

When & Why Bible Study – Week 3

Read chapter 1 of Kushner's *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* and answer the following questions:

1. According to Kushner, what is the only question which really matters? How is that question different than the title of his book? Do they mean different things? If so, what?
2. Kushner states there are serious limitations to the idea that God gives people what they deserve, that our misdeeds cause our misfortune. Which one of these limitations do you identify with? Why?
3. Kushner states that one of the ways people try to make sense of situations when people *don't* get what they deserve is by believing that "if we wait long enough, we will see the righteousness of God's plan emerge." What is one of the reasons Kushner rejects this way of thinking?
4. Another way of explaining the suffering of the innocent is by saying it serves some higher purpose. How can this be a comforting belief to have? How can it fall short?
5. What does Kushner say is the problem with the idea that suffering is God's way of teaching a person a lesson?
6. Some people take comfort in believing that the innocent are compensated for their suffering in the afterlife. What does Kushner say can be the problem with this way of thinking?

7. Many of the ways we try to make sense of suffering comes directly from scripture. Choose one of the following scriptures and state what it teaches us about suffering: Job 1:20-21, Proverbs 3:11-12, Proverbs 12:21, Psalm 68:6, Psalm 119:75, Deuteronomy 11:26-28. (Feel free to choose another scripture.)

8. Kushner criticizes the scripture from Isaiah 3:10-11 because it doesn't reflect reality – it doesn't always go well with the righteous, wicked people prosper, etc. If Kushner is correct in his analysis, why do you think this scripture and others like it are included in the Bible? (NOTE: there is no "right" answer to this question!!)