

Why Does God Permit Evil?

NEW DELHI, India (AP) – A cyclone and 16-foot tidal wave struck India's east coast and political leaders reported a loss of 15,000 to 20,000 lives in this latest major natural disaster on the rim of the Bay of Bengal.

The wave and 100-mile-an-hour winds hit Friday night, but the devastation was so complete that word of its catastrophic proportions did not reach the outside world until yesterday.

The Indian government radio reported the number of homes destroyed by the combined forces of nature which were unleashed as being far . . .

“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” (Psalms 30:5)

Why?

Why does God permit the reign of sin and death, injustice, sorrow, trouble, pain, headaches and heartaches? Why doesn't he deal with humanity kindly, as he deals with the angels? Is it just or loving on the part of the Creator to bring millions of his creatures under these unfavorable conditions? Is it just that we should be in an unequal fight, subject to weaknesses, dying and imperfect conditions on account of the sin of our first parents?

The inheritance of weaknesses, sorrows, pain and trouble, according to the Scriptures, is all part of death, which is the penalty for sin given to Adam right from the beginning by his Creator.

God anticipated having given him freedom of choice, that man would through lack of full appreciation of its results, choose sin. Still, God planned to permit evil because having the remedy provided for man's redemption, he saw that the result would be to teach him, through experience, *“the exceeding sinfulness of sin”* in contrast to the matchless brilliancy of virtue. The final result will be to teach him to love and honor his Creator, who is the source of all goodness and to forever abhor that which brought so much misery.

This redemption feature of God's plan – condemning all in one representative, Adam, opened the way for the ransom and restitution of all by one Redeemer. Evil will be extinguished forever when God's purpose in permitting it shall have been accomplished, and when the benefits of the ransom sacrifice are made available for the whole world.

A privileged class

Meantime, the merit of that sacrifice has been applied to the Church—“the household of faith”—since Pentecost. It has brought to this class very special privileges, though very different ones from those it will bring to the rest of the world during the Millennium. The willing and obedient of

the world will then get restitution gradually (Acts 3:20), back to human perfection and a worldwide Edenic home. The blessings for the Church is different. The promise now made to those who can and will walk by faith and not by sight is a heavenly one. They are to have a heavenly reward. The conditions of the present time are severe, proportionate to the greatness and grandeur of their heavenly calling. The terms of acceptance of the Divine nature include not only faith and love, but a self-sacrificing will. These sacrifice their earthly restitution rights and privileges for the privilege of suffering with Christ that they may also reign with him in his Millennial Kingdom.

Learning by suffering

It seemed wise to our Heavenly Father that the Lord Jesus should learn obedience through sufferings and be tested as to his willingness to endure suffering for righteousness' sake. How, appropriate it is that the same Father should make similar arrangements for all the Church, whom he will receive from among the race of Adam to be members of the Royal Priesthood under Jesus, the High Priest. We see a need for this, not only for our own testing and a thorough proof of our own heart loyalty to the Lord, but also in preparation of a priesthood of the future.

The priest in the Bible was not merely one who offered sacrifices—although every priest was a sacrificer. The special mission of the priests was that of instructing, helping, healing, teaching. And so God is preparing a *“royal Priesthood”* for the Millennial Age to bless, to heal, to teach and to uplift all the willing and obedient. As priests who will have to do with judging and chastening, healing and helping humanity, how much sympathy do we think these Royal Priests should have? Aren't they to be *“members of the body”* of Messiah? And the Apostle wrote that he must be a faithful and merciful High Priest, able to sympathize with the people. (Please read

Hebrews 4:15 - 5:4). And isn't it in harmony with this that all those accepted as *“members of his body”* should have such experiences in this sacrificing time that would demonstrate their loyalty to the Lord and guarantee their deep sympathetic interest in the world, then to be committed to their care? To such will be committed the work of human restitution, uplift out of sin and death conditions – mental, moral and physical.

The morning of joy

How glad we are that our Heavenly Father's sympathy for us will provide *“a morning of joy”* to be ushered in, in this *“due time.”* Additionally he sympathizes with us to the extent that he has given us in advance a message and explanation to comfort us, to sustain us in the way. How we can rejoice as we see the length and breadth and height and depth of God's program for the future, and the blessings which it still bring to this *“groaning creation.”* How we long for the time to come when the Church will be made ready, through the sufferings of this present time, for the glories of the future – of the Kingdom!

The morning of joy, the Millennial morning, of course, cannot be ushered in until the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. Its beams of grace and truth will flood the earth with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, and it will drive out all ignorance, superstition and sin, which have worked such havoc in our race.

But what is this Sun of Righteousness? The Bible answers the question by telling us that it symbolically represents the Lord himself and the elect Church of this Gospel Age. The mystery hidden for a time from many is the fact that the Church is to share with her Lord in every feature of his glorious work, not only in suffering, but also in reigning (Romans 8:17).

In view of the great plan of redemption and the consequent *“restitution of all things”* through Christ and his Church, we

can see that blessings will result from the permission of evil which probably could not otherwise have been so fully realized.

“Evil is anything causing injury or harm”

– American College Dictionary

This subject not only covers human ailments, sorrows, pains, weaknesses, and death, but goes back of all these to consider their primary cause – sin and its remedy. Since sin is the cause of evil, its removal

is the only method of permanently curing the disease.

No difficulty, perhaps, more frequently presents itself to the inquiring mind than the questions:

1. Why did God permit the present reign of evil?
2. Why did he permit Satan to present the temptation to our first parents, after having created them perfect and upright?
3. Why did he allow the forbidden tree to have a place among the good?

4. Couldn't God have prevented all possibility of man's fall?

Space does not allow us to cover these answers in detail, so we would like you to read THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES, Chapter 7, entitled, “The Permission of Evil and its Relation to God's Plan.” If you don't have the book, send for it. It's scriptural, logical . . . and free.