
WHY DOES GOD ALLOW EVIL AND SUFFERING?

In Part 8 of the “*Good News From God*” brochure, published by the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society of Pennsylvania, the Society poses five questions: (1) How did evil begin? (2) Was God’s creation defective? (3) Why has God allowed suffering until now? (4) What does God’s patience allow us to do? and (5) How can we choose God as our Ruler?

The question of why God permits evil and suffering is a question of the ages. Early in our development, mankind wondered how evil and suffering could exist in a world created by a perfect God. In answer to that question, we were given a simplified explanation that satisfied early man. However, when Jesus appeared on earth, his ministry created a new dilemma. He explained that our God is not only perfect, but He is a God of Love, even the very personification of love. (*1 John 4:8*) And if He is love, He is pure goodness. Consequently, the elementary doctrines given to man in his early stage of development are no longer satisfactory to modern thinking man, especially to the faith sons of God who are developing spiritual vision and insight. We are now faced with the challenge of harmonizing a God of Love with the reality of evil and suffering.

Yet such a harmonizing is not difficult. But it does require that we first understand what evil is, and how evil differs from sin and iniquity. When we have reached that plateau of understanding, the eternal purpose of the Father becomes sharper and clearer in our minds. Our self dignity is elevated and we find peace in our temporal existence on earth. God is love. (*1 John 4:8*) God is good. (*Luke 18:19*) And man is His most prized possession.

“For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.” – *John 3:16*

1. How did evil begin?

In order to answer this question, we must first define evil, sin and iniquity. We know that our definition might be different from what one has heretofore understood. But if you are patient with our explanation, you will understand why we defined these three terms as we do.

“Evil” is the unconscious or unintended transgression of divine law, the Father’s will. It is the measure of the imperfection of obedience to the Father’s will.

“Sin” is the conscious, knowing and deliberate transgression of divine law, the Father’s will. It is the measure of our unwillingness to be divinely led and spiritually directed.

“Iniquity” is the willful, determined, and persistent transgression of the divine law, the Father’s will. It is the measure of the continued rejection of the Father’s loving plan of survival and the Son’s merciful ministry of salvation.

They are related in this way: evil unchecked leads to sin, and persistent sin eventuates in iniquity. We can illustrate it this way: It is the Father’s will that a man stick to his wife and they become one flesh.

“However, from [the] beginning of creation ‘He made them male and female. On this account a man will leave his father and mother, and the two will be one flesh’; so that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God yoked together let no man put apart.” – **Mark 10:6-9**

If a married man begins to desire another woman, he has turned away from the divine will. This would constitute an evil act. He has not committed the conscious deliberate act of adultery, but he has nevertheless transgressed the divine will by refusing to be led by the spirit which tells him to desire only his wife. Evil is considered unconscious and unintentional in that no overt act has been committed. Evil is more of a mental turning away from what ones knows to be good and right.

If that married man continues in his evil course, he will eventually commit the sin of adultery – the deliberate, conscious, overt act. And if he continues in his adulterous activities, he will have become guilty of iniquity – the continued rejection of the divine will as regards his marriage. – which leads to death. James aptly described this process:

“When under trial, let no one say: ‘I am being tried by God.’ For with evil things God cannot be tried nor does he himself try anyone. **But each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire.** Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn, sin, when it has been accomplished, brings forth death.” – **James 1:13-15**

Note that evil (having an unrighteous desire) is not sin, and it can exist without ever sinning. So can iniquity. In other words, **persistent evil** can result in iniquity, even without committing the sin. Evil is the immature choosing and the unthinking misstep of those who resist goodness and who are disloyal to truth. Evil is the misadaptation of immaturity or the disruptive and distorting influence of ignorance. Evil is the inevitable darkness which follows upon the heels of the unwise rejection of light. Evil is that which is dark and untrue, and which, when consciously embraced and willfully endorsed, becomes sin.

Now that we have defined evil, we can better explain its origin.

Mankind has always been bothered with the question of why an all-wise Creator permits evil and sin. They fail to comprehend that evil and sin are inevitable if man is to be truly free. Man's ability to choose good or evil is a universe reality. This liberty to choose for oneself is an endowment of the Father, and no creation in heaven or on earth has the right to deprive any one of us this divinely bestowed liberty.

