



Why Does God Let the Innocent Suffer?

Ephesians 1:9-10: (NLT) *⁹God has now revealed to us His mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill His own good pleasure. ¹⁰And this is the plan: At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.*



Tragedy hurts. But a tragedy that involves the utterly senseless taking of the lives of innocent children is a blow to the heart that can send us reeling. Such a blow is hard to recover from, and the recent school shooting in Uvalde, Texas is a most recent and horrifying example of this profound pain. Heated debates typically spring up after such a tragedy, as everyone wants answers as to how to stop such things. One resounding question that comes from believers and unbelievers alike is, how can an all-knowing, all-powerful God see such things happen and just, well, do nothing? If God is love as the Bible says He is, how do we even begin to

understand what so many consider to be His utter lack of attention and intervention in such tragedies?

The vast majority of us cannot even begin to imagine the psychological damage on the surviving parents, children, friends and families of those killed in a mass shooting or other horrible event. And of course our collective fears are, could it happen to me or my family? Could I or my loved ones simply be in the wrong place at the wrong time?

News report, *Uvalde School Shooting*, ABC News

- (News Anchor) *New video obtained by ABC News shows the terrifying moments after that gunman opened fire.*
- (Police) *Okay, they're getting the kids out.*
- (News Anchor) *Police officers breaking windows trying to evacuate the children. The video also capturing what appears to be dispatch audio sharing with officers; they're on the phone with the student trapped in the classroom the gunmen had entered.*
- (Dispatcher on phone) *You have a child on the line. Room 12. Are we able to...is there anybody inside of the building? 2-1, child is advising he is in the room, full of victims. Full of victims at this moment.*
- (News Anchor) *Texas law enforcement detailing those chilling calls from the children.*
- (Police) *She identified herself and whispered she's in room 112. At 12:10 she called back. In room 12, advised multiple dead. Again at 12:16, she's called back and said there was eight to nine students alive.*
- (News Anchor) *ABC News learning the gunman was inside the school for 77 gut-wrenching minutes before law enforcement reached the locked door with a key and killed the shooter.*





Can we even imagine being on the phone with this child, surrounded by her classmates, many of whom were not still alive? Your whole life has become this incredible, unspeakable nightmare. So many people ask why these things have to happen. This is an important question.



This makes me think back to a different attack. It was the time 9/11 occurred and parents started to panic in the schools around us. We lived in an area where there was not only a Naval base, but where they made submarines and we were only a couple of hours away from where the attack took place. Parents were running to the schools trying to take their kids home, and we went to pick up our son. It was a frightening time, so I can't even imagine how the people in the situation of the shootings felt.



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WHY DOES GOD LET BAD THINGS HAPPEN?

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One of the tragedies here is that this was not the first one. Our minds go back to others, knowing the horror that we might possibly see or ask, is it my child? We cannot even begin to describe what goes on in our minds if we have experienced one of these tragedies. All of this brings us sorrow and uncertainty.



SORROW AND UNCERTAINTY

Death, especially an untimely one, is never easy. God's plan acknowledges these tragic experiences in the context of long-term hope:

Romans 8:18: (NASB) *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*



There is a small sense of hope here. Yes, there is suffering now, but glory later. The hope comes with *not worthy to be compared*, there is no comparison. This certainly may not help in the moment, but it gives us a small hope that there is something bigger in God's plan and we need to pay attention.

God's plan is not necessarily easy to comprehend, especially when we suffer the acute pain of the loss of loved ones. His plan is not a straight line and does not always seem to make sense. It twists and turns but inevitably it will use all present sorrow for the eternal good of those who suffered. How is this possible?

We are sure many of our listeners are here for this particular episode because they need hope, comfort and assurance NOW that somehow all of this makes sense. Looking far into the future is not much help. What do we do now?



This is the hard part of dealing with events such as these.

We will look at two aspects as we delineate God's plan:

1. What might not seem sensible

2. Why this step is necessary



What might not seem sensible: God allowed for sin to enter and affect all generations of humanity.

Genesis 2:16-17: (NASB) ¹⁶The LORD God commanded the man, saying, From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.

This is a simple command with a simple consequence. While God's plan does not always seem to go in a straight line, there is sense to it once we put it all together.



The necessity of that step: Freedom of choice HAD to be in play for the human creation to be in God's own image.

To be created in God's own image is to be able to think, reason and choose our path.



The consequences of Adam's sin created a legacy of sorrow and uncertainty.

SORROW: Sadly, the first recorded human death in the Bible was Cain killing Abel.

Think of the sorrow Adam and Eve felt as the first human death was by murder - one son taking the life of another:

Genesis 4:9-10: (KJV) ⁹And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? ¹⁰And He said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground.

Remember, this is man's first inhumanity to man. God is not responsible - Satan is:

John 8:44: (NIV) He was a murderer from the beginning.

Murder is the way the first human death is recorded. Disobedience brought sin, sin brought injustice and injustice brought destruction!

