It would take far too long to analyze all of them because this study would be several thousand pages long. What we must remember is the thought of God behind this situation. It is this same thought that we will find in 100% of cases, God does not do things out of wickedness, nor out of vice, nor out of whim. He warns, informs, anticipates, insists, advises, so that humans do not have to suffer unnecessarily. You can find many of these situations explained in detail in my study "The Personality of God".

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Today God has a completely different relationship with His children than He had with the Hebrew people. The law was fulfilled by Jesus, the punishments that could fall on humans who did not comply with God's law, fell on Jesus.

The sanctions that the law caused against those who disobeyed, such as death, fell on Jesus Christ at the Cross.

***Isaiah 53: 5*** *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was [b]bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes[c] we are healed.*

All the sanctions that the law could impose on a human being, causing suffering or often death, have been redirected by God Himself, onto Jesus Christ.

Some may say to me, *"But Franck, and the story of Job, it wasn't under the law. Yet God has accepted that Job suffers, that he loses his family and possessions, and his health?"*

Yes, that's right!

But we will study this circumstance a little closer, because there are indeed many Christians who take this example to justify that God sends suffering and hardship on His children today.

This story of Job has been, and still is, taken up in every sense by many Christians today. We hear anything and everything about Job. People who read part of it and extrapolate the rest, others who let their imagination run wild, which is totally outside the text, all situations that give a false interpretation of this story of Job.

Will I be saying that Job didn't suffer?

Not at all!

Am I saying that God had nothing to do with the calamities that occurred in Job's life?

I'm not saying that either!

But we will look at everything that makes up this story and its tangible and spiritual context in order to understand what happened.

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First of all, I would like to establish the fact that the book of Job is not a book whose main theme is suffering. This book contains much more information about science, the person of God, the world commonly and falsely called "prehistoric", the formation of the elements on earth, and much more.

To understand the book of Job and before beginning to read it, it is very important to situate it in both material and spiritual time.

We will start with material time, that is, the context of Job's life and his position on the time frame:

Job and Abraham were contemporaries for a period of their lives. Job was about 60 years old when the onset of problems began in his life.

The duration of this suffering is not mentioned in the Bible. We know that things lasted more than a week, which is a certainty, because the Bible speaks of Job who remained 7 days suffering without speaking.

On the other hand, we know that Job lived approximatively 200 years. Considering that he was about 60 years old at the beginning of his problems and that he lived about 140 years afterwards, this does not leave much room for this period of suffering, so it did not last for many years.

Moreover, the account in the book of Job shows us that several days passed between the first event in Job's life and the beginning of his physical suffering.

So we see that Job's sufferings are in the long run a matter of days or weeks or a few months at most, but less than a year in any case. This is simply to give us a clearer picture, but it is only approximate information and not statements.

Abraham was born when Job was about 60 years old.

Noah died when Job was about 59 years old, and it is quite possible that Abraham and Noah both lived for a very short time as contemporaries of each other.

Job died full of days when Abraham was about 140 years old.

It is now easy to better locate the history of Job in the time, and to see that Job did not live under the Law of Moses, as many Christians wrongly believe. The Law of Moses was given more than 400 years after Job's death.

It is also very interesting to see that God did not only have a relationship with Abraham during this period, but the story of Abraham and Job overlapped for a

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while. Sometimes we might have the impression that God only spoke to Abraham at that time. The order in which the books of the Bible are placed is a major factor. Since the story of Abraham is in Genesis, we might have the impression that these are the only relationships that God could have had with humans during this period. We might sometimes think that God revealed Himself to Abraham because humanity had lost all relationship with God. But the book of Job shows us the opposite.

Certainly God revealed Himself to Abraham to form the Hebrew people to receive and keep the law, but He did not reveal Himself to Abraham because all humans had lost their relationship with Him. The story of Job proves it. We will not be lingering on this subject, but it is a simple remark for the record.

Now that we have established the context of Job's life and his time position, we will look at the spiritual context of that time.

We know that in the Bible everything is linked. Each era has a link with the previous and the next. Everything revolves around a very specific goal: "To give back to humans what they lost when Adam and Eve fell". God's only motivation since the fall is this, and nothing else.

The different times linked together are called dispensations.

satan and his demons have at that moment a communication with God, this in the sense that satan can communicate with God, address Him.

We can see this in the following passage:

**Genesis 3: 14** *Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.*

Of course God does not speak directly to satan, He does so through the snake. This is simply to show that God did not refuse all communication with satan. We will also find this passage from the book of Job in the first verses where God and satan have this communication.

Having established this fact, we can continue in the spiritual context of the period of Job.

We are at a time in God's plan when sin is not held against by God, because God's law had not been given. When there is no law, there is no sin.

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We were about 350 years after the end of the flood when Noah and his family began to repopulate the land. It was time for God to create this people who would be able to receive the law so that sin would be revealed, and a Savior could be sent, Jesus Christ.

There was of course no question of returning to the situation before the flood where satan had succeeded in converting humanity to the cause of evil, except for Noah and his family. Things had to move forward, and God's plan at the same time.

We are in the following situation:

satan has just lost "his bet" to see all humanity rally his cause, because Noah did not rally to the cause of evil. satan's particularity is that he never admits defeat. It is easy to see that even today, when he has lost all his power, he continues to make anyone who wants to hear him believe that he is still as powerful as ever. Therefore, satan continues and pursues his goal, in order to rally all humanity to his destructive cause. So he could say before God: "They are all on my side, you have lost, your creation now belongs to me, your plan of salvation ends there! ». This is exactly what satan has been after for thousands of years.

In this context we can now begin to study the history of Job in the suffering he had to go through. For this reason we will take the verses one after the other and try to explain them as clearly as possible.

***Job 1: 1-4*** *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East. And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.*

Obviously Job was a man who had no financial problems. He was an apparently generous man, who had a special attention for his family. Job was honest, he did not accept corruption, and had a humble character.

***Job 1: 5-6*** *So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that*



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*my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did regularly. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.*

It is this passage which, when a majority of Christians read it, think that the story of Job takes place under the Law of Moses. The fact that the book of Job is also located in the Bible after all the accounts of the law, of the life of King David, and of the kings of Israel, suggests that Job lived under the Law of Moses. Moreover, when we read that Job was making sacrifices for the possible sins of his children, many think, "This story and this book correspond to the period of the Law of Moses".

But it is not the case, Job died more than 400 years before the law was given to Moses.

***Job 1: 6-7*** *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, “From where do you come?” So Satan answered the Lord and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.”*

Here the sons of God are the angels. They come to present themselves in assembly before God. We do not have precise details about these kinds of assemblies in heaven, but the book of Job shows us that this assembly between God and the angels was not exceptional. It is also clear that at that time satan, being a fallen angel, had nevertheless free access to this assembly. This also shows us that satan still had a communication with God at that time. He obviously had free access between earth and heaven since he went down there to walk around, and go back to heaven to attend the assemblies.

We might ask ourselves why satan went to earth to stroll around?

When we read this sentence we might have the impression that satan was taking a walk, to look around and distract himself. This was my impression for years until the Holy Spirit showed me something else, because I had decided to study this passage more closely.

If we look at other translations of this verses, the perception is different.

***Job 1: 7 (AMP)*** *The Lord said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Then Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming around on the earth and from walking around on it.”*

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**Job 1: 7 (CEV)** *the Lord asked, "Satan, where have you been?" Satan replied, "I have been going all over the earth."*

**Job 1: 7 (ESV)** *The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."*

**Job 1: 7 (NET)** *The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" And Satan answered the Lord, "From roving about on the earth, and from walking back and forth across it."*

The different verbs used are: running, walking everywhere, furrowing, prowling. Imagine the action of a person running everywhere, looking everywhere as they roam. It is clear that satan didn't come back from a "healthy walk". He was on the lookout for something, he was on the hunt for something, and he was trying to chase something or someone.

If we put ourselves in context, satan has just suffered a heavy defeat at the time of the flood, when he thought he had finally won the battle against God to dethrone Him. He still thinks of only one thing: to prove to God that the human race is rallied to his cause.

We are therefore in this context where satan is among the angels in assembly before God.

God calls satan to ask him where he comes from.

We might ask ourselves why does God speak to satan?

Why does God let him come to the assembly with the angels?

Most Christians would say: "I do not want this creature in my assembly! »

This is where we see that the nature of God is very different from that of most of us. God respects things, He respects the laws, and He respects His law, His standard of living.

As a result, satan had the right to speak, to explain himself, to plead his case. That is why God is in a loyal battle with satan, even if satan precisely does nothing loyally. God does not answer back according to the way He is treated. On the contrary, He does not change, He keeps His way of doing things no matter who is in front of Him.

This, by the way, is a good lesson for us Christians today: to remain according to the nature of God, no matter who is in front of you. Do not irritate someone

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because he irritated you first. Do not humiliate for humiliation. Do not make people angry for anger. But on the contrary, remaining firm and inflexible about the nature of God in me whom I wish to manifest whatever the circumstances may be.

So God lets satan come to express himself. It is now clear that satan is trying by all means to prove that the human race is united to his cause. It was for this purpose that he walked the earth, seeking in every corner, checking and trying to rally men to his cause through lies and deception of all kinds, trying to develop even more the nature of sin in humans.

God is perfectly aware of all this, He knows exactly what is happening in satan's mind. That is why He challenges him before he can affirm lies. Here again, we could ask ourselves why God is addressing satan by talking to him about Job? Why didn't He avoid talking to him? Hence, Job would have been spared...

God had no choice but this. It was out of question to let Satan falsely say that the human race was rallying to him. It was necessary to be able to prove faithfully that at least one man was honest and right according to God. That is why God had to set the example of Job before the whole assembly.

Job was somehow the man who suffered innocently in order to spare the human race. Of course, it is not necessary to think long to recall Jesus who also suffered in an innocent manner to save humanity. Not that Job would have been a savior, but his story is an image of that of Christ. Of course Job was not the Son of God, and could in no way redeem the slightest of our sins. But very often God uses circumstances to picture the real situation that will happen later. The story of Job is one of these images of the sufferings of Jesus saving humanity.

Let's get back to this meeting. God therefore addresses satan.

**Job 1: 8-9** *Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and [b]shuns evil?" So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"*

In other words, God says to satan: "Not all of them are won over to your cause. There's Job! No one is as upright and honest as him on the whole earth. He is my servant. He certainly hasn't rallied to your cause, because he's turning away from evil. Job respects Me because he fears Me. Job is not corruptible because he is a righteous man. So satan, you didn't win! ».

