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THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND SUFFERING

As an "ambassador" of Christ (2Cor.5:18-20) you should "be ready to give an answer to every man who asks..." (1Pet.3:15).

1. God, the Creator, did not begin the population of planet Earth with a suffering human race. In fact He created it all "GOOD" (Gen.1:10,12,18, 21,25,31) without corruption, pain, sorrow, evil, sin, sickness, suffering, death...and perfect man and woman lived in a perfect paradise! (Gen.1:26-31; 2:7-9).
2. God is not responsible for the evil and suffering! Man has no one to blame but himself. God created man with the freedom and responsibility of choice - to obey or disobey God. Obviously, because man chose to disobey, we are reaping the consequences!!! (Gen.3:1-13; Rom.5:12).
3. The entire universe was affected by man's fall into sin and man's choices ever since have been in rebellion against God. Therefore, man and the earth are now under the curse of sin, because of the fall of man. (Gen.3:14-24; Rom.8:18-22).
4. Man's heart is corrupt, deceitful, and desperately wicked (Jer.17:9; Mk.7:20-33; Js.1:13-15; 4:1-4; Rom.1:18-32; 3:10-18,23). That's the ongoing problem! Which explains why there is so much hurt, pain, abuse, violence, and suffering. You will simply reap what you sow (Gal.6:7-8)!
5. The inter dependence of human life automatically means that every ones choices, actions, and decisions affect others directly or indirectly. Human beings cause accidents, start fires, commit violence and crime, pass on virus, infections, and bacteria to others resulting in disease. They take drugs that cause deformity and/or cause numerous other problems and suffering because of irresponsible acts.
6. God could have made man without the capacity to sin, however, that would be like creating a life size doll (puppet or robot) programmed to say "I love you". There would be no spontaneous expression of love and true love must be voluntary...the result of one's choice to love another. It cannot be forced. The decision of the All-Wise God is fully evident. He knew that freedom of choice involved "risk" and that risk leads to consequences (Gen.2:17). Consequences lead to blessing or cursing, the result of obeying or disobeying God (Deut.30:19). The same was true of the angels in the beginning and they are now "locked" into their choice.
7. The scriptures furthermore reveal that Satan is directly and/or indirectly responsible for some of the evil and suffering in the world. God certainly allows and limits it according to His sovereign purposes in accomplishing His plan (Job 1; 2:7; Lk.13:10-13; 2Cor.12:7-10).
8. Also God has brought about natural disasters and catastrophes as clear signs of his divine and just judgement upon sin (Gen.6-7; Ex.7-11; Jer. 8:13; Nahum 1:3; Joel; Rev.6:1-17; 7-18). He has even used, sometimes, sickness and death (Acts 5:1-11; 12:21-23; 1Cor.11:28-32).

WHY DOESN'T GOD STOP THE PRESENT DAY EVIL AND SUFFERING?

1. In order to eliminate all suffering (which He could do), He would have to do away with the cause of suffering, which is sin. Logically, that

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- would include all human beings (1Jn.1:8-10). Suppose God were to decree that at midnight tonight all evil would be removed from the universe. Who, of all mankind, would still be here after midnight?
2. God has already begun to solve the problem of sin and evil. He sent His son to suffer (Heb.2:18; 1Pet.2:20-24; 4:12-16). Christ has broken sin's power and paid the penalty through His death on the cross and resurrection (Rom.6).
 3. He also gives wisdom (Js.1:5; Ps.119:98-100), power (Phil.4:13; Gal.2:20), and grace (2Cor.12:7-10) to accept, endure, and overcome suffering. He wants to help us in our suffering (Js.1:27; 5:14-16) and if only people would turn to God this world would be much better (Heb.2:14-18; 4:15-16).
 4. God sovereignly uses imperfect conditions and suffering to:
 - bring repentance and cause man to submit to Him (Js.1:2-5; 4:6-10; Ps.119:71).
 - bring spiritual growth and develop characters (Rom.5:3-4; Js.1:2-5).
 - judge unbelievers (see #8 previous).
 - chasten believers (see #8 previous) (Lev.26:14-16; Heb.12:5-11; 1Pet. 5:10).
 - purifies believers (Rom.8:18,28-29; 1Pet.1:6-7; Js.1:25).
 - learn obedience - even Christ experienced that (Heb.5:8)!
 - bring glory to Himself (Jn.9:3).
 - bring benefit and blessing (Rom.8:28; 2Cor.12:7-10; 2Cor.1:3-10) (see other study listing over 80 Biblical purposes and reasons for suffering).
 - make us long for heaven!
 5. God will, one day, take care of sin, evil, Satan, sickness, suffering.. once and for all!!! He has His own sovereign timetable (Rom.8:32; 16:20; 2Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 20,21,22), but He's patiently waiting for the "final few" to repent and trust Christ (2Pet.3:9). The bible does reveal that when Christ restores paradise (what adam lost) there will be NO MORE curse, sin, death, suffering, tears, sorrow, crying, pain, regrets, trouble, hurting, decay, unrighteousness, wicked people, deceit, impurity, unmet longings,... HEAVEN will be perfect Rev.21-22; Isa.65:17-25; 66:22)!

The more man follows God's instructions on how to live, the less problems and suffering there will be...but "push God out" of the culture/society, educational system, governing process, (reject His truths and laws) and the world simply gets what it deserves.

Ultimately, regarding the issue of suffering, whether all our questions are answered about it or not - the real question is, "are you still going to trust, obey, and worship God (Habakkuk 3:16-19)?"