

## ***“Why is There So Much Suffering in the World?”***

*1Peter chapter 3, verse 18: “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God”*

We live in a world of suffering including starvation, sorrow, pain and death. These issues often cause us deep personal grief, and when we think about them they bring many questions. If there really is a God, why is there so much suffering?

### ***The Reason for Suffering***

There are two major kinds of suffering which the Bible talks about:

#### **Global Suffering**

- This includes all the natural disasters, the crimes, and the general sorrow found in this world.
- We need to see that much of this suffering is actually not God’s fault at all – instead it is a result of our own selfishness and sinfulness (rape and murder being the extreme examples). But some will say, “Why does God not stop it?” The answer is clearly that God has given human beings the ability to choose to do right or wrong, and if He stepped in afterwards and stopped evil things He would be violating this basic human right which He has given.
- Actually, the world was not always this way when God made it – in the beginning the world was very good (Genesis 1-2). But when human beings *chose* to sin, God cursed the earth and the problems began. Even in this case, it was the wrong choice of humans that messed everything up.

AN INTERESTING NOTE ABOUT THE GIFT OF PAIN – we would never know that bad things are bad unless they came with an uncomfortable result. For example, it is a good thing that we feel burning pain when we put our hands on a stove – it protects us from leaving our hands there. The same is true in the spiritual realm ...

#### **Eternal Suffering**

The Bible makes it clear that death – eternal separation from God and suffering in hell is the result of sin (Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:14-15). When we take a step back and look at it, this is by far the more serious kind of suffering, since it lasts for so long. And again, it is the fault (sin) of human beings that causes this suffering.

*In all this we see that SUFFERING IS THE PENALTY FOR SIN.*

### ***Why is the Lord Jesus the Suitable Saviour?***

#### **He is Sinless – the Righteous Man who Suffered**

The testimony of God’s Word about the Lord is that there is NO SIN IN HIM! (1John 3:5). Think about this for a while! But if suffering is the penalty for sin, it is strange that Jesus, a sinless man, would suffer – except for the fact that as God, He was suffering for us!

#### **He Suffered at the Cross – the Requirements of His Suffering**

The sufferings of the cross were immense, as anyone who reads the Bible or who has seen the film *The Passion of the Christ* can attest. But this text in 1Peter gives us important insight into His sufferings:

- 1) His sufferings were **for sins** – meaning that the *evil things we had done* had to be punished with suffering, and this was a suffering the Christ was willing to endure. This is incredible self-sacrifice! It brings a beautiful *pardon/forgiveness*.
- 2) His sufferings were **for the unjust people** – meaning that *human beings are evil/wrong* people on the inside, but for every person like this Jesus Christ suffered. This is a wonderful *provision* for the whole world.
- 3) His sufferings are over **forever** – they were only done once at the cross, meaning that now for every person who accepts Christ as Saviour and Lord, we can be confident we will never suffer in hell for our sins!