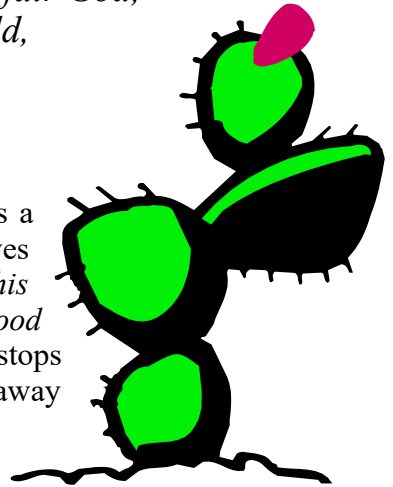


INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the seminar that answers **one of the most DIFFICULT and troublesome questions ever asked related to God**. Whether you're just looking or you've already gotten right with God, this is one of those questions that simply is **NOT** going to go away. It usually goes something like this:

*"If God is such a powerful, loving, compassionate, and fair God, then why do **so many bad things** happen in this world, even to good people?"*

How's **THAT** for a thorny question? It's a **hard** question, it's a **common** question, and let's face it, it's a **FAIR question**. And it deserves a great answer. That's what this seminar is all about. *I've heard this question all my life, but I've virtually **never** heard Christians give a good answer. **This is so wrong!*** The lack of a good answer to this question stops people from getting right with God, and can cause Christians to turn away from God. Not answering it well is simply _____ an option!!!



So welcome to a seminar that will blow your mind. *By the time we finish today, you will **clearly understand** the question, the answer, and _____ yourself and others when life jumps up and hits you in the face.* Get ready for God's truth, **it's gonna be "WAY COOL"**.

TAKIN' A LOOK AT THE PROBLEM



Every one of us has at some time come face to face with the reality that things in this world just do not happen like they should. A child is born hurt, or gets sick, or even dies. Someone loses a loved one in a tragic accident. *An "act of God" wipes out a whole community or devastates a nation.* Certainly, the **assassination of Charlie Kirk** in 2025, the **terrorist attacks of 9/11/01** and the **Tsunami of 2004** which killed **300,000** and other tragedies come to mind. When these things happen, we suddenly find ourselves asking a somewhat uncomfortable question, one that some even think should not be asked, **"Why would God DO this?"** Some wonder if they'll get hit with a bolt of lightening for even asking the question, but don't worry, _____ of the question. **He's gotta just be pretty ticked off** at most of the responses people try to give as the answer. They are **SO** far off!



Some of the problems that we have with this issue are theological, where **we've just not thought well about spiritual things**. We'll fix these problems today. However, I freely admit that there are things that simply aren't answerable because **we do not have ALL the necessary information**. Let's face it, when you're dealing with the infinite mind of God, you shouldn't expect to be able to figure out **everything**. *Having said that, you'll be amazed at **how many answers** really are available, and how incredibly helpful these answers will be for you.*

I do not say what I do today as some pointy headed theologian who hasn't lived real life. **I speak from EXPERIENCE, not theory**. This is especially important for any of you who have already experienced suffering on a large scale. This will be equally important for those of you who are watching this seminar on DVD because of some suffering in your life or in the life of someone you know. And **everyone** faces the big problems at some point, so I believe that it will help for you to know that I've been there.

HOW MY LIFE CHANGED FOREVER IN 1991

GETTIN' SOME STUFF OUT OF THE WAY

You may wonder **why I'm only talking about bad things that happen to "GOOD people"**, not all people. It's because I've discovered that everyone thinks that they are "_____ " to one degree or another. They rarely think that what is happening to them is deserved, *even when there is a direct relationship between something that they did and the bad thing that ended up happening to them*. So while my title addresses what people tend to see as a big problem in this world and with God, it really addresses the **reason WHY there's bad stuff in the world AT ALL**.

Before I can make this issue clear, I need to make sure that you understand that one aspect of difficult things in this world includes the fact that *God disciplines us for _____* behavior. (Hebrews 12:5-11) Sometimes when bad stuff is in our life, it is **a result of our own behavior and is deserved**. When looking at bad stuff in the world, this always has to be considered first. Please understand that if the bad in your life is discipline from God, **it will be OBVIOUS to see** and will *clearly be a consequence of your own behavior*, just like any _____ would do.

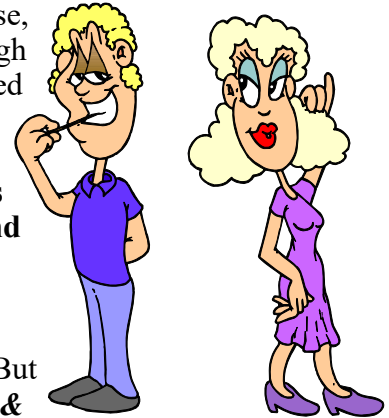


GOOD DADS DON'T KEEP YOU GUESSING

One thing I see as I look at what seems to be “*discipline*” moments from God, is that it seems that *many times God just allows the natural* _____ and _____ *to run its course*. Galatians 5:7,8 tells us that this will be the case:

*“Don’t be deceived, God is not mocked;
what ever a person sows is what he will reap.
If he sows to his own flesh, he will reap corruption.
If he sows to God’s Spirit, he will reap eternal life.”*

It’s that simple. It’s just like in _____, **you reap what you sow - so watch what you plant!** For instance, drunkenness - liver damage, other physical problems, accidents, abuse, financial ruin and more. Wrong sexual involvement - disease, sorrow, emotional destruction, depression, low self-esteem, high percentage of divorce. Bad temper - fights, jail time, lost job, destroyed marriages. Obviously we could go on and on. So when people say to me “*How can God let me go to jail for stealing, fighting, child abuse*”, they clearly aren’t seeing things clearly. **When someone has “EARNED” what they GET, they need to take responsibility and learn from it.**



So **discipline and punishment from God are both a reality**. But we are dealing here with *the times when there is NO CAUSE & EFFECT, no reason that this should be happening to you* - then the question is “**WHY?**”

As you may know, from the beginning of BCC, I have tried to operate on what we call **the Law of the Lowest Common Denominator:**

*“The simpler you can keep it,
the better you and everyone else can do it.”*



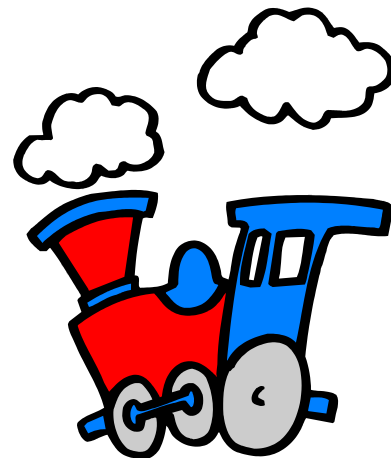
Because of this, **I’ve made a conscious effort to make sure that this seminar is very clear, very practical and to the point.** I want you to be very clear on why bad things happen to good people by the time we’re done. *I also want you to be able to clearly and simply explain to other people why bad things happen to them or those they know.* So it seems to me that the best place to start is to **GIVE** you the **ANSWER right up front...** the _____ that bad things happen to good people.

WHY BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE

- 1) Our world is a train wreck.
- 2) Our enemy is in charge.
- 3) God's not allowed to fix what we've broken.

Or more simply:

- 1) We made a mess of the world.
- 2) Satan is now messin' with us.
- 3) God's not allowed to clean up the mess.



Now that you have the ANSWERS to this hard question, I want to clearly explain each of these points. *So let's take each of these three reasons for suffering in this world and take a closer look at them.*

1) Our world is a train wreck.

To understand this, we have to go back to the very beginning, way back to the Garden of Eden: *"And God saw all that He had made and it was very good."* Genesis 1:31

God put the world together to be _____; **NO** flaws, **NO** mistakes, **NO** mess ups. Everything had to be just right, and that's what He did. *Don't miss that this was God's heart, God's desire. He wanted everything perfect, so that's how He created it.*



So what happened? How did we get **FROM** everything being perfect **TO** what we see today?

*"Then the Lord God said to Adam,
'From any of the trees of the garden you may eat all you want.
But you are not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,
because if you eat from it, you will die.'"*

Genesis 2:16,17

Let me make a side point here for our own



lives today. Notice that God told Adam and Eve what was **good** for them? He _____ on them or trying to make them miserable, **He was trying to PROTECT them**. Doing the wrong thing looked good to them, but God gave them the heads up and told them **not** to be fooled by this, it would destroy them. *They decided to ignore God and ruined everything - just like we do when we ignore God.* God doesn't tell us how to live to hurt us, only to help us. And **sometimes it will look like you're missing out on some good stuff**, but God **NEVER** leads us wrong. So we need to learn to just trust Him and **stay away from that tree!**

You've probably heard what happened next in the story. Even though God had given them so much, **they still decided to do their own thing and REBEL against Him**. *And just like God said, that messed everything up.* God made it all perfect, told us what was best for us and the consequences of disobedience, and then **let us choose**. He gave us "_____", the right to choose to obey Him or reject Him. And **we rejected Him**.



choose to.

People often ask, "*Why did God give us the freedom to choose against Him in the first place?*" It's a good question - here's the good answer. If God did not allow us the freedom to choose for or against Him, there could be no such thing as _____, or even life. **We would be like ROBOTS**, having to obey God out of **self-preservation**. So for God to actually have a **relationship** with His creation, He had to be willing to limit Himself to the point of letting us reject Him if we

So **this is how the TRAIN WRECK happened**: God made it all perfect, we chose against Him and messed it all up. God told us from the beginning that this would mess everything up, and it did. **Now we are living with the consequences of our choice.**

A LOOK AT THE TRAIN WRECK

"The Fugitive"

Now in a train wreck like this, _____. We expect that people will be **HURT**, **suffering**, and even **DEAD**. *We expect that things will be messed up; twisted steel, parts and pieces everywhere, things that no longer work.* This is what we **EXPECT**, and we all know that.

*What's interesting to me is how we view the **PEOPLE***



INVOLVED. In a wreck like this, someone who comes out of it without being hurt, suffering, or dead, we call “_____”. And when people are hurt and killed, while we’re sad, we aren’t surprised because **THAT’S WHAT YOU EXPECT IN A TRAIN WRECK.** In a train wreck, the hurt and dead people are the “_____” ones.

**Until we understand that our world is a train wreck,
we won’t see clearly how things really are here on earth.**

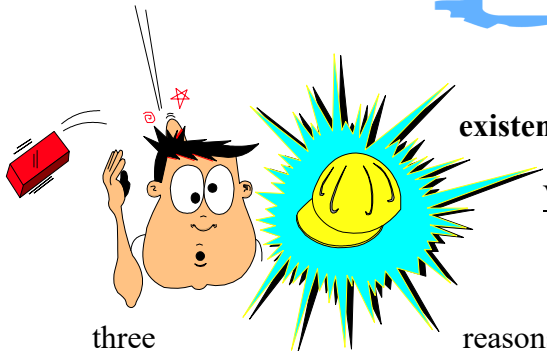
- This means that those of you who are healthy or happy or wealthy or attractive or talented or anything that is good, are the “**LUCKY**” ones.
- Anyone who ends up being hurt, suffering, or even dying; they are the “**NORMAL**” ones.

*But because **God has worked so hard to protect us in this extremely dangerous world**, we have it all backwards. We totally _____ how well God has protected most of us in this very dangerous world. **We actually call people who have a great life “normal”.** And people who are hurt, suffering, and dying in the wreckage? *We’re just **NOT SURE** how to explain how that happened!* So we end up standing in the middle of the smoldering wreckage, **surprised & even OFFENDED that people actually got hurt!** Then we look with anger and accusations at the “**Conductor**”, when we’re the ones that derailed the train!*

BUT WHY PAIN?



People who have attacked God have long used the existence of PAIN and SUFFERING in the world as proof that God does not exist. (People like the French infidel Voltaire, and the atheistic skeptic Bertrand Russell.)



three
another perspective - the
world?

