

Why Does a Good God Allow Bad Things to Happen?

There are a lot of possible reasons that God might allow bad things to happen on this world.

1. God Has Different View of These Things
2. Free Will
3. Testing/Trials
4. Punishment
5. Instill Fear of the Lord

God Has Different View of These Things

The Bible teaches us that God sees the end from the beginning of a matter. He might allow a bad thing to happen to a person when He sees the end result is something good, like their salvation. He might allow a tire to blow on a car, when he sees death if the person kept driving forward.

1 Corinthians 2:11

For who among people knows the *thoughts* of a person except the spirit of the person that is in him? So also the *thoughts* of God no one knows, except the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 2:6

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory; *the wisdom* which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written:

“THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD,
AND *WHICH* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HUMAN HEART,
ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.”

None of us knows the mind of God. Those who crucified Jesus would not have done so if they had understood the good to mankind that occurred because of His death and resurrection. So what was done was apparently evil, but God had a higher good in mind. Through the death of Jesus, salvation was made available to all mankind. Though we had sinned, we could be reconciled to God and obtain eternal life!

Free Will

God gave mankind free will. To understand why God did this, it is helpful to understand some of the reasons why God created mankind.

He created mankind for His own glory.

Isaiah 43:7

Everyone who is called by my name, **whom I created for my glory**, whom I formed and made.

He created mankind for good works.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Titus 2:14

Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to **purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works**.

He created mankind to praise Him.

Isaiah 43:21

The people **whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise**.

He created man for His own pleasure.

Revelation 4:11

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and **for thy pleasure they are and were created**.

These purposes have a more profound fulfillment when they are done with free will. God could have made slaves who could do nothing but praise Him, do good works, glorify Him, please Him, but it is much better that they are done freely, out of love, than done without a choice. The question is, will you freely choose God? Will you choose to love Him, praise Him, glorify Him? Will you freely choose to do good works? Will you choose good over evil? If there is only one choice, there is really no choice to make.

This idea of having a choice leads us to the next reason why God would allow bad things to happen, which is for testing or trials.

Testing/Trials

Scripture makes it clear that God does indeed test people.

Psalms 11:5

The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked, And His soul hates one who loves violence.

Proverbs 17:3

The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But **the Lord tests hearts**.

Jeremiah 20:12

Yet, **Lord of armies, who tests the righteous**, Who sees the mind and the heart; Let me see Your vengeance on them, For to You I have disclosed my cause.

Scripture also gives some reasons for this testing:

Deuteronomy 13

If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let's follow other gods (whom you have not known) and let's serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams; for **the Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul**. You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.

Ecclesiastes 3:18 AMP

I said to myself regarding the sons of men, "**God is surely testing them** in order for them to see that [by themselves, without God] they are [only] animals."

I suspect one reason for testing people is because there was rebellion in Heaven. God wants us to prove our loyalty to Him. Satan's fall from Heaven is described thus:

You were the seal of perfection,
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
You were in Eden, the garden of God.
Every kind of precious stone covered you:
carnelian, topaz, and diamond,
beryl, onyx, and jasper,
lapis lazuli, turquoise and emerald.
Your mountings and settings were crafted in gold;
they were prepared on the day you were created.
You were an anointed guardian cherub,
for I had appointed you.
You were on the holy mountain of God;
you walked among the fiery stones.
From the day you were created
you were blameless in your ways
until wickedness was found in you.
Through the abundance of your trade,
you were filled with violence, and you sinned.
So I expelled you in disgrace
from the mountain of God,
and banished you, guardian cherub,
from among the fiery stones.

Your heart became proud because of your beauty;
For the sake of your splendor
you corrupted your wisdom.
So I threw you down to the ground;
I made you a spectacle before kings.
You profaned your sanctuaries
by the magnitude of your iniquities
in your dishonest trade.
So I made fire come from within you,
and it consumed you.
I reduced you to ashes on the ground
in the sight of everyone watching you.
All those who know you among the peoples
are appalled at you.
You have become an object of horror
and will never exist again.”

There was also the Genesis 6 rebellion of the angels, which ultimately lead to the flood and only 8 people being saved out of the whole world.

