

why do bad things happen?

you asked for it | week four

post falls campus | july 2nd & 5th | titus leger



“Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then God is not omnipotent. Is God able, but not willing? Then God is malevolent. Is God both able and willing? Whence then is evil?” (Hume)

1. Key Thought: There was more going on in Job’s suffering than Job knew about.
 - a. Goal: To shift from “Why?” to two more useful questions:
 - i. God, what do you want me to know about this situation?
 - ii. God, what do you want me to do in this situation?

2. Why Did Bad Things Happen to Job?

Job 1:9-11 NIV “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

- a. Job was unaware of events taking place in the spiritual realm

3. Two Common Mistakes

- a. We oversimplify suffering.

Job 11:14-15, 17 “If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away; do not let wickedness reside in your tents. Surely then you will lift up your face without blemish; you will be secure, and will not fear [...]Your life will be brighter than the noonday”.

- i. “God sends calamities upon wicked people only. You have suffered a calamity. Therefore, you must be wicked” (TOW Project).
- b. We assume: “If evil looks pointless to me, then it must be pointless.”
 - i. Where is the hidden assumption in David Hume’s thinking?
 1. He assumes that we - as humans - could make adequate judges.
 - ii. “Walking with God through Pain and Suffering” by Timothy Keller

The hidden assumption is: “If God had a morally sufficient reason for allowing this suffering, I would probably know what it is” (Keller).

- iii. But this assumes that you and I are on God’s level - that we are in a position to make that call.

Job 38:1- NLT “Then the Lord answered Job from the whirlwind: “Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words? Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them. “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line?”

- c. In simple terms: Just because we can’t see God’s reason for our suffering doesn’t mean there isn’t one.

4. Two Types of Evil:

- a. Moral evil - Evil and suffering caused by people or angelic beings who have the ability to choose evil.
 - i. Adam and Eve’s rebellion, Cain’s murder, and Sodom and Gomorrah’s sexual depravity
- b. Natural evil - Evil and suffering that is caused by the earth being under a curse
 - i. Earthquakes, cancer, Ebola outbreaks in Uganda, famine in Sudan

5. Why Do Bad Things Happen?

a. An Example of Natural Evil

John 9:1-3 NLT “As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. ² “Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?” “It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.”

- i. Learn to shift from “Why?” to two more useful questions:
 1. God, what do you want me to know about this situation?
 2. God, what do you want me to do in this situation?

b. An Example of Moral Evil

Genesis 45:4-8; 50:20 ESV ⁴ So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God. [...] ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

- i. Learn to shift from “Why?” to two more useful questions:
 1. God, what do you want me to know about this situation?
 2. God, what do you want me to do in this situation?

c. An Example of My Moral Evil

Acts 5:3,4b-5a ESV “But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? [...] You have not lied to man but to God! When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last.”

- i. Learn to shift from “Why?” to two more useful questions:
 1. God, what do you want me to know about this situation?
 2. God, what do you want me to do in this situation?

6. Why Did Bad Things Happen to Jesus?

Isaiah 53:10 NIV “Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

a. How did he respond to suffering?

1 Peter 2:23 “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.”

b. What did he gain from suffering?

Hebrews 5:8 NLT “Even though Jesus was God’s Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered.

