



## Why is there Suffering & Natural Disasters?

Various; Luke 13:1-5

### Overview

#### **I. The Holiness of God – The “Who” question**

- A. Isaiah 6.1-8
- B. We have offended an infinitely Holy God
- C. He is greater, more beautiful, more grand than we could ever imagine

#### **II. The Purposes of that God – The “What” question**

- A. Genesis 1.27-28
  - 1. Display of the Glory of God through His creation
- B. Ephesians 1.3-6
  - 1. “According to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace”
- C. This Holy God is acting in the world to bring about the praise of His glorious grace as most evidently seen in the Beloved...Jesus the Christ

#### **III. Sin & Its Consequences – The “How” question**

- A. Genesis 3
  - 1. Direct assault upon that Holy God in at least three ways
    - a. Disobeyed the command of God
    - b. Adam did not lead his wife
    - c. They let the serpent rule over them instead of the opposite
- B. This sin ushered in more sin which brought death and destruction into the world
  - 1. Sin, willful rebellion against God – ALL have sinned (Rm. 3:23)
  - 2. Death: Ugly to everyone because we were not created to die, but live
  - 3. Destruction: The distortion of God’s originally good created world
- C. Because we rebelled against an infinitely Holy God the consequences are devastating...pervading every aspect of creation

#### **IV. Suffering – The “Why” question**

- A. Luke 13.1-5
  - 1. Jesus addresses human element and natural element
  - 2. The apparent point of suffering according to Jesus are to awaken us to repent in order that we would not be surprised at final judgment beyond grave
- B. God does not delight in suffering: Ezekiel 33.11
- C. God is both entirely Sovereign over the universe & not the author of evil
- D. He uses evil events to accomplish His purposes: Genesis 50.20, Romans 8.28
- E. Before we accuse God, we should repent: Job 38

F. There is mystery to it all...but ultimately in the midst of pain, we know this suffering is NOT because He doesn't love us

#### **V. God intimately knows our suffering – The “rock” to stand on**

A. Christ accomplished seven critical things for His glory and our good

1. Christ absorbed the wrath of God – Did it by suffering (Gal. 3.13)
2. Christ bore our sins & purchased our forgiveness – Did it by suffering (1 Peter 2.24; Is 53.5)
3. Christ provided a righteousness for us in Him – Did it by suffering (Phil. 2.7-8)
4. Christ defeated death – Did it by suffering (1 Cor. 15.55-57)
5. Christ disarmed Satan – Did it by suffering (Col. 2.14-15)
6. Christ purchased perfect healing for his own – Did it by suffering (Isaiah 53.5; Rev. 7.17)
7. Christ will bring us finally to God – Did it by suffering (1 Peter 3.18)

B. John Stott: *“I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?”*

C. John Piper: *“The ultimate purpose of the universe is to display the greatness of the glory of the grace of God. The highest, clearest, surest, display of that glory is in the suffering of the best person in the universe for millions of undeserving sinners. Therefore, the ultimate reason that suffering exists in the universe is so that Christ might display the greatness of the glory of the grace of God by suffering in himself to overcome our suffering and bring about the praise of the glory of the grace of God.”*

D. Jesus claims that he will make “all things new” (Rev. 21.5)

#### Questions

1. Why would we start a discussion on suffering with the Holiness of God, His purposes, and then sin and suffering?
2. How does a more Biblical understanding of the Holiness of God, its grandeur, and greatness, and our minimizing it give us some answers regarding suffering?
3. How does suffering display the praise of His glorious grace in the world?
4. When thinking about sin as the rebellion of man against God who created him/her, how apparently deep is that sin against God given the suffering in the world?
5. Discuss Luke 13.1-5 and begin to lay the groundwork as to how this message informs us in times of suffering
6. How does the Christ, Him crucified and resurrected provide salve to the soul of him/her that suffer? Why is this significant when compared to the philosophies of religion or the world?