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Then satan, in an attempt as cunning as himself, makes an accusation that Job is doing things for his own benefit. "If you stopped protecting him, he wouldn't be so honest. Job is your servant out of interest."

Of course these words of satan are all lies, but God must prove it to him. Remember: God will always remain loyal, even in the face of false accusations.

**Job 1: 9-12** *So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not [a]made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.*

This accusation, even false from satan, must absolutely be countered, because it is the fate of humanity that is at stake. It was out of question to let satan affirm that humanity was bound to his cause without proving otherwise. God's plan of salvation had to continue to be carried out.

God does not do this with joy, He is not happy at all about the thought that satan will come to interfere in the life of Job and his people. God does not change and even in this situation He remains love. And even if this thought of letting Satan act in Job's life does not suit Him at all, He has no choice but to let this situation happen. There is no question of thinking that God could be forced to act this way, but His perfect nature will always manifest itself in order to let a fair and just fight be carried out.

However, it is very interesting to look at this passage above where God speaks to satan and says to him: "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person".

We could think that God is standing there, offering Job as a pawn to satan. I understand that this passage, if misunderstood, can make many Christians wonder about the true nature of God.

We will therefore look at this passage a little more deeply.

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We can easily see that Job was a person who lived in fear and anxiety: he prayed for his children every day, offering sacrifices.

**Job 1:4-5** *And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did regularly.*

The story of Job, as we have said, is set long before the Law of Moses. At that time, sin was not imputed by God on earth. Of course people suffered the consequences of their sins, but God did not impute sin in itself because there was no Law. The apostle Paul tells us that as long as there is no established Law, there is no sin (**Romans 4:15**). Job did not have to make sacrifices for his children.

There is reason to believe that Job's children, who were not short of money, led a somewhat dissolute life, regularly holding festivities for days.

Job was anxious about his children, he even thought that they might have sinned and even offended God. This may have been true, but Job was not sure; his fear dominated him. Job did not live in peace, he always foresaw the worst, and he acted according to his fearful thinking.

When you think about it for a moment, what kind of relationship or vision did Job have with God? How did he see the nature of God?

Job was afraid of offending God, and though his walk was good in substance, it was not good in form. Job loved God, he respected Him, but he did not know God in His true nature. That is why the Bible says that Job was . God Himself also calls him blameless and upright. To be blameless and upright does not mean that Job was perfect, but simply that his motivation was upright. Job certainly did things in a spirit of fear and anxiety, but he did it in good faith, if I may say so. It is in that sense that God says Job was blameless and upright. But

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that doesn't mean that Job was doing the best in the thinking that drove him to act.

*Job 3:25-26* For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, And what I dreaded has happened to me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes."

Although we can understand that Job was going through very difficult times, we can see that fear and anxiety were part of his way of thinking.

It was this way of thinking of Job that gave Satan access to what he possessed. By living in this fear, he gave satan all the leisure to come and amplify these fears in his life.

I think that Job had no knowledge of the existence of satan. He had no idea that an enemy was there to make his life difficult for him. That is why Job repeatedly blamed God for what satan was doing against him.

In this context, we can now understand a little more easily this word of God to satan about Job: "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person".

God was not at all giving Job's life to satan as many think, but on the contrary, God is giving a fact here. In other words we could write: "It is obvious, everything Job possesses, he himself gave it to you by his way of thinking".

Some Bible translations such as easy to read version, added the following sentence to verse 12: "All right, do whatever you want ". The result is in ***Job 1:12*** *The LORD said to Satan, "All right, do whatever you want with anything that he has, but don't hurt Job himself."*

But this added phrase "All right, do whatever you want" is not part of the original text. It was added by the translators for a better understanding, according to them. But this addition changes the whole meaning and modifies the original Scripture.

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God is therefore simply pointing out, or confirming to satan, that Job has already given him all that he possesses.

It is therefore in a completely different perspective that we can now read this passage from Job 1:12.

We can see this once again as proof of God's love for Job. In other words, God says to satan: "Yes, Job has given you all that he possesses by his fear and anxiety, and that is his own fact. You have that in your possession. I cannot come back to it because it was his choice, but I forbid you to touch his life".

This is a completely different vision of God, a completely different way of seeing God in His true nature, not a God who would use His creatures as insignificant pawns.

The rest of the story is well known but we will nevertheless read it.

**Job 1: 13-22** *Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house; and a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, when the Sabeans raided them and took them away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and [c]onsumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.*

All these atrocities followed. This shows us the true nature of satan. He has no feelings, the human race is more than negligible for him.

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But Job proves that he is as God had described him. Despite all these situations, Job will not attribute anything bad to God.

Sometimes I wonder, "Would I be able to lose everything that belongs to me, as well as my family, and remain in a sinless attitude as Job did? ». I think it is only if we faced a situation like this that we would be able to say how we would react. But Job, in any case, remained righteous without attributing anything bad to God.

Was God at the origin of this evil?

No, we can't really say that.

Was God in agreement with this action of satan?

Not at all!

Job had understood this clearly, not that he knew what was happening in heaven, but Job knew that God would never agree with what had just happened to him. That is why Job did not incriminate God. He certainly asked questions to God, sometimes with their mistakes, but he never denied God.

As I often say, satan has a particularity, which would be an advantage in other hands than his own: he never gives up. The essence of evil in him pushes him to never stop. satan does not sleep, he does not need to rest, he is constantly, 24 hours a day, busy spreading evil. This is an important point that every Christian must constantly keep in mind.

After losing one more battle, satan returns to the attack. satan reiterates his research. He goes, he travels the length and breadth of the earth.

So we read once again that satan is assembled with the angels in heaven in the presence of God, just as the first time.

***Job 2: 1-3*** *Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a lameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."*

We see a similar situation again. This time satan tries to go a little further in his accusations. An element could be disturbing if it was to be taken literally.



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God said: "... you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause".

Would God be excited to destroy Job?

Would satan have a hold on God to incite Him to do evil?

Let's take a closer look at this sentence. The various English translations do not really help in this case, because they all talk about provoking, inciting, exciting, tricking, stirring, urging...

The word translated as "incited" is in Hebrew CUWTH. This word effectively gives the notion of excited, but also of abusing, being misled, and deceived.

Has God been deceived or incited by satan?

Certainly not!

God perfectly knew that satan was telling lies when he said that Job was honest simply because God blessed him. But as we said above, God had no choice but to remain loyal and right.

God was therefore not stirred by satan, nor incited to do evil in Job's life, but God had no choice but to demonstrate to the assembly by Job's attitude that he was truly of integrity.

But satan is not ready yet to admit defeat.

***Job 2: 4-7*** So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely [a]curse You to Your face!" And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

This expression "skin for skin" may seem a little difficult to understand. If we look at this verse in another version it gives us this:

***Job 2: 4 (AMP)*** Satan answered the Lord, "Skin for skin! Yes, a man will give all he has for his life.

Here "skin for skin" means that a person is selfish and self-centered, but also that when they are touched (when their skin is touched), nothing prevails to their person. All their priorities fall apart, the only thing that matters is their own person, which also is in a sense derived from selfishness.

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satan says in other words: "When a person is touched in his own body, then nothing is more important than that. Let me touch his body and you will see that you will no longer be above his integrity.

Once again God has no choice but to prove that satan is a liar by accepting that Job be touched this time in his body.

***Job 2: 5-6*** *But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely [a]curse You to Your face!" And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life."*

When satan says to God "stretch out your hand" we might get the impression that he is asking God to act in Job's body so that he will be sick. But that is not the case. When satan says: "stretch out your hand", it means in other words "Give me your approval".

This is simply to clarify the fact that it was not God who sent a disease upon Job, but it was satan who did it with God's acceptance.

Could we say that God allowed satan to do this?

Not really.

As we have already explained, God had no other choice, but He totally disagreed with this, in the sense that He would never have done Himself such a thing.

Would that mean that God was pressured to do something for which He did not agree?

Yes and no.

In a sense God is subject to His own spiritual laws, such as loyalty for example, honesty, etc. In this case, He was induced to do something that he does not approve.

But in another sense, God is in full agreement with His standard of life, with His own laws. Even if this law has somehow been circumvented by satan, nothing can change God in His nature.

The case of Job is to my knowledge the only one in the entire history of the Bible where satan has in a way taken advantage of a divine law to satisfy the evil in him.

But God retains His full sovereignty in this situation, He imposes on satan not to touch Job's life.

***Job 2: 6*** *And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life."*

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It would be therefore inaccurate to say that God had his feet and fists tied in this situation, because He always had control over Job's life. But He had to let satan act in order to prove that at least one person was honest and loyal to Him on earth.

We could ask ourselves why God could not have taken Abram to prove satan's lie?

After all, they both lived around the same time.

Why couldn't God have said to satan: "Have you considered My servant Abram, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

Yet (Abram) Abraham had no equal in exercising his faith.

Yes, that's right. But if God did not choose Abram but Job, it is for very different reasons.

God said that there was no one of integrity like Job on earth. God needed a person loyal and upright.

Looking at the life of Abraham, and even after his encounter with God, we cannot really say that he was an example of integrity. Of course he was a person of faith, but not of integrity. Abraham had a bad habit of lying, as had his wife Sarah. He lied to Pharaoh, not hesitating to give his wife's body to another man to save his own skin.

We can read this story in Genesis 12.

**Genesis 12: 18** *And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?"*

It is now easy to understand that Abraham would not have been the man of the situation at all in this assembly with God, the angels, and satan.

Job was the only man who probably could have achieved this integrity towards God the way he did, being perfect in his reactions until the end without sinning. Job was not an example of faith, as we can see in some of his words to God, surely because of certain misunderstandings. But God needed a man of integrity.

**Job 1: 22** *In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.*

**Job 2: 10** *But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.*

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**Job 42: 16-17** *After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days.*

In all the records of Job's words and attitudes, at no time did he sin. Job has always kept the right thought, the right attitude. Job sometimes had erroneous thoughts, which led him to say a few incorrect words.

For example, it is easy to understand that when Job says that God took over certain areas of his life (Job 1:22), this was not the case at all.

That is why not all the words that are written in the Bible are not necessarily in agreement with what God thinks.

It is interesting, however, to see what God thought about the words and attitudes of Job's friends.