From the beginning of this seminar, we have given you the reasons why bad things happen in this world. *But what about* _____ of _____ **to SURVIVE** in such a **dangerous**

Dr. Paul Brand speaks (1)

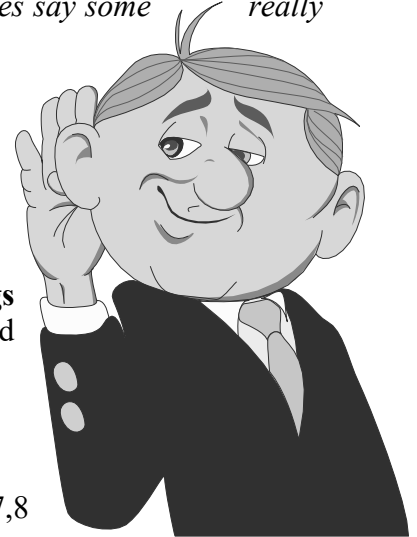
TRYING TO EXPLAIN THE TRAIN WRECK WHEN YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW IT'S A WRECK

While *most Christians don't reject God because of pain and suffering, they do try to figure out* " " *when it happens. The biggest problem that they run into is that they believe THAT GOD IS IN CHARGE of all this and is therefore responsible. Based on this WRONG assumption, as they try to figure all this out, they many times say some really painful, wrong, and insensitive things to those who are suffering:*

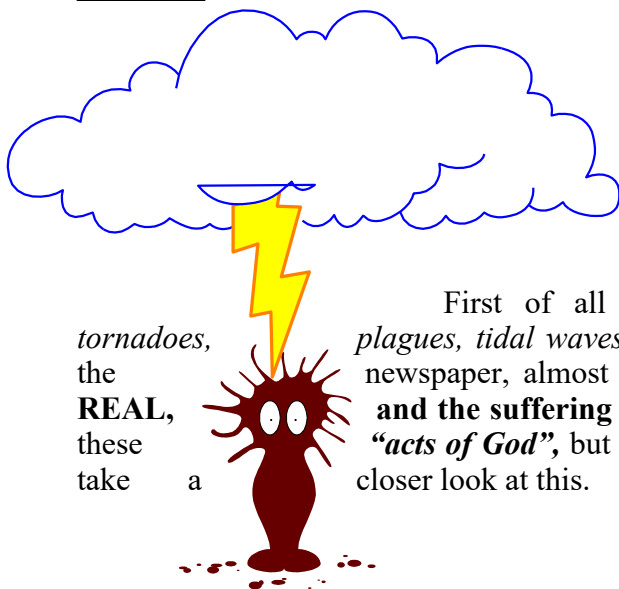
John and Claudia Claxton (2)

Job had three friends who said most of these same things regarding Job's suffering. We should learn well from what God said to Job's "friends" regarding what they had said to Job:

*"I am angry with you and your two friends because
YOU HAVE NOT SPOKEN OF ME WHAT IS RIGHT..."* Job 42:7,8

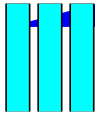


So we've already been told clearly BY GOD that these answers don't fly – THEY ARE WRONG! So we need to look for the real problem. •A principle to learn here: *You shouldn't expect to explain the train wreck until you've actually taken a _____ at the WRECKAGE. That's what we're doing today.*



WHAT ABOUT "ACTS OF GOD"?

First of all - **NICE TITLE!** *Famine, drought, hurricanes, tornadoes, the REAL, these take a plagues, tidal waves...* we all see it happening on the evening news or in newspaper, almost to the point that we don't see it anymore. But **it's and the suffering is terrible.** So what about this? People foolishly call "acts of God", but I can assure you *that they are anything but that.* Let's closer look at this.



A chunk of famine is theological - India



Even when discussing a tragedy like **FAMINE**, we have to consider a unique reason for famine in the **#1 famine area of the world - India**.

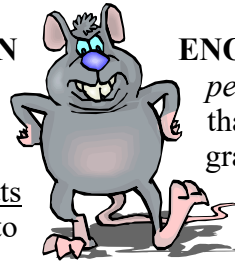
The real problem in that area is actually theological. As a Hindu nation, they believe in **reincarnation**, that we live life after life, trying to get it right. Because of this belief, they consider _____ and _____ to be better than the "Sudras", who they call the "**untouchables**", the lowest caste in India. For this reason, they won't eat obvious food, like beef. **They are also NOT interested in helping those in need**, believing that this is their bad

"karma", or fate for **past mistakes**, and they need to suffer to get to a better "karma". They believe that those who are suffering are getting what they

_____, **so why help them?** They will just have to come back and suffer again to pay up. **Compassion** like what they saw displayed in Mother Theresa and her work in Calcutta seemed ludicrous to them.



In addition to this, **India grows MORE THAN** the over _____ million people who reside there - *most when they hear this*. But a big part of the problem is food is **eaten by RATS** in the process of storing and hoarded for higher profits. They refuse to kill these rats **theology**, so it only takes a slight drought for people to death.

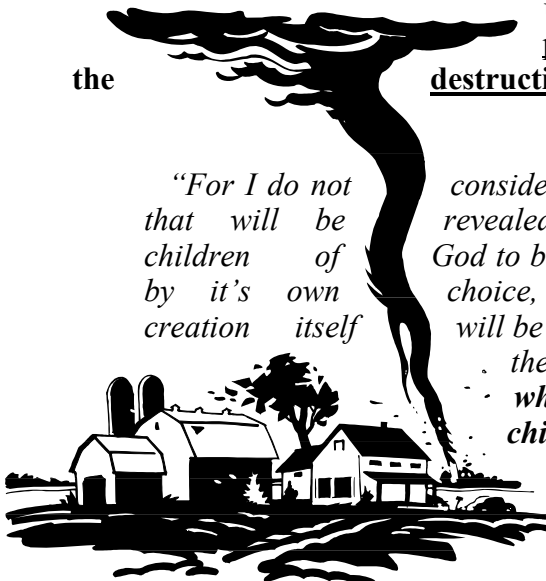


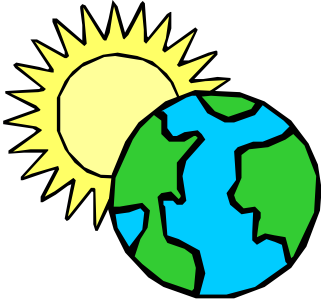
ENOUGH food to feed people are surprised that _____ of that grain is also often **based on their** begin to starve to

But there is still all this other stuff that happens, and **GOD usually gets BLAMED for it**. So is God taking a red pencil and drawing a line on a map, "Let's have the tornado kill them and them, then jump over these houses and the school, then kill them..."? No, but most people subconsciously kind of believe this. This is not about God doing anything but trying to protect us in a dangerous world. So why does this chaos take place? **Why does even the WORLD seem to be bent on the destruction of itself?** The Bible gives us the clear answer:

"For I do not that will be children of by it's own creation itself

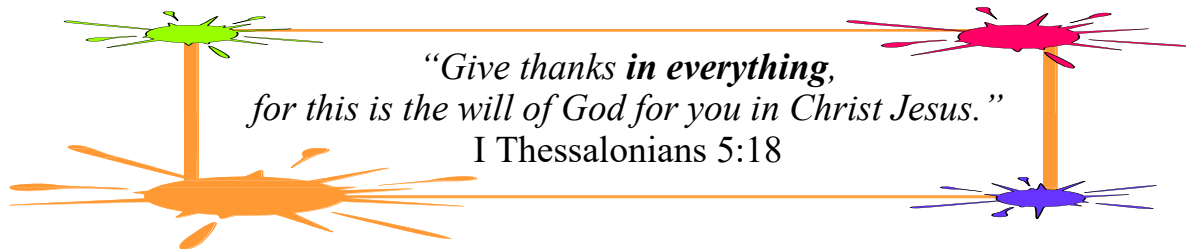
consider our present sufferings worth comparing to the glory revealed to us. For creation waits in eager expectation for the God to be revealed. For creation was subjected to futility, not choice, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the will be set free from it's bondage to decay into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that **the whole creation GROANS and suffers the pains of childbirth** even now. Romans 8:18-22



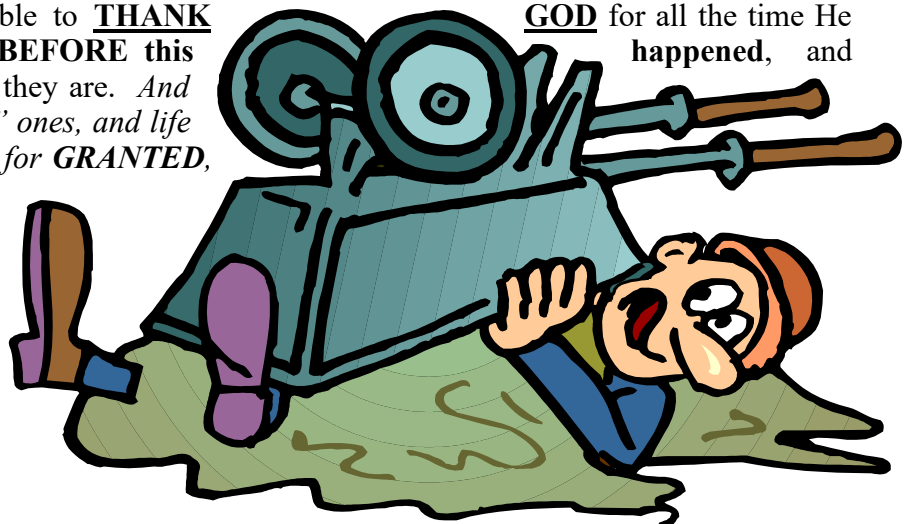


So even CREATION was negatively impacted by SIN. Everything got messed up when we chose against God. *The world became a dangerous and stained planet.* We're living under _____, and we **can't ever forget** that we are. It's not until the end of revelation that God tells us **He's gonna FIX all this mess we've made.** He promises then that "*there is **no longer any curse***". (Revelation 22:3; 21:1-4)

DETOUR: Consider how this understanding of the train wreck should change how we relate to this world and God. First of all, we would know to _____ that bad stuff will happen at times in this world - so this would change our view of everything that happens to us. **If nothing else, we would NOT always be so surprised when bad stuff comes our way.** Consider something that God tells us to do:



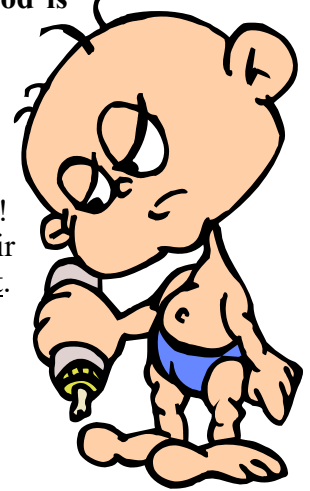
Just **HOW** are we supposed to do that?! **When things aren't going right or there's problems, loss, or suffering, HOW are we supposed to GIVE THANKS in everything?** *Well by knowing that when things go wrong, we've just stepped into the "normal" category, we are **NOT** surprised when bad things happen – **bumped, but not surprised.*** This enables us to be OK with God and have Him right there with us to _____ this creates much better. We are also able to **THANK** _____ **GOD** for all the time He has been able to protect us **BEFORE** this _____ happened, and that things **aren't worse** than they are. *And when we're one of the "lucky" ones, and life is going well, we **don't** take it for **GRANTED**,* and we're thankful for all God's protection and gifts.



2) Our enemy is in charge.

When we look around at the world, there are some great things that we can really **ENJOY**. When we are in those moments, it's easy for us to feel that God is fully **IN CHARGE** and doing His job quite **WELL**.

But then something goes WRONG: *life gets ugly for us or someone we know, or we just become aware of some tragedy.* For instance, did you know that _____ **die every day of starvation?!** (3) Do you feel the horror of that statistic?! Parents sitting by, watching their poor sweet little kids starve to death - and they can't do ANYTHING about it.



What on earth has gone WRONG?!
Or better yet, what has gone wrong... ON EARTH?

*We have to realize that when people start looking around to figure out what the problem is here, they quickly end up landing on God. **And WHY NOT?** They've been told that **He's the One** _____ of this mess - and all they can think is "He sure is doing a crummy job!"*

So people start to wonder what God's doing. **When faced with the horror of REAL tragedy**, we tend to side with Elie Wiesel who said, "*If that's who God is, why doesn't He **RESIGN** and let someone more **COMPETENT** take His place?*"

Let me show you where Elie Wiesel was coming from. He lived through one of the classic "*How can God let this happen?*" moments in history, the **HOLOCAUST**.

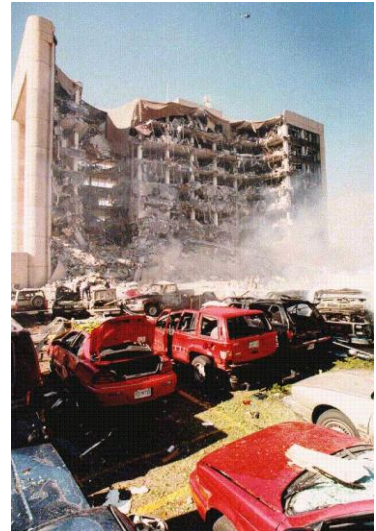
Elie Wiesel and where is God? (4)



Don't miss the absolute HORROR of this scene. ***If God is in charge of this world, and allowed such an unthinkable, hideous thing to happen, then _____ is _____!*** There simply is **no other choice**. How could **anyone** make sense out of something this awful **if** they try to somehow say that God is in charge?

It certainly is not difficult to look around **OUR WORLD** and clearly see obvious illustrations of **Satan** running the show here on earth:

On **April 19, 1995**, around 9:03 a.m., just after parents dropped their children off at day care at the Murrah Federal Building in downtown **Oklahoma City**, the unthinkable happened – a massive bomb inside a rental truck exploded, blowing half of the nine-story building into oblivion. A stunned nation watched as the bodies of men, women, and children were pulled from the rubble for nearly two weeks. When the smoke cleared and the exhausted rescue workers packed up and left, **168 people were dead** in the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil. 27-year-old **Timothy McVeigh** was eventually arrested, tried, convicted and executed for this attack – an element of justice - but 168 people and their loved one still paid the price.



