



**WHY
DOES
GOD
ALLOW
SUFFERING?**

"Why Must Humans Suffer?"

Original text by Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986)

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"Why Does God Allow Wars?"

Original text by Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986)

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"The Way of Peace They Know Not"

Original text by Dan C. Taylor

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"Where Is God When Little Children Die?"

Original text by Patrick A. Parnell

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Cover photo by Hal Finch

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING?

If God is all powerful—if he is all love—why does he permit wars, sickness, anguish and pain? Here is the answer to that age-old question.

WHY DOES God permit war? WHY does God allow *human* suffering and misery? "If God is GOOD—if God is LOVE—if he is MERCIFUL, he would not wish for people to suffer," is the reasoning of many humans. "And if he is ALMIGHTY," they conclude, "he could prevent it. So why doesn't he?"

What's wrong with this reasoning?

The common conception is this: that God *finished* his Creation as described in the first chapter of Genesis; that God created the first man *perfect, immortal*; the work of Creation was finished—complete. Adam was *perfect* in character—innocent of sin—endowed with immortality.

But then, when God wasn't looking, these people believe, Satan entered and succeeded in overthrowing the man, wrecking God's perfect specimen of human creation. In doing so, of course, Satan thwarted God's purpose.

When God returned and beheld what Satan had done, says this conception, he was forced to think out some plan for repairing the damage. And what is that damage supposed to have been? The man's *nature* had been changed. He had "fallen" from the nature of perfection, innocence and holiness to a fallen, sinful nature.

According to this concept, God must have shaken his head in near-unbelief and near-frustration. But he did think out a plan to repair the damage—a plan to restore man to a state and condition *as good as Adam*, before the "fall." The plan of salvation is, therefore, regarded as designed to restore damaged mankind to a condition *as good as Adam* at creation. But, of course, Satan didn't give up and go away. He has been around ever since, opposing God's efforts, and winning the contest.

What Men Don't Understand

Either this common idea is true, or the only alternate possibility—that

WHY Must Humans SUFFER?

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous," says Scripture. WHY? "I am the Lord . . . I create evil," says Isaiah 45:5, 7. HOW can this be? The real meaning of the biblical book of JOB brings the true answer.

God was looking, expressly *permitted it*, and that God therefore is RESPONSIBLE FOR IT!

And the preachers, the churches, and the professing Christian people of this world simply cannot believe this! Yet, to reject it makes Satan more cunning, more powerful than God. The common idea represents Satan as outsmarting God.

What men do not understand is GOD'S PURPOSE, and GOD'S PLAN for accomplishing his great purpose.

Yes, God *is* responsible! And being responsible, God *will see to it*—he and he alone is responsible for accomplishing his great original purpose. But being *responsible* does not imply being guilty. Nor does it imply God *caused* it.

All that has happened is a necessary *part* of that great design. Satan can do nothing God does not allow. "My purpose shall stand," says God.

There is NO CONTEST being waged between God and the devil. God reigns SUPREME, and every creature and every being stands subject to God's will!

What the world does not grasp is that God is *reproducing himself*—creating, in mortal humans, his very own divine CHARACTER—permitting humans to *learn by experience*. For character cannot be automatically or instantaneously created, imparted or imputed—it must be *developed*, and this only through EXPERIENCE; and experience requires *time*.

Becoming the Sons of God

We humans must *have our part* in the development of righteous and holy character. We must first come to realize the true values, and to thoroughly repent of the false way. We must come to *seek*, with our whole hearts and minds, God's true way of righteous character. We must set our wills in tune with God's will.

Then we must come to realize our utter helplessness, and learn to rely on God, in living FAITH, for the power, the strength, the understanding, the righteousness we ourselves are incapable of attaining.

We receive eternal life, and all



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righteousness, from GOD. But we have *our part to do!* We must come to *desire* it above all else—to *seek* it with all our might—to *yield* ourselves utterly to God's will, and to trust implicitly and unswervingly in HIM. In no other manner could we become the supreme characters which it is God's PURPOSE to make of us.

To this end, we must now be begotten as God's own children, inheriting his divine nature. Through his power, through feeding on his Spirit, we GROW in grace and knowledge and spiritual character, until, at the resurrection, we shall be BORN of God as his very SONS—elevated to his plane and level!

That's God's supreme purpose. It can be achieved only through EXPERIENCE, and in process of TIME. And men LEARN by *suffering*.

Jesus suffered. "For it became him . . . in bringing many *sons* unto GLORY, to make the captain of their salvation [Christ] perfect *through sufferings*" (Heb. 2:10). Again, "Though he were a Son, yet

learned he OBEDIENCE by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8).

Now see how Job's experience explains all this.

LET'S UNDERSTAND IT!

Job's Experience Explains It!

Thousands of years ago, there was a man named Job. You've heard of the man. He lived, as *you* live today, for a PURPOSE. And the solution of this whole question is made clear by the life experiences of Job. Many know the story, but *few* understand its MEANING!

This Job was a wealthy man—the wealthiest in all the East. Solomon may have possessed greater wealth. But, as Solomon was the *wisest* man who ever lived, so Job was the *most righteous!*

So let's glimpse, briefly, this thrilling story and its revealing lesson.

"There was," begins the scriptural record, "a man once in the land of Uz, whose name was Eyob [Job]; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and shunned evil. He had

seven sons and three daughters; also in livestock he possessed seven thousand sheep and goats, three thousand camels, five hundred pair of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, besides a very large household; so that this man was the greatest man in all the East" (Job 1:1-3, Moffatt translation).

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is none like him in the earth*, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth [shuns] evil?" (Verses 6-8, *Authorized Version*).

"[Satan] answered, 'But is it for nothing that [Job] reverences God? Have you not hedged him safely in, his house and all he has? You have prospered him in his business, and his flocks are teeming on the land. Only put out your hand, touch whatever he possesses, and see if he will not curse you to your face!' " (Verses 9-11, Moffatt trans.).

This World's Philosophy

Notice, please, Satan couldn't point out one imperfection in the man's righteousness. Even God said it was perfect. Yes, undoubtedly Job was the most righteous man who ever lived.

But Satan tried to get around it. He argued that it *paid* Job to be righteous. So, Satan argued, just take away from him *what he has*, and the man will lose his temper and start cursing God!

Well, God deliberately PERMITTED Satan to take away Job's possessions, and put Job to this test.

"Then said the ETERNAL to Satan, 'There! I leave all he has within your power; *but lay no hand upon the man himself*' " (verse 12, Moffatt trans.).

Notice, will you, Satan did this *with God's permission!* Satan was the active agent. But he did it with God's express permission; he could go just as far, in inflicting evil, as

God permitted, and *no further!* God *set a limit* on how far Satan could go! There is no contest here between God and Satan—no equality. GOD IS MASTER OF THE SITUATION! He gives the orders, grants permission, sets the limitations!

