

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SICKNESS?©

- By Pastor Greg Hooker

Every one of us is acquainted with sickness and disease. Like a raging forest fire out of control, it spreads throughout the land, destroys lives, and inflicts multitudes. Were it not for divine intervention, humanity would have been destroyed long ago during her infancy. So why does God permit sickness and disease in the first place? Why doesn't He just speak the word and eradicate it forever? Let's pray-fully take a look at several reasons.

I. GOD'S WAYS ARE HIGHER THAN OURS

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9).

First and foremost, the prophet Isaiah tells us that God's ways, thoughts, and actions are so far above ours, they can be likened to the distance of the earth from the heavens above. In other words, there can be no greater distance! We are puny and insignificant when it comes to comparing our thoughts to that of the Almighty. When questioning the why of God's allowance for sickness invading our lives, we simply have to step back and proclaim, 'God, your ways are higher than mine, therefore; I submit to your will without question.'

God is Sovereign, which means He does whatever He chooses and thinks best. He is governed only by the extent of His own holiness – for example: God cannot sin; God cannot lie; God cannot allow sin to go unpunished. Therefore, when God allows a person to develop a sickness or disease, He is under no obligation to explain His actions – He is the Almighty Sovereign who governs the universe according to His divine goodwill and pleasure. God's ways are higher than ours.

II. GOD'S WAYS ARE WORKING TOWARD OUR GOOD

"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" (Romans 8:28).

Whenever we are suffering from sickness, disease, or injury, we are prone to focus our attention on the 'suffering' itself, rather than focusing on the possibility that God is allowing it for a reason unbeknown to us at the time. We may not know 'why' He has allowed us to suffer, but you can rest assured He knows what He is doing and is working it according to His great plans and purposes for humanity.

Think back for a moment; can you remember a time when you were suffering from sickness, disease, or an injury and you began crying out to God, ‘Why me Lord? What have I done to warrant your displeasure?’ At the time you simply could not understand why the benevolent Lord would allow these maladies, but Romans 8:28 remind us they are going to bring good out of a bad situation.

Later, after recovering, you glance back at the overall canvas and there, plain as the noon-day-sun is (as the late Paul Harvey used to say) ‘the rest of the story’! Suddenly you understand why God allowed you to undergo what you did. Through those times we learn to trust in the Lord more, rely upon His providential provisions, and wait with patience and endurance – “... *we know that all things work together for good to them that love God ...*”

III. GOD’S WAYS ALLOW FOR THE NATURAL COURSE OF HIS CREATION

Since Romans 8:28 teaches that everything God allows to come into our life is for our own good and His purpose; does that mean God always inflicts us with malaises to teach us spiritual lessons? Something very important that we must remember in order to rightly divide the Word of Truth and avoid heretical doctrines of falsehood is this: all sickness, diseases and injuries exclusively came about as a consequence of sin being introduced into a prior-perfect-world via our first parents – Adam and Eve. From the moment of inception, evil and wickedness has plunged the human race into a sin cursed world tainted with all manners of sickness, diseases and death.

So you see, sickness is not always from God. Many times it’s because of the natural course of a world infected by sin. For example: let’s assume you go down to the super market to do some shopping. You park your car, lock the doors and proceed through the entrance of the store. While entering, you grab a shopping cart and begin filling it with your shopping needs.

Later, after arriving home you unload the car of your bags of groceries, carry them through the back door and begin placing them in the cabinet. Tired and exhausted from your cruise through the crowded shopping lanes, you flop down on the couch to rest your weary bones. But before you do, you grab one of those nice, red, juicy Red Delicious apples you just brought home. As you chomp down on that heavenly piece of fruit, you suddenly remember, ‘I forgot to wash my hands! Oh well, I’ve eaten most of it anyway’ – so you finish your apple.

A couple of days later you begin to feel a little queasy and light-headed. A few hours more and you begin running a high temperature and your body begins to ache and chill. Suddenly it dawns on you, I’ve picked up some kind of a virus and it was probably from pushing that shopping cart with a germy virus farm for a handle. Now you are paying the price for your own foolish neglect of personal hygiene! God had nothing to do with it.

When sin was introduced into this world, it brought an enormous list of undesirables – cancer, heart disease, depression, anxiety, MS, scarlet fever, the flu, colds and countless other sickening sidekicks. Many times sickness, disease and injuries are simply a result of the inception of sin into a perfect world.

IV. GOD'S WAYS ALLOW FOR DEMONIC ATTACKS

There are occasions when Satan is the culprit for sickness, disease and injuries. In fact, an entire book in the Old Testament gives credence to this fact – the book of Job. Job was a man who loved and feared God, and, in turn, the Lord blessed Job with good health, a wonderful family and a growing livestock business. Notice part of the story from Job chapter one:

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job 1:6-7).

Satan told the Lord he had been walking up and down the earth like a roaring lion “*seeking whom he may devour.*” God responded to Satan by saying, “*Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil* (vs. 8)?

Wow! Job must have been an extraordinary man because God trusted him to do the right thing under any circumstance – even the attacks of the Devil himself! “*And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD*” (Job 1:12).

So begins the story of Job and his unspeakable sufferings. God allowed Satan to attack everything Job held dear in life, only he was not allowed to touch Jobs life and soul. He lost his health, family, friends, and fortune, while at the same time remained true to his Lord.