**Job 42: 7** *And so it was, after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.*

It is now obvious that Job's friends did not know God. They had no idea of His true nature, of His person. Their knowledge of God was erroneous and filled with ridiculous prejudices.

Let us quickly look at some of the words of Job's friends about God. Let us remember that we are not in the period of the law. God did not attribute sin to men, for it had not yet been revealed by the Law of Moses. However, there were people who were already making ridiculous statements, claiming to know God. Job's friends were among these people.

We will take two examples of Job's friends false statements to him.

**Job 4: 7-9** *"Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off? Even as I have seen, Those who plow iniquity And sow trouble reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, And by the breath of His anger they are consumed.*

This is Eliphaz from Theman speaking to his friend Job. He is telling him that if Job is in this condition, it is because he must have sinned at some point in his life. Eliphaz thinks that all the misfortunes that happen to people come from their bad actions. He also thinks that God in his wrath is avenging Himself by sending them suffering, and sometimes even by sending death upon them.

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God does not agree with this, and He made this known to Eliphaz a later on in the story, as we saw in the verse above. Eliphaz had a totally mistaken vision and knowledge of God. How many Christians still today are sure that God sends suffering, trials, and that He judges evil deeds by sending suffering!

**Job 5: 17-18** *“Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole.*

Eliphaz is still speaking to Job here. He says that God corrects humans by sending them suffering. Eliphaz believes that God educates through suffering. We are in the exact same pattern that we can still hear today, more than 4000 years later, in the mouths of some misinformed Christians.

"God is teaching you by leading you through suffering. Rejoice because it is necessary! ».

This is just one example of absurdity that can unfortunately still be heard today in the mouths of some Christians.

This shows us by the way, a very important element:

Not everything written in the Bible is necessarily a truth. Many of the words of Job's friends are perfect examples of this. Their words are recorded in the Bible but God does not agree with many of these words, despite the fact that these words are part of the Bible's texts.

A very important lesson is to be learned from this fact.

It is very important to check that a passage or verse of the Bible is in agreement with what God thinks, because this is not necessarily the case for all Bible verses. Of course, there is no question of checking all the passages of the Bible in this study. But it is simply important to realize that not all the scriptures written in the Bible can be taken as a word that God necessarily agrees with.

Far too many Christians take verses from the Bible and proclaim them as words that God approves of, whereas they are not at all.

There is a question that I am often asked when referring to the story of Job: "Can satan still do today what he did during Job's time?"

satan cannot send a disease directly as he did before the law in the case of Job for example. This is impossible for him today.

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It is very important not to take for granted everything that is written in the Old Testament, and transfer it to our time as a rule. The history of the Bible is made up of different periods, very distinct periods. With this, different facts are being put in place, which will sometimes change certain rules of daily life.

Sometimes when we discover faith, but this also happens to older Christians, we may wonder if God is not a bit schizophrenic when we read the different periods in the Bible. On the one hand God says "I am not changing", but if we do not understand the Scriptures properly, we could have the impression that He is changing all the time precisely. The different periods of the Bible are called dispensations. We can broadly say that: man has sinned, then gradually lost his relationship with God, then God gives the law to show men that they need a Saviour because they will never be able to find a standard of holiness in order to find a relationship with God as Adam and Eve had. God therefore sends His Son to fulfill this law, and to offer this personal relationship with God. These different periods, briefly mentioned here, are therefore dispensations.

From these dispensations we can have the impression that God is going in all directions, and changing His mind as often as He changes His shirt. But all these epochs have been defined in advance, God has prepared them and all have their uses. God designed them in a sequential way, one after the other. They all serve the same purpose: to give humans the opportunity to find an eternal relationship with God, in order to become like Him.

As I said earlier, satan can no longer act today as he did in Job's time, for example. Why?

Simply because his position and authority have changed.

When Jesus came to earth, the apostle John said of him:

**1 John 3: 8** *He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*

Jesus did indeed come to destroy the work of the devil, and He perfectly carried out this mission that God gave Him.

**Colossians 2: 15** *Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*

All those who are in Jesus Christ, that is, who are born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, are directly untouchable by satan or one of his demons.

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Why are we talking about "directly untouchable"?

Simply because satan's only and unique direct power today over a born-again person will be to suggest lies to him in order to influence him. In other words, satan will only do directly in my life what I let him do.

On the other hand, satan can very easily use a third person to reach a Christian. It can be a person born again as well as a person who is not born again. It is in this case that we speak of being directly untouchable, in the sense that satan has to use a person to reach me indirectly by various means. It is exactly what we have just described and what satan uses to exert persecution.

Apart from this indirect case, satan can do nothing against me that I have not allowed him to do. He will certainly put lies into my thoughts, but if I remain firm, submitting to God, then I will be able to resist him without any problem.

For a person who is not born again, there is an additional case that may arise, but that will be impossible for a person born again.

satan or one of his demons, can physically enter the body of a person who is not yet born again. In this case, it is said that the person is possessed. This is the one and only case where a demon will be able to create a dysfunction in a human body.

We can find this kind of case in the following passage:

***Luke 13: 11*** And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way [a]raise herself up.

We can note that this case occurs under the law, but we can also consider that a demon can create a physical dysfunction when it is in a body today.

In this sense, satan can directly create a dysfunction only if the person is possessed by an evil spirit.

But for people who are born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, this case cannot arise.

satan has lost all the powers he possessed at the time of Job. Today, he is unable to create a skin disease as it was the case for Job for example.

***Colossians 2: 15*** Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

For the moment and until the end of time, satan's only field of action is lying.

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We might ask ourselves why God allows satan the leisure to be able to communicate with humans mainly through thought. This is simply to respect the free choice we have. God created us free and continues to let us free of our choices. Whether we are born again or not, we are always free to make our own choices.

It is therefore up to every Christian not to give in to satan's lies out of weakness or ignorance.

Lying can sometimes be considered almost harmless, it will in fact draw all its power from the person who receives it and depending on his degree of acceptance when he gives it credit or not.

The demonic lie to which we would give credit can have more or less serious consequences. For example, a person would let the grudge settle and lose the relationship of a good acquaintance because he or she has given in to bad words and attitudes that a demon would have suggested to him or her. On the other hand, with another lie, a demon could persuade a person to commit a murder, for example.

I would simply like to show by these rather extreme examples, that the scope of the demonic lie is wide. But also the fact that a person who accepts such lies in his or her mind may suffer very severe consequences.

If satan still had the power to communicate diseases or even kill as he did in Job's time, do you think he would be reluctant to do all these things today?

Of course not!

If this were the case, then the vast majority of Christians would be sick, dying of disease in great numbers.

Some may say to me: "But Franck, that's still a little bit what's going on, isn't it?".

Indeed, there are Christians who get sick all over the world, but it is not through satan's direct intervention.

Still in the field of lies, satan will be able to persuade a human being, born again or not, to act in an unreasonable way, in order to contract a disease or a virus of some kind for example. Have an intimate relationship with, for example, an infected person. Regularly consuming harmful products, such as alcohol and other addictive substances.

Having a lifestyle that is harmful to health are opportunities for satan to lead people into this kind of life in order to better deceive them.



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It is in these kinds of situations that satan can manage to make a Christian get sick. But what is very important in this example is to remember that the devil can never force me to act one way or the other. Of course he will use persuasion, but he can never do anything unless I agree to let him act. satan is a manipulator and a liar, everything he tries to do in our thoughts is just intimidation. It is our responsibility to know this, but also not to give him any clear field.

The image is this one:

A person rings your doorbell, you discover that it is a salesman going door to door.

You will have a first choice to make: to let him in or not. If you let him in, he now has an advantage because the discussion is going on, and you give him the opportunity to convince you to buy his product.

If you don't let him in, then you have every opportunity to cut short his argumentation and close your door.

Can this person enter your home by force?

Not at all!

Can he force you to buy his product?

Not at all!

Is it hard to say you don't want to buy anything and close your door?

Not at all!

The same principal applies to satan or one of his demons when they come to suggest thoughts in our soul. It is up to us to accept, to start feeding this thought and take action, or to ignore it.

We can sometimes hear Christians say "I can't do it! It's too much for me, I can't do otherwise". Or at other times, "It's beyond me! ".

**1 Corinthians 10: 13** *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

This passage is often used to support the idea that God sends suffering through trials. When you read the original words, you notice that the New King James translation is not optimal. It is certainly true, but it could be confusing in our language today when Paul says "...but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

Here the preposition "with" gives in the original the notion of "in".

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A little further on in the sentence the adverb "also" is in the original KAI. It can also be translated as "indeed", or "then".

This sentence would therefore be: *"...but in temptation He will indeed prepare the way out of it, so that you can bear it."*

The complete passage would this time be this one:

**1 Corinthians 10: 13** *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but **with** the temptation will **also** make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

The Message translation gives a correct idea:

**1 Corinthians 10: 13 (MSG)** *No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you **be pushed** past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it.*

With this insight into this passage, we can now realize that God could not be faithful, not tempting anyone, and at the same time sending a temptation without pushing ourselves beyond our strength. And then to overcome this temptation, or in other words to shorten this temptation, He would prepare a way out.

This approach would still be quite inconsistent.

We remember this word of James quoted above saying that God cannot tempt anyone.

**James 1: 13** *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*

This word of Peter confirms the fact that God is there to help people get out of a trial, not to put them in it.

**2 Peter 2: 9** *then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the Day of Judgment,*

How could God throw people into trials and at the same time take them out according to His good pleasure? Any human being would be punished for such

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an attitude in any country in our world. God has no problem with personality splitting!

**Matthew 7: 11** *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*

Jesus Himself says here that God is much more loving than humans. He goes on to say that God is even more capable of giving good things to His children than the best of the fathers on earth.

Paul writes to Timothy in his second letter, which, in one of his passages, could be confusing. Here again, a misinterpretation may influence many Christians who would not bother to check the accuracy of the Scriptures. I am well aware that not everyone has at their disposal original documents, concordances, or even access to the Internet to verify this. But for those who have the opportunity, a large majority of them unfortunately do not take the time to check this kind of passage and "swallow everything they are served" in a preaching, or any teaching.

**2 Timothy 2: 15** *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

This passage in the French language has the same word that means "approved" and also "trials or tested". I will explain this further down, because the French people had the choice to understand the word "approved" as a trial, a test or as someone who was approved. There is only one French word to describe those three states such as: Approved, trials, or tested.

