Punishments From God

Described

Punishments from God are those types of sufferings which He directly or indirectly imposes on unbelievers or believers.

The purposes of punishment

The main reason for God’s punishment of sin is to maintain the perfectly right sinless, good standards by which He rules the whole of creation. He must maintain these standards because they are a reflection of His perfectly good nature and character. If He did not preserve these standards, He would be being a hypocrite. But it is impossible for Him to be a hypocrite.

One of the main ways that He maintains His perfect standards is by punishing all evil. He either punishes the person who sins or Jesus Christ. If God did not punish sin, He would be like a policeman with a gun who did nothing after seeing a person murder your mother. The policeman would be sinning by not arresting and charging the murderer.

A secondary reason why God punishes sin is to deter the sinner and others from further sin and to encourage the person to repent and turn to Him (see Leviticus 26:23 and Numbers 21:5-7). Isaiah 26:9-10 shows that God’s punishments can teach others His righteous way: “For when Your judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness…” This verse also reveals that often when God is gracious to sinful people and does not punish them for their sins, this results in them even more strongly rejecting His right ways. Ecclesiastes 8:11 confirms this: “Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

If God did not punish sin, He would not be acting in love towards those hurt by the sins of others. Also, if God did not send punishments on unrepentant unbelievers in their earthly lives to try to turn them from their sins to Him, He would not be acting in love towards them. This is because He would not be deterring them from the path heading towards being eternally condemned to hell.

Two types of God-given punishments

Punishments from God can be divided into the following two types:

- punishments based on God’s perfect justice.
- punishments aimed at one or more person’s salvation.
Punishments based on God’s perfect justice

God is the perfectly just Supreme Ruler and Judge. His perfect justice declares that the punishment owing for any human sin is death (see Genesis 2:16-17, Romans 1:29-32 and 6:23). This deserved death sentence has two features:

- physical death
- spiritual death – being eternally separated in hell from God’s Presence (see 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 and Matthew 25:41).

When an unbeliever experiences physical death or being eternally separated in hell from God’s Presence, they are receiving what they deserve or merit because of their sin. These two punishments are not aimed at reforming the person.

When a believer physically dies, this results in them going to heaven. But note God does not use the physical death of a believer to reform the person.

Punishments aimed at salvation

As a loving Creator, God sends earthly punishments on both believers and unbelievers with the purpose of their salvation from sin, Satan and eternal punishment.

These earthly punishments which have saving purposes are acts of God’s grace and mercy. Through these punishments, God mercifully works aiming to save the person from experiencing greater earthly punishments and/or eternal punishment.

Earthly punishments aimed at salvation can be divided into two types:

- those sent on unbelievers (see Isaiah 26:9-10).
- God’s loving discipline of believers.

God’s loving discipline of believers

There is a difference between God’s punishing of unrepentant unbelievers and His disciplining of His sons and daughters. God never eternally punishes those who are in spiritual union with Jesus Christ, but He does lovingly discipline them using various hardships. Hebrews 12:5-11 refers to the latter: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”
In Greek, the expression “He chastens” in Hebrew 12:6, the word “chastened” in Hebrews 12:10, the expression “we are chastened” in 1 Corinthians 11:35, the phrase “I chasten” in Revelation 3:19 and the expression “they may learn” in 1 Timothy 1:20 are various forms of the word “paideuo”. In these contexts, the word “paideuo” means “to punish for the purpose of improving behaviour”. 1

In the original Greek, the word “chastening” in Hebrews 12:5, 7, 8 and 11, which are all quoted previously, is the word “padeia” or forms of it. The word “padeia” also means “to punish with the purpose of improved behaviour”. 2 As Vine says, “padeia” relates to “the training of a child, including instruction; hence discipline, correction, chastening”. 3 God trains, disciplines, corrects and lovingly punishes His children. 4

Note in Revelation 3:19, Christ insisted that His discipline or punishing of His followers is based on His wonderful love: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”

1 Corinthians 11:29-34 reveals that God sometimes punishes or disciplines believers if they refuse to turn from their sins: “For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgement…” Note these verses show that such judgement does not involve eternal condemnation, but instead is the loving discipline of our Father.

This loving discipline is aimed at preventing sinning believers from hardening their hearts against Him. This is God’s mercy and love being expressed through His judgement.

