

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING?

or why do bad things happen to good people?

Pain, death, accidents and natural tragedies raise questions that cause many people a great deal of anguish. The questions that most people would like an answer to is:

"If God is love, why would innocent people die?"

" Why doesn't He just stamp out evil right now and put an end to all this grief and heartache that we all seem to go through?"

It's not wrong to think about these things, so we'll explore the reasons to these seemingly unanswerable questions and see what the King James Bible says about them.

" And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

(Romans 8:28)

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."(Ephesians 5:20)

"WHY DOESN'T GOD STAMP OUT ALL EVIL FROM THE WORLD AT MID- NIGHT TONIGHT?"

Would you still be here at 12:01am? A lot of people think they would be. I suppose you could name a few people who wouldn't be here. But general consensus among people is that there are good people and there are bad people and that the bad ones would have been wiped out and the good ones left here.

BUT THE BIBLE SAYS THAT NO-ONE WOULD
BE HERE. IF GOD STAMPED OUT ALL EVIL,
WE'D ALL BE GONE!

YOU MAY BE THINKING THIS DOESN'T SOUND RIGHT.... SO LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING:

Ever heard of these sayings?

"He's got a heart of gold."

"As long as your good outweighs the bad you'll be alright with the big fella upstairs"

"Always look on the bright side of life."

"Her blood's worth bottlin'."

"If ever anyone ought to get to heaven, it should be so and so."

Well that's about all they are - sayings, made up by man for man.

HAVE YOU EVER: 1. Told a lie? 2. Taken something that wasn't yours? or 3. Had sexual thoughts about someone else? If you have, the Bible says that you're a LYING, THIEVING ADULTERER!

You may be thinking - "I can't be that bad! There's a lot worse than me - I'm no axe-murderer!"

At each end of the scale you'd have Hitler & Mother Teresa and you'd be somewhere in between, right?

And maybe you're just crossing your fingers - somehow hoping that God'll let you into heaven with a 50% pass mark, right?

Now, we rarely think of ourselves as being bad, because " *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes:* " (Proverbs 21:2). In fact, most criminals in jail think they've been unjustly sentenced.

As we can see, our standards vary and the Bible says we are not wise to compare & measure ourselves against each other (2 Corinthians 10:12).

In fact, "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23).

HOW FAR SHORT?

God's standards are so high, He says even the GOOD THINGS we do are like FILTHY RAGS in His eyes - not the bad things but the good things! (Isaiah 64:6)

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WHAT ABOUT LITTLE SINS?

Has the thought entered your mind that a loving God should overlook your sins and only punish the serious criminals like murderers, child-molesters and rapists? The Bible says, quote: *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all"* (James 2:10). There are no big or little sins in God's eyes. If you've done one - you're guilty of the whole lot. Just one poison will kill you.

BUT WAIT ... THERE'S MORE!

When God created Adam, He made him the representative of the entire human race. When he disobeyed God, his sin was put onto everyone's individual account - just as if we'd sinned!(Rom 5:12) As a result, our nature got changed from "pure to sewer" and from then on, all were born with a sinful nature. No-one needs to be taught to sin - we take to it like "ducks to water". We sin because we're sinners! The Bible says that when Adam sinned death and disease came upon all of creation. The assumption is that while nobody's perfect, everybody is basically good, although with some people we just have to look a little harder.

WHAT'S THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE NATURE OF MAN?

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:"

(Mark 7:21-22)

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"
(Jeremiah 17:9)

You might be thinking, "This sounds a bit rough. I wonder who God is referring to here? These must be dreadful criminals of the highest order?"

NO MY FRIEND, THIS IS GOD'S
DESCRIPTION OF YOU AND ME.
AND IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER!

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our Iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (Isaiah 64:6)

"There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Eccles 7:20)

They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.' (Psalm 14:3)

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."(Romans 3:23)

"Every man at his best state is altogether vanity.'" (Psalm 39:5)

Now, you might be thinking at this point that you don't like the Bible, because it doesn't paint a very positive picture of mankind.

THIS IS PRECISELY WHY PEOPLE HATE THE BIBLE. IT TELLS YOU EXACTLY WHO WE ARE AND IT DOESN'T PULL ANY PUNCHES!

DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO BAD PEOPLE? BUT ARE THEY BAD?

The Bible says that all things work together for good to them that love God, (Romans 8:28). Things are only bad if you're not saved.

We are aware that the Bible points out that the Jews continued to wander in the desert for 40 years because of murmuring in the desert. They refused to see that God's hand was on them and He was looking after them. They loved Him, worshipped Him and praised Him but it was only on their lips and not in their hearts. They didn't want to trust God and the plans He had for them. It has been said that the journey from Egypt to Canaan could have been done in 10-14 days. That was God's plan. Instead it took them 40 years but they didn't trust Him. Now God is wanting today - for people to trust Him.

WE ARE TO EXPECT SUFFERING

There is a warped view that when you become a Christian, God gives you an armchair ride your whole life and then into heaven when you die.

"For unto you it is given in the behalf Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."
"Philippians 1:29

"... we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" Acts 14:22

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2Timothy 3: 12

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"That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto." 1Thessalonians 3:3

Note the writer is addressing Christians and the suffering, tribulation and persecution is for righteousness sake.

HOW ARE WE EXPECTED TO REACT?

Christians today are only suffering for their sakes and not for righteousness sake.

God is in the business of humbling the non-Christian as well as the Christian. He wants to get the non-Christians attention. When WWI and WWII were raging, the churches were packed. Why? People looking for God. He knows that when things are prosperous and we are healthy, we turn away from Him.

The reason that God allows suffering is to get our attention - always to show us our own insufficiency. If unsaved, then to get us saved and if saved to depend on him totally.

The 23rd Psalm says it all:

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell In the house of the LORD for ever. "

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. "Romans 8:28 "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" Ephesians 5:20

"Be careful for nothing; but In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. "Philippians 4:6-7. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in Him." Nahum 1:7.

God knows our needs long before we do and He is never surprised. Problems are allowed into our life by God for our good and His glory.

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." 1Peter 5:7

THE FIVE BENEFITS OF SUFFERING

1. It proves the reality of our faith, weeds out the mere professors and develops out our trust in God.
1 Peter 1:7 "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."
2. It enables us to encourage and comfort others who are going through trials.
"... and the God of all comfort who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble..."
2 Cor 1:3-4
3. It develops character
...but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed... "Romans 5:3
4. **It makes us more zealous in spreading the gospel.**
"As for Saul, he made havock of the church... they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." Acts 8:3-4
5. It helps remove the dross from our lives.
"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Job23:10.

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