

# Greater than Part 2: Week 3 v2

## Other religions

**Warm-up.** Have you ever had an amazing worship experience? Where and what was it? At that moment how did you feel about God and yourself?

Q1: Pastor Paul said that we are wired for worship. Do you think that is true of everyone? READ Ecc 3:11 and Gen 4:26. Why then do many people not find this desire met in God?

One reason that is often given is that they cannot believe in a God who allows suffering. This is the argument from evil (or suffering). They say, "If God is all good then he cannot be all powerful or if God is all powerful, He cannot be all good".

### OTHER RELIGIONS

We are going to look at how 3 other religions or "isms" deal with this issue.

If you wish to go into more detail on the different worldviews of other religions, there is a good summary in the link below.

<https://www.everystudent.com/features/religions-of-the-world.html>

1. Most Hindus believe a person has countless rebirths, which, because of Karma, inevitably include suffering as a payback or 'balancing' for previous 'sins'. Hindus believe it is a person's 'sin' or failings that cause these rebirths.
2. Buddhist also believe in many rebirths and believe that it is necessary to purify one's heart and to let go of all yearnings toward sensual desires and the attachment to oneself. This leads to spiritual enlightenment and an end to the cycle of birth and rebirth.
3. Islam. Moslem means one who submits. All events are controlled by Allah and cannot be questioned. Suffering is simply the will of Allah and a follower just needs to submit.
4. Atheism. Believes that there is no rhyme or reason for suffering. Suffering is the unhappy consequences of a world controlled by chance. Richard Dawkins (see quote at the end) said, "DNA doesn't know or care". There is, therefore, no explanation or morality to suffering.

### A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

Q2: Pastor Paul stated that people are responsible for much of the suffering in this world. Do you agree or disagree? Can you give some reasons or examples why? What type of events are they not responsible for?

1. What God created was good. Gen 1:27,31. God created the perfect world but mankind chose rebellion and self-rule or autonomy.

Q3: How is autonomy different to freedom? Can you give some examples of the difference? What are the consequences of our choice to be autonomous? Do you think people today believe that they live in freedom?

*(HINT: Autonomy – acting in your own self interests. Think about what we have freedom from and freedom for? Freedom implies boundaries)*

2. As Christians we believe we live in a world that is cursed & groaning (Rom 8:20-22) as it waits a rebirth. This is very different to what naturalism and humanism believes.

Q4: Should God intervene & stop all suffering? What would happen if He did?

*(HINT: How might He do that? Where would He stop intervening? What would that make us?)*

3. No other religion offers a way to deal with suffering other than in another life or state.

**READ** John 11:38-44.

Q5: How did Jesus show his identification with the pain of Lazarus' death?

Q6: How did He show by his life that He had conquered pain?

Q6: How can we be sure that God will be with us in our suffering? Rom 8:28

4. We believe that Jesus is all good & all powerful. Being resurrected proves both His power and love.

5. Suffering is not a judgement from God. READ John 9:1-3. People don't 'deserve' suffering. But still God allows us to question Him - no other religion allows that.

Q7: Why does God not deliver us from all suffering and pain? How can God bring good out of it?

6. God has promised that one day He will deal with pain and suffering forever. Rev 21:4 How does that give hope?

**“The Existence of evil does not eliminate God but God will eventually eliminate suffering”.**

**SHARE:** Share some of your own experiences of God's presence during pain or suffering.

8 LIVE

***In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and we won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at the bottom no design, no purpose, no evil, and no-good; nothing but blind, pitiless Indifference. DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is and we dance to its music.'***

***Richard Dawkins, The evolution of the Darwin***

freedom