Who in America can forget **September 11, 2001** – 9/11 became the **NEW** “*worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil*”. **3 planes** flown by Muslim terrorists were crashed into the twin towers and the Pentagon, while one plane was stopped from its mission by courageous passengers who sacrificed their own lives, crashing that plane before it could add to the carnage. When the smoke and dust had cleared and the wreckage searched, **almost 3,000 people** lost their lives that day because they had the audacity to **GO TO WORK**.

On **December 26, 2004**, an undersea earthquake in the Indian Ocean led to a **TSUNAMI** of such great size and power that *Indonesia, Sri Lanka, South India, Thailand and other countries were devastated by this event*. The number of dead and missing through this one event was almost **300,000 people**.

On **September 10, 2025**, Charlie Kirk was sitting on a college campus in Utah as he had on many campus’ and was debating and taking a stand for God’s truth, for right/wrong when a sniper shot and killed him.

How **HORRIBLE** & none of it makes **ANY sense** - unless I can show you that **Satan** is in charge in this world – now all the sudden horrible tragedies like this actually **DO make sense!** As a matter of fact, *you would have to wonder why things like this don’t happen more often*.

As we discussed in the first reason bad things happen to good people, our choice against God messed everything up and made our world a **train wreck**. **But it did more than that**. *It also means that we chose someone else to run the show in this world*. Since life is a spiritual battle, (Ephesians 6:12), when we _____ **God**, we put **Satan** _____.

Want a little proof from GOD? I hoped you would. Here you go:



*"The **whole world** lies in the power of the **evil one**."*
(I John 5:19)

*He is called "the god of **this world**".*
(II Corinthians 4:4)

*He is called, "the **prince** of the power of the air".*
(Ephesians 2:2)

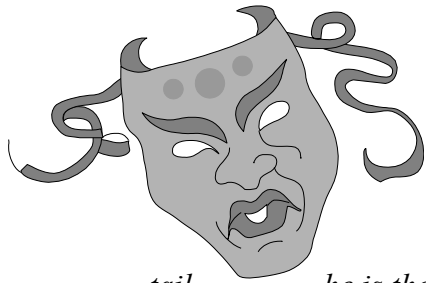
*"And the devil led Him up on a mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. The devil then said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; **for it has been handed over to me**, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship me, it will all be Yours."*
(Luke 4:5-7)

Now Jesus could have said, "*huh uh, it's not yours, I'm in charge here*", or "*My Dad's runnin' this show, bro!*" This was **the perfect time** to straighten this confusion out. But Jesus didn't even argue the point with him - because Jesus was well aware that it was true! Jesus just said,

*"It is written,
'You shall only worship and serve the Lord, your God.'"*
(Luke 4:8)

Do you understand the implications of this? It's **HUGE!** Don't miss it. Quite the opposite from the "**God is in charge of all this**" that we hear all the time, (*PRIMARILY FROM CHRISTIANS*), this actually means that **WE ARE ON _____ SOIL!** We are an army who has to fight in the enemy's camp on the enemy's terms. **This completely explains why there is PAIN and SUFFERING in the world - the guy in charge is inflicting it.** *So if you ever wonder how a holocaust, Oklahoma City bombing, 9/11, Kirk assassination, or tsunami happens, or when someone shoots up Columbine High School, it's because **THE "hideous one"** is running things. It's no wonder life can many times look and feel like a **battle field**.* So God's actions are **COVERT**.

And don't ever forget that in any war, there are always innocent, civilian _____. **These innocent people don't do anything to deserve what happens to them** and the heartache that it causes all those involved. But this always happens in any war, including a spiritual one – and **we ARE at war!**



PULLIN' THE MASK OFF THE EVIL ONE

*Satan isn't just some funny little guy with horns and a tail, he is the **DESTROYER** and he wants to get **US**! So since Satan is in charge of this world, we need to understand a little about this hideous being. By seeing the _____ of the one in charge, we can begin to understand the _____ of the world.*



Another side of this is the importance of **KNOWING THE ENEMY**. Since this is spiritual warfare, we need to know the enemy to beat him. Whenever you are going into a battle, it is imperative that you know _____ the enemy **IS**, _____ he **THINKS**, and _____ he will probably **DO**. If you don't understand these things, you'll be **surprised** every time he attacks, and you'll **probably be defeated**. But if you know the enemy you face, you can capitalize on your enemy's weaknesses, which is the key to victory. This is why God tells us to make sure that "*we are **NOT** ignorant of his schemes*". (II Corinthians 2:11)

We can get to know the enemy by knowing his **names** and **behavior** in the Bible.

NAMES

•**Satan** - means **adversary**, referring to a legal opponent in a lawsuit.

•**Devil** - (διαβολος - diabolos), word **diabolic** from this - means slanderer, attacker.

•**"Abaddon"**, (Hebrew), **"Apollyon"**, (Greek) - both mean destruction. (Revelation 9:11)

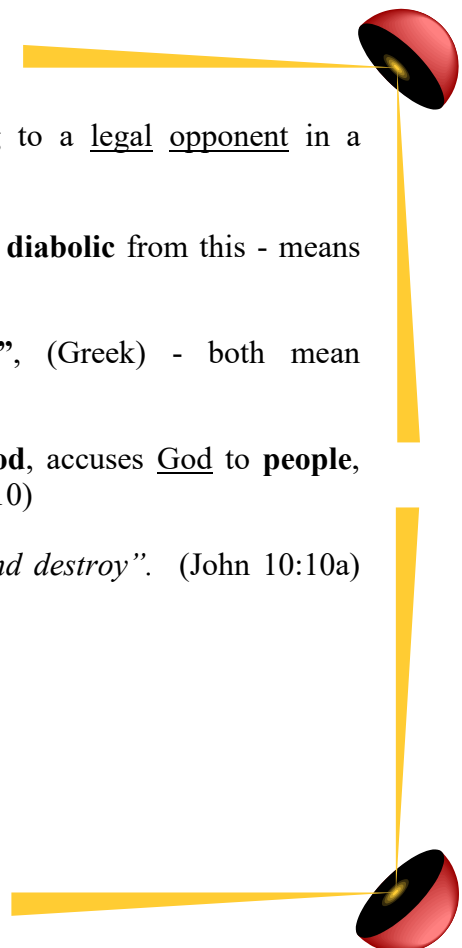
•**Accuser** - Accuses people before **God**, accuses God to **people**, and accuses people to **people**. (Revelation 12:10)

•**Thief** - "*comes only to kill, steal, and destroy*". (John 10:10a)
These represent his sole desire and motive.

•**Dragon** (Revelation)

•**Serpent** (Genesis and Revelation)

•**Beast** (Revelation)



BEHAVIOR

•He _____ against God and attempted to overthrow Him. (Isaiah 14 & Ezekiel 28)

•He quickly started to _____ and ruin them.

•Biblical examples of **his CHARACTER** include - *murder, adultery, prostitution, rape, homosexual sin, incest, sibling rivalry, rebellion, disobedience, false gods, sacrificing children to them, polygamy, wars, famine, plagues, hatred, pride, useless religion, killing Jesus, killing Christians, and more.*

•All the **hideous RULERS** like the Caesars, Hitler, Stalin, Lenin, Mussolini, Castro, Saddam Hussein and many more in our world.

•More things he is _____ for in our world include: *death, disease, accidents, handicapped, injury, hate, terrorism, violence, alcoholism, family destruction, divorce, child abuse, pornography, drug use, corruption in government, and much more.*

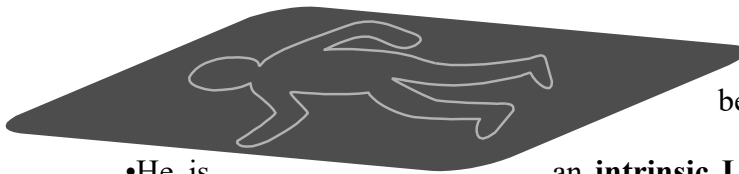
•He's "**a ROARING LION seeking someone to devour**". He's indiscriminate in his destruction, not specific. **He doesn't care who he destroys, just as long as he can destroy.** The word "*devour*" is an intense Greek word meaning to **drink down**. He wants to hurt us, and **hurt us bad!** (I Peter 5:8)



•He's always **SCHEMING** against us. (Ephesians 6:11, II Corinthians 2:11))

•He presents himself as an **ANGEL OF LIGHT**, *trying to make us think that his wrong is really right.* (II Corinthians 11:13-15)

•He **DECEIVES** the whole world. (Revelation 12:9)



•He was a **MURDERER** from the beginning. (John 8:44)

•He is _____ an **intrinsic LIAR** who can't be honest and truthful to save his life. He is deceitful to the core. (John 8:44)

•He has the **POWER OF DEATH**. (Hebrews 2:14)



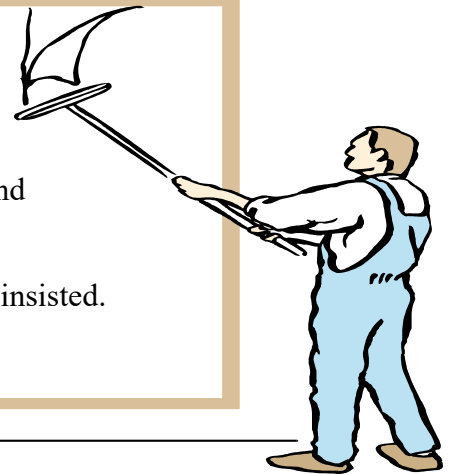
This last one surprises most people. **They were just SURE that God was responsible when it came to DEATH.** So when lots of people die, they quickly wonder why “*God took them*”. Christians then tend to scramble to come up with reasons, which always seem ridiculous to anyone who takes the time to think about it. Death was

_____ God’s idea, *He **DIDN’T START** with it in the Garden of Eden, and He **GETS RID OF IT** when this is all over.* (Rev. 21:1-4)

Satan has the power of death, which, if you think about it, would be necessary **if he’s the one in charge of this world.** *So while we know that God has punished people and even nations in the O.T. with death, when it comes to death in general, Satan is to blame for death, not God.* And the resurrection of Jesus is so crucial because it made it so that we **DON’T** have to **FEAR** death, so we aren’t enslaved to it anymore. (Hebrews 2:15)

So what have we learned so far?

- 1) **WE** created the train wreck,
- 2) **WE** put our worst enemy in charge, and
- 3) **GOD’S** trying His best to clean up
as much of **OUR** mess as He can,
while still playing by the rules on which WE insisted.



Meg and Peggie Woodson (5)

1) Can you imagine how **PAINFUL** this is for God to have his _____ in a situation like this, **NOT** just “*sitting on them*” like she thought?

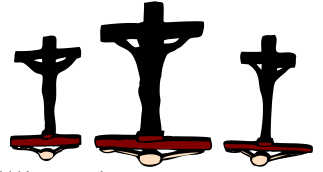
2) **In light of Satan running the show**, can you see how what this young lady and her mom had to go through **actually MAKES SENSE** now in such a messed up world? As a matter of fact, **why** doesn’t it happen **MORE**? With such an awful being in charge, all the good that we see around us can **only come from God working so hard to help us** - yet God gets **blamed**.

Don’t miss this: **This jerk is hateful, mean, and murderous.** *He **loves** watching the pain that is displayed in this story.* And he really loves it when he can inflict this level of pain and suffering AND HAVE **GOD GET BLAMED FOR HIS ACTIONS!** Do NOT let this **DOG** get away with it!



DO NOT FEAR THIS JERK!

O.K., so *our enemy* is in charge of this place, but he does **NOT** own us! He wants you to **FEAR him** - to feel like you **can't** beat him, but understand this: This dude has **already lost the battle**, and he knows it. 2000 years ago on a Roman cross, *God led him right into a very **STUPID** move* - killing His



Son. Satan was **probably sure that he had WON** when he pulled that one off, not knowing that he did the very thing necessary to **SEAL HIS FATE for eternity** - **CHECKMATE!** So this guy is a _____, he just wants to take as many people down with him as he can. So "just say 'no'!" And remember this:

"Greater is He that is IN ME than he that is in the world."
(I John 4:4)

So if he can't beat you because you're obeying God, realize that **he'll try and RUIN you instead**. *Sometimes he tries to do this by causing you to suffer over past sins.* So try this one on:

The next time Satan **reminds you of your PAST**, you just **remind him of his FUTURE!**
Burn baby, burn!

The devil, the "beast", and the "false prophet", (the 3 "**STOOGES**"),
TORMENTED day and night forever and ever and ever and ever... (Revelation 20:10)



Here's a great rule of thumb:



•All **GOOD** comes from **God**.

•All **BAD** comes from **Satan**.