Sometimes (on rare occasions), God allows Satan to inflict a person to display His work of grace in that person’s life, but notice Satan could not do anything to Job until he first received permission from God. In like manner, Satan has no power over you except for that which God allows. The same goes to all of the other fallen angels, or demons under the banner of the Evil One.

IMPORTANT NOTE: There is a common misconception among well-meaning-Christians, which goes like this: ‘The Devil made me do it!’ That, my friends, is a fabricated lie of the enemy – Scripture simply doesn’t bear that theology. Certainly Satan doesn’t mind if your blame him for what you have done; because he knows when you do, you are neglecting ownership and responsibility for your own sins. Satan has not and never will, ‘make’ you sin! The Bible tells us in James 1:14, “*...every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*”

Can you imagine standing before God one day and you tell him, ‘God, the Devil made me do it!’ After the Lord shakes his head and stops laughing over such a lame excuse; I imagine him saying, ‘My friend, my Son, Jesus didn’t die for the sins of the devil; he died for yours!’ Now don’t get me wrong, I am certainly not sticking up for the Devil, but it’s time we accept responsibility for our own sinful choices. We cannot ‘pass the buck’ to the Devil or anyone else for that matter, for the wrong choices we make.

That's what sin is – choosing to go the path contrary to the revealed Word of God. Just as Adam and Eve could have done the right thing and refused to eat of the forbidden fruit, so are we faced with daily choices that will determine whether we live a life of holiness, or a life of shame (see also Matthew 17:14-18; Luke 13:10-16 for other examples).

So at rare times, God allows the attacks of Satan to cause sickness, disease and injury to people. Nevertheless, God is still in control and Satan must have special permission to inflict one of God's children. Even at that, God will work all things to the benefit of Himself and His child.

V. GOD'S WAYS ALLOWS SICKNESS FOR A DISCIPLINE MEASURE

As we know from the Scriptures; when a person is born into the family of God, we are declared His children via virtue of the New Birth. Our names are entered into the Book of Life, we become joint heirs with Jesus Christ, our citizenship is transferred to our Heavenly home, God becomes our Heavenly Father, and His only begotten Son becomes our big brother (think about that eternal security!).

Thus, while we are still living in these bodies of corruptible flesh, we are still prone to sin and disobey our Heavenly Father. When this happens, our Father doesn't boot us out of His providential care and love. He warns us through Words of love to repent, turn away from sin and do what is right. However, many of us rebellious 'kids' take it upon ourselves to dabble in things that can harm us, and like mischievous children we ignore our Heavenly Father's repeated warnings.

Now comes the painful part! When we ignore our Father's repeated admonitions to stop the thing, or things that are not right, He goes to 'plan B'. God sometimes allows sickness, disease, or some kind of injury to wiggle into our lives un-expectantly as a form of correction. Rather than obeying the Lord to begin with, we persisted in our rebellion forcing the Father to use a sterner tactic to discipline his children.

To many of us, that would seem a harsh treatment to inflict upon a child, but the fact is; God does it out of love and compassion. He knows that if we are left to our sinful habits we will ultimately pay an enormous price. Therefore, a little pain now is a lot better than what's down the road.

In eastern countries during Biblical times, a shepherd tending his flock always kept a watchful eye on his sheep. He made sure the wolves, or jackals remained on the outside of the fenced-in corral during the night. The good shepherd loved every one of his sheep and saw to it that none would wander off into the danger zone. One way he would do this was to count each sheep, make sure they were inside the confines of the fenced-in corral, and then he would take his own body and lie across the entrance to the corral, thus becoming the actual 'door' to the sheep fold.

That is why Jesus said of Himself, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep" (John 10:7). Before anything can get to God's sheep, they must first come through the Good Shepherd who is

diligently protecting us from predators. In order for the enemy to get one of the Shepherd's precious sheep, they must first come through the Door of the sheepfold – through Jesus Christ Himself!

I said all of that to say this: there were times when a sheep or even a lamb rebelled against the shepherd. They were always trying to wander off and get into mischief and trouble. After a while of trying gently to coax the rebel into compliance, the shepherd would do something that would absolutely break his heart – he would break one of the legs of that animal so they could no longer wander off and be devoured by a pack of wolves.

What a beautiful picture of what the Great Shepherd does for us. My friends, God is long-suffering toward His sheep, but there comes a point after repeated warnings, in which he 'breaks a leg' so to speak, and allows something such as sickness, disease, or injury to come into our lives for our own good. He knows if we are left to wander, the ravenous wolves and jackals of life will soon feast upon our carcasses. God sometimes allows sickness to invade our lives as a measure of discipline.

CONCLUSION

Sickness and suffering is never an easy thing to deal with, but one thing is for certain, sickness should not cause us to lose faith in God. God is good, even when we are suffering. Even the ultimate of suffering—death—is an act of God's goodness. It is hard to imagine that anyone who is in Heaven as a result of sickness or suffering regrets what they went through in this life.

Every person reading this message is experiencing their own pain and suffering, but take heart; one day the curse will be lifted from the earth, our bodies will receive a glorified body like unto our Savior, and all sickness, disease, injuries and even death will be cast into the Lake of Fire forever. Until then, trust in the Sovereignty of God that He knows exactly what he is doing and is doing so for our betterment.