

THE END TIMES

Bible Report Quarterly

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The END TIMES Bible Report Quarterly is sponsored by the Associated Bible Students of Central Ohio and is published for the purpose of disseminating Bible Truths which are seen to be harmonious with the Plan of God as illustrated in Scripture.

The Associated Bible Students of Central Ohio is an independent Christian fellowship not affiliated with any denominations. We are committed to a diligent search of the Scriptures to determine through them the Divine Word of Truth found in the Bible.

The goal of The END TIMES Bible Report Quarterly is to encourage others in their studies of the Scriptures that they might share the peace and joy we have gained through careful study of the inspired Word of God. The articles covered in each edition are the result of cooperative studies of Bible Students throughout the world.

We encourage you to search diligently for the beautiful plan of salvation found in God's word. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15

WHY DOES GOD PERMIT EVIL?

We read in Genesis 1:31: "God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." But everything is certainly not "very good" today. What happened to change this condition? Why did God permit evil to enter into the world and develop to the extent that it has? And why doesn't He put a stop to all the sickness, sorrow and tragedy?



BASIC FOUNDATION OF FAITH AND TRUST

Evil is a reality. "God is love" is a reality. How can we find harmony in these two statements? To believe in God, one must have *faith* that He *is* loving and wise, and providing all things for man's eternal good. God, whose character is supreme love, would not have *permitted* 6,000 years of evil to reign over His creation without a useful purpose and, ultimately, a grand outcome. It would truly be a horrible thought that a God who claims to be love would create billions to live on earth in sorrow, only to send them to a future of

eternal torment. We know that God is just and good, and hates evil of every kind. "Thou are **not** a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee..." Psalm 5:4

To understand why God permits evil, we must first realize the difference between *permitting* and *causing*. God has *permitted* man to have a *temporary* experience with evil, so that all will come to see firsthand the contrast between righteous living, and selfish disobedience. And, by faith, we know that God will not permit this experience with evil to last forever.

SATAN'S LIE, DISOBEDIENCE AND DEATH

The *cause* of evil is sin—not only personal sin, but inherited sin. "Dying, thou shalt die" was our inheritance from father Adam. (Genesis 2:17) Fellowship with God having been cut off, man's distressed mind affected his physical health, and soon disease permeated the perfect organism.

God purposely made the test upon Adam simple, stating plainly; "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17) If it had been a difficult thing the Lord required of him, Adam might have been excused, because obedience would have been beyond his capabilities. No, Adam was simply forbidden to eat of the fruit of only one of the many trees of the garden.

Here, Satan found an opportunity to carry out his prideful scheme. His strategy was to convince mother Eve that God was withholding something beneficial

from her. The effectiveness of this first lie, “*Ye shall not surely die,*” plunged the entire human race into a spiral of mental, moral and physical disease, and finally, death. It gained Satan dominion over the whole earth and the title “*the god of this world.*” 2 Corinthians 4:4

Man lost his dominion over himself and his dominion over nature. Yes, exposure to calamities in nature are, also, the result of disobedience. God said, “*Cursed is the ground for thy sake.*” (Genesis 3:17) Man must endure an unfriendly earth as part of the penalty for disobedience.

Satan’s rebellion has, not only, cost the lives of all mankind, but, also, his own life, for embodied in the curse to Adam is the curse to Satan that, one day, the seed of the woman will cast a fatal blow to the serpent’s head. Satan will *surely* die. Genesis 3:15; Revelation 20:10, 14

EXPERIENCE THE BEST TEACHER

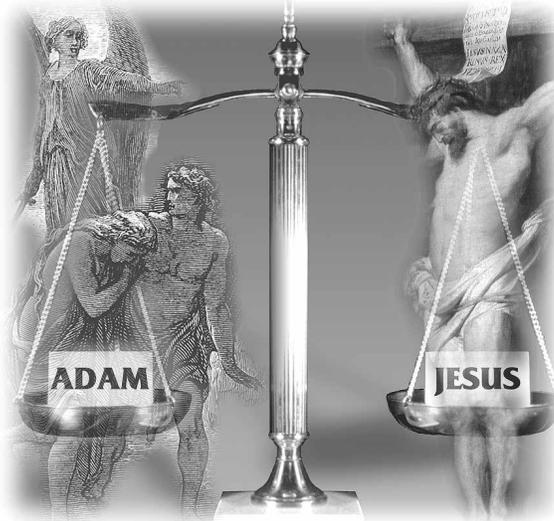
Other than intuition, observation and information, the only way to learn is by *experience*. Why did Eve believe Satan, when God said plainly, “*Thou shalt surely die*”? Because of Eve’s innocence and inexperience, she would have been easily deceived when the crafty Adversary said eating the forbidden fruit would make her wise.

