

“Where Is God?”

Last Sunday, a string of blasts rocked Sri Lankan hotels and churches, killing nearly 300 people and wounding 500 more. The devastation was horrendous, with half-clothed dead bodies drenched in blood. Churchill Karunaratne, 52, said, “My kids have seen it all on the TV and now they are very scared about going to church.” He added, “They are asking many questions such as ‘Where is God?’”

I can’t imagine living through such a horrible act, and since Sunday the Sri Lankan government has said that a radical Islamist group is responsible for the atrocity. While someone may rightly ask about the existence and help of God, perhaps a better question to ask would be what happened to man? Ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God, this sin-cursed world has borne the scars of a people who do the will of their spiritual father, the devil (John 8:44).

In being as respectful as possible to the people who suffered, God is not to be blamed for the sins of man. Job could not see what we see. He could not see that the devil, albeit constrained by God, brought almost inconsolable amounts of grief to his life (Job 1:6-12; 2:7). The woman who was “bowed together” for 18 years was so because she was bound by Satan (Luke 13:16). Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” was a “messenger of Satan” (2 Corinthians 12:7). Moreover, in Romans 1:26, 28 Paul said that God “gave up” and “gave over” men who were determined to live unrighteously (cp. Acts 7:42). God let them do what they wanted. C. S. Lewis, in *The Problem of Pain*, wrote that men “enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self-enslaved.”

Also, the Bible does not assure a peaceful life as a follower of Christ. The Sri Lankans were killed because they were Bible believers, intent on showing their respect to God on Easter Sunday. Most of Christ's apostles were martyred. Someone who dies as a result of persecution has a reward in heaven, but not necessarily a peaceful existence on earth (Matthew 5:10-12).

Finally, if one wants to know where God was, He could be seen in the people rushing towards the carnage, not running away from it. He could be seen in the man that carried the eight children to safety. He could be seen in the people who are praying and wanting a better world. God is seen in the people who act in a holy way. Satan is seen in the people who murder and kill. Don’t confuse the two or you’ll be forever blaming God for acts He didn’t commit or support.

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