

**More challenging than
the mountains on the
Moon...**



**More challenging than
the mountains on the
Earth...**



The Highest View: *Why There Is Suffering And Distress On Earth*



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**More challenging than
the mountains on the
planet Mars...**



... Why would God ever allow such
WIDESPREAD AFFLICTION and
SUFFERING in Human Life?

... Why must the *ENTIRE EARTH*
suffer and endure such *ENDLESS*
TROUBLE and *TORMENT*?

WHAT MIGHT BE GOD'S **RATIONALE** for SUSTAINING a world of such pain and misery?

The people of Earth have been asking this kind of hard question for centuries... and have rarely gotten any sort of convincing answer that seems really adequate!

There are several VALID EXPLANATIONS which can help us FATHOM THE PROBLEM of Universal Affliction and Suffering. Today we'll take a look at some of the most reasonable explanations that are currently revealed by the Bible and its authorities. READ ON!

THE PROBLEM OF AFFLICTION is one that is strongly related to other enigmas that also perplex humankind: the problems of DEATH, DISEASE, AND DECAY... of EVIL FLOURISHING... of PARADOXES... of the DEVASTATION OF EARTH... and of the FUTURE OF EARTH. In this tract, we will focus first on *the problem of affliction*.

We will deal with those related questions at a later time in separate tracts devoted to those subjects. We can summarize only one area of explanation at a time in the limited space that is available for a tiny tract!

"What's GOD'S JUSTIFICATION for SUSTAINING a world of UNIVERSAL AFFLICTION?" . . . Take a look at GOD'S ANSWER-KEY and it may help you to achieve a Godlike COMPREHENSION of His answer to this ancient and perplexing question.

***** From God's own omniscient viewpoint, THIS HUMAN SUFFERING IS PRESENTLY GOOD FOR US, AND THE NECESSARY AFFLICTIONS SERVE A VERY VALUABLE LONG-TERM PURPOSE. *******

**** From God's omniscient viewpoint, SUFFERING IS GOOD FOR US AND THE AFFLICTIONS HAVE A VERY VALUABLE LONG-TERM PURPOSE. *****

1. Afflictions and suffering are **DESIGNED TO RESTRAIN US FROM EVIL** that we might be more inclined to perpetrate if life were very easy.

Without the existence of the poverty, hard work, afflictions, and troubles which can sometimes crush (or lessen) our arrogance, we might have an even greater excess of time and pleasures available to us and thus be even more easily corrupted than we are when in the midst of deprivation and many trials.

2. Afflictions surmounted— when we humans can ascend beyond them with our faith intact— are **DESIGNED TO BE A PROOF** that Satan's wicked accusations against us were wrong and mostly a pack of lies.

3. Afflictions and suffering are **DESIGNED TO HUMBLE US**, to remind us of our own human weaknesses and the need to depend on God for all things.

4. Afflictions are **DESIGNED TO ALERT US AS A WARNING SIGN, FORCING US TO SLOW DOWN SO WE RECOGNIZE THE POTENTIALLY DESTRUCTIVE PROBLEMS** existing in our lives and in our world.

These serious problems could be physical, financial, biological, emotional, or spiritual— social injustices or personal behavior matters.

5. Afflictions in this present life are **DESIGNED TO SHOW US THAT THIS WORLD IS NOT WHAT IT SHOULD BE**, and that it must be transformed by God into what He wishes it to be.

6. Afflictions and suffering are **DESIGNED TO FORCE US TO PRACTICE THE VIRTUES OF ENDURANCE AND PERSEVERANCE.**

This sort of trial forces us to learn patience, in order that our lives may be more admirable and even bear witness to the angels that God's plan is right and proper.

7. Afflictions are **DESIGNED TO FORCE US TO LEARN ABOUT OURSELVES, OUR INADEQUACY, AND OUR OWN PERSONAL VALUES,** SO THAT WE will then GROW TOWARD THE SPIRITUAL MATURITY THAT GOD REQUIRES OF US.

