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WHY IS THERE SO MUCH SORROW?



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Why is there so much sorrow and death in our world?

There is hardly a question that so many people busy themselves with like this one. In particular, it surfaces when it comes to the subject of God. For many it is true, if there is a loving and almighty God, then there is no suffering and no death in this world! Is this statement true? This is what we want to deal with here.

Four logical options

Logically speaking, there can be four different answers when asked why God allows suffering and death in this world:

- 1) Either God wants to eliminate suffering but He can't,
- 2) He can and doesn't want to,
- 3) He can't and doesn't want to,
- 4) He can and wants it.

Which answer is the right one? That is exactly what we will clarify now!



Death and suffering are everywhere

Suffering and death are constant companions in our world. We know about natural disasters like earthquakes, tornadoes and floods of the century and accidents like ship disasters and plane crashes, unintentionally caused by humans. And we know of disasters deliberately caused by humans. Let us just think of the New York terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 with over 3000 dead, or to the countless radical Islamic suicide bombers. At the Paris massacre on November 13, 2015, 130 people were brutally murdered. As for plagues and viruses on this earth, mankind has known its share of the thousands of deaths that are carried out by microscopic germs. The latest as of year 2019, is COVID-19 or better known as the Corona virus, spreads throughout the globe, wreaking panic and fear upon millions of people, creating a pandemic not seen in the history of the world!

In addition to the horror events in the headlines, each and every one of us experiences suffering sooner or later. Be it rejection, loss, illness, accident or death. Some newborns are malformed or die a few days later. If the burdens get too heavy, people accuse God. To solve the problem I would first like to compare the two fundamentally different views of history.

Two Opposing Views

View 1 of evolutionary belief: According to this interpretation, our earth is millions of years old, and death is a constant companion in our history. Suffering and death are declared allies in the "creation" of life, only through death can new life arise. The German microbiologist Reinhard Kaplan writes in this sense: *"The 'built-in' aging and dying is painful for the individual, especially for the human, but it is the price to pay, considering that evolution could create our species at all."*



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View 2 belief in the creator: The Bible names God as the Creator. He judged everything that had been created with the assessment occurring only once 'very good' (The Bible, Genesis 1:31). This rating applies on the entire creation and thus also on the first humans Adam and Eve. In the event of sin, man became disobedient to God and did not heed the warnings previously given by God, resulting in death, suffering and disease. With that came the law ***"For the wages of sin are death"*** (Romans 6:23) into effect. Sin and death are closely linked. The sin brought an intruder, death, into the previously very good world. Since then all of creation is given over to decay and transience.

Which of these two views is correct? One of the two must logically be wrong! In the cells of all living things we find an almost unimaginable amount of information. This is necessary for the forming of all the organs and to control all processes of life. But information cannot arise in matter alone. Using the natural laws of information the whole concept of evolution collapses. (see also the writing 'Refuting Evolution Through Natural Laws' under www.naturgesetz.wernergitt.de) So we need only to start with View 2, the Biblical teaching.

We have now found the cause of suffering and death. It has been man's sin since Adam's time. This explains the general suffering in this world. Each teaching that wants to explain the world and does not include the fall of man, is built on the wrong foundations.

It is important to note: It is our fault the world is the way it is.

God's Dealings in Disasters

We have discovered that suffering and death is the result of sin. But what about natural disasters to which individuals cannot be blamed? I think for example of the flood of the century on the Elbe and Mulde in August 2002. In Job 12:15 we read, ***'See, if he withholds the water, they dry up, If he sends them out, they overwhelm the earth.'***

And in Amos 3:6 it gets pretty drastic: ***"If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it?"*** Similar it says in Isaiah 45:5a + 7, ***"I am the Lord ... I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity. I the Lord do all these things."***

We are very surprised that God sees himself as the cause of accidents and calamities. This statement excites our horror at first. God not only allows misfortune – even more, He is its author. That doesn't really fit into our trivializing idea of 'Dear God'. But we remember the same God caused the great flood that miserably drowned millions of people. The same God pronounced the judgement on the Amalekites, exterminating the whole nation with its livestock. (1 Samuel 15:2-3) God doesn't do anything arbitrarily. Everything God does has a reason and He often announces His judgements long enough in advance to give the opportunity to repent. ***"Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."*** (Amos 3:7) God did so before the great flood (Genesis 6: 7) and even before the

fall of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 18) The same God also speaks the eternal condemnation of damnation concerning the wicked, (Revelation 21: 8) this is also predicted long before, (Mark 16: 16b) so that no one is met with the unexpected. With all of this being said, we must remember that this God is love in person. (1 John 4: 16) It's the same God who ***"Sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live (eternally) through Him."*** (1 John 4:9)

The suffering of the individual

The Bible teaches that the general suffering, including sin is part of the overall picture in this world. The individual suffering of an individual, however, is NOT always associated to one's own sins committed. Therefore, let us be strictly careful not to tell the sick or needy individual, that his individual situation is the result of his sins!

