

A close-up photograph of a colorful snake, possibly a corn snake, with distinct bands of red, black, and yellow. The snake is resting on an open book with visible text on the pages. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the snake's scales and the paper of the book.

Why
GOD
Permits
Calamities

Evil
Disaster
Sickness
Death
Sorrow
Violence
Trouble
Corruption

PREFACE

Daily life has come to a standstill, while fears and anxieties mount, in the midst of a worldwide upheaval caused by the fast-spreading novel [Coronavirus](#) pandemic. This virus which began December 2019, in Wuhan China, has now infected over 2,300,000 people worldwide, and the death toll continues to rise. In our new life of physical distancing many are wondering, *what is this world coming to?* They wander through ransacked grocery stores with masks on their faces, stand in eerie lines, six feet apart, and look out on a strange world of empty schools, businesses, churches and sports arenas. Uncertainty of what the future holds is the great reality of our time.

Technology has enabled people all over the world to see in real-time all the many tragedies taking place daily on screens large and small.

Even more disheartening are news reports on the hypocrisy of those who were supposed to protect and comfort the community and be faithful shepherds of the church — crimes against the innocent and the subsequent cover-ups have been exposed and contribute to weaken faith.

All thinking people realize that we are not able to fix all of the world's problems. However, there is a promised and guaranteed deliverance from all that hurts and destroys.

Yes, there is hope for the world on the other side of this great trouble. Whatever this world is coming to, there is assurance and even comfort in knowing that the Word of God predicted today's phenomenal happenings beforehand. They also predict that this trouble is a sign that man is standing at the threshold of lasting peace and economic security in a pollution-free earth.

To learn how God will turn man's troubles into blessings, read this booklet, *Why Does God Permit Calamities?*

Why Does God Permit Calamities?

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Chapter 1

Where Was God?

The role of divine judgment in calamities has long been a controversy. The tragic death toll of 60,000 in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake and tidal wave—actually, tsunami—triggered an international debate. Advocates of divine punishment of the victims were pitted against intellectuals, ranging from atheists to skeptics of the Bible. Voltaire, the piercing 18th century satirist, had been a Roman Catholic. The Lisbon tragedy shattered that. In his book *The Lisbon Disaster*, Voltaire's siding with the intellectuals, though he remained a Deist, propelled the Age of Skepticism forward. By the 20th century the "wrathful God" scenario lost its popularity. But now in the 21st century it has returned with vengeance, in the shadow of the Tsunami of December 26, 2005, when the Indian Ocean rose to swallow up the lives of over 250,000 in eleven nations.

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach observed in the *Jerusalem Post*, January 12, 2005, "A shockingly large number of Christian and Islamic leaders agree that the tsunami was a punishment from God for human sin. The sins in question are the subject of some dispute. But all agree that homosexuality tops the list."

Then he quotes the influential Saudi cleric Sheik Fawzan Al-Fawzan, "These great tragedies and collective punishments that are wiping out villages, towns, cities and even entire countries, are Allah's punishment... We know that at these resorts, which unfortunately exist in Islamic and other countries in South Asia, and especially at Christmas, fornication and sexual perversion of all kinds are rampant. We must fight fornication and homosexuality."

The same point was emphasized by Catholic spokeswoman Jennifer Geroux in two debates that Boteach had with her on MSNBC. She said that "the tsunami was a result of abortion and homosexuality in the United States." Pat Robertson, who was in the

TV debate with them, concurred. He predicted that the tsunami would soon be eclipsed by an even bigger disaster in the form of a giant asteroid plunging into the oceans of the earth.

Of course, this is not the first time homosexuals have been blamed for mass deaths. Immediately following 9/11, Jerry Falwell blamed gays, lesbians, and abortion advocates for the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Speaking on Pat Robertson's *700 Club* TV program, Falwell said, "The abortionists have got to bear some burden for this because God will not be mocked... I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make an alternate lifestyle — I point the finger in their face and say, 'you helped this happen.'"

With Katrina and Rita, we again saw the "blame game." Moslems boasted that Allah was punishing the U.S. for supporting Israel. Many Christians also felt God was punishing the U.S. because President Bush forced Sharon to compromise on land. Also, Evangelicals claimed Katrina's havoc on New Orleans was God's judgment for the tolerance of immorality that pervaded that city. We will not be drawn into the debate of God's targeted judgments—but we will probe the basic scriptural reasons for calamities.

In addition to Evangelicals who emphasize the vengeance of God in calamities, the reaction of other Christians is mixed. Both "nominal" and even some "sincere" Christians ask, "Where was God?" Nevertheless, Christians listening to the news flashes of the incredible mounting disasters are overwhelmed with grief and better understand why Jesus wept with Mary and Martha, sorrowing over the death of their brother Lazarus.

Some Predestinationist-Calvinists are smugly content with their "sovereign justice" of God concept. After all, the victims were mainly Hindus, Buddhists and Moslems, along with a few thousand vacationing Jews, all of whom before birth were doomed to an endless existence of woe anyway. Of course, if any of the vacationing Christians were indeed God's elect, divine fate ushered them into their eternal joys.

This begs the question—Why does anyone, Calvinist or not, who considers unbelievers worthy of eternal torment, grieve over this massive loss of unbelievers in death? After all, they assert, God plans to imprison the vast majority of His creatures in "a calamity," to which all the horrors of earth's tragedies by comparison are nothing but a

mere prelude to the most awful indescribable torment that God with fiendish cruelty will perpetuate for eternity.