Trials and troubles are often used by God for very practical results: It is sometimes necessary that our human egotism be assaulted in order that we humans should turn away from a familiar pattern of selfishness, foolishness, arrogance, or wickedness.

*Trials are often used by God to bring about some extremely pragmatic goals: **TO BRING UNBELIEVERS TO A POINT OF WEAKNESS THAT BRINGS ABOUT TRUE REPENTANCE and SPIRITUAL SALVATION**, or perhaps **TO CHASTISE BELIEVERS** who are guilty of wrong-thinking and wrong-behavior, or else **TO FORCE BELIEVERS TO RELY ON THEIR GOD IN A CONTINUING (EVEN LIFELONG) STATE OF TOTAL MEEKNESS AND COMPLETE DEPENDENCY.***

8. Afflictions and suffering have been deliberately **DESIGNED TO FORCE US TO SHOW GOD THE HARD CHOICES WE WILL MAKE** when we are under great stress and confronting grave difficulties.

*Trials of this sort help God to make His own final determinations as He proceeds with a very careful and lengthy developmental process of **SELECTING** and **REJECTING** from among the people of the Earth.*

9. Afflictions will one day come to an end. In the new world that God will then provide for us, there will be **no more pain, nor tears, nor suffering of any kind.**

God has a special project planned for those who make it through His training program to the final list... It's called "THE NEW EARTH."

10. Afflictions on this present Earth serve as a **preliminary counterpoint of** unpleasantness, yet these will make **the new world** of peace and safety much **more fully honored** and **appreciated** when God someday provides it for us.

The torments experienced on the Old Earth will make the heavenly raptures of God's next world all the more memorable and will increase our gratitude for God's reign when He rules at last.

11. Afflictions surmounted by humans living on this present Earth — when we have ascended beyond them with our faith intact — are **DESIGNED TO VALIDATE US** humans before the watchful eyes of all the angels in Heaven.

When we have passed through all these trials safely and successfully, without the destruction of our faith, it is only done by the grace of God and the power of His Holy Spirit within us.

Yet it is also true that the many astounding examples of the trials and afflictions which we have survived on Earth are designed to be evidence for the angels. These serve as proof that God is right in His decisions concerning our fate in this universe — that some should be given special status and privilege in a future time, while others shall be cast down and excluded.

FIVE KEYS TO ACHIEVING A GODLIKE COMPREHENSION OF UNIVERSAL SUFFERING:

1. From God's own omniscient viewpoint, THIS HUMAN SUFFERING IS PRESENTLY GOOD FOR US, AND THE NECESSARY AFFLICTIONS SERVE A VERY VALUABLE LONG-TERM PURPOSE.

AFFLICTIONS HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY DESIGNED TO FORCE US TO SHOW GOD THE HARD CHOICES WE WILL MAKE WHEN WE ARE UNDER GREAT STRESS AND CONFRONTING GRAVE DIFFICULTIES. TRIALS OF THIS SORT CAUSE PAIN, BUT CAN HELP GOD TO MAKE HIS OWN FINAL DETERMINATIONS AS HE PROCEEDS WITH A VERY CAREFUL AND LENGTHY PROGRAM — AN OLD DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS OF SELECTING AND REJECTING FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH.

This first key has been elucidated within the present tract re: the problem of universal affliction.

2. From God's omniscient viewpoint, **THERE ARE VALID REASONS FOR THE PRESENT EXISTENCE OF DISEASES AND PHYSICAL DEATH. . . AND EVEN WHEN THESE SERVE AS PRESENT-DAY TEMPTATIONS AND ASSAULTS OF SATAN, THEY HAVE A VALID AND USEFUL FUNCTION.**

THESE ARE USED BY GOD TO BENEFIT US HUMANS IN OUR EARTHLY PROGRESS AS WE ARE PUT THROUGH A CAREFUL PROCESS OF **DIVINE SELECTION** IN THIS ONE STAGE OF GOD'S LENGTHY **DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM** FOR EARTH.

