

IF GOD IS GOOD: HOW CAN HE ALLOW SO MUCH SUFFERING IN THIS WORLD?

John 16:31-33

INTRODUCTION: One of the big questions that is asked is "If God is good and all powerful why does He allow so much suffering in this world?" The study of this age-old question is called "theodicy." Theo meaning "God." "Dicy meaning "Justice." It is trying to show that God is just even though evil and suffering exist in this world. When others are suffering it is a theological question. But when we or a family member are suffering we want answers now! The question of pain and suffering in this world was addressed by the Lord Jesus Himself: John 16:33. Jesus Himself suffered in this world: Isaiah 53:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:7. There really is a mystery surrounding evil and suffering but let's look into that mystery: Isaiah 55:8-9.

I. HOW COULD A GOOD GOD ALLOW SO MUCH SUFFERING?

One of the arguments about God's existence is "If God is good, how can He allow so much suffering in this world?" Larry King always said: "I can't believe in a God who would allow so much evil to exist." In order for there to be evil in our world, that means there must be a moral law giver Who declares what is good and what is evil.

II. GOD IS ALL WISE!

In order for the atheist to make his argument that God does not exist he must say that if God does not exist then there is neither good or evil, yet we all know that good and evil does exist. Jesus said that suffering, pain and evil are true: John 16:33. If you look at just two aspects of God's character, God is good and God is all powerful you might come to the conclusion that God does not exist. But who says we can only look at two aspects of God's character? The God of the Bible is all wise. God is also eternal and evil exists in time: Psalm 90:2. The Word of God tells us that God will eventually do away with all evil. Revelation 21:4-5. You may say why didn't God do away with all evil in 1971. If He had I and Mimi would never have been saved. Our God in His wisdom tells us why He has not done away with evil yet: It is because our God is very patient also: 2 Peter 3:9. God does not ask us to understand everything in this world, He only asks us to trust Him. Peace comes to us when we admit we only see a few of the threads in the great tapestry of the life God has planned for us. God has not called mankind to figure everything out but He has called us to trust Him. Romans 8:28. In the midst of our suffering God wants us to rejoice in Him: Habakkuk 3:18. When Job was suffering he did not charge God with wrong doing but God does not answer him about why He allows suffering, He just tells Job to trust Him: Job 38:1-7.

III. WE MUST LOOK TO THE GOD WHO IS LOVE!

We have talked about the love of God: 1 Corinthians 13:13. Jesus answered the question about what the greatest commandment in the Law was: Matthew 22:37-40. In order to have true love God has to give us free will. Love requires free will because if we have no choice there cannot be true love. Proverbs 23:26. God doesn't make us love Him but He does invite us to love Him. Adam and Eve had a choice to love and obey God or to disobey Him. Our God is holy: Revelation 4:8. Anything that is not holy is evil and sin. Romans 5:12. Adam and Eve's sin brought death into this world and suffering and pain.

IV. GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN!

Our God had an eternal plan for mankind before He ever created mankind: Romans 5:12. Our Lord Jesus suffering to pay for mankind's sin was also a part of God's eternal plan: Isaiah 53:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21. Jesus Christ's death for the sins of mankind was not an after-

thought; it was part of God's eternal plan for the redemption of mankind: Revelation 13:8. God saw that even though mankind would suffer dearly for their sin that eventually many would chose to love and obey God and spend eternity with Him and God felt it was worth it all. Hebrews 13:12-14. God's plan is that through suffering we can learn and become more like our Lord Jesus. Feeling pain in this present world is a good thing: 1 Peter 5:6-11; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

V. OUR SUFFERING WILL BE SWALLOWED UP IN GLORY!

One day according to God's plan all our suffering will be swallowed up in eternal glory: Romans 8:18-21; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5. We must learn to live with eternity in view. If we do not our suffering can lead us just as it did Mrs. Job to say "curse God and die!" Instead let's learn to be like Annie Johnson who wrote the hymn "He Giveth More Grace."