***"Every good and every perfect gift is from above,
coming from the Father of lights,
who never changes..."***
(James 1:17)

So while Satan is **the epitome of EVIL**, God is **the epitome of LOVE**, *perfection, compassion, help, concern, comfort, and more, so much more.* **God is CONSTANTLY trying to give us GOOD in our life.** So use this rule of thumb to focus _____ on the enemy and to **get comfort from God in times of trouble**.

3) God's not allowed to fix what we've broken.

Here's the **question of the hour** - the question the whole world would like to have answered.

*"If God is such a God of **LOVE** and **COMPASSION**, then why does He 'allow' so much **BAD stuff** to happen?!"*



This question obviously assumes that an intrinsic quality of God is that **He is COMPLETELY IN CHARGE of everything and can do whatever He wants**. Most people would immediately agree with that assessment of God. So listen carefully to the **TRUTH**, and you will understand the answer to this hard question very clearly.



It's true that whenever you put these two words together, "**God**" and "**can't**", many people quickly say "*wait a minute!*" Most people believe that God can do ANYTHING He wants, ANYTIME He wants; after all, this is **GOD** we're talking about - they call it the **SOVEREIGNTY of God**. They believe that _____, and that everything that happens is **because God WANTED it to happen**.

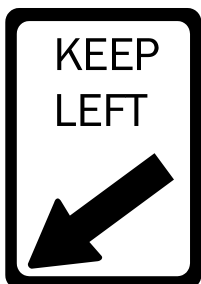
It's one thing to say that God is **ULTIMATELY sovereign**, meaning He will eventually have it all just like He wanted it and how He created it in the first place – *it's quite another to look around this world and say that **He is getting everything He wants NOW!*** Nazi Germany - 6 million Jews dead, among many other examples - screams AGAINST this position. Please hear this: **If God is sovereign over this mess, then God is Satan.**

There are many ways to show this fallacy of Calvinism, (the belief system that this comes from), but **how about this one?** The **BIBLE** tells us very clearly that:

*"God **desires** that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth."*
(I Timothy 2:4)



So God wants EVERYBODY to get right with Him. *This is _____ stuff dealing with _____ souls*, so we know that **this is the thing God cares about the MOST**. So how's it gonna turn out? Is God going to get what He wants? Jesus tells us:



*"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and **MANY ARE THOSE** who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and **FEW ARE THOSE** who find it."* (Matthew 7:13,14)

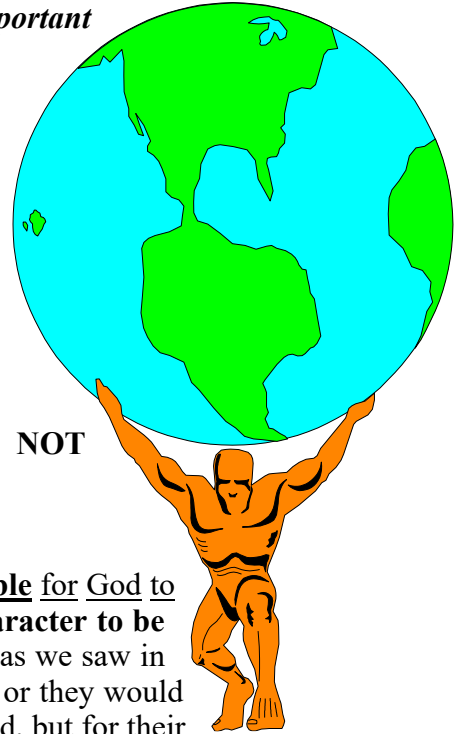
Now let's get this straight... God wants **EVERYBODY** to get right with Him, and Jesus tells us here that **by far MOST people WON'T**. WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?! *If whatever God wants is what happens in this world, how is it that the **most important** thing possible that He wants, doesn't happen?*

Because God's NOT IN CHARGE here in this world, we ruined that. Remember:

*"The **whole world** lies in the power of the evil one."*
(1 John 5:19)

So how does this all work? And **WHY** is it that God's **NOT ALLOWED** to fix what we've broken?

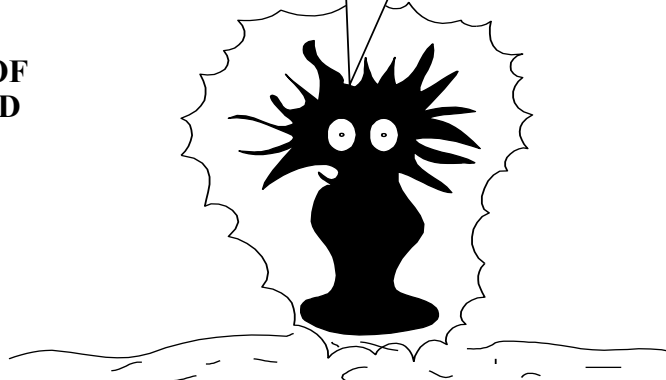
Let's start with **Hebrews 6:18**. This tells us that "it is impossible for God to **LIE**". While Satan lies by his very nature, **it's God's nature and character to be truthful**, so lying is out of the question. God _____. Now as we saw in Genesis 2:15-17, God basically told Adam and Eve **not** to eat the fruit or they would **mess everything up**. They had free will and could do what they wanted, but for their own good, God told them to obey Him. *God made a **promise**; He told them the truth about the **consequences** if they disobeyed*. They decided to **reject Him** and put Satan in charge anyway. Now the natural repercussions of that rebellion have to be allowed by God for God to be truthful to what He said. **He can't make everything OK, because He already told us that rejecting Him would create a MESS. He's bound by His word and His character.**



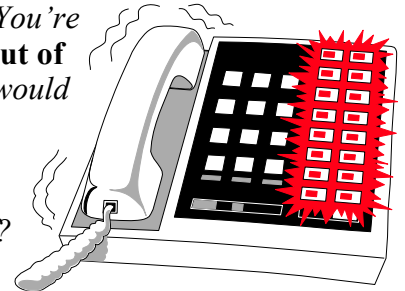
WELL HOW 'BOUT A BIG OLE POWER SHOW?

Hey! *If God's so powerful, then why doesn't He just do some **fancy miracles** so that people would follow Him?!*" He did some pretty cool stuff in the Old Testament. Wouldn't He make it a whole lot easier if He'd just do some of that stuff again? **Would it?** Let's take a look.

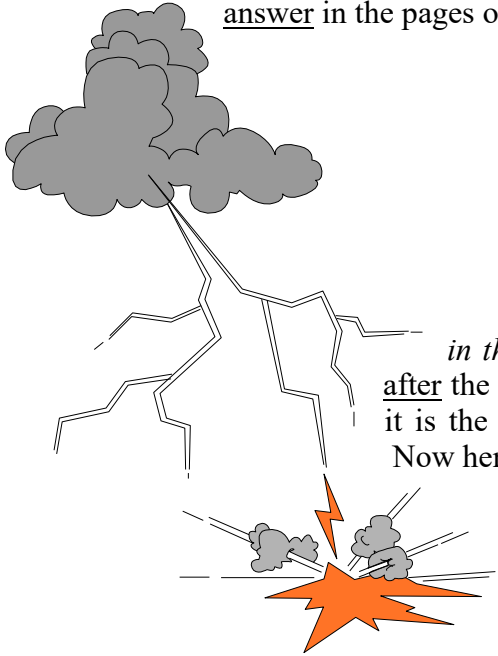
**THE STORY OF
A GUY NAMED
RICHARD (6)**



All this guy wanted was a little sign – “Just show me that You’re there”. Was it **TOO MUCH TO ASK** that God take a little time out of His schedule and communicate with this guy? Especially if it would have led to a strong relationship with a committed Christian?



So is God powerful? _____. Can God show Himself? _____. If that’s true, then **WHY DOESN’T HE** show Himself, not just to Richard, but to **ALL** of us? I think that there’s a clear answer in the pages of the Bible.



IT’S NOT ABOUT GOD’S POWER

A closer look at the **book of Job**

Most of you have heard of a guy named **Job**. He was *a guy in the Old Testament who really loved God... a lot*. He lived soon after the **Universal Flood** and therefore if the book was **written by Job**, it is the **oldest book** in the Bible AND the oldest book **in the world**. Now here’s how Job is described:

*“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was **blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil.**” (Job 1:1)*

It was a good start to the story, but **this guy’s life quickly FELL APART**. *He was a very, very wealthy man*. In **ONE DAY**, enemies attacked his servants, took all his oxen and donkeys, and killed a bunch of his servants. A lightening storm killed his sheep and more servants. Other enemies stole his camels and killed more servants. Then a great wind knocked the oldest brother’s house over where the kids were having a birthday party and killed all of Job’s children. (7 sons and 3 daughters) **Soon after that terrible day**, Job lost his health to painful boils from his head to his feet. The guy was having a **BAD WEEK!** The only thing Job had left was his wife, and she said, “Curse God and die!” **Couldn’t she at least been taken too?!**

We learn a LOT from this oldest book in the world that applies to us now in the **21st century**. When God pointed Job out to Satan as **PROOF** that Satan was a **loser and failure**, Satan went ballistic and angrily accused God of having the **audacity** of overprotecting and providing all GOOD things for Job! (1:10-12) He then **demand**ed that God **BACK OFF** so that he could wipe Job out. In the next chapter, (2) Satan **demand**s to attack Job physically! *I’m sure Satan wasn’t too happy to find out that all of this was **recorded in the Bible for us***, so that we could **listen to God’s ARCH ENEMY** testify that God was the great Protector and Provider for people in every way He can. By contrast, Satan showed himself to be the *blood thirsty, hateful, murderous enemy of human kind* that he is.



Oooops, that was a **SECRET** Satan wanted to keep **under wraps**!

So for most of the rest of the book of Job, a lot of **discussion** goes on **between Job and 3 “friends”** of his. His 3 friends all tell him that **GOD is doing all of this** to him for a reason, (*which is what most churches still teach today*), yet we already got to **see behind the scenes** that it was Satan who was doing all the attacking and God who was doing all the protecting and providing that He could. Later, in **Job 42:7**, God tell Job’s 3 friends that they were **WRONG** when they said He was doing all this and that **He was TICKED** at them! Uh-oh! This wasn’t God doing bad stuff to a good man – **that’s Satan’s M.O.**

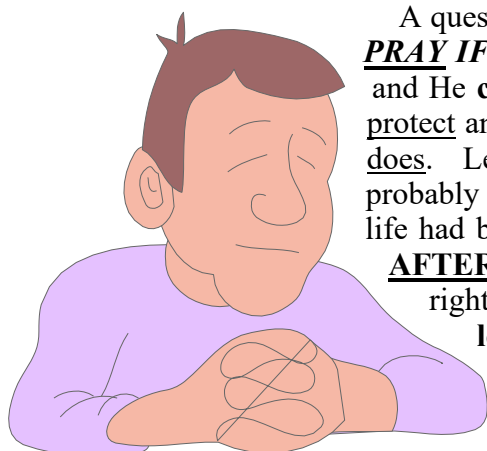


But after a while, *Job finally* _____ *for* *what’s happening to him.* **What’s interesting is God’s response** in Job 38-42. Listen to how God starts:

“... *Who is this that **darkens counsel** by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct Me! **Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?** Tell Me if you have understanding.*” (Job 38:1-4)

This does NOT sound promising! Using the amazing things of creation that He had created, God then spends 4 of the next 5 chapters answering Job’s questions and attacks with one statement, “Look how _____ I am”. **This seems like an extremely STRANGE time for God to be pointing out His power.** Let’s face it; *since He wasn’t doing anything to stop Job’s suffering, it sure **LOOKED** like He was **helpless**.*

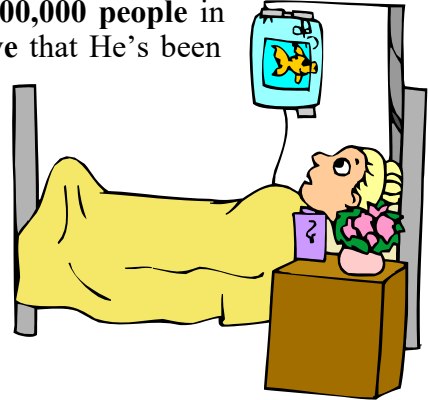
But **GOD’S POINT** to Job and to us is this: *When things go wrong, when people suffer, when they have loss in their life; basically when life hurts - the reason for this is **NOT** God’s **LACK of POWER**. It’s not about Him. Our comfort or happiness has nothing to do with how powerful God is - He is all powerful. So God’s point is that **IT MUST BE SOMETHING ELSE**. If it’s not that God just doesn’t have what it takes to win, then **there must be ANOTHER CULPRIT**, which is exactly what we are explaining today.*



