

The And Others Club

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Some time after I became a Christian I began to have questions about Christianity and my life. Why was my life so painful? Why were the plans for my life failing? Why wasn't God providing the prosperous, abundant life that I had been told about? I began to search the Bible for answers and in my search I found some surprising information about people in pain.

The And Others Club

***AND OTHERS** were tortured, not accepting their release . . . **and others** experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. **They** were stoned, **they** were sawn in two, **they** were tempted, **they** were put to death with the sword; **they** went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (**people** of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all **these** . . . did not receive what was promised . . . (Heb. 11:35b–40 emphasis added)*

All of the “*And Others*” had hard and painful lives and did not receive what God had promised them!

The apostles also had very hard and painful lives, especially Paul. By extending my studies outside the Bible, I found that most of them suffered horrible deaths!

This made me take a quick, but honest, look at history. If God is trying to create Heaven on earth, He is failing! If God is all-powerful, and all-knowing, and only wants to bring about a good world for me to live in – He should have been able to do so by now! If He is using human history to teach me how to become godly, He's still failing! (Someone once observed: “The only thing we have learned from history is that, we do not learn from history.” That is so true of me!) After all this research I had to admit: If God is a loving God who only wants to bless me, make me happy, and make this world a better place for me to live in – He is failing!

A Different Perspective

The Bible commands me to have God’s point of view—a spiritual perspective.

In the Old Testament book of Job, God reveals that He has a disagreement—a conflict—with Satan. It also reveals that humans are involved in this conflict! This conflict continues throughout the entire Bible. By understanding this conflict a new perspective and a new purpose for my life began to emerge.

Understanding The Conflict

In the beginning God created everything to operate perfectly under His wonderful rulership. But Satan *chose* to rebel against God’s rulership. Satan wanted, and still wants, to take God’s place as the supreme ruler of all creation!

Satan’s rebellion affected every area of creation. One-third of the angels in Heaven and all the humans on earth followed him. Because of this, Satan’s rulership now includes an area of heaven and the entire earth.

The New Perspective

From God’s spiritual perspective there is an ongoing conflict for the rulership of all creation.

A New Purpose

God’s purpose, or goal, is not simply to save me, make me happy, and make this a wonderful place for me to live. God’s goal is to reconcile all creation back to Himself.

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Christ, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself . . . I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

(Colossians 1:19–20, emphasis & clarification added)

So what is reconciliation? I found that in the Bible reconciliation means “to

bring back into unity.” When this unity is accomplished, everything is once again, brought back under God’s wonderful, unchallenged, rulership – for all eternity!

God is in the process of destroying Satan’s rulership and regaining an unchallenged rulership over His entire creation; and He is using humans —not angels— to accomplish this! This means that God has a different purpose for me than I first thought. This is why I —AND OTHERS— have had such painful lives!

By knowing my life has a spiritual purpose and is important to all creation for all eternity, I can now accept the present trials in my life. It doesn’t make the trials any less painful but it does strengthen me to push on through the trials. This eternal, universal perspective is why all the “And Others” stayed obedient unto death!

Different Questions

All this surprising information about God reconciling His entire creation, for all eternity, and His people who were suffering, but stayed obedient unto death, made me ask some different questions about myself.

In the beginning of my walk with the Lord: Did I accept the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior because I was miserable, in trouble, and only wanted a more pleasant earthly life? When I tried to follow Him did the pain and suffering from that attempt dull my desire to follow Him? In the daily routine of just trying to live, did I find that following the Lord Jesus Christ was not all that important to me? Do I actually believe that by His death Jesus paid the ultimate eternal penalty for all my sins and that I belong to Him? Then I asked the hard questions:

Do I now live to serve the Lord Jesus Christ?

or

Do I think Jesus lives to serve me?

My New Answers

My original questions with new biblical answers.

Question: Why is there so much pain in my life?

Answer: Because I am involved in a conflict between God and Satan (Genesis 3:15; Ephesians 6:11–18).

Question: Why doesn't God turn this world into the perfect place for me to live?

Answer: Because Satan is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4)!

Question: “What is the purpose of my life?”

Answer: I am not here for my glory, or comfort. God put me on this Earth to glorify Him by *choosing* to be obedient to His rule, not Satan's rule—that is my job. I am only successful at my job, and my life, when I *choose* to destroy Satan's rulership over me by *choosing* to —personally— obey God and to look forward to my eternal salvation (Isaiah 43:7; Genesis 3:15; Acts 26:18; 1 Peter 5:8–9; Romans 16:20; 14:23).

“choose for yourselves today
whom you will serve”
(Joshua 24:15)

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