Why Does God Permit Suffering?

Robert Harkrider · Series: **Christian Living (Questions)**

INTRODUCTION

- If there is a God, how do you account for all the suffering that's in the world?
- Perhaps there's no single argument that challenges the Christian faith more than that of human suffering.
- The skeptic concludes that God either must be loving and not powerful, or powerful and not loving.

1 Is It God's Will That Men Suffer?

- There's a difference in the intentional will and the permissive will of God.
- God permitted, because by his laws that are inevitably set forth. And yet he's given man freedom of choice.
- God did not make us puppets at the end of a string and he pulls every act that we do.
- To be in the image of God says we are creatures of choice. We have the right either to obey him or to disobey him.

2 Blame Satan, Not God

Luke 13:16; 2 Corinthians 12:7–9

- We ought to blame Satan, not God, for the suffering and death. It's the devil's will that there be suffering.
- Ought not this woman being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the Sabbath.
- Her binding was according to Satan, to his will. The loosing was of God.
- There was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted over much.
- God did not bring the thorn in the flesh, God brought ability to bear it.

3 God Does Not Want Man to Suffer

Genesis 2:8–9; Genesis 3:22

- Nowhere has God ever been pictured as desiring man to suffer. God's desire always has been for the best interest of man.
- What did he put in the garden of Eden? Only that which was for man's good.
- But yet he did not force man to serve him. Even the Garden of Eden he gave man choice.
- God wants man to choose to love him and to serve him, not to force him to want to serve him.

4 Suffering Is the Result of Sin

Genesis 3:16–17; Romans 5:12

- Man died being separated from God by sin.

- For the woman, pain and childbirth, pain enters in. Sorrow and struggle enters in because of sin.
- As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, so that in death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.
- Suffering, death, the result of the entrance of sin into the world.

5 All Suffering Is Not Punishment for a Person's Sin

John 9:1–3; 2 Timothy 3:12; Job 1:1–5

- All suffering is not punishment for a person's sin.
- Neither this man nor his parents have sinned.
- He used the affliction, the blindness of this man to prove the mercy of God, number one, by giving him sight, and the power of Jesus, number two, by healing the man.
- All who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.
- It's not because the righteous are sinful, it's because they are righteous that they're suffering in those occasions.
- God permitted, didn't he? He permitted Satan to test Job, to try his faith.

MY NOTES