

And finally, to the person who asks what good is God? Who needs religion, if these things happen to good people and bad people alike? I would say that God may not prevent the calamity, but He gives us the strength and the perseverance to overcome it. Where else do we get these qualities which we did not have before? . . .

When people who were never particularly strong in the face of adversity, when people who tended to think only of themselves become unselfish and heroic in an emergency, I have to ask myself where they got these qualities which they would freely admit they did not have before. My answer is that this is one of the ways in which God helps us when we suffer beyond the limits of our own strength.

Again, we can agree with Rabbi Kushner that God does not cause bad things, but we cannot agree that God is unable to prevent them. God may not choose to prevent many calamities, but He is certainly able to!

And we can agree that God is the ultimate source of all good – of human strength and perseverance and unselfishness and self-sacrificing concern – but we must affirm that He is also active in His world, working all things together for the good of His saints, and that He hears the prayers of His suffering people, and has the power and inclination to relieve their suffering whenever that relief accomplishes His purposes and is truly for their highest good as He defines "good."

Vast amounts of suffering are prevented or alleviated by God's general grace and special grace, both through His general mercy and general benevolence to all human beings, and through His special mercy and special love to His redeemed children.

When we reflect on the fact that no sinner deserves any of God's favor, and that God is therefore under no obligation to relieve the consequences of sin, we are once again overwhelmed by the greatness of the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are moved to say with the songwriter:

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt;
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.