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everything that happens in the world – good, bad, or otherwise – is the will of God. Is it? But often, people wonder, “Why do tragic things happen to good people?”

“I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For they suffer no pain; their bodies are healthy and sleek. They are free of the burdens of life; they are not afflicted like others” (Psalm 73:3-5 NAB). The realities of this life often just don’t seem to make any sense, even as they didn’t to Bible writer Asaph 3,000 years ago. The opposite of what common sense would tell us is what often happens. Why?

People often say that when something bad happens to a person, it’s because they’re getting their “karma.” But when something bad happens to a good person, what is it then? The idea of “karma” is derived from the Eastern philosophy of Buddhism and Hinduism, and is popularly believed in the West. Christian preachers and others often say that “God took” the

good person from earth to be with him in heaven. Did he?

The story is all too familiar. Someone driving who is grossly irresponsible and negligent, often under the influence of alcohol/drugs, causes a terrible accident which kills and/or seriously injures one or more innocent victims, while he suffers little or no harm. The victim(s) is/are described as a very good person, who was always helping others. Why?

“There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: the righteous who get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless” (Ecclesiastes 8:14 NIV). Three thousand years ago, this paradox was observed by wise King Solomon.

Then there is the good person who gets a very debilitating disease, and suffers horribly, and dies at a relatively young age, while many who are unkind and cruel to others and live only for themselves, continue to live to old age. Why?

“Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power?” (Job 21:7 NIV). The righteous man Job noted this same perplexity 3,500 years ago.

“I saw something else under the sun: In the place of judgment-wickedness was there. In the place of justice-wickedness was there. If you see the poor oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things; for one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them are others higher still” (Ecclesiastes 3:16; 5:6 NIV). In this world, people don’t always get true justice. Good, innocent people are often slighted, even mistreated, in judicial decisions, while corrupt, rich and influential people and corporations are favored. Why?

Many thousands of innocent victims are killed or harmed in wars, conflicts, shootings, and natural disasters every year. Why?

“We call the arrogant blessed; for evildoers not only prosper, but even test God and escape” (Malachi 3:15 NAB). Twenty-four hundred years ago, the prophet Malachi reported such injustices. Why do they happen?

The Creator, Almighty God, informed the first humans that they were essentially **“free”**, but that obedience to his principles for living was vital for their well-being, in fact, their life (**Genesis 2:15-17 NIV**). The rebellious angel called Satan the Devil influenced them to violate the Creator’s law, claiming that God was withholding good things from them, and that they would be better off to disobey God (**Genesis 3:1-6; Revelation 12:9**). Afterward the Creator foretold the tragic and disastrous results that would follow after the first humans rejected God’s law (**Genesis 3:16-19**).

The result has been that, **“just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12 NIV)**. All humans born since (except Jesus) have been born **“sinful” (Psalm 51:5 NIV)**. Thus, we live in a very sinful world, in which everyone makes mistakes, does bad things, and some, of course, much worse than others. The Bible realistically explains what happens in this world:

“We do not know when our time will come; like fish caught in the treacherous net, like birds caught in the snare, just so are we all trapped by misfortune when it suddenly overtakes us” (Ecclesiastes 9:12 NJB). While we certainly do have quite a bit of control over our individual **“actions” (Galatians 6:4 NIV)**, the stark reality is that there are many things in this life that we simply have no control over.

“In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these: the righteous perishing in their righteousness, and the wicked living long in their wickedness” (Ecclesiastes 7:15 NIV). Only the Bible accurately explains the reasons behind the harsh realities of this life, such as why bad things happen to good people.

“When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe the labor that is done on earth — people getting no sleep day or night — then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim to know it, they really cannot comprehend it” (Ecclesiastes 8:16,17 NIV). While God has **“revealed” (Deuteronomy 29:29 NIV)** the basic things that we really need to know, there are many other things that we don’t know, and will not be able to find out, or figure out, in this world.

“The same destiny overtakes all . . . they join the dead.” “Death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart” (Ecclesiastes 9:2,3; 7:3 NIV). Everyone, good or bad, is facing death, sooner or later. There is no escape from it in this world.

“The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19 NKJV), because God has allowed him to be the temporary **“ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11 NKJV),** which helps to explain why bad things happen to good people now. Satan exerts powerful negative influence in this sinful world, with some limitations, as the Bible indicates **(Job 1,2; James 4:7).** Will God ever do anything about it?

“The Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8 NAB), including sin. **“What has been written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory’” (1 Corinthians 15:54 NIV).** In his due time, God will eliminate death and all its effects, and **“will crush Satan (Romans 16:20 NKJV).** **“There will be no more death . . . these words are trustworthy and true” (Revelation 21:4,5 NIV).** In the eternity that God has in store for those who serve him no more bad things will happen.

That’s all well and good, one wonders, but what about all the depressing thoughts and haunting memories of terrible things that have happened in the past?

“The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind” (Isaiah 65:17 NIV). For those who are given eternal life by God, they will have no bad memories or depressing thoughts, nor any **“mourning or crying or pain” (Revelation 21:4 NIV).**

In this article, we have reviewed why good people often experience terrible things, because of God’s allowance of: (1) sin; and (2) Satan’s challenge to God’s rulership to be settled; and (3) Satan’s rulership over the world. We’ve also reviewed what God is going to do about it.