

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS

"Part II: Job - Why And How Bad Things Happen To Good People In A Good God's Universe"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

When Bad Things Happen To Good People to explain the enigma of why the righteous suffer. He could not explain the problem other than to say that God must not always be in control of everything and that He is thus limited from helping innocent people escape bad events in their lives!

Kushner's explanation has enormous ramifications in trials people face today! Consider the following in light of his conclusion:

Newsweek, July 24, 1995, p. 21) Was God not then in control of the bomb blast?!

(b) Days later, when the second bomb exploded over Nagasaki, 250 American POWs in the city lost their lives (Ibid., p. 28). Are we to conclude that things got out of God's control so that these innocent American soldiers died by their own country's bomb?

Newsweek are too graphic for me to mention here. In view of this tragedy, dare we conclude that God was somehow unable to control events, and that is why things turned out this way there?!

(d) A Christian family I knew in California had a sandbox in their front yard. One day when their 8-year-old boy, Gordy was playing in his sandbox, a drunken 17-year-old driver in a speeding car popped up over the sidewalk, crashing through the sand box and instantly killing little Gordy! Though the whole church attempted to console his parents, Gordy's mom was so upset that she could no longer live in Chico. The family moved away to the Bay Area! We still don't know why Gordy died though it happened 25 years ago! Was God somehow out of control of Gordy's sandbox that day?!

Why do bad things happen even to good people if there is a Good God who created the universe?! (Turn to the "Need" section)

Need: "If Genesis teaches that good comes from God and evil comes from sin, why and how do BAD things happen to GOOD people in a GOOD GOD'S universe?! How can we deal with this paradox?"

I. (We study Job after Genesis since Job lived in Abraham's era:

- A. Job's living 140 years after his calamity (Job 42:16) conforms to the longevity span of the patriarchal era, cf. Gen. 11:32; 25:7.
- B. The Sabean and Chaldaic nomad bands of Job 1:15, 17 were nomads in Abraham's era, but were not nomadic in later times.
- C. Job's wealth is reckoned in livestock owned (1:3, 42:12) which was also true of Abraham's era, Gen. 12:16; 13:2; Gen. 30:43; 32:5.
- D. Secular literature in Egypt and Mesopotamia with Job's genre of prose-poetry-prose was written in Abraham's era, B.K.C.,O.T., 716.)

II. Though a good man, Job suffered great, unexplained troubles:

- A. In **God's** view, Job was the most upright man in his day, Job 1:1, 8.
- B. Yet, Job suffered terrible trials without any explanations for Job:
 1. Invaders killed his workers and ruined his business, 1:14-15, 17.
 2. A strong wind killed his children, and he developed a distressing skin disease, Job 1:18-19; 2:7-8.
 3. Finally, his wife told Job to die by euthanasia, cursing God so as to experience His wrath, Bib. Sac., v. 151, No. 604, p. 409! (2:9)
 4. Besides, these things all happened suddenly in overwhelming, psychologically draining succession, Job. 1:16a, 17a, 18a!
- C. Job wondered why these troubles had come upon him, Job 3:1, 11, 13!

III. Unknown to Job, his troubles were a test permitted by a Good and Sovereign God to reveal Job's uprightness to evil Satan:

- A. God wished to reveal the uprightness of Job to Satan, Job 1:8-12.
- B. However, Satan felt that God's past blessings to Job hindered the exposure of Job's real heart, a heart he implied was evil, Job 1:9-10.
- C. Accordingly, to prove the depth of Job's uprightness, God let Satan bring all of the troubles listed above to Job, Job 1:10-12; Job 2:4-6!

IV. When Job demanded God explain WHY he had these troubles (Job 31:35), the great evil in Satan AND the great goodness in God led to Job's STAY UNINFORMED on the why of his trials, 38:1-3!