And why is God supposed to impose this punishment of eternal torture? Simply because, when told by Christians that such was God's character and purpose, these unbelievers could not love Him nor praise His "good and just" (actually, diabolical) plan. Yet, other millions have died never even hearing the name of Jesus, through whom alone is salvation. How can anyone believe that tens of thousands in the Indian Ocean's indiscriminate killing went straight to hell, never having had an opportunity to believe in the Lord Jesus?

Where Was God?

The massive response of people around the world—their outpouring of love and concern manifested in the monumental relief effort—was overwhelming. All this love and sympathy in humankind is only the remnant of the original divine likeness in which Father Adam was created. This divine likeness was not wholly effaced during thousands of years of mankind's degradation in sin. God is represented in every act of kindness, whether by Christians or by others in the world. Certainly this outpouring of love did not come from blind evolutionary development. Impossible! These actions of love reflect a measure of God's character.

Tragedies Every Day

Headline tragedies such as the 9/11 Twin Towers and December 26 tsunamis are dwarfed by the personal tragedies of loved ones endured daily by hundreds of thousands—senseless death or mutilation on the highways, babies born physically deformed or mentally deficient, and victims of senseless crime. Hurricanes, floods, tornados, earthquakes, and other disasters steal the lives of millions in their onslaughts of destruction and deprivation. Psychological tragedies of dysfunctional families, drug addiction, and the multitudes of lonely, neurotic, homeless people, in turn, have left tens of thousands of families emotionally scarred.

Yes, these statistics fill the daily news, but only when they strike us or our loved ones are we overwhelmed with the pain of tragedy. Every day these statistics have faces—millions of faces of real people shattered emotionally and mentally. The cries of sickness,

sorrow, suffering and death encircle the globe. Not one of us can comprehend the enormity of the total sufferings of all humankind. Only God can and does see this humongous picture of human misery. And God is deeply grieved (Isaiah 63:9).

If God is grieved by the enormity of human suffering, why does He permit it?

Chapter 2

Why God Permits Calamities

To fully understand why God permits evils—including calamities—we must go back in time before man lived on the earth, before the mountains rose majestically over plains, before the millions of galaxies sparkled in orbit around and through each other, before the angels graced the heavens, back, back before God began His creative work.

God desired to have a family, to be a parent—a father or life-giver—the Heavenly Father. All things were created for God’s pleasure (Revelation 4:11). Evidently angelic children and human children were the desire of His heart. Ephesians 3:14-15 speaks of God as the Father of “the whole family in heaven and earth.”

Raising children entails suffering—both the suffering of the parents and the offspring. How much suffering does parental love demand? The most loving parents are not overly protective; rather, they are willing to permit hard knocks, realizing it will cost themselves dearly in pain as they watch their children struggle to maturity. Our Heavenly Father, the most loving and wise parent in the universe, is willing to suffer to the ultimate degree for the eternal welfare of His children. This He did in the gift of His son. With great fatherly emotions the Father sent His son to earth on that errand of mercy to suffer and die at the hands of sinful man.

How could utopia be attained for His children? God desires mankind to live in peace, harmony and happiness. He knows this will happen only as each practices the principles of righteousness and love. Otherwise, evil will result with its consequences of suffering and unhappiness. Here we glean an insight into what may be referred to as the “dilemma of God.” The planetary systems move in mechanical obedience; the animal creation is driven mainly by instinct; but God desired the human race to have a free will and to “worship him

in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). God could have programmed the ideal man—utopia would have been inevitable; but man would be no better than a robot, without true happiness. God knows it is only as man is fully motivated by the principles of righteousness, that he can really attain happiness for himself and be in that attitude of cheerful concern for the happiness of his fellows. This is the true meaning of worshipping God “in spirit and in truth”—possessing the spirit of God’s Law. God wants us to emulate His principles not just to obtain His reward, but out of love for His principles. God wants us to love Him and our fellow man because of our sheer love for His principle of love.

Free will has a built-in dilemma. Man can rebel against his Creator. The Lord was willing to bestow free will, fully aware that it would cost Him dearly before man became fully responsible to this freedom. Free will—what an awesome power! Man can stand in stiff-necked rebellion against his Creator. He can refuse to submit to His authority. He can refuse to accept His favor. He can choose to avert the mercy of God and adamantly stand upon his decision against God. For by free will, man is man, created in the image of God—neither an animal nor a machine.

Put yourself in God’s place to appreciate this dilemma. A parent will tell a baby not to touch the stove because it is hot, but what does a baby know about pain? Hot! Burn! Pain! Without experience, these words are meaningless. The anxious parent knows the inevitability of the baby touching the stove before learning the consequence of heat. A wise parent will create a controlled experience with heat, lightly and quickly placing the child’s hand where the heat is not too severe. All through life parents will admonish their children, knowing that they will only learn certain lessons the “hard way” — by experience. Likewise, God is giving mankind a controlled experience with sin.

As our Father, God knew man would not comprehend His warning about the dire consequences of sin/disobedience—sickness, suffering and death. Without experience these words were meaningless. So God formulated a plan whereby man, by his own choice, might first experience evil and then righteousness in God’s kingdom. This contrasting experience will manifest, as no other educational process could, the wholesome influence of God’s law and the dire consequences of its violation.

