



Is God To Blame?

IF God is a God of love, why is there so much suffering in the world?

Why doesn't God do something?

It's a common question. One we've all asked at some time in our lives.

There seem to be some possible ways of looking at this suffering world :

- ◆ God doesn't exist.
- ◆ God is there but doesn't get involved in human life.
- ◆ God is powerless, impotent.
- ◆ God is a vengeful God causing suffering because men and women don't do what he wants.

But...maybe those aren't all the options. Perhaps there is another answer.

Perhaps God **HAS** done something, is doing something but it isn't what we'd expect so we've missed or rejected it!

You can't prove God!

Even the Bible says that no-one has seen God. But then I can't see the wind, I can't see electricity. What I CAN see is the effects of those things and so I believe they exist!



O.K. So where is God?

For the Christian he's right here feeling the pain of his suffering world and sitting alongside those in pain. He's not distant, up in heaven minding his own business, he's here with us.

But saying that, of course, just brings us back to the original questions. Why doesn't God intervene and stop the suffering?



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To answer this the Christian goes back to the beginning.

- ◆ God made the world.
- ◆ God made a good world.
- ◆ God made man.
- ◆ Man disobeyed God's ways.
- ◆ Man spoilt God's world and brought suffering, pain and death. Things God never put there in the first place.

The thrust of this is that God made man to function with free will. But, he made a world that functioned on right behaviour, care for man toward another, fair distribution of the world's resources. Instead man tried to make the world God made function on selfishness, greed and (to use a biblical word) sin.

So, you say, God is paying us back for not doing things his way! It's not that simple.

If you buy a car and treat it in a manner other than that recommended by the handbook and the makers instructions you'll invalidate the warranty! Man has done that with God's world and, frankly, we are paying the price. Sadly, though, everyone suffers. Suffering does not just pick on the wicked and ignore the good. It affects all. Sometimes it seems that the good suffer more and the wicked get away with it. Even King David in the Psalms threw that one back at God!

We seem to have reached the point where we are saying that Man is to blame. That's true. It's not that each individual deserves their own suffering. It's that man's choice not to follow God's ways brought evil and suffering into the world and each one us, young or old, black or white, Christian or otherwise are reaping the consequences of that.

So, how can God just stand by and watch?

Simple answer to that is that he's not. He has provided an answer.

You and I would want the answer to be that God stepped in and stopped all the suffering, healed all the diseases, ended all the wars and gave us all peace and harmony.

But, because of the nature of man AND because mankind still has freewill that cannot happen as things are now. God could only do that by a total change in the whole character of our world!

AND...the Bible tells us...that is exactly what is going to happen on one day, yet unknown, in the future. On a day only Father God knows he will say “enough is enough”. Then Jesus Christ will return to this world, judgement will take place, justice will be restored and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Things will be exactly as God intended them to be from the beginning. Death, evil and the devil will all be destroyed for ever. That’ll be some amazing day and it’s a day that Christians teach will come and Father God already knows when it’s going to be.

So, do I need to be afraid?

The answer to that is contained in our next answer!

God is not only going to do something in the future. He has already done something in the past, in our history, that affects us today and will very much determine how we are affected by the future events we’ve already spoken of.

Jesus Christ is coming back to this world, at God’s command, in the future. But, the answer we are now going to consider involves the first coming of Jesus.

It’s a real historical event, documented in the Bible and in other historical documents. Jesus Christ came to this world, living and dying as a normal human being. But he wasn’t a normal human being! He was, and is, God in the flesh.

This is the very centre of the Christian Faith.

- ◆ God has done something.
- ◆ God has stepped right into the middle of human suffering.
- ◆ He has done that in the person of Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Jesus has suffered, not for his own wrongdoing, but for the wrongdoing (sin) of every man woman and child.
- ◆ Jesus invites us to believe in him and be renewed.





So how does this help the problem?

The way that God has dealt with the problem of suffering is to supply each individual with an answer. The answer is to recognise their own failures, to believe in Jesus Christ and his suffering on the cross and to receive Jesus Christ into their lives!

This of course hinges on the second central plank of the Christian faith. The resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is, that he rose from the dead and is alive, with God, today.

He is active in today's world through his people and will (see earlier) be returning to this world to finally put an end to all suffering, all pain and all misery. Until then every person has the opportunity to trust him and receive his forgiveness and new life.



So, what now?

Right now the offer from Father God through Jesus Christ is to put our trust and faith in Jesus and receive his new life. The only requirement is to recognise I need Jesus, to believe and accept.

Once you have done that you join the worldwide body of people known as the church of Jesus Christ. They spread across all nationalities, denominations, ages, cultures! They are all involved in God's work of making a difference here and now in this world, their local community. AND... looking forward to Jesus return.

**Want to know more?
Got questions?
Come and see us at
Thursday Coffee morning
9.30 — 1.30**

