



GrowN
Week 5: THE Path of GrowN – Why Suffering?
2 Peter 3:17-18
October 11th, 2023

5560
suffering

The experience of pain or distress, both physical and emotional. Scripture is thoroughly realistic about the place of suffering in the world and in the lives of believers. To become a Christian is not to escape from suffering, but to be able to bear suffering with dignity and hope.

This set of themes consists of the following:

5561 suffering, nature of	5564 suffering, of Jesus	5567 suffering, emotional
5562 suffering, of the	Christ	aspects of
innocent	5565 suffering, of believers	5568 suffering, causes of
5563 suffering, of God	5566 suffering,	5569 suffering, hardship
	encouragements in	

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suffering, nature of

Since the fall, human beings have suffered in various ways. Scripture provides insights into the nature and place of suffering both in the world and in the lives of believers.

Suffering began with the fall

Ge 2:17; 3:16-19; Ro 5:12

Suffering is universal

Job 5:7; 14:1

Different kinds of suffering

Physical pain and illness Ge 48:1 See also 2Ki 20:1 pp 2Ch 32:24 pp Isa 38:1; Job 2:7; Ps 42:10; Mt 8:6; 17:15; Lk 4:38; Ac 28:8; 2Ti 4:20; Jas 5:14

Emotional stress Ps 55:4-5 See also Ge 35:18 “Ben-Oni” means “son of my trouble”; Pr 12:25; Jn 11:32-35; Php 2:27

Spiritual suffering Ps 22:1 See also Mt 27:46 pp Mk 15:34

The prospect of death Ge 3:19 See also Ecc 12:7

Major causes of suffering

The disorder in creation Ge 3:17 See also Ge 12:10; Joel 1:4; Mt 24:7 pp Lk 21:11; Ro 8:22; Rev 11:13

Human cruelty Ps 54:3

Murder: Ge 4:8; Ex 1:16,22; 1Ki 21:19; Mt 2:16

Ge 49:5-7

Oppression: Ex 1:11; Am 2:6-7; 4:1; Mal 3:5



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2Ki 6:25; 19:17 warfare; 2Ch 10:13-14; Job 1:14-15,17; Am 1:3,13; Jas 5:4-6; Rev 6:4

Family troubles Ps 27:10 See also 1Sa 1:7; 2Sa 16:11; Job 19:14-19; Mal 2:14; Mt 10:36; Jas 1:27

Old age Ps 71:9 See also Ecc 12:1-7

Satan’s activity 1Jn 5:19 See also Job 1:12; 2:6-7; Lk 13:16; 2Co 12:7; Rev 2:10; 20:7-8

Aggravations to suffering

Memories Job 29:2

Fears Job 3:25; Heb 2:15

Resentment Job 2:9

Sin and suffering

They are not necessarily related Jn 9:3 See also Job 2:3; Lk 13:2

They are sometimes closely related Ro 1:18 See also Ge 6:5-7; Nu 14:33; Dt 28:15; Ps 107:17; Eze 23:49; Ac 5:5,10; Ro 1:27; 1Co 11:29-30; Jude 7; Rev 2:22

God’s final judgment Mt 25:41 See also Da 12:2; Mt 8:12; Mk 9:48; Isa 66:24; Rev 20:15

Effects of suffering

Hardness of heart Rev 16:9 See also Ex 7:22; Rev 9:20-21

Repentance 2Ch 33:12; Lk 15:17-18

Blessing Ps 119:71 See also Isa 38:17

See also

5436 pain	5952 sorrow	6154 fall, the
5605 warfare	5972 unkindness	9020 death
5782 agony	6020 sin	
5823 cruelty	6142 decay	

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suffering, of the innocent

Scripture does not teach that the wicked will suffer, whereas the innocent and blameless will prosper. It offers insights into the place of suffering in the lives of the innocent, and the apparent injustice of this situation.

