

# The Doctrine of Thorns

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God." (John 3:16–18). "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!" (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

And since this is the topic of this verse:

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1. Thorns are associated with the curse of mankind and nature at the time of the Fall. Man has to contend with thorns in his work and in his spiritual life. **Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field** (Gen. 3:18)
2. Thorns are used in connection with man's failure. The thorn is a symbol of man's negative will toward God. So thorns are used to designate divine chastisement. **But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those of them whom you let remain shall be as barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land where you dwell.** (Num. 33:55; ESV) See also Judges 2:3.
3. In 2Cor. 12:7, Paul's thorn in the flesh was something aggravating enough to bother him. God permitted a fallen angel of great ability to penetrate the wall of fire around Paul and to bother him. However, Paul was persistent, praying this erroneous prayer three times. Paul was in fellowship, but the suffering was still there; however, it was suffering designed for blessing. **So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.** (2Cor. 12:7–9; ESV capitalized)
4. The thorn is a sign of Satan's power; but even Satan's evil designs result in good when God's power is employed.
5. Thorns are used to designate the administration of the final cycle of discipline to a nation. **Its nobles-- there is no one there to call it a kingdom, and all its princes shall be nothing. Thorns shall grow over its strongholds, nettles and thistles in its fortresses. It shall be the haunt of jackals, an abode for ostriches.** (Isa. 34:12–13; ESV).
6. Thorns are related to economic depression and recession under an agricultural economy. Depression is brought on by man's bad decisions or sins in the field of economy. **They have sown wheat and have reaped thorns; they have tired themselves out but profit nothing. They shall be ashamed of their harvests because of the fierce anger of the LORD."** (Jer. 12:13; ESV)
7. The unconquered Canaanites in the promised Land were thorns to the nation of Israel. God had ordered

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Israel to destroy all the Canaanites. But the Jews did not obey that mandate, so God permitted certain Canaanite groups to live as thorns to the nation Israel. For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the LORD your God has given you. (Joshua 23:12–13; ESV) Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, "I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall break down their altars.' But you have not obeyed my voice. What is this you have done? So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you." (Judges 2:1–3; ESV) See also Num. 33:55.

8. Thorns are used to describe the results of not accepting Bible truth. Thorns and snares are in the way of the crooked; whoever guards his soul will keep far from them. (Prov. 22:5; ESV)
9. Thorns are used to describe the distractions to positive volition toward Bible truth. In Matthew, thorns refer to the man who hears the Word, but the worries of this life (e.g. peer pressure) and the deceitfulness of riches choke out the Word. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them...As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. (Matt. 13:7,22; ESV)
10. Thorns are used to describe unbelievers, who are burned at the last judgment. The worthless [are] like thorns, all of them being cast out, for they are not taken with the hand. And a man strikes them; he is armed [with] an iron [weapon] and a spear; and they will be certainly consumed with fire in the same place. (2Sam. 23:6–7)
11. Thorns are used to describe the results of being involved in Satan's domain cosmic and negative volition toward the plan of God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned. (Heb. 6:8; ESV)
12. Jesus Christ wore a crown of thorns on the cross, which signified the fact that He was made a curse for us. Matt. 27:29 Mark 15:17 John 19:2 Gal. 3:13 1 Pet. 2:24
13. In the millennial reign of Christ, nature will be delivered from the curse of the Fall. This is expressed by the removal of thorns in Isa 55:13 and Ezek 28:24

This is mostly taken from <http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/thorns.html> accessed May 5, 2014.

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