



2 Peter 3:1-9 Why Hasn't Judgment Come?

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One of the most common questions people have about God is, "Why does a good, all-powerful God let bad things happen to good people?" The question seems powerful, but in reality it is fundamentally flawed when asked of Christian theology because Christians believe that there are no good people – that we are all sinners, deserving of God's punishment and wrath for choosing to rebel against Him. Christians recognize that we live in a flawed world and we suffer from the effects of sin all around us. We understand that people sin against us and sometimes it hurts. We understand that God's perfect creation is marred by sin and sometimes it hurts us through birth defects, illnesses, and natural disasters.

As Christians we can understand why bad things happen to good people. But what about the similar question, "Why don't bad things happen to bad people?"

Why do some people who live openly sinful and self-centered lives seem to be doing so well? Why do they seem to have so much money and so much fun? Why isn't God judging them? Why aren't they struck down instantly for their sin? Why do they seem to be getting away with it?

The answer is, they're really not - just give it some time. Sooner or later, we all face judgment – there is no escape.

I don't know if you caught this in the news a few weeks ago, but:¹

"Hungarian authorities have put a 97-year-old Nazi war crimes suspect, Laszlo Csatory, under house arrest.

He is number one on the Nazi-hunting Simon Wiesenthal Center's wanted list and is accused of assisting in the murder of 15,700 Jews."

He served as a senior police officer in the city where Hungary's first Jewish ghetto was established after the Nazis took over. He was convicted in absentia and condemned to death in 1948 by a Czechoslovakian court but never apprehended.

"After the war, Mr Csatory escaped to Canada where he worked as an art dealer in Montreal and Toronto. He disappeared in 1997 after he was stripped of his Canadian citizenship.

¹ **Hungary Nazi war crimes suspect Laszlo Csatory detained**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-18884106> last accessed on August 4, 2012.

Efraim Zuroff, the Wiesenthal Center's chief Nazi-hunter, urged the Hungarian authorities to prosecute Mr Csatory, saying: "The passage of time in no way diminishes his guilt and old age should not afford protection for Holocaust perpetrators."

Talk about the long arm of the law! But you know what, even if this guy had never been caught on earth, he would still face an eternal judgment.

And the truth is, sometimes people do seem to get away with things their whole lives – sometimes they don't get caught. Sometimes no one ever busts them on earth, but there is more to life than the short time we spend here.

Peter picks up on this same theme this morning writing to warn us that even though God doesn't seem to be judging people immediately that doesn't mean He won't or that He isn't really there. Turn with me to 2 Peter 3:

[1](#) Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), [2](#) that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, [3](#) knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, [4](#) and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation."

Peter says, "I'm writing to remind you of the truth. But you will have to choose," **and some of you in here this morning also need to choose**, "who will you believe, the words of the Scripture – the words of the prophets and the apostles, who tell you that there is a God, and that He will judge you for your actions, or the words of these scoffers who say, 'God isn't going to punish you, stop feeling so scared – have you ever *seen* Him judge anyone?'"

Who is right? The Scripture, or the Scoffers? You MUST decide.

But, don't the scoffers *seem* right? Why don't bad things happen to bad people?

Turn with me to Psalm 73 and we'll see what the Psalmist had to say about all of this.

[1](#) Truly God *is* good to Israel,
To such as are pure in heart.
[2](#) But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;
My steps had nearly slipped.
[3](#) For I *was* envious of the boastful,
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

[4](#) For *there are* no pangs in their death,
But their strength *is* firm.
[5](#) They *are* not in trouble *as other* men,
Nor are they plagued like *other* men.
[6](#) Therefore pride serves as their necklace;

Violence covers them *like* a garment.

[7](#) Their eyes bulge with abundance;
They have more than heart could wish.

[8](#) They scoff and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression;
They speak loftily.

[9](#) They set their mouth against the heavens,
And their tongue walks through the earth.

[10](#) Therefore his people return here,
And waters of a full *cup* are drained by them.

[11](#) And they say, "How does God know?
And is there knowledge in the Most High?"

[12](#) Behold, these *are* the ungodly,
Who are always at ease;
They increase *in* riches.

[13](#) Surely I have cleansed my heart *in* vain,
And washed my hands in innocence.

[14](#) For all day long I have been plagued,
And chastened every morning.

[15](#) If I had said, "I will speak thus,"
Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children.

[16](#) When I thought *how* to understand this,
It was too painful for me—

[17](#) Until I went into the sanctuary of God;
Then I understood their end.

[18](#) Surely You set them in slippery places;
You cast them down to destruction.

[19](#) Oh, how they are *brought* to desolation, as in a moment!
They are utterly consumed with terrors.

[20](#) As a dream when *one* awakes,
So, Lord, when You awake,
You shall despise their image.

[21](#) Thus my heart was grieved,
And I was vexed in my mind.

[22](#) I was so foolish and ignorant;
I was *like* a beast before You.

[23](#) Nevertheless I *am* continually with You;
You hold *me* by my right hand.

[24](#) You will guide me with Your counsel,
And afterward receive me *to* glory.

[25](#) Whom have I in heaven *but* You?
And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You.

[26](#) My flesh and my heart fail;
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

[27](#) For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish;
You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry.

[28](#) *But it is good for me to draw near to God;*
I have put my trust in the Lord God,
That I may declare all Your works.

