

said it was the serpent. God didn't even answer one of them. God simply went ahead to meet out His vengeance and punishment on all three. We're all too ready to blame others.

Peter said to the Lord (John 21), What shall this man do? Jesus said, If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee, follow thou me. God deals with each of us as an individual. If we can help, if we can rebuke them for their sins, if we can be God's instrument to bring them to know the Lord, we should do the utmost of our ability. But when it comes to blaming others particularly for what they might do to us, that is not the answer.

We all have losses in life. We all have sufferings. We all find that things go wrong from time to time, and when they do I think we should find that there are usually one of three causes:

The first cause is the thing that was the cause in David's case here: David had grievously sinned and God punished him for his sin. We, if we believe in Christ, our sins are with Him on Calvary's cross. Our sins are under the blood. We are forgiven for the guilt of our sins, but the result of our sins may plague us the rest of our lives. We have to suffer for our sins. God in His mercy may remove the results of the sin, or He may not. He does remove the guilt, and that is by far the most important. So whenever anything goes wrong in your life, whenever you have difficulties, don't say, That person did this, that person is at fault. Say, What is the reason for this? God controls all things. He could protect me from any thing. What is the reason for this? Ask yourself first, Is the reason that I have committed some sin, of which perhaps I was not aware. Perhaps some sin like a canker is eating away at my Christian life, and I need to search down there and see what mistake I'm making, how I'm failing to follow God as he wants me to. How I'm failing to make my life count for Him as He wants me to. Search and see if your sin is the cause of what's happening to you. Don't spend time grieving over it, but find it, and repent of it, and look to the Lord for forgiveness. Praise God for bringing it to your attention.

This lesson was brought home to me very vividly when I was quite young. I heard of others who had certain sufferings they had to undergo, and I was very much afraid myself of having to undergo such experiences. I prayed God to deliver me from it, to protect me. Then I decided that was the wrong prayer. Instead I prayed, Lord, if I am doing what is wrong, if I am not making my life count for the Lord as I should. O Lord send me chastisement, send me punishment. Send me the lessons without the punishment if you will, help me to be alert to your mind, your message, your will for me. But if I fail to heed it, send me the suffering no matter how bad if it is necessary, rather than let me go on in my own way instead of following the way the Lord wants me to do.