Evil, therefore, is the inherent **tendency** of the physical world. While evil does not have to exist, the **potential** for evil must exist if mankind is to have free will – the ability to choose good or evil. How can man choose to do the divine will unless the **ability** to reject the divine will is present? How can man choose to be faithful, unless the **ability** to be unfaithful exists? How can man choose to do good, unless the **potential** for evil exists? The **potential** for evil is necessary to moral choosing, but **actual** evil is not necessary as a personal experience. The **potential** for evil is an adequate stimulus for spiritual development. Evil becomes a reality of personal experience **only** when a moral mind makes evil its choice.

If our world were simply a mechanical universe, if the Father was only a force and not also a personality, if all creation were a vast aggregation of physical matter dominated by precise laws characterized by unvarying energy actions, then perfection would exist in our universe. There would be no disagreement; there would be no friction.

But in our growing and evolving universe of relative perfection and imperfection, we rejoice that disagreement and misunderstanding are possible, for that is evidence of the fact of personality and free will in the universe. And if our universe is an existence dominated by personality, then can we be assured of the possibility of personality survival, advancement, and achievement. We can be confident of personality growth, experience, and adventure. What a glorious universe, in that it is personal and progressive, not merely mechanical or even passively perfect!

A world without the **possibility** of unwise judgment would be a world without free intelligence. Such a man would be nothing more than an intellectual parrot, a social automaton, and a slave to religious authority. Man could not dynamically choose the divine life if there were no self-life to forsake. Man could never lay saving hold on righteousness if there were no potential evil to exalt and differentiate the good by contrast. No, our universe was not created in perfection. Perfection is our eternal **goal** (*Matthew 5:48*), not our **origin**. And the **potential** for evil is our stimuli to pursue perfection.

2. Was God's Creation Defective?

We know that the Father, who exists beyond our physical universe, is absolute complete perfection in all ways. He is what we call existential, meaning that He knows everything by His mere existence. There is nothing He needs to learn or experience first in order to know it. All knowledge exists in Him, by Him and through Him. He knows all. Since God is perfect, He is also good, and all His works are righteous.

“Jehovah is righteous in all his ways. And loyal in all his works.” –
Psalms 145:17

“The Rock, perfect is his activity, For all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; Righteous and upright is he.” – *Deuteronomy 32:4*

Man, on the other hand is experiential, meaning that he must experience things to know them. The need to acquire experience implies that perfection is not his starting point. At his creation, man was not absolute, not complete, and consequently not perfect. But imperfection is not sin. Imperfection is incompleteness – there is much for man to learn. He is like a babe learning to walk. When the baby falls, he is not sinning. He is learning to perfect the art of walking. Likewise, man was not created perfect, but he **was** created sinless.

There are creatures and creations in the heavens that are created perfect, but developing man must be fallible if he is to be free. Free and inexperienced intelligence cannot possibly at first be uniformly wise. The possibility of mistaken judgment (evil) becomes sin only when the human will consciously endorses and knowingly embraces a deliberate immoral judgment.

We have historically viewed mankind as beginning on earth with a perfect Adam and Eve, and rapidly degenerating, through sin, to man's present deplorable estate. But a careful

review of the Genesis account does not say that Adam and Eve were created perfect. Rather it states:

“After that God saw everything he had made and, **look! [it was] very good.** And there came to be evening and there came to be morning, a sixth day.” – **Genesis 1:31**

There is a difference between being ‘perfect’ and being ‘good.’ Adam and Eve were ‘good’ in that their bodies and their mental facilities and capacities were up to God’s standards for mortal man. They were fully equipped for God’s purpose. But they were imperfect and incomplete because they had a great deal to learn. But imperfection is **not** sin.

However, Adam and Eve failed in carrying out the purpose to “be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it.” (**Genesis 1:28**) They made a significant error. **This** was sin.

Although the Genesis account is a summary account suitable for the mind of the early nomadic Hebrew tribesmen, it can teach us much about evil and perfection. And we must also keep in mind that the way God is described in these early books of Moses is a limited and veiled understanding and expression of God’s true nature.

“But their mental powers were dulled. For to this present day the same veil remains unlifted at the reading of the old covenant, because it is done away with by means of Christ. In fact, down till today whenever Moses is read, a veil lies upon their hearts.” – **2 Corinthians 3:15**

(See **Revealing the Awe Inspiring Father.**) The account in Genesis tell us that after placing Adam and Eve in the Garden:

“And Jehovah God also laid this command upon the man: “From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will positively die.” **Genesis 2:16-17**

There are several interpretations of what the “tree of the knowledge of good and bad” represents. Some believe the ‘fruit’ of the tree had some special properties that would enlighten them as to what was good and what was bad; others believe the tree represented God’s right to decide for Adam and Eve what was good and bad, and God kept that right to himself. Neither of these interpretations seem correct to us.

