

Objection to Christianity

If God is Good Why is There So Much Evil in the World (Suffering)?

February 24, 2019

I Peter 1: 3-12

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Suffering can cause us to be bitter or better.

1. Suffering comes from sin – Hope comes from God. (vs. 3)

I John 1: 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Romans 8: 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

2. Our suffering is minimal compared to the great inheritance God has in store for His followers. (vs 4, 5)

Romans 8: 18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

3. Though suffering isn't good – God can use it for good. (vs. 6, 7, 8)

II Corinthians 12: 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Romans 5: 3, 4 ... also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.

4. God can relate to our suffering. (vs. 10, 11)

Hebrews 4: 15, 16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

5. Suffering calls us to reflection, evaluation and renewal. (vs. 12)

II Timothy 1: 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

"Meanwhile, where is God? This is one of most disquieting symptoms... But go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is in vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside."

C.S. Lewis