



**GOD CAN'T
DO ANYTHING**

The Problem of Pain

Why is there pain and suffering in the world?

“Not many years ago when I was an atheist, if anyone had asked me, ‘Why do you not believe in God?’ my reply would have [been]:

*“Look at the universe we live in . . .
History is largely a record of crime, war,
disease, and terror. . . .*

The universe . . . is running down. . . .

All stories will come to nothing: all life will turn out in the end to have been a transitory and senseless contortion upon the idiotic face of infinite matter. If you ask me to believe that this is the work of a benevolent and omnipotent spirit, I reply that all the evidence points in the opposite direction.

*Either there is no spirit behind the universe,
or else a spirit indifferent to good and evil,
or else an evil spirit.”*

C.S. Lewis

“Is God willing to prevent evil but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able to but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Why then is there evil?”

David Hume

Pain & Unbelief

Emotional not Rational

“The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive,

many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease.

It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication,

*some people are going to get hurt,
other people are going to get lucky,
and you won't find any rhyme or reason in
it, nor any justice.*

The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.”

Richard Dawkins

“Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun: I saw the tears of the oppressed— and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors— and they have no comforter.

Ecclesiastes 4:1 NIV

And I declared that the dead, who had already died, are happier than the living, who are still alive.

Ecclesiastes 4:2 NIV

But better than both is the one who has never been born, who has not seen the evil that is done under the sun.”

Ecclesiastes 4:3 NIV

**“Why, LORD, do you stand far off?
Why do you hide yourself in times of
trouble?”**

Psalms 10:1 NIV

“How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’ but you do not save?”

Habakkuk 1:2 NIV

Why do you make me look at
injustice? Why do you tolerate
wrongdoing? Destruction and
violence are before me; there is
strife, and conflict abounds.

Habakkuk 1:3 NIV

Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.”

Habakkuk 1:4 NIV

“And the Lord God commanded
the man, ‘**You are free** to eat from
any tree in the garden;

Genesis 2:16 NIV

but you **must not** eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will **certainly die.**”

Genesis 2:17 NIV

“Dear brothers and sisters, when
troubles of any kind come your
way...

James 1:2 NLT

Life is hard.

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, **consider it an opportunity** for great joy.”

James 1:2 NLT

Life is painful.



Life isn't fair.

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

James 1:2 NLT

For you **know** that when your faith is **tested**, your **endurance** has a chance to grow.”

James 1:3 NLT

Faith isn't about receiving the things from God we wanted as much as it is learning to receive from God the things we didn't want.

Faith is living through the
worst of life while still believing
the best about God.

“So **let it** grow, for when your endurance is **fully developed**, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.”

James 1:4 NLT

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

Romans 8:18 NIV

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that **far outweighs them all.**”

2 Corinthians 4:17 NIV

“We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great **endurance**...”

James 5:11 NLT

Jesus

“For whatever reason God chose to make man as he is—limited and suffering and subject to sorrows and death—He had the honesty and courage to take His own medicine. Whatever game He is playing with His creation, He has kept His own rules and played fair.”

He can exact nothing from man that He has not exacted from Himself. He has Himself gone through the whole of human experience, from the trivial irritations of family life and the cramping restrictions of hard work and lack of money to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation, defeat, despair, and death.

*When He was a man, He played the man.
He was born in poverty and died in
disgrace and thought it well worthwhile.”*

Dorothy Sayers



*“I never lost faith in
the end of the story.”*

-Jim Stockdale