Before eating from the tree, both Adam and Eve understood what was good and what was bad – they certainly understood that not eating of the tree was good, and eating of the tree was bad. And it does not seem logical that God would give man the ability to exercise free will and then tell them that only He had the right to exercise it.

Rather, it seems to us (and this is not dogma) that the tree represented the **combining** of good and evil. God was telling them that good is not to be achieved by a bad method. In other words, the ends does not justify the means. We will have to await a future revelation from God to know exactly what sin Adam and Eve committed, but we can learn from the account that God’s creation was not defective.

By laying the command, God was establishing his divine will. Adam and Eve could choose to abide by it or not. Yes, they could choose to ‘eat’ of the fruit or they could choose ‘not to eat’ of the fruit. Accordingly, God was creating the **potential** for evil– the potential to turn away from and reject the divine will.

When Eve was alone, the account tells us a “serpent” suggested that she should turn away from the divine will as a means to help her achieve her objective (whatever it was.) (**Genesis 3:1-5**) Thus the “serpent,” who has been identified by many as the Devil, first brought evil to the earth when he thought to entice Eve, and he then brought sin to the earth when he took the overt act of deceiving Eve into taking of the “fruit.”

In turn, Eve began to look longingly at the “tree” (**Genesis 3:6**), like a man lusting after a woman not his wife. By this act, Eve compounded evil in the world; and when she took and ate of the “fruit,” she became a sinner. Interestingly, we note that Adam did not commit evil; he had no desire for the tree. Rather he went directly into sin, apparently so that he could share in whatever punishment he knew was to come upon his wife. (**Genesis 3:6**) The account tells us:

“And the man went on to say: “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me [fruit] from the tree and so I ate.” With that Jehovah God said to the woman: “What is this you have done?” To this the woman replied: “The serpent—it deceived me and so I ate.” – **Genesis 3:12-13**

However, neither Adam nor Eve committed iniquity. They confessed to their wrongdoing, and even though they were ousted from the garden, they continued to the best of their ability to fulfill their commission to “be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it,” though they and their offspring were deprived of the benefit of a clean conscience and direct communion with God.

They also lost access to the “tree of life” that was also in the garden. This tree appears to be an actual tree since Adam could ‘put his hand out and actually take [fruit] also from the tree of life and eat and live to time indefinite.” (**Genesis 3:21**) The account says:

“And so he drove the man out and posted at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubs and the flaming blade of a sword that was turning itself continually to guard the way to the tree of life.” – **Genesis 3:24**

By losing access to the tree of life, their mortal bodies began to deteriorate. We learn from this that the mortal bodies fashioned for Adam and Eve were not imperishable or incorruptible, and thus not perfect. What allowed them to continue living was the life giving properties of this particular tree. What caused them to die was the lack of access to this tree.

These facts show that mankind was not defective. He was imperfect and incomplete because he had a lot to learn. But imperfection is not sin. Sin requires a conscious and deliberate act. There is no other way to give man divine liberty unless there is the **potential** to reject that liberty. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve made a poor choice, but that does not mean they were defective. They were acting according to what was allowed by the Father, and they reaped what they sowed.

As for us, their offspring, we all have the inherited **tendency** toward evil, but sin is not transmitted from parent to child. Again, sin is the act of conscious and deliberate rebellion against the Father's will by an individual will creature.

But the fact that Adam and Eve continued living on earth indicates that the Father's will continued. The default of Adam and Eve did not thwart God's purpose.