We are told Adam lived for 930 years. How long after the murder did Adam and Eve look back on their own decisions to follow Satan's advice instead of God's guidelines and think that their decisions put their sons into that position? It would be difficult to look back and have that regret!



Deep **SORROW** and loss inevitably bring **UNCERTAINTY** because they shake the foundations of our lives and pierce the armor of stability we find protection behind. As uncertainty settles in, it changes the punctuation of our lives from periods and exclamations to questions.



"cascading collective trauma"

Humans are not comfortable with a lot of uncertain question marks. "Cascading collective trauma" is a term coined by psychologist Roxane Cohen Silver. It means, "Chronic events with an ambiguous endpoint. We do not know how bad things will get, nor when recovery can truly begin." Here is where it is hard to grasp onto hope. It is like we are a boat floating aimlessly in the ocean.



What might not seem sensible: God allowed Satan's influence to continue over humanity.

Why would God allow someone who has proven himself to be evil to stay in control?

Free will has the opportunity in all cases (including all of us) to affect others around us for good or for evil. The free will in the spirit realm had that same affect, and God had to allow it so the lesson could be thoroughly learned and remembered.

Adam faced uncertainty as an immediate consequence of his sin and of Satan's influence. Those who have lost loved ones face this uncertainty, too. What do they do now?

Genesis 3:22-23: (NASB) ²²Then the LORD God said, Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever ²³therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.

Adam is entering an uncertain, untested and new environment. Life and death literally hang in the balance. Uncertainty often comes with sorrow.

Adam's sin exposed us to this same environment of uncertainty.

It is further complicated when we realize that Satan presently has dominion of our world and continues to influence us, just as he influenced Adam:

2 Corinthians 11:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.



Even though ultimately all these horrible happenings are Satan's fault, what is stopping God from putting a stop to it all?

We can ask this about a lot of things: Why didn't God stop World War II and the dropping of the atom bombs? Why didn't God stop the influenza epidemic in 1918? Why didn't He stop the Black Plague? In fact, why didn't He stop Eve from eating the fruit when Satan deceived her?



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FROM TEMPTING EVE?**

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It comes down to the same answer - the exercise of free will produces consequences, many of which are not good. Our free will choice to pursue advances in technology is mostly good. Our free-will pursuit leading to our moral degradation is not so good. God lets our decisions run their course.



Understanding the power of free will and why we have it



The necessity of that step: God's wisdom gives all who have free choice the ability to use it, even when our choices can stifle or destroy another.

Why? The result of sinful choice is always death:

Romans 6:23: (NASB) *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The wages, the payment, for all those free choices out of harmony with God is always death. This is a pretty depressing answer, but is thankfully not the end of God's plan.

Yet, there is a quiet but powerful thread of hope for ALL who suffer:

Romans 8:19: (NASB) *For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.*



The anxious longing of the creation (the whole world) wants the pain, sorrow and uncertainty to stop. But do they know what they are waiting for? What is *the revealing of the sons of God*?

The sons of God have many names, including the saints, the bride of Christ, the little flock and the body of Christ. These are the followers of Christ who have been tested and found trustworthy to reign with Jesus. No Christian organization knows who they are. No group chooses the saints. Only God makes the selection. Why? Because He can read their hearts.



When does this *revealing of the sons of God* happen? This revealing or manifestation happens after the close of the time of trouble (Daniel 12:1). Then God's kingdom is ushered in with the sons of God being revealed. They are a mystery to the world until then.

God's plan allows the free will of man to lead mankind all the way down to the point of the degradation we are seeing today with these shootings and other horrific events. Then it says there is something better afterwards. The world longs for hope, longs for help, for something better. This hope will later come through the sons of God. The hope is coming!

SUFFERING WITHIN GOD'S PLAN:

Suffering, especially when innocent ones undeservingly experience it, is harsh. God's plan allows this harshness to exist for a time knowing that the life experience it gives us will have an eternal impact.



How long is eternity? It is forever, and we need to look forward to it. Right from the start we have a strong hint from Scripture that the end result of all this will somehow be good!

While it is nice to know that God's plan somehow will eventually put all in order, how do I cope right now?

The pain we experience over those innocent ones in our lives who suffer will not simply be put aside by a promise of the future, no matter how powerful it is. We need to find the internal resolve to continue moving forward, to continue to find ways to learn how to be strong through our loss and then learn how to pass on that strength to others.

Unfortunately, we have another newsclip to share of yet another shooting:



Buffalo supermarket shooting, *Today Show*

- (Crowd of people) *Guilty! Guilty!*
- (Reporter) *This morning, a city in anguish after a gunman opened fire at this supermarket in Buffalo, NY, killing ten and injuring three others.*
- (Woman) *Evil came into my neighborhood, into my community.*
- (Reporter) *Authorities say 11 of the victims were black.*
- (Man) *This is an absolute racist hate crime.*
- (Reporter) *Survivors left shaken to their core.*
- (Woman) *If we would have walked in three minutes later, we probably would have been dead with them because everybody that was front in the store, he killed them.*
- (Reporter) *Police say 18-year-old (we have deleted the name of the shooter) stormed Tops Premium Market Saturday afternoon armed with multiple weapons, tactical gear and a camera to livestream the massacre. The shooter later surrendered to police. He's been charged with first degree murder, pleading not guilty.*
- (Man) *These people were just shopping. They went to go get food to feed their families.*



Buffalo, New York

It is heartbreaking. This shooting in New York happened on May 14, 2022. Within the 10 days between that and the Texas school shooting, there were 18 mass shooting events around this country. As of the airing of this episode, there have been 69 since then and counting. (Wikipedia: "List of Mass Shootings in the United States in 2022.") People in this country are vehemently arguing over how this got so out of control - gun control issues, mental illness funding, violent video games, and easy access to gruesome news and social



media. How did we get to a place where there is such a casual disregard for human life?

The average person does not have a casual disregard for human life, but we live in a world where we have come to accept things that bring us there. This is a heart-searching moment for many of us right now. What can we use to combat sorrow and uncertainty?

Humble HOPE and Strength

Now we have to build upon something that will find us a way to stand. Walking a life path that has now become one of uncertainty and deep sorrow is no easy task. What was once a paved road has now become a mud-filled mire where each step is full of stress and strain.

Hope lies in taking small steps that quietly develop humble strength:

Psalms 102:1,4,7: (NASB) ¹*Hear my prayer, O LORD! And let my cry for help come to You.*
⁴*My heart has been smitten like grass and has withered away, indeed, I forget to eat my bread.*
⁷*I lie awake, I have become like a lonely bird on a housetop.*

While this entire Psalm is special in that it is prophetic of Jesus, on its surface this is David crying. Don't we sometimes feel just like David, especially when we hear of these horrific stories in the news?

We can certainly identify with *Hear my prayer, O Lord! And let my cry for help come to You.* We have this sense of longing especially when faced with such trial and tragedy. It tends to make us pause and look up, but what do we see when we look up?



What might not seem sensible: God allowed humanity to continue to make their own selfish choices:

Romans 8:20: (NASB) *For the creation was subjected to **futility** <3153>, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope.*

Futility: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3153 *mataiotēs*; inutility; figuratively, transientness; morally, depravity:—vanity

Biblical usage:

1. what is devoid of truth and appropriateness,
2. perverseness, depravity,
3. frailty, want of vigour



Picture a hamster wheel - you run and run but aren't going anywhere. Why would God purposefully subject the whole human race to futility? How could this possibly result in hope?

The lesson of sin's consequences and our inability to cancel sin HAD to be learned. Israel atoned for their sins through yearly animal sacrifices:

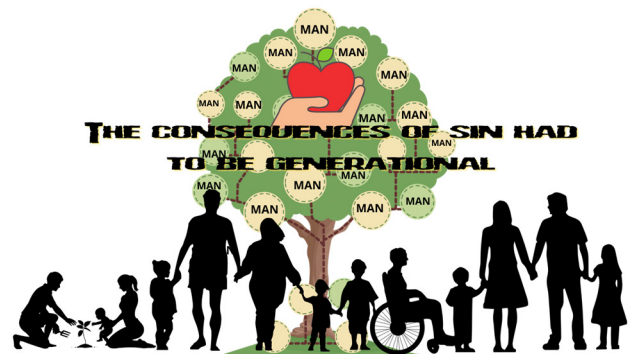
Hebrews 10:3-4: (NASB) ³*But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.*
⁴*For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*



God subjected the entire human race to this futility because it was man's choice to sin. We look back at the choices a generation makes, then the next generation picks up on it. There seems to be no way out, even with the Jewish Law. They were sinful and they had to make those sacrifices year after year to atone for those sins. But the sacrifices could not take away the sins permanently.

God had provided Jesus as *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, (Revelation 13:8) to permanently atone for sin. God allowed all of this to happen because the consequences needed to be clear and understood.

The consequences had to be generational so they could be personally felt by the vast majority of people - not just by Adam and Eve and then the rest of us only hearing about them second-hand. The cumulative consequences - and the recognition of how awful and hurtful and long lasting they are - are part of God's plan so the majority of mankind will finally choose His ways when given full opportunity in the kingdom.



God is thorough when He blesses and thorough when He allows sin to develop. He pre-planned a long-term solution; we just did not know it. Since consequences had to be learned for eternity, the teaching tool had to be the most effective teaching tool possible.



The necessity of that step: God in His patience allows darkness under Satan to have its full measure. He sees the beginning from the end; we need to trust what He sees.

Think of watching a parade. We can only see the parade floats directly in front of us, but God is able to see the entire parade. We trust He sees the beginning and the end.

To trust what God sees we need to know WHO God is so we can embrace WHAT God does. We will use verses in Isaiah 55 to define who God is and what He does. If we can begin to understand God, we can then try to see what He sees.



First, God is love and therefore has a plan to forgive sins:

Isaiah 55:7: (NASB) *Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, and to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.*

God IS love, but we are talking about the “innocent” here, not the forgiving of sins. Why does God let the innocent suffer? Of course, no one is truly innocent, as we are all born in sin. But the children going to school and the people just going to the grocery store were not doing anything wrong.





God allows the innocent to suffer because that is the consequence of preserving man's free will. Why did Abel have to die at the hand of Cain? He did not have to, as God even gave Cain time to rethink the decision. Cain committed the act anyway, so Abel died even though he was completely innocent. Why? Why does that have to happen? Disobedience brings sin, and sin brings death. Unfortunately, humanity is a tremendous purveyor of sin and death one to another. When we look at mankind, we know that everybody is not in that same category; there are just some people who are evil. If we go further, we can see how that fits into this grand plan.

Let's continue to define who God is. First, we saw God is love.



Next, we will see God's wisdom and the fact that it is above our own:

Isaiah 55:8-9: (NASB) *⁸For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*

In other words, God is saying: "I know what you are thinking, but My thoughts, ways and plans are higher than your ways. I understand. I am the Creator, and I have a clear objective. You, as humans, are in the middle of this tapestry where you cannot see outside of where you are. I can. You need to understand that My wisdom is higher, so give it time."



We will see God's justice as an assurance that all wrongs will be made right:

Isaiah 55:10: (NASB) *For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;*

God allows the earth to produce for everyone - not just the "better" people, but for everyone.

Because of justice, everybody receives the same sentence of sin and death. We all die because of sin.



Then, we will see that the power of God is clearly focused on accomplishing His will:

Isaiah 55:11: (NASB) *So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*

If God says it, it will happen and He has the power to make it so.

We see four of God's attributes working together in harmony: love, wisdom, justice and power.

Now that we know the basic characteristics of God, we can see a glimpse of His plan. It is all about peace and harmony:

Isaiah 55:12-13: (NASB) *¹²For you will go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. ¹³Instead of the thorn bush the cypress will come up, and instead of the nettle the myrtle will come up, and it will be a memorial to the LORD, for an everlasting sign which will not be cut off.*

Thorns and briars (nettles) form a thicket. The curse upon the ground of thorns and thistles we find in Genesis 3:18 will be lifted.



Our humble strength is fueled by the unmistakably detailed plan of God for humanity:

Ephesians 1:9-11: (NLT) ⁹God has now revealed to us His mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill His own good pleasure. ¹⁰And this is the plan: At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. ¹¹Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us in advance, and He makes everything work out according to His plan.

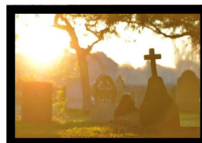
Verse 10 literally says, *And this is the plan!* The plan is revealed, but NOT to the whole world at this time. The majority of people have no idea that God is working a plan that started before the earth was even created. We have just described who God is, and now we are looking at the plan that has to do with Christ and everything in heaven and earth being brought under his authority. Once we get an idea of who God is, we can trust that His plan is holy, good and with purpose.

This plan includes everyone being given a clear and complete understanding of truth:

1 Timothy 2:3-4: (KJV) ³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; ⁴Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the **knowledge** <1922> of the truth.

Knowledge: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1922 *epignosis*; recognition, i.e. (by implication) full discernment, acknowledgement

The time frame this verse is referring to is AFTER the resurrection of mankind. That is when they are taught the truth.



Episode 1083: What is the End Times Resurrection About? How Does It Work?

Unraveling the multiple mysteries of the resurrection for all

SUFFERING WITHIN GOD'S PLAN:

When we begin to grasp the magnitude of who God is, we can begin to understand what He does. The result is an assurance that God, in His love and wisdom, has an answer for the suffering of this world. This understanding feeds our foundation of humble strength so we can cope with our pain and losses.



Glimpsing God's character and the focus of His mind is an inspiring start to standing again even when we are so broken.



Hope and strength are important. What details of God's plan can we hold onto so we can better endure our trials?

The Bible is full of details, examples and prophecies of how God's plan will unfold. We will look at several details to help us to see how several of the seemingly confusing pieces of redemption and reconciliation through Jesus will actually work. Understanding these will help us carry on through our pain.

This was a difficult episode to prepare because there is no one scripture we can quote that will suddenly make all of the hurt go away. We studied the beautiful lessons of the Beatitudes in Episode 1213.



Episode 1213: Is God Happy With My Attitude?

Uncovering the life-directing principles in the Beatitudes of Jesus

Matthew 5:4: (NASB) *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

Part of mourning is a recognition that we do not have an answer within ourselves to fix whatever we mourn over. It is beyond us, so we recognize that we need something bigger than we are, to help us through the experience. The grief of loss is real and needs filling. Jesus knew this and gave the promised blessing of comfort if we search the Scriptures for it.

We SHOULD have a dissatisfaction with present conditions. We want to long for the better things coming in God's divine plan for mankind.



In the wake of tragic loss, we usually just try to survive, let alone endure. Yet, if we continually look to tap into the strength of God's plan, **ENDURANCE** will come to us. Endurance feeds us for the long run.

A great scripture to give us peace and a sense of rest:

Matthew 11:28-30: (NASB) ²⁸*Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.* ²⁹*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.* ³⁰*For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

The time we are living in causes many of us to be heavy-laden. We are heavy with the never-ending pandemic, wars, violence, economic distress - not to mention the daily individual traumas we might experience. People are emotionally exhausted.



(Source: We're All Coping With So Many Collective Traumas At Work Right Now, by Monica Torres, Jun 16, 2022)

When it comes to endurance, when we get hit with one thing after another "The impact feels greater each time, because we have lower and lower capacity to deal, because we haven't had enough time to recover from the last thing," said psychotherapist Esther Boykin, who likens it to catching a cold and then getting an allergic reaction, plus an infection on top of that.

"We may be weathering the same storm of traumas, but we're all on different boats." Some people are more affected than others. We have to be patient with each other and try to help each other as best we can.





We need to keep things in perspective and take one small step at a time. **ENDURANCE** wins this long, difficult race. Whether our loss is due to these kinds of shootings, COVID or other disease, war or accident, none of it is fair. But it is a part of our experience. We need to be able to deal with it and develop endurance by seeing the way God sees, so we can appreciate where things are going. Knowing that there is a finish line may help.



What might not seem sensible: God allows the vast majority of humanity to be stuck in the mud of corrupted thinking without letting them know of their future hope.

2 Corinthians 4:4: (NIV2011) *The god of this age (Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*



The necessity of that step: God knows this is all part of the full expression of free will. Yet, we are told this time of corruption will end in a grand and glorious fashion.

The full expression of free will needs to be allowed to fully develop. We do not like free will in others when it affects us adversely, but we sure like it when it is “all about ME!” Exercising free will is what is bringing on the trouble, but when we are not allowed to exercise free will, we complain! We do not like our free will constrained.

Sometimes our desires are evil. There is a mixed bag of evil and good that God allows as examples for our benefit.

This next scripture builds on this:

Romans 8:21: (NASB) *that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.*

Again, the fulfillment here is after the resurrection on earth. That full expression of free will without righteousness, is in fact, a *slavery to corruption*.

(Source: Silver, R.C., Holman, E.A. & Garfin, D.R. Coping with cascading collective traumas in the United States. *Nat Hum Behav* 5, 4-6 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-00981-x>)

“News has been almost entirely bad with escalating intensity...In addition to a round-the-clock news cycle, individuals across the world have embraced pocket-sized smartphones with easily accessible cameras that capture graphic videos of disasters and other tragedies and rapidly disseminate images widely with a click. Traditional and social media now broadcast collective traumas across the country - and globally - in record time.”



"doom scrolling"

There are associated mental and physical health consequences to continually re-traumatizing ourselves by “doom scrolling” the news. Doom scrolling is when we are continually scrolling through and reading depressing or worrying content on social media or news sites, especially on a phone.



We have to find a way to feel it without having it overrun us. Do not get lost in the sorrow. It is important to consider professional help in the aftermath of our own personal trauma, or if we are overly affected by what is going on around us.



"post-traumatic growth" There is such a thing as "post-traumatic growth," and the research on this is really interesting. It is when a person experiences positive changes resulting from a major life crisis. Someone who survives cancer, for example, might dedicate their lives to helping others with cancer. They may feel a stronger connection to friends and family, a stronger religious faith and find they have new interests and opportunities.

There are several studies that show suffering may prompt some people to be more compassionate and generous toward others. This seems like it is a glimpse of how things will be in the future kingdom of God. For example, the overall respect and kindness shown to others immediately after 9/11 in this country was shocking and well-documented. It was amazing.



Let's review how God's plan works for Christians and non-Christians. If we can count to two, we can see all of God's amazing plan revealed!

2 TWO 2
resurrections

for the faithful Christians
John 5:28-29

for the "everybody else"
John 5:28-29

John 5:28-29: (NLT) ²⁸Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son, ²⁹and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.

This shows both a heavenly resurrection and an earthly resurrection.

2 TWO 2
enlightenments

*NOW for those
called to Christianity*
2 Timothy 1:9-10

2 Timothy 1:9-10: (NASB) ⁹who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, ¹⁰but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

*LATER for the
"everybody else"*
Isaiah 40:5

Isaiah 40:5: (NASB) Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

We saw resurrection described in two different ways: one for the righteous, those who faithfully follow Christ, and the other for the "everybody else" to judgment.



Here we see enlightenment/learning happens in two different ways: First for those called to be Christians, but Isaiah tells us unequivocally that later, *all flesh will see it together*. There is enlightenment for everyone else, just not now at the same time as for Christians.

TWO
ways that bring
life to humanity

*NOW for the
disciples of Jesus*
Matthew 7:14

Matthew 7:14: (NASB) *for the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

*LATER for the
resurrected masses*
Isaiah 35:8-10

Isaiah 35:8-10: (NASB) *⁸A highway will be there... and it will be called the Highway of Holiness... ⁹No lion will be there, nor will any vicious beast go up on it...but the redeemed will walk there, ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*

There are two ways that bring life to humanity. Those who follow Christ now metaphorically walk on a narrow, difficult way. The majority of mankind in the kingdom will walk up a smooth, wide highway after resurrection and redemption by Christ.

TWO
covenants for life

*FIRST to faithful
Christians as those who
will bless all the families
of the earth*
Galatians 3:27,29

Galatians 3:27,29: (NASB) *²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.*

According to promise - referencing the promise God made to Abraham in Genesis 28:14 and other places, In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

*SECOND to all of
humanity through
the nation of Israel*
John 5:28-29

Jeremiah 31:34: (NASB) *They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*

We see another “TWO” in the prophetic promise to Abraham: *thee and thy seed* (the faithful followers of Christ, part of the blesser seed, the heavenly seed who will bring blessings) and *all the families of the earth* (the “everybody else,” those receiving the blessings from the seed).

In the Jeremiah scripture, we see that all men will know God *from the least of them to the greatest of them. I will forgive their iniquities and their sin I will remember no more.*



Here are two promises; both bring life.

2 TWO 2
types of life

Divine nature for true
followers of Christ
2 Peter 1:4

2 Peter 1:4: (NASB) *For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature...*

The opportunity for
eternal life for the
"everybody else"
Romans 5:19,21

Romans 5:19,21: (NIV2011) *¹⁹For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. ²¹so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The true followers of Christ receive the divine nature (life not dependent on an external source) to be like God and Jesus. But the rest of the world of mankind receives the opportunity of eternal life through Jesus Christ.



Episode 1231:
**What if I'm Not Good
Enough for Heaven?**

Uncovering the destiny of humanity's billions who don't go to heaven

For more on how this works, please see:

SUFFERING WITHIN GOD'S PLAN:

When the details of God's plan begin to scripturally unfold right before our eyes, it can change us. This unfolding brings assurance that God is ultimately in control through all of our pain and loss. The hope of God's plan becomes clearer and that brings the endurance needed to fight another day.



ENDURANCE

We need endurance to see as God sees, to understand there is a future when all will be blessed.

As we let this sink in, we more fully realize that by God's grace, our pain and suffering is only a temporary condition!

**What is the end result for me and those whom
I love who have suffered painfully and needlessly?**

The end result of all of this is a perspective on the future that is so full of possibilities that many would call it too good to be true. As we further lay out prophecy, we will verify not only the true character of God but also more deeply appreciate the sacrifice of Jesus. Because God sent His son, all suffering and losses will be reconciled.



How can a tragic loss be reconciled?

It seems like once we lose someone in death we will never get them back. However, we are assured they will be resurrected because Jesus died for everyone. The eventual reconciliation of mankind with God will bring them to a full, rich life even better than their present lives. The victims of the school and grocery store shootings and all of the other tragedies are guaranteed a resurrection provided by the sacrifice of Jesus. They then have the opportunity for reconciliation with God through His plan.



GODLY PERSPECTIVE brings **RENEWAL**. Having been pierced with pain and sorrow and battled with uncertainty, we need **HUMBLE HOPE AND STRENGTH**. Locking onto God's perspective unlocks our **ENDURANCE**, and we can now finally approach our tragedies with **GODLY PERSPECTIVE** - seeing what God sees. **RENEWAL** always comes when we look through God's eyes!



What might not seem sensible: God allows ALL of us to suffer and that suffering eventually and always ends in death:

Romans 8:22-23: (NASB) ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Did you catch that? There is another "TWO" here - two parts to God's plan: *The whole creation groans. And we ourselves (faithful Christians) groan.*

2 TWO 2
groanings

the whole creation groans
Romans 8:22

we ourselves groan
Romans 8:23



The necessity of that step: There is no escaping death, the automatic end result for the sinful race of Adam. Jesus came to do the work of buying back the human race from sin, death and the damaging ripple effect they have caused.

We have repeatedly talked about the need for mankind to have free will, but we realize their unrighteous choices bring sin and death. Free will and its consequences are allowed to come to its full completion, its finish, for everyone's ultimate benefit. This is what the plan of God entails. Let's look at how this works out in the end.



To begin tracing the big picture of how God's plan unfolds, we need to start in the middle with Jesus because that is where all the action is!

There is sin and death before and after, with Jesus right in the middle:

Acts 3:18-21: (NLT) ¹⁸But God was fulfilling what all the prophets had foretold about the Messiah - that he must suffer these things. ¹⁹Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. ²⁰Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and He will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. ²¹For he must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through His holy prophets.

This time of *final restoration of all things* can only come after all of the trouble has come to its completion. Restoration cannot start while systems and governments are still being torn down. God will let things get completely broken, and then the *times of refreshment* (*restitution* in many translations) begin so that God's righteous government can be rebuilt the right way.



I used to do fine furniture making and repair. One of the things I did when I needed to restore a chair, for instance, was to pull every single part of it apart. I removed all the old glue and then rebuilt it with the right kind of materials, repairing what was broken.

That is what this time of refreshing is about. The return of Jesus brings *restitution or refreshment*, which means restoration.

Let's see how this works. Remember, trouble comes first:

Zephaniah 3:8-9: (NASB) ⁸Therefore wait for Me, declares the LORD, For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal.