Imagine if you were a French person who thinks that God sends diseases, sufferings or even allows them, you will read this text with an idea already grounded in yourself. Likewise when we read Paul's words in the French language that say "*Be diligent to present yourself approved (tested by) to God,...*"

Most of them will think that Paul is telling Timothy to present himself before God, that is, to pray to God as a person who has suffered, who has undergone trials, tribulations and sufferings that would most certainly have educated him in the right direction. Then these same people will continue saying that we need to suffer to be presentable before God, but also that suffering has an educational power.

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Except that, when we look at this passage more in detail, we can see that it is not at all a question of suffering or trial in the negative sense.

Here it is the whole expression "approved to God", which has been translated from the original word DOKIMOS.

This does not give at all a notion of suffering in the trial, but rather to be approved, or accepted, pleasant, acceptable, recognized.

Paul is only talking here about encouraging Timothy to be a man according to God, and in no way a man who should be proven through suffering. When he says that Timothy must be presented "approved", it is in a sense to have given clear signs of his commitment to God.

There are other passages in the new covenant that could be confusing. We will study the main ones.

Peter's first letter is an example of suffering. He wrote to Christians in Asia.

**1 Peter 1: 6-7** *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*

**1 Peter 4: 12** *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;*

**1 Peter 2: 20** *For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.*

We know that all Christians who wish to live according to God will be persecuted, Paul confirms this point in **2 Timothy 3: 12**. It is therefore not so much the fact of being persecuted that we must look further here, but rather where this persecution comes from. We saw at the beginning of this study that persecution in its application is also a test, because it reveals what is inside me.

These Christians to whom Peter writes are experiencing persecution. Peter confirms this in this passage, which is still taken from his first letter.

**1 Peter 3: 12-16** *For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."*

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*Suffering for Right and Wrong And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." But sanctify [b]the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.*

That is why Peter encourages these Christians scattered throughout Asia to keep the faith even in the midst of suffering generated indirectly by satan against the Church. These trials, of which Peter speaks in the three passages above, are due to persecutions.

Peter continues in these three passages, successively saying that in their cases the persecution lasts only for a time, because God delivers us from it. Then he add that we should not be surprised by the persecution in our lives, because God had already warned us about it. But also that enduring persecution without doing anything wrong and in an innocent way is a grace from God, a supernatural action that we would be unable to accomplish alone with our own strength.

The context of James' epistle is also related to persecution. Some of the Christians to whom he addresses are in a condition where they no longer even have the strength to pray effectively. Many of them died murdered. James can only encourage others to overcome these persecutions through patience, praise, and the support of brothers and sisters.

**James 5: 10** *My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.*

**James 5: 13** *Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.*

These passages are still about persecution.

There are a few episodes in Paul's life where if you don't have the right approach, you might think that God destined Paul to suffering, and that he should somehow pay with his person for the Gospel to be spread.

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In the following passage, Paul has just gone through the new birth. God speaks to Ananias so that he will go to Paul in order to pray for him to regain his sight. God addresses Ananias saying this:

**Acts 9: 15-16** *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."*

When we read this word from God, we might have the impression that because God says that Paul will have to suffer for the name of Jesus, then this suffering would come from Him (God).

In this passage from the Book of Acts, God does not say that He will be the one who will make Paul suffer, not at all. God is simply saying that He will teach Paul to remain patient, to walk in love, to rejoice, to praise despite the suffering that awaits him.

... *"For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."*

The "for" in this sentence is a preposition in Greek HUPER. It also gives the idea of "For the Love of..."

The most accurate translation would therefore be:

..."For I will show him how much he must suffer for the love of my name".

Would that mean that it is God who is responsible for making Paul suffer?  
Not at all!

Once again we are in the case where God has to inform Paul that he will suffer the persecution organized by satan against him in the years to come. God is showing an act of love here in order to best prepare Paul for what he will have to go through.

And we can see that it worked out very well.

**Acts 16: 22-25** *Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*

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This happens about 14 years after Paul's conversation. He is in the company of Silas, both of them have been beaten, they have surely suffered and are still suffering in their bodies in the depths of this prison. But despite the persecution, despite the fact that Paul suffered for the name of Jesus, he remains in joy, and patient. The teaching that Jesus gave him therefore is working perfectly!

It was then about 20 years later that Paul was stoned and left for dead, while he was with Barnabas at Lystra. Paul had just healed a man, but the priests worshipping Jupiter wanted to offer sacrifices for Paul. Despite the fact that Paul disagreed, Jews arrived, taking advantage of the situation to turn the crowd against Paul and Barnabas. Paul was then nearly stoned to death.

**Acts 14: 18-20** *And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them. Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.*

There is no mention of any derogatory manifestation on Paul's part. No complaint to God, no hint that God sent, or even allowed, this stoning. Paul knew very well that this act was only satan's work to prevent him from building the Church. The teaching Paul received from Jesus about how to deal with persecution in his life then has its full impact.

Shortly afterwards, and still in this context, Paul wrote to the Galatians.

**Galatians 4: 13- 14** *You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an [a]angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*

Because of this passage, many people claim that Paul had a recurrent disease, and that he had this disease from God and that its purpose was to educate him. In this passage from Galatians 4 above, Paul simply speaks of the fact that some time earlier he had been stoned to death in Lystra, when he went before a group of Christians to teach them, still bearing the marks on his face still very severely bruised by the stoning. Paul must not have been very pleasant to look at that day. He reminds these people that when he passed among them, his body and mainly his face, exposed to the sight of others, still bore the traces of his stoning. It must have been swollen, purple, red, or at least of an appearance that does not leave anyone indifferent.

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When Paul speaks of a physical infirmity, it is about his temporary wounds caused by his stoning. Then when he talks about being tested by his flesh, Paul is still talking about his wounds, which were difficult to look at because he was so bruised, and which were also, and surely, still painful.

The Amplified translation is a bit clearer on this subject:

***Galatians (AMP) 4: 13-14*** *On the contrary, you know that it was because of a physical illness that I [remained and] preached the gospel to you the first time; and even though my physical condition was a trial to you, you did not regard it with contempt, or scorn and reject me; but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus Himself.*

This word of Paul is there only to describe his condition after being stoned and left for dead. Fortunately for him, the disciples at Lystra had surrounded him to protect him from further stone throws that would surely have finished him off.

***Acts 14: 19-20*** *Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.*

Paul confirms that he was persecuted when he speaks with Timothy.

***2 Timothy 3: 11*** *persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.*

These sufferings that Paul had to endure are therefore in no way trials or any suffering sent by God, but simply the result of the demonic persecution in his life.

Sometimes some theories emerge about Paul's situation.

We can sometimes read or hear that Paul had an eye disease. I have heard several times in erroneous preaching that Paul had an eye disease because he would apparently talk about it in one of his letters.

***Galatians 6: 11*** *See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!*



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The most far-fetched theories are circulating on this subject. For those I have heard from some predictors, they range from an eye disease that God would have inflicted on Paul in order for him to go through the new birth on the way to Damascus when he was blinded at his encounter with Jesus. Others say that this physical problem he mentioned in this same letter to the Galatians, is one of the symptoms of this eye disease that God caused to him. Still others claim, without being able to prove it, that Paul's large letters were due to a large handwriting due to his vision problem.

***Galatians 4: 13-14*** *You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an [a]angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*

Unfortunately, it is much easier to present ridiculous theories than to try to study things historically with the help of the Holy Spirit.

We have already explained this passage from ***Galatians 4:13-14*** by explaining that Paul's physical problem was due to his stoning.

So now we will see together why Paul talks about large letters in ***Galatians 6: 11***.

***Galatians 6: 11*** *See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!*

When you look more closely, the original word translated as "large letters" is in Greek GRAMMA.

This word gives a very important notion of writing.

The examples given for GRAMMA are: an acknowledgement of debt, an invoice, a word of God's law.

GRAMMA means that what you write is not large in size, but rather of great importance. If Paul had had to write the entire letter to the Galatians with large letters in his own hand, then the letter to the Galatians would have been a tricky roll to carry by hand. But the problem does not arise because we now know that the " large letters " of which Paul speaks in his letter to the Galatians have nothing to do with the size of the characters, but rather with the importance of what is written in it.

We can now show that Paul had no problems in his eyes nor that he had an eye disease.

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Another great subject about Paul's health is this famous thorn in his flesh. Here again, many preachers, naively taken up by a majority of Christians, too often evoke this fact in a totally wrong way. I do not blame them, because I myself believed this theory for years, foolishly reproducing what I heard in the mouths of some preachers in my local church at that time.

Those who advocate that God sends diseases jump at these kinds of passages that talk about Paul's thorn in the flesh. In principle, it is also the same people who advocate that God sends trials, using the history of this thorn to try to prove that sometimes God sends suffering to educate His children.

But we will once again, through a thorough study, show that these theories are still monumental errors, which only keep the Church of Christ in a paralyzing passivity orchestrated by the devil.

**2 Corinthians 12: 6-7** *For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to [a]buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.*

So we will look at this passage step by step.

Paul speaks to the Corinthians here about his relationship with God. He says he would have something to boast about if he wanted to, because he receives powerful revelations. But he has no intention nor desire to do so. Paul is a humble man whose sole goal is the growth of his brothers and sisters, and the salvation of those who have not yet been born again. Paul has no problem with pride.

Thus Paul says that if it were necessary (but it is not), in order not to be puffed up with pride, and because of the fact that he receives these powerful revelations from God, a thorn has been put into his flesh.

Above all, it is important to point out that what the Bible calls the flesh is not necessarily the human body alone. When the Bible speaks of the flesh, it can be the human body alone, the soul alone, or the body and soul together.

Paul goes on to say that if he were to take pride (which is not in his mind at all, but he mentions this point to contrast), it could not happen because a thorn has been placed in his flesh.

He also speaks of the fact that it is because of the excellence of the revelations he receives from God that this thorn has been placed in him.

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Paul never said at any time that this thorn came from God. Moreover, and if God was at the origin of this thorn, then it would be like saying that Paul would have to pay somehow for these revelations of God with suffering!

But also if God was the author of this suffering in Paul's flesh, then God would give us suffering so that we would not be proud?

