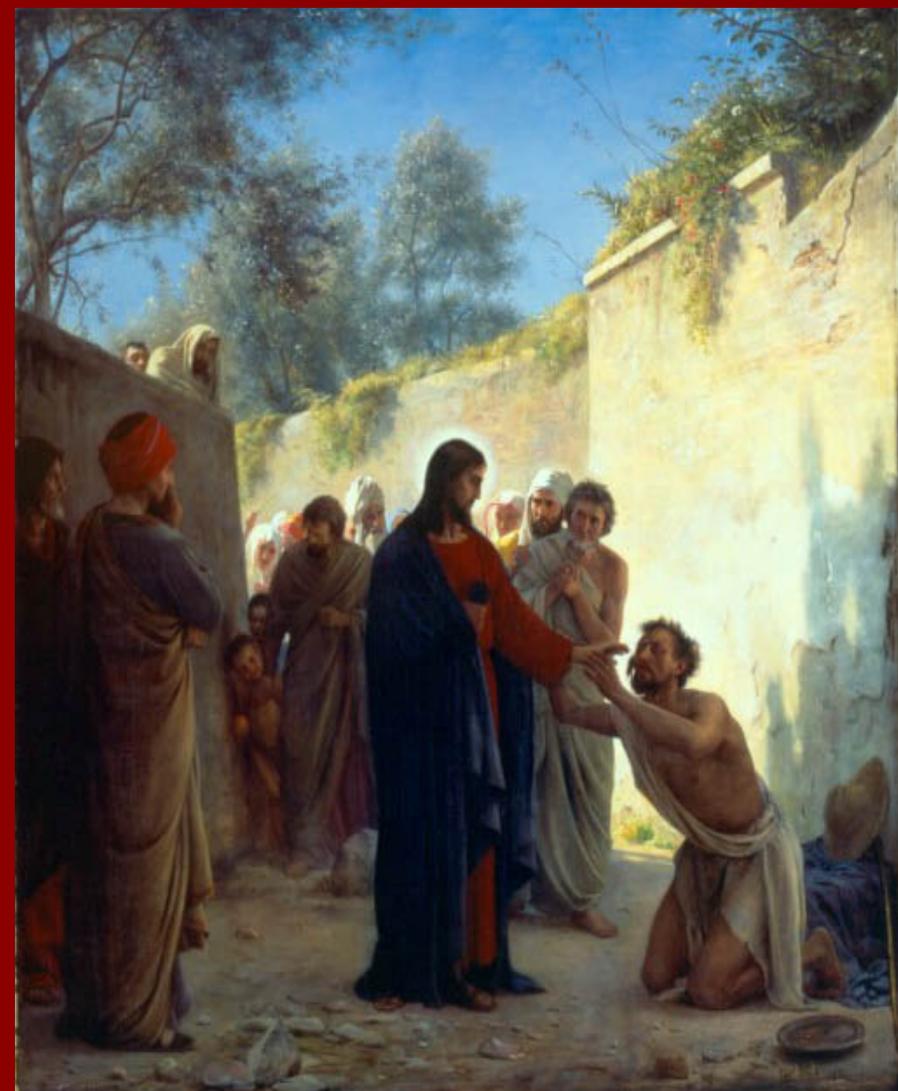


**“Rabbi, who
sinned, this
man or his
parents, that
he was born
blind”**

John 9:2



**Is suffering always
associated with God's
punishment?**

Certainly not!

1. Suffering has been part of the normal life process since the Fall

“In pain you shall bring forth children....In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life”

Genesis 3:16-17

2. In some instances, it might be a way to reveal a virtue

“...because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, blessing I will bless you.”

Genesis 22:16-17

3. Suffering might be a shield that protects our humility

“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 buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure”

2 Corinthians 12:7

4. It might be permitted as a stepping stone along the way to exaltation

“Then Joseph’s master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king’s prisoners were confined.”

Genesis 39:20

5. Suffering might be the expected consequence of an erroneous life style

“But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want”

Luke 15:14

6. It also accompanies an unwise economy

“...and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed
by the filthy conduct of the wicked.”

2 Peter 2:7

How Do We Understand Suffering?

1. It has been part of the normal life process since the Fall
2. It might be a way to reveal a virtue
3. It might be a shield that protects our humility
4. It might be permitted as a stepping stone along the way to exaltation
5. It might be the expected consequence of an erroneous life style
6. It accompanies an unwise economy