Pain and Suffering

Why?

“I can’t believe in a god that allows people to suffer.”

“Why do bad things happen to good people?”

“If God allows pain and suffering he must not be a loving god.”

Atheist View

“If God were good, He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty He would be able to do what he wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore God lacks goodness or power or both.”

Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.

Proverbs 26:5

“And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks.”

Acts 18:4

Definitions

Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
Who substitute darkness for
light and light for darkness,
Who substitute bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter!

Isaiah 5:20

Pain

- Uncomfortable sensation felt by the body
- Uncomfortable feelings
- How much?
- Beneficial Pain (stretching, exercise)

“If God were good…”

Good, Goodness

According to skeptics

- Protect me
- Provide for me
- Never disappoint me
- Serve me

“…He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy.”

Happy

According to skeptics

- Without struggle
- No pain
- Never sad
- Always cheerful

“A loving God wouldn’t…”

Love, Loving

According to skeptics

- Support what I want
- Always kind
- Prevent pain and suffering

How to explain

The Nature of God

Nature of God

- Omnipotent (all-powerful, creation)
- Omniscient (all-knowing, prophecy)
- Omnipresent (is everywhere)
- Freewill

Genesis 3

“15 Then Yahweh God took the man and set him in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 16 And Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may surely eat;

Genesis 3

“17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it; for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

Freewill Results in Pain

- Caused by self
  - Bad life choices
  - Ignore warnings
  - Accidents

Reasons for Pain (cont.)

- Caused by others
  - Cain and Abel

Genesis 4

6 Then Yahweh said to Cain, “Why are
you angry? And why has your
countenance fallen? 7 If you do well,
will not *your countenance* be lifted up?
And if you do not do well, sin is lying at
the door; and its desire is for you, but
you must rule over it.”

Genesis 4

8 Then Cain spoke to Abel his brother;
and it happened when they were in
the field, that Cain rose up against
Abel his brother and killed him.

Reasons for Pain (cont.)

- Caused by others
  - Cain and Abel
  - Accidents
  - Conflict
  - Indirect causes

Reasons for Pain (cont.)

- Natural
  - Storms
  - Illness

Is nature meaningless pain?

Genesis 3

14 And Yahweh God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,
Cursed are you more than any of the cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go,

Genesis 3

And dust you will eat all the days of
your life;”15 And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head, And
you shall bruise him on the heel.”

Genesis 3

16 To the woman He said,
“I will greatly multiply
Your pain and conception,
In pain you will bear children;
Your desire will be for your husband,
And he will rule over you.”

Genesis 3

17 Then to Adam He said, “Because
you have listened to the voice of your
wife and have eaten from the tree
about which I commanded you,
saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’;

Genesis 3

Cursed is the ground because of you;
In pain you will eat of it all the days of your life.18 Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;

Genesis 3

19 By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”

Reasons for Pain (cont.)

- Natural
  - Storms
  - Illness
  - A changed world (Genesis 3:14-19)
    - Serpent changed form
    - Man changed
    - The earth changed

Nature of God

- Omnipotent (all-powerful, creation)
- Omniscient (all-knowing, prophecy)
- Omnipresent (is everywhere)
- Freewill
- Good

Jeremiah 26

1 In the beginning of the reign of
Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of
Judah, this word came from Yahweh,
saying,

Jeremiah 26

2 “Thus says Yahweh, ‘Stand in
the court of the house of
Yahweh, and you shall speak to
all the cities of Judah who have
come to worship *in* the house of
Yahweh all the words that I have
commanded you to speak to
them. Do not take away a word!

Jeremiah 26

3 Perhaps they will listen and everyone will turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the evil which I am devising to bring against them because of the evil of their deeds.’

Nature of God

- Omnipotent (all-powerful, creation)
- Omniscient (all-knowing, prophecy)
- Omnipresent (is everywhere)
- Freewill
- Good
- Love

1 Corinthians 13

4 Love is patient, love is kind, is not
jealous, does not brag, is not
puffed up; 5 it does not act
unbecomingly, does not seek its
own, is not provoked, does not
take into account a wrong *suffered*;

1 Corinthians 13

6 it does not rejoice in
unrighteousness, but rejoices
with the truth; 7 it bears all things,
believes all things, hopes all
things, endures all things.

How does God’s love work?