

God is Sovereign

The Bible is very clear that God is almighty, and even this term in itself is sometimes used as a name of God (**Gen 17:1**). Nobody can defeat or overturn God in what He purposes to do. The “good” (correct morally speaking) is defined as that which is the will of God, and anything else is sin. But we must separate the concept of “good” in a correct moral sense from what is of immediate earthly benefit, and “bad” from the concept of that which is disobedience to the will of God. A person may suffer from needs, and he may say that stealing is “good” for him, so that he may eat. Even though the person sees it as “good”, morally it is “bad.” Even though obviously it is of benefit to him, it is still sin.

Equally we have to separate between that which is sin (something outside of the will of God) from that which is generally considered “bad.” The concept of “adversity,” or something not going “well” for me, is not necessarily sin in a moral sense. In the sense of adversity, God creates evil and darkness. **Isa 45:7** *I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.* **Jer 13:16** *Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, ...* The cross of Calgary was adversity and in a sense “bad” for Jesus because he suffered, but it was absolutely the will of God, and was good morally speaking even though he suffered horribly and eventually died. Equally no woman can actually say that the experience of natural childbirth is “good” or “pleasurable”, but in the end, they all see it not as the pain and suffering, but as the entrance of their child into the world.

God made Creatures with Free Will

We should understand that God made the angels and human beings with a free will, and that means that they can obey God’s will or disobey it. God in creating this situation had to permit the possibility of something (which we call “sin”) other than his own will, so that in reality these beings have a choice between two possible options, moral

goodness or immoral sin. The arch-angel Lucifer started the first sin when he chose something which was not God’s will. We equally see that hell and punishment was created to punish the disobedient. God did not create nor does he have to do with things against His will, but God definitely creates, permits, commands, and orders what many consider “evil”, or adversity, but this is not of a moral character opposite to His will.

God permits and uses Evil

In **Genesis 3:16**, we see God chastising the disobedience of Eve (and all women after her) with the pains of childbirth. Moreover we see God created hell as a place of torment for those disobedient to His will, so we cannot assign evil at the feet of God because he chastises sin. To the contrary, we have to demand that judges of our countries chastise those that hurt and rob people. This is the concept of justice and judgment that is the correct counterpart to disobedience. When somebody disobeys the law, there should be a punishment by just people who are charged with justice and judgment. In this case, the harming of a criminal is correct, it is what ought to happen, and there be no immorality connected with it. No judge is considered evil when he punishes a murderer, even though the punishment hurts the criminal. Even God uses nature (like in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah), angels, and he even uses demons and Satan for his own purposes (for example the situation with Satan and Job), to the end that it is with the moral blessing of God. But it would be unjust if a judge makes a criminal break the law.

That we bow before the Creator

Isa 45:5 *I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. 7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. 8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them*

bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. 9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? 10 Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begetteth thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?

What is the end or purpose of God in creating hurt, suffering, or adversity for a human being, especially for a child of God? The purpose of God is to force us to show fear, respect, and to seek to please Him with all our heart. God is the only God that there is, and God wants us to respect him, that we should honor Him, and give Him the priority and importance in our lives that he deserves. Sin is rebellion against the authority of God in directing our lives, of God commanding us as He wants. This is the principle conflict between creature and God, and God alone has the right to command and impose His will in our lives contrary to what we may want.

Rom 9:19 *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay...*

Isa 45:9 *Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?*

Salvation comes through our submission to the will of God, and sin, condemnation, and eternal perdition comes because we disobey that same will of God. God brings us affliction in order to make us take note of Him, so that we seek Him. Otherwise we would never have neither time nor interest in God.

God gives Adversity and Sickness

Deu 32:39 *See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.*

Job 5:17 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: **18 For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.**

The point here is that God sends us “bad” experiences because God fulfills His purposes, and this is especially true when he forces us to sit up and take note of the spiritual things in our lives that we do not want to see, or that we don’t have interest or time to meditate on. Man is the most humble and thoughtful in all his life when he is restricted to a sick bed not able to do anything, and just meditates on his situation and life. The physical pain causes a person to passionately seek God, and God answers his pain with “*first think on your own life.*” With financial blessings and health, we entertain ourselves instead of things on God.

When a Christian has bad experiences in life, we should understand that it is not because God hates us, but because God loves us. For the moment it does not seem that this is love rather it seems to be punishment, but the correction works the good fruit of piety to those who receive it as the blessing of God.

Our Attitude towards Adversity

Deu 8:3 And **he humbled (afflicted) thee, and suffered thee to hunger,** and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; **that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.**

God causes us problems, sufferings, adversity, “bad luck”, financial ruin, and everything similar to these so that we will learn to depend upon God. This lesson is not learned if we do not receive everything by faith and confidence in our God.

Rom 8:28 And we know that **all things work together for good** to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Our faith that saves us has to be shown and supported with a lot of actual evidence in our

lives, and if not, it is hollow and false. This evidence is shown in adversity and sickness when everything goes wrong and against “our good”, and even so we declare our loyalty to God, and restate our belief in the goodness of God towards us even in the bad things of life. This is called “integrity”, and this is what Satan fought to destroy in Job, to cause him to lose his confidence in God, and in what God allows, permits, or sends us in this life. Losing your confidence in God is to say that you are not whole, unfaithful, and unstable with God. Many are just unfaithful with God, and very unstable in their Christian lives. Job, for example, never moved his faithfulness in God.

Job 1:22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly **2:10** But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? **In all this did not Job sin with his lips.**

God does permit, cause, send, and even command adversity, problems, and sicknesses that transform us spiritually to be more like God, to separate us from such an attraction and desire for the worldly, changing our focus, and forcing us to concentrate on the heavenly.

1Pe 5:10... after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. **(Rom 8:17)**

2Ti 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him...

Act 14:22... that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Our rule should be “**patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:** Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:” **2Thess 1:4-5**

Theodicy

The Problem of the Existence of Evil

by David Cox

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“Theodicy” is a concept which tries to explain how evil can exist in a world where God has everything in the palm of his hand, and this God is good, generous, all powerful, and has a good disposition toward human beings.

The Bible clearly plants the idea that God is in total control of everything, and that God is good. So, accordingly the logical question is: How can evil exist then? Why doesn’t God intervene to stop all evil?

The answer that one gives to this will come from his understandings about God, and this will basically model his reaction to “bad things” that happen in his life.