This second key is discussed in more detail within a separate tract re: the problem of universal death, disease, and decay.

3. From God's omniscient viewpoint, it is clear that **THERE IS A VALID JUSTIFICATION EVEN FOR HIS PERMITTING THE ASSAULTS OF SATAN UPON THE FOLLOWERS OF GOD. . . AND THE STRANGE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED IN THE PRESENT TIME.**

THESE DIFFICULTIES MAKE THE WORLD SEEM BADLY UNBALANCED, BUT THEY ARE STILL USED BY GOD TO BENEFIT HIS LENGTHY DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM FOR EARTH.

This third key is discussed in more detail within a separate tract re: the problem of evil flourishing.

4. From God's omniscient viewpoint, **THERE IS A VALID JUSTIFICATION EVEN FOR HIS PERMITTING THE EXISTENCE OF HELL AND THE POWER OF SATAN. . . AND ALL THE STRANGE PARADOXES OF EXISTENCE IN THIS PRESENT TIME.**

THESE THINGS LIKEWISE ARE MANIPULATED BY GOD, AND THEY HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED INTO GOD'S GREAT PLAN IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT WILL ALL WORK TO BENEFIT HIS LENGTHY DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM FOR EARTH.

This fourth key is discussed in more detail within a separate tract re: the problem of paradoxes.

5. From God's point-of-view, *which is an omniscient perception of the Universe*, **OUR HUMAN SUFFERINGS ON THIS PRESENT EARTH SHOULD NOT BE OF EXCESSIVE CONCERN TO US**, due to the fact that there will eventually be a **transformed Earth** where there is no more affliction, nor death, nor evil.

GOD'S GREAT PLAN CALLS FOR THE CREATION OF AN ENTIRELY NEW AND TOTALLY RESTRUCTURED EARTH IN FULFILLMENT OF A PROCESS OF DIVINE SELECTION.

This fifth key is discussed in more detail within separate tracts re: the problem of devastation and the future of Earth.

THE CRITERION FOR DIVINE SELECTION...

1. Rather than the Darwinian concept of a very long process of "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest" (*meaning the strongest*) in a scheme of evolution, God's system of development is quite different!

God's plan is that there will be "DIVINE ELECTION" of all those who have chosen to accept His system of grace and mercy through Jesus Christ, and His plan calls for a "SURVIVAL OF THE LOYAL" instead.

2.

In this scheme which God Himself has formulated, it is *not* the **STRONGEST** who survive, but rather the **SUBMISSIVE!**

(In this regard, it is certainly true that God can make the weak person become strong. But a person who is too strong and egotistical God may choose to crush, in order that he—or she— will be humbled and will become submissive to the will of God!)

3.

God is continuously harvesting the Earth as His ever-progressing plan of **DIVINE SELECTION** goes forward, through a wise and millennia-long program of evaluation—through interminable *testing* of people and a very lengthy developmental process of **SELECTING** and **REJECTING**.

4. *Any soul can be spared on the basis of God's own painful sacrifice, by a belief in the salvation God offers through His chosen Messiah, His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ. Jesus was slain as the unblemished Lamb of God, as God's self-sacrifice for the sins of the world.*

Those souls that are spared will be the ones that have opened the door of the heart and have allowed Jesus Christ to come inside, through the Holy Spirit, to take up residence inside as the NEW CENTER of the Universe . . . as A BRILLIANT LIGHT AT THE CENTER OF THE SPIRITUAL "SOLAR SYSTEM."

5.

God asks for a **MAJOR SHIFT IN WORLD-VIEW**, for it truly requires a **COPERNICAN REVOLUTION IN THE MIND-SET** of a human being.