“So, away went Satan from the presence of the ETERNAL.”

What Happened to Job?

Then one day a servant came running to Job with the startling news that Arabs in a foray had carried off all his oxen and asses. Even while he was still talking, in dashed another servant shouting that lightning had just struck and burned up all the sheep, goats, and shepherds. While he was yet speaking, another rushed in breathlessly announcing three parties of Chaldeans in a raid upon the camels had carried them off, slaying all the servants except the one who escaped to bring the news.

And even while he was yet speaking in burst another.

“Your sons and daughters,” he exclaimed, “were eating and drinking wine in the house of their eldest brother, when a whirlwind swept across the desert and struck the four corners of the house, till it fell upon the young folk; they are DEAD; and I alone escaped to tell you” (verses 12-19, Moffatt trans.).

Well, now Job was stripped of all his great wealth—wiped out! Worse, all his children were killed.

Did Job blame this ill-fortune upon GOD? Did he lose his temper and curse God? Did he sin, as Satan expected?

“Then [Job] rose, tore his tunic, shaved his head, and dropped upon the ground in humble worship, crying, ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I must return: *the Eternal gave, the Eternal has taken*—blessed be the Eternal!’ In all this [Job] did not sin, nor did he give offense to God” (verses 20-22, Moffatt trans.).

Notice, Job attributed ALL to God. The wealth he had had, *God gave*. The good—the prosperity—all came from God. But also “*The ETERNAL has taken*”! The Eternal—the Lord—was responsible

Man was created to need God! He cannot live his full life, fulfill his mission, or be happy, unless he keeps himself in the right relationship with God!

for the disaster! NOTHING happens contrary to God’s purpose!

Satan Tries Again

“One day the sons of God again came to present themselves before the Eternal, and among them came Satan.

“‘Where have you been?’ said the Eternal to the Adversary; and the Adversary answered, ‘Roaming here and there, roving about the earth.’

“Then the Eternal said to Satan, ‘Have you noticed that there is no one like my servant [Job] on the earth, a blameless and an upright man, who reverences God and shuns evil? He still holds to his loyalty: it was idle of you to entice me to undo him.’ But the Adversary answered,

“‘He has saved his own skin! A man will let all he has go, to preserve his life. Only put out your hand, touch his flesh and bones, and see if he will not curse you to your face!’” (Job 2:1-5, Moffatt trans.).

Notice, there is no contest here between two equals. God sits in authority supreme. Satan cannot do one thing without permission from God!

And here, in this heavenly court, God permits Satan to advance his arguments—even to put them to the *test of experience* on the most righteous human on earth! It is a thrilling drama here being enacted—a drama with great purpose—tremendous meaning!

“So the Eternal said to Satan, ‘He is in your power; only, *spare his life!*’” (Verse 6, Moffatt trans.).

Notice again, ALL AUTHORITY

comes from God. It is GOD who put poor Job in Satan’s power. Satan was permitted to devise his most cunning and cruel affliction—with but one restriction: “Spare his life,” commanded God. Satan could go no further than God specifically authorized! And God did permit this evil! WHY, we shall soon see!

So, “Away went the Adversary from the Eternal’s presence, and he smote [Job] with painful ulcers from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, till [Job] took a potsherd to scrape himself.

“As he sat among the ashes, his wife said to him, ‘Still holding to your loyalty? Curse God, though you die for it!’”

Was God Just and Fair?

But Job retorted to his wife, “‘You are talking like an impious fool. Are we to take *good* from God’s hand, and not evil too?’”

Notice, all the GOOD had come from God. Also *all the evil!* Besides Him there is no God—no power equal or superior to His. God is responsible for EVERYTHING—both good and evil—because God’s power is SUPREME—*absolute!* Is this a sin to charge the EVIL, as well as the good, to God?

“In all this,” answers God’s Word, “*Job sinned not* with his lips.” Charging this evil to God, then, was no sin—no error. It was the TRUTH!

Job’s Friends Have an Argument

“Now, when [Job’s] three friends heard of all the trouble that had befallen him, they came, each from his home, Eliphaz from Teman, Bildad from Shuah, and Zophar from Maân; they arranged to go and condole with him, to comfort him. But when they caught sight of him at a distance and could not recognize him, they wept aloud; every man of them tore his tunic and flung dust on his head. For seven days and seven nights they sat beside him on the ground; none said a word to him, for they saw how terrible was his anguish” (Job 2:9-13, Moffatt trans.).

Here is human suffering to compare with the horrors of World War II. Here is anguish almost beyond description! Satan inflicted

it. But God *permitted it*, and therefore is RESPONSIBLE!

Now in the long conversation that followed between Job and his three friends—a conversation occupying the next 34 chapters in the Bible—Job's friends blamed it all on JOB. Their idea was a good deal like many people believe today. Since God is GOOD, it was impossible to attribute this evil to GOD.

But Job continually denied his friends' allegations. Continually HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS he upheld and maintained. He attributed it all, rightly, to God—*yet, without imputing any blame or fault to God*. JOB UNDERSTOOD GOD'S GREAT PURPOSE being worked out here below!

And it is important that we understand! For here Job, as one single individual, is used as an illustration for our learning TODAY, typical of all the mass suffering we see about us in this world today!

God Enters the Argument

Finally, after all these long conversations run themselves out, God himself takes a hand in the conversation.

Now we begin to see WHY this affliction had come to Job.

"Then the Eternal answered [Job] out of a storm, saying:

"'Who darkens MY DESIGN with a cloud of thoughtless words? Confront me like a man; come, answer these *my questions*'" (Job 38:1-3).

That Job was proud of his righteousness is plain. Job was too well aware of his righteousness. God now proceeded to deflate his ego.

"'When I founded the *earth*,'" God opened up on Job, "'where were you then? Answer me that, if you have wit to know! Who measured out the *earth*?—do you know that? Who stretched the builder's line on *it*? What were *its* pedestals placed on! Who laid the cornerstone, when the morning-stars were singing, and all the angels chanted in their joy?'" (Verses 4-7).

And so God continued to deflate poor Job. Job may have been the most righteous man on earth—yet how insignificant he was, compared to GOD!

Man was created to need GOD! Man cannot live his full life, fulfill

ALL humans have this great lesson to learn. It's the one supreme lesson of life! To learn it, and conform to it, is the PURPOSE of human existence!

his mission, or be happy, unless he keeps himself in his right relationship with GOD! *That is the very first lesson man needs to learn and keep ever in mind!*

A first principle in character—in the PURPOSE of our existence—is to exalt and worship only GOD, to humble the self, to realize man's utter helplessness, and his total DEPENDENCE upon GOD!

