

Why do bad things happen to good people?



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Assumptions

- The first is that there are values in life. In other words, there are some "good" things and some "bad" things. But however we define good and bad, we would rather have the good things happen to us than the bad.
- Second is that the universe is logical and orderly. We believe in a universe that "makes sense." When some sort of tragedy occurs, we look for an explanation. We believe that there is a cause for things happening in the universe.
- The third assumption is that people are important. We are fairly unconcerned when bad things happen to ears of corn, or fish, or cows. People are different, in our estimation, from plants and animals, and are more important.

Is God good?

- Epicurus reasoned that if God is all-powerful and all-good, then why doesn't He stop evil? Either God is all-powerful and not all-good, and therefore unwilling to stop evil, or God is all-good but not all-powerful, and therefore unable to stop evil.
- It appears logical but it was proposed by one who had already made up his mind that God does not exist. Epicurus believed that the existence of evil in the world was evidence that God did not exist.

Biblical view

- The Biblical view is that:
 - God is good
 - God created everything including people
 - God loves people who He created in His image
 - God knows everything; He is omniscient
 - God is all powerful; He is omnipotent
 - God is everywhere; He is omnipresent

Who are “good people”

- Me
- My people – my family, church, city
- People who we don’t know have done bad things
- Christians



If God eliminated all evil would you still be around?

What are “bad things?”

- Dying
- Being sick
- Being unhappy
- Being uncomfortable
- Being insecure
- Unable to enjoy life
- Too many hassles
- Can’t pay our bills
- Lost/don’t have a family
- Being lonely
- Don’t have a piece of the good life
- Somebody takes what’s mine



God's purpose

- Sometimes God may have a purpose beyond our hurt and unhappiness.
- In the Bible we find a story of Joseph. What happened to Joseph could be construed as "bad." He was hated by his brothers; thrown into a pit; sold to an Egyptian caravan as a slave; torn away from his aged father; in Egypt he was wrongfully accused and thrown into prison where he spent several years.
- Finally he was elevated to the position of Prime Minister of Egypt. All of this was for the purpose of eventually providing for the needs of his family and the household of Israel.
- In fact, Joseph said to his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." (Genesis 50:20).

Bad things happen because of

- Choice – freedom – sin.
- Consequences.
- Evil exists and people do evil.
- Of the difference between corporal and eternal consequences.
- Prayers of others.
- Growth opportunity from God.
- God also deals with nations, etc. People suffer along with their nation.
- Ignorance or lack of experience.
- The physical world and its natural laws. E.g. Tornados are the result of weather patterns.

Some bad things don't happen

- God intervenes – miracle
- Man intervenes – may seem like a miracle



Is there a purpose in suffering?

- Suffering makes it easier for us to relate to others in similar circumstances.
- God may allow it to prevent us from being proud
 - Pride leads to self-worship (Ezekiel 28.2)
 - Pride leads to the deceit of self-sufficiency
 - Pride leaves no room for God (Psalm 10.4)
 - Pride leads to quarrels (Proverbs 13:10)
- God is working out a purpose in all things. It says in Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

Who suffered in the Bible?

- Job
- Joseph
- Jonas
- Elijah
- Moses
- The apostles
- Paul
- Many others



Maybe it's a good thing

- There once was a farmer who owned a horse. And one day the horse ran away. All the people in the town came to console him because of the loss. "Oh, I don't know," said the farmer, "maybe it's a bad thing and maybe it's not."
- A few days later, the horse returned to the farm accompanied by 20 other horses. (Apparently he had found some wild horses and made friends!) All the townspeople came to congratulate him: "Now you have a stable full of horses!" "Oh, I don't know," said the farmer, "maybe it's a good thing and maybe it's not."
- A few days later, the farmer's son was out riding one of the new horses. The horse got wild and threw him off, breaking the son's leg. So all the people in town came to console the farmer because of the accident. "Oh, I don't know," said the farmer, "maybe it's a bad thing and maybe it's not."
- A few days later, the government declared war and instituted a draft of all able-bodied young men. They came to the town and carted off hundreds of young men, except for the farmer's son who had a broken leg. "Now I know," said the farmer, "that it was a good thing my horse ran away."

What can we do?

- Read God's Word
- Pray for release
- Pray that God will give you His perspective on the suffering & His timing.
- Read the books of godly Christians writing on relevant topics.
- Encourage one another
- Help (e.g. provide material assistance to) one another.
- Forgive the one who offended you

A old man once told me

Don't insist that others do what you think they should be doing or should know what you were going to do. They are not out to insult you or bugger your day. Get out of their way. Let it go. Empty the trash. Mop the floor. Clean up others mess. And don't complain about it.

The Bible Says

- “You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” (Job 2:10)
- “So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.” (1 Peter 4:19)

Then what?

- It doesn't matter what they are doing (whoever they are). Just keep working hard and do what needs to be done.
- As Abraham Lincoln said, "Do the very best you know how - the very best you can - and keep doing so until the end."
- The end

References

- A Sufficient Grace, J. Oswald Sanders, Discovery House Publishers (January 1, 2004)
- “Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?” J. David Hoak, at <http://www.horizonsnet.org/sermons/oc03.html>
- Ask Rabbi Simmons, Rabbi Shraga Simmons, at http://judaism.about.com/library/3_askrabbio/bl_simmons_murder.htm