A question that I’ve had come up before in light of all this is, “**SO WHY PRAY IF GOD CAN’T HELP US?**” Wait a minute - God **CAN** help us and He **constantly DOES** – by far **MOST of the time**, God is **ABLE** to protect and provide for us, and at **EVERY** opportunity that He **CAN**, God does. Let’s go back to all the awful things that happened to Job. Job probably lived to be somewhere around **200 years old**. (42:16) Now Job’s life had been **wonderful BEFORE** all this tragedy and it was **wonderful AFTER** all this tragedy. The first events of chapter 1 all happened one right after another **on ONE DAY**, and then quite soon after this Job **lost his health**. His friends came to him fairly **quickly**, sat with

him silently for **7 days** and then **argued** their position against Job. **God** then stepped in and **straightened everybody out** at which point Job was given **TWICE** his riches and had **10 more children**. So the time period that we read about here in Job's life was **relatively brief** compared to his whole life – **Job had a GREAT LIFE**, this horrible suffering was a **SMALL part of the whole**, as it is in most people's life. Pretty **shocking** is such a **BROKEN WORLD!**

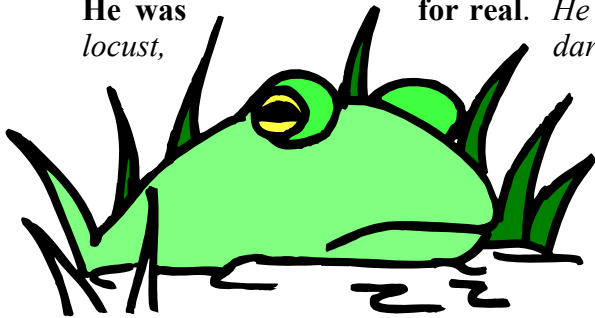
Think about **ALL the hospitals in Tucson** and say there are **50,000** people in those hospitals in **various states of sickness** right now out of the **1,000,000 people** in this area. That would mean that God is **SO good** and **protective** that He's been able to keep **95%** of the people **HEALTHY & SAFE** in a **messed up, chaotic world** that **WE** created where **EVERYONE** should be messed up. The facts are in: in a world this messed up where we chose sin and Satan over God, **God has done an AMAZING job** making the majority of **people's lives GOOD**. So *praying for God's help, protection and provision is valid since He can usually overcome the mess that we created.*



A SHOW OF POWER SIMPLY DOESN'T WORK

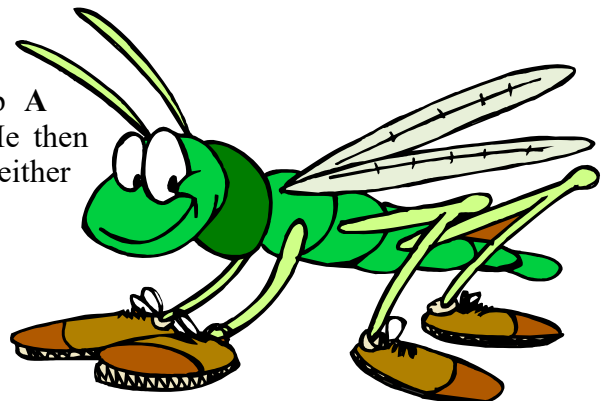
A look at a gang called "Israel"

Ah, God's people. Probably our best example of God doing exactly what **Richard wanted** is found with God's dealing with the **JEWISH PEOPLE**. Over and over, He proved Himself. When He came roaring into Egypt to save His people, _____ **that He was** _____ **for real**. *He offered the plagues of blood, frogs, flies, disease, boils, locust,*



*darkness, death, and more, as **PROOF** that He was for real, extremely powerful, and **NOT** to be messed with. He then led His people out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, destroying Egypt and their army in the process. He then lived right among the Israelites, **doing lots of miraculous, powerful things**.*

In addition to all this, He also set up A **CLEAR SET OF RULES** for His people. He then made it clear what would be the consequences either way for their behavior. *Check it out:*



Results of Obedience

- Prosperous cities and rural areas
- No sterility among people or animals
- Assured success in farming
- Dependable weather conditions
- Guaranteed military success
- Immunity to diseases

Results of Disobedience

- Violence, crime, and poverty
- Infertility among people and animals
- Crop failure, locust and worms
- Scorching heat, drought, blight, mildew
- Domination by other nations
- Fever, inflammation, madness, blindness, and confusion

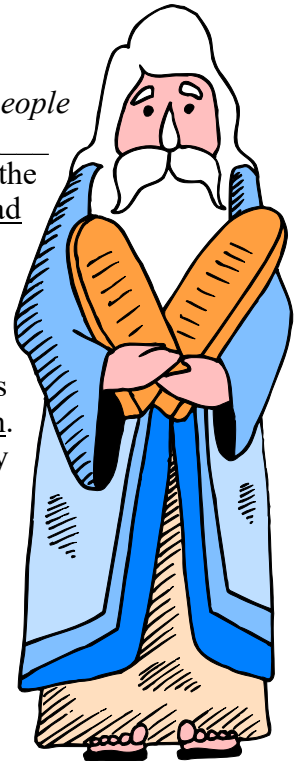
Pretty CUT and DRIED!

The **PROBLEMS** of a perfect God living that close to imperfect people quickly became obvious. First of all, there was a total lack of _____. **NOTHING** was safe from God - not sex, menstruation, the content of clothing fabric, diet, farming – **nothing!** All you have to do is read some of the Old Testament to quickly find out all the restrictions.

that He
right
They

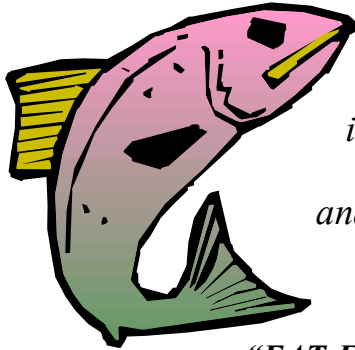
Another problem with God being that close was **actually seemed FURTHER AWAY than ever**. He was **over there** in the Tabernacle, but no one could go see Him. were so terrified of a real relationship with God that they said,

*“Let us not hear again the voice of God
nor see His great fire anymore, lest we die.”*
(Deuteronomy 18:16)



Mortal people being confronted with the immortal God was **TOO SCARY**. And just think how good they had it! If they wanted to know whether they should pack up the tent and the good china and move, they only had to look over at the cloud over the Tabernacle to know. They could tell by what it did. God even did the column of fire at night so they could check His “will” - even in the dark.

So how did all this all powerful “*I am God*” stuff affect “*God’s people*”? Did it **HELP** them to **OBEY**? No. Instead of obeying God, they _____, not adults. A God that close *eliminated the need* for faith or trust. If they wondered what God thought about something, **they did NOT have to study, learn, or grow**, they would just send Moses trudging over the hill to find out. They didn’t have to grow up. **Instead of producing a relationship with God**, it produced _____ and open _____. 10 different times, they got involved in **serious rebellion** against God. And they even spoke of the “*good ole days*” of **SLAVERY!** Listen:



*“We remember the fish which we used to **eat free** in Egypt; the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onion, and garlic. But now our appetite is gone, and there is nothing at all to look at except **this manna.**”*
(Numbers 11:5,6)

“EAT FREE?” They were willing to go back into **SLAVERY** just so that they could have more **VARIETY in their diet!** (And apparently really bad breath too!) Out of all those 2 million plus Israelites who came out of Egypt and saw all this great stuff, **none of them** actually got to enter the “*promised land*” of Palestine - but **two**, Joshua & Caleb. *What a total wash out!*

OK – for sake of argument, let’s just assume that these 2 million plus Israelites were just a bunch of **BOZOS**. *We wouldn’t act like that - or would we?*

Sodom and Gomorrah
(Genesis 19)

Solomon
(I Kings 11:1-8)

Elijah
(I Kings 18, 19)

Response to Jesus
(Mark 15:32; Matthew 28:11-15)



People many times like to put a high priority on miracles, but God has always put a priority on _____. Consider Luke 16:31. *We don't need a miracle to have a relationship with God.* **History tells us that it can actually BACKFIRE on us.** Great shows of power or even miracles do not produce true faith or a relationship with God. A right heart that has seen sufficient proof is where **REAL FAITH** comes from.



*“Now faith is being **SURE** of what we can prove, so that we can be **CONFIDENT** of what we can't prove.”*
(Hebrews 11:1 - paraphrase)

God has certainly given us an **ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF PROOF!** We show that to you all the time at BCC. But since God's greatest concern is _____, not temporal, this life is nothing more than a **MEANS TO AN END for eternity.** *So if that demands that **His hands are sometimes TIED** and that people try and say that He is powerless, helpless, or even nonexistent, **then so be it.*** As long as people get to choose freely whether to get right with Him, without coercion of powerful displays, or fear of getting fried; just a free choice based on the facts, then **it's worth it to Him.**

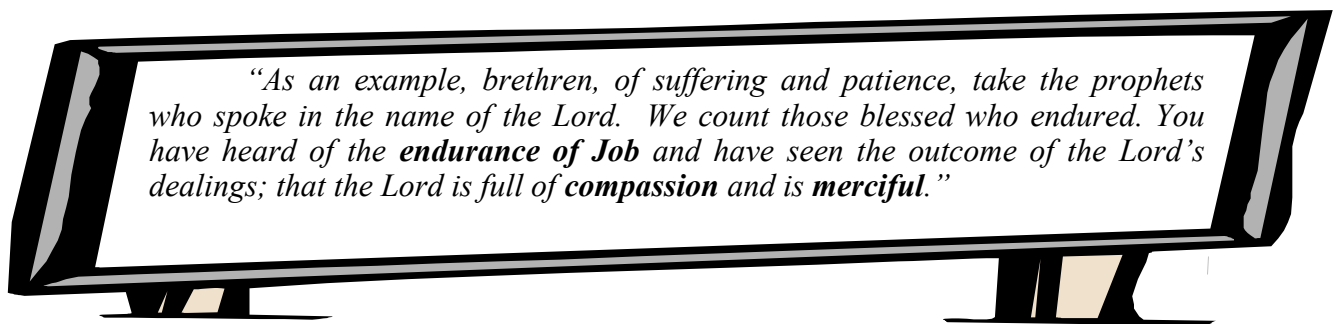


I'm always fascinated when I read **commentators** or listen to **many Pastors** who view what is going on in this world as a **HUGE celestial chess match** going on between God and Satan – they see us as **nothing more than PAWNS** in their game! They come to this conclusion based on their desire to defend their doctrine of the **“SOVEREIGNTY”** of God - that **God is in control of everything** that happens. The **FACT** of I John 5:19 puts a real knot in that idea, among other things. We need to understand that this world is **NOT a game** and we're **NOT** just pawns to either **God OR Satan**. To God - we are **His creation, His CHILDREN**, who He **loved so much** that He sent His Son to die for us. To Satan – we are something he **HATES** and wants to destroy. So both God and Satan are **acting on their intense feelings toward us** – One good, one bad. God is not some willing participant in a game with Satan, but **God's arm is being twisted by Satan** because **WE put Him in that position by choosing sin and Satan over Him** – He loves us so much that He was **willing to accept this unacceptable position.**



One **foolish thing** that people say about **bad stuff** that happens is that **God is not DOING** these bad things, He is just **“ALLOWING”** them to happen – as though that changes **ANYTHING!** They clearly do not understand **the implications** of that position. Listen, if this isn’t Satan allowing God to comply, (based on **OUR sin** and **choice of Satan**), to do **what God would stop if He COULD**, then God is **ultimately GUILTY** since **every horrible thing** has to have **His “APPROVAL”** before Satan can do it – God would have to sign off on it FIRST. Think: if this were true, God would be **capricious** and **untrustworthy**, and ultimately the **AUTHOR of evil** because **EVERY EVIL THING THAT EVER HAPPENED** could **only happen** if He **“allowed”** it - He **COULD** choose to **stop it** if He wanted to.

A big problem here is that this **in NO WAY** fits the character of God. Consider Job again – **God was FIGHTING SATAN every step of the way in this story**, not **“allowing”** it. **James 5:10,11** says this about Job:



“Compassion and mercy”?! The ONLY way that God could be credited with compassion and mercy based on THIS story is if He was _____ in the whole matter and was doing everything He could to HELP and PROTECT Job – the TOTAL blame has to fall on Satan or else this statement simply does NOT make ANY sense! Listen, whether it’s **Job’s 10 kids**, my **first wife dying** or **your own life crisis** – if God **“ALLOWED”** that, **He IS Satan**, not our **compassionate and merciful God**.