God allowed Job to suffer even though he was a just man. Job, who was the most righteous man on earth in his day, experienced an incredible amount of suffering. He lost all his children, servants and all of his possessions in a single day. Furthermore he was afflicted with a very painful disease. God never explained to Job the specific reason for his suffering





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but He lets every reader of the Book of Job (part of the Bible) become 'eyewitnesses to extraordinary scenes that played out in the backdrop of heaven and that Job didn't even suspect. God had reasons to allow Job's suffering, but He neither revealed it to Job or to us.

Only in very few cases does God tell us why an individual has suffered. As Jesus and His disciples passed a man who had been born blind. The disciples asked Jesus, whether the man's blindness was due to his own sins or to those of his parents. Jesus explained that the man was born blind because God wanted to make His omnipotence visible through healing. (John 9:1-7) Hanania and Saphira fell dead after publicly lying to the church. (Acts 5:1-11)

Suffering in the face of eternity

Suffering must not be considered without eternity being included! The apostle Paul found reasons for his 'frailty' – his illnesses, his pains, his losses – in which to boast. His suffering report includes torture, beatings, prison, stoning, shipwreck, robbery, illness, exhaustion, hunger, thirst and cold. (2 Corinthians 11:16-33) His letters show that only through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is eternal life possible for us.

In the face of this, suffering shrinks to insignificance. ***“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”*** (Romans 8:18) A friend who has suffered great pain from several diseases wrote me: *“In order to endure this world, my consolation is eternity.”*

What does God do concerning suffering and death?

People who accuse God of leaning back and doing nothing overlook a vital truth. In reality, God has already done everything what we would expect from a loving God. The Son of God, Jesus Christ became human and endured terrible suffering and a cruel death in our stead. For Adam's sin had left mankind in a state of terrible hopelessness.

Even if our body dies, we still have one immortal soul because God breathed in us His (eternal!) breath at the creation. That what constitutes our conscious being will exist forever. Had God done nothing against our sin, we would have stayed in eternal separation from God, and thus in a condition of lasting suffering.

It was God's plan to send His son Jesus to us so that He could step in the breach for us. He let every conceivable sin be loaded on Him on the cross of Calvary. As the only one who was without sin, it was possible for Him to bear them, bridging the deep chasm between God and man that originated from sin. Because of His rescue act, He now grants eternal life to whoever believes this. (John 1:12; Ephesians 2: 8-9) All those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that God has raised Him up from the dead and accepting Him as Lord and Savior will spend eternity with God. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)



There is also a place of eternal separation from God. The Bible warns us that those who do not believe in Christ, will taste a “second death”, that being hell; the eternal and absolute separation from God in terrible pain. (Revelation 21:8) In Matthew 25:46, Jesus mentions both ways in one verse: ***“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*** There are no contradictions between the two expressions, which say, *“God is an almighty and loving God”* and *“The world is full of suffering and evil.”*

What would God have to do if He wanted to remove suffering and death from the world? Well, He would be required to fix the cause. The cause of suffering and death is sin. Consequently He would have to cause us, the cause of sin, to be removed from this world. If He lets us die with unforgivable debt, the only optional abode is hell. But God does not want that. Out of His love He based His plan:

I will leave people in this situation of suffering and death during their short life on earth, but the saving message of the gospel will be proclaimed. In this way, they hold the possibility to have eternal life and accept the invitation into heaven.

This results in a dual decision option: ***“He who believes in Him (Jesus Christ) is not condemned; but he***

who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)

Consequences for us

After all our considerations, I come up with the four logical options mentioned at the beginning of God's behavior. Would you have chosen No. 2 as the correct answer? **God can remove suffering, but He does not want it because it serves to our salvation.**

Pray to the LORD Jesus Christ for forgiveness from all sins. Accept Him as your personal Creator and Savior and follow Him in order to rejoice in the eternal life, free from sorrow.

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