In Revelation 2:20-23, Jesus Christ prophetically warned some believers at the church of Thyatira that they would be punished in this earthly life if they continued to practice the teachings of a false prophet who encouraged sexual immorality. Hebrews 13:4 warns: “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

James 5:9 warns believers of the possibility of being judged by the loving discipline of our Heavenly Father: “Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.” (N.A.S.B.) This verse also does not refer to eternal condemnation in hell.

In the original Hebrew Old Testament, the word “yasar” relates to God’s loving discipline of His people. “Yasar” means “discipline, chasten, instruct”. 5 “Yasar” is used in Leviticus 26:18 and 28 in the context of God aiming to reform the attitudes and behaviour of His people (see Leviticus 26:23). In Proverbs 3:11-12, God’s chastening of His children is said to be based on His love.

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1 Louw and Nida, page 490.
2 Ibid.
3 Vine, page 97.
4 The Acts 5:1-11 example of Ananias and Sapphira being punished with physical death is a hotly debated passage. It is hard to know with certainty whether they were true believers in Christ or just believers-in-name-only.
5 Harris, Archer and Waltke, page 386.
Two extremes – the ascetic and humanist views

At present, there are two harmful extreme teachings in the Church in relation to God’s disciplining of His children. The first is the ascetic view and the second is the humanist view.

The ascetic view of God’s discipline suggests God spends most of His time inflicting punishments on His children. An equivalent wrong human father model was the one in which a father never kissed nor cuddled his children nor told them how much he loved and accepted them, but instead constantly rebuked, corrected, threatened, smacked and disciplined them. This was a common model in Western countries decades ago. It caused many problems in children.

An extreme version of the humanist view is very popular among compromising Protestant liberal churchgoers. This view says God’s love is so great He would never send anyone to hell, not even unrepentant Adolf Hitler and his Nazi mass murderers.

A modified form of the humanist view is taught by some Charismatic preachers. They insist that as a loving Father, God would never inflict or allow any suffering to occur in His children’s lives, no matter how much they refused to repent of their various known sins.

Such people have remoulded God the Father of the Bible to fit the model portrayed by the modern Western philosophy of secular humanism. The secular humanist father gives his children whatever they want, no matter whether it is for their long term good or not, and rarely, if ever, smacks or disciplines them.

God does not fit into this humanist “wimp” model of a father. Hebrews 12:5-11 shows if God does not sometimes lovingly discipline us with various hardships, we are not really His children. God is not aiming to produce “spiritual spoilt brats” who have their Heavenly Father under their manipulative control.

Because of my own relationship with my son, I can understand why God does not follow either the ascetic or the humanist father models. I would be a poor father who did not really love my son if I followed either unbiblical extreme.

Different types of suffering in believers’ lives

Suffering in our lives as believers can come in a number of forms. Suffering can be:

- the loving direct punishment of our Heavenly Father. Such punishments are aimed at leading us to repentance and to be transformed more in Christ's holy image.
- the loving indirect punishment of our Heavenly Father through other humans, Satan and God’s preplanned principles of creation.
- a trial or testing in our lives which is not a punishment in any way (see Matthew 5:11-12, James 1:2 and 1 Peter 1:6-7). Job is a classic example of a godly person of faith who misinterpreted great sufferings in his life as being God’s punishments (see Job 10:1-22, 13:23-27 and 16:8-14). Not once does the Book of Job say his sufferings were punishments from God.

Two other categories of punishments

Punishments from God can therefore be categorised as either:


- direct punishments or
- indirect punishments.

**Direct punishments by God**

There is so much imbalanced teaching in the Church. For example, one view claims God directly causes every death and accident. This is wrong because Job 1:6-19 shows Satan and not God brought about the death of Job’s sheep and servants through evil humans.

Another view says God never kills anyone nor sends earthquakes nor uses nature to bring judgement on unrepentant unbelievers. For example, one popular American television preacher said, ‘To accuse God of killing or destroying is the same as saying God ‘damns’. God is love. He is life. He creates and brings forth good things…It is just as vain to say that God brought damnation on Southern California with an earthquake as it is to say that God damns.” God is love and creates good things (see 1 Timothy 4:4 and James 1:17) but to say He does not sometimes kill or send earthquakes is unbiblical. It is just as unbiblical to say God would not send anyone to hell because He is love and totally good.

2 Samuel 6:1-8 reveals God slew a man named Uzzah for touching the Ark of the Covenant. 2 Samuel 6:6-7 records: “And when they came to Nachon’s threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and he died there by the ark of God.”