The apparent injustice of suffering

Hab 1:13 See also Job 19:7; 24:1,12; Ps 59:3-4; 74:1,11; 88:5,14



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The wrong answers to suffering

*The concept that those who suffer must be sinners: Job 4:7; Jn 9:2-3
 Eze 18:25 the idea that God is unjust*

The wrong reactions to suffering

Job 2:9-10 resentment against God; Job 23:13-15 being terrified of God; Job 40:2 arguing with God; Ps 73:3 envying the wicked; Ps 73:13 disillusionment

The right reactions to suffering

Reverent submission Job 1:21 See also Job 28:28; 34:12; 36:26; 37:19; 40:4; La 3:40,49-50; Mt 10:28

Trust in God Ge 18:25; Ps 55:22-23 See also Ex 2:23; Ps 56:3-4; 59:16; 62:5; 70:2; 107:6,13,19,28

Ps 119:50,153; Da 3:17-18 the trust shown by Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; **Hab 3:17-18; 1Pe 2:23** the example of Jesus Christ; **1Pe 4:19; 5:7**

God's reaction to suffering

Concern for those who suffer Ps 9:12 See also Ex 2:25; 2Ki 14:26; Ps 1:6; 33:18-19; Jas 5:4

Anger at the wicked Ps 11:5; 59:8; Eze 36:6-7; Hab 2:9,12

God's response to suffering

Deliverance for those who suffer Ps 34:19 See also Job 42:10-12; Rev 7:16; 21:4

Judgment for the wicked Mal 3:5 See also Ex 3:19-20; Ps 73:16-18; 141:10; Am 1:3; Na 3:1,19; Hab 2:16; Mt 25:41-46; Jas 2:13; 1Pe 4:18; Rev 18:6-7

See also

1030 God, compassion	1310 God as judge	8020 faith
1075 God, justice of	1320 God as Saviour	8030 trust
1085 God, love of	5347 injustice	8333 reverence
1125 God, righteousness	5959 submission	

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suffering, of God

See 1135 God, suffering of

5564

suffering, of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ suffered on behalf of his people, showing both the reality of his human nature, and the extent of his love for humanity. Those sufferings reached their climax in the sufferings of Jesus Christ upon the cross, through which God chose to redeem the world.



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The OT foretold Jesus Christ’s suffering

NT references to the OT Scriptures Lk 24:25-26 *See also* Lk 24:46; Ac 3:18; 17:2-3; 26:22-23; 1Co 15:3

Types and foreshadowings of Jesus Christ’s suffering Ge 22:2,8,13; Ex 12:22-23; 1Sa 19:5; 2Sa 16:11-12; 1Ki 21:15; Ps 55:12-14; 57:4; Heb 13:11-12

Prophetic statements of Jesus Christ’s suffering Ge 3:15; Ps 2:2; 22:1,7-8,12-18; 69:21; Isa 53:3-12

Jesus Christ himself foretold his suffering

Mt 16:21 pp Lk 9:22 *See also* Mt 17:12 pp Mk 9:12; **Mt 20:18-19** pp Mk 10:33-34 pp Lk 18:31-32; Mk 9:31; Lk 17:25; 20:13-15 *compare with Naboth (1Kings chapter 21)*; Lk 22:15; Jn 12:27

Aspects in Jesus Christ’s suffering

The enmity of Satan Ge 3:15

In the temptation of Jesus Christ: Mt 4:1-3 pp Lk 4:1-3; Mt 4:5 pp Lk 4:9; Mt 4:8 pp Lk 4:5 pp Mk 1:13

Mt 16:23

In entering Judas Iscariot: Lk 22:3; Jn 13:27

Jn 14:30; Rev 12:4

The hatred of the world Jn 7:7 *See also* Mt 2:13; Jn 1:10; 3:20; 15:18-20; 1Co 2:8

Rejection by his own people Jn 1:11 *See also* Isa 53:1; Mt 23:37; Lk 19:41-42; 24:20; Jn 18:40; Ac 2:36; 3:13; 4:10; 1Th 2:14-15

The failure of his disciples Mk 14:50 pp Mt 26:56 *See also* Mt 16:22; 26:40,74-75; Lk 18:34

