

THE MEANING OF SUFFERING IN THE WORLD

I read a recurring question over and over in various literature and newsletters, "If there is a God, why does he allow so much suffering in the world?": "Why does He allow innocents and little children to suffer?" This is like blaming God for allowing us to choose, and blaming him for our decisions. It wasn't God who willed the suffering but ourselves.

God created us in his image. He created us not as slaves, but as children; heirs of his creation, as well as co-creators. He told us to do the good, "Be and multiply and subdue the earth", he said. This was not a restrictive order like one commands a servant, but a broad invitation to aid in the process of creation.

The only restriction was to refrain from evil. "Of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, do not eat!", that was it! One prohibition in a world full of admissibilities. He even warned us, "If you do eat of the Tree of Good and evil, you will surely die!" He didn't pull any punches, didn't fail to notify us of the consequences.. Up until that time the world was described as a paradise. There was no murder, hatred, wars, or suffering of innocents and children.

Even after the fall, he gave us the 10 commandments. Now, at that point we'd lost the ability to comply ~~to~~ due to original sin, or the inherited genetic predispositions within our DNA that compelled us to act in contrast to the Law. But imagine a world based on the 10 Commandments. Where everyone complied...no anger, covetousness, greed, theft...etc...would this not be paradise?? Now that is God's will for our lives.

All the suffering in the world? That is the result of what we chose. What we thought would grant us happiness as opposed to taking God's word for it. He is God: all knowing, all Loving. He didn't command us for his own benefit. The commandment was for short-sighted us. Yet, due to our own foolishness, we decided we knew how to find happiness for ourselves better than God. So we ate. We thought we fulfilled our desires.

Look around! God isn't in a belligerent shouting contest. He'll let us find our own happiness without him if it can be found. Of course, He knows there is no life outside of Him. But, since we can't and won't take his word for it, he'll let us see for ourselves.

Our vision is limited and short sighted. We see immediate consequences. He sees the long haul. We see we steal something from our neighbor, we gain and are happy. He sees that neighbors thoughts of revenge, or him steal from another as a result, and so on, cascading down the years until the effects of that one sin have snowballed out of control.

We mistakenly believe the effects of sin are immediate and final. He sees the consequences that lead to more sin that in turn produce still further effects. We believe that our sin affects only us. He sees the innocents that sometimes pay the price for their neighbors' and He in turn sees the falsely affected innocents grow cold in their love for neighbor and in time come to hate as well.

Again, look around! The world is a living testimony of the results of our own way over God's way. Sure God could have stopped it all, forced us into submission, stripped our free will, and run his creation like a chain gang, telling us where, when, and how to plow. Yet if he did that, I imagine Satan would be chained up right along beside us with his same old lies about how foolish God is and that we can be happy without Him or without obeying Him.

One day when we look back on the history of the world we will see creation in it's entirety. When every hidden work is disclosed and every secret made known. We'll begin with Satan the serpent offering us a choice based on our understanding as opposed to God's. Then we'll see the filth, destruction, and chaos of that decision as opposed to the world had it been in obedience to God.

What better argument could God possibly make to us?? I imagine he'll have no use whatsoever for the leg shackles to compel our obedience. Even the daftest of us will be able to see his Goodness and Purity. Even the daftest