3. Why Has God Allowed Suffering Until Now?

When God endowed mankind with free will, He knew the potential to reject the divine will was present. So we must assume that God's purpose allowed for such a contingency. We recall that the commission laid upon Adam and Eve was a long term proposal. It would take many years, many centuries, even millenniums to subdue the entire earth. The actions of Adam and Eve would, at best, delay the completion of their task, but it would not stop it:

“For just as the pouring rain descends, and the snow, from the heavens and does not return to that place, unless it actually saturates the earth and makes it produce and sprout, and seed is actually given to the sower and bread to the eater, so my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. **It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted**, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it.” – *Isaiah 55:10-11*

We are further told that in addition to subduing the earth, God had an even greater purpose for earthling man; plans He put in motion long before Adam and Eve arrived:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in union with Christ, just as he chose us in union with him **before the founding of the world**, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love. **For he foreordained us to the adoption through Jesus Christ as sons to himself**, according to the good pleasure of his will.” – *Ephesians 1:3-5*

Yes, before Adam and Eve were even placed in Eden, the Father foreordained that Christ would appear on earth and provide a means for mankind to be adopted into the heavens! Nevertheless, in the intervening time, mankind would continue to be faced with the potential for evil, the free will to accept or reject the divine will, and the inevitable consequences of rejecting it. And because we are a family, the sins of one affects others. For example, if in a family, the family head commits a major crime and goes to prison, the entire family, though innocent, will suffer.

Some suffering comes not from the conduct of man, but from our mere existence on earth such as when ‘natural’ disasters occur – earthquakes, tornados, tsunamis, etc. These things occur because our planet is also imperfect and incomplete. Science tells us our earth is still settling and cooling. Until our planet becomes more stable and less volatile, these events will continue to occur. But again, even these events do not stop the Father's eternal purpose – neither does death:

“[A]nd I have hope toward God, which hope these [men] themselves also entertain, that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous” – *Acts 24:15*

Some assume that God allows suffering so that He can establish His right to rule mankind and vindicate his sovereignty. That kind of thinking is shortsighted and small, and grossly underestimates the power of God, the security of God, the absoluteness of God, the uniqueness of God, the wisdom of God, the essence of God, the supernal reality of God, the unquestionable maturity of God, and the very nature of God. It rests on several false assumptions, including the assumption that the exercise of free will by humans is an affront and challenge to God’s universal sovereignty. As is shown above, free will is a gift from God. He expects us to exercise it. And it did not matter whether man’s first choice was wise or not. The ultimate outcome will be as God intended from the beginning.

The so-called sovereignty challenge is also defective in that it assumes the Lucifer/Satan/Devil rebellion against God only affected humans on earth such that human obedience would resolve the matter. However, the Bible tells us that a large number of the heavenly host fell into rebellion and were misled by the demonic sophistry. (*Jude 6*) Man’s obedience would not effect a resolution to angelic rebellion.

The solution to universe rebellion was resolved by the Jesus Christ, not mankind. His rulership (and consequently the Father’s sovereignty) was firmly established when he returned to heaven after his resurrection:

“However, the eleven disciples went into Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had arranged for them, and when they saw him they did obeisance, but some doubted. And Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying: **“All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth.”** – *Matthew 28:16-18*

“Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God’s form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God. No, but he emptied himself and took a slave’s form and came to be in the likeness of men. More than that, when he found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake. **For this very reason also God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every [other] name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground, and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.**” – *Philippians 2:5-11*

Though man is very important to the Father, our obedience or disobedience is a very small matter in the overall scheme of the universe. And when we add to the equation the Father’s gift of free will, not only to man, but also to the angelic hosts, we know that disobedience and even rebellion were contingencies that the Father anticipated and prepared for. Our God is not a god in training!

God allows suffering because He allows free will. We cannot escape the consequences of our choices, and the choices of those around us. We indeed reap what we sow.

“Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap; because he who is sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh, but he who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit. So let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out.” – ***Galatians 6:7-9***

But the Father is also faithful and merciful and loving. He has provided guidance and counsel to assist us in encountering the dangers around us in as wise a fashion as possible. To every one of life’s challenges, we can find guidance and assistance through the inspired words of the Bible, through the compassion and love of our fellow man, and through the spiritual refreshment and guidance of Holy Spirit, including the Spirit of Truth. We are also told:

“No temptation has taken you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it.” – ***1 Corinthians 10:13***

And finally, we are told that this life is temporary and of relatively short duration compared to the life set before us – the **real** life:

“Give orders to those who are rich in the present system of things not to be high-minded, and to rest their hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God, who furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment; to work at good, to be rich in fine works, to be liberal, ready to share, safely treasuring up for themselves a fine foundation for the future, **in order that they may get a firm hold on the real life.**” – ***1 Timothy 6:17-19***

Yes, there is more for us beyond this life – a life that will make these temporary trials seem as nothing:

“Eye has not seen and ear has not heard, neither have there been conceived in the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him.” – ***1 Corinthians 2:9***

Yet in the interim, this life of relative evil and suffering allows another important aspect of universal peace and divine purpose to manifest itself, as discussed in the next question.

