

Ignite: Why Evil, Pain and Suffering 2

Objective: By the end of the lesson the student will understand three reasons the bible provides for evil, pain and suffering.

Bible Verses:

Revelation 12:9	Ephesians 6:10-12
II Corinthians 4:4	Ecclesiastes 9:10-12
Luke 13:1-5	Job 38:1-4
Romans 11:33	Revelation 20:5

Essential Question? Why does a loving, merciful God allow evil, pain and suffering?

Opening:

Theodicy is the problem of how God can be “just” and “righteous” given the fact there is so much suffering in the world that He has created and ultimately controls.

Teacher Note: Make sure all scriptures are read out loud in the class by student volunteers.

Content:

In our first lesson on this subject we looked at three reasons for evil, pain and suffering. In this lesson we will do the same thing. **The fourth** reason the Bible gives for evil, pain and suffering has to do with the Devil being in the world. The Devil (Satan) is permitted by God to cause some of the world’s evil, pain and suffering. He does this by deceiving humanity (**Revelation 12:9**). **Ephesians 6:10-12** also warns us that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against dark spiritual forces (Satan and his demons). Let’s not forget Satan is now the god of this age (**II Corinthians 4:4**) until Christ returns to set up His kingdom.

A **fifth** reason the Bible provides for pain and suffering in the world is time and chance. In **Ecclesiastes 9:11-12** we learn that time and chance happen to everyone. In other words bad things can happen to good people and good things can happen to bad people. We could go out and be involved in an auto accident through no fault of our own. God does not get intimately involved with everything happening in the world. Jesus makes this clear when He addresses the tower of Siloam falling on people in **Luke 13:1-5**. Some people thought if something bad happened to you---you must be a worse sinner than others. That is not the case. God can control weather events that cause destruction, but for the most part He allows the weather patterns to run their own course on the earth.

A **sixth** reason for pain and suffering is a mystery. Yes, there is no answer for some of the pain and suffering people endure on the earth. Job questioned why bad things had happened in his life and in **Job 38:1-4** God responds to Job. The answer God gives is basically, “Who are you to question me?” We will not have satisfactory answers to all the questions of life and some pain and suffering has to remain a mystery to us. **Romans 11:33** helps explain this by telling us God’s ways (some) are beyond our capacity to find out in this life.

Independent Practice:

Read the following quote to the class from Bart Ehrman. Ehrman is a professor of Religious Studies at North Carolina University. He was a staunch Episcopalian growing up and has a Masters in Divinity and a Phd in New Testament studies from Princeton Theological Seminary. Ask the class how they would reason against Ehrman losing his faith over the question of pain and suffering in the world. This quote is taken from Ehrman’s book, *God’s Problem*. “I could no longer explain how there can be a good and all-powerful God actively involved with this world, given the state of things. For many people who inhabit this planet, life is a cesspool of misery and suffering. I came to a point where I could simply not believe that there is a good and kindly disposed ruler who is in charge of it. The problem of suffering became for me the problem of faith.”

If the students don’t mention it make sure you address the fact Ehrman is not aware of “the last great day” and the fact God will resurrect all those who have suffered pain and heartache in this life. They will all have an opportunity for eternal life in a different world (**Revelation 20:5**).

Close/Reflect

Today we have looked at three more biblical reasons for why there is evil, pain and suffering in the world. There are a number of reasons for evil, pain and suffering in the world. Father knows best so we need to recognize in order for His plan to be worked out evil, pain and suffering will need to be experienced. Let’s not forget there is also good, pleasure and satisfaction in life too.

Any final comments or questions?

Sources: *God’s Problem*, by Bart D. Ehrman, (New York: Harper Collins), 2008.