"'Who helped shut in the sea,'" God asked, "'... when I swathed it in mists, and swaddled it in clouds of darkness, when I fixed its boundaries . . . saying, *Thus far, and no further!* Here your proud waves shall not pass!'" (Verses 8-11).

"'Have you ever roused the morning, given directions to the dawn? . . . What path leads to the home of Light, and where does Darkness dwell? Can you conduct them to their fields? . . . Have you grasped earth in all its breadth? How large is it? Tell me, if you know that!'" (Verses 12-18).

"'Can you bind up the Pleiades [clusters of stars] in a cluster, or loose the chains of Orion? Can you direct the signs of the Zodiac, or guide the constellations of the Bear? Can you control the skies? Can you prescribe their sway over the earth?'" (Verses 31-33).

GOD does all these things. How MIGHTY is God! And how little, how weak, how impotent and insignificant is man—yes, even the most righteous man, Job! How Job must have begun to shrivel up in his own estimation! Smaller and smaller Job shrank, as God contin-

ued. Job didn't seem too important, now!

"'Who then,'" God is not through yet—"is able to stand before ME? Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? *Whatever is under the whole heaven IS MINE . . .*" (Job 41:10, 11, A. V.). And so God continued to bring down Job's self-righteous importance—and to show the unmatched, awesome MAGNITUDE of God, through four whole chapters, before he finished.

And by the time God finished, Job's estimation of himself was exactly nil. All through his conversation with his three friends, Job stoutly maintained *his own righteousness*—his self-importance! Even though Satan had taken away his wealth, his children—even though reduced to a pitiful sight, covered with nauseating boils—Job's own righteousness he stoutly maintained!

Job was able to maintain his case against Satan—against his friends. But now he could not answer GOD! Job's trouble was not what he had done, but what he was—SELF-RIGHTEOUS! The self in Job had never died!

In just 5 verses of Job's conversation, he used the personal pronoun 15 times (Job 27:2-6); and in the 29th chapter alone, he used it 50 times!

Now, for the first time, he began to realize the TRUTH—he began to catch a vision of GOD!

The Lesson Learned!

"Then Job answered the Lord, and said,

"I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." Continuing in Moffatt's translation: "'I thoughtlessly confused the issues . . . I spoke without intelligence, of wonders far beyond my ken . . .'" Now back to the *Authorized Version*: "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eyes have seen thee. Wherefore I ABHOR MYSELF, and REPENT in dust and ashes'" (Job 42:1-3, 5-6).

That was Job's SURRENDER to Almighty God, a surrender every human must make before he can be converted—before God's PURPOSE in him can be fulfilled! A man may

be naturally GOOD—but even the *self-righteousness* of a Job, God says, is like a filthy rag to Him! The only righteousness that is really good is the righteousness of GOD, imparted to us BY FAITH!

Job at last had learned his lesson! Just human goodness is not enough. GOD is all in all. And the only goodness that *is* good is *God's own goodness*, imparted, through God's Holy Spirit, *within us!* All true righteousness comes from GOD.

ALL humans have this great lesson to learn. It's the *one supreme lesson of life!* To learn it, and conform to it, is the PURPOSE of human existence!

Job's calamity and great suffering proved a great blessing to him, in the end! Actually, great good, double prosperity, and eternal happiness, came of it! For, after he repented, and came to really *know God*, he was given another seven sons and three daughters, and *twice* the material possessions he had had before!

"So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning," it is written (Job 42:12). And verse 11 speaks of "*all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him.*"

Satan Never Altered GOD'S PURPOSE

So notice this! Satan has never upset God's program—*never* altered God's purpose! In Job 42:2, the alternate marginal translation of the original inspired Hebrew words is: "*no thought of thine can be hindered.*"

Almighty God is SUPREME in the universe! Supreme not only in love, and in power—but in WISDOM! There is divine WISDOM in God's permitting Satan to afflict Job. Out of all this experience of suffering,

Job was humbled, his ego deflated, his self-pride removed. It *hurt* to have these things torn out of his character—Job suffered—even as you and I suffer, today! But he was brought to *repentance*, surrender to GOD, dependence upon GOD, a filling of God's Spirit, without which he never could have known real happiness, never could have gained eternal LIFE!

All Job originally had was material wealth and possessions, and more *human* righteousness! Now Job had double the material possessions—but infinitely greater, he now had the supreme security of the faith of God, and that true source of happiness, reliance upon the Supreme One and the indwelling of all his attributes! God's Spirit in us is the only thing that will satisfy the heart-hunger—the *only* thing that can warm, fill, and energize with happiness and joy the human soul!

The True ANSWER to Our Questions!

Now we are ready to see, and to UNDERSTAND, the true answer to our questions!

The real answer was brought out by Job during his conversation, even as it is illustrated by the experience of his life.

"If a man die, *shall he live again?*" asked Job (Job 14:14).

And the answer is the answer to all our questions! Here it is:

"All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: *thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands!*"

The part of what Job said that is most often carelessly overlooked is the part that answers the questions of this article! *Notice it again!*

"*Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands!*"

STUDY THAT! Job knew he was merely the *work of God's Hands!* Merely a clay model, which God, the Master Potter, was to mold and fashion and reshape. Let Isaiah explain it: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and *all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*; and we all do fade as a leaf; and *our iniquities*, like the wind, have taken us away . . . But now, O Lord, thou art OUR FATHER; *we are the clay*, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand" (Isaiah 64:6-8).

Our own righteousness will not save us. We must REPENT, surrender unconditionally to GOD, come to him through Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, and then God PROMISES to beget us with his Holy Spirit—actually put HIS SPIRIT *within us*. His Spirit is his very LIFE—his Love, his understanding and wisdom, his power, his faith, his righteousness. *We drink in*, through his Spirit, HIS NATURE AND HIS CHARACTER.

Through a long life of Christian living—of *overcoming* self, of growing spiritually, through the very power of GOD imparted to us, we develop spiritually ready to be finally BORN OF GOD—by a resurrection, or instantaneous conversion from mortal to immortal—from human to divine—from weakness to power—from dishonor to GLORY (I Cor. 15:50-54; I John 3:1, 2).

And what about all these human sufferings which work character within us?

The Apostle Paul settled that: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the SONS OF GOD" (Rom. 8:18-19). □

Why Does God Allow Wars?

WHY civil wars and violence—with no hope in sight for peace? Has God lost control?



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MANY ASK, “If there be a God, WHY does God *allow* wars?”

They argue: “If God is LOVE, he surely wouldn’t *want* all this suffering. And if God is ALL-POWERFUL, he could *prevent* wars! So why doesn’t he?”