2 Kings 18:17-19:35 records God sent His angel to kill 185,000 pagan Assyrian soldiers who were intending to capture the godly King Hezekiah, the prophet Isaiah and the people of Jerusalem. 2 Kings 19:35 states: “And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when the people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses…”

Genesis 18:16-19:29 shows God sent two angels to destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 19:24-25 records: “Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.” Note Genesis 19:21-22 specifically reveals God used His angels when He destroyed these cities. Also, see these angels inflicted blindness on the sinful Sodomites when the Sodomites tried to rape them. This is similar to how the Holy Spirit temporarily blinded the occultist Elymas when he opposed the Apostle Paul (see Acts 13:6-12).

Luke 12:5 states: “But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him whom, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him.” Someone may wrongly think this verse refers to Satan. But this verse concludes by telling us to fear the One Who after killing the body can throw the person into hell. God does not want us to fear Satan. Matthew 13:37-42 shows it is God’s angels and not Satan and his fallen angels who throw unbelievers into Hell.

God and not Satan sent the flood which destroyed multitudes of sinful humans in Noah’s time (see Genesis 6:1-7:24). God and not the Devil drowned Pharaoh’s soldiers who were about to massacre the Israelites (see Exodus 14:1-15:19). Numbers 16:1-33 records the Lord and not Satan opened the ground to slay the sinful Korah, Dathan, Abiram and their
families. Numbers 16:34-35 shows fire from the Lord killed 250 wicked people. Numbers 21:4-6 reveals God sent snakes to kill some of the sinful people of Israel.

Acts 12:20-23 records how an angel of the Lord slew King Herod. This judgement occurred in the New Covenant period.

Earthquakes

It is unbiblical to suggest that God does not send earthquakes by His Holy Spirit or angels. Matthew 28:2 shows God’s angel caused an earthquake when he went to Jesus’ tomb: “And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.”

Acts 16:25-26 records that after Paul and Silas had been praying and singing hymns to God, there was a violent earthquake enabling them to escape. Do you honestly believe Satan caused an earthquake to occur to free Paul and Silas? 1 Kings 19:11-12 shows God caused an earthquake to occur in Elijah’s presence. There is not one verse in the Bible which says earthquakes are caused by Satan, impersonal fate or chance.

Indirect punishments from God

God can punish indirectly:

- through punishments inflicted by God-ordained human authorities such as the police, law courts, governments, parents and school teachers.
- the pre-ordained principles on which His natural creation has been set up.
- the activities of Satan and demons.
- the wicked actions of various individuals, groups or nations.

Through God-ordained human authorities

Romans 13:1-5 reveals that rulers, law courts and other God-ordained human authorities can be indirect instruments of His holy anger: “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgement on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake.”

Humans who steal, murder and commit other crimes are often punished indirectly by God through human authorities. This does not mean all political rulers act with perfect justice (see Isaiah 1:23 and Micah 3:11). The Word of God itself records rulers such as Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar and Herod making evil laws and punishing various people unjustly (see Exodus 1:8-22, Daniel 3:1-30 and Matthew 2:13-18). But Romans 13:1-4 proves in general, rulers punish those things God disapproves.
**Through God’s pre-planned creation principles**

God also punishes indirectly through the pre-planned principles on which He created the Universe. For example, if humans choose to be drunk with alcohol frequently or to smoke tobacco or marijuana continually, they will usually end up damaging their bodies and/or brains. Humans who ignore this pre-ordained principle of God, will usually bring an indirect punishment of God on to themselves.

Similarly, some of those who are sexually immoral catch venereal diseases. Romans 1:26-27 says: “For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.” As a result of the Fall, venereal diseases are present and ready to bring self-imposed indirect punishments from God on many of those who choose to rebel against His perfect standards about sex for humans.

Sadly, sometimes innocent people who receive blood infected with A.I.D.S., die also. This is similar to when innocent babies catch syphilis or other venereal diseases from their sexually immoral mothers or when babies tragically become addicted to heroin because of their heroin-using mothers. But by their own evil actions, certain humans are making others suffer.

When God punishes people indirectly through His pre-planned creation principles, it is similar to a situation in which a little boy refuses to obey his parents’ command not to put his fingers on the hot stove. His parents have warned him many times of the horrible burns that will result if he insists on putting his fingers on the stove. But he stubbornly thinks he knows better and ignores the parents’ command.

As a result, the boy is burnt and suffers very sore fingers for many days. He finds it hard to sleep and cries at times because of the pain. The parents have not directly punished him for being so silly. His own foolish disobedience has brought great suffering onto himself. This is an imperfect comparison, but does partly explain indirect punishments from God.