For further discussion on this question, please see: **Foreordained from the Founding of the World** and **Christ’s Relation to the Individual**.

4. What Does God’s Patience Allow Us to Do?

God has been patient with erring mankind and He has been patient with Lucifer/Satan/the Devil. He certainly has the power and the right to extinguish all beings who persist in an evil, sinful or iniquitous course. But there is wisdom behind the Father’s patience.

First, we know that our Father is a God of justice (*Deuteronomy 32:4*), but He is also a God of mercy. (*Luke 6:36*) Mercy always acts as a restraint on justice. Second, we know that our Father is a God of love (*1 John 4:8*), so His justice is also tempered by love. Therefore, we can trust that justice will never destroy that which mercy can save.

“This is fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God, whose will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.” – *1 Timothy 2:3-4*

Thus the patience of God allows each of us to exercise our free will and choose the divine will. Even if we have chosen poorly in the past, the time lag of mercy give us an opportunity to correct our path.

But God’s patience also allows one an opportunity to demonstrate a deliberate and fully chosen rejection of the divine will such that when justice is executed, even the iniquitous one will know that the judgment is true.

The patience of the Father also gives us an opportunity to share in the fulfillment of Adam and Eve’s commission to subdue the earth. By rejecting evil and choosing the divine will, we can be an asset to our families, our friends, our communities, even our world. We can imitate our Lord by being a source of encouragement to those who are less fortunate:

“Jehovah’s spirit is upon me, because he anointed me to declare good news to the poor, he sent me forth to preach a release to the captives and a recovery of sight to the blind, to send the crushed ones away with a release, to preach Jehovah’s acceptable year.” – *Luke 4:18-19*

We can help ourselves and other to recapture the divine communion that was lost by Adam and Eve and become reconciled to God:

“But all things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and **gave us the ministry of the reconciliation**, namely, that God was by means of Christ reconciling a world to himself, not reckoning to them their trespasses, and he committed the word of the reconciliation to us. We are therefore ambassadors substituting for Christ, as though God were making entreaty through us. As substitutes for Christ we beg: “Become reconciled to God.” – *2 Corinthians 5:18-20*

And when we are reconciled to God, we are assured of being adopted into the heavens as spiritual sons and daughters of the Father through Christ Jesus, as was the Father’s purpose since the founding of the world. (*Ephesians 1:3-5*)

For further discussion on this question, please see: **Foreordained from the Founding of the World** and **Ambassadors Substituting for Christ**.

5. How Can We Choose God as Our Ruler?

We chose God as our ruler by turning away from evil and doing the divine will.

Evil is degrading, whether held in thought or carried out in deeds. Pain and suffering is the result. Evil is the fruit of wrongly directed thinking. It is evil to see sin where there is no sin; to see no sin where there is sin.

“Woe to those who are saying that good is bad and bad is good,
those who are putting darkness for light and light for darkness,
those who are putting bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” –
Isaiah 5:20

Evil is also the path of false doctrines in the sense that one might create false stories about what we know to be right for the purpose of placating some unholy desires – including the desire to control and manipulate others. We can avoid this type of evil by being honest and seeing things as they are, and thus embracing the truth. We can make an end of our misery by loathing sin and turning away from sin with a whole heart. We should make no apology for evil; nor any excuse for sin. Thereby, we can minimize and **potentially** eliminate sin from our lives, and we can **actually** eliminate iniquity.

If we truly want happiness and peace of mind in our imperfect world, we must follow the path of pure thinking and virtuous living. Virtuous living is not as difficult as we might think if we check sin at the door, so to speak, and cut it off at its root by correcting our thinking. As Paul counseled:

“Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things. The things that you learned as well as accepted and heard and saw in connection with me, practice these; and the God of peace will be with you.” –
Philippians 4:8-9

Doing the divine will includes being honest with ourselves and others. By making amends for past sins, we acquire the strength to resist future tendencies thereto. Restraint is born of repentance. It is like an addict who wants to quit. As long as the drug is in his system, he will crave it. But when he is clean and sober, he has the desire as well as the strength to turn away from the drug. So with sin. When we have repented from our sinful acts, we gain a clean conscience and that standing gives us the desire to do the divine will as well as the strength to pursue it. Accordingly, we should examine ourselves, make peace with our brothers, and leave no fault unconfessed to the Father.