What the Psalmist is saying, is that he couldn't make sense of how well sinners seemed to be doing until he put it into an eternal perspective, and then he realized how "foolish and ignorant" he had been. He realized that there would "be hell to pay" for the way they had lived, and that he, although he had not had much on earth, at least had eternal peace with God, and from his new perspective in the sanctuary, that was worth it all.

But what about the perspective of the sinners? From their side, they seemed like they were getting away with things. It seemed like, for whatever reason, even though they were doing wrong, they weren't getting caught and no one was punishing them.

But even though you aren't being immediately disciplined for what you're doing – even though you seem to be getting away with it right now, that doesn't mean you're not guilty. And it doesn't mean you won't be found out one day. Turn with me back to 2 Peter 3 and we'll see what the scoffers were overlooking:

[5](#) For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, [6](#) by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. [7](#) But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

The scoffers, the people who say God won't judge them, forget – they willfully forget, that God created the world, and judged it once through the Great Flood and that He has promised to judge it again through the Final Judgment.

Rev 20:[11](#) Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. [12](#) And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. [13](#) The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. [14](#) Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. [15](#) And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Well, but why does God judge? Why can't He just leave us alone and let us do what we want to do?

The answer is, because we aren't autonomous. We can't just do whatever we want without impacting other people. We sin against our parents through our disobedience, we sin against our brothers and sisters, we sin against our friends, our boyfriends, our girlfriends, our spouses, even our own kids – we hurt other people so we can get what we want – we put our desires over theirs and when necessary we use them or ignore them while we chase what we want.

We sin against others actively by doing things we should not do, and we sin through inaction by not doing things for others that we should do. No one is their own little island of self-love, never touching or hurting anyone else. We do impact each other.

And worse than all of that – we do the same thing with God. The Bible teaches that He created everything – the wood that was used to build your house came from a tree that He designed; the cotton used to make your clothes comes from a plant He made, using water He made and grew in soil He created. It was picked and processed and sent to a plant made out of steel and aluminum and full of copper electrical wires that were all made by mining minerals out of the earth which He had placed there. Then the material was cut, printed, sewn, and sold by human beings made in His own image. The breakfast you ate was made from food that He designed and caused to grow. Even the very air you breathe belongs to Him – you didn't make it – you came into this world with nothing and you will go out of it with nothing but maybe some clothes on your corpse.

No matter how you look at it – from the perspective of the atheistic evolutionist or the Christian Creationist – you came into this world with nothing, but you tried to gather as much to yourself as you could while you were here and tried to claim it as “yours” and do with it what you wished.

But God says, “That stuff's Mine. And you're using it. And you're using it in ways that I don't like.” And how do you respond? You respond by saying, “whatever – there is no God, or if there is, I'm sure He'll understand.” Well, are you sure? 'Cause I've got a book right here that He claims to have written that says He's going to make you give an account for what you did and why.

Well, if all that is true, then what about what the scoffers say? Why isn't He judging right now? Why aren't people suffering for the wrong they do? Why do they seem to get away with it all?

Here is the most amazing, and unexpected answer:

2 Peter 3:8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

He's not taking forever to come - He just moves on a different time schedule – if you are eternal what does time mean to you? God is no hurry because He has all of eternity.

Now that doesn't mean He's indifferent to our sin. **Do not fall into the error of mistaking God's patience with His permission.** The reason He gives us time during and after our sins *is so that we can repent*, so that we can realize the error of our ways and return to Him asking for forgiveness! He "is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Instead of snuffing you out immediately, He gives us room to respond to the gospel.

But judgment **will** come one day. Every sin against God will be paid for – the question is, who will pay? Will you resist Him until the end, thinking that you are getting away with something? Or will you allow Him to step in and take the judgment for you?

Turn with me to John 3:

[16](#) For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. [17](#) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

[18](#) "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [19](#) And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. [20](#) For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. [21](#) But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

Here is the shocking truth – God is at work convicting you of your sin – He is coming to you and telling you what is the right thing to do – He is sending people your way, or He is speaking to you in a way that you can't fully understand but you recognize, and it's getting your attention. And as He does, you need to choose – who will you believe? Will you believe the prophets and the apostles that He sent, will you believe His Son, will you believe the Christians in your life who are trying to tell you the truth – or will you keep shaking it off saying, "I must be alright because nothing bad has happened so far."

Once again: do not mistake God's patience for His permission.

Christian, or non-Christian – if there is sin in your life that you are sheltering, and which you feel like you are getting away with – re-read this section of Scripture:

[5](#) For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, [6](#) by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. [7](#) But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

God has judged the world once, and He will judge it again. And every individual human being will stand before Him alone one day to give an account for their actions, their words, their thoughts and their desires.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Instead of paying for your own sins, you can let Jesus pay for you. You can let go of your sins, and take a hold of Him.

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **9** The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

So what about you? Where do you stand?

I'd like to give you a few minutes to think about that this morning. Is there anything you're trying to hide from God, or anything you think you're getting away with that you need to let go of? Or are you sitting in here this morning and realizing that there really is a God and you need to get straight with Him?

Whatever the case – all you have to do is come to Him in prayer, confess what you are doing wrong, and ask for His forgiveness through Christ. Ask Him to help you let go of what you are doing, or ask Him to take away what has such a hold on you. And ask Him to give you a new start, a new life, in Christ.

While you're doing that, the ushers will pass out the elements for communion – reminders of what Christ has done for us, hold on to them, and after the worship teams finishes their song, we'll take communion together in celebration of God's mercy and His endless patience with those hearts are turned toward Him.

EVERYTHING is washed away in Christ – there is no lingering guilt because you are no longer guilty – go your way and sin no more.