The answer is, certainly God *could* stop it—and in very few years *will*!

But, why in the future? Why did he *ever* allow it?

Because a PURPOSE is being worked out here below! Man was put here on earth to develop righteous CHARACTER! That purpose *necessitates* free moral agency in man. It is absolutely *necessary* that man be given both the prerogative and the ability to *make his own choice*, and exercise *his own will*! Otherwise,—NO CHARACTER!

WHY Must There Be WARS?

There *is a way* that will prevent WAR and produce PEACE—a way to happiness and abundant well-being for everybody!

The ETERNAL God offered mankind *that way*—and let mankind *choose*! The ETERNAL created and set in motion inexorable *laws* that *work*—not only laws of chemistry and physics—but also a basic SPIRITUAL LAW, which is *the way* to peace, happiness, abundant well-being! That LAW is the basic CAUSE of peace. Its violation is the CAUSE of war!

Yes, it’s just that simple!

But a rebellious humanity—priding itself on its rational processes of “intellect”—willingly blinds its minds to simple TRUTH, and embarks on a system of complicated and nonsensical ERROR—MUCH OF IT IN THE NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Human nature is basically rebellious against God and the inexorable laws of God (Rom. 8:7).

The Creator laid before man the KNOWLEDGE of his law—the knowledge of HOW TO AVOID WARS! But yielding to human nature—

Military cemetery at Anzio, where in 1944 fierce fighting followed establishment of Allied beachhead behind enemy lines.

vanity, greed, *self-centeredness*—rebellion against God's law of PEACE—that is the CAUSE of WARS!

Nations Never Needed Go to War!

In respect to war, the basic point of God's spiritual law is the Sixth Commandment. It says, simply, "*Thou shalt not kill.*"

If all nations OBEYED that command of God and followed *the way* of LOVE and PEACE there would be no war!

But, an objector argues: "That's a pretty platitude—but it's not practical. It would never work! Any nation that would follow that command would be attacked and beaten by some other nation that was more practical!"

Oh, but that way WOULD WORK! That way IS practical!

The Creator understands human nature better than we humans do! He provided for that!

Do you think the Almighty Creator is so impractical that he leaves those who OBEY HIM—who accept HIS GOVERNMENT over them—helpless?

One of the responsibilities of GOVERNMENT is to protect its own subjects! You think—do you?—that the GOVERNMENT OF GOD is so feeble and lacking in power that it is unable to protect the individual or the nation it governs?

God did take a people—a family of some two million SLAVES, children of God's friend Abraham—and offered to set them up as a special nation UNDER HIS GOVERNMENT!

To any people—whether an individual, a nation or even all nations—who will voluntarily subject themselves under God's GOVERNMENT, God says the SAME THING—he is no respecter of persons! What he said to these Israelites, he says to ALL:

"But if thou shalt indeed obey [my] voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries . . . and I will cut them off" (Ex. 23:22-23).

God promised supernaturally to fight any invading enemy to protect the nation and people under HIS government. God, ONLY, has

the right to take human life! He *created* human life. All lives BELONG to him.

But, did you notice? There were CONDITIONS to God's promise of divine and supernatural protection. During the first 6,000 years of man's sojourn on earth, it is not in God's master plan to *force* any nation, or individual, to come under his GOVERNMENT. That is left to man's free CHOICE!

Man must choose which way he will go—the way of give and of submission to God's law and government, or the way of get, of self, of rebellion against the law and government of God.

But these freed slaves—the Israelites—accepted God's offer, and became his nation. They AGREED to obey him and his laws—his government—and he agreed to give them PEACE, *as long as they obeyed and trusted him.*

But human nature is human nature—and facts are facts.

Human Nature at Work

And HUMAN NATURE? Yes, these Israelites were full of it!

These Israelites, even while being blessed and delivered by God with MIRACLES, still were rebellious. After the MIRACLES God had performed in FREEING them from slavery in Egypt, these people began to gripe, grumble, complain and DISOBEY God.

These people—600,000 men, besides women and children—came to the Red Sea. There were no ships, no bridges. They could not swim such a distance. They could not walk on the water. They were STOPPED by this obstacle beyond their own power.

They looked, and within eyesight, Pharaoh's ARMY was coming after them.

Right here, God *demonstrated* he would preserve his people from having to undergo military service, or fighting war, or taking human life!

In spite of their faithless complaining in this initial EXAMPLE of God's faithfulness, he was determined to fight *this* battle and save them.

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which HE

WILL SHEW TO YOU to day. . . . *The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace*" (Ex. 14:13-14).

The Israelites were not to fight—but STAND STILL! God would fight their wars for them! They were to remain at PEACE!

How GOD Fights for Us!

"Moses stretched his hand out over the sea . . . Then the Eternal swept the sea along by a strong east wind, all night, till the bed of the sea was dry . . . and the Israelites marched through the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall to right and left. . . . Thus did the Eternal save Israel that day from the Egyptians. . . . Israel saw the mighty action of the Eternal against the Egyptians. . ." (Ex. 14:21-22, 30-31, Moffatt translation).

After this miraculous delivery from disaster—from a WAR—a whole army of a then great nation destroyed—those Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron and said, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt . . ." (Ex. 16:3).

Again and again, "they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?" (Ex. 17:7).

Repeatedly, God had given these people awe-inspiring and miraculous demonstrations of his intention *to fight their battles for them.* After all of this OVERWHELMING PROOF, these people DOUBTED God's faithfulness—DOUBTED his power—even DOUBTED his very existence. They disobeyed. They went *the way* of SIN!

Moses was distraught, his nerves shattered, his patience about exhausted. After all, Moses was only human!

"What shall I do unto this people?" Moses appealed to God, "they be almost ready to stone me" (Ex. 17:4).

At this juncture, Amalek came against the Israelites in great strength with an invading army. This time God ALLOWED the Israelites *to write the lesson of experience.* He allowed them to SIN. God does not forcibly prevent humans from sinning.

Moses, at the end of his patience trying to induce these stubborn, rebellious people to believe in and

self even *commanded* them to go to war, driving out the pagan nations from the Promised Land.

Many people have wondered WHY, if God's teaching is that WAR IS WRONG, he actually commanded his own nation to fight in war.

The answer is that God made man with FREE MORAL AGENCY—God not only *allows* humans to have a CHOICE—he compels us to choose!

God alone determines WHAT is sin. God *does not allow* MAN to decide WHAT is sin, or WHAT is righteousness. But he does allow man—he actually *compels* man—to decide WHETHER to sin.

