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Problem Of Pain



Synopsis

[MP3-CD audiobook format in Vinyl case. *NOTE: The MP3-CD format requires a compatible audio CD player.] [Read by Robert Whitfield -aka- Simon Vance] For centuries, Christians have been tormented by one question above all: "If God is good and all-powerful, why does he allow his creatures to suffer pain?" Is there justice or wisdom to be won by suffering, or some reward beyond understanding? And what of the suffering of animals, which neither deserve pain nor can be improved by it? Is the quantity and variety of suffering in the world inconsistent with, or evidence against, an omnipotent and perfectly loving God? The greatest Christian thinker of all time sets out to disentangle this knotty issue. With his signature wealth of compassion and insight, C. S. Lewis offers answers to these crucial questions and shares his hope and wisdom to help heal a world hungering for a true understanding of human nature, free will, and the will of the Divine.

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Customer Reviews

The Problem of Pain answers the universal question, "Why would an all-loving, all-knowing God allow people to experience pain and suffering?" Master Christian apologist C.S. Lewis asserts that pain is a problem because our finite, human minds selfishly believe that pain-free lives would prove that God loves us. In truth, by asking for this, we want God to love us less, not more than he does. "Love, in its own nature, demands the perfecting of the beloved; that the mere 'kindness' which tolerates anything except suffering in its object is, in that respect at the opposite pole from Love." In addressing "Divine Omnipotence," "Human Wickedness," "Human Pain," and "Heaven," Lewis succeeds in lifting the reader from his frame of reference by artfully capitulating these topics into a

conversational tone, which makes his assertions easy to swallow and even easier to digest. Lewis is straightforward in aim as well as honest about his impediments, saying, "I am not arguing that pain is not painful. Pain hurts. I am only trying to show that the old Christian doctrine that being made perfect through suffering is not incredible. To prove it palatable is beyond my design." The mind is expanded, God is magnified, and the reader is reminded that he is not the center of the universe as Lewis carefully rolls through the dissertation that suffering is God's will in preparing the believer for heaven and for the full weight of glory that awaits him there. While many of us naively wish that God had designed a "less glorious and less arduous destiny" for his children, the fortune lies in Lewis's inclination to set us straight with his charming wit and pious mind. --Jill Heatherly --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"It is really a pleasure to be able to praise a book unreservedly, and that is just what I can do with 'The Problem of Pain'." --Guardian "A really remarkable book. It says so many things which seem to me to need saying today. It will help many people to revise what they had taken for granted and face possibilities which had not occurred to them." --Spectator "This is an incredibly lucid and unprejudiced work . . . Lewis' treatise on suffering, read by [Simon Vance], is like listening to a very interesting, yet intellectually revered, friend talk about a thorny subject over a cup of tea." --Paradise "The point about reading C. S. Lewis is that he makes you sure, whatever you believe, that religion accepted or rejected means something extremely serious, demanding the entire energy of the mind." --Harper's "Lewis succeeds in lifting the reader from his frame of reference by artfully capitulating these topics into a conversational tone, which makes his assertions easy to swallow and even easier to digest. Lewis is straightforward in aim as well as honest about his impediments . . . The mind is expanded, God is magnified, and the reader is reminded that he is not the center of the universe . . . While many of us naively wish that God had designed a 'less glorious and less arduous destiny' for his children, the fortune lies in Lewis' inclination to set us straight with his charming wit and pious mind." --.com, editorial review

As always C.S.Lewis at his best. This is part of a sweet triage of the gains we are to achieve through life's many depths of. despair. Always with the Masters hand.

This is a masterpiece of a treatise on the problem of pain. CS Lewis with both an ultra wide lens and also with great precision maps out the Christian solution to the problem that has dogged the individual sufferer and theologians and philosophers through the ages. Einstein once said no

problem can be solved when we remain at the state at which the problem was created in the first place. Well CS Lewis here succeeds in lifting his readers to a higher plane from which to view the problem. At this new plane somehow pain seems to diminish and Christ and His works takes on a presence of greater significance. I personally am very grateful that this book is still available and am especially grateful that the audio version came bundled with the kindle edition. Sandeep Thomas

Perhaps, my favorite of Lewis's for his bravery and clarity in tackling this subject. It remains a mystery, but certain restraints upon God make sense....the intrinsic impossibilities...are core ideas. God is on a mission to make us lovely, like it or not.

