

Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

Psalm 73:1-17

(All Scriptures NASB 1995 unless otherwise noted)

1

"Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart! But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, my steps had almost slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pains in their death, and their body is fat. They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like mankind. Therefore pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them. Their eye bulges from fatness; The imaginations of their heart run riot. They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; They speak from on high." (Psalm 73:1-8)

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"They have set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue parades through the earth. Therefore his people return to this place, and waters of abundance are drunk by them. They say, 'How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?' Behold, these are the wicked; And always at ease, they have increased in wealth. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence; For I have been stricken all day long and chastened every morning." (Psalm 73:9-14)

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Introduction

- This is an age-old question!
 - Asaph ponders this question...
 - Why do the wicked prosper? - vs. 3
 - **Why do good things happen to bad people?**
 - Was envious of the wicked for a time!
 - One of the hardest questions of life!
 - A reality & difficult part of life!

WHY ...did my child die?"
 ...am I sick?"
 ...such heart ache and suffering?"
 ...must there be disease and death?"
 ...am I being treated this way?"
 ...did I lose my job?"
 ...ME???

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The Answer of Some Is...

- **God is to blame!**
 - Some Charge that God...
 - "took my Child!"
 - "took my loved one!"
 - "caused a bad thing to happen!"
 - Natural disasters are often called...
 - "**an act of God**"
- **Job's wife charged God!**
 - "Then his wife said to him, 'Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!'" (Job 2:9)

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God Is Not To Be Blamed!

- **The goodness of God declared!**
 - Asaph - **Psalm 73:1**
 - The apostles:
 - Paul - **Romans 11:22**
 - John - **1 John 1:5**
 - James - **James 1:17**
 - "For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations." (Psalm 100:5)

"God Is So Good"

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To Blame God is Foolish & Sinful!

*"But he said to her, 'You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?' In all this Job did not sin with his lips."
(Job 2:10)*

- **Therefore, bad things that happen are NOT some sinister plan of God!**

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Bad Things Do Happen!

- Job – **Job 1:1-22; 2:3-7**
- Asaph – **Psalms 73:14**
- Apostles – **Matthew 10:16, 21-25**
 - Paul – **2 Corinthians 11:24-27**
- Brethren in Christ!
 - **2 Corinthians 4:16-5:9**

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WHY?

Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

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Because We Are in a Sinful World!

- **Sometimes we suffer from our own past sins!**
 - Some bad things are self-imposed! – **Galatians 6:7-9**
 - Sexual immorality –
 - Broken homes, divorce
 - Unwanted pregnancy, shame
 - STD's – AIDS – ABORTION!
 - Drug & alcohol consumption –
 - Health & financial problems
 - Addiction, crime & impaired judgment with lasting consequences!
- **Suffer from the consequences of sins of others!**
 - **Gossip, Murmuring & Lies** – destroy good names & reputations & cause division and contention among brethren and families!
 - **Proverbs 6:16-19**
 - **Philippians 2:14-15**
 - Drunk drivers – kill & maim good innocent people!
 - Murderers, robbers, scam artists & law breakers, etc.!



*"...and be sure your sin will find you out."
(Numbers 32:23b)*

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Because of Evil People

- **Faithful of old suffered extreme persecution!**
 - **Hebrews 11:36-40**
 - Suffering of God's people has always been and will always be!
 - **1 Peter 4:12-16**
 - Suffer at the hands of the rich!
 - **James 5:1-7**
- **Christ suffered & died in innocence!**
 - At the hands of His own people – **Acts 2:22-23**
 - **John 1:11; 1 Peter 2:21-23; cf. Acts 10:38**

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Because of Evil People

- **First-Century Christians suffered severely!**
 - Antipas – *"...my faithful one who was killed among you..."*
 - **Revelation 2:13**
- **Faithful preachers suffered for preaching the truth!**
 - Paul – **MARTYRED** – **2 Timothy 4:6-8**
 - John the Baptist – **BEHEADED** – **Mark 6:17-29**
 - Stephen – **STONED** – **Acts 7:51-59**
 - Many faithful preachers today suffer because they refuse to compromise the Truth!
 - **2 Timothy 4:1-5**

Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

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Because Satan is an Active Force!