God made it PLAIN to ancient Israel that they need never go to war. He guaranteed complete protection from outside enemies. He guaranteed PEACE—if they would trust him and obey the laws of his government! He demonstrated his ability—and his POWER! But the Israelites chose WAR. Just as ALL nations have chosen WAR! Just as *our* nations do—needlessly—today!

Case History No. 2

We have now seen the first actual case history showing, in detail, how the ETERNAL God, by supernatural miracles, delivered the Israelites at the Red Sea from the army of the then greatest nation on earth, the Egyptians.

Now notice case history No. 2.

This concerns King Asa of the kingdom of Judah. The king of Ethiopia came against the Jews with 300 chariots and an army of ONE MILLION soldiers. They had major size armies in those days, strange as that may seem.

In those days the Jews also had a sizable army—but not nearly large enough to withstand an invasion of a force of a million troops.

Perhaps, had the Ethiopians come with a smaller army, Asa might have gone to war with them relying wholly on his armed force, instead of on God. But, regardless, the FACT is that in this instance this king *did* rely on God for his defense!

“And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have NO POWER: help us, O Lord our God;

for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee. So THE LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; *and the Ethiopians fled*” (II Chron. 14:11-12).

But there is an unhappy sequel to this tremendous event—where reliance on GOD put A MILLION ARMED MEN TO FLIGHT!

The king of ISRAEL, Baasha, came with an armed force against the Jews. Incidentally, note carefully, the kingdom of ISRAEL was here fighting against the JEWS of the kingdom of JUDAH! They were two altogether *different nations!* The people of the northern kingdom of ISRAEL *never* were called Jews!

This time Asa neglected to rely on God to fight off the attacking military force! This time he did PRECISELY WHAT THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN ARE DOING TODAY! He *hired* an ALLY—the kingdom of Syria (II Chron. 16:1-3).

“And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and *not* relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself STRONG in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly:”—JUST LIKE THE UNITED STATES AND ALL NATIONS TODAY!—“therefore from henceforth THOU SHALT HAVE WARS” (II Chron. 16:7-9).

If you wonder why OUR NATIONS are continually having WARS, *there is your answer!*

Case History No. 3

The next case history involves Asa's son, Jehoshaphat, the next king of Judah.

Three allied armies came against Judah, with a mighty military force.

“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord. . . .

“And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and RULEST NOT THOU OVER ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE HEATHEN?”—that is, over all gentile nations, as well as Israelitish.

Continue: “and in thine hand is there not POWER and MIGHT, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our GOD, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel . . . ? And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade. . . . Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. O our GOD, wilt thou not judge them? for WE HAVE NO MIGHT AGAINST THIS GREAT COMPANY that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: BUT OUR EYES ARE UPON THEE” (II Chron. 20:3-7, 10-12).

Could God *be* GOD, and fail to heed a heartrending prayer like that—coming from helpless people who were obeying and TRUSTING him?

Immediately God answered through one of his prophets:

“Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; *for the battle is NOT YOURS, BUT GOD'S*. . . .

“Ye shall *not need to fight* in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord. . . . And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord.

“. . . Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah. . . . *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.* And . . . he appointed SINGERS unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before

the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.

“And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children [soldiers] of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped” (II Chron. 20:15, 17-18, 20-24).

But would not most hoot and jeer in sarcasm, if one suggested that the West TODAY humble itself—and trust in the INVISIBLE God—and WORSHIP him, bowing our heads to the ground? Couldn't you just hear the snorts and raucous ridicule at the suggestion that the West send before an armed enemy an army of SINGERS, saying, “PRAISE THE ETERNAL!”—instead of relying on the nations' MILITARY strength?

Yes, WOULDN'T it seem RIDICULOUS to suggest that OUR proud nations do this—and march to war SINGING praises to “the beauty of holiness”?

Someday—and in the next few years—the West will be forced to WAKE UP to the sobering REALIZATION of which way is truly the “foolish” way! You'd better make the right choice NOW, before it's too late! For indeed it *is* later than you think!

Case History No. 4

Several years later, “Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. . . . And when Hezekiah [king of Judah] saw that Sennacherib had come and intended to fight against Jerusalem . . . he . . . gathered [the people] together to him in the square at the gate of the city and spoke encouragingly to them, saying, ‘Be strong

and of good courage. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him; for there is one greater with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles.’ And the people took confidence from the words of Hezekiah king of Judah” (II Chron. 32:1-2, 6-8, *Revised Standard Version*).

Supposing, in the event of a threat of nuclear war, Western leaders broadcast words like those to all the people—saying we would RELY ON THE ETERNAL OUR GOD to fight this battle FOR US!

This is just a hypothetical question. But YOU answer it!—and I think you'll realize that OUR PEOPLES have gone SO FAR away from the ETERNAL our God that, in most minds today, he seems nonexistent! Yet he is *just as REAL*—and as POWERFUL—as in Hezekiah's day!

Continue: “After this Sennacherib king of Assyria . . . sent his servants to Jerusalem to Hezekiah king of Judah and to all the people of Judah that were in Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria, “On what are you relying, that you stand siege in Jerusalem? Is not Hezekiah misleading you, that he may give you over to die by famine and by thirst, when he tells you, ‘The Lord our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria’? . . . Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands at all able to deliver their lands out of my hand? . . . How much less will your God deliver you out of my hand!’”

“Then Hezekiah the king and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed because of this and cried to heaven. AND THE LORD SENT AN ANGEL, who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria. So *he returned with shame of face* to his own land. And when he came into the house

of his god, some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword. SO THE LORD SAVED HEZEKIAH AND THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand of ALL HIS ENEMIES; and HE GAVE THEM REST [PEACE] ON EVERY SIDE” (II Chron. 32:9-11, 13, 15, 20-22, RSV).

War is *so needless!*

War is WRONG!

Yes, the West *could* put an END to the threat of nuclear war IMMEDIATELY—*IF* not only leaders, but ALSO the PEOPLE AS A WHOLE, COULD RECOGNIZE REALITY—could understand that God is REAL—and would *humble themselves* before him, BELIEVE him—RELY ON him!

But, if our people WILL NOT, then *it is decreed* we shall, in fewer years than you will believe, see OUR CITIES DESTROYED, along with a full third of our populations by a foreign invasion!

The God who is REAL says of OUR PEOPLES: “Prophesy against the prophets of Israel. . . . O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge, for the house of Israel to STAND in the BATTLE IN THE DAY OF THE LORD” (Ezek. 13:2, 4-5).

That is NOT a message to ancient Israel—but to our world TODAY. The “DAY OF THE LORD”—a time foretold in more than 30 prophecies—is going to strike sooner than you may think! You will *know*, then, how REAL it is. You will wish, then, you had heeded. We are not saying this foolishly, but very soberly, ON AUTHORITY of the *living CHRIST!*

Continue this WARNING to OUR nations TODAY: “They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord saith: and the Lord *hath not sent them*. . . . Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and *there was no peace* . . .” (verses 6, 10).