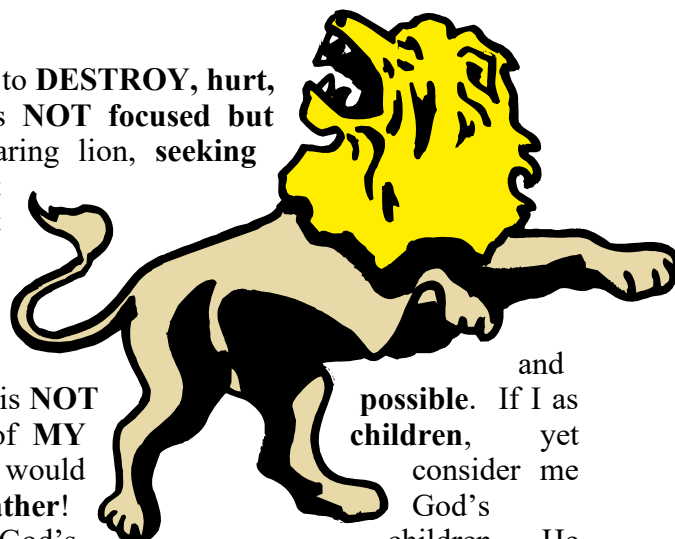
Now keeping the **pure evil of our enemy in mind**, let’s consider **people’s perspective on God during a life crisis** for a moment. When a life crisis takes place, you often hear people ask, **“How could God DO this?”** or at least, **“How could God LET that happen?”**; ignoring texts like **I John 5:19** and **Hebrews 2:14**. But it would be a fair question for me to ask that if **God stopped Satan from going all the way and killing Job**, then **why did God “LET” my wife die?** If God could **stop Satan** there, couldn’t He have **stopped Satan from killing MY wife?**



There are a **FEW PROBLEMS** with this thinking:

1) This **assumes again a FAIR, JUST WORLD** where **everyone is treated equally**, yet the Bible tells us clearly that **sin brought about CHAOS** in our world which **God is constantly TRYING TO STOP** – so the idea that God can provide the **same protection for everyone** doesn’t make sense.

2) The Bible tells us that **Satan** has a **desire** to **DESTROY, hurt, maim, KILL**, but that this **hate and carnage** is **NOT** focused but **general**. **I Peter 5:8** says Satan is like a roaring lion, seeking “_____” to devour. The fact that Satan **doesn’t ONLY kill and hurt Christians** but **he attacks his own** illustrates this reality.



3) The “**let**” part implies that **God actually COULD stop Satan** from killing my wife simply **CHOSE NOT TO** for some reason - which is **NOT** a **father could** stop someone from killing any of **MY** chose **NOT to**, there isn’t a person in the world that would a “**GOOD**” father. Yet God is the **PERFECT Father!** **character DEMANDS** that when crisis happens to God’s does all He can to help. When **BAD** happens - in that case **God could NOT stop Satan.**

and possible. If I as children, yet consider me God’s children, He

So based on **God’s CHARACTER** as our loving heavenly Father, He does absolutely **EVERYTHING He can** to protect and provide for us – we can **ALWAYS depend on that** – and when something happens - like my wife dying, it was because **God COULD NOT do anything about it**. My wife became a **casualty** of this **cataclysmic spiritual battle** – **AS WE ALL WILL SOME DAY** – please don’t miss that, we will **ALL suffer the same fate she did** – it was just because she was a **godly 30 year old wife and mother** when she died that we cry out “**UNFAIR**” – but crying “unfair” in a **CHAOTIC, unfair world** is actually **redundant**.



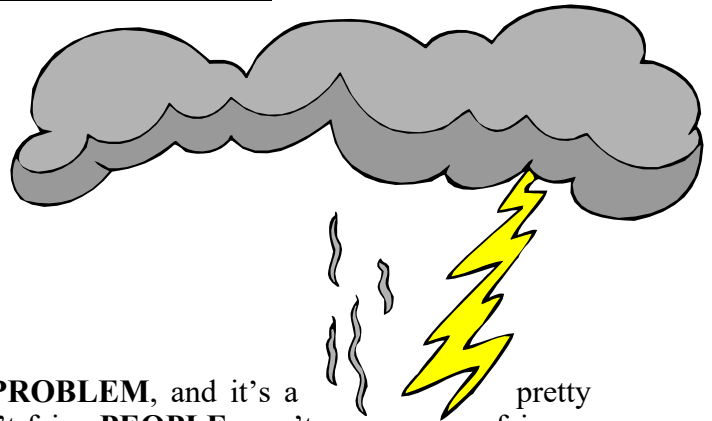
because
Do you
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WE DON’T
God – He does an **AMAZING JOB** making this **BROKEN WORLD** work - He saves us over and over, time after time – and we don’t even know He did it – but when **finally He CAN’T stop a tragedy** because of the **choices WE made**, we look up at Him and scream, “**how DARE You!**”

There’s another important side: **WE** cry out, “**WHY didn’t God protect her**”, yet when we look at the **facts, HE did**. Remember that **Satan is pure evil** – he would **wipe us all out** if he could just get at us – and the **only reason he can’t is GOD is STOPPING him** over and over. realize that that means that **God HAS Satan from killing my wife and me and everyone, over and over and over** – **THAT EVEN KNOW ABOUT!** I honestly **feel SORRY** for

LIFE SIMPLY ISN'T FAIR

A confused Pastor, wanting justice (7)

When lightening strikes, and when it ought to strike (8)



So let's be honest about it, **we have a PROBLEM**, and it's a serious one. **The WORLD isn't fair. LIFE isn't fair. PEOPLE aren't** And we are all well aware of this. *We don't like it, but we all know that* we also tend to _____ that this is the case on a **fairly regular** then we get so mad, usually at God, because of **injustice** in the world, or injustices in **OUR** world. So we'd better start this part by backing up and the root, source, and foundation of injustice. *If we don't do this, it's just quickly look for the One that we **THINK** is holding the bag - God.*

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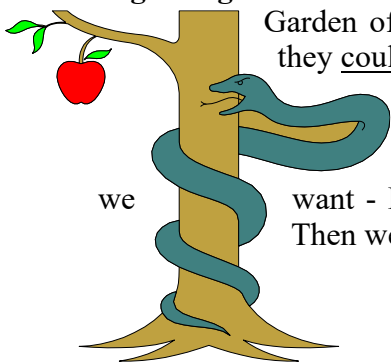
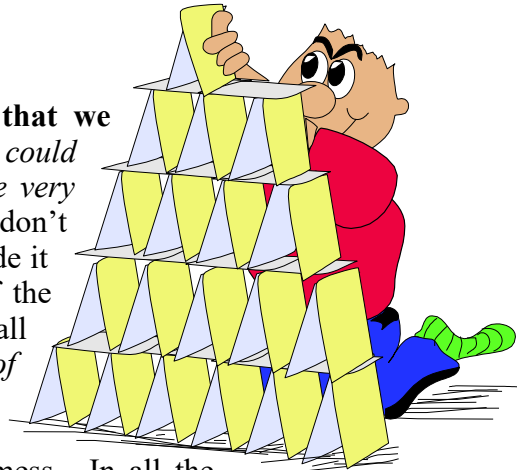
Once again, God made everything perfect - **everything**. **NOTHING** was wrong, unfair or unjust. So that there could be the possibility of love between us and God, **God** allowed us to have **free will**. **We rejected Him** and chose the one whose entire goal is to **destroy** us. (Smooth move on our part!) So we put that dirty dog in charge and ever since then, **INJUSTICE has reigned supreme**. Let's take a closer look at all that happened right after we tossed God:

Murder, polygamy (Genesis 4)
People became so **wicked** they had to be destroyed
through the flood (Genesis 6)
Drunkenness (Genesis 9)
Worship of self and false gods (Genesis 11)
Treating **a wife like a possession**,
not protecting her, but using her (Genesis 12, 20, 26)
War (Genesis 14)
Jealousy (Genesis 16)
Rampant **homosexual sin** Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19)
Rape (Genesis 34)
Prostitution (Genesis 38)
Deceit of Jacob, Rebekah, Laban, Jacob's sons and more
(rest of Genesis)

All this in the FIRST book in the Bible! We didn't waste any time!

Now here's a good question for you: If God did it all _____, and we messed it up by doing it all _____, then **why would it be GOD'S FAULT that everything is messed up?** And **why is HE RESPONSIBLE** to make it all right again? Is it His job to fix what we purposely messed up?

Let's try and see this clearly. **What exactly is it that we WANT?** We want _____ on _____. *And who could blame us? We have a desire to have it be like it was in the very beginning, the way that it was **created** to be by God.* Well don't miss this: **GOD wants it this way too** – He's the one who made it that way to begin with. Then if you go to the very **end** of the Bible, (Revelation), you'll find out that God is going to put it all back like it was supposed to be all along, back to "*the Garden of Eden*". But He **CAN'T** do that now because God can't lie. (Hebrews 6:18) Remember, **He TOLD US from the beginning** that if we rejected Him, everything would be a mess. In all the



Garden of Eden, with all the great stuff He provided, He only put **ONE** tree that they couldn't touch. **He stacked the cards in our favor** gave us the **SMALLEST** opportunity possible to disobey Him - and **we made a beeline for the tree.** God can't go back on what He said now and make everything right here on earth. He can't make it "*heaven*" here on earth, the way we want - **His character CANNOT allow it.** If He lies, He's **not God anymore.** Then we'd really have a mess - *He's the only One on our side in this fight!*

JUST GIVE US JUSTICE!

So we want **JUSTICE**, things in black and white, simple fairness. Why couldn't God be a "*John Wayne*" kind of God whose "*gonna clean up this town*". **Is that what we REALLY WANT?** Realize this:

- 1) Everyone would **have to GET RIGHT with God** immediately just for _____.
- 2) **REAL LOVE** or a relationship with God would be **OUT**. We would just **live in FEAR of Him** all the time, just like the Israelites did.
- 3) This justice idea would apply to us too, and that's the rub. **No breaks... ONE STRIKE and you're OUT!** You see, experience has shown me that we don't want justice for _____, just for everybody else. When it comes to our self, **we want MERCY, forgiveness, and understanding** - not justice. But luckily for all of us, God wants to be merciful. That's the primary reason He waits before closing the curtain on this show. Check this out

*"First of all know that in the **last days** mockers will appear, mocking and following after their own lusts.*

*They will say, 'Where is this "**coming**" that Jesus promised? For ever since our fathers died, **everything continues** just as it always has from the beginning of creation.'...*

*But the present heavens and earth by His command are being **reserved for fire**, kept for the day of judgment and **destruction of ungodly people**.*

But don't let this one fact escape your notice: with God, one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like one day.

*The Lord is not slow about keeping His promise, as some view slowness, **but is patient toward us, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**" (II Peter 3:3,4, 7-9)*

"SO WHAT DID THE CONTRACT SAY?"

You know, if we're going to ACCUSE God of failing to get His part of the deal done, we should **first of all make sure that we know just what it is that HE SIGNED ON to do**. Just what did God say life in this world would be like?



*"...for God causes His sun to rise on both **evil** and **good** people, and He sends rain on both **righteous** and **unrighteous** people."*
(Matthew 5:45)

*"Don't pull out the weeds, (that the enemy has sown in my field), because you might uproot the wheat too. **Allow both the weeds and the wheat to grow together until harvest**. When harvest comes, I will instruct the reapers, "First gather up the weeds and bind them into bundles to burn them up, then gather the wheat into my barn."*
(Matthew 13:24-30)

*"Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all people. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people. **Never take your own revenge, but leave room for the wrath of God...**"*
(Romans 12:17-21)

*"These things I have spoken to you that in Me you might have peace. **In the world you will have tribulation**, but take courage, I have overcome the world."*
(John 16:33)

*"All who live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be **persecuted**. But evil people and impostors will go **from bad to worse**, deceiving and being deceived."*
(II Timothy 3:12,13)

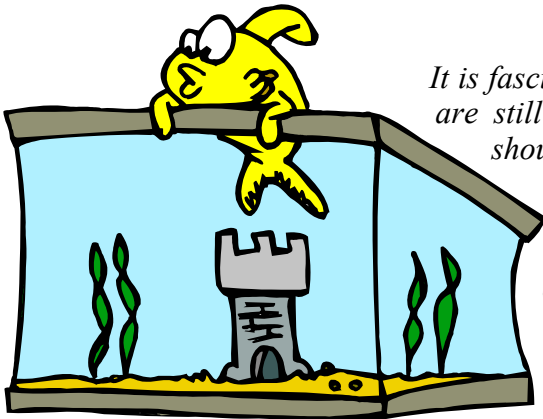
Seems pretty CLEAR. *We live in a world where there will always be _____ people who do _____ things.* God **NEVER** said that life would be any different than this. So He certainly has not broken His covenant with us - **this is HOW He said life would BE IF we rejected Him.**

However, **God does promise that He will SETTLE THE SCORE.** But the key is to realize that *while we want fairness here **ON EARTH**, God promises justice when all of this is **OVER** and as much justice as He can here on this unjust earth.* At the end, God can remove the curse that we create in the beginning, and then **settle the score.** Listen:

*"The one who **does wrong**
will receive the consequences of his wrong without partiality."*
(Colossians 3:25)

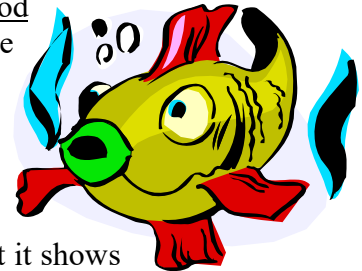
*"After all, it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to those what are afflicted, and to us as well. **He will do this when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire**, dealing out retribution to those who **do not know God** and to those who **do not obey the gospel** of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of God and the glory of His power."*
(II Thessalonians 1:5-9)

It **IS** interesting that we just read in Romans 12 that we are **NOT** to take our own revenge, but it then goes on and says: "... **but leave room for the wrath of GOD**, for it is written, **"VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,"** says the Lord." God tells us not to take vengeance – we do it all wrong – but then says, **"TAKING REVENGE ON MY KID'S ENEMIES IS MY JOB!"** Go get 'em God!