Betrayal by Judas Mt 26:23 pp Mk 14:18 pp Lk 22:21 pp Jn 13:21

God’s judgment of his Son for the sins of the world Mt 27:46 pp Mk 15:34 *See also* Ps 22:1; Isa 53:5-6,10; Lk 22:42; Ro 3:25-26; 2Co 5:21; Gal 3:13; Heb 2:10,14; 1Pe 2:24

Jesus Christ’s willing submission to suffering

Mt 26:42 pp Mk 14:36 pp Lk 22:42 *See also* Isa 53:7,11; Lk 23:46; Heb 5:7-8; 12:2; 1Pe 2:23

See also

1135 God, suffering of
 2033 Christ, humanity
 2324 Christ as Saviour
 2339 Christ, example of

2410 cross, the
 2570 Christ, suffering
 4025 world, the
 5798 betrayal

5827 curse
 6614 atonement
 6720 redemption

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suffering, of believers



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Believers ought to expect to suffer as an inevitable part of their calling. To believe is not to evade suffering; it is to face it with new confidence and hope. Rightly approached, suffering develops the character of believers, equips them for more effective service, draws believers closer to Jesus Christ and prepares them for eternal life.

Believers must expect suffering

Jesus Christ foretold it Mt 10:22 pp Mk 13:13 *See also* **Mt 10:17; 23:34; 24:9; Lk 21:16-17**

The apostles foretold it Ac 14:22; 2Ti 3:12 *See also* **Php 1:29; 1Jn 3:13; Rev 2:10**

The experience of the OT shows it Ro 8:36; Heb 11:25-26,32-38

The experience of the NT shows it Ac 4:3; 5:40; 9:29; 12:1-3; 2Co 11:23-29; Gal 3:4; 1Th 2:2,14; 1Pe 4:4; Heb 10:32-34

Suffering for Jesus Christ is commendable

Mt 5:10-12 pp Lk 6:20-23 *See also* **Ac 5:41; 2Ti 1:8; 1Pe 2:19; 3:17; 4:12-16**

Suffering is profitable

It affirms believers' adoption Heb 12:7 *See also* **Jn 15:19; 17:14; Ro 8:17; Gal 6:17; 2Th 1:4-5**

It is the price of godliness Heb 12:11 *See also* **Ps 119:67,71; Isa 38:17; Jn 15:2; 1Pe 1:6-7**

It is a condition of service 2Co 4:10; Col 1:24 *See also* **Ps 126:5-6; Ac 9:16; 20:23-24; 1Co 4:9-13; 2Co 1:3-5; Gal 4:19; Php 3:18; Col 2:1; 2Ti 1:11-12; 2:3,10**

It develops trust 2Co 1:9 *See also* **1Pe 4:19**

It develops character Ro 5:3-4 *See also* **Heb 5:8; Jas 1:3**

It deepens fellowship 1Co 12:26 *See also* **Ro 12:15; 2Co 1:7; 8:2; Gal 4:14-15; 6:2**

It draws believers to the Lord Php 3:8,10 *See also* **Job 42:5; 2Co 4:8-10; 12:9-10; 1Pe 4:13**

It prepares believers for heaven 2Co 4:16-5:4

See also

1040 God, fatherhood

6608 adoption

8206 Christlikeness

8266 holiness

8342 servanthood

8347 spiritual growth

8450 martyrdom

8794 persecution

8832 testing

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suffering, encouragements in

Believers are encouraged by the loving care and faithful promises of God and by the example, support and prayers of fellow believers. The prospect of heaven helps them to endure.