God does not fight evil with evil. In the same way that satan cannot cause evil with good, God cannot cause good with evil. Jesus stated about this:

**Matthew 12: 35** *A good man out of the good treasure [a]of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.*

**Matthew 12: 36** *But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment.*

**Mark 3: 24** *If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.*

In other words, Jesus explains that it is impossible for a person to act apart from his nature. God is love, and He cannot use evil to make His kingdom on earth last. In the same way satan is evil, therefore, he cannot use good to try to keep his kingdom on earth alive.

These two hypotheses mentioned above, that God would make Paul suffer to educate him, are therefore not at all in agreement with what we have demonstrated throughout this study with regard to the nature of God. Moreover, suffering in no way prevents the development of pride. The lives of many people today are living proof of this.

It is also easy to see that even today, not all those who receive revelations from God suffer in their flesh.

Paul goes on to reveal that it was not God who placed this thorn in his flesh, but a demonic spirit.

If God were the author of this thorn in Paul's flesh, then God would be in some kind of partnership with some demons... For it is indeed an angel of satan who has put this thorn in Paul's flesh.

We also know that satan has no weapon other than lying (see my study on this subject: The True Colours of Satan).

If then this thorn was something physical in Paul's body, how could satan or one of his angels put this thorn in Paul's body?

It's simply impossible!

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The angel of satan (a demon) who comes to buffet Paul, gives in the original the image of a slap or punch to the face. This word gives the notion of a fight. In Paul's case it is a battle of thought. This demon came to try to demoralize Paul, to devalue him. This thorn was sentences like: "But look at you, listen to yourself speak, your eloquence is far from good". Or: "These people don't care about you, they don't even do what you teach them, you can't even teach them properly, go back to building your tents, and forget about this ministry, you just aren't made for it". Or: "You have received revelations from God, but what are they for? Wherever you go, people are after your life..."

It is among other things this kind of thought that this thorn generated in Paul's memory.

Then Paul prays to God that these thoughts may cease, that this demonic spirit may stop these lies.

**2 Corinthians 12: 8-10** *Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

There is a very important teaching in this word of Paul that still concerns us today.

Paul asked God three times to remove this demonic spirit from his mind. It is easy to assume that Paul may have said something like: "My God I know you are all-powerful, satan is defeated, so take away this evil spirit, prevent him from coming and putting such thoughts in me".

If Paul asked God three times this, it is because the first two times nothing happened, because if it were the case he would not have repeated his prayer twice again.

But it is at the end of two prayers without result that Paul hears God's voice telling him: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."*

Here again, many Christians and preachers take the opportunity to affirm that the Christian must survive in a contrite life of weakness, that we must make ourselves very little to see God act in our lives.

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The truth is not quite in these terms.

When God tells Paul that His grace is sufficient, it is a very positive thought. God gave us His grace; at the cross Jesus became like us, so that we might become like Him.

He became sin that we might become sons and daughters of God.

Therefore, everything that God has, we also possess.

When Jesus gave us His condition on the cross, we inherited the authority found in the Word of God.

As a result, it is now up to us to command, to order things. We not only have this opportunity but also the responsibility to be actors in the spiritual world. (For more details on this subject, see my study called: I take and use my authority).

God has established certain things in this world, He has ordered certain mechanisms, certain processes. The developing nature, humans, animals, reproducing nature, are processes that God created and He does not revisit them. He is not checking on every human being who is going to be born, nor is He checking on every plant that grows. In the same way, we as sons and daughters have a duty and responsibility to take authority over circumstances. That is why God says to Paul, "My grace is enough for you". In other words, God said to Paul: "You have received more than enough to get rid of this demonic spirit that tries to overwhelm you with lies". Use what you have received and you will see that the results will impress you.

To be able to use our authority in Christ, it is all our spirit that must be in action (for more details on this subject see my study called: Leading my whole being with my spirit). Therefore, the reflexes of my flesh must be reduced to their strict minimums.

This is what God said to Paul when he said: "My power is fulfilled in weakness". The weakness of which God speaks here, gives the image of a person who dies to himself, a person who has renounced himself, who has abandoned his former nature. Thus the power of God can develop in the new person that I am, pour out because the reflexes of the flesh are no longer there to act as a barrier, and to choke my faith.

To sum up, God said to Paul: "Use the authority given to you, and activate it by being sure that your flesh is in tune with your spirit, by being sure that your soul is in a willing attitude aligned with your spirit".

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God has therefore in no way sent or allowed suffering in Paul's flesh. Nor has He been without love, sending him back alone to his problem saying something like: "You manage with this thorn, I have already given you My grace, I will not come to your rescue again another time! ».

On the contrary, God is love and He does not change. He is always ready to teach us and help us. He will certainly not do the work for us, it is up to us to act according to our responsibilities as sons and daughters of God. But God is always ready to help us fulfil our responsibilities, He will never be tired or annoyed to help us.

The same Paul also speaks of his companion Timothy who accompanied him on some of his missionary journeys and was persecuted with him. Paul talks to the Philippians about it when he writes his letter to them.

***Philippians 2: 22*** *But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.*

Here again Timothy has proven his character in the sense that he showed his ability to endure persecution. Just like in other passages as we have seen above, this word from Paul to the Philippians is also misunderstood by many French Christians. It is the same example as the expression "proven his character" has been translated as "facing trials" in the French Bible. It is very likely that Paul taught him about this subject as Jesus Himself did with Paul immediately after his new birth.

There are many passages that show us that a misunderstanding of the Scriptures can lead to ridiculous and harmful attitudes for us and those around us. A reading skimmed through and too quick will prevent us from grasping the whole teaching of a passage from the Bible. Unfortunately, Christians are not the only ones who make these kinds of mistakes. Many leaders, pastors or other teachers (who are also Christians, by the way), have sometimes fallen into this kind of trap of skimming through the Scriptures, and make a rule of what they think they have understood.

Sometimes and unfortunately in far too many local groups or churches, we reach ridiculous deductions such as:

- "God uses suffering to teach us!"

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- "If you have become sick or had an accident in life, it is because God wants to put good thoughts in order!"
- "You have lost your child, yes I understand, but you know God is sovereign, and if He allowed it, it is for a good reason!"
- "You don't pray enough so God sent you this disease so you can stay in bed and take the time to read more the Bible!"
- "God doesn't want to heal me, He has His reasons!"
- "I am not healed because it is not God's time."
- "I caught a cold, I'm sick, satan is attacking me!"
- "Paul had his thorn in his flesh, so God has given me mine because this week I evangelized two people!"
- "I am sick because my ancestors have sinned, I must be delivered!"
- "I can't get out of it, I need deliverance, because satan is on my back!"
- "My past hounds me, and I can't get rid of it."

Unfortunately, we could add many more pages to this list.

Quite often people who advocate this kind of stupidity just naively repeat what they have heard without checking in the Scriptures whether this is consistent with what the New Covenant teaches. Humans like to relate to a common idea. Sometimes it is a good thing depending on the cause or subject, but other times we can unknowingly convey ideas that are not in conformity with what the Bible teaches. It is very important to always check that I am not, unknowingly, an instrument that conveys theories that are antagonistic to what God says.

Prove everything you read and hear, don't swallow things without chewing them and even pondering them sometimes. Test the teachers you hear, including those from TRGN, so that you can be assured that they are in line with what God says.

As all my writings are translated from French to English, I have mention several times that we can sometimes find interesting words. For instance as I was saying previously, in the French language, the word "trials" is the same as "approved". So because of that, some French Christians make a mistake of interpretation in some passages of the Bible.

A word of Paul when he ends his letter to the Romans, is also a good example of this mistake that French Christians can make. Let's see this passage.

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***Romans 16: 10*** *Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.*

In this instance, and if we could read this passage in French, this is basically what this word of Paul would say: "Greet Apelles, having trials in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus".

This is why a lot French speaking Christians are confuse sometimes by this kind of words from Paul. They take this and make a rule to say that God sends trials in the lives of His Children sometimes.

But I have sadly notice that even if the English language does not have this kind of problem with the words trials and approved, many English speaking Christians still believed that God can send or allow trials and suffering in their lives.

The case of Apellès is exactly the same as 2 Timothy 2:15 which we mentioned earlier. Here "approved" means having given proof of their affiliation, motivation and maturity in God. But I had to mention this explanation in the French version of this study. This is why we also have it here in the English version.

Paul simply says to greet Apellès who is a person in whom one can trust, a person on whom one can count, because he has had many opportunities to prove his spiritual commitment.

How was Appellès approved?

Simply by the fruits he has manifested in his personal life.

Has he been through temptations, persecutions?

Yes, there's a good chance. But one thing is certain: God has never sent or even allowed suffering in that person's life.

Now that we have exposed and explained some passages, we can look a little more serenely at the nature and intentions of God about us, His children.

If we go back to the genesis of things, God made creation and everything in it. We see no trace of evil, suffering, disease, or any consequence of evil in what God creates (For more details on this see my study called: "The Personality of God"). It was only when satan entered Adam and Eve's life that evil came to life in their existences. In all the scriptures we have that concern or describe heaven, the heavens, the new earth, the New Jerusalem, there is no trace of evil there, nor any of its consequences.



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***Revelation 21: 4*** *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

Suffering in all its forms often generates tears. God confirms in this passage that there will be no more suffering (no more tears of suffering), death will no longer exist in the world where God will be totally sovereign. It is obvious to see that neither suffering nor death is part of God's nature. Satan is the one who brought pain, suffering and death to this world. Surely he did so with the permission of humans in the person of Adam and Eve, but it is him who is the generator of evil, of suffering.

Humans have a free choice that God has given them at the creation. God did not take back this free choice.

Do you think that God did not see everything that happened when the serpent spoke to Eve, when Eve spoke to Adam, and that both ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil?

Of course, God saw and heard everything!

Did God intervene? Did He prevent this?

No, He didn't! No one can contradict that.

It is easy to see that God did not take back the free choice He had given to Adam and Eve and all their descendants. Today this free choice is still in our hands, nothing has changed on this matter. Humans, including Christians, are free to make their own choices, their own ways of thinking, but they suffer the consequences of their choices, both good and bad.

This free choice is therefore still given today to humans and Christians alike.

Unfortunately, there are Christians who voluntarily abandon their salvation and give it back to God in an irrevocable way. The Bible calls this the sin against the Holy Spirit. There is no longer any chance of salvation for these people, because Jesus died only once on the cross; therefore, we cannot take advantage of going through the new birth twice. Of course these cases are rare, but they do exist.