- "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. The Lord said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' Then Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.'" **(Job 1:6-7)**
- "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case **the god of this world** has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." **(2 Corinthians 4:3-4)**

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Because Satan is an Active Force!

- **Satan is our "adversary" & seeks every opportunity to devour & destroy us!**
 - By discouraging, disheartening, using deceptive devices!
 - Uses trials and human suffering
 - **Matthew 24:7-13**
- "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." **(1 Peter 5:8)**
- "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." **(Revelation 2:10)**
- We must be equipped and watchful for the **"schemes"** of the devil! **Ephesians 6:10-20**

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Because Life is Not Fair!

- **Not promised a fair and fanciful life!**
 - "But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content." **(1 Timothy 6:6-8)**
 - "He said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'" **(Job 1:21)**
- Perfect fellowship with God was lost in the garden!
- Four-fold curse because of sin! – **Genesis 3:9-19, 23**
 - Woman to suffer pain in childbirth, in subjection to her husband!
 - Earth cursed with thorns & thistles, man to work with his hands!
 - Physical death - return to dust!
 - Adam & Eve driven out of the garden!

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Because Life is Not Fair!

- **That which was lost in the garden is regained in Christ!**
 - Made perfect in Christ, if we **suffer** with Him!
 - **Romans 8:17-23**
 - The Christian life is no rose garden!
 - A life of service, humility, toils, trials, hard choices and labor!
 - "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household." **(Matthew 10:34-36)**
 - Death viewed as a rest from life's toils & labors.
 - **Hebrews 4:9-11**
 - **Psalms 116:15**

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Warned That Trials Will Come!

- **1 Corinthians 10:13**
 - Christ – **Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:15**
 - **2 Timothy 3:10-12**
 - **Romans 5:1-4**
 - **1 Peter 1:6-9**
- Eternal Blessings are promised ONLY to those who endure these trials!**



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Trials Strengthen & Perfect!

- **Made inwardly stronger by trials:**
 - "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." **(James 1:2-4)**
- "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you." **(1 Peter 5:10)**



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Trials Strengthen & Perfect!

■ Made inwardly stronger by trials:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort." (2 Corinthians 1:3-7)



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Trials Strengthen & Perfect!

■ Trials test our love & fear of God!

- John 14:15

• "God tested Abraham" – Genesis 22:1

• Abraham obeyed God!

■ Offered his beloved son Isaac - Genesis 22:11-18

• "...for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." – vs. 12b

■ Cf. Hebrews 11:17

■ Trials of old age & failing health will come!

• Aging inevitable – no stopping it!

■ Godly, active, moderate living is necessary!

• 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

• Solomon's allegorical description of aging!

■ Ecclesiastes 12:1-7



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Because of The Trials of Aging

Ecclesiastes 12:3-7

■ Verse 3

- Watchmen of house tremble – arms & shoulders weak
- Mighty men stoop – legs & back weak
- Grinding ones stand idle – teeth fall out
- Those who look through windows grow dim – eyesight fails

■ Verse 4:

- Doors are shut – desire to stay home
- Sound of the grinding mill is low – hard of hearing
- Arise at the sound of the bird – easily awakened
- Daughters of song sing softly – voice becomes feeble

■ Verse 5:

- Afraid of a high place – fear of falling
- Terrors on the road – fear of travel
- Almond tree blossoms – hair turns gray, white, falls out
- Grasshopper drags himself along – loss of mobility
- Desire fails (ESV) – fleshly desires wane
- Man goes to his eternal home – obvious reference to death

■ Verse 6:

- Silver cord is broken – spinal cord & central nervous system
- Golden bowl crushed – skull that houses the brain
- Pitcher by the well shattered – heart & circulatory system
- Wheel at the cistern crushed – breathing becomes difficult and weaker

■ Verse 7:

- Body returns to dust – spirit returns to God who gave it! – DEATH

Man
does not
waste
time...
time
wastes
man!



