

# HOW CAN A GOOD GOD EXIST WITH ALL THE SUFFERING IN THE WORLD?

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We all have questions. We all wonder why things are the way they are. One of these is the question about the existence of evil and suffering. This question must be answered by every religion or worldview not just Christianity. And even though the answers might not be comprehensive, the most reasonable thing to do is to look for the worldview or answer, which makes the most sense and at the same time offers the most hope. Now, the question about evil presupposes that there is some universal good that you know ought to be a reality but somehow isn't. And if there is such a thing as a universal good, then where did that absolute moral standard come from? Why is it that human beings know which instinct you ought to go with? The question of evil actually points to the existence of a moral something or Someone transcendent above you. Now, the question more directly is, how could this Someone, or lets say the God of Christianity, be good and allow evil and suffering to still exist?

Alvin Plantinga put it this way. Imagine that I ask you to look into an empty tent and I say, "Are there any St. Bernards in the tent?" You're going to say, "No, of course not." But what if I asked you, "Are there any 'no-see-ums' in the tent?" Well, you can't tell me because the reason that they call these bugs no-see-ums is because they exist but you can't see them. Now, what if the reasons to why there is still evil and suffering in the world is more like a no-see-um and less like a St. Bernard? In other words, just because you don't see a good reason for how suffering can co-exist with a good God doesn't mean there isn't a good reason.

So, is there any reason at all to think that God is good while suffering still exists? Christianity's answer is yes. The coming of God into his broken yet beautiful world in the person of Jesus (the incarnation) to remove sins penalty and power on the cross (the atonement) proves that God truly cares and is not distant from the suffering that you and I experience. And Jesus' resurrection and ascension is the sign that one day God is going to return and destroy it completely. This means that even though you and I don't know all the reasons God has determined to allow sin and suffering to continue for a time, we know what the reason isn't; it isn't because he doesn't love us or doesn't care.

Furthermore, this means Christianity presents the type of God and hope that you need when you are going through a time of terrible suffering. Because the two things that make times of suffering so unbearable is to think that nobody understands what you're going through or that what you're going through is senseless. What Christianity offers to the world in the person of Jesus is a God who understands what it means to suffer and who can sympathize with you. The Bible presents a God who is both crushed by the suffering he sees but is also in control of the suffering he sees. He both grieves over it and governs over it.

Think of the cross. It was the greatest act of evil against the only truly innocent human being and God turned that event into the most celebrated moment of love and redemption in all of history. So if God could do that with the sufferings of Jesus, why can't he do that with the rest of the sufferings of this world? Just because you and I can't see how God could tie up all the loose ends like that, doesn't mean he can't. After all, the Bible calls God, "The Potter." What does a potter do? He takes a mess and turns it into a masterpiece. This is the God that Christianity offers this suffering world.