Eve, being deceived, partook of the forbidden fruit and offered it to her husband. Adam, realizing that the penalty of death would come upon Eve, would, no doubt, have been dismayed by the thought of life without her. And, so, Adam ate of the fruit, and knowingly disobeyed his Creator. Thus, the death penalty was enforced, and ever since, all of Adam’s descendants have been born dying. “*...as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*” Romans 5:12

In due time, by benefit of experience, mankind will have learned to hate evil with its bitter consequences, and, instead, to desire obedience with its resultant rewards. “*This sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.*” (Ecclesiastes 1:13) In the end, experience will have truly been the best teacher.

MAN’S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

God could have prevented sin from entering the world by programming man to be blindly obedient, but he would have been no better than a robot. No, man was created in God’s image with the ability to love and obey by choice. Because of the vivid lessons



provided by the cruel consequences of disobedience, man is learning why obedience to God is the only option for peace and happiness. Ultimately, under the more favorable circumstances of God’s Kingdom, man will *choose* to love and respect his fellow man and his environment. More importantly, he will joyfully render love, respect and perfect obedience to his loving Creator.

KNOWING THE END FROM THE BEGINNING

Because God *is* love, He will not always permit evil to reign over man.

Knowing Adam would disobey, God lovingly planned for man’s redemption. Jesus was the lamb “*slain before the foundation of the world.*” (1 Peter 1:19, 20) God’s gift of salvation was the greatest demonstration of fatherly suffering in history—watching His only begotten Son suffer the agony of being vilified and crucified. Is there any doubt what great love God has for the human race? “*God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” Romans 5:8

Yes, God’s plans include a merciful escape from our suffering and death: “*As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all unto justification of life.*” (Romans 5:18) Just as Adam willingly forfeited his right to live in perfection, so Christ willingly gave up his perfection to pay the penalty for Adam’s sin. “*As in Adam ALL die, even so in Christ shall ALL be made alive.*” (1 Corinthians 15:22) This corresponding price releases all from the curse of Adamic death, guaranteeing every descendant of Adam a resurrection and granting them the opportunity to walk up *the highway of holiness*. The right to everlasting life will then be granted to those who choose righteousness. Isaiah 35:8

THY KINGDOM COME THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH

The prophecy of Hosea 13:14 will, in due time, be fulfilled, “*I will ransom them from the power of the grave.*” Isaiah confirms this saying, “*And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*” Isaiah 35:10

God’s Kingdom to come on earth, with Christ as King, will bring to mankind a time of restoration and renewal. Satan will be restrained during this thousand year Kingdom, and righteousness will be the rule rather than the exception. (Isaiah 32:17; Revelation 20:2) This will be the first real chance for mankind to know their loving Creator under ideal circumstances. Everyone will then have a fresh start in

life—a new life. If obedient, they will live forever, and having learned, by experience, that *“the wages of sin is death,”* the vast majority will want no more of sin and will love righteousness. Romans 6:23

THOSE WHO CHOOSE RIGHTEOUSNESS NOW

Only a few in this present evil world escape the corruption that is in the world now. (2 Peter 1:4) Jesus called these his *“little flock,”* and Paul called them *“the Church.”* They have not only received the invitation to the *“high calling of God in Christ Jesus,”* but they have answered this call. (Philippians 3:14) This small company of Jesus’ followers who choose to live righteously now are counted worthy to share in Christ’s sufferings and are rewarded to sit with Christ on his throne. *“Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.”* Philippians 1:29

The Scriptures are clear that the suffering of the little flock of Christ will be rewarded: *“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him;”* *“Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life;”* and *“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection... they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”* (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:10; 20:6) If, then, there is a *“first resurrection,”* by implication there must be a second resurrection of the dead.

THE EVERLASTING LESSONS

This second resurrection is the purpose for which Christ and his Church reign a *thousand years*—to bring the resurrected world of mankind up *the highway of holiness* to righteous perfection here upon the earth. *“...when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”* Isaiah 26:9; 35:8

Oh, what a marvelous God we have! *“In our affliction He is afflicted”* (suffers). God’s *“compassions fail not!”* (Lamentations 3:23) This is our assurance that His chastenings are rehabilitative so that His *“beloved”* wayward children might be restored back to His loving favor. (John 3:16) Yes, God chastens to heal!