*It is fascinating that even though God has revealed all this to us, we are still **so surprised** when life doesn't go like we think that it should. We respond with shock, horror, and anger, at something that we did and that God has made clear we have to live with. It's like a **FISH** that's continually surprised that water is **WET**!*

An interesting twist in all this is **how this whole thing is portrayed in the Bible.** The picture that it shows



is that **GOD** is the betrayed one, the disappointed one, **NOT US**. *He's the rejected parent, the jilted lover.* God doesn't _____ the _____ that our actions have inflicted on Him. **We blew it, not Him, we rejected Him, NOT the other way around.** *And after all that we've messed up, all he's trying to do is to help us deal with the mess that we created.*



DOUGLAS - A MODERN "JOB", A GREAT RESPONSE TO SUFFERING (9)

So if difficulties, problems, suffering and pain are simply a part of living in a world that's been messed up by sin, then how do we deal with the cards we get dealt?

TOP 10 WAYS TO COPE WITH PAIN

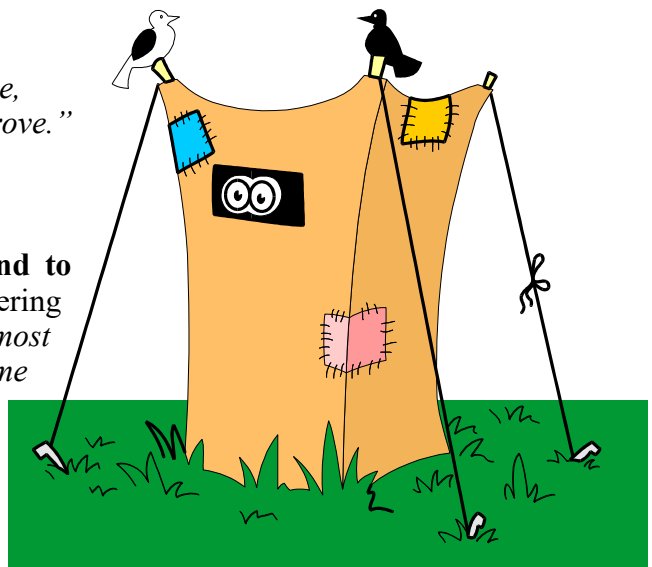
(Some practical ideas)

1) Understand GOD and YOURSELF.

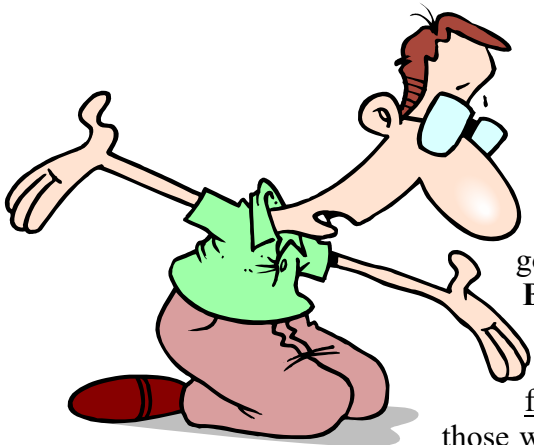
This is God we're dealing with. Know that we simply will **NOT** always understand everything - that's the nature of true faith - _____ in God for what we can't prove, based on **all the FACTS** that we can prove. Don't hide FROM God – **RUN TO GOD**.

*"Now faith is being **sure** of what we can prove, so that we can be **confident** of what we can't prove."*
(Hebrews 11:1)

Also know that as human beings, **we tend to look around for someone to BLAME** when suffering comes our way. *God seems like the safe and most likely choice – He'll forgive us - so we tend to blame Him.* Don't do it. **He's on OUR side.**

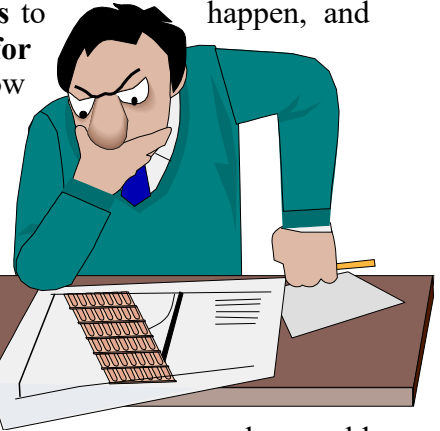


2) Remove WRONG expectations.



Understand clearly the **three reasons** that I am explaining here. When people don't understand these, they search for the _____ "_____" behind what they are going through, and this completely messes them up. **Dr. Paul Brand** stated that of all the Christians he's seen suffering, *those who get **hung up** on searching for some special "why" to their suffering do **NOT** do well at all.* They many times turn away from God or resign themselves to some fatalistic despair. But those who got past the issue of "**why**", (or in the case of this seminar, now understand the REAL "why"), **kept depending on God, and moved on to just deal with the problems confronting them.** He stated that these people handled their suffering significantly better. (10) So we need to see things clearly.

I've **been around CHURCH** all my life, and I've watched people **deal with suffering**. What has been fascinating to watch has been people's **determination** to **figure out "why"** this was happening to them. Now the **reason** that they had been so determined to discover this is because they had been **taught** by their Pastor that **God was "SOVEREIGN"**, or in control of everything that happened so **at least God was "ALLOWING"** this to happen, and they had also been taught that God had an **individual "WILL" for every person's life** – a **blueprint or map** – that if you'd follow carefully, all would be good in life. Both of these **false doctrines** led to people struggling to discover **the "why"** and having wrong expectations about God and life.

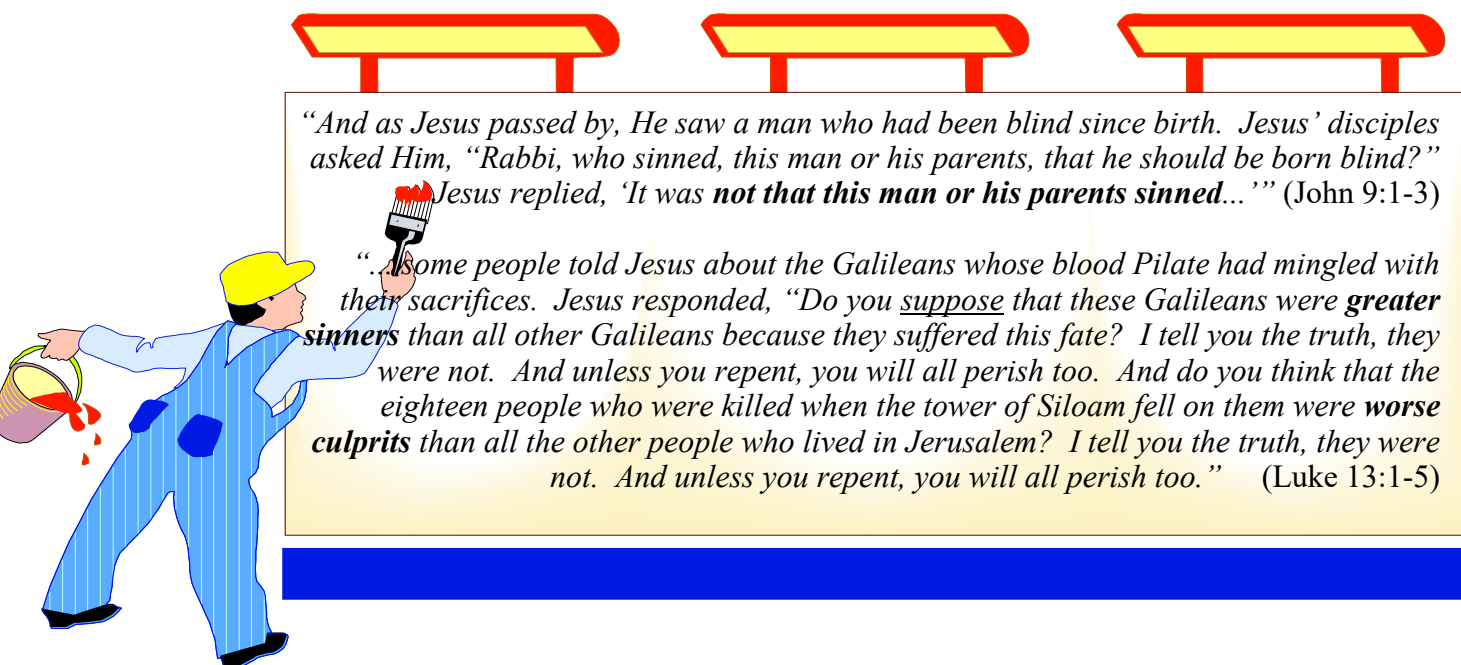


Not only would people look for the "**why**" in their **own life**, they would quickly decide that they were **EXPERTS** in finding and reporting the "**why**" in **OTHER people's life** – which always seemed **easier**

for them to figure out. For instance, when my **first wife passed** away, people would quiz me, **looking for "why"** she had died. For a while, it looked like her **twin brother** might come **back to God** – so **THAT was it** – till three weeks later he **QUIT** going to church - **AGAIN**. The church where I served really **pulled together** through this – so **THAT was it**. When I came to **Tucson** to **start BCC** and it was such a **success** – so then **THAT was WHY she had died**. I even had people ask if there was **some SIN** in my life or my wife's life that God would have **"TAKEN"** her! (The nicer Christian word for God **KILLING** someone) **HELP** but When we wrongly approach suffering this way, we **CAN'T** get consumed with the "**why**" that is NOT there.



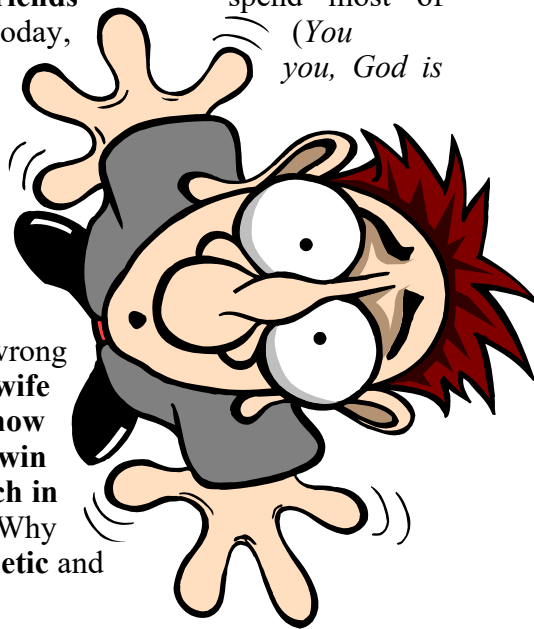
3) Realize that suffering is NOT always a result of your own personal SIN.



In each of these cases, **those talking to Jesus believed the prevalent thought of the day** that said **BAD things only happened to BAD people**, because they were sinning. Jesus clearly addressed that and said _____. Clearly **bad stuff happens to everyone and anyone in a dangerous, BROKEN WORLD**, so He tells them to get their lives right with God since stuff can happen to them, (and us), too.

A great case in point would be back in Job 2:3, where God told Satan: "*you incited Me against him to ruin him **WITHOUT CAUSE***". God told Satan that Satan **INCITED** Him to **BACK OFF** protecting Job – and **there was NO REASON** for it! While suffering is **EXTREMELY personal** when it come into **our life**, it is often **nothing personal** in this messed up world. Not only does **God** tells us this here, but **Job's 3 friends** the book of Job spouting the same garbage many churches do today, *sinned, you're not close enough to God, God is disciplining punishing you*), and God told those 3 friends that they were **"WRONG"** and He was **TICKED OFF** at them for it! (42:7) So unless you can draw a **DIRECT correlation** between **something you've done** and the suffering, (Like *sex before marriage leading to disease, unwanted pregnancy, heartache*), then **don't waste your time** sweatin' the "why".

Just realize the kind of **FOOLISHNESS** this wrong doctrine can lead us to. For instance in my situation with **my wife dying** - can you step back objectively enough to consider **how LAME** it would be to have a **God** who wanted to bring a **twin brother** back to Jesus, or **unite a church** or start a **new church in Tucson, AZ** and His solution is to **KILL MY WIFE?! Why would I want to connect people to a God who was that pathetic and**



unimaginative that this was the **ONLY** way He could figure out how to do this?! How could I TRUST a God who would treat His faithful servant like something to be used and thrown aside? How could I appeal to Psalm 46:1-2 when He's the One INFLICTING the suffering?! Bad stuff happens to good people because we live in a DANGEROUS world ruled by a DANGEROUS dude – who WE voted into power!



4) Think clearly about DEATH.