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The encouragement of God’s love

The care of the Father Ps 103:13 *See also* Ps 86:17; Isa 50:10; 64:8-9; Lk 18:6-7; Jn 16:27; 17:11,15; Ro 8:32; 2Co 1:3

The sympathetic understanding of Jesus Christ Heb 2:18 *See also* Isa 40:11; 42:3; 53:5; Lk 4:18; Isa 61:1; Jn 14:27; 16:22; Ro 8:35-39; Heb 4:15; 7:25; 12:3

The comfort of the Spirit Jn 14:16-17 *See also* Lk 11:13; Ro 5:5; 8:26; Gal 5:22-23; Eph 3:16; 1Pe 4:14

The promises of God Ps 119:50; Ro 8:28; 2Co 12:9 *See also* Isa 41:10; 43:2-3; Mt 6:31-33; Ro 15:4; Php 4:7; 1Pe 5:10

The encouragement of the fellowship of believers

Examples from the past Heb 12:1 *See also* Ps 102:17-18; Jer 20:11; Php 4:11; Heb 11:25-26; Jas 5:10-11

Support from other believers 1Th 5:11 *See also* Ru 2:13; Job 42:11; Ac 28:15; Ro 16:4; 2Co 7:6-7; Php 4:14; Col 4:11; 1Th 2:11-12; 4:18; 2Ti 4:9,11; Phm 13; Heb 10:25

The encouragement of looking ahead

The assurance of victory Ro 8:37 *See also* Ro 16:20; 1Co 15:20,25,55-57; 1Th 4:16-17

The prospect of glory Ro 8:18 *See also* Job 19:25-26; Isa 65:17; 2Co 4:17-5:1; 2Th 1:6-7; 2Pe 3:13; Jude 24-25; Rev 7:16-17; 21:1-4

See also

1035 God, faithfulness	3130 Holy Spirit, Counsellor	6705 peace, experience
1190 glory	5596 victory	7921 fellowship
2015 Christ, compassion	5805 comfort	8414 encouragement
2048 Christ, love of	5963 sympathy	9310 resurrection

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suffering, emotional aspects of

Suffering gives rise to inner distress, on account of a sense of injustice, frustration, loss or anger. Christ himself provides an example of such suffering to believers.

Causes of emotional suffering

A sense of injustice Ps 119:53 *See also* Job 19:7; Ps 82:2

Frustration Job 19:8 *See also* Job 23:8-9; 1Th 2:18

Loss Ge 27:34 *See also* Ru 1:20-21; Pr 5:11-14; La 1:12



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Bereavement 2Sa 18:33 *See also Ge 23:1-2; 37:34-35; 50:1-3; Ex 12:30; Dt 34:8; 2Sa 19:4; Mt 2:16-18; Jer 31:15; Jn 11:32-35*

Childlessness Ge 30:1 *See also 1Sa 1:4-8*

Parting from loved ones Ac 20:38 *See also 1Sa 20:41; 2Ki 2:12; SS 5:6-8*

Spiritual loss Lk 13:28 *See also Jdg 2:4; Mt 25:11*

Great fear Ge 45:3 *See also Ge 20:8; 32:7-8; Ex 20:18-19; 1Sa 17:24; 1Ki 19:3-4; Isa 21:2-4; Da 5:8-9; Lk 21:26*

Guilt Mt 27:3-4 *See also Ge 3:8; Jn 16:8; Ac 2:37; Heb 10:2,22*

Emotional suffering in the Lord's work

Jesus Christ's suffering Isa 53:3 *See also Mt 26:38 pp Mk 14:34*

The apostles' suffering 2Co 11:28-29 *See also Ro 9:1-4; 1Co 15:31; 2Co 1:8-9; Gal 4:19*

Expressions of emotional suffering

Sadness Ne 2:1-3; Ps 107:39; 116:3; Mt 26:22 pp Mk 14:19

Weeping and groaning Jer 9:1

Joseph wept as he saw his brothers again: Ge 42:24; 43:30; 45:1-2

2Sa 15:30 Covering the head and going barefoot were also signs of sorrow; Ezr 3:12-13; Ne 1:4; Ps 6:6-7; 32:3-4; 137:1; Isa 15:5; Jer 14:17; Mt 26:75 Peter wept bitterly after disowning Jesus Christ; Jn 11:35