**Through Satan and demons**

Another form of indirect punishment from God occurs when He permits Satan or demons to inflict suffering on unrepentant sinful humans. For example, a demon tormented King Saul after he fell into sin and he would not turn from it (see 1 Samuel 13:1-14, 15:1-35 and 16:13-14).

**Through the wicked actions of others**

Another indirect means of punishment can involve God removing His protection from an individual or group. He can willingly permit wicked people from one nation to make war against another. Judges 2:13-15 records what God did after the Israelites turned from Him: “They forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of the plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for calamity, as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.”
1 Kings 11:14-25 reveals God raised up adversaries to attack the people of Israel after Solomon led the nation into backsliding away from God. Refer also to 1 Chronicles 5:26 and Isaiah 9:8-17.

Or He can use the evils of individuals to bring indirect punishments on other individuals. For example, God used Abimelech, an evil person to kill the wicked inhabitants of the city of Shechem (see Judges 9:1-49). Previously, with the aid of the men of Shechem, Abimelech murdered Gideon’s (Jerubbaal’s) seventy other sons (see Judges 9:1-5). Judges 9:23-24 records God wanted to punish Abimelech and the men of Shechem for what they had done: “God sent a spirit of ill will between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech, that the crime done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be settled and their blood be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who aided him in the killing of his brothers.”

Similarly 2 Kings 9:1-10 and 10:30 record God wanted Jehu to slay the wicked King Ahab and his sons. 2 Kings 10:30-31 says: “And the Lord said to Jehu, ‘Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.’ But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin.” But note verse 31 above reveals Jehu was a very sinful person. God was pleased Jehu slew Ahab and his sons, but was not pleased Jehu did not obey Him about other matters.

This does not mean every person who is killed by another is being indirectly punished by God. Abel was a righteous person who had faith and pleased God (see Genesis 4:4 and Hebrews 11:4). God willingly permitted Cain to murder Abel (see Genesis 4:1-15). But nowhere in the Scriptures does it say God was pleased Cain murdered Abel. God later punished Cain for this wickedness (see Genesis 4:9-13).

Similarly, God willingly permitted wicked King Herod to murder John the Baptist (see Matthew 14:1-12). John was an exceptionally righteous person (see Matthew 11:11) and was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth (see Luke 1:15). John was murdered when he was only about 31 years of age. God was not indirectly punishing John the Baptist by allowing Herod to murder Him.

Genesis 15:16 refers to the fact that usually when the wickedness of various nations reaches a certain level, God will punish them: “But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” God was here referring to the time when the sins of the Amorites in Canaan would be so great that He would choose to punish them indirectly through the Israelites. Deuteronomy 7:1-2 records God’s later instructions to the Israelites about this: “When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.” Deuteronomy 20:16-18 says similar things.

Deuteronomy 18:9-12 records some of the wicked practices of these nations which God told the Israelites to destroy: “When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who
practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you.”

To “pass through the fire” refers to murdering children through human sacrifice. God endured this wicked human practice for many years. But then He commanded the Israelites to destroy those nations in Canaan who practiced it. Do you think He will endure forever the abortion of millions of innocent babies in many modern countries?

God uses both direct and indirect punishments on nations

In Ezekiel 14:12-20, God declares that He uses direct punishments – famine and wild beasts – and indirect punishments – war – to punish those nations who continually refuse to turn from their wickedness to Him. Ezekiel 14:19 also says He uses deadly diseases to judge these nations. God was referring here to all nations – even those who were not under the Mosaic Covenant and Law. Ezekiel 14:12-20 reveals how God still acts in New Covenant times.

God does not enjoy punishing people


In 2 Chronicles 36:15-16, we see that on many occasions after giving continual warnings year after year, God is left with no other remedy except punishment: “And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.”

Jonah 3:10, 4:2 and 4:11 show God always prefers saving instead of punishing even exceptionally wicked people like the Assyrians. Jonah 1:1-2 reveals their wickedness was so great it came up before God. But note the prophet Jonah’s words in Jonah 4:2: “…Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.”

Relevant Hebrew words

In the original Old Testament, there are numerous Hebrew words which refer to punishments of God:
The words “shillem”, “shalam”, “gemul” and “gemula” mean “recompense”.  

The word “natan” means “give” and is used in the sense of giving punishments in Ezekiel 7:3, 7:4, 7:8, 7:9, 9:10, 11:21, 16:43 and 17:19.


