

Why Does God Allow Innocent People to Suffer?

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That is a great question, and the same one that needs to be asked regarding the Holocaust and all sorts of horrors and sinful things that have happened and have kept happening to relatively innocent people throughout history. It is a question that has plagued me most of my life.

Fundamentally, evil exists because men have chosen to commit evil continuously (Gen. 6:5, Jer. 17:9, Mark 7:21-23, Matt. 15:19).

Additionally, as fallen beings and due to the fallen creation that we live in, (which we caused to fall), the demonic realm has been empowered to tempt and otherwise drive people to do even more wickedness (Exhibits A, B, C, D and E: Mao Zedong, Adolph Hitler, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Isis and more).

God has brought a remedy to all of this by sending His Son to pay the penalty for our sins by dying on the cross and taking them upon Himself. However, most people continue to reject that solution and continue in their wickedness (John 3:16-21). In essence, evil men continue to do evil because they have rejected Christ and His solution to the problem. If they did accept Him as their solution, He would send them the Holy Spirit to guide them through a sanctification process that would eventually cause them to hate evil and cling to what is good (John 14:15-17, 15:26, 16:7-15; Rom. 12:9).

So, in short, such evils exist because men reject God and choose to continue in them.

It is not God's fault. It is our fault, whether we personally commit the more grievous evils or not. God is innocent of all

charges—even the one of not doing anything to stop sinful acts—though He will stop them upon His return, after all men have been given the chance to choose the source of good or the source of evil.

The Bible teaches that without taking advantage of God's remedy for sin, "evil men and seducers will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13).

It seems the only way that sinful man can recognize his need for a Savior is to see the consequences of sin all around him and cry out for God to send one. Sadly, most won't do that. (Even when God did send a Savior, Jesus Christ, most men refused to accept Him).

Concerning innocent victims of sin, I asked God one night to explain why He allows them to suffer. His reply to me was, "What you're really asking Me is how could I love you and allow you to suffer."

"Yeah God, now that you mention it, that is what I am asking!" I said.

"I have already proven My love for you by dying a horrific death on the cross," he told me. "And when the cross becomes enough proof for you that I love you, then you will find the peace you are seeking."

The fact is, Christ Himself joined in the suffering—as a victim of evil men—in order to demonstrate the consequences of sin and His remedy for it. He was as innocent as they come, and yet He had to suffer horrific treatment at the hands of evil men in order to atone for our sins. So, although He didn't answer my question perfectly, He did answer it sufficiently, and He called me (and all of us) to a life of faith, where we follow Him even though He doesn't perfectly answer all of our questions.

Essentially, God demands faith from us, in this life, as a way

of reversing the sin of Adam and Eve, who chose to doubt God's goodness and to live according to their own wisdom rather than the wisdom and goodness of God (Gen. 3:1-13). It's like Oswald Chambers said, "The core of all sin is the doubt that God is good."

Here's a redeeming truth: Those who have suffered in this life will have unimaginable recompense in the next if they will only repent and believe in the Son of all glory, despite their unanswered questions. It is what Adam and Eve should have done but didn't. So God asks us to do now what they didn't: to believe in Him and His love based solely on His demonstration of ultimate and perfect love on the Cross. Not a perfect answer to the question, but a sufficient one, and one that calls us to faith in His goodness even in the face of suffering. {eoa}

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