



Glenn Brown

441 ½ Lark Drive
Grand Junction, Colorado 81504

DOES GOD ALLOW EVIL?

In his book, “Biblical Foundations of Freedom”, Art Mathias deals with the question, does God allow evil? “Why did God allow that cancer/accident to kill my child?” “How could God, who has infinite power, allow Hitler to kill millions of Jews in the Holocaust?”

While ministering to people, we find many that go through life angry and bitter at God because of a family tragedy or personal loss. I have heard pastors and other Christians confidently say that God in His sovereignty “allows” evil, but He uses it for our good as an opportunity to demonstrate His grace and mercy. This verbal salve is supposed to make it better, make it okay that God “allowed” evil to happen.

What does the word “allow” mean? If you or I allow something evil to happen, does that mean that we approved or condoned it? Does it mean that in some hidden fashion we caused it to happen, and were, therefore, responsible for the terrible consequences of that action? All we have to do is consider our relationship with our children to disprove this false reasoning. As our children become adults, we gradually permit them more and more freedom to make their own decisions. Some of our kids may make bad, destructive decisions, that cause suffering in their lives, and in our life. We may try to offer our counsel, but sometimes we have learned that our counsel is neither wanted nor accepted, so we bite our tongue and keep still. But we pray. And we try to act like Christians and refrain from worry and anxiety. We struggle with thoughts of failure as parents. And if their choices and lifestyle continue to deteriorate, we enter into a season of anguish that we cannot describe to those who are not parents. But we allow that evil to play out in their lives. Do we condone their bad decisions? Absolutely not! Are we responsible for their bad decisions? Ultimately, we are not. They are free to make their own decisions.

Oh, but you say, that is different! We are humans, and our power is limited. God has

telephone 970-434-1377

infinite, unlimited power, and He could stop that evil and suffering in a moment. **NO! HE CANNOT!** The Bible makes very clear that at the beginning God limited His power over humans in order to give us freedom, and He will not act contrary to that decision. Should God cancel that decision and restrain all the evil that men do? Think about your response. If you had the power, would you really overrule your children’s free will and exercise absolute control over them? Some parents dominate their children in that way, and it is called witchcraft. (Control over others is the essence of witchcraft.) It is a terrible evil in itself. Would you choose to surrender your freedom to another person, or to God, so that you would be a puppet, an automaton? If you did that you would not be a human being, made in the image of God, but something far less.

Yes, God created the possibility of evil and suffering when He gave us free will. God created the law of sowing and reaping, and those who sow evil will surely reap evil. God decreed that misery, wretchedness, sorrow, trouble, and distress will result from sin. (Gal. 6:7-8) But God does not tempt people to sin, God did not create sin, and it is against His will. God is ultimately Sovereign over His creation, but everything that happens on this earth is not His will. Absolutely not! It is not God’s will that any should perish, but many are perishing. Only in this place of freedom can you and I choose to love, and that is the over-arching reason that God has given us freedom. We can choose to become lovers, and thus we can become Christ-like and regain the image of God in which we were originally designed.

Does God condone all the evil that humans do, that you and I do? Absolutely not! God is not the author of sin. “Every good and perfect gift comes down from above, from the father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” Good things come from God, bad things come from the devil, and from the hearts of evil men. “But God permits it, He allows it!” That does not mean that He approves of it or is responsible for it. I am convinced that

one of the reasons God created mankind to participate in His creation by parenting children is so that we could understand in some dim way His grief and anguish when His kids (you and I) make evil, selfish decisions. We usually don't believe He loves our children as much as we do. That illustrates how little we comprehend the heart of our Heavenly Father.

We must go back again and again to the Cross to see the heart of the Father. We must look at the broken body of the Son of God and realize that is how much the Father loves us. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself." Satan is the accuser, and he constantly impugns the character of God. Most of the people in the world agree with the accuser, and many times you and I agree with him. I have heard it said that no one needs to defend God, that He is big enough to defend Himself. That is true, but we have the privilege of defending His character. People who hate and attack God are blind to Who He really is, and we have the privilege of gently correcting them. We can give our testimony and tell how we were encountered by the most kind, gentle, loving Person in the universe, and how in spite of our rebellion and hatefulness He patiently reached out to us again and again, until we willingly surrendered our self-will and allowed Him to rescue us from our destructions.

REGARDING THE USE OF TORTURE

A few weeks ago Time Magazine reported on a situation that had just occurred in Iraq. Two terrorists were captured by our troops, along with their "safe-house" containing many explosive devices and other weapons. These men and their comrades had killed several Americans a few days before. The two men were turned over to our allies, other Iraqis, who beat one of the men terribly in order to frighten the other man who broke and told where other terrorists were holed up. Thus, a coup was accomplished, fanatic terrorists were killed or captured, their bombs and other weapons were destroyed, and American lives were spared. Torture was an important component in this victory.

The aim of "terrorists" is to terrorize, to instill fear and dread in order to paralyze the will of their perceived enemies. Their use of torture is universal and purposeful. Torture has been used by governments and armies from antiquity. It is mentioned numerous times in the Bible. The cross, for instance. But this present war is the

first time that its use has been publicly endorsed by our national leaders. Not long ago, Vice President Cheney went before a congressional committee to seek approval for the use of limited torture as being a necessary component in the defense of liberty.

Torture is becoming a part of popular entertainment in our land. Movies about Hannibal Lecter, The Texas Chain-Saw Massacre, the horror genre of films for teens, all feature the most gruesome and revolting scenes of torture imaginable. What will be the consequence of this entertainment? A week or so ago the Grand Junction newspaper reported on a former resident now living in another state who, with his wife, had tortured a woman to death in a grisly fashion. Just for fun, you understand. We will be reading many more such reports in the future. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." The things you meditate on, think about, read about and watch, you will eventually act out.

This subject is personal for me. I have previously related how some 35 years ago God took me through steps of painful cleansing and repentance because of my backslidden condition. By the way, many scriptures indicate that a backslidden person has returned to his lost condition, has removed himself from the mercy of God, and can look forward to judgment and condemnation. For instance, Hebrews 10:26ff: *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation....how much worse punishment do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace.....It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

One of the steps of cleansing that God mercifully gave to me was an extensive session of demonic deliverance. Several hours into the session, the man leading the ministry spoke to any demons still within me and commanded them to name themselves. (This is a method that I no longer use, but I am glad it was used on that occasion.) A name came involuntarily from my mouth: "Torquemada!" The man said, "What does that mean?" I said that I didn't know. We prayed for revelation. After perhaps 10 minutes the meaning popped into my mind. I said, "Torquemada was the leader, the top church

official, of the Spanish Inquisition. They tortured to death hundreds of thousands of Christians and Jews to force them to recant their faith.”

Along with this revelation came a sudden insight into how this demonic spirit had come to be inside me. When I was eleven or twelve years old, several of us boys had a little gang that was led by an older boy of about fourteen or fifteen. We had a club house in his backyard, and he regularly led us in a game. We pretended to tie up a victim, drawn on a large board, and tortured that “victim” with knives while we laughed at his suffering. A demonic spirit named Torquemada used that occasion to invade my personality. All of my adult life, up until the time of my deliverance, I had experienced nightmares involving torture. If I read something, or saw a movie, about torture, I lay in bed at night in a cold sweat, imagining being the victim of torture.

Torture is demonic. It is an invention from the evil mind of the devil. I suspect that it may be related to the three unclean spirits of demons like frogs that will be released in the last days. (Rev. 16:13) Richard Wurmbbrand, a Christian pastor, suffered in both Nazi and Communist prisons for some 14 years, and was tortured in fiendish ways, including being castrated without anesthesia. He reported that the faces of his torturers literally glowed with a demonic joy.

I am irrevocably against it!

Yes, I know its use saves American lives in the short term. And I know that all war is hellish, and that it is difficult to draw lines. And I know that the terrorists delight in the use of torture and that they deserve the same treatment. But I have some major concerns:

- (1) What is the use of torture doing to our young men and women? (Abu Ghraib) This practice is demonic, and ultimately its use affects those who practice it far more terribly than those on whom it is practiced.
- (2) What message are we sending to the rest of the world, especially to the non-Christian world, by our use of this evil practice? Yes, the terrorists already use torture as an instrument of their policy, but when we participate in its use, we provide al-Jazeera with fodder. And we guarantee even more atrocities against our young men and women who become captives.
- (3) What is its use doing to our society? We are moving beyond any semblance of a nation with Christian values.

(4) What is its use doing to our relationship with the most high God? Do we not understand that the favor of God is worth more than 50 battalions of soldiers? If God does not protect us, we will be destroyed by our enemies.

There is little that you and I can do about things like this. But we can believe and vote and pray and speak for Christian values. It is important what we believe about abortion, and homosexuality, and torture, and the use and misuse of our natural resources, etc. And that we have a gentle, loving disposition in arguing for Christian values.

THE PURPOSE OF PROBLEMS

Following are some insights from a tape by Graham Cooke:

There is no maturity without stillness. We cannot hear God when there is clamor, anxiety, inner turmoil. Note: “The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet.” We must enter into peace, God’s peace, so He is free to crush the enemy.

1. The purpose of **problems** is to produce **faith**. Living by faith is something we all do all the time – the question is, faith in what or whom? If we are living by faith in Christ, we should get excited when problems come, since we know they will build our faith.
2. The purpose of **demonic opposition** is to teach you **power and authority**.
3. The purpose of **human opposition** is to teach you **grace**. Difficult people are a short cut to the character of Christ. (Graham went through a period of years when he was being persecuted and slandered by 3 guys. They followed him around the country so they could visit all the pastors in town and tell them Graham was a false prophet. They stood in front of every auditorium where he was holding his seminars with signs, “False prophet! Anti-Christ!” They sat in the front row of every seminar, scowling and taking notes. They drove him crazy. He called them the Three Stooges. Then God gave him a vision: he saw himself in heaven, and a big chunk of rock was being sculpted into a figure of Christ. Three pairs of hands were doing the sculpting. God explained: That chunk of rock is you, and you are being sculpted into the image of Christ. The 3 pairs

of hands belong to your 3 “enemies.” They are doing My work for Me.” Graham’s attitude changed. He started greeting his 3 enemies, taking them a cup of coffee, etc. They were totally perplexed.)

4. The purpose of **tribulation** is to teach you **patience**. If it is from the enemy, take authority over it. But if God’s purpose is behind it, count it all joy! Don’t be a whiner! “I’m having a bad day, poor me!” From now on, there is no good day or bad day, only a day of grace. If you’re having a good day, enjoy it as a day of grace; if you’re having a bad day, endure it as a day of grace. God spells patience with a “T” - - Tribulation.

5. The purpose of **tension and difficulty** is to teach you **rest and peace**. Don’t let tension become friction. You need oil for the friction. Worship and praise and thanksgiving, even under your breath, can change the atmosphere in a room.

6. The purpose of **temptation** is to produce **righteousness**. The devil sees something in you that he can touch. You then have the opportunity to choose, and your choice determines which direction your soul is headed.

7. The purpose of **conflict in human relations** is to produce **love**. The secret of keeping the anointing: spend 80% of your time on relationship with God, and 20% in ministry. Love must be our choice every time, and it must be non-negotiable. Always believe the best about people. When in a conflict with someone, declare your commitment to them.

Example: I (Glenn) recently had breakfast with a friend who is an inspiration to me. He is an expert mechanic who works on big machines used in big construction projects. Because of his skill and integrity, he is in demand for jobs around the country. He might take a job that will last from a few months to a few years (building a tunnel, a pipeline, etc.). I told him that I realized he was working around a rough crew, and asked him to tell me how he witnessed to people. He related an experience where he had a boss that was downright mean and abusive. He cursed and intimidated everyone who worked under him. I asked my friend why he didn’t pack up and leave. He said he couldn’t leave a project he had committed to work on. He said the situation got so bad that he didn’t feel he could go on, and he

cried out to God for help and wisdom. The next day he noticed his boss’s pickup, filthy and covered with mud. He waited till no one was around and washed the pickup inside and out. He didn’t say a word to anyone. But somehow his boss figured out who the culprit was, and his attitude started softening. Wow! God give us grace to go and actually act like Christians.

MINISTRY

Paul Cradit and I just spent another weekend at a prison in Canyon City. (As I previously mentioned, there are eleven prisons in the city limits of Canyon City, and two more nearby. There are some 22,000 inmates of the state prison system in Colorado, not to mention jails, youth detention facilities, etc., and that number is growing at 1,000 per year. Each inmate costs the state about \$30,000 per year, plus cost of building and maintaining the facilities.) We had a good weekend, with about 50 inmates attending the sessions. A nice looking middle-aged man came for prayer after I taught about trauma. He had on a shoulder brace, and said he had been in constant pain for 14 years, since having an auto accident (about the same time he was going through a divorce). After a brief ministry, he said that all the pain left, and he started weeping in relief and gratitude to God. At the end of the seminar, I tried something I read about somewhere. Since most inmates had a poor or non-existent relationship with their fathers, I asked if I could act as a surrogate father and pray a father’s blessing over them. Following the prayer, there was an extended time of silence that seemed to go on forever, but probably lasted between 5 and 10 minutes, when the Heavenly Father seemed to be speaking to many of the men. About 40 of the men came forward to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

God Bless,
Glenn

I would like to thank each of you
for your support of this ministry.
If any of you want to receive tax credit for your
financial contributions, you may send them to:
CANON VIEW VINEYARD CHURCH
736 24 ½ Road
Grand Junction, Co. 81505