

Divine Providence
(Part 8)

Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?
Psalms 73:1-17

God and the Existence of Evil

- Existence of evil and an all powerful God must be reconciled.
 - Moral evil.
 - Natural calamities.
- Some believe only good things happened to the elect and evil to the non-elect. (cf. Calvinists)

God and the Existence of Evil

- What happens when bad things happen to good people?
- Many lose their faith.
- The Psalmist (**Psalms 73:1-17**) also struggled with the weight of this question until he "... went into the sanctuary of God ..."
- There he saw things in the light of eternal values and understood that God truly is good, provident, and just.

God is Provident

- **Define providence:**
Providence is the working of God through His provision in the natural and spiritual realms, and yet it is a control that violates neither the sovereignty of the human will nor the divine natural and spiritual laws.

God's providence is His continuous activity of preserving and governing the whole of creation by His wisdom and goodness and power, for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose and for the glory of His name.

God is Provident

- Seen in many lives.
- Generally. **Matthew 5:45**
- Specifically:
 - Joseph
 - Esther
 - Paul
 - Job

Facts to Remember

- Can do above what we ask
 - **Ephesians 3:20**
- Provided plan of salvation
 - **Hebrews 5:9**
- Makes provision for His own
 - **Hebrews 13:5-6**

Study

- We can understand some things about “provisions” of God’s help
- Must avoid two dangerous extremes
- Find it difficult with certainty which act or event to label as part of His providential care
 - Ecclesiastes 9:1
 - Ecclesiastes 3:11
 - 2 Corinthians 5:7
 - Proverbs 3:5-6

Two Evils–Two Sources

The Devil Genesis 3:2ff; James 1:13-14; cf. Genesis 3:16ff

- Moral Evil
- Natural calamities
- Description of Satan
 - John 8:44 Murderer and liar
 - 1 John 3:8 Sinneth from the beginning

Ascribing Evil to Satan

- Satan allowed to act within certain limitations
 - Job 1:12
- Instrumentality of men
 - Job 1:13-17
- Force of nature
 - Job 1:18-19
- Limited to Job’s person
 - Job 2:6

Satan’s Work

- Job’s body was struck with boils
 - Job 2:7-8
- Wife and friends lost faith in him
 - Job 2:9; 2:11ff
- Society rejected him
 - Job 17:6; 19:13-22
- Evil of disbelief and disloyalty
 - Job 2:11-13

Remnant from Babylon

Zechariah 3:2

- God cleansed the priesthood to fulfill proper function
- Satan stood at right hand of Joshua the high priest “*to be his adversary.*”
- God overruled Satan by putting the priestly garments on the priests

Miracles of Jesus

Luke 13:10-17

- Evil is the result of an intruding power contrary to God’s goodness and desire
- Healed women of with an infirmity of 18 years
- Challenged by the ruler of the synagogue

Satan Acts in Natural World?

- Cannot determine the extent to which Satan acts in the natural world
- In the past he acted
- Acted within divine limitations
- Instrument in God's hand
 - Ecclesiastes 3:11-14

Ascribing Evil To God

- Deuteronomy 30:15
- How would God **set evil** before the people?
 - **Cause** and **Effect** – Inevitable consequences
- Amos 3:6 "shall evil befall a city, and Jehovah hath not done it?" cf. Amos 4:6ff

Ascribing Evil To God

- Deliverance of His people from Babylon
 - Isaiah 45:7 "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and **create evil**; I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things."

Ascribing Evil To God

- Rebuking Judah for seeking help from Egypt instead of Him
 - Isaiah 31:2 "Yet he [Jehovah] also is wise, and will **bring evil**, and will not call back his words."
- **Evil of judgment brought on by rejection and disobedience of divine law!**
 - Romans 1:18-32

Why Do Men Suffer?

- Foolish to presume to know **all** the causes behind every specific affliction.
 - Proverbs 14:12
- Yet, the Scriptures reveal **some** reasons why some may suffer.

Why Do Men Suffer?

- Some suffer as direct consequence of their sins
 - Galatians 6:7-9
- Some suffer because of sins of others
 - Mark 6:18-27 John the Baptist
 - Acts 7-8 Stephen

Why Do Men Suffer?

- Some suffer because of the free moral agency of men
 - Joshua 24:15
 - 2 Corinthians 11:23ff Paul suffered.
 - Luke 10:30-33 Man fell into the hands of robbers.

Why Do Men Suffer?

- Some suffer because the laws of nature given to maintain order in the universe have been violated.
 - Acts 20:9 Eutychus
- Some are persecuted because they are righteous
 - 1 Peter 4:12-19 (cf. Matthew 5:10-12; 2 Timothy 3:12)
 - Hebrews 11:32-37

Why Do Men Suffer?

- Suffering makes it possible for us to grow in relationship with God.
 - Hebrews 12:6-11; 1 Peter 1:6-9; cf. Romans 8:18

Why Do Men Suffer?

- Mistake to believe that all human suffering is punitive
 - Job 1:1; John 9:1-3
- Many children of God have suffered in the pages of the Scriptures!
 - Stephen. Acts 7:59-60
 - Paul. 2 Corinthians 11:23
 - James. Acts 12:1ff

Benefits of Suffering

- The suffering God **permits** can be used for the **benefit of those who experience it** – or those whose **lives are touched by it.**
 - Romans 5:3-4
 - James 1:2-4
 - 2 Corinthians 1:3-6

Conclusion

- When Asaph (**Psalms 73:17-28**) went into the sanctuary of the Lord and reconsidered the question of human suffering, he saw the situation more clearly.
- When the latter end was considered everything then is brought into proper perspective. cf. **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**
- Suffering now fades into nothing when laid against the backdrop of eternal glory. **Romans 8:18; cf. 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1**