Love the insight and genius of SC Lewis. A complete smarty pants ... sometimes my ADD gets the better of me, and I have to re-read the heavy writing style but he is funny and genuine.

How does one review any book by CS Lewis? He is one of my favorite authors... this book approaches pain as only CS Lewis can. Always an unexpected depth.

The pages are yellowing on my modest collection of C.S. Lewis paperbacks. I've read them several times over the years, and they ring as strong and true as the first time through them, if not more so. In the Problem of Pain, Lewis deals with the difficulty of suffering in a world created by a good and all powerful God. As a Catholic, I understand that suffering exists to bring about a greater good, but why is that? Basically, it comes down to our free will; if humans are beings free to choose and not simply automatons, we have to have the ability to go bad: we are self-absorbed rebels and, as Lewis explains, "the human spirit will not even begin to try to surrender self-will as long as all seems to be well with it." There are plenty of great, informative reviews already written, but I just want to highlight two passages that stood out to me; I'm a sucker for dogs, so these both had added impact. The first passage is an analogy to help explain why pain is involved - even necessary - in God's plan for us to reach perfection: "Man interferes with the dog and makes it more lovable than it was in mere nature. In its state of nature it has a smell, and habits, which frustrate man's love: he washes it, house-trains it, teaches it not to steal, and is so enabled to love it completely. To the puppy the whole proceeding would seem, if it were a theologian, to cast grave doubts on the 'goodness' of man: but the full-grown and full-trained dog, larger, healthier, and longer-lived than the wild dog, and admitted, as it were, by Grace to a whole world of affections, loyalties, interests, and comforts entirely beyond its animal destiny, would have no such doubts." How true. House breaking

must be a complete mystery to that furry, little, tail-wagging barbarian; and the concept of bathing must be as linked in the mind of a puppy to torture as food is to pleasure. Lewis continues: "It will be noted that the man takes all these pains with the dog, and gives all these pains to the dog, only because it is an animal high in the scale - because it is so nearly lovable that it is worth his while to make it fully lovable. He does not house-train the earwig or give baths to centipedes. We may wish, indeed, that we were of so little account to God that He left us alone to follow our natural impulses - that He would give over trying to train us into something so unlike our natural selves: but once again, we are asking for not more love, but less." The next passage, near the end of the book, deals with the idea of vicariousness in Christianity. As we are saved and resurrected in the man Christ, so too, Lewis supposes, our pets may - may, mind you - be taken up through us as we are taken up through Christ: "And in this way it seems to me possible that certain animals may have an immortality, not in themselves, but in the immortality of their masters. And the difficulty about personal identity in a creature barely personal disappears when the creature is thus kept in its proper context. If you ask, concerning an animal thus raised as a member of the whole Body of the homestead, where its personal identity resides, I answer 'Where its identity always did reside even in the earthly life -- in its relation to the Body and, specially, to the master who is the head of that Body.' In other words, the man will know his dog: the dog will know its master and, in knowing him, will be itself. To ask that it should, in any other way, know itself, is probably to ask for what has no meaning. Animals aren't like that, and don't want to be." Since reading that passage, I have often wondered, petting my dogs as they rest so blissfully on the couch, if one day I may find that in return for the adoration and companionship they have afforded me, if, in 'civilizing' them, I have not done a greater thing than I know.

As usual CS Lewis is masterful in his logic and reasoning, guiding the reader through one of the most challenging aspects of the Christian faith: suffering, mourning, sadness, and pain. In this book, Lewis tackles "the problem of pain," with his signature penchant for syllogistic reasoning followed by analogy after analogy until you are left with so many angles of understanding that you may have to read the book two or three times just to be able to straighten out your own explanation of the ideas involved. Wonderfully written. Challenging. Thoughtful. Enduring. Highly recommend.

C S Lewis is a great author!

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