

**Providence of God:**  
**The Problem of Evil**

**Psalm 73:1-17**

# God and the Existence of Evil

- Existence of evil and an all powerful God must be reconciled.
  - Moral evil.
  - Natural calamities.
- Some believe only good things happened to the elect and evil to the non-elect.

# God and the Existence of Evil

- What happens when bad things happen to good people?
- Many lose their faith.
- The Psalmist (**Ps. 73:1-17**) also struggled with the weight of this question until he *“...went into the sanctuary of God...”*
- There he saw things in the light of eternal values and understood that God truly is good, provident and just.

# God is Provident

- **Define providence:**

Providence is the working of God through His provision in the natural and spiritual realms, and yet it is a control that violates neither the sovereignty of the human will nor the divine natural and spiritual laws.

God's providence is his continuous activity of preserving and governing the whole of creation by his wisdom and goodness and power, for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose and for the glory of His name.

# God is Provident

- Seen in many lives.
- Generally. **Mt. 5:45**
- Specifically.
  - Joseph
  - Esther
  - Paul
  - Job
- **2 Peter 1:4**

# Facts to Remember

- Can do above what we ask
  - Ephesians 3:20
- Provided plan of salvation
  - Hebrews 5:9
- Makes provision for His own
  - Hebrews 13:5,6

# Study

- We can understand some things about “provisions” of God’s help
- Must avoid two dangerous extremes
- Find it difficult with certainty which act or event to label as part of His providential care
  - Ecclesiastes 9:1
  - Ecclesiastes 3:11
  - 2 Corinthians 5:7
  - Proverbs 3:5,6

## Two Evils—Two Sources

**The Devil** Gen. 3:2ff; Jms. 1:13-14; cf. Gen. 3:16ff

- Moral Evil
- Natural calamities
- Description of Satan
  - **John 8:44** Murderer and liar
  - **1 John 3:8** Sinneth from the beginning

# Ascribing Evil to Satan

- Satan allowed to act within certain limitations
  - Job 1:12
- Instrumentality of men
  - Job 1:13-17
- Force of nature
  - Job 1:18,19
- Limited to Job's person
  - Job 2:6

# Satan's Work

- Job's body was struck with boils
  - Job 2:7,8
- Wife & friends lost faith in him
  - Job 2:9; 2:11ff
- Society rejected him
  - Job 17:6; 19:13-22
- Evil of disbelief and disloyalty
  - Job 2:11-13

# Remnant from Babylon

- **Zechariah 3:2**
- God cleanse the priesthood to fulfill proper function
- Satan stood at right hand of Joshua the high priest ***“to be his adversary.”***
- God overruling Satan by putting the priestly garments on the priests

# Miracles of Jesus

- Evil is the result of an intruding power contrary to God's goodness and desire
- Healed women of with an infirmity for 18 years
- Challenged by the ruler of the synagogue

– Luke 13:10-17

# Satan Acts in Natural World?

- Cannot determine the extent to which Satan acts in the natural world
- In the past he acted
- Divine limitations?
- Instrument in God's hand
  - Revelation 20:10
  - Ecclesiastes 3:11-14

# Ascribing Evil To God

- **Deuteronomy 30:15**
  - How would God set evil before the people?
  - Cause and Effect— Inevitable consequences
- **Amos 3:6** “*shall evil befall a city, and Jehovah hath not done it?*” Cf. **Amos 4:6ff**
- **Snow and Hail (Job 38:22-24)**. These are the treasuries of His arsenal which He has “*reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war.*”

# Punishment and Reprieve

- Deliverance of His people from Babylon
  - **Isaiah 45:7** *“I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and **create evil**; I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things.”*

# Punishment and Reprieve

- Rebuking Judah for seeking help from Egypt instead of Him
  - **Isaiah 31:2** “Yet he [Jehovah] also is wise, and will **bring evil**, and will not call back his words.”
- Evil of judgment brought on by rejection and disobedience of divine law
  - **Romans 1:18-32**

# Why Do Men Suffer?

- Man are rash who presume to know **all** the causes behind every specific affliction.
  - Proverbs 14:12
- Yet, the Scriptures reveal **some** reasons why some may suffer.

# Why Do Men Suffer?

- Some suffer as direct consequence of their sins
  - Galatians 6:7-9
- Some suffer because of sins of others
  - Mark 6:18-27 John the Baptist
  - Acts 7-8 Stephen

# Why Do Men Suffer?

- Some suffer because of the free moral agency of men
  - Joshua 24:15
  - 2 Cor. 11:23ff Paul suffered.
  - Lk. 10:30-33 Man fell into the hands of robbers.

# Why Do Men Suffer?

- Some suffer because the laws of nature given to maintain order in the universe have been violated.
  - Acts 20:9 Eutychus
- Some are persecuted because they are righteous
  - 1 Peter 4:12-19 (cf.. Mt. 5:10-12; 2 Tim. 3:12)
  - Heb. 11:32-37

# Why Do Men Suffer?

- Suffering makes it possible for us to grow in relationship with God.
  - Hebrews 12:6-11; 1 Peter 1:6-9; cf. Rom. 8:18

# Why Do Men Suffer?

- Mistake to believe that all human suffering is punitive
  - Job 1:1; John 9:1-3
- Many children of God have suffered in the pages of the Scriptures!
  - Acts 7:59,60

# Benefits of Suffering

- The suffering God permits can be used for the benefit of those who experience it—or those whose lives are touched by it.
  - Romans 5:3,4
  - James 1:2-4
  - 2 Corinthians 1:3-6

# Concluding Thoughts

- When Asaph (**Ps. 73:17-28**) went into the sanctuary of the Lord and reconsidered the question of human suffering, he saw the situation more clearly.
- When the latter end was considered everything then is brought into proper perspective. **Cf.. Eccl. 12:13-14**
- Suffering now fades into nothing when laid against the backdrop of eternal glory. **Rom. 8:18; Cf.. 2 Cor. 4:16-5:1**