

Reason for God: Chapter Two: How Could a Good God Allow Suffering?

Terry Wimberley

FPCA

Evil and Suffering Isn't Evidence Against God

- Just because you can't fathom why God would allow evil and suffering doesn't mean there is not one.
- Traditionally the church has explained this in terms of free-will or the God bestowed capacity for people to live their own lives and make their own decisions.
- It has also been related to the autonomy of creation to adapt and grow as it needs to (e.g. [Theologian Jordan Wessling](#), of Fuller Theological Seminary).

Evil And Suffering May Be Evidence for God

C. S. Lewis speaks to this saying:

“My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? If the whole show was bad and senseless from A to Z, so to speak, why did I, who was supposed to be part of the show, find myself in such violent reaction against it?” ... “In the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist -- in other words, that the whole of reality was senseless -- I found I was forced to assume that one part of reality -- namely my idea of justice -- was full of sense. Consequently atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning: just as, if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with eyes, we should never know it was dark. *Dark* would be without meaning.” (*Mere Christianity*)

Fair Play and Justice

- Lewis observed that modern objections to God are based upon notions of fair play and justice and ought to spare humans the torments of illness and death.
- However the evolutionary process depends upon disease, death and re-creation.
- From Nature's perspective disease, death and regeneration are "normal" not aberrant.

Jesus's Experience of Death

- Jesus resisted death, sought to avoid it and suffered mightily in dying.
- Death may have been “normal” in creation but Jesus sought to be spared death as did his followers.

The Suffering of God

- The Son of God when he died was cut-off from God the Father and the dread and terror that Jesus felt up to his death must also been experienced by God since Jesus was related to God in a triunal fashion.
- In short, Jesus's pain was God's pain.
- As children of God, our pain is God's pain.
- Moreover, the sense of abandonment Jesus experienced would have like wise been experienced by God.
- Jesus suffers – God Suffers. Humans suffer – Jesus suffers – God suffers.

God is Not Indifferent to Our Suffering

- As Christians we believe that God takes our suffering so seriously that he has taken it on to himself in Jesus.
- What suffering we experience, Jesus experienced and God experienced.
- As sons and daughters of God, our pain is also his pain.
- Suffering then is not just part of human experience, it is also a part of the divine experience.