



April 19, 2024

Good and Evil
Part 3, The Doubt

Why do bad things happen to good people? We talked about this just a bit in this month's introductory lesson. This is a question that often generates **doubt**: doubt of God's concern for his children, doubt of God's ability to protect and bless his children, and sometimes even doubt of God's existence altogether. We've all heard the emotional challenge, "If God is loving and all-powerful, then why _____?", and you can fill in that blank. Unbelievers always struggle with this question, often using it as a justification why they choose NOT to believe. And even some believers struggle with it, causing them to abandon worship and service to the Savior. But... God gives us the answer to this question in His Bible!

First, everything that natural men (as opposed to spiritual men) label as "bad", whether it be in the form of disability, disease, injustice, conflict, geologic and meteorological chaos, and finally, death, is a consequence of mankind's free will choice to sin, to rebel against God. God gave His perfect human creation free will. Our original parents exercised that free will and chose to rebel against their Creator. And with that choice came horrible consequences: an entropic world, entropic bodies, corrupted consciences, people who give themselves over to wickedness (e.g., Cain), and finally death. WE are the cause of "bad"; it is what WE inherited. WE chose it!

Second, let's define the two objects in that question: "bad things" and "good people". Again, only our Creator, who is working all things for the good of his redeemed children, has the authority to label an event or a condition as "bad" or "good". What appears, to the natural man, as "bad", e.g., the congenital blindness of the man described in John 9, might actually have been the best thing that could have ever happened to this man. This man's congenital blindness brought him into a redeemed relationship with the Messiah. Could it be that God knew, that apart from this man's blindness, he would never have been born again? I believe this man, who is now in Heaven with Jesus Christ, is still praising God for the GRACE that allowed him to be born blind so that he might come to repentance, belief, and eternal life. Next, let's ask, who are the "good" people? Again, the natural (i.e., the non-spiritual) man categorizes every person as "good", if they haven't robbed banks, abused children, or committed murder. But again, only God is qualified to define "good", and He says, "*There is none good, no not one*" (Psalm 14:3; Psalm 53:3; Romans

3:12). So actually, the question itself is fallacious on both accounts. We can't judge what is bad or good in the scope of the spiritual and eternal, and there are NO good people. We are all sinners; we all live with the debilitating consequences of sin!

Third, God is Sovereign, and this means His hands are not tied by man's choice to rebel and the hard consequences we have earned. God taught Jeremiah that we are like the potter's clay; He can mold us and remold us as He wishes, and it will always be for our ultimate spiritual good and His glory. God can and will use those things that we consider "bad"—our consequences—for our ultimate good. And for born-again believers, He will use the tests of life to mature us and make us into the image of His Dear Son (Romans 8:29).

So... "Thank you Father for loving us and even using the mess we have made to bring us to repentance and to mature us in the faith!"

God bless and consider!