The process of recovery from sin is called redemption in the Bible. Redemption simply means the release from sin and death through the payment of a price. The thought is similar to the release of a person from prison when a benefactor pays the fine the prisoner could not afford to pay. This release through the death of Jesus is generally considered as an afterthought of God to salvage some of the human race. However, the depth of God’s wisdom is shown in His foresight to devise a plan that provides for man’s free choice and experience with evil, redemption through Christ and ultimate eternal happiness. Thus Isaiah 46:9-10 speaks of God knowing and declaring the end from the beginning.

Jesus Slain Before the Foundation of the World

Knowing man would disobey Him, God planned for man’s redemption before He even created the earth and man. First Peter 1:19-20 speaks of Jesus as slain before the foundation of the world. God lovingly planned the best for His future human children. This meant a plan that would deeply grieve His fatherly heart as He watched man trampled down into death by the machinations of evil while learning the consequences of sin. Also, it would cost the ultimate in fatherly suffering—watching His only begotten son suffer the agony of being vilified and crucified. God’s gift of Jesus was the greatest demonstration of fatherly suffering in history.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed, God withdrew His fellowship. Loneliness, stress and depression engulfed them. The latest scientific research confirms the biblical account of man’s “Fall” into sin. Loneliness, stress and depression render both the mind and the body prone to disease. Fear, hostility and aggressiveness became the norm. Exploitation, crime and violence were the inevitable consequences. The body’s immunity to disease soon broke down. The dying process had begun. Yes, Adam’s children, the human race, were born sinners (Psalm 51:5) worthy of death (Romans 6:23). This “permission of evil” is “the sore travail God hath given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith” (Ecclesiastes 1:13; 3:10).

The Unfinished Earth and Calamities

Since Adam and Eve disobeyed, mankind is learning by experience the bitter consequences of moral sin and evil that results in death. Additionally, they were cast out of their Edenic paradise into the

unfinished earth, where the components of nature were still unbalanced. Here mankind has “toiled by the sweat of their brow” and are subjected to sporadic upheavals of nature. These upheavals of nature are gradually preparing the earth to become the Edenic paradise in the 1000-year Kingdom of God on earth.

Remember, our earth is yet an unfinished planet. Being much closer to completion, planet earth has fewer and far less severe eruptions than other planets.

Often parents who remand a disobedient child to their room for the evening have loving thoughts of their continued relationship when the period of punishment is over. God has remanded His human children to their room—the unfinished earth. He has wonderful loving thoughts recorded in the Bible prophecies concerning their restoration to His favor. Yes, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:22, “as in Adam all die” but he continues, “even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Why? Because Jesus died “a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9).

Because of Adam’s sin of disobedience, the whole human race, symbolically speaking, yet in Adam’s loins were condemned by God to death—Adamic death, not eternal death. Whether one dies of cancer, a heart-attack, any other illness, car accident, train wreck, plane crash, murder, war, tsunami, earthquake or any other disaster of nature, these are simply the consequential incidents of God’s death sentence upon the descendants of Adam. God does not directly kill each of Adam’s children. These executions are the natural consequences of the effects of both inherited moral sin in all mankind and the harsh realities of the unfinished earth. Remember, whether one lives an hour or 130 years, this is but a “moment” compared to eternity. Only Christians who have accepted Jesus as their savior and dedicated their life to the Lord now enjoy fellowship with the Heavenly Father. After learning their lessons now during the “permission of evil,” the non-Christians as the “remainder of men” will come forth from the grave to their trial for eternal life.

Natural Calamities Overemphasized

Many natural calamities are not a question of “Where is God?” or “What’s wrong with God?”—rather, “What’s wrong with man?” Take, for example, the train of catastrophes around the

world periodically spawned by an El Niño. A monster El Niño could not exist without a large hole in the ozone layer. There would be no hole in the ozone layer without pollution. From whence came pollution? It came from diverse sources that are all rooted in man’s greed for profit. Many natural disasters before and after the 1997 El Niño also find their cause in global warming—the mischief of ultra-violet rays escaping through this hole in the ozone layer. For greater detail see Appendix Two, Ozone Depletion.

The extreme toll of human life accompanying other natural catastrophes have often been aggravated by man’s selfishness. Over 4,500 lives were devoured in the 1988 Armenian earthquake. Such high casualties were due largely to shoddy construction of high-rise apartments over a well-known fault area, again illustrating human callousness. The same was true of the devastating 2004 Bam earthquake in Iran. Californians dwelling over a huge fault area are hoping it won’t happen in their lifetime. When that “BIG ONE” does strike, you will hear the cry, “Where is God?” but it will be man’s gamble and loss, not God’s.

Man has long observed and recorded the patterns of natural calamities such as floods, monsoons, hurricanes, etc., yet frequently he chooses not to respect the danger of these killer patterns. It is well documented that certain rivers will periodically—every 10, 15, 25 or 50 years—swell over their banks into an ocean of destruction. Yet thousands continue to rebuild in the path of the inevitable ruin. Hurricane paths have temporarily obliterated shorelines and coastal isles. Yet the vanity quest for the ultimate in oceanfront luxury and prestige continues to provide a path of future victims.

Some disasters could have been eliminated or minimized if the recommendations of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had been followed. Yes, the killer force of natural catastrophes spirals numerically thanks to human selfishness and greed. This is one of the many lessons man is learning from the permission of evil.

