

# Why Does God Allow Undeserved Suffering?

The following article contains excerpts from “A Book of Bible Study”,  
Copyright 2014 by Joseph F. Harwood

<https://www.abookofbiblestudy.net/>

[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB](#)

At times, we may question why God would allow undeserved sufferings to touch the lives of His people, when He surely could have prevented them. As we seek answers from the Scriptures, we can recall that Isaiah 55:8-9 teaches that God’s ways and thoughts are above the ways and thought of men. Paul also taught in Romans 11:33 that God’s judgments are unsearchable, and that His ways are beyond man’s ability to understand.

In Ecclesiastes we also receive this insight: “and I saw every work of God, I concluded that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, “I know,” he cannot discover.” (Ecclesiastes 8:17). With these teachings in mind, we know that man will never be able to understand all that God does.

Our sovereign God limits the actions taken by all men, and He also limits the actions taken by Satan (Job 1:6-2:8). However, there are times when God allows suffering to affect the lives of His people through evil that is perpetrated by others, or through evil that is perpetrated directly by Satan himself.

When we as believers endure undeserved suffering that comes about as a result of the wrongdoing of others, then we are experiencing a share in the sufferings of Christ, who also suffered unjustly as a result of the wrongdoing of others. His sufferings happened according to the predetermined plan, purpose, and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23), as do the sufferings of every one of us who follows Him (John 12:24-26, Psalm 139:16).

When we consider our own sufferings, let us recall once again Jesus' teaching in Matthew 10:29-31, where He revealed that God is intimately familiar with every detail of His creation, even down to the number of hairs on our head. Nothing, not even an event as small as the death of a sparrow, happens in God's creation apart from His knowledge and His sovereign will.

For everyone who has been called to faith in Christ, God has ordained that the unjust sufferings which He has allowed to affect our lives are for us a share in Christ's sufferings. *These sufferings have been allowed to touch our lives by our sovereign God, because as He has also ordained, it will be through our sharing in the sufferings of His Son that we will realize a share in His eternal glory (John 12:24-26, Romans 8:17-18, Philippians 1:29, others)*. Unbelievers may also suffer as a result of the evil doing of others, but unlike the believer, they have been granted no share in Christ's sufferings and no share in His eternal glory.

Some refer to God's allowing suffering to occur in the lives of men as His "permissive" will, meaning that God knew these things would happen, and He did not stop them from happening, though He could have. However, when suffering and tragedy come into the lives of believers, God's word promises us that these things are working together, along with everything that God allows to touch our lives, for our ultimate good and for our future glory together with Christ in Heaven (Romans 8:28). For believers, and only for believers, the troubles and sufferings that we endure, all of which have been allowed to affect our lives by our sovereign God, will all be made to achieve for us an eternal measure of glory that far outweighs the grief and burden of the troubles themselves (2 Corinthians 4:16-18, others).