Anger Jnh 4:1 *See also Ex 32:19-20; 2Sa 6:8; Rev 16:10-11*

Bitterness Ex 17:3; 1Sa 30:6; Job 3:1; 7:11; Jnh 4:3; Ro 3:14

God's response to the emotional suffering of believers

He comforts them 2Co 1:3-4

He has delivered them through Jesus Christ Isa 53:4

Jesus Christ gives them rest Jn 14:1 *See also Mt 11:28-30; Jn 14:27*

There is no suffering in heaven Rev 21:4 *See also Isa 35:10; Rev 7:17*

The proper response of believers to emotional suffering

Assessing the problem before God Ps 73:16-17; 119:78; Ro 8:28

Controlled emotion before God Jdg 20:23; Ps 22:1-2; 62:8; 74:1

Prayer Heb 5:7 *See also Ge 18:22-25; 32:9-11; Nu 16:22; 2Sa 12:15-17; Ps 38:9; 77:1-9; Jnh 2:1; Mk 5:22-23; Jas 5:13*



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Continuing to do what is right Job 1:20-22; Eph 4:1; Php 1:27

See also

5056 rest	5831 depression	8602 prayer
5198 weeping	5879 humiliation	8754 fear
5795 bereavement	5945 self-pity	
5799 bitterness	6172 guilt	

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suffering, causes of

The ultimate cause of suffering is sin, which has brought violence, disease and death into the world. All suffering, however, is under the sovereign purpose of God, who is able to use it for his glory.

The ultimate cause of suffering is sin

Ge 3:14-19

It need not be the result of particular sins: Job 1:1; Jn 9:1-3

Job 5:6-7; Ro 5:12-14

Suffering as a result of human wickedness

Murder Ge 4:8 *See also Ge 49:5-7; 1Sa 18:10-11*

Injury Mt 26:67

Cruelty Ps 71:4 *See also Jdg 1:7; Ps 54:3; Am 1:13; Mt 2:16-18; Lk 10:30*

Rioting 2Ki 7:17; Ac 16:22

Warfare Jer 50:22 *See also Ge 14:1-2,11-12; Ex 13:17; Jos 6:20-21; 10:22-26; Jdg 1:4-7; 1Ki 22:35; 2Ki 17:5-6; Zec 14:2; Lk 21:20-24; Rev 6:4*

Injustice Eze 9:9 *See also Ge 39:19-20; 1Ki 21:11-14; 2Ki 21:16; Ps 58:1-2; 64:6*

Oppression Ecc 4:1 *See also Ex 1:11; 1Ki 12:1-4,12-14; Ps 12:5; Jas 5:1-6*

Adultery 2Sa 12:9; Mal 2:14

Theft Mt 6:19 *See also Ge 31:19; Job 1:14-15,17; 24:2*

Broken relationships Job 19:14-19; Ps 27:10; Pr 16:28; Ac 15:39

Hatred Ps 109:3 *See also 2Sa 13:15; Tit 3:3*

Jealousy Ge 37:4 *See also Ge 4:4-5; 16:6; 21:8-10; 1Sa 18:8-9; Mt 27:18*

Persecution Jn 15:20 *See also Jer 38:6; Da 3:4-6; 6:7; Mt 5:10-12; 10:35-36; Rev 6:9-11*



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Suffering as a result of misfortune

Accidents 2Sa 4:4; 2Ki 1:2; Lk 13:4

Sickness Ge 48:1 *See also* 2Ki 20:1; Job 2:7; Ps 42:10; Mt 8:6; Ac 28:8; Php 2:27; 2Ti 4:20; Jas 5:14

Hunger and want Ge 12:10; Job 30:3; Isa 5:13; Mt 25:42-43

Natural disasters 1Ki 22:48; Job 1:16,18-19; Isa 29:6; Joel 1:4; Zec 14:5; Mt 24:7; Ac 27:18-20

Suffering through old age and death

Ageing 2Sa 19:34-35; Ps 71:9; Ecc 12:1

Bereavement Ge 23:1-2; Job 1:18-19; Lk 7:11-13; Jn 11:33-35; Jas 1:27

Suffering through anxiety

Pr 12:25 *See also* Dt 28:65-67; Lk 21:26

Suffering through foolishness

Ps 107:17 *See also* Jdg 11:34-36; Pr 10:1; 11:15; 14:1; 23:29-30; Lk 15:17

Suffering through Satanic activity

The influence of Satan Ge 3:1 *See also* Job 1:12; 2:6-7; Lk 13:16; 1Jn 5:19; Rev 2:10; 20:7-8