Do you think God agrees with this kind of attitude?

Do you think God would not rather prevent these people from doing this kind of thing?

Of course God absolutely does not agree with that. Yet He lets it happen. He respects this free choice He has given us.

God's will is that all humans, without exception, without distinction from their past actions, be saved.

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**1 Timothy 2: 3-4** *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

It is an undeniable fact, God wants everyone to go through the new birth.

Is this will of God being respected on earth?

Unfortunately not...

This shows us that here again God's will is not applied on earth in many areas.

God is not in control of everything that happens on earth.

Would God be caught in some kind of trap where He would have lost control of some areas of life on earth?

Of course not!

We could summarize it this way: ***God, in His sovereignty, has chosen not to be sovereign in certain areas of our world.***

When we understand this a little more deeply, it is also easy to understand that not all the suffering we encounter in our lives is ordered by God or allowed by Him.

God gave the stewardship of the earth to Adam and Eve. All humans receive this responsibility as if by heredity. God does not take back the responsibility He has given to humans to manage, or subjugate this land. Man is therefore free to administer the land as he pleases. He reaps all the consequences, good and bad. God does not intervene in this stewardship. It is very important to understand and accept this fact. God is not behind everything that can happen on earth.

This is a fairly easy point to understand when you look at it a little more closely.

- Does God allow or accept paedophilia?
- Does God allow or accept murder, torture in the world?
- Does God allow, accept, or send deadly cyclones?
- Does God allow or accept your illness?

I could extend this list with dozens more pages, the answer would always be the same: No, God does not allow or send evil to earth. Moreover, God chose not to have complete control over all things, for He gave the administration of the earth to men.

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Man has sin attached to his person, as we said at the beginning of this study, humans have organized an imperfect world on earth, with in addition to that a whole creation cursed by God following the sin that entered it. As a result, we live in a world where evil sometimes happens without warning. The deregulated elements, incalculable quantities of human actions generated by sin within them, or at other times orchestrated by satan or one of his demons through another person: all these things affect the whole human race, including Christians sometimes.

Of course we can prevent this by our faith and authority in Christ, but sometimes evil can strike in the lives of some people. This does not mean that everything is gone, quite the contrary.

I am not saying that if evil happens in the life of a Christian, it would be because of a lack of faith, not at all. What is certain is that each case is unique, dozens of parameters can arise, such as the activation of faith, prayer, wisdom, the place where we are in this world, with whom, etc. But what we can say is that even if we can proclaim health, provision and security with our authority in Christ, we cannot avoid persecution as Christians. But we can learn to manage it as Paul did, instructed by Jesus.

Nevertheless, we can proclaim with faith the security of our lives. But salvation also includes other things, such as being healthy, and not lacking in the essentials.

Organized life on earth sometimes tests us, and the devil persecutes us. These are two undeniable facts.

But there is, as we have briefly seen above, a way to approach persecution when it happens, just as there is a way to approach a trial in everyday life. The example of Paul's life is full of teachings on this subject. It would take far too long to detail them all here. Everyone will be able to study them in the different books of the New Covenant. Generally speaking, what can be noticed in all Paul's attitudes during the persecution are some of the facts listed below:

- Paul didn't look at himself first.
- He did not look at his achievements as a priority.
- He was able to escape at times in order to avoid persecution.
- His personal priority was his relationship with God and loving his neighbour.
- While he was suffering, he never held a grudge against anyone.

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- Even after being beaten he kept his peace, his joy.
- His main weapon against discouragement was to praise God.
- His priority for others was to proclaim the Gospel.

These are some of the keys to staying in a constructive attitude towards persecution.

It is also important to note that when Paul was persecuted, he didn't stay silent. On several occasions Paul had to escape, fleeing from his persecutors. Sometimes he lowered from the city wall into a basket. Other times Jesus Himself passed in front of the crowd who wanted to throw him off the cliff. We can find these passages in:

**Acts 9: 22-25** *But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.*

**Luke 4: 29-30** *and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.*

Paul as Jesus did not accept persecution without any action, they both seized the opportunity to escape persecution.

Persecution is therefore not to be taken as a fatality. Yes, the Bible says that those who want to live piously will be persecuted, but it does not say that we should not flee persecution when we have the opportunity.

These few key points being highlighted in Paul's attitudes, we can therefore consider, even if we have never lived them, that the attitudes that Paul had are also within our reach, and therefore possible to adopt in the life of a Christian. It will certainly not be easy, but in any case, it is far from impossible.

From another perspective, and to give an example of encouragement:

A little over 25 years ago now, I remember my wife Christine and I were in our living room one evening. The children were in bed, we were praying for the daughter of a friend of ours who had to have eye surgery a few days later.

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We had decided some time earlier to take one evening a week where we fasted and prayed for cases of diseases we knew. At that time I was still thinking that fasting would somehow soften God. I was still in a process where I had not really understood God's grace in my life. But it was from those moments that my wife Christine and I began to understand things a little better.

I remember, after a few weeks of praying, that one evening we had the same thought.

I remember telling her: *"I want to go further in my Christian life, to go deeper. I think there has to be more than just going to church on Sundays, participating in 2 or 3 activities, going to a meeting during the week. I really feel that there is more to it than that. I want to ask God to help me go deeper in my relationship with Him"*.

Christine my wife replied, *"Yes, I think so too, we should do that"*.

That evening we told God that we wanted to go further with Him, be more dependent on Him, see His power in our lives, etc.

At the same time, we were both well aware that this kind of request would surely turn some circumstances and areas of our lives upside down. We were ready for this and we had well understood all the consequences of our words when we prayed in this way.

I am going to give you some details of what has happened since that prayer. I could not mention everything, because it is more than 25 years of our lives, and the consequences of this prayer are still going on today as I write this study.

I would also like to point out that what God has done, and is still doing in our lives, is not to be taken as a rule, because God has a different plan for everyone. But this account is simply intended to show the steps and challenges we have faced. These steps and challenges will hopefully give you examples of what to expect.

Because I sincerely asked God to depend more on Him, to go deeper into my relationship with Him, then God did what I asked Him to do.

I would take three examples where I have been "tested" in my Christian life. When I use the word "tested", I do so in the sense of giving a revelation of what was in me. In practice, these are events that have occurred in my life, and that have allowed me to reveal my nature at that time, exactly as this example in this passage:

***Romans 16: 10*** *Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.*

I have already explained the problem that French Christians can face toward this kind of passages, so I will not come back to it.

In this first example, God changed my job at the time.

I started my professional life as a mechanic after completing my studies in this field. About 6 years later I was in charge of the workshop of a car dealer in France.

Then I wanted to work in the field of computer technology; at that time the Internet did not yet exist. So I found a job in a large company, and I started by cleaning computer magnetic tapes, then shipping them in boxes.

About a year later, I was offered a position as a system operator. I remained in this field of high-performance computer systems for about 15 years.

At that time I was very proud of myself, I worked dressed up with a shirt and tie, appearance was still important to me at that time. One day God spoke clearly to me, telling me: "Your time here is over, hold on, I'm with you", because my job was threatened. Of course I could have moved to another position, but I followed what the Holy Spirit told me that day.

At that time I had no idea what God's grace represented, I had no idea of my spiritual authority. I thought that I had to beg God and that things were more or less obtained on the basis of merit. I was born again, but I was not in an active process of transforming myself into God's image. I say this simply to show that my experience of Christian life was at its very minimum. Yet I went to church every Sunday, had various activities, led a prayer group, and sometimes preached for about 10 minutes in small prayer meetings in my local church. But that didn't really change me. I was like in a kind of Christian life routine.

When I was made redundant, it was time for me to find another job. I was so overwhelmed with pride that I certainly didn't want to go back into the automotive industry. Now I had become a "white-collar worker", and I was very proud of it, even way too much. Sometimes I had nightmares at night, seeing myself going back to a car workshop to work. Sometimes I would pray and say, *"My God, anything but this! I don't want to go back into this field"*. I used to say at other times: *"But you are God, if you want you can give me a great job in IT, so please do it"*. When I recall as I write these few lines, I realize that I was simply living like people under the law: *"God, I do this and you do that", or "God, I will obey and do what you want and you in return you bless me"*.

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To make a long story short, a few months later I found myself working in a truck and heavy vehicle garage...

Did God make me change my job?

Yes, absolutely!

Did God put me in that heavy vehicle garage to work?

Yes, absolutely.

Why?

Because it was the only way I could get rid of that self-importance and pride that was inside me. And especially because I had asked Him, when I said: *"I want to go deeper with you"*. God only answered my request. I am sure that under no circumstances would He have done so if I had not asked Him a little earlier.

When you think about it, some people would be very happy to work in a truck garage. Why was that a problem for me?

Because my pride prevented me from doing so.

I spent a little over three years working in this place. These three years were difficult, I grumbled, I was upset, I was unable to get down from the pedestal I had put myself on. Over time I put up with it, but I was not happy at all. I prayed to God saying, "But how long will you allow me to stay in this place? ». I sent resumes everywhere, to all the IT positions I could find in the ads. The worst thing was when two or three people I knew arrived in this garage where I was selling spare parts. "Hey, Frank, what are you doing here, you work here now, you're not an IT anymore?". Sometimes I lied about taking care of the company's IT, which was not totally wrong, but not totally true either, having set up their IT system two or three times. I was a proud and a liar.

It was almost at the end of my time in this company that I finally understood. I surrendered and left my pride aside with regard to this problem of appearing. I then began to see my identity in Jesus Christ.

In this example my point is this:

The position in which God put me when changing my job was at my request. I am absolutely certain that if I hadn't asked God for anything, then today, more than 20 years later, I would surely be in a responsible IT position where I would have no financial problems. God only responded to my request. I wanted to go deeper with Him, to have a more powerful life, spiritually speaking. Pride and self-importance would have made this impossible, so I had to enter a process where I would start to eliminate all this, but also know how to continue in this direction in a more autonomous way.

Did God make me suffer?

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Not at all, it was my pride and self-importance that made me suffer, not God! It was up to me to react well from the beginning so that I would not suffer.

**Genesis 4: 7** *If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."*

In the same way as Cain in this example, I made the wrong choice. What God had caused in my life with this new job was absolutely not painful, nor did it generate suffering in itself. It was I alone who transformed these three years into suffering because of my own stupidity. Christians often think that when God puts them in various situations following their prayers and that this causes suffering, it is then God who has generated this suffering.