Our world FEARS death. And why not? *If there is no God, death really is “the final absurdity”.* (Nihilism)

But for someone who is right with God, death is **NOT** something to be feared. *We are ready to stand before God based on what Jesus did for us on the cross.* We can be **confident** when we face death. That doesn't mean that we won't fear the _____ of death or the suffering that many times

accompanies it. But death **can't** hold any **power** over us.

(Jesus, through His death)

*“... rendered **powerless** him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”*

(Hebrews 2:14,15)

(If we are)

*“... absent from the body, we are **present with the Lord**.”*

(II Corinthians 5:8)

(So we can say)

*“O death, where is your **victory**? O death, where is your **sting**?”*

(I Corinthians 15:55)

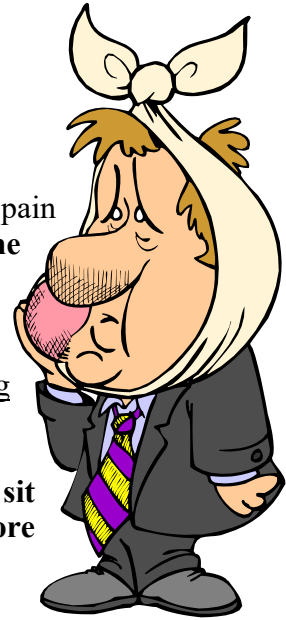
5) Look at JESUS to see suffering and difficulties clearly.

Think about this one: Both God and Jesus had the power to STOP His suffering, yet neither One did. Why? *Because it was necessary that Jesus “_____” to truly WIN.* We have to do the same. After all, we made the rules - not Him - so we have to play by them.

6) Do something.

In experiments measuring **pain thresholds**, scientists found that the pain threshold went up from between 19 to 45 percent, **just by DIVERTING the ATTENTION of the research subject**. *In other words, in a test where heat was focused on a subject's arm, it took 19 to 45 percent more applied heat before the preoccupied subject noted pain.* Researchers diverted attention by clanging bells, repeatedly touching the subject's hand, reading an adventure story aloud, and having the subject read numbers. (11)

The conclusion was obvious. If a person does nothing but sit around and **THINK ABOUT THEIR PAIN**, the pain becomes much more **OPPRESSIVE**. Do something.



7) Try to focus on OTHERS – it actually helps you and them.



*“Do nothing from **selfishness** or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, let each of you consider the other person as **more important** than yourself. And do not merely look out for your **own personal interests**, but look out for the interests of **others**.”* (Philippians 2:3,4)

8) LEAN ON people who can support you

...especially if they've **been through it themselves**. (friends, family, acquaintances, etc.)

“...the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles so that we may be able to in turn comfort those who are also having trouble...”
(II Corinthians 1:3,4)

9) Avoid BIG, LIFE-CHANGING decisions in the middle of suffering.

Statistics reveal that **MOST BIG DECISIONS** that are made during or soon after a traumatic occurrence in a person's life **are usually a _____**. *While there are exceptions to this, it's usually best to give yourself time to **heal** and **adjust** to what's happened before making big, life changing decisions.*



10) Don't ever forget the NATURE of God.

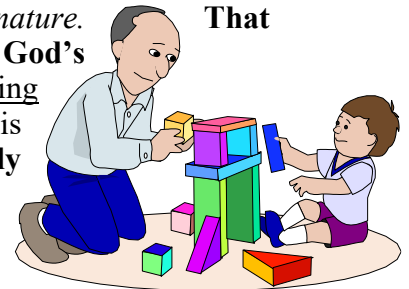
God is our loving heavenly Father, **always working His hardest for the BEST of His KIDS**. He's so busy caring for us that He doesn't even take the time to sleep! He's always available and working to help us.

*"I will lift up my eyes to the mountains. **Where will my help come from?**
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
 He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will **not slumber**.
 Indeed, the One who watches over Israel will **neither slumber or sleep.**"*
 (Psalm 121:1-4)

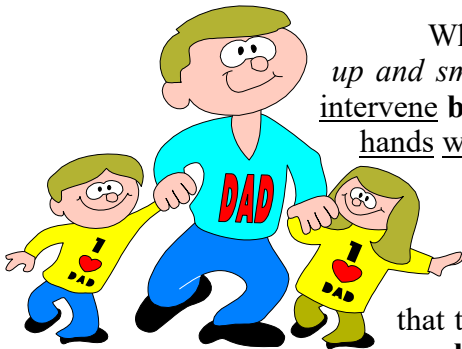
So is God **ANY GOOD** to us in a stained, chaotic world, **or is He helpless?** Obviously, God is **VERY ABLE** to help, since our world is as nice as it is. A world that was run exactly like Satan wanted it would be **chaotic and dangerous**. Satan only wants to destroy us. Clearly God is stepping in all the time to help us live safer in a very dangerous world.

So God gave us free will, we botched the whole thing, chose sin and Satan, and now God can't be a liar and just make everything OK. **What CAN He do?** I believe that the answer is found in the _____ of God.

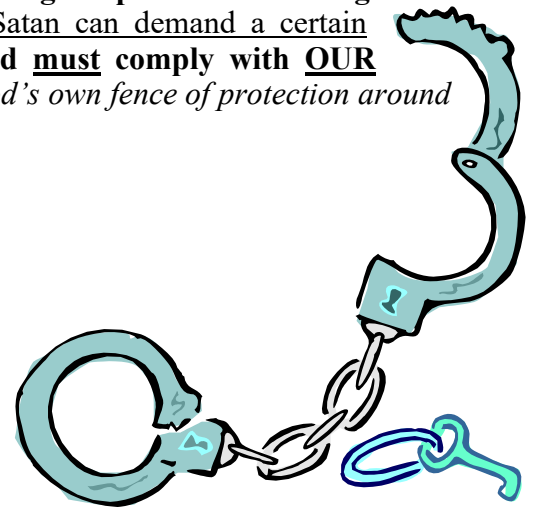
I'm a dad, and I love my kids. But the Bible makes it clear that though I am made in the image of God, I can never achieve the goodness that God is by nature. **That means that the best father on earth would be a JOKE compared to God's Fatherhood of us.** God, as the epitome of Fatherhood, does everything right. That being the case, just think what that means about God in this whole thing. It means that **God does absolutely everything He possibly CAN for His kids**. As long as they are trying to live for Him, He works His very hardest to love, protect, provide, lead, and more.



What this means is that *every time the world jumps up and smacks us in the face*, it was a time that God _____ intervene **because of the CURSE that we brought into existence**. Again - His hands were tied.



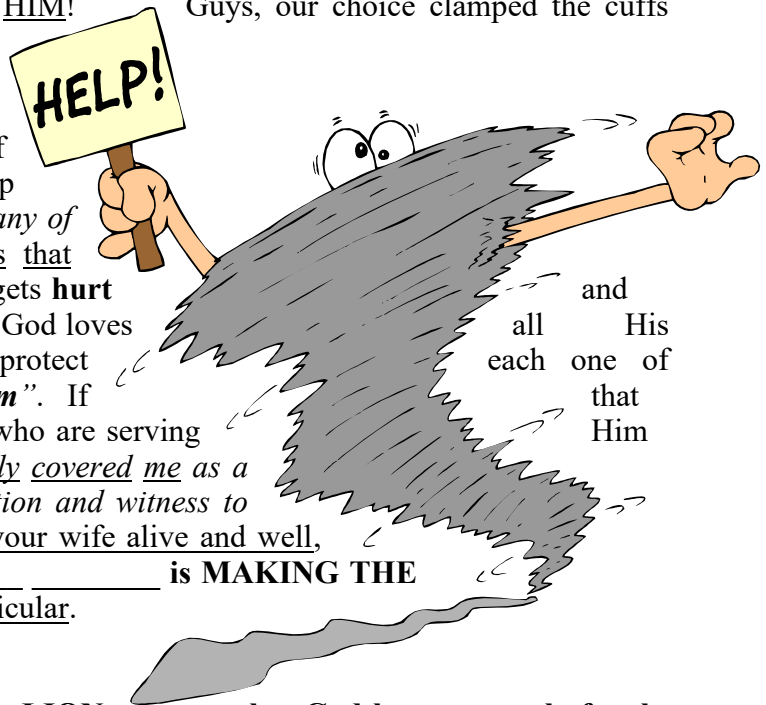
I think that we can all see, based on our study, that God **CANNOT** make the world perfect, or like heaven. So we all agree that there has to be a **degree or percentage of pain and suffering in the world**. So because of our choice, Satan can demand a certain amount of suffering, (what we see in the world), and God must comply with OUR wishes, by allowing him to act. *God must let Satan climb God's own fence of protection around the world and have at it.*



Now do **NOT** misunderstand this. It would be easy to once again start the “*God doesn’t cause it, He just allows it*” foolishness. That statement implies that God has a CHOICE in the matter, and no “*perfect dad*” would let His children suffer if He **COULD** stop it. WE’RE THE ONES WHO “ALLOWED IT”, NOT HIM! Guys, our choice clamped the cuffs on God. Don’t ever forget that.

Another question could be “*but why did God choose me to suffer*”? Well first of all, the real question in such a messed up world really is “*why NOT you*”, “*why not any of us*”? But secondly, that question implies that

_____ is the **ONE** who is choosing who gets hurt who doesn’t. This simply is **NOT** the case. God loves children the same and **works** just as **hard** to protect them. God isn’t saying, “*all right, take him*”. If _____ were the case, wouldn’t God protect those who are serving most and best? *Wouldn’t He have especially covered me as a faithful Pastor with a great family, reputation and witness to the world?* Yet most of you sit here with your wife alive and well, while mine died. Obviously, _____ is **MAKING THE CHOICES** here, and he isn’t especially particular.



It’s more like a **LION** _____ that God has constantly fought to keep out of the park got in to injure and maim at will. Actually, it’s exactly like that:

*“Be on your guard, for your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking **SOMEONE** to devour.”*
(I Peter 5:8)

Don’t miss this... Satan is **INDISCRIMINATE**, he just wants to **HURT** and **KILL** someone, anyone, everyone.

The beauty of all this is that when we or those we love suffer, we can **learn to HATE Satan** for what he is doing, **focus our rage AGAINST him** by living well for God and **still LOVE God** for all that we know He’s doing to help us. *We have God right there to help us through and Satan to hate for what he’s doing to us.* Having this perspective helps us to **COPE with suffering very well**.

God loves us so much. He has done so much for us, especially in light of how **WE** messed up **HIS** perfect creation. *Don’t ever lose sight of how great God is as He helps us to navigate the storm that we’ve created, even sending His Son into the storm and letting Him become a casualty to ultimately fix this mess.* **God is way cool!** Show your thanks to Him by loving and obeying Him. **He’ll take care of you in the train wreck.**



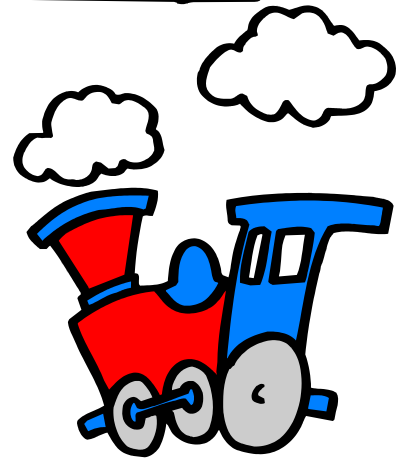
So we're **back** at the **BEGINNING**:

WHY BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE

- 1) Our world is a train wreck.
- 2) Our enemy is in charge.
- 3) God's not allowed to fix what we've broken.

Or more simply:

- 1) We made a mess of the world.
- 2) Satan is now messin' with us.
- 3) God's not allowed to clean up the mess.



A very **clear** and **simple** **ANSWER** to *one of the **TOUGHEST QUESTIONS OF ALL TIME***. Get these three reasons clearly in your mind, both for yourself and for others *when you get the chance* to tell them **the truth** about God.



My GOAL today was to take one of the toughest questions of all time and make it **SO** clear that not only you understand it, but you also now get it so well you can tell **OTHERS** the truth. I hope that I've accomplished this goal and that you will **USE these facts** in a great way to help yourself and others in **the middle of our world - our train wreck**. Thank you.

ANSWERS FOR BLANKS IN ORDER: NOT, how to help, God's not afraid, good people, sinful, good father, cause, effect, farming, three reasons, perfect, wasn't holding out, free will, love, we expect bad things, LUCKY, NORMAL, take it for granted, necessity, pain, the big "why", good hard look, cows, dogs, deserve, 600, 1/3, the curse, expect, handle the stress, 40,000 children, in charge, God, Satan, rejected, in charge, ENEMY, casualties, character, condition, who, how, what, rebelled, attack people, responsible, never, hands tied, loser, anger, God is totally in charge, eternal, eternal, can't lie, Sure, Yes, starts to blame God, powerful, no one doubted, personal freedom, behaved like children, fear, rebellion, His Truth, eternal, FORCING, INNOCENT, someone, forget, right, wrong, heaven, earth, self-preservation, our self, bad, bad, hide, hurt, trust, unknown "why", they were wrong, pain, play by the rules, mistake, character, could not, God, someone else.

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