

# Biblical Answers To Evil

## a. Freedom And The Fall

*Genesis 3:17-19*

*"Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.  
It will produce thorns and thistles for you,  
and you will eat the plants of the field.  
By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food  
until you return to the ground,  
since from it you were taken;  
for dust you are and to dust you will return."*

The Bible says that evil is the result of a great 'rebellion' or 'fall' that started with angels and included Adam and Eve and now all human beings. The choice of humankind to rebel against God has created 'ripples' throughout the universe. Like a once still pool, every corner of our earth is now affected by this fall.

C.S. Lewis wrote:

*"It would, no doubt, have been possible for God to remove by miracle the results of the first sin ever committed by a human being, but this would not have been much good unless God was prepared to remove the results of the second sin, and of the third, and so on forever. If the miracles ceased, then sooner or later we might have reached our present lamentable situation: if they did not, then a world, thus continually underpropped and corrected by Divine interference, would have been a world in which nothing important ever depended on human choice, and in which choice itself would soon cease from the certainty that one of the apparent alternatives before you would lead to no results and was therefore not really an alternative."*

- C.S. Lewis, *The Problem Of Pain*, Fount. 1940, Pg 59.

The Bible is not a 'fairy tale' where everything is always nice. In fact, it contains some of the most dark, disturbing, and scary history of suffering we can imagine. The Bible never pretends evil is not real. It talks much of suffering – and deals with it as a real thing.

The book of Romans tells us that the 'fall' is all part of God's ultimate plan which will result in something greater than we can imagine! (see Romans 8:20-21)

## **b. Human Rebellion Creates Ripples**

The evil that affects us personally is not always due directly to our own individual sin. While the sin of Adam and Eve (and therefore all humans) has brought a curse on creation. We are not always responsible for the evil that happens to us individually!

*John 9:1-4*

*As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus...*

These words of Jesus were an incredible comfort to me when my son was born disabled and dying. I wondered for a moment what I had done that was being punished. But then I remembered that sin creates 'ripples' that affect all of reality. I was not being specifically punished, but was just a part of a fallen broken world.

Sin spreads and seems to 'randomly' hurt others.

Like ripples in a pool. Like glass in a park.

Like a red shirt in with the white clothes.

Like a dirty shirt in with the clean washing.

Like pollution in a waterway.

## **c. Eternity Makes Sense Of The Present**

What if someone said to you: "If you suffer thirty minutes of pain now, you will be pain free for the rest of your life?" [Yancey, Where Is God When It Hurts, p176]

*Romans 8:18*

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

*2 Corinthians 4:17-18*

*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

There is a sense of incompleteness in the world which calls for an answer?  
God's goodness completes us!

Consider the musical parable CDEFGAB of pain and suffering... (Fun!) What does it teach?

*Revelation 21:4*

*He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

## **d. God's Plan Is Bigger Than We Can See Or Know**

The Old Testament book of Habakkuk is only three chapters (6 pages) but it is amazing! It's a conversation between Habakkuk where he complains to God about You can read the lot in 15 minutes... today!

### **1:1-4 Habakkuk complains:**

*"God how long must I cry out – you don't listen or answer?  
Violence is everywhere, there is destruction everywhere,  
The evil people seem to be winning, why are you letting this happen?"*

### **1:1-11 God replies:**

*"I'm going to sort it all out – be amazed!  
Your corrupt and evil people of Judah will get their just desserts,  
Because I'm sending the Babylonians to destroy Judah and take over!"*

### **1:12-2:1 Habakkuk asks:**

*"Oh! I thought you were so holy and pure God?  
Why would you use people so evil as the Babylonians for your plan?  
They are terrible – they just keep conquering and destroying forever.  
Now I will stand and wait for God's answer to my complaint!"*

### **2:2-14 God replies:**

*"Babylon is all arrogant and puffed up with pride,  
But the righteous will live by faith!"*

*Woe to Babylon, as you steal you will be stolen from!  
Woe to Babylon, what you have built will turn against you!  
Woe to Babylon, you'll come to nothing,  
But as the waters cover the sea all the earth will be filled with knowledge of  
God!  
Woe to Babylon, all your tricks will come back to haunt you!  
People worship many things and idols that can achieve nothing,  
But one day the whole earth will be silenced before God."*

### **3:1-19 Habakkuk sings a long and beautiful song of praise to God!**

God's plan stretches beyond the current small part we can see. His greater plan integrates all that has happened into a greater whole that will bring perfect good! Everything, even evil and suffering will ultimately fit into God's purposes and result in a greater good than we can imagine. We may not understand the plan, but God is truly taking it all somewhere good!

## **e. God's Ultimate Answer To Evil – The Cross**

*Isaiah 53:2-6*

*He grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root out of dry ground.  
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.  
He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with  
suffering.  
Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows,  
yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we  
are healed.  
We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

God's answer to the suffering of our world is Jesus Christ. God came as one of us – to suffer with us – and to break the curse upon this world. God hasn't ignored the suffering and evil, but has entered into the world to suffer with and for us – to break the curse.

No answer to suffering can ever just be a logical or intellectual one.

We cannot speak about suffering without our hearts being moved.

We must never confront suffering without compassionate action (even if only prayer).

God is our example of this because he does not turn away from the world's suffering.

God's answer to evil and suffering is to take it on himself.

*"One man, totally alone, is swaying back and forth as if dizzy, his face in his hands. Suddenly he crumples to me, the ground 'Abba! Abba!' The sound is strangled in his throat. His fingers dig dirt like the roots of the trees. His chin and beard grind against the earth. 'Abba Father, I don't want to do this. Please! You can do anything; you can take this cup away from me...' The man's voice is hoarse, a kind of guttural barking. But then he sucks air and howls at the top of his lungs, "Hell is in that cup! Death and damnation are in that cup! My Father, my Father, it will tear me away from you! No, I don't want to do this! No! Sin is in that cup – and if I drink it you won't look at me, you will loathe me, I will hate myself! I don't want to drink it. Abba, Abba, take this cup away from me..." The man twists his body underneath the trees, then holds himself in tense, unnatural posture, his face upward, his eyes shut, his breathing sharp through his teeth. He grimaces, as if smiling, then whispers almost inaudibly, whispers as soft as the leaves: 'Nevertheless, not what I want, what you want, do.'"*

- Walter Wangarin Jr. "Reliving The Passion" Pg. 63

God isn't distant – he takes it on himself to save us. Thank you Jesus!