You must comprehend with an entirely new way of looking at the Universe — for to be among the redeemed, to be among the survivors who are granted eternal life with God, you must place **JESUS CHRIST AT THE CENTER OF YOUR UNIVERSE**, in the very place where once *YOUR OWN EGO* had ruled supreme!

6. All those souls who are not to be spared on this basis (those who have rejected God's words, His truth, and His sacrifice) will suffer eternal separation from God and from God's final achievement — *the recreated Paradise that will one day be revealed as His ultimate objective.*

This will be a **NEW EARTH** produced by God for those persons whom He has rescued (or harvested) from the present world. **God will populate the reconstructed Earth with all those whom He has chosen through His millennia-long DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM of DIVINE SELECTION.**

7.

This is **God's final goal**— His **objective** is to produce an entirely different world, a new and totally restructured world that will be vastly superior to this present world of distress and disorder, of countless evils and sin-produced chaos.

It is very certain that the **NEW EARTH** will be **IMMENSELY MORE PLEASANT** than this present Earth which will eventually be rejected and replaced!

8.

You can see it by placing Jesus Christ, **Who in the Trinity of God created our Universe**, upon a throne at the center of your heart! *He deserves that position and that kind of respect.* He was first **God The Son**, but when born in human flesh He became the only sinless and righteous person who ever lived. Yet He sacrificed Himself on a cross for your sake, taking all guilt and sins upon Himself, in order that you and I — that all people — **that whoever wishes for salvation might be rescued from the due punishment of sins.**

9.

All it really takes is a simple but sincere little prayer— one that you should make up in your own words. The prayer for deliverance and for God's leadership should come from your own heart!

Some important elements that you might include are:

- 1) your desire to turn away from the wrongness or evil of your past life, and your remorse over the sins of your previous life,
- 2) your desire for God's forgiveness and mercy through the act of sacrifice of His Only Begotten Son (Jesus Christ),
- 3) your desire to know God's leadership in your life,
- 4) your desire to learn more of God's truth through Bible study,
- 5) your desire to find fellowship with genuine believers.

If you will do this, you'll have a new contentment and peace as you accept **God's organizational plan for the Universe**. . . because you'll be letting **God be the Ruler of All Things in this world**. . . and in **your own life**.

God wants to bless you for all your long efforts to understand this very confusing and difficult Universe in which we live— so let Him reward your search with the grace of His forgiveness and enlightenment!

Jesus spoke of the people of God as being like a seed that is growing secretly, saying, "As for the Kingdom of God, it is as if a person should cast seed into the ground; and then he sleeps, and he rises up night and day to see that the seed is springing forth and always growing up, although he knows not exactly how. The Earth is bringing forth fruit from itself; first the blade, then the ears of corn, and after that the fullness of the ears of corn. And when all the **fruit of the Earth** has come forth, immediately God will use the sickle to reap the fields, because the **harvest-time** has come."

Excerpt from the book of Mark [4:26-29].

Jesus said of the people of God that "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a **net** that God has cast into the sea, and it gathers of every kind: When it is full, it will be pulled up on the shore, where they will sit down to sort the catch, and they will **collect the good fish in baskets, but the bad things will be thrown away. This is the way it will be at the end of the world: The angels shall come forth, and they will separate the unrighteous persons from among those justified by God . . .**"

Excerpt from the book of Matthew, who was a constant companion of Jesus and his devoted disciple [13:47-50].

A Letter From The Author

In 1979, I spent two months in Nepal. During November, I did the Pokhara-Muktinath Trek with my travel-buddy, a Swiss adventurer named Werner Baumgartner. Later, in December, we would also do the Everest Trek together.

For the first trek, we hiked day after day — all day, every day — through the mountains of Nepal... until we finally reached our destination at Muktinath. There we saw the goal of this trek.. what was called "The Temple of Miraculous Fire." It was an old building which was situated on a mountaintop.