Another observation must be made on the destructive forces of nature. Since the days of Voltaire (1790s), atheists and agnostics have seized on nature’s catastrophes to loud-mouth, “Where is God?” What a distortion of proportions. Numerically, the victims of natural disasters pale into insignificance compared to man’s

inhumanity to man. Actually, these atheists and agnostics need the lessons of the permission of evil to explode their naive view of evil. At the beginning of the 1900s they were predicting that Darwinism and social evolution would usher in a 20th century utopia. What has happened?

It Is Horrific

In his book *Out of Control*, Zbigniew Brzezinski notes that the 20th century became the century of insanity in which 175 million were slaughtered in the name of “politics of organized insanity.”

It is horrific—“175 million slaughtered” in one century because of mankind’s hate, greed and ruthless craze for power. Total all the deaths from natural disasters in the 20th century and what do you have? It is a drop in the bucket compared to man’s killing machine of the insane 20th century. This is what the schooling of the permission of evil is all about.

Eden, A Closer Look

To fully appreciate the fairness of Adam’s trial, it is necessary to take a closer look at Eden. God created Adam and Eve and established them in Eden—a perfect paradise. There they enjoyed a perfect home. Eden provided an abundance of food containing all the wholesome nutrients to sustain their perfect life. Adam was given dominion over the whole earth and all the animals therein. The crowning feature of this experience was Adam’s close fellowship with his Creator and God (Genesis 1 and 2).

The third chapter of Genesis details the history of man’s free will choice. God instructed man that if he practiced righteousness, he would live forever. If he disobeyed, then “dying thou shalt die” (Genesis 2:17). Death would be a process of sorrow and suffering culminating with the grave. Note well that death, not eternal torment, is the penalty for sin (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4).

Like the child and the hot stove, Adam did not know what suffering and death would mean. These were mere words to him. By information he knew that his disobedience would lead to his own death. No matter how many times God reiterated “dying thou shalt die,” these were only words devoid of meaning. Adam never saw anyone die. The dying scenario was never played out. Adam could

not look down through the corridors of time and visualize all the suffering and death that would be brought about by human sin and selfishness, all of which would have their beginnings in his own disobedience.

Set aside his eating of the fruit for a moment and focus on the principle. Something far more weighty was involved here. Adam of his own free will chose not to continue in the fellowship of God. This important detail is recorded in Genesis 3:8.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool [breeze] of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

This account indicates that a very familiar routine had developed between the Heavenly Father and our first parents. “They heard the voice of God walking in the garden in the cool (Hebrew, breeze) of the day.” Evidently, God spoke to Adam frequently, perhaps daily—“in the breeze of the day.” A familiar pattern developed by which they knew when God was approaching. Now that he had disobeyed, Adam heard God approaching to fellowship with them and knew the consequences of his actions. By his disobedience, Adam realized he had willfully chosen to withdraw from God’s fellowship; therefore, he hid from the presence of God. Notice that even before God cut off fellowship with him, Adam hid or withdrew from fellowship with his Heavenly Father.

A Fully Responsible Choice

Ponder well Adam’s choice. Just think, Adam enjoyed perfect communion and fellowship with the Heavenly Father. Communion with his Creator was not just a momentary experience. Some teach that from Adam’s creation to his disobedience was a short time—a few minutes or a few hours at the most. No wonder many are repelled by the absurdity that a momentary decision by a minutes-old Adam plunged the human race to long centuries of horrific tragedies. The record in Genesis 2:7-9, 15-23, allows for a much longer period of time. It elaborates on the events that occurred between Adam’s creation and Eve’s.

After Adam's creation, God planted a garden in Eden and put Adam in it. Adam, after receiving instructions from God, worked in the caring of the garden. This took time. There was extensive communication pertaining to things Adam could and could not do. Then Adam was instructed to name all the birds and all of the living creatures. This took time. And, during this time of extensive responsibility in caring for all the plants and naming all the animals, Adam enjoyed communion with God. Then Eve was created and became the wife of Adam. Now Adam had time to spend with his wife and enjoy her companionship. All of these events covered a period of time. Other scriptures indicate a period of two years.

In his talks with God in the "cool of the day," Adam should have realized there was something vastly different about his God compared to himself and Eve. He was such a loving Father. God not only practiced benevolence, kindness, love, justice and mercy, but God also loved these qualities. They were the very fiber of His being. He loved them so much that He wanted to exercise them in every relationship with His creatures. This was the "spirit" or "essence" of God's holy principles which He wanted to crystallize in the human heart. If God had programmed these qualities into man's heart, man would have been a mere robot, devoid of fulfillment and happiness. But in order for mankind to live eternally in peace, harmony and happiness with each other, they must have these qualities crystallized in their heart. The only way this moral crystallization of God's likeness could have been developed by Adam, would be by Adam choosing (free will) to maintain close fellowship with his God and daily choosing to learn and practice—obey all of God's holy principles. God was the epitome of holiness, wholesome benevolence. Due to a lack of experience, Eve chose the way of self-interest, selfishness. The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 2:13-14, Eve was not fully responsible, but Adam was. Adam was faced with a choice between loyalty to God and His benevolent ways or loyalty to Eve and her ways of self-interest.

Over a period of time, Eve evidently had become a rival to God. Adam not only disobeyed God, but chose loyalty to Eve before loyalty to his Creator. He loved Eve more than he loved God. Man had to learn this basic principle. It is only as he loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength, and with all his mind, that man will be enabled to love his neighbor (fellow man) as himself.