Perhaps you need to read the free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. It is a last WARNING from the ETERNAL GOD! □



GIASANTI—SYGMA

“The Way of Peace

All around this strife-torn planet, thousands of children are directly involved in war or are training in the art of war. Their youthful enthusiasm is readily channeled into the tasks of soldiery.

Jubilant Palestinian youths (above) in Tripoli, Lebanon, celebrate their exuberance for victory. Is theirs to be a world of one life-and-death struggle after another? Or will they be able to enjoy the peace and prosperity humanity yearns for?

Some youth are directly involved in front-line fighting like this

Continued on page 15

WHAT a paradox! We hope and dream that our children will enjoy a life free from want, a life of abundance and peace.

Yet, in many parts of the world we see children, often smaller than the weapons they are carrying, being drilled in the art of revolution, counterrevolution and war.

Forced to lay aside the innocence of childhood, they are immersed in a sea of adult hatreds to learn to kill or be killed for causes they don't fully understand, in a world increasingly hostile to their very existence.

Why this paradox? Why do adults dream and hope for peace, yet practice the arts of war?

Child Warriors

Thousands of children around the world have been pressed into military and paramilitary organizations to fill real or imagined manpower shortages. Many volunteer in a euphoric state of patriotism. Others succumb to peer pressure or outright coercion.

The death-dealing instruments in their hands suddenly make them a force to be reckoned with. And the heroic fantasies of youth are easily exploited by those who claim to be fighting for the benefit of future generations.

The teachable qualities of youths make them desired as the most malleable of soldier material. They become willing to carry out even the most dangerous or repulsive commands. They are often less fearful, not having known enough of life to fear death.

For many of these children, the future is a fatal bullet, a deadly bomb or a life shattered by a landmine.

A Global Problem

In the struggle with Iraq, Iran mobilized *Baseej*, or boy soldiers, under the draft age of 18. Some of the young Islamic warriors are only 10 years old.

These young Iranian boys—the very future of that nation—are given rudimentary training and much indoctrination, then sent to the Iraqi front where they perish by the hundreds, hurling themselves at Iraqi fortifications, tanks and minefields to clear the way for

Isaiah 59:8

e They Know Not”

adult soldiers who are more “valuable” for the war effort.

In Northern Ireland, the situation is different. There are no massive fronts, but the battlelines have been drawn and children are victimized by the rage of their elders.

The conditioned-response hatreds of the home spill over into the streets as youths periodically become involved in street violence against opposing religious or political factions or security forces.

In spite of the known dangers of confronting security forces in Belfast and elsewhere, children are at times placed in the front of funeral processions and protest demonstrations.

In Pol Pot’s Cambodia, youthful communist Khmer Rouge soldiers committed atrocities on children and adults alike.

In El Salvador, scores of youths fight in the ranks of antigovernment forces. The hit-and-run style warfare conducted by the guerrillas has made them a formidable military force in certain areas of that strife-torn land.

Throughout Africa as well, youthful recruits fill the ranks of

various antigovernment armies of liberation.

The use of children in warfare is not new, of course. Further back, in the history of Catholic Europe, is the incredibly tragic Children’s Crusade that took place in A.D. 1212. Two teenage boys, one in France, one in Germany, raised up two armies of youths to reconquer the Holy Land. They believed that a lack of virtue in the adult crusaders was the cause of previous failures. The German group got no farther than Genoa, Italy. The ill-fated French group wound up being sold into slavery in Egypt by unscrupulous merchants who had promised them passage to Palestine.

The tragedies, past and present, of youths robbed of their childhood make a mockery of the purpose of childhood and of human existence.

Why Is It Happening?

Humanity need look no further to discover the cause of today’s wretched condition than this revelation: “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood, in their paths are ruin and misery, and *the way of peace they do not know*”

(Rom. 3:14-17, *Revised Standard Version*).

They have never been taught how to live the way of peace with their neighbors. Training children for revolution and war is not what God had in mind when he created humans to go through the experience of childhood. Happily, the society God is soon going to bring to this planet is one full of instruction in peace and joy. “All your children shall be *taught* by the Lord, and great shall be the *peace* of your children. In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you” (Isa. 54:13-14, *Revised Authorized Version*).

Only when God’s government is restored and enforced on earth will humanity at last be able to “beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.” And “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isa. 2:4, RAV).

Only then, when revolutions, counterrevolutions and wars are banished, will the hopes and dreams humanity has for its children begin to come true. □





PHILIPPOI—SYGMA; INSETS FROM LEFT, GUICHARD—SYGMA; KEZA—LIAISON; LEDRU—SYGMA

Continued from page 12

Iranian Baseej on the Iraqi front near Dizful, Iran (inset left). For others, the front lines are less well defined as in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, where a rock-throwing youth vents anger on security forces during a riot (center).

Learning the ways of war, in the United States thousands of youths receive military training in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC). Here a JROTC cadet receives military skills training at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina (inset top).

Meanwhile, in Cambodia, young Khmer Rouge recruits present arms during military training sessions.

In anticipation of the day when





YASHOOTZADEH—SYGMA, INSETS FROM LEFT: VOLLIARD—LIAISON, NICKLESBERG—LIAISON, LAFFONT—SYGMA

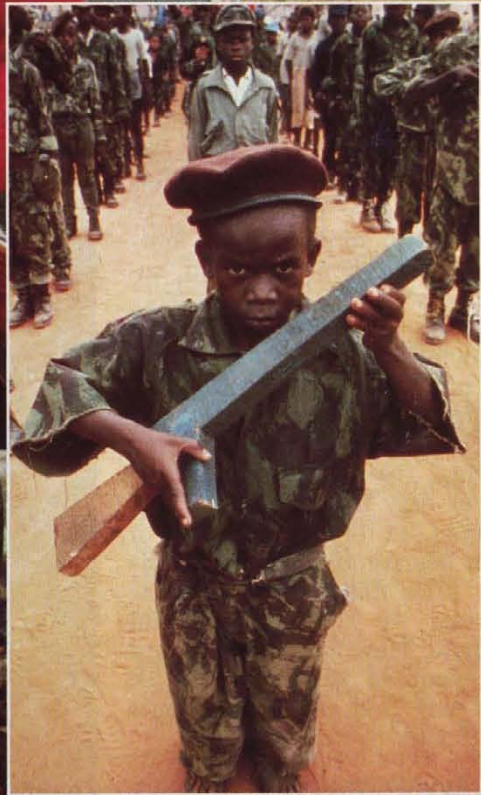
they will join the ranks of the East German tank corps, Young Pioneers parade in East Germany (inset top left) riding in minitanks—scaled-down versions of the real thing.

