



# Answers for Chris Lesson 2

Lane Cohee  
Spring 2014

# Answers for Chris

## Course Overview

---

- ▶ Lesson 1 - Chris' World – Values, Meaning and Truth in Our Culture
- ▶ Lesson 2 - Questions About God, Suffering and Pain
- ▶ Lesson 3 - Questions About Christian Exclusivity, Judgment and Hell
- ▶ Lesson 4 - Questions About Genocide and Slavery in the Bible
- ▶ Lesson 5 - Questions About Sexism and Homosexuality in the Bible
- ▶ Lesson 6 - Questions About the Bible and Science
- ▶ Lesson 7 - Questions About the Bible, Superstition, and Mythology
- ▶ Lesson 8 - Questions About the Message and the Messenger

# God, Suffering, and Pain

---



- ▶ Our world is full of seemingly capricious tragedy, suffering, and pain. If God is good and he really cared, how could he allow these things to happen?

# Our Anger and Sadness Over Suffering Actually Makes the Case for God

---

- ▶ Suffering and pain are directly or indirectly tied to the existence of evil in this world
  - ▶ Christianity speaks clearly and directly to the existence of evil. Other views either do not explain it or reject it
- ▶ Our anger and grief over suffering shows that we instinctively know it is unnatural and should not be
  - ▶ This was the reaction of Jesus when faced with a loved one's death (Jn 11) and it should be ours
  - ▶ However, this “visceral response” is not consistent with a belief system dependent on natural order and selection

# God Uses Evil and Suffering as Part of His Redemptive Plan

---

- ▶ God does not pretend that evil and suffering are outside his control e.g., Dt 32:39, Job
- ▶ God does not state that tragedy always follows direct “cause and effect” e.g., Lk 13:1-5
  - ▶ He does state that tragic events like these are a general result of sin and evil in the world
  - ▶ He does state tragic events like these should “touch our pain receptors” and drive us to seek him
- ▶ God does help us understand that pain and suffering isn’t necessarily pointless e.g., Gen 50, Ro 5:3
  - ▶ It is likely that suffering is the gateway by which God best shows his “people in action.”

# God Uses Evil and Suffering as Part of His Redemptive Plan

---



No other God has wounds

- ▶ Os Guinness

- ▶ He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Is 53:3)
- ▶ He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (Ro 8:32)

# God Promises an Ultimate End to Pain and Suffering for His People...But Not Yet

---

- ▶ Many claim that a good God would just eradicate evil. Jesus teaches us to be careful what we ask for...
  - ▶ Mt 13:24-30
- ▶ However, there is a day in which this reality will come
  - ▶ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (Rev 21:1-4)

# Some Questions We Might Ask Chris

---

- ▶ Since most pain and suffering e.g., genocide, school shootings, wars, suicide bombings is directly linked to human evil and cruelty, why are you so quick to put your confidence in humanity for solutions?
- ▶ If you instinctively reject and blame God because there is so much pain and suffering in the world, why don't you instinctively accept and praise God because there is so much joy and happiness in the world?