Educational Process Changed

The crystallization of God-likeness in man ended, but only temporarily. Before God pronounced the death sentence, withdrew His fellowship and expelled the first pair from Eden, He did a remarkable thing. God slew an animal and clothed Adam and Eve with its skins. What a ray of hope! This pointed to the shedding of Jesus' blood that would cover the sins of Adam and all his children who would be born in sin—inherited from father Adam. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22) in God's Kingdom. Then they will individually be given the opportunity to crystallize God-likeness in their hearts. Meanwhile, the educational process has changed. Adam and his descendants would first learn the bitter consequences of sin—disobedience to God's law (Ecclesiastes 1:13; 3:10). Man would reap the dire results of the ways of selfishness which Adam chose when he cast his lot with Eve and her ways.

The Consequences of Sin

Sin literally means "missing the mark"—disobedience to God's principles. When Adam and Eve disobeyed, God withdrew His fellowship. This was devastating! Alienated from God, man became alienated from his human companions. Rivalry and jealousy raged, and soon murder shattered the first family. Cain in a rage of jealousy killed his brother Abel. Loneliness, stress and depression overwhelmed them rendering both mind and body prone to disease. Mental distress does disease the body and mind. The dying process had begun, and man became alienated from himself.

Man is out of harmony with himself and struggles within himself. This adds to his mental anxiety. Fear, hostility and aggression became the norm. Exploitation, crime and violence were the inevitable consequences. Man was learning the dreadful consequences of sin and its resultant evils. Yes, Adam's children, the human race, were born sinners (Psalm 51:5) worthy of death (Romans 6:23). This is "the sore travail God hath given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith" (Ecclesiastes 1:13; 3:10).

Original Sin

Some will say, “Don’t tell me you still believe in original sin! Just because Adam and Eve were disobedient, the whole human race are sinners?” In 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; Romans 5:14; and John 8:44, both Jesus and the apostles refer to this event in Eden as an actual historical event. What better proof can we have that the Genesis account of Eden occurred? Unfortunately, the logic of the original sin concept has been obscured by Dark Age superstitions that have been attached to it, such as “hell fire” and a vindictive God who must be placated. Modern man is rightly repelled by the superstitions contained in some church theology, but these superstitions are not taught in the Bible. Shorn of Dark Age theology, there is no better explanation of man’s miserable plight than the Scriptural teaching of original sin and its penalty, death—extinction, not eternal suffering.

Chapter 3***A Suffering Saviour
and Suffering Christians***

Even if humankind learns the lesson of the dire consequences of sin in this lifetime, how do we know God’s Kingdom will succeed? What assurance is there that at least the majority will crystallize the God-likeness that will enable them to live in eternal peace, harmony and happiness?

Jesus is our assurance. He is the “surety of a better covenant” (Hebrews 7:22), the New Covenant which will bless all mankind in God’s Kingdom. As King, Priest and Judge in that Kingdom, his name will be called “Wonderful” (Revelation 20:6; John 5:22; Isaiah 9:6). Yes, Jesus will be a “Wonderful” success.

Why Jesus Suffered

Not only did Jesus die to provide the payment, a perfect human life that will eventually release the human race from death; but during his lifetime he suffered at the hands of his fellow man so that he could fully sympathize with their every need.

The Prophet Isaiah anticipated the suffering of Jesus. “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows acquainted with grief... Surely he has borne our grief, and carried our sorrows... He was wounded for our transgressions ... and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:3-5). Therefore, Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus is a sympathetic high priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Jesus continually permitted himself to be afflicted through contact with sinful man.

Every time Jesus healed, it was at the expense of his own strength. We read that “virtue [strength] went out from him” as he

healed the blind, the lame, the deaf and the lepers (Mark 5:30). He was expending his own strength so that he might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Further, Jesus was mocked; he experienced brutality, violence and murder at the hands of his fellow men. As a Jew, he tasted the racial scorn of the Romans. He identified himself with poverty, drudgery and obscurity. Full of compassion, his heart was moved for the mentally ill, the physically sick, the lame, the deaf and the blind. Why? So that in God's Kingdom Christ will know just what lessons mankind will need. "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity" (Hebrews 5:2). Jesus assumed upon his shoulders the ills of this world. Indeed, he can have compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way. Those whom he ransomed, he will know how to restore.

Your High Calling

Jesus died over 2,000 years ago. The question naturally arises, Why the long delay before setting up his Kingdom for the blessing of all mankind? One thing is clear throughout the Bible: God has not been attempting to convert the world since Jesus' death and resurrection.

The Scriptures speak of God dealing with only a few for a specific purpose. Christ's followers are spoken of as a "little flock." "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). God is only calling a few; a representative of every type of the human race is being called into the church of Christ. The Greek word translated "church" in the New Testament means "called out ones."

What is this special calling or selection of the church? Christians are called to the multiple profession of judges, priests and kings of mankind in Christ's Kingdom. What an honor! At first our faith staggers. But the Scriptures are explicit on this point. First Corinthians 6:2 states that "the saints shall judge the world." First Peter 2:9 shows Christians are called to be a "royal [kingly] priesthood." Similarly, Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 states we are called of God to be "kings and priests" and "we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 20:6 states that Christians "shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

Judges, priests, kings! What a profession Christians have been called to! But what a rigorous training course the Christian must pursue to attain this profession.