The word “ra’a” means “punish” in the context of Zechariah 8:14.


The word “awon” means “punishment for guilt” in the context of verses like Genesis 4:13, Psalm 149:7, Lamentations 4:6 and Ezekiel 14:10 (twice).

The word “naqam” means “vengeance” in verses like Deuteronomy 32:35, 32:41, 32:43, Isaiah 34:8, 35:4, 61:2, 63:4 and Micah 5:15. Commenting on the root of the word “naqam”, Harris, Archer and Waltke say, “God cannot be true to his character of holiness and justice if he allows sin and rebellion to go unpunished”.


### Relevant Greek words

In the original New Testament, there are many Greek words used which relate to God-given punishments. The main ones are:

- “ekdikesis” which means “vengeance, punishment” and is used in verses like Romans 12:19, 2 Thessalonians 1:8 and Hebrews 10:30.
- “kolasis” meaning “to punish, with the implication of resulting severe suffering” in verses like Matthew 25:46 and 1 John 4:18.
- “kolazo” which means “punish” and is used in 2 Peter 2:9.

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6 Harris, Archer and Waltke, pages 166 and 930.
7 Ibid, page 608.
8 Brown, Driver and Briggs, page 646.
9 Harris, Archer and Waltke, page 650.
10 Ibid, page 598.
11 Ibid, page 599.
12 Bauer, page 238.
13 Louw and Nida, page 489.
14 Bauer, page 440.


- “timoria” meaning “to punish with the implication of causing people to suffer what they deserve”\(^\text{15}\) in Hebrews 10:29.
- “dike” which means “penalty, punishment”\(^\text{16}\) in verses like 2 Thessalonians 1:9 and Jude 7.
- “krisis” meaning “punishment, with the implication of having been judged guilty”\(^\text{17}\) in Matthew 23:33, John 5:24, Hebrews 10:27 and Jude 15.
- “orge” which means “divine punishment based on God’s angry judgement against someone”\(^\text{18}\) and is used in Romans 3:5.
- “mastigoo” meaning “to punish severely, implying whipping”\(^\text{19}\) in Hebrews 12:6.
- “dichotomeo” which means “cut in two”\(^\text{20}\) and is used in Matthew 24:51.
- “antmishthia” meaning “a recompense based upon what one deserves”\(^\text{21}\) is used in Romans 1:27.
- “antapodoma” which means “a giving back in return, a recompense”\(^\text{22}\) in Romans 11:9.
- “apodidomi” meaning “to recompense someone…depending upon what the individual deserves”\(^\text{23}\) in the context of Romans 2:6.
- “misthapodosia” which means “a payment of wages”\(^\text{24}\) or “punishment, retribution, penalty”\(^\text{25}\) in the context of Hebrews 2:2.
- “antapodidomi” meaning “to cause someone to suffer in turn because of actions which merit such retribution”\(^\text{26}\) in Romans 12:19, 2 Thessalonians 1:6 and Hebrews 10:30.

Note earlier in the section “God’s loving discipline of believers”, I wrote about two other Greek words – “paideuo” and “paideia”. These two words relate to God punishing believers with the purpose of improving or changing their behaviour.

Bible Study Questions

1. What are God’s purposes when He punishes people?
2. What are the differences between God’s punishments based on His perfect justice and those aimed at the eternal salvation of humans?
3. Explain various aspects of God’s loving discipline of believers.
4. What is wrong with the ascetic and humanist views of God’s disciplining of His children?
5. What are the different types of suffering which can occur in believers’ lives?
6. What are the differences between direct and indirect punishments from God?
7. What Biblical examples are there of direct punishments from God?

\(^{15}\) Louw and Nida, page 490.
\(^{16}\) Bauer, page 198.
\(^{17}\) Louw and Nida, page 489.
\(^{18}\) Ibid, page 490.
\(^{19}\) Ibid, page 491.
\(^{20}\) Bauer, page 200.
\(^{21}\) Louw and Nida, page 49.
\(^{22}\) Vine, page 513.
\(^{23}\) Louw and Nida, page 491.
\(^{24}\) Vine, page 513.
\(^{25}\) Bauer, page 523.
\(^{26}\) Louw and Nida, page 492.
8. What examples are in the Bible of each of the different types of indirect punishments from God?

9. What does Ezekiel 14:12-20 teach us about how God deals with nations who continually refuse to turn from their wickedness to Him?

10. Does God enjoy punishing people?