



The Reality of Suffering and Persecution

Why Does a Holy God Allow Evil to Exist?

Part Two - 1 Peter 3:13-18

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All Scriptures are printed verbatim with translations noted. • Pew Bible Page Number is 1115.

In the STUDY VERSE SECTION, God's Word is printed in regular faced text with Pastor Joe's commentary in the smaller faced text. Biblical words, underlined with dots, are explained in the brackets. • Pastor Joe's email: Joe@southreno.com

Here's a simple answer:

You've asked one the most significant questions a person can ask. It's very important to get the right answer as Satan takes advantage of your pain. Your starting point is all-important. If you start with tragedy, it will be almost impossible to reason your way back to God. If you start with God and three key events, you have started in the right place to understand suffering. Those places are: 1. The Garden of Eden (man lived in a perfect place and chose to leave the garden and live outside God's protection. Therefore, man—not God—is responsible for the suffering in the world. Man chose to leave the perfect garden and live in a broken world.) 2. The Cross (Jesus died for the sins of all man and wants all men to come to know His as Lord. (3) Heaven (God will soon make all things right. He will demonstrate His holiness and righteousness to His followers at that time.) Our God allows evil and suffering to continue at this time so other people can make peace with Him. Bottom line: the sufferings and trials we experience are never going to be fair, they will never make sense, or be fully understandable. Because answers don't really heal our hearts, a better question is, "how can we endure the evil and trials of life?" Christianity is not a vaccine that immunizes us to problems or difficulties in life. God said, "In this world you will have troubles." He also promised we would never be alone in our trials. We don't let what we don't understand keep us from what we do understand—God is here for us. Our faith is in Him. He alone will rescue us from this evil, fallen, broken world in which we live.

- Pastor Joe

Additional Insights About Evil, Trials and Suffering:

1. God is not the author of evil.

James 1:13, NLT - ¹³ *And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and He never tempts anyone else.* cf., John 10:10, Isaiah 6.3 and Habakkuk 1:13.

2. Though evil isn't good, God can use it for good.

Romans 8:28, NASB95 - ²⁸ *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* cf., Romans 8:28 and Gen. 50:20.

3. The day is coming when evil will be judged by God.

2 Peter 3:9–10, NASB95 - ⁹ *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.* ¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.* cf., 2 Peter 3.10.

4. Our suffering in this *evil world* will pale in comparison to what God has in store for His followers in *Holy Heaven*.

2 Corinthians 4:17–18, NASB95 - ¹⁷ *For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,* ¹⁸ *while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* Cf., Romans 8:18.

5. Rather than predicting the future, we are to prepare for it.

Matthew 24:42, NASB95 - ⁴² *"Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."* Cf., Matthew 24:36.

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What are we to do: Pray, Help and Learn.

What are we to learn from Hurricane Harvey? (1) Stuff doesn't last, relationships do. (2) We really are in this together. (3) This world doesn't work, but the next one will.

-Dr. Max Lucado

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2017/08/31/max-lucado-what-harvey-teaches-us-as-christians.html>