Not Many Wise

For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; ...and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

For the most part, God is bypassing the world's standards of greatness and calling the ordinary of the human race to compose the "little flock." How will this "bring to naught things that are?" Down through history, man's wisdom has tried every conceivable philosophy and political and/or economic ideology, but man has failed to solve humanity's problems. Each page of history is a record of man's inhumanity to man. The flaw is not so much the ideology, but man's selfish heart. History confirms the Biblical teaching that man is born in sin and "shapen in iniquity" (Psalm 51:5).

The 20th century started with great expectations. Through science and technology, utopia would be attained! Alas, this century is closing in disillusionment. Communism has failed. Capitalism is on the verge of bankruptcy. Unprecedented teen suicide, vice, drugs and immorality are the symptoms of a civilization self-destructing. In the meantime, the earth is becoming a wasteland of pollution. With over five billion people thinking of self first, could it be otherwise?

Thus the Lord has "brought to naught things that are." Human history has proven the futility of man's efforts. No flesh can glory in God's presence. No president, prime minister or statesman, or anyone, can boast that he has the solution for all man's individual or collective ills.

An Understanding Heart

But there are a few who have learned early not to trust in the arm of flesh for solutions. Through faith in God's word they realize that only God's Kingdom will completely solve man's ills. They have accepted Jesus as their savior and made a full consecration to do God's will. Their calling is to be judges, priests and kings with Christ in God's Kingdom.

These Christians are not relieved of their share of the tragedies common to man (1 Corinthians 10:13). Although many of mankind become bitter or hardened by the tragedies of this life, consecrated Christians have the peace of God which passeth all understanding (Philippians 4:7). Their faith realizes that tragedy provides the Lord an opportunity to develop in them a tender and understanding heart.

The loss of a loved one, husband, wife, parent, child can mentally scar. Physical tragedy such as being crippled, blind or deaf can leave one a forgotten member of the human family. Drug addicts, alcoholics, the mentally ill have found that few can understand. There are the scars of mental or physical abuse by a stranger or even a loved one. To those in economic poverty, nothing could be worse. Then there is loneliness. Some have experienced a darkness of loneliness that no human hand could reach. To consecrated Christians these various experiences provide a unique opportunity to patiently endure, while the Spirit of God transforms them day by day into the likeness of Christ (1 Peter 1:7; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

Foremost is the struggle of subduing sinful flesh and its interests. These are the "fightings within" (2 Corinthians 7:5; 10:4-6; Hebrews 12:4). The Christian's struggle against his own fallen flesh gives him compassion and understanding concerning the sin ingrained in the hearts of men. A priest is one "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity" (Hebrews 5:2).

This can be illustrated by the noble work of Alcoholics Anonymous. An essential step of A.A. therapy is to assign a former alcoholic to each alcoholic that comes for help. The victim being driven by alcohol will not readily accept help or advice from just anyone. How could anyone know his agony, his depression, his desperation if he has not shared the same experience? But the alcoholic will accept help from a former alcoholic because he knows that this person can

understand his agony. And this former alcoholic stands ready at any time to come to his side to plead with him, encourage him and make good suggestions for overcoming. It requires a former alcoholic to rehabilitate an alcoholic. Psalm 51:13 beautifully portrays this principle. Because the followers of Jesus were once sinners and transgressors they will be able to say of their work in the Kingdom—

Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways;
and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.

Finally, the church will be united with Christ during his return and share the glory of his Kingdom. Like him (1 John 3:2) they shall be compassionate priests, understanding judges, and benevolent kings (Revelation 20:6; 1 Corinthians 6:2). As a composite they will fully understand the sin sick, mentally warped, emotionally scarred and physically marred world of mankind.

Chapter 4

God Is Not Trying to Convert the World Now

Many believe the opportunity for eternal life ends with the second advent of Jesus. Nothing could be further from the Truth.

The common words ALL and EVERY are two of the most important words in the Bible. In Luke 2:10 the angel who announced the birth of Jesus said, “Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to ALL people.” Verses 30 and 31 speak of salvation for “ALL people.” First Timothy 4:10 speaks of God as “the Savior of ALL men.”

The simple logic of Jesus dying for ALL is found in 1 Corinthians 15:22: “As in Adam ALL die even so in Christ shall ALL be made alive.” Similarly, Romans 5:18 shows that “by the offense of one [Adam] judgment came upon ALL men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one [Christ] the free gift came upon ALL men.” Father Adam sinned with the unborn race yet in his loins. Therefore, ALL were born in sin and shapen in iniquity (Psalm 51:5) and thus worthy of death. God knew that Adam, due to a lack of experience, would disobey. Thus 1 Peter 1:19-20 speaks of the blood of Christ as being foreordained for our redemption even before Adam was created. Since ALL were lost in Adam, it was necessary that Jesus “by the grace of God should taste death for EVERY man” (Hebrews 2:9).