The permission of evil will have been a useless torment unless mankind is given an opportunity to use this experience to make positive choices at some future time. The Scriptures promise that those who come up in the Kingdom in the second resurrection will return to the days of their youth to begin again! (Job 33:24-26) All the troubles and tribulations of the past, instead of being



useless torments, will be valuable guides. Death, the penalty for sin, is not the irrevocable end of human existence; *it is the final experience of an everlasting lesson.*

THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS

All people in every nation desire a benevolent and stable government with wise and just laws. But, where on earth can we find true *liberty and justice for all?* Ironically, the desire for these qualities has actually resulted in countries going to war and killing one another for the sake

of peace. We know the Scriptures speak that one day, under God’s Kingdom, there will indeed be peace, harmony, and liberty for all. But, we cry, *“How long, O Lord?”*

“I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come...” (Haggai 2:7) What is meant by the phrase *“shake all nations”*? When a new building is being constructed on a sight where an old, condemned building exists, the contractor must tear down the old first. God, through His faithful Son Jesus, is shaking the old order to usher in this righteous Kingdom for which we pray: *“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as in heaven.”* (Matthew 6:10) God is clearing the way for this glorious prospect. *“Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”* 2 Peter 3:13

It is not only a universal human longing, but God, too, desires life, health, peace and joy for all of His creation. (1 Timothy 2:4) Think of the memory that never fails, of the judgment that never errs, of the wisdom that plans for eternity without the possibility of failure, and of the power and skill which can harness every opposing element and make them all work together for the accomplishment of His grand designs. Think of one whose eye never sleeps, whose ear is ever open, and who is ever aware of all the necessities, and active in all the interests of His broad domains.

Now, close your eyes to the scenes of misery and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mind the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart. There, sickness shall be no more; not even the fear of death. Think of all the pictures of health and beauty that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. Mental and moral perfection will stamp every radiant countenance. Such will earth’s society be; and all tears will be wiped away, when thus the resurrection work is complete.

THERE IS HOPE FOR A FEAR-FILLED WORLD

In a recent tragedy, two young boys killed a teacher and four little girls. A young mother was reported as saying, "I am so thankful that God sent his angels to protect my child." We can understand the comfort she takes in this, but, where were God's angels for the other children? Did God love her child and not the others? Of course not.

As stated in our feature article, there is a difference between permitting evil and causing it. God did not instill a lack of compassion for human life in these two little boys. Perhaps endless hours of violence and conflict in children's programming planted the seeds of this crime. A recent study on television violence concluded that children are experiencing a condition known as *post traumatic stress syndrome*—the same illness which plagues soldiers of war. Children have had to numb their senses to violence in order to survive the amount of violence they witness every day. No, God is not the author of this terrible evil, although He permits it for a time to teach us all to hate its painful results.

The Apostle Paul states: "the last enemy that shall be destroyed will be death." (1Corinthians 15:26) The first enemy was pride, the second was disobedience and the third, death, was the result. All three have been the weapons of God's arch enemy, Satan. In this same order, pride will be the first enemy to be destroyed when

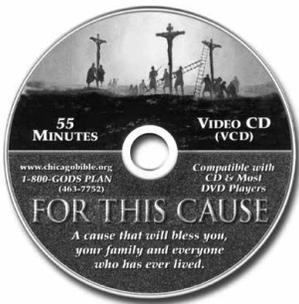


mankind has had enough of sin and humbly turns to God for help. The second enemy to be destroyed will be disobedience when all will learn righteousness in God's kingdom. (Isaiah 26:9) The last enemy, death, will be destroyed when Christ will have corrected all unrighteousness. Then, the grave and all who *choose* evil will be eternally destroyed in the second death. Revelation 20:2-15

For parents who are grieving over the death of a child, it is written, "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears... they shall come again from the land of the enemy." (Jeremiah 31:16) The present evil world, under Satan's rule, and the grave, to which sin has led, has been "the land of the enemy." Having learned their lesson with sin, and then being obedient to

the rule of righteousness reigning in the earth, mankind will attain human perfection, and continue to live on in joy and peace with those they have loved and lost. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing... And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35

VALUABLE BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES



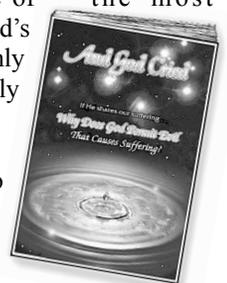
FOR THIS CAUSE
a wonderful video to watch in connection with the message of this *End Times* Issue.
Free to watch online at www.biblestudents.com

This inspirational motion picture *FOR THIS CAUSE* illustrates the life of Christ, his purpose for coming into the world and what his death will accomplish for all mankind. As the angel proclaimed, this cause will "bring good tidings of great joy which shall be for all people." Learn how this prophecy foretold of the time when Christ will bring liberty to all the captives of sin, sickness and death! (55 minutes)

And God Cried: If He shares our suffering, why does God permit evil that causes suffering?

This question has stumbled the faith of many people in the light of human tragedy. This booklet is one of the most encouraging ever written on the subject of God's loving compassion for frail humanity. This highly captivating account describes how God actually feels the sorrow that mankind has experienced.

- See why God allowed sin to enter the world
- Explore how God's dealings with Job relate to all mankind's sufferings
- Understand how the book of Job proves the Bible as the inspired Word of God.
- Learn how God will ultimately remove every evil from the human race and "wipe away tears from off all faces."



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