- A. Had God told Job that his trials were a proving ground to Satan in exposing Job's good character, Job would have known enough to have trusted God **too easily** for his trials to have shown any **real** character!
 - B. Had the contest thus been tainted, God could not have **defended** Job's **true** character before Satan's slander, and vicious Satan would have charged that Job was not under a **truly fierce enough** trial, 1:9-11!
 - C. Because God is so **good**, God laid His own reputation with **Job** on the line to defend Job's character before vicious **Satan**: God showed Job only nature's wonders to teach that the Creator God's ways were too lofty always to be **understood** by the created Job. Job had to **trust** God **without** God's **explaining** WHY his trials existed, Job 38:1-3!
- V. **Seeing he couldn't demand God explain the trials, though ignorant of the why, Job repented of demanding an explanation, Job 42:1-6!**
- VI. **Thus, Job passed the test and God won the contest. God then restored to Job a double portion of all he had lost, Job 42:10-17.**
- VII. **Though WE know, God STILL gave JOB no further reason as to why he had suffered! This kept Job from turning proud for learning he'd won in a massive contest, guarding his valued piety!**
- VIII. **In Job, God's ULTIMATE solution to the suffering caused by evil in the world, the "thread of redemption," continues from Genesis:**
- A. In pain, Job hoped for a resurrection to bear his present ills, 14:13-15.
 - B. Later adding to the idea, he said that since God is fair, God **must** vindicate him **sometime**, 19:22-27! Job assumed he soon would die (19:20) yet reckoned he **must still see** his vindication by God, implying his **bodily resurrection**, 19:26-27, Wycliffe Bi. Com., 476.
 - C. Job thus adds the **resurrection of the body** to the Gn. 3:21, 24 hope of God's preserving future life for man, cf. Rom. 8:23!

Application: Deal with bad things happening to good people by following Job's example: (1) believe on Christ for salvation from sin, Acts 17:30; Jn. 3:16; Job 1:8; (2) then fellowship with God like Job did (Job 1:5), (a) confessing any sins we do (1 Jn. 1:9) and (d) relying on God's Holy Spirit for behavior control, Gal. 5:16-23; (3) next, recall that there IS a wonderful explanation that might not be POSSIBLE to be given now, rest in the wisdom of a GOOD God and, like Job, trust God's making great sense of it all in the resurrection!

Lesson: (1) Bad things happen because of sin and a very wicked Satan. (2) Bad things happen to good people without current explanations as an infinitely wholesome God's best permissive way to defeat enormous evil!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

I counseled with a man who went through a very traumatic divorce. He had lost a lot in the court settlement. He lost the home that he had purchased before marriage and many of his expensive possessions. He also lost the custody of his beloved children. His former wife could prove to the divorce court her points where he could not prove that he had caught her in bed with her lover.

I worked with him for several years. He seethed with anger and hurt so that it was impossible to console him. Like Job, he at times wished for death just to be relieved from the pain of it all. He was a believer, and he knew that suicide was not an option, but the agony just went on and on, day after day, year after year!

I spent a lot of private time in prayer while talking with him, asking the Lord for wisdom to say the right thing. I just didn't seem to have the right words. One day, as he poured out his soul, he mentioned how moving he found Eric Clapton's hit song about his toddler son. The boy had fallen out of a New York City skyscraper to his death far below because the baby-sitter wasn't doing her job. The song was about heaven, and if Eric Clapton's son would know him were he to see Eric in heaven. Led by this moving subject, we started to talk about heaven and its coming blessings for the believer.

End to pain seemed so **priceless** to him! Just like Job found solace in anticipating the resurrection when His divine Kinsman-Redeemer would stand on the earth and one day vindicate Job's righteousness before his three accusing "friends," this Christian found solace in the hope of justice in the life to come. God would deal out justice where he couldn't do so now. Job's 4,000 year old blessed hope of the resurrection had delivered its balm once more!

God permits calamitous challenges to come our way often just for the sake of making us **homesick for the life to come! There is a resurrection day coming -- let us live for it, serve God toward it, and long for it the more!**