John 1:7 speaks of Jesus as “the Light, that ALL men through him might believe.” Verse 9 says he is “the True Light, which lighteth EVERY man that cometh into the world.” How can this be? Countless millions died before the time of Jesus. They never saw the True Light! They never heard the name of Jesus. And since the death of Jesus, millions have died never hearing of the only

“name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). If you are a Bible-believing Christian, you know that no one is saved through ignorance but only by believing in Jesus as his or her savior. This is a seeming contradiction. The answer is found in 1 Timothy 2:5-6, “...Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for ALL, to be testified in due time”—a plain statement that Jesus died for “ALL.” If Jesus died for “ALL,” why is it that ALL do not have the opportunity to hear this good news? The key of harmony is found in the phrase “due time.” The Greek word translated “time” is plural; i.e., “times” (*Thayer’s Lexicon of the New Testament*). The knowledge that Jesus is a ransom for ALL will be testified “in due times.” The due time for those God is calling to be of the Church is during the Christian Age. The due time for ALL other people to understand is during the 1,000-year reign of Christ.

Now is not the time for ALL to hear the name of Jesus. God is not trying to convert the world between the first and second advents. If He was, then He has obviously failed. For after more than 2,000 years, less than one third of the world’s population even claims to be Christian. The fact is, Jesus predicted that the Gospel would only be a witness to the world, not that all would be converted before the end of the Age. Mark 4:11-12, specifically states that God is not trying to convert the world now. Jesus said to his disciples, “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables. That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.” Ponder well this scripture.

If Jesus died for ALL, why has God arranged that many would not be able to understand the Bible and, therefore, not be converted and have their sins forgiven? The Bible is not written like a textbook system of logic. God purposely had the Bible written in parables and symbols, so that many would not be converted and have their sins forgiven. This is why there are over 250 Christian denominations with so many different interpretations of the Bible. God has not attempted to convert the world, but is only calling a “little flock” at this time. If man’s eternal destiny were dependent upon understanding the Bible now, our God of love would have surely made the Bible plain and simple for all to understand (1 John 4:8).

Acts 15:14-17 reveals that “God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name [not to convert all]. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, after this I will return [Second Advent] and build again the tabernacle of David [set up the kingdom of God]...that the residue [REMAINDER] of men might seek after the Lord and ALL the Gentiles....” God’s work since the death of Jesus has not been to convert all humankind, but merely to take out or to call out a “people for his name.” In the Kingdom, all the REMAINDER of men, who are not of these called out ones, will have their opportunity to seek the Lord.

Similarly, 1 Timothy 2:3-4, states that God “will have ALL men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge [Greek, accurate knowledge] of the truth.” This is a salvation that comes before knowledge. Jesus’ ransom for ALL (verse 6) guarantees that ALL who died in Adam will be saved from Adamic death.

The ALL of 1 Timothy 2:6, who are ransomed parallels the ALL of John 5:28-29 who come forth from their graves. Jesus divides this ALL into two classes—the “good” and the “evil.” The “good” is a reference to the church who are united with Jesus in the resurrection. The “evil” are the remainder of mankind—come forth “unto the resurrection of trial (Greek—*krisis*).” The Greek word “*krisis*” has the same meaning as our English word crisis. Crisis is the time a situation can take a turn for the better or worse. The crisis or time of probation for the majority of mankind will be in the Kingdom of God.

Chapter 5

God’s Kingdom

In the Kingdom, Jesus and his church will embark upon the greatest educational program in history. Isaiah 11:9 states, “...for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Also Jeremiah 31:34 says, “...for they shall ALL know me from the least of them unto the greatest.” Verses 29 and 30 show that for the majority, the Kingdom will provide the first full, fair opportunity for salvation. “In those days they shall say no more, the fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children’s teeth are set on edge. But everyone shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.”

When ALL who are not of the church come forth from the grave in God’s Kingdom (Acts 15:14-17; John 5:28-29), they will be informed that they have been purchased with the precious blood of Christ. And they will be made aware of the fact that they are now under the reign of Jesus Christ and his church (1 Corinthians 6:2). What confidence they will have that the church will know just how to enter into their problems! Why? Because the members of the church also were once sinners. Further, humanity will realize that the church representatively experienced all the problems, hardships, and emotional and mental tragedies endured by them. Because “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son” for them (John 3:16), the church will cherish each individual of the human race. The personal experiences of true Christians in overcoming sin and struggling with their own emotional and psychological problems (2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Hebrews 12:3-4) will give them an “understanding heart” so that they will know when to show compassion on ignorance and when to administer discipline where willfulness is involved (Hebrews 5:2; Luke 12:48). This plan of rehabilitation will work. The majority of humanity will

gladly receive the instruction, the discipline and the nurture necessary to pass their trial for eternal life.

The Blessings of the Kingdom

Isaiah 35 portrays some of the wondrous Kingdom blessings. "...the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose" (verse 1). The blind shall see, the deaf shall hear, the lame shall walk, the dumb sing (verses 5 and 6). Verses 8 and 9, speaking of the Highway of Holiness, states that it will be for the "unclean," but the unclean shall not pass over it.

This interesting phrase can be compared to an automatic car wash. It is for dirty cars, but dirty cars don't pass over it, because they are clean by the time they reach the end of the car wash. Similarly, the Highway of Holiness is for the morally unclean. Through the instruction and nurture of Christ and his church, they will step by step be made morally clean. Verse 9 shows no lion shall be there. Peter identified Satan as symbolized by the "lion" (1 Peter 5:8) and Revelation 20:1-3 reveals Satan will be bound (unable to tempt or hinder mankind) during the 1,000-year Kingdom. "But the redeemed shall walk there." Verse 10 concludes, "And the ransomed [Jesus died a ransom for 'ALL' 1 Timothy 2:6] of the Lord shall return and come to Zion [the Kingdom] with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." The climax of the Kingdom work is described in Revelation 21:4, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Chapter 6

Supposed Objections

Some say God was unjust to judge and then condemn the whole human race in father Adam. What was the alternative? Create each of the billions of humanity individually and give each an individual trial? Recall the scenario of the baby and hot stove. Lacking experience, Divine wisdom knew most, if not all, of humankind would disobey Him—just as father Adam did. Then there would be billions of individually condemned sinners, not just one. To salvage that disaster, each sinner would require a separate redeemer. What a mathematical challenge that would pose!