Genesis 6

Now it came about, when mankind began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then the Lord said, “My Spirit will not remain with man forever, because he is also flesh; nevertheless his days shall be 120 years.” The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of mankind, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of mankind was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. So the Lord was sorry that He had made mankind on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. Then the Lord said, “I will wipe out mankind whom I have created from the face of the land; mankind, and animals as well, and crawling things, and the birds of the sky. For I am sorry that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

Jude 1

Now I want to remind you, though you know everything once and for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. And angels who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper dwelling place, these He has kept in eternal restraints under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these angels indulged in sexual perversion and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

Now there are some famous examples of people being tested in the Bible record. Abraham was tested before he became the father of God’s chosen people. He was asked to sacrifice his only son. This not only tested Abraham, but provided a picture of God offering up His only Son as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

Another example is Job. God described him: “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from

evil.” Job endured extreme testing: he lost his children, flocks, wealth and health. But he remained faithful to God under his testing, and was blessed with more than he had in the beginning.

Some more speculation on my part: This world is a school where we learn to love and trust in God. If we don’t want to learn this, we have that choice. We’re either under Satan or under God. If we follow God, we follow Him to his eternal home: heaven. If we follow Satan and the world’s ways, we follow Satan to his eternal home: the lake of fire. Seems like a no-brainer of a choice to me, but you’re free to choose.

Punishment

Why would God bring calamity on people? One reason is to learn righteousness.

Isaiah 26:9

I long for you in the night; yes, my spirit within me diligently seeks you, **for when your judgments are in the land, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.**

Another reason is to put an end to wickedness.

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of mankind was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. So the LORD was sorry that He had made mankind on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. Then the LORD said, “I will wipe out mankind whom I have created from the face of the land; mankind, and animals as well, and crawling things, and the birds of the sky. For I am sorry that I have made them.”

People ask why God doesn’t put a stop to all the wickedness today.

Hebrews 10

For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Be careful what you ask for when you want the wickedness of the world put to a stop. Will you be among the wicked who are swept away in God’s wrath? Are you good enough to live up to God’s perfect standards?

Instill Fear of the Lord

God generally waits as long as possible before bringing His judgment down on people to give them chances to repent and stop their wickedness. He loves us and it is His will for all to be saved. So usually there are many chances to turn back from sin. But there are a couple of examples where God’s judgment comes shockingly swift.

2 Samuel 6

Now David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David departed from Baale-judah, with all the people who were with him, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the Lord of armies who is enthroned above the cherubim. They had mounted the ark of God on a new cart and moved it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart. So they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Ahio was walking ahead of the ark. Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord with all kinds of instruments made of juniper wood, and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals.

But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, because the oxen nearly overturned it. And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God. Then David became angry because of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah; and that place has been called Perez-uzzah to this day. **So David was afraid of the Lord that day**; and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" And David was unwilling to move the ark of the Lord into the city of David with him; but David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom, the Gittite. The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

Acts 5

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the proceeds for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God." And as he heard these words, Ananias collapsed and died; and great fear came over all who heard about it. The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

Now an interval of about three hours elapsed, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for this price?" And she said, "Yes, for that price." Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well." And immediately she collapsed at his feet and died; and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. **And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard about these things.**

Why would God want people to fear Him? Proverbs tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It is good to understand how powerful God is. Jesus said in Matthew 10:28 "And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Hell is a place of terrible torment. People there are aware and feeling the terrible pain of the place. In the book of Revelation, it describes the people who take the mark of the beast, that the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever. It's not a party there with all your friends. It's unending pain and misery, because all who are there have rejected all that is good, that is, God.

Conclusion

We are living in a time of great evil on the earth. What God calls abomination, man is celebrating. Murder is rampant. Sexual immorality is rampant. Theft is rampant. Multitudes of harm is coming on the little children. God's judgment is immanent.

Revelation 4:7

"Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth, and sea and springs of waters."

Paul's message to Athenians is pertinent for us today:

Acts 17

Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said, "People of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed, 'To an Unknown God.' Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it—he is Lord of heaven and earth—does not live in shrines made by hands. Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. From one man he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. **He did this so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.** For in him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.' Since, then, we are God's offspring, we shouldn't think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination.

"Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, **God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.**"

Seek God now while he may be found. There will come a time when it is too late.