This situation allowed me to reveal, or experience, the degree of spirituality that was in me at the time.

God never educates us with suffering.

Why?

Because it doesn't work!

We are the ones who, through our carnal reactions, make ourselves suffer in this kind of case. We are the only ones to blame because we always have the choice to either react well according to the nature of God in us, or to react badly according to the nature of our flesh which is also in us.

God answers our requests in our prayers, He puts us in situations following our requests where we must show spiritual maturity.

He won't do anything if I don't ask Him.

In this second example, we are looking back some 7 years later. I was gradually moving forward in that spiritual depth that I had asked God for. I was beginning to see some prayer results with miracles. At that time God clearly asked me to go to Australia so that He could continue to help me in my spiritual life, and so that I could perfect this transformation in His image with His help.

In order to validate our visas, my wife Christine and I had to go to Paris for an English test.

However, there was one particularity to this situation: we had an appointment on a Saturday morning at the Cambridge Training Centre to take our English tests.

Being always naturally provident and quite organized, I had planned that we would leave by train the day before, that we would sleep in a hotel near the test



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centre so that we could be fresh and without stress the next morning for this language test.

We took our train the day before in the south of France to Paris. But about an hour later the train stopped in a station and did not leave. We remained there for 30 minutes, then 1 hour, to end up with several hours of waiting.

After three hours, we were invited to take another train back to our departure station because a fire on the track had burned cables and no train could pass this point. The repairs would take too long.

I must point out that we had to be in Paris the next morning at 9 am before the exam doors closed to start the written tests. It was not possible to have another appointment for an exam later because it would lead us past the deadline for our visa. If we missed this exam, the project that God had for us would go up in smoke, because by the time I had another appointment I would have exceeded the age limit to get this visa, and everything would have been cancelled.

So it was that date or nothing.

Was it a test of God?

No, I don't think so!

Was it a test of everyday life?

No, I don't think so!

satan knew very well that if he could indirectly make us fail this test, he gained a very important point by sabotaging this project.

Can we say that satan started this fire on the railroad tracks?

No because he is not directly capable of it....

But it was possible for him to persuade someone by lying, to commit a malicious act by setting fire to this railway.

So we returned to our departure station.

In this type of case, we have two options:

- Either I consider that everything is falling apart and throw in the towel,
- Either I keep my faith active and consider that God has put me in this project, and it is not a few persecutions that will stop me.

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With my wife Christine, we have chosen to keep our faith active until the end. I remember a good rage boiling inside me, I was like a bull dog that wouldn't let go.

Of course, dozens of thoughts were going through my head: "You won't be able to do it, everything's screwed up, let it go, it's ridiculous!"

But we chose to keep our faith activated.

So we had returned to our departure station, where a countdown began. I thought we were going to call a friend and ask him to drop us off at Nice airport so that we could catch the last flight to Paris that very evening.

Despite our run, we arrived at the airport less than 10 minutes after the last flight to Paris had boarded.

Everything seemed to gradually lock up to catch us.

Could satan create traffic jams on the road to slow us down?

Of course he could, but always through other people, not directly.

So as a last resort we bought a ticket to flight to Paris the next day at the first hour, then we went home. When we got home it must have been around midnight. Our friend was supposed to pick us up the next day at 5am to take us back to the airport for the first morning flight to Paris.

Before going to bed I thought I would print our boarding passes because as we didn't have any luggage, it would save us time. So that's what I did, and then we went to get some well-deserved sleep.

The next morning we left home and headed to the airport, and when I boarded I noticed that I had forgotten the boarding passes at home on the table in our living room.

It was in this kind of case that Christine, my wife, would say to herself: "Fortunately, I'm not the one who forgot the boarding passes!". I still had this unfortunate tendency sometimes when I was too stressed, to take her as a scapegoat, but she herself could fortunately say today that things are not at all like that anymore 😊

The hostess had us put on the side because she had to check that we were on the passenger list and that we had already paid for our tickets... having no proof with us.

I felt the stress intensifying inside me, my hands were starting to shake, and my thoughts were telling me that we were going to miss that plane, etc. But we always had this certainty that satan would not win; he could try to persecute us, but we stood firm in our faith.

Once we entered and sat in the plane, we knew that every minute would be important, because by the time we get from Paris airport to the test center in the heart of the city, things could delay us again and we would find closed doors.

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So we were sitting in the plane, ready to take off, but nothing was happening. Then a call from the pilot warned us that the plane had to wait for a passenger. Yet this low-cost airline, which I would not name, was not known to wait for late passengers, because none of their tickets were refundable. But that morning, they did!

So we left 15 minutes late.

Christine and I prayed during the flight, and the more we trusted God through the expression of our faith, the more peace grew. But we kept in mind that the game was far from being won.

Lack of sleep, fatigue, and stress that came and went were managed positively thanks to our faith, thanks to our trust in God.

I would say that our general attitude was as if we were doing things without stopping to think, guided by our faith; we had to act quickly and that's all that mattered to us.

Before we sat on the plane I asked (still my organized side) if we should get off from the front or back of the plane, so we could sit near the exit and be the first ones out to save precious minutes and then find a taxi.

The hostess replied that we would go out through the rear. So we chose a seat at the back near the door as the seats were not assigned on this type of low-cost flight.

When we arrived in Paris, we were the first to get off the plane. But that morning the hostess explained that the plane had not parked near the exit lanes, but away from the terminal, in the middle of the tarmac. Despite the fact that we were the first passengers to get on the bus, we had to wait for all the passengers to get off the plane and get on the bus before we could head off to the airport buildings. The persecution kept on going relentlessly. But at the same time we felt God's peace, and the joy ahead of time of seeing this situation reach its goal. All this to help us not to give up.

I remember as soon as we got off the bus, we ran as fast as we could to the exit of the airport to catch a taxi to take us to the test center. When I arrived outside the airport, I thought there would be a taxi queue in front of the exit doors, as you can often see when you leave an airport. That morning there was absolutely not a single car in front of the airport. Where were we going to get a taxi?

A man who was sweeping told me that I had to go to an office that was about 200 meters away. I ran in the direction and our taxi arrived about 15 minutes later to pick us up.

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I remember exactly when we sat in that taxi, a peace still immense overwhelmed me again. I heard God said to me, "You are safe now, everything is fine, and you will be just in time for this exam".

The taxi dropped us off about 45 minutes later in front of the test centre doors, we were the last ones, and two persons closed the door just behind us. We arrived at the exact second.

We were sweating, our hands shaking. I remember for the written exam that I had to hold my left hand with my right hand to keep the shaking as low as possible in order to write legibly.

That day, of course, we passed our exam. Satan tried to stop us by persecuting us, but it ended in a crushing defeat for him that day.

So of course it is not physical persecution, but this kind of persecution is much more frequent. I am well aware that the physical persecution to prevent someone from advancing in God's plan must be disproportionate to what we experienced for this examination. I am thinking, for example, of our brothers and sisters in Asia, Africa, China and many other countries.

But God gives us this example in Paul's life, which we have briefly described above, in order to go through persecution with power and confidence, regardless of the outcome.

The third example is a circumstance of God's plan for my life, which has generated suffering. Here again, this suffering was only my fault and not God's.

When we arrived in Australia, it was very different from France. Our standard of living has drastically dropped. The house where we were had a standard far below the one we had in France. The inside walls were made of prefabricated wood, most of the equipment was flimsy. Anyway, it was a very big contrast. I must say that my pride was certainly still far too present, because I had a hard time accepting it at first.

My goal is not to be complacent because I am aware that this house was perfect for some people. Again after a while I learned to accept things with joy. But I just want to show that sometimes, even when we are certain that we are in a good way of thinking, we can still have things to change in our lives.

I thought I was very spiritual when we left France. Of course I could see that I was in an obvious transformation, but I was still way off the mark. I was improving on some things, but I was far from having grasped what still needed

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to be removed from my way of thinking so that God could continue to do His work with me.

To make a long story short, I needed to repent (change my way of thinking) in many areas of my life.

I missed our way of life in France, I complained, I often had negative thoughts when I saw everything that wasn't perfect to my opinion. This attitude blinded me to everything God could do for me to help me in this transition.

In this situation, it is the same as in our first example: I was sometimes frustrated, but at other times I lived wonderful moments with the Holy Spirit. What is certain is that despite these powerful moments with the Holy Spirit who taught me and used great patience with me, I had at other times thoughts of dissatisfaction, of frustration. It got to such a point that I really suffered from being in situations where I no longer understood. I knew I was where God wanted me, but at other times satan took advantage of flaws to introduce thoughts like: "Look, what are you doing here? You left a comfortable life, you're not even sure God is with you here. He told you about a plan for you, but nothing has happened since you got here".

I was in a period when I saw nothing tangible about the first steps of the plan that God had revealed to me. Nothing happened as I had planned in my mind.

My problem was that without really noticing it, I had developed a personal plan for this situation long before it came into being. It is a mistake that I then noticed and that I still notice in many Christians: to be thinking in God's place.

God had given me a part of His plan. Naturally I had arranged things my way for the future, and I had deduced that everything had to go as I had imagined it. I didn't think I was doing anything wrong, quite the contrary, I told myself that God was giving me a part of His plan for me, and that it was up to me to imagine how this plan would come to pass in its continuity. What a mistake!

Having this part of His plan in my mind, without really realizing that I was missing the truth, I had begun to imagine how things would be organized.

Quite often God tells us what He wants to do with us, but He very rarely gives us from the start the form or the way things will unfold. It is in this trap that I fell, I myself developed a whole plan according to my own human thought, a whole implementation on how things were going to turn out.

The problem with this kind of personal attitude is that you are very rarely on the right track. We only know what we see, what we can develop, and we are light years away from knowing all the ins and outs of the situation.

I was really starting to let myself be negatively impacted by this situation, the suffering was taking hold of me.

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At that time and when I was going through this situation when I arrived in Australia, I no longer understood, nothing was happening as I had thought. After a while my only support was my faith, nothing else could show me that I was right in His plan for me.

At other times, my ridiculous attitude prevented me from moving forward. I had to accept first the condition where I was, the situation I was going through, in order to be able to understand what God was trying to help me acquire. I needed to adapt to any situation, without having a standard of living, prejudices, etc. Again, it was after some time that I succeeded, with the help of the Holy Spirit and many tears and sufferings, in passing this test successfully. This suffering could have been avoided if I had reacted correctly in the first place.