But God, in His infinite wisdom found a way to condemn all in one man (Adam) so that He could redeem all in one man's death (the perfect man Jesus). "For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17).

Human History Horrendous

Some complain that the tragedies of history have been horrendous—at times, unbearable. If God is loving, why hasn't He at least limited their severity?

Psalms 76:10 assures us that God is limiting man's wrath (man's inhumanity to man) to only those experiences that will praise Him—accomplish the purposes of His plan for mankind. All human evil which is in excess of what is necessary for humanity's schooling will be restrained. Actually, civilization would have aborted or adversely mutated itself time and again if it wasn't for this Divine restraining. But the schooling of the permission of evil must of necessity be severe.

Man has to learn once—for all time—not just the error of sin, but also its horrific consequences. For the most part, the scenario of sin must be played out in ghastly detail in order for this lesson to be thoroughly learned. Further, these terrible details of sin’s consequences must become the facts of history to be studied for the eternal welfare of all. The experiences of each have not been the same. This is obviously true of those who died as babies or children. Actually, the Scriptures reveal that man’s total experience with sin will be studied throughout eternity. Certainly in the Kingdom, when the dead are raised, the total experience of all mankind will be shared. What a motivation this composite history of evil will be to inspire all to love the ways of righteousness.

Future Creations

Isaiah 45:18 informs us concerning the earth that God “created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited.” It is logical to conclude that this is true for the myriads of other planets in the universe. In future creations on these planets, intelligent beings will not need a learning experience with sin. Sin and its sequel of evil will no longer be mere theory. Sin and evil are now an actual fact not only in the history of the earth but also the universe. A vivid account of this history will be conveyed to all future creations. This is another reason the scenario of sin must be played out in such sordid detail on earth.

Spectacle to Angels

The angelic hosts of heaven are intensely watching the drama of sin and evil as it unfolds on earth. Angels are primarily learning the bitter consequences of sin by observation. In order for this lesson by observation to be effective, it must run its course in gruesome details.

Restraining the Severity of Evil

But there are ways in which God is limiting the severity of humankind’s experience with evil. In love, God has cut off nations and whole groupings of people before their consciences became irrevocably scarred by experiencing evil. Otherwise there would be no conscience left to which God could appeal when they come forth from their graves in the Kingdom (John 5:29).

Both the Ten Commandments and the preaching of the Gospel for a witness in all nations have had a tremendous influence on the moral laws of the nations thereby, limiting the practice of evil.

In his book *Out of Control*, Brzezinski reminded us that the insane evil of the 20th century was due to the unprecedented knowledge of our day. God kindly withheld this explosion of knowledge until the “Time of the End” (Daniel 12:1, 4). This explosion of knowledge is having its God-intended effect—the destruction of our social order to make way for God’s Kingdom.

Why Will the Kingdom Succeed?

If Adam failed in his test of obedience, what assurance is there that mankind will pass the test for eternal life in the Kingdom? There are four fundamental reasons. The first three are experience, experience and experience. The fourth is that mankind will be in the hands of a sympathetic Priesthood.

Experience

The factor of personal experience is all-important. Adam had no experience with the consequences of sin. In the Kingdom each person will have a vivid memory of every pain, sorrow and tragedy, and realize their debilitating effect on mind and body. Every encounter with man’s inhumanity will be relived time and again as they interact with these same individuals in the Kingdom. What a challenge each will face, to ask forgiveness and to forgive. This is one of the many practical ways they will learn to develop love one for another. What a refreshing contrast life will be in the Kingdom when they experience the rewards of health, peace and happiness for righteous living. Also, Satan, the one who took Eve down the “primrose path of deception,” will be bound.

A Sympathetic Priesthood

Humanity will be in the hands of Jesus and His Church (his faithful followers) who will be Kings and Priests to the world. Think of being in the hands of King Jesus—a King who was willing to die for his subjects that they might have life. Think of the compassion he

developed for sinners by the sufferings he received at their hands. The more they opposed him and harmed him, the more he learned to understand and love them. Think also of humankind being ruled and helped by members of the faithful Church, who will be associate rulers and priests. They were once fellow sinners—representatives of every type of humanity. They have experienced every sort of tragedy which man has suffered. Oh, what an incentive it will be to realize that members of the Church understand and can help them out of every temptation to disobey!

Because man's past experience with sin and assistance from the sympathetic priesthood in the Kingdom will be so effective, the Scriptures speak of those who gain eternal life as the "sand of the sea" in number (Genesis 22:17-18). Yes, the experience with evil will enable the vast majority of mankind to share the joys of eternity.

When the testings of the Millennial Kingdom are over, as mankind stands at the threshold of eternity, they will look back on the permission of evil and thank God for every tragedy and every sorrow. What an invaluable lesson! Compared to eternity, it will seem but a moment. And when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death neither sorrow, nor crying" (Revelation 21:4).

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