



# SUFFERING

Some people feel that God causes human suffering or that, at the very least, he is indifferent to it. But is that what the Bible teaches? You might be surprised at the answer.

## Does God cause us to suffer?

**WHAT PEOPLE SAY** Some say that everything that happens is God's will. Thus, they believe that God causes us to suffer. When natural disasters strike, for instance, they think that these events are God's way of punishing those who have sinned.

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS** The Bible clearly teaches that God does *not* cause us to suffer. For example, the Bible says that when we go through trials, it would be a mistake to say: "I am being tried by God." Why? Because "with evil things God cannot be tried, nor does he himself try anyone." (James 1:13) In other words, God never causes the trials we face or the suffering that follows. To do so would be wicked, but "God does not act wickedly."—Job 34:12.

If God does not cause us to suffer, then who or what does? Sadly, humans are often victimized by other imperfect humans. (Ecclesiastes 8:9) Additionally, we may face calamities because of "unexpected events"—that is, because of simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) The Bible teaches that ultimately "the ruler of this world," Satan the Devil, is responsible for human suffering, for "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (John 12:31; 1 John 5:19) It is Satan—not God—who causes people to suffer.

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*"For a certainty, God does not act wickedly."—Job 34:12.*



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## Does God care about our suffering?

**WHAT PEOPLE SAY** Some think that God is indifferent to our trials. For example, one writer cites what he calls God's "apparent lack of mercy or pity in reaction to our suffering." This writer argues that if God exists, he must view humans with "pitiless indifference."

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS** Far from depicting God as pitiless or indifferent, the Bible teaches that God is deeply moved by our suffering—and that he will soon bring an end to it. Consider three comforting truths found in the Bible.

**God is aware of our suffering.** From the very start of human suffering, not a single teardrop has gone unnoticed by Jehovah,\* whose "watchful eyes" see everything. (Psalm 11:4; 56:8) For example, when his worshippers in ancient times were being oppressed, God said: "I have certainly seen the affliction of my people." But was he only vaguely aware of their pain? No, for he added: "I well know the pains they suffer." (Exodus 3:7) Many people have found comfort in that truth alone—the thought that God is aware of everything we suffer, even the trials that others may not be aware of or fully understand.—Psalm 31:7; Proverbs 14:10.

**God feels for us when we suffer.** Jehovah God is not only aware of human suffering but also deeply moved by it. For example, God was sincerely troubled when his ancient worshippers faced trials. "During all their distress it was distressing to him," says the Bible. (Isaiah 63:9) Although God

is vastly superior to humans, he feels empathy for those who suffer—as if their pain were in *his* heart! Indeed, "Jehovah is very compassionate and merciful." (James 5:11; footnote) Additionally, Jehovah helps us to bear our suffering.—Philippians 4:12, 13.

**God will end all human suffering.** According to the Bible, God will bring an end to the suffering of every human on the planet. By means of his heavenly Kingdom, Jehovah will drastically change the human condition—for the better. Regarding that time, the Bible promises that God "will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4) What about those who have already died? God will bring them back to life here on earth so that they too can enjoy life free from suffering. (John 5:28, 29) Will anyone be plagued by painful memories of past suffering? No, for Jehovah promises: "The former things will not be called to mind, nor will they come up into the heart."—Isaiah 65:17.\* ■

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\* As to why God has allowed suffering for a time and how he will bring it to an end, please see chapters 8 and 11 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Also available at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org).

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***"During all their distress it was distressing to him."—Isaiah 63:9.***

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\* Jehovah is the name of God as revealed in the Bible.