

BIBLE STUDY SERIES:

TRUSTING THE FATHER

GOD ALLOWED IT?

Chris Badenhorst

GOD ALLOWED IT?

INTENTION:

Don't blame God for the misfortunes of this world.

He is the Author of Life, not hardship or death.

I. TOPIC:

We want to look at the saying about whether or not “God Allowed It?”.

Sometimes we see this as said in the questions: “Why does evil exist?” or “Why does God allow evil?”.

But these questions boil down to humanity trying to understand the Character and Nature of God and questioning whether He is in control or even exists. We would like to think that God “sovereignly” chooses when things happen, if it is to happen, and why it happens—whether it be a natural disaster (like a hurricane or earthquake), sickness, disease, birth defect, pandemic, accident, unanswered prayer, and the like.

To ask the question, “Why does God allow evil?”, is usually in the context of harm done to us or others. We want God to keep people and things from hurting other people (and hurting us personally). Yet, with that question, do we also ask ourself, “Why does God allow ME to do evil?”

From the beginning of Creation, God has only wanted the best for us. He designed a world free from hurt and pain and evil. And in that perfect place, did not design us as programmed robots. He designed us with Free Will: the ability to make our own decision to choose Him (Life) or choose death ([Genesis 2:16-17](#) and [Deuteronomy 30:11-20](#))—further giving us understanding that it’s the Thief that comes to Kill, Steal, and Destroy—not Him ([John 10:10](#)).

This same God-Given means to choose for ourselves, regardless of the consequences, is still active now. We make choices for ourself that bring us in alignment (or not) with His Will, affecting both ourselves and those around us.

Yes, it is our choice to align with His Will—to make “on earth as it is in Heaven” ([Matthew 6:10](#) and [Matthew 18:18](#)).

Can you do something outside of God’s Will? Yes.

Can you do something without God knowing it? No.

That is God’s Sovereignty—a sovereignty WITH limits.

In the desire to want God to be All-Powerful (and all-controlling), we make it as though we do not have to take responsibility for our own actions. That way, when something doesn’t go the way WE want it to, there is someone to blame but ourselves (blame as an individual or humanity as a whole). And if we don’t like what we see, or do not want to believe God is All Good, we create doctrines and confusions of God—even though Christ Jesus demonstrated to us the exact identity of who God is. We may even deny the existence of God because we can’t fathom a God who would allow a person to have a Free Will to do harm (disguised in the question of God allowing evil).

The term “evil” above, is used as a verb with the actions of being: morally reprehensible, arising from actual or imputed bad character or conduct... ([Merriam-Webster](#)). But in the context of the Bible, that definition is just talking about the sins that people commit. When Jesus used the word ‘evil’, He referenced people that do not believe in Him for Salvation—‘evil’ as a state of being ([Matthew 7:11](#)); just as we saw with Righteousness as a state of being.

As such, when we question God as to why He allows bad things to happen, we are talking about why sin exists—because, regardless of whether you are a Born-Again believer or not, we still commit sins (as we have discussed in previous Bible Lessons). Sin is anything God does not want for us. But these sins of the flesh, as we know, were forever taken away at the Cross. The Sin of not believing (being Evil) is only removed upon believing in Jesus Christ.

But that is not what we are discussing here—we are here to really talk about whether God can somehow control us (violating our Free Will) and thus “allows” things to happen or not based on a decision He makes in that specific moment. Implying that God was witness to something He could alter with His Power, but for some reason “chose” not to. Or more specifically, this is asking the question: can God make someone do sinful “evil” things?

In short, the answer to these questions is that He cannot violate our Free Will; instead, He instructs us in what to do, even providing us the power and ability to choose Life over Death. And does so through guidance; not forcing, not hardening, not coercing, not manipulating, not bullying. The choice is ours.

II. READING: We limit God in and through us:

[Ephesians 3:4-21](#) (MSG)

As you read over what I have written to you, you'll be able to see for yourselves into the mystery of Christ. None of our ancestors understood this. Only in our time has it been made clear by God's Spirit through his holy apostles and prophets of this new order. The mystery is that people who have never heard of God and those who have heard of him all their lives (what I've been calling outsiders and insiders) stand on the same ground before God. They get the same offer, same help, same promises in Christ Jesus. The Message is accessible and welcoming to everyone, across the board.

7-8 This is my life work: helping people understand and respond to this Message. It came as a sheer gift to me, a real surprise, God handling all the details. When it came to presenting the Message to people who had no background in God's way, I was the least qualified of any of the available Christians. God saw to it that I was equipped, but you can be sure that it had nothing to do with my natural abilities.

8-10 And so here I am, preaching and writing about things that are way over my head, the inexhaustible riches and generosity of Christ. My task is to bring out in the open and make plain what God, who created all this in the first place, has been doing in secret and behind the scenes all along. Through followers of Jesus like yourselves gathered in churches, this extraordinary plan of God is becoming known and talked about even among the angels!

11-13 All this is proceeding along lines planned all along by God and then executed in Christ Jesus. When we trust in him, we're free to say whatever needs to be said, bold to go wherever we need to go. So don't let my present trouble on your behalf get you down. Be proud!

14-19 My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength—that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.

20-21 God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

Glory to God in the church!

Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus!

Glory down all the generations!

Glory through all millennia! Oh, yes!

III. RELATED VERSES AND QUESTIONS:

- A. God cannot force us to believe in Him, nor can He force us to follow Him. This is something we even saw in the life and ministry of Jesus. He demonstrated Himself as Christ, and represented fully who God the Father was, yet people still chose not to believe Him—even when witnessing all His miracles. People had hardened hearts to Him—and it wasn't God doing the hardening. It wasn't even God who hardened Pharaoh's heart—it is the miracles and Righteousness of God that people react to in a hardened state. The disciples of Jesus "couldn't believe" some of the things Jesus did—their hearts were hardened.

[Mark 3:1-6](#) (MSG) {PoG}

Then he went back in the meeting place where he found a man with a crippled hand. The Pharisees had their eyes on Jesus to see if he would heal him, hoping to catch him in a Sabbath violation. He said to the man with the crippled hand, "Stand here where we can see you."

4 Then he spoke to the people: “What kind of action suits the Sabbath best? Doing good or doing evil? Helping people or leaving them helpless?” No one said a word.

5-6 He looked them in the eye, one after another, angry now, furious at their hard-nosed religion {hardness of their hearts}. He said to the man, “Hold out your hand.” He held it out—it was as good as new! The Pharisees got out as fast as they could, sputtering about how they would join forces with Herod’s followers and ruin him.

[Mark 16:9-16](#) (MSG) {PoG}

After rising from the dead, Jesus appeared early on Sunday morning to Mary Magdalene, whom he had delivered from seven demons. She went to his former companions, now weeping and carrying on, and told them. When they heard her report that she had seen him alive and well, they didn’t believe her.

12-13 Later he appeared, but in a different form, to two of them out walking in the countryside. They went back and told the rest, but they weren’t believed either.

14-16 Still later, as the Eleven were eating supper, he appeared and took them to task most severely for their stubborn unbelief {and hardness of heart}, refusing to believe those who had seen him raised up. Then he said, “Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of God’s good news to one and all. Whoever believes and is baptized is saