

Suffering in the World

When we come to the subject of God, one of the many questions that are asked is, "if there is a God why is there suffering in the world?" When we see people hurt by others or touched with tragedy, our natural reaction is to ask why is this happening to us? We have been able to change so much about what happens in the world but still there is evil, still there is sickness and death. **If God exists then why do these things happen to us?**

The bible makes it clear that the problems of this world are the result of a lost relationship with God. What God had made perfect, was knocked out of balance by humanities sin and rebellion and therefore suffering, decay and death entered in the world. This fall destroyed our eternal sense of purpose and lost for us both physical and spiritual perfection that only could be found in a relationship with God. So what is this "Fall" that has had such a devastating effect on humanity.

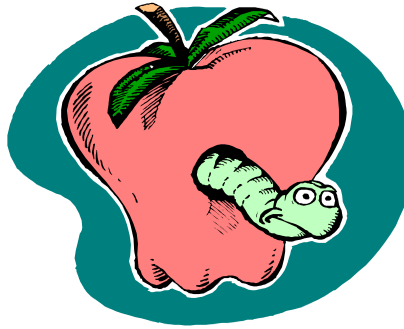
The Fall

When God created humanity He gave us the ability to make free will decisions. Any act of true love is a voluntary act. If God had made us as robots who were pre-programmed to love him, without an alternative, then it would not have been genuine love that was being expressed. His desire was that humanity would choose to love and be in relationship with Him, so He gave us the ability to make decisions and to choose from two separate realities.

Two Choices God gave to us:-

1) To live in relationship with God. This is the reason we were created for and in this relationship we would experience the creator God's love, provision and protection. To know Him would bring the reality of fullness of life now and everlasting life. It would enable us to reach our full potential as human beings and fulfil the intended purpose we were created for.

2) To turn our back on God and live for ourselves. Right from the very beginning of human existence God has given man the freedom to turn our back on the God who created us and spend the inheritance of our lives on ourselves. **This is what the bible says happened at the very beginning of human history.** In the garden of Eden humanity decided to disobey God and choose to follow selfish pride and ambition. This turning our back on God and living selfishly to please ourselves, is what the bible calls **Sin**. Hatred, anger, jealousy, bitterness, racism, gossip, lust, unforgiveness are all signs of the one sin of turning our back on God and living for ourselves. Since the fall of the first man we have all been born separated from a relationship with God and blind to our spiritual condition.



Famous Quote

"Man's highest destiny is to know God and to be in a personal relationship with God. Man's chief claim to nobility is that he is made in the image of God and therefore is capable of knowing Him. But this God who we are meant to know and whom we ought to know is a Moral Being and we are sinners. Consequently our sins blot out God's face from us as effectively as the clouds blot out the sun. Therefore we have no communication with God."

John Stott

Results of The Fall

There are a number of consequences to us and on creation because of humanities rebellion against God.

Whole of creation knocked out of balance –man's fall did not just affect himself but damaged and knocked out of balance the whole of creation. Result is natural disasters and famines

Sickness – The natural viruses and germs that had no effect on us in our unfallen form resulted in sickness and death after the fall. Sicknesses of body mind and spirit entered into human experience and became part of it.

Physical death – One of the results of the fall is that man was enslaved to physical death

Spiritual Death – this results in us being blind and deaf to God so we cannot experience Him.

Blind to Spiritual State – As human beings we are blind to our spiritual state before God and become hard and proud of heart.

Enslaved to world – born addicted to selfishness and sin . Addicted to focus on the now and fail to see the big picture.

False Religions –man was created to have a relationship and worship the divine. When this relationship with God was broken, man sort ways of restoring and fulfilling that need to worship something greater than himself. The result was that man created idols, images of made creatures and worshiped them instead. Today the need to worship something is still paramount in our society and people fill this vacuum in different ways.

Under God's Judgement and punishment - The bible makes it clear that the true God is a God of justice. Because of our sin we stand before God as guilty people who God will punish on a great last day of judgement. Hell is the destiny of all those who do not find a living faith in Jesus