This sounds harsh, but think about the human harshness that brings God's anger. Think of all the injustice, all of the sin, all of the misery we have piled upon ourselves with our own evil choices. Incidentally, in our world right now, many people think they are as smart as God. The condition of this world and society proves we are not!

God allows it, but when He says ENOUGH, here is what happens afterwards:

⁹For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder.

We know this is using symbolic language, as we are assured *the earth abideth forever in Ecclesiastes 1:4*. The fire in *verse 8* results in purified lips in *verse 9*. Here is one way we know resurrected humanity cannot be doomed to a burning hell, or else they would not be calling *on the name of the LORD*, to *serve Him shoulder to shoulder*.



The prophecy gives us both sides. The Scriptures are honest about the permission of sin, evil, death, injustice and tragedy. Then we hear God saying: "Enough! The time is right, and it is now time for restitution."



What does this look like? For those of us who have lost loved ones, however we have lost them, it is never comfortable; it is never good. Let's pause now and take a look into the future at God's kingdom.

Let's look at how powerful God's eternal future kingdom will be:

Daniel 2:44: (NASB) *In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.*

To think of God's kingdom enduring forever is very comforting. Satan's kingdom, with all of its tragedies and horror, will come to an end. We are assured this present time is temporary.

God's kingdom will *crush and put an end to all these kingdoms* and will replace them. Contrast this to what we just read in Zephaniah: He will *pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger*. These verses are talking about the same thing, this massive replacing and restoration to the way the earth should be that God is engineering through the returned Lord Jesus.

A look at how righteous, God-fearing and peaceful this kingdom will be:

Micah 4:1-5: (NASB) *¹And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. ²Many nations will come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths. For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*



Mountains typically refer to governments as a symbol. Here the *mountain of the house of the Lord* will be established as the *chief of the mountains*. It will be THE governing force in the world. The word of the LORD will go forth from Zion through Jerusalem. We get the physical sense of how the kingdom will be set up.

What happens when this is all established?

³And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war.

Never again will they train for war - instead, they will be cultivating and developing the earth. There will be harmony and unity between...peoples.

⁴Each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one to make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. ⁵Though all the peoples walk each in the name of his god, as for us, we will walk In the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.

There will be enough for everyone to be able to live in peace with *no one to make them afraid*. When we think of the families running to pick up their kids on 9/11, and the families running to the school in Uvalde, with the fear and the anguish in such tragedies, we now see all of that is gone! All of that is wiped away in this kingdom of God.

A look at how the people will be led and developed in that kingdom:

Isaiah 35:8-10: (NASB) ⁸*A highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for him who walks that way, and fools will not wander on it. ⁹No lion will be there, nor will any vicious beast go up on it; these will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk there, ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*



No lion will be there - in 1 Peter 5:8, the devil is described as a roaring lion.

In Revelation 20:2, Satan will be bound during the 1,000-year day of judgment, so he will not interfere with man's recovery.

No ravenous beast - in Daniel 7, beasts symbolically represent earthly governments. This means no evil governments will influence the world. It will be the perfect nurturing environment in which to grow.

The redeemed will walk there - meaning all those who have died in this world of sin and death. All of our loved ones are among the redeemed. They will be able to live godly lives in God's kingdom.

A look at how the depth of the promise for life through Jesus will be fulfilled:

Revelation 21:4: (KJV) *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

Our prayer for those who are hurting:



Getting to that hope is often one small step at a time. We encourage you to take that first small step to realize that God is ultimately in control, that He has something we can all look forward to and that it can bring us comfort now when we are so broken.

SUFFERING WITHIN GOD'S PLAN:

Based on all we have seen, we can be assured that we will be reunited with our loved ones again in God's kingdom. No matter the suffering and pain of this life, the resurrection promises a new opportunity for perfection. Let us take this perspective and find renewal now as we cope with our losses. God is love – believe it!



We live in a really hard time, in difficult circumstances. We often wonder: Why? It is because God's plan is in the process of unfolding. We live in the part of it that is really uncomfortable, but through this discomfort comes the resurrection, a perfect earth, and the opportunity for every human being to live a perfect life forever!

Psalm 30:5: (KJV) *For His anger endureth but a moment; in His favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

Hold onto these scriptures of promise and hope. Let them be a help to you as you walk through your own personal tragedies and difficulties. And may God bless you in seeing His way as you deal with your hardships.

*So, why does God let the innocent suffer?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



Join us next week for our podcast on June 27, 2022

Ep. 1235: Can Christianity and Paganism
Work Together? (Part I)

Bonus Material and Study Questions



Check out our CQ Kids videos:
WHAT WILL GOD'S KINGDOM BE LIKE?
WHEN WILL GOD'S KINGDOM BE HERE?
WILL THE EARTH ALWAYS BE HERE?

christianquestions.com/youtube

God had prophecy written to prove His care for humanity:

Isaiah 45:18-23: (NRSV) ¹⁸For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is God!), who formed the earth and made it (He established it; He did not create it a chaos. He formed it to be inhabited!): I am the LORD, and there is no other. ¹⁹I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, Seek Me in chaos. I the LORD speak the truth, I declare what is right. ²⁰Assemble yourselves and come together, draw near, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge—those who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save. ²¹Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? There is no other god besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is no one besides me. ²²Turn to



Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. ²³By Myself I have sworn, from My mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: To Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

There is a principle in nature played out in every aspect of every life ever lived. It sometimes brings us goodness and joy and sometimes brings us heartache and sadness. To grasp the seeming lack of fairness in God's plan, we must take hold of and apply this principle. Once we grasp its depth, we will begin to see His plan in a whole new light. This principle is called the ripple effect.