In many ways, it was a very inspirational trip, but the "miraculous fire" that we found in that temple was just a little bit disappointing. When the altar curtain was pulled back by a Buddhist monk, we were given a chance to see the miniature wonder contained inside this Nepalese temple.

We saw then what the Temple of Miraculous Fire was all about. There was a tiny stream of water coming up through the ground, and it made a miniature waterfall behind that curtain. But there was more to it than that. An endless supply of natural gas was also gushing out of the ground, and it was kept lighted by the monks... so there was a flame of fire floating over the waterfall, one that seemed to burn eternally. That was the miracle of this temple, and the Buddhist pilgrims who travel there are greatly impressed by this combination of fire, water, earth, and air... the four basic elements in their cosmogony.

Imagine — a fire that floats on water, seemingly forever! Well, it is a rather unusual thing for a trekker to discover in this world, as you might guess.

Six months later, I came to the Pacific Island of Guam, where I would be living and working for the next five years. Soon after I got there, I became a genuine believer in Jesus Christ, and finally I became a diligent student of the Bible. My arrival on Guam brought me to a new comprehension. I understood that "miraculous fire" becomes a reality for a human being when God puts His Holy Spirit into a believer. This comes only through faith and a prayer to Jesus Christ. Then the human being becomes a temple for God's Holy Spirit. Amazing as it may sound, a mere human being is able to become a "Temple of Miraculous Fire." The fire of God's Holy Spirit will then burn in you eternally!

And what is more, Jesus Christ will also give you an endless supply of "living water," which will become in you a spring of Eternal Life.

The Christian believers of our Earth are all engaged in a great Journey to the East... the trek to a New Beginning and a New Earth. I hope you'll join us.

Our army is still growing, and we are looking for new recruits. That is a good thing, because it's what Jesus wants us to do. And as Rev. Richard Wurmbbrand has aptly stated in his book *Reaching Toward The Heights*: "If we become a larger party climbing together, we may succeed better."

I became a believer in 1980, right after I settled down for a while on the island of Guam. I didn't know it, but my Swiss pal Werner also became a believer in Christ during this same year, by an independent route.

I learned from his letters that Werner eventually studied theology at a Bible College in Switzerland. My old trekking buddy, the congenial baker from Switzerland, the pal with whom I had traveled so extensively during our globetrotting days... ended up becoming an evangelical pastor for the Reformed Free Church in Switzerland. He also became a missionary evangelist, working to this very day as a "church planter" in the more rural and unreached areas of his native country. He starts new churches there.

It's not surprising that we both became believers and followers of Jesus Christ. We traveled for many months inside a great many countries of this world, and we could both see how much this Earth is in need of God's Son.

I became a believer because Jesus Christ is our Gateway to the Truth of God. He is the Guardian of God's Absolutes, and He is the Announcer of God's Truth! When we see His face, we see the face of the Father in Heaven. When we hear His words, we hear the Truth about Heaven and Earth. The voice of Jesus Christ is the voice of God. Clothed in perfect righteousness and purity, He is eternally the Son of God.

The Devil has too many children already, but the Father in Heaven could use some more. If you become a child of God, you'll be proud to declare that you have become a member of His Family... and a brother to Jesus Christ!

In His Service,
Ken Street

More challenging than
the mountains on the
Earth...

More challenging than
the mountains on the
Moon...

God's
Earthward Outreach.

The people of Earth
abide.

This tract is distributed through the OCTO site by **Earth-Trekker's Mission**, which is a Christian outreach ministry. It is part of a commemorative edition that we are calling the **Earth-Trekker's Tracts** version.

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THIS GUIDE WAS WRITTEN FOR YOU BY...
Ken Street, a baptized follower of the Way.

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DESIGNED FOR THE EARTH-TREKKER TRACTS PROJECT AND OCTO

*... Why must the entire Earth endure
such endless trouble and torment?*

*... Why would God allow widespread
affliction and suffering on Earth?*

WHY SUCH AFFLICTION?