

ask ANYTHING

Why believe in a God who allows evil & suffering?

Romans 8:18-25 (ESV)

October 25, 2020

¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know

that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

INTRODUCTION

Why should I believe in a God that allows such terrible things to go on in the world? Why do innocent and good-hearted people suffer so terribly in atrocities? Why does God create things that harm us, such as murder hornets?

1. The darkness we all must face

“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.” Revelation 19:6

“God is love.” 1 John 4:8

“There is at bottom no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference.”
—Richard Dawkins

2. The lack of light in other world views

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3. The candles that Christianity lights

Candle #1: Creation

Candle #2: Cross

“It is the cross that gives God his credibility. . . . In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? In the course of my travels I have entered a number of Buddhist temples in different Asian countries. I have stood respectfully before a statue of the Buddha, his legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, the ghost of a smile playing around his mouth, serene and silent, a remote look on his face, detached from the agonies of the world. But each time, after a while, I have had to turn away. And in my imagination I have turned instead to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in Godforsaken darkness. The crucified one is the God for me! He laid aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death. He suffered for us, dying in our place in order that we might be forgiven. Our sufferings become more manageable in light of his. There is still a question mark against human suffering, but over it we boldly stamp another mark, the cross, which symbolizes divine suffering.” —John Stott

Candle #3: Purpose

“Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.” Hebrews 5:8

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” James 1:2-4

I walked a mile with Pleasure; She chatted all the way;
But left me none the wiser For all she had to say.
I walked a mile with Sorrow; And ne'er a word said she;
But, oh! The things I learned from her, When Sorrow walked with me. —Robert Hamilton

Candle #4: Resurrection

“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Romans 8:18

“I have a childlike conviction that the sufferings will be healed and smoothed over . . . and that ultimately, at the world’s finale, in the moment of eternal harmony, there will occur and be revealed something so precious that it will suffice for all hearts [and] justify everything that has happened with men—let this . . . come true and be revealed.” —Fyodor Dostoyevsky

4. The next step on your trail

“When belief in God becomes difficult, the tendency is to turn away from Him; but in heaven’s name to what?” —G.K. Chesterton