Demon-possession Mt 8:28; 12:22; 15:22

Suffering brought about by God himself

All suffering comes within his will Jn 9:3; Eph 1:11

Some suffering is for his immediate glory Jn 21:19

Jesus Christ's suffering produces salvation Isa 53:10 *See also* Ac 2:23

Christian suffering produces good fruits Ro 5:3-4; 2Co 1:9; Heb 12:11; Jas 1:2,3

God's people must be disciplined Heb 12:7 *See also* Ex 32:35; 2Sa 12:13-14; Ps 119:67,71; Pr 3:11-12; Heb 12:8-11

The wicked must be punished Ro 6:23 *See also* Ge 6:5-7; Jn 5:14; 2Th 1:8; Rev 9:4; 20:15

Suffering accepted voluntarily

By Jesus Christ 1Pe 2:21 *See also* Isa 53:3-5,10; Lk 9:22

By his people 2Co 12:15 *See also* 2Co 4:10-12; Php 3:10; Heb 11:35

For the good of others Jn 15:13 *See also* Ro 5:7; Phm 18

See also

1045 God, glory of

1130 God, sovereignty

4120 Satan



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4822 famine
 5297 disease

5346 injury
 8230 discipline

8755 folly
 8790 oppression

5569

suffering, hardship

Scripture provides examples of types of hardship which people may expect to encounter.

Different kinds of hardship

Poverty Pr 10:15 *See also* **Dt 15:11; Job 24:5-11; Mt 26:11** pp **Mk 14:7; Jn 12:8**

Hunger and thirst Ps 107:4-5 *See also* **Ge 41:53-57; Ex 15:22-24; 16:2-3; 17:1-3; Nu 11:4-6; 1Ki 17:7-12; Ne 5:1-5; Mt 4:2** pp **Lk 4:2**

Hard labour Ge 3:17-19 *See also* **Ge 31:38-42; 2Ch 10:3-4; Ecc 2:21-22; 1Th 2:9**

Oppression Job 35:9 *See also* **Ex 1:11; 2:23; 5:8-9; 2Ki 4:1; Ps 12:5; 31:9-13; Ecc 4:1; Jer 6:6; Am 3:9; Jas 5:4**

Danger Ne 4:21-23 *See also* **Ex 18:8; 1Ki 2:26; 1Ch 11:15-19; Ac 27:27-44**

Examples of those who suffered hardship

Israel Dt 28:47-48 *God's people suffered under his chastisement. See also* **Dt 8:15** *their suffering in the wilderness; Dt 26:6-7* *their suffering in Egypt*

David was oppressed by his enemies Ps 132:1

Paul suffered in serving the Lord 2Co 6:4-5

God's people must endure hardship

The example of Jesus Christ *See also* **2Co 8:9**

The suffering of believers Ac 14:21-22 *See also* **1Co 4:11-13; 2Co 1:8-9; 11:23-29; Php 4:11-14; 2Ti 2:3; Heb 10:34; 11:37-38; 12:7; Rev 2:3**

The need for faith, courage and endurance 2Co 1:9; Heb 3:6; 10:36; Jas 1:12; Rev 1:9; 14:12

God helps his people through hardship

He provides for them Dt 8:16; 1Ki 17:2-9; 2Co 1:10; Php 1:19; 4:19

He comforts them with his love Ro 8:35-39; 2Co 1:3-4; Heb 13:5

He sets heaven before them Rev 7:16-17

See also

1085 God, love of
 1330 God, the provider
 5341 hunger

5446 poverty
 5580 thirst
 5628 work

5828 danger
 8219 courage
 8418 endurance



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¹ Manser, M. H. (2009). [*Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*](#). Martin Manser.