Every action causes reactions. Some of these reactions are planned or anticipated and some are completely unintentional and bring results contrary to what was intended. The ripple effect of free will can obviously go in many directions with long-lasting consequences.

Satan as an angel of light works contrary to the righteousness of God:

2 Corinthians 11:14-15: (KJV) ¹⁴And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

The "god of this world" intentionally blinds the minds of humanity wherever possible:

2 Corinthians 4:3-4: (NRSV) ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Mark 4:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴The sower sows the word. ¹⁵These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.

God did not intervene in the death of Jesus. He did not stop His own son from torture and death:

Mark 15:9-15: (ASV) ⁹And Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? ¹⁰For he perceived that for envy the chief priests had delivered him up. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. ¹²And Pilate again answered and said unto them, What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? ¹³And they cried out again, Crucify him. ¹⁴And Pilate said unto them, why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him. ¹⁵And Pilate, wishing to content the multitude, released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

The ripple effects of God allowing this crucifixion will be ransom, restitution and reconciliation.

These next texts contain the pivot point of all world events:

1 Corinthians 15:22: (KJV) *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

Hebrews 2:9: (NRSV) *but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

2 Peter 3:8-9: (NRSV) ⁸But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.



The kingdom of God will be specific and dynamic:

Daniel 2:44-45: (ASV) ⁴⁴And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. ⁴⁵Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

The time is coming when even death is destroyed:

Revelation 20:12-14: (ASV) ¹²And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire.

Christian Questions Weekly Newsletter

CQ Rewind Show Notes and Study Questions

Text

CQREWIND

to **22828** to get started.



Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1234: Why Does God Let the Innocent Suffer?

<https://christianquestions.com/society/1234-innocent/>

See:  **CQ.Rewind**
SHOW NOTES

1. How did sin enter into the world? Who was responsible for this sin? Why does freedom of choice figure so prominently in God's plan? (See Genesis 2:16-17, 4:9-10, John 8:44)
2. Why did God allow Satan to have free will in the spirit realm? How did this affect Adam? Why does God allow Satan to continue his control over mankind? (See Genesis 3:22-23, 2 Corinthians 11:14-15)
3. What is ALWAYS the result of our free will choices that are out of harmony with God? What is the hope the Bible gives us to save us from sin and death? How and when will the "sons of God" be revealed? Who are they? (See Romans 6:23, 8:19)
4. Why would God allow mankind to continue on its path of making sinful choices? Why were the sacrifices under the Jewish Law inadequate to permanently atone for sin? How did God provide for the permanent removal of mankind's sins? (See Romans 8:20, Hebrews 10:3-4, Revelation 13:8)
5. What is the purpose of each of us personally experiencing the consequences of sin? Why should we trust God even as we are confronting the terrible effects of sin in our lives? Why does God allow the innocent to suffer? How is God's view different from ours? Why is this important?
6. Why do we sometimes have trouble understanding God's love and wisdom? How do we know that His word will be accomplished? What are four attributes of God's character? (See Isaiah 55:7-11)
7. How does God describe the ultimate conclusion of His plan? Who is included? How does this help us to cope with our pain and loss? (See Isaiah 55:12-13, Ephesians 1:9-11, 1 Timothy 2:3-4) What sweet promise does Jesus give to those who are weary, and who mourn? How do we acquire endurance to get through hard times in our own lives?
8. Why are most people unable to see and understand God's plan of hope and salvation for all? Why does He continue to let mankind participate in corrupt thinking? What will be the end result of this personal knowledge of sin? When will this result happen? (See Matthew 5:4, 11:28-30, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Romans 8:21)
9. Describe all the dual promises in God's plan. To whom do they apply? How do we know that God sees and recognizes our pain? (See John 5:28-29, 2 Timothy 1:9-10, Isaiah 35:8-10, 40:5, Matthew 7:14, Galatians 3:27, 29, Jeremiah 31:34, 2 Peter 1:4, Romans 5:19-21, 8:22-23)
10. What has to happen before the "times of refreshment" can come? Describe God's coming kingdom. How will the human race be brought to a knowledge of God during the coming kingdom? (See Acts 3:18-21, Zephaniah 3:8-9, Daniel 2:44, Micah 4:1-5, Isaiah 35:8-10)
11. How does Revelation 21:4 give us comfort? What details of God's plan deepen your trust in Him? How has God shared His perspective with us, and how does this give you hope? (See Romans 15:13, Psalm 30:5)