We should also keep in mind that our actions, whether good or evil, will affect those around us. The human race is a family, though we are a dysfunctional one. We cannot escape the reality of our share in the suffering of others. But by making better choices for ourselves, we enhance the lives of those close to us. In this way, we can do much to minimize the suffering of our friends, family and our fellow man.

The most powerful thing we can do to uplift ourselves and our world is for us individually to accept the offer of sonship for ourselves from the Father and pursue the heavenly calling. In this way, we become examples to others of the joy of turning away from sin and doing the Father's will. And it will inspire them to likewise take up the free gift. As Jesus said:

“You are the light of the world. A city cannot be hid when situated upon a mountain. People light a lamp and set it, not under the measuring basket, but upon the lampstand, and it shines upon all those in the house. Likewise let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens.” – Matthew 5:14-16

And as more and more people accept sonship with the Father, the spiritual brotherhood of Christ will grow and expand, and by this means, the earth can be ‘subdued’ (*Genesis 1:28*) until such time as the Father sees fit to further intervene.

No, God's creation is not, and was not, defective. Man was created ‘good’ and capable of doing all that he was commissioned to do. But the gift of freewill requires the **potential** to do evil, and the Father allows us to exercise our divinely given right of freewill.

Though Adam and Eve chose the course of evil and sin, the original purpose for mankind has not changed. Faithful mankind **will** be adopted into the heavens as sons of the Father. (*Ephesians 1:3-5*) Though we had lost our way, Christ Jesus came and provided clear direction to the Father.

“Jesus said to him: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” – *John 14:6*

All those who follow “the way” that Jesus provided will eventually attain to perfection and completion, but in the heavenly, not in the earthly, realm. (See **What is the Good News?**) Jesus is called “the Chief Agent and Perfector of **our faith**” (*Hebrews 12:2*) not of our bodies.

By exercising faith in Jesus, we are reborn of the spirit. (*John 3:3-8*) The new birth – the baptism of the spirit – is essential to deliverance from evil and necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven where suffering and evil will meet its end. (See **Being Born of Spirit.**) We have to elevate our thoughts beyond this fleshly world:

“For those who are in accord with the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those in accord with the spirit on the things of the spirit. For the minding of the flesh means death, but the minding of the spirit means life and peace; because the minding of the flesh means enmity with God, for it is not under subjection to the law of God, nor, in fact, can it be. So those who are in harmony with the flesh cannot please God.” – *Romans 8:5-8*

Understanding that the potential for evil is necessary for us to have free will, we can see why we must endure suffering for a time. But this life is not the real life. It is only where mankind begins, but not where we end. Perfection is our goal, not our origin.

One beautiful effect of knowing that we are imperfect, but not inherently sinners is that it raises our level of self respect. We know that our earthly plight is not a punishment meted out

for the errors of our original parents. But rather it is the natural outcome of the earthly existence and a manageable consequent of free will and personality experience. Therefore, we can face our trials and tribulations from a position of strength over which we have control by keeping our eyes on the “prize of the upward call” (***Philippians 3:14***) and “contending according to the rules.” (***2 Timothy 2:5***) When we do so, we place ourselves in the position to attain that which the Father always purposed through the administration of Jesus Christ:

“For just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive. But each one in his own rank: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence. Next, the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has brought to nothing all government and all authority and power. For he must rule as king until [God] has put all enemies under his feet. **As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing.** For [God] “subjected all things under his feet.” But when he says that ‘all things have been subjected,’ it is evident that it is with the exception of the one who subjected all things to him. But when all things will have been subjected to him, then the Son himself will also subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, **that God may be all things to everyone.**” – ***1 Corinthians 15:22-28***

By means of this heavenly administration, we will be raised ‘from glory to glory’ (***2 Corinthians 3:18***) in the Kingdom of the Heavens until we attain complete perfection and be able to see our Father face to face.

“Happy are the pure in heart, since they will see God.” – ***Matthew 5:8***

This is the Father’s purpose, not suffering. And it has been His purpose since the founding of the world.

For further discussion, please see **Everlasting Life Now!, Being Born of Spirit, Foreordained From the Founding of the World, The Genius of a Living Faith, Sons of the Kingdom, Stand Up!** and **What is the Good News?**

We welcome your comments.

“Elaia Luchnia”