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Because of Time & Chance

"I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all. Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them." (Ecclesiastes 9:11-12)

■ Wrong place at the wrong time!

• Ecclesiastes 9:1-3

■ Tower of Siloam fell – Luke 13:4-5

■ 911 terrorist attacks!

■ Accidents, Injuries, Death



■ Calamities & blessings happen!

• To all men - "Evil and the good... the righteous and the unrighteous."

■ Matthew 5:44-45



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Because of Time & Chance

1 "There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven—

2 A time to give birth and a time to die;

A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.

3 A time to kill and a time to heal;

A time to tear down and a time to build up.

4 A time to weep and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn and a time to dance.

5 A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones;

A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing.

6 A time to search and a time to give up as lost;

A time to keep and a time to throw away.

7 A time to tear apart and a time to sew together;

A time to be silent and a time to speak.

8 A time to love and a time to hate;

A time for war and a time for peace."

(Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

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Because That's Life!

■ Life is fleeting & troublesome!

"Man, who is born of woman, is short-lived and full of turmoil. Like a flower he comes forth and withers. He also flees like a shadow and does not remain." (Job 14:1-2)

■ Life is as a vapor; with a sure and swift end and no guarantee of a tomorrow!

"Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.'"

(James 4:14-15)



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Because, I Don't Know!

- No logical explanation for some things that happen!
 - Only God knows! **Deuteronomy 29:29**
 - Must leave these in His hands!
- Must learn and accept the truth that we do not have an answer for some happenings in this life!
 - **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**



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The Most Important Question

- Is not "**WHY** do bad things happen?"

But How Will We Respond When They Do Happen



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What We Not Do!

- We must not **ENVY** the wicked!
 - **Psalm 73:2-3**
 - Their destiny is everlasting destruction!
 - **Psalm 73:15-20**
- We must not **BLAME** God!
 - Remember Job!
 - "Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God." (**Job 1:22**)
- We must not **DEPART** from God!
 - "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (**Hebrews 3:12-13**)

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What We Must Remember:

- God is not the author of bad things, but of good.

"Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."
(**James 1:17**)
- The devil is the source of our problems, not God.

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (**1 Peter 5:8**)
- We must be careful that we not falsely charge God with our troubles. He is not the cause of the troubles — He is the help and deliverance from them!

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What We Must Remember:

- Nothing in this life compares to what God has prepared for us.

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God." (**Romans 8:18**)
- Nothing in this life can affect God's providence toward those who love Him.

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."
(**Romans 8:28**)

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What We Must Remember:

- Nothing in this life can separate us from the love of God.

"Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, 'For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
(**Romans 8:35-39**)

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What We Must Do?

- **Count our blessings!**
 - Take a "spiritual and physical blessing inventory!"
- **Remember others who are suffering!**
 - **1 Peter 5:9b; Philippians 2:3-4**
- **Make the most of each day of your life!**
 - **Ecclesiastes 8:15**
- **Always seek God when trials come!**
 - **Hebrews 4:14-16; Job 1:20-22**
- **Remember, God blesses the righteous! Psalm 24:4-5**
 - Job was blessed because he endured – **Job 42:12-13**
 - Seek the **Eternal** blessings! – **Matthew 6:33**
- **Draw near to God! – Psalm 73:21-28**
 - He will draw near to you – **James 4:8-10**
 - Promised a **UNIQUE** place of rest – **Revelation 21:1-7**

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Our Goal Is Heaven

*"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, **and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.**' And He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' And He said, 'Write, for these words are faithful and true.' Then He said to me, 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.'"* **(Revelation 21:1-7)**

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Our Goal Is Heaven

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How To Be Saved

Hear the word of God

(2 Thessalonians 2:14-15; James 1:21)

Believe the gospel message

(Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24)

Repent of sins

(Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31)

Confess Jesus Christ

(Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32-33)

Be Baptized for Forgiveness of Sins

(Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)

Remain Obedient

(Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 3:12)