

**Jack L. Arnold**

### **WHY DO THE INNOCENT SUFFER?**

The third frequently asked question concerns the problem of evil. “If God is all-good and all powerful, why do the innocent suffer? Why are some babies born blind or mentally defective or deformed? Why are wars allowed? Why . . .?”

Either God is all good, but He is not powerful enough to eliminate disease and disaster; or He is all powerful, but He is not all good and therefore He does not end all evil. Once again I think we must admit our partial ignorance. We don’t have the full explanation of the origin and problem of evil because God has chosen to reveal only a part of it to us. We are clearly told, though, that God created the universe perfect.

Man was given the freedom to obey God or disobey. Evil came into the universe through man’s disobedience. Because of the pattern of the universe, man’s actions are not limited to himself but always involve other people. Because man disobeyed and broke God’s law, evil pervades the universe.

As we discuss this question, we mustn’t overlook the presence of evil in every one of us. Many people ask, “Why doesn’t God step in and get rid of evil? Why doesn’t He eliminate war?” They do not realize that if God executed judgment uniformly, not one of us would survive. Suppose God were to decree, “At midnight tonight all evil will be stamped out of the universe.” Which of us would be here at 1:00 A.M.?

After we point out man’s personal problem with evil we need to note that God has done everything necessary to meet the problem of evil. He not only came into human history in the Lord Jesus Christ, but He died to solve the problem of evil. Every individual who willingly responds receives His gift of love, grace, and forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

As C.S. Lewis has observed, it is idle for us to speculate about the origin of evil. The problem we all face is the fact of evil. The only solution to the fact of evil is God’s solution, Jesus Christ.