Did God generate this suffering in my life?

Absolutely not, it was up to me to react well and let my material achievements no longer be part of my identity.

Was this situation in which God sent me at my request made to generate suffering?

Not at all! On the contrary, it is only because of my attitude that suffering has become part of this situation.

After realizing that I myself had put into practice God's plan according to my own thought... the landing was rough!

It was not until quite some time later that I was able to hear the Holy Spirit help me realize that I had made the mistake of determining for myself how things were going to be set up. I had to accept little by little that I would no longer exist through my intellectual and material achievements. I had to accept that I would no longer exist according to the way of life I had before.

It was after a while that I accepted to be a son of God without adding anything else. I had to accept to let go of certain ways of thinking that held me in attitudes contrary to my identity as a son of God.

It was a very good lesson.

Today, many years later, I can say that this experience has made me free. Free of myself, free of certain living conditions, free of others. What a joy!

When reading this kind of trial where we are led to manifest what is within us, many may think that God is at the origin of all this suffering.

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Most often a person is faced with a situation in which God has put him clearly in it, whether as a result of a prayer as I did, or by a desire to change for the better.

Most of the people in this situation react badly, as I did myself in the first and third example.

As a result, there are often two outcomes: either the person ends up understanding his or her mistake and returns to a better thought by following God's directions step by step (and not the other way around), or the person persists and will not change in this area for the time being. Then there is a good chance that suffering will set in because of this stubbornness.

It is important to understand that when God puts us in situations that are not comfortable, it is because we have asked Him to do so. If we ask God to help us to be closer to Him, then it is quite natural that I understand that I will have to change. I will then have to leave my comfort zone. I will have to change my way of thinking in several areas, change words, attitudes, etc.

I understand that some Christians are sometimes unaware of what they are asking God, saying: "Lord I want to follow you everywhere, My God, I want you to show me the plan You have for me".

In all cases and without exception, this kind of prayer will bring about a radical transformation on my part. God, at my request, will put me in situations that will give me the opportunity to manifest repentance. But these situations will never be developed to generate suffering. With time we come to understand that we can change without suffering. Suffering is generated by lack of maturity.

Is it abnormal to lack maturity?

Absolutely not!

What is abnormal is to stay too long in a lack of maturity.

I myself will decide whether or not these situations will generate suffering in my life, based on my reactions to it. This is why many Christians believe that God is at the origin of some suffering in their lives. But this is not true.

When I arrived in Australia, it was up to me to face all these new challenges with a good attitude. This situation in which God had put me was not at all meant to generate suffering. On the contrary, it was I who turned it around and generated suffering by my attitude.

It is therefore very important to understand that when God educates us, He never does it with suffering, but with love, with patience. Not once did I feel an

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impatience, an irritation from God while I was stubbornly obstinate in my nonsense.

As I often say, if suffering made us more spiritual, then we could see that all our brothers and sisters who are in extreme suffering in the world would be much more spiritual than others. But it must be said that all those who go through, or have gone through suffering are not necessarily more spiritual than others. This theory is therefore incorrect.

The only circumstances that can bring suffering into a Christian's life are:

- Persecution.
- Our own choices, bad attitudes or reactions.
- Life in general.

God is never at the origin of our suffering.

Jesus came to earth in a human body, and as such, He had to learn His relationship with His father, His physical and mental development, etc. Of course Jesus was perfect, He was fully God, but He nevertheless had to manage the development of His body for example, Jesus was not born in an adult body.

In no place can we see God using suffering in Jesus' life to educate Him, or help Him to develop in any way. If God were to use the best means of education or growth, it is with Jesus that He would have used it. But on the contrary, as usual God used prayer, the study of the Scriptures, a loving relationship with His son among other things in order to provide for His growth.

However, there is a passage in Scripture about Jesus that is often misinterpreted.

***Hebrews 5: 7-8*** *who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*

As we read this passage and without deepening it, we might think that Jesus could have learned precisely because He had to suffer.

The first question we must ask ourselves is this:

Did Jesus need to learn obedience?

Was He disobedient to His father?



The answer is "no" of course. So why then does the author of this epistle tell us about Jesus who learns through the things He suffered?

Jesus is the Word of God, before He came to earth in the body of a newborn child, He was in perfection, in full power, and Jesus had no limits in heaven. But when His Spirit came into this body of flesh, it is easy to imagine that Jesus no longer had the same room for manoeuvre, He had to act from a body of flesh, and no longer as a Spirit like He had done up to that point. His body limited Him in certain areas.

Let us imagine Jesus who suddenly is like locked in the body of a foetus in Mary's womb. Then comes physical and mental growth, expressing Himself with audible words from vocal cords, etc.

It was a new experience for Jesus, He had to learn to deal with it in this flesh, which from that moment on would become part of His person for a few years. In this sense, Jesus went through all the stages of growth. He remained obedient, voluntarily submitting His flesh to His Spirit.

This passage simply says that Jesus experienced all the suffering that the flesh can cause in our growth. In other words, we could say that Jesus learned to live in a body of flesh, with all the limitations and physical and moral suffering that this can cause, like any human being. The author shows us here that Jesus was truly God in a human being's body.

This makes sense especially when Jesus took all the sin of humanity upon Him on the cross. His body caused Him exactly the same suffering as any human would have suffered, not to mention moral suffering.

In His voluntary sacrifice, He fully identified Himself with humans, and as a result, this sacrifice was fully consumed and validated.

There is therefore no question here of talking about God who would cause suffering on the person of Jesus in case He needed it in order to learn about life on earth.

Nor was it for Himself that Jesus shouted and prayed with supplication. This passage from **Hebrews 5:7-8** describes Jesus on the cross suffering in His flesh (body and soul), praying to God for humanity that He may rise from the dead, have totally overcome sin, and complete His mission on earth.

I specify for those who would not know it that praying with supplications has nothing to do with praying by begging God. The explanation of these two words

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can be found on the "Quick Teachings" page of our website, which the URL is mentioned at the end of this study.

We can also find another passage of the same kind in:

**Hebrews 2: 10** *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

This passage is in the same line as the one we have just studied above. Here the author simply says that Jesus who opened up the possibility of salvation in the glory of God to all humans, did so through His body, His flesh that received all the sin of humanity, causing His sufferings on the cross.

Now that this has been clarified, we know that God never uses suffering. As we say above, the suffering in the life of a newborn person comes from:

- Persecution.
- Our own choices, bad attitudes or reactions.
- The life in general that has been organized on earth.

In the examples of my personal life I mentioned above, it is easy to see that in the first and third examples, it was my own stupidity and ignorance at that time that caused suffering in my life.

I myself turned around (for a while) these trials, which were supposed to give me the opportunity to change my mentality without any suffering, into hard and painful times.

I think that all Christians go through these kinds of painful and immature actions at some point in their lives, as I have experienced on several occasions myself.

There is a phase that can only be reached after a certain time, and that will take us into a whole new dimension.

When I felt that I had to manifest a change in thinking, it was through seeing suffering in my life that I began to wonder if I was on the wrong track somewhere. I knew that God never used suffering, for me this fact was a certainty and under no circumstances did I return to this point.

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In this case, the deduction is very easy... If God is not at the origin of the sufferings that are in my life, if I know that I have to manifest changes in my attitudes as a result of my prayers, and if I realize that I can manifest these changes only through generating suffering, then I am missing out somewhere. Quite often it is in this analysis that the majority of Christians are mistaken. Their lack of humility leads them to think that God is the problem. It is easier to think that God is sending me suffering than to think that maybe I am the one who has to change the way I take things, and not let my flesh control the situation. Yet it is something that strongly astonishes me to see Christians who prefer to say that God sends them suffering, rather than having the humility to say that it is their attitude, their way of thinking that must change.

There are also those who lack knowledge of the person of God. The Bible says that he who seeks God finds Him, because God allows Himself to be found. I think that anyone who really wants to understand, and who asks himself the right questions, will soon receive an answer from the Holy Spirit on this subject.

When I realized that the problem came from me, it didn't take too long for me to realize that it was in my entire interest to change the way I approached things. To no longer let myself be driven by my flesh, my pride, my self-sufficiency, but to transform all the opportunities that God gave me to improve myself while enjoying moments of joy, instead of putting up with moments of suffering.

Today, some years after suffering for nothing in my transformation process, I am in a completely different approach.

This stage I mentioned earlier is more and more established in my life. No doubt I am not perfect in this field, but I am on my way to being perfect.

Of course, I am still in a process of transformation to be more and more in the image of God. Therefore, today, not a week goes by without me asking the Holy Spirit to create a circumstance in my life where I will have the opportunity to manifest an attitude that will show that I am even more in the image of God.

I am not afraid to ask this, because today I have understood that when the opportunity is there, when the circumstance presents itself to me, I have the opportunity to demonstrate love, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control.

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Today I am able to show more and more of these kinds of attitudes, and the best part is that I like it. I like to change, I like to improve, I like to be more and more like God. This is not due to my effort, but it is only one of the results of our transformation in His image.

It's a bit like when you practice a sport and after a while you start to feel a little more comfortable, and as a result you start to really enjoy it. This same situation is also true when learning a musical instrument for example.

The more you progress, the more you like it.

The more you see the results, the more you want to go further.

I can say that if I had been told about this only a little over 20 years ago when my wife and I prayed to God in this way, I would never have believed it. Yet it is there, and that is what I am experiencing: the joy of change.

Does this mean I've become perfect?

Certainly not!

Sometimes I miss out on things, not to the point of causing suffering, but in these cases I go back up on my feet and set out again in the right direction.

I would simply like to say that suffering because of our stupidity, pride or lack of knowledge is not a fatality. There is a step that all those who are motivated and determined will necessarily take to find themselves in the joy of improving, the joy of being more and more in His image, the joy of seeing that we love our neighbour even more, and the joy of seeing that we take great pleasure in becoming better.

***James 1: 12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.***

Thus we are free of ourselves, free of others, circumstances no longer dictate our mood.

I then understand that the circumstances before me are trials that are only there to reveal a change towards the best, without any suffering or pain.

I am then ready to go through persecution with power, without fearing it.

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I also know that God does not tempt me, but that it is far better to resist temptation with strength and joy, rather than to let myself succumb to it.

I know that God loves me and that neither suffering nor evil is part of His nature.

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Author: Franck Kvaskoff

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