Elsewhere, youthful Salvadoran guerrillas survey the fiery devastation of a successful roadblock (inset bottom left).

Victory amidst the rubble is proclaimed by a young Shiite Muslim and his companion in Beirut (center). While in Angola, a recruit of the Marxist regime's Pioneer Group drills with a wooden gun (inset right). □

من ٤٣ حة
سہارۃ الجب
اللہ اعلم ابنہ
فأین اسرائیل





A MOTHER wrote a letter to a syndicated newspaper columnist. In it she said:

"I can tell you firsthand that of all human suffering, none can equal the pain of a mother who must put her young child into a grave."

Where Is God?

Why, many ask, does God let these things happen to little children? Why does God allow little children to suffer and die? Why does God let thousands of healthy children die each year because of accidents?

Overwhelmed and emotionally distraught, perhaps even on the verge of anger and bitterness because of a heartrending incident involving a little child, some people lash out in harshness: "I can't believe in a God who would let that happen!" Or, "I can't worship a God who allows awful diseases and accidents!"

How *are* we to explain an eternal, everliving, all-wise, all-knowing God who allows painful suffering and death to happen to innocent little children, not only *now* but throughout recorded human history?

Tragedies involving little children, such as the widely published plight of the starving Ethiopian and other African children—their little bodies emaciated, diseased and dying, their bellies bloated—are never easy to take. But before we blame God for the multitude of terrible, heartrending tragedies afflicting little children and people worldwide, we need to stop and understand. Have you ever stopped to ask yourself if there may be reasons why God allows sad events and suffering to occur?

Whose Fault? Whose Responsibility?

Is God totally to blame? Shall we humans assume no responsibilities? And what about a devil? Philosophers and theologians, scientists and agnostics have all puzzled over these questions.

Consider the thousands of little children maimed and killed by accidents. There's a cause for every effect. Faulty equipment, careless-

Where Is God When Little Children Die?

Why does God allow human heartache and misery? But especially, why does God let tragedy strike little children?



G.A. BELLOCHE, JR.

ness, human miscalculations, lack of training, drunkenness. How many fires occur because children play with matches? Or because people smoke and fall asleep on a sofa or in bed? How many small children are severely injured and permanently scarred or maimed through scalding accidents; or die from drinking caustic, deadly solutions negligently left within their little reach?

Dangerous toys, loaded guns, unguarded swimming pools, children darting into the path of oncoming automobiles—and you can name other causes—claim children's lives daily. Parents, often, are either careless or fail to teach children proper precautions.

Do humans bear no fault? God, of course, bears responsibility if he is God! And what about a deceiving devil? How do we account for a deceived and deluded world of suffering?

Babies: Alcoholics and Drug Addicts

Consider another tragic example. Worldwide, babies are born already addicted to alcohol or hard drugs because their mothers were addicts during pregnancy. Imagine these babies' first taste of life. They enter the world suffering painful alcohol or addiction withdrawal symptoms. Some die in the process.

Can we begin to understand the human part in the suffering and death children endure? There is a human responsibility involved even before a baby is born. After birth parents have an even greater duty to teach, protect and watch over their children.

Parents must especially know what their little toddlers are doing and where they are.

But the more we open our minds, and the deeper we search for understanding about why little children suffer, disappear or die, and why people have suffered terrible evils throughout history, the more we must acknowledge the human responsibility involved.

There is only one source available to give us the needed understanding of the causes of so much human suffering and misery. That source—which holds life-giving

and life-preserving knowledge—is the Bible.

A Series of Wrong Choices

Since the beginning of human experience God reveals he has given humans freedom of choice—freedom to act rightly, act wrongly or not act at all.

The first two humans were given a choice. Since God gave them a choice, God is in charge. He is therefore *responsible* for whatever happens. But if the first humans chose freely to go the wrong way, the *fault* is theirs and the penalties theirs and their children's! Instead of choosing to obey God's government over their lives and do things God's way, they chose to do things their way.

God freely offered them the "tree of life," which symbolized outgoing concern for others, God's way of doing things, obedience to his authority, and acceptance of his revealed knowledge, leading eventually to eternal life in health and happiness.

He warned them against choosing the opposite way, portrayed by the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil"—representing self-centeredness, selfishness, reasoning apart from God, acquiring knowledge by trial and error, even living life in outright rejection of God's revealed way of outgoing concern for others.

A wrong choice, God warned man, would lead to coming under the sway and government of Satan and unhappiness and death for the whole human family. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 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" (Gen. 2:16-17).

They chose wrong! The woman was deceived by Satan. The man willingly—not wilfully—chose to go the wrong way. They rejected God's way and chose Satan's way instead. They rejected God having any authority in their lives! They

built their own society and civilization cut off from God's revelation, from his revealed spiritual and physical knowledge. That's how this world became Satan's world.

That's why mankind has suffered throughout history. That's why all the misery we see today. Mankind as a whole has chosen to reject God's revealed way of life—including his promises of protection from evil, and healing of our

How are we to explain an eternal, everliving, all-wise, all-knowing God who allows painful suffering and death to happen to innocent little children?

sicknesses and diseases. God did not force our first parents to choose correctly. He hasn't forced mankind since. And he doesn't force us today.

Except for a select few, whom God has called out and to whom he has revealed his truth, humanity—and that includes the vast majority that profess Christianity—has rejected revealed right knowledge on how to live—that right knowledge disseminated by God's law and spelled out specifically in God's Ten Commandments. The first four show us how to love God and the last six teach us how to love each other.

Instead, humans have chosen to live contrary to God: cheating, lying, stealing, killing, coveting, committing fornication and adultery and living selfishly and competitively to the hurt of others. This pattern of living has affected every facet of life: business, education—or shall we call it miseducation?—medical science, politics and most certainly religion.

Is it any wonder, then, why we have unhappiness, suffering and so many terrible heart-rending personal and world ills?

Even the Righteous Suffer

Yes, our world is on a course of life

contrary to God's wholesome way of living. Because of it all humanity is suffering, sometimes even those who decide to choose correctly and live God's way.

We have to learn that all of us affect each other. Others' mistakes and actions can and often do hurt. Others' selfishness and inconsideration, sometimes outright disrespect, persecution and hatred, cause pain. And, of course, often they are not another's actions, but our own!

The ancient poet-musician Asaph records in Psalm 73 how saddened and bewildered he became after noting those living contrary to God seemed to prosper and get ahead. They scoffed at the idea that God even took note of their self-centered, wrong conduct. Their money, they thought, could buy them anything.

Since the beginning of human experience God reveals he has given humans freedom of choice—freedom to act rightly, act wrongly or not act at all.

Said Asaph: "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (Ps. 73:2-3). It was difficult for him. "When I thought to know this [understand it]," he said, "it was too painful for me" (verse 16).

But when Asaph considered the end of it all, he knew better than to be envious of wrongdoers: "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (verse 17).

Once Asaph got his mind back on God's revealed truth, he recalled that we humans eventually *are responsible to God* for what we do in this life—and we are eternally rewarded accordingly. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that

soweth to . . . the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).

God has allowed even those who serve him to suffer the world's hatred and persecution since the very first murder of Abel by his brother Cain. ". . . And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. 11:35-38).

Jesus Christ himself suffered. But before he did he overcame Satan and qualified to replace Satan. But Jesus will not remove Satan until humans have experienced their near 6,000 years of going their own way under Satan's sway.

No wonder, then, that Satan deceived the leaders of Jesus' day, especially the self-righteous religious leaders, to plot more than once to kill Jesus. Jesus was accused and maligned, slapped in the face, beaten unmercifully, cruelly crucified and speared to death.

And so God makes it plain even to those who choose right, not to think it strange when difficult trials strike, causing suffering: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Pet. 4:12-13).

But he adds this warning to make sure that any suffering isn't from breaking his law: "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a

Christian . . . let him glorify God on this behalf" (verses 15-16).

Why does God let the righteous suffer? Because it gives absolute proof where their true loyalty is. It allows those so tested to build godly character that will last for all eternity—character that continues on into eternal life when Christ returns to restore the government of God on earth and to reward individuals who serve him.

"And, behold," says Jesus, "I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. . . . Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life. . ." (Rev. 22:12, 14).

And, as Paul clearly explains, any suffering in this life by those choosing to obey God cannot compare with the tremendous reward to come later: "For I [consider] that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

God is Fair and Just

Where is God when little children suffer and die? God assumes the responsibility. He has been restraining himself these near 6,000 years, allowing this world to complete its lesson. But he is soon to intervene in human affairs by sending Jesus the Messiah the second time to put an end to suffering and ignorance by deposing Satan and restoring the government of God.

The fairness of God's way is in the fact that all who have ever lived or ever will live, will yet have an opportunity to choose right and have "right to the tree of life."

All of you who have lost a loved one can take heart. That loved one will live again by a resurrection to physical life in a strong healthy body! All who have ever lived and died in ignorance of God's way of life, or who ever will live, will be given their opportunity under the reign of the government of God, and by a resurrection, to live a normal, right way of life. Wrongs will be corrected. Sorrow, as in the case of tragedy involving children, will be turned to joy.

God is righteous! God is just! He

is merciful! These thousands of millions of adults and children, who did not fully understand God and did not have the chance to choose his way of life, will have their opportunity in a resurrection to physical life described by John in Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened [books of the Bible revealing the right way to live]; and another book was opened, which is the book of life:

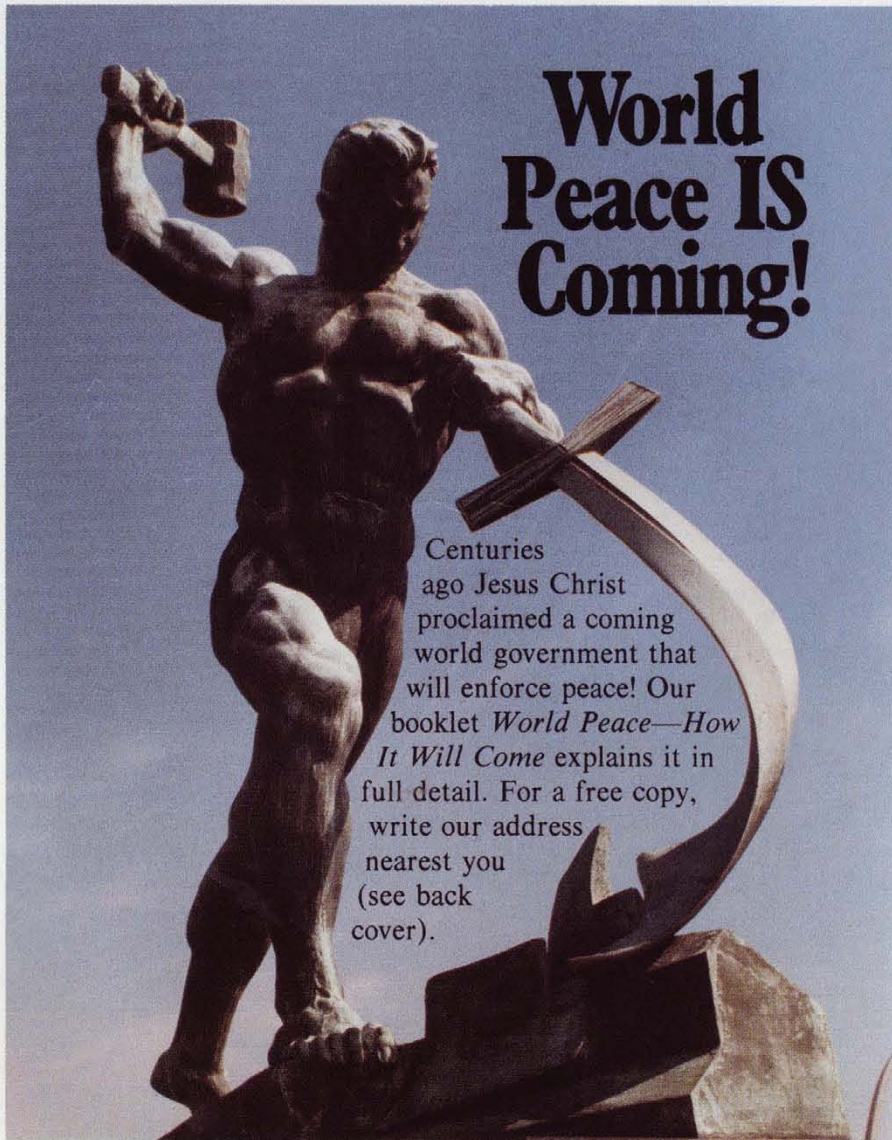
and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

How fair! They will live again! They will be taught Bible truth on how to live, and then be given a chance to live God's way.

And after that, God the Father himself will live with all those choosing his way of life. Then there will be no more heartache and human miseries: "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying,

'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away'" (Rev. 21:3-4 *Revised Authorized Version*).

What comforting words for all of us! □



**World
Peace IS
Coming!**

Centuries ago Jesus Christ proclaimed a coming world government that will enforce peace! Our booklet *World Peace—How It Will Come* explains it in full detail. For a free copy, write our address nearest you (see back cover).