

Why Do Bad Things Happen?

By Steve Durkac

When a loved one lays unconscious and dependent on a machine to breathe or a simple drive to the grocery store is interrupted by a drunk driver or a physician informs you that the pain you thought was a pulled muscle is actually stage 4 cancer, we ask Why? Why do bad things happen?

In this post I want to pull back the curtain and draw our attention to the big behind the scene picture that explains why we have to deal with tragedy, trauma, and horrible events of evil imposed on innocent people.

Let's begin with a look at a parable Jesus gave in Matthew 13:24-30 about the kingdom of God being a field sowed with good seed but weeds came up too. The parable goes, ***"The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied"*** (Matthew 13:27-28 NIV).

In the parable the servants want to pull up the weeds, but the master said No, because He didn't want them to pull up the good plants with the bad. Instead, He said ***"Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."*** (Matthew 13:30 NIV).

Here's the lesson: God gave us a world of good seed but His ***"enemy"*** has been at work sowing bad things into our world. God's plan is to destroy the weeds of the enemy at the final harvest when Christ returns to take us to Heaven.

While it's not specifically mentioned in this parable, the time of waiting for the harvest allows mankind to choose Christ's redemption or reject it for continuance in Satan's weeds. The record in Heaven will show that all who are saved from Satan's fallen world are saved by their choice to accept the Savior and not by force of God.

In the story of Job we see Satan saying that Job only worshiped God because of his good life (Job 1:9-11) and Satan thought Job would turn from God if tragedy strikes him. We know from the story that Satan was wrong and despite Job's losses he remained faithful toward God by his choice.

When we compare Scripture with Scripture we get an understanding of how we got to this point. Isaiah 14:12-14 gives us a snapshot of Lucifer's fall because of his pride and desire to rise above God, stating ***"How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth. You said in your heart..I will make myself like the Most High"*** (NIV).

Ezekiel 28:15-16 reiterates this **"You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you...So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you"** (NIV). Jesus said, **"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"** (Luke 10:18 NIV). John the Apostle recorded in Revelation 12:9 that **"The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him"** (NIV).

Since Satan's success in the Garden of Eden by tempting Adam and Eve to reject God and believe him, he has been **"a roaring lion looking for someone to devour"** (1 Peter 5:8 NIV). Jesus stated the mission of Satan on earth when He said, **"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"** (John 10:10 NIV).

Thankfully Jesus became the second Adam (Romans 5:17-19) in the sense that He would succeed where Adam failed (Romans 3:24-25) and He would become our Savior and Redeemer, **"that he might make atonement for the sins of the people"** (Hebrews 2:14-17 NIV).

Even in the midst of Satan's attacks and his works of evil that are meant to turn us away from faith in the Savior, when we **"are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it"** (1 Corinthians 10:13 NIV) because **"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work"** (1 John 3:8 NIV). Though tragedy strikes we can know **"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble"** (Psalm 46:1 NIV).

We may not have any say in the bad things that befall us, but we do have a say in how we respond to them. We can choose to allow them to drive us further from God or choose to allow them to push us closer to God so we may find comfort, strength, and hope in the midst of that sorrow, struggle, and pain.

Ultimately, time on this earth and sin fallen ways will come to an end. Jesus will return to deliver us, the resurrection of the saved will happen, and we will unite once again with our loved ones in an eternity without sin, sickness, or evil.

Satan will be judged a liar (John 8:44 NIV) and God's character will be seen in its true light **"because God is love"** (1 John 4:8 NIV) and **"God is truthful"** (John 3:33 NIV). Satan will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 21:1-5), his pride will come to an end (Ezekiel 28:17-18), and the earth will be made new and restored, and **"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away"** (Revelation 21:4 NIV).

As you can see, God is not the author of tragedy, trials, and our troubles. We live in a sinful fallen world and Satan is throwing all he can at us to get to God and malign His character because he thinks he should be on God's throne. Remember, Satan said **"I will make myself like the Most High"** (Isaiah 14:14 NIV).

God could have annihilated Satan the minute he started expressing his lies in Heaven, but that would have caused the angels and us to wonder if Satan maybe had a point. Now, the passing of time and the destruction of his works will prove Satan's ill-gained lies and works of harm as worthy of God's wrath in the Lake of Fire. The whole universe will see and judge that God is just and righteous in His plan of redemption.

I want to conclude by pointing to the story of Jesus healing a blind man and the disciples asking, **"who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"** (John 9:2 NIV). I often hear the same response to tragedy today when families say something like "God's judging him, that's why this happened" or I hear "Why did this happen he is such a good person."

Bad things do not happen because God is against us, nor are they obligated to not happen to us because of the quality of our goodness. In response to the disciples' question Jesus said, **"this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him"** (John 9:3 NIV).

Jesus might have well answered: Bad things happen. We live in a sinful fallen world. At any given time throughout the day we are exposed to the possibility of an unexpected accident, illness, or tragedy. However, whatever may happen to us is an opportunity for us to show others **"the works of God"** despite the accident, illness, or tragedy that has occurred.

The works of God is His grace through us, His provisions for us, and His indwelling Holy Spirit to be a witness to those around us that we can have **"love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"** (Galatians 5:22-23 NIV) in the midst of horrible situations.

We can make the most sense out of bad things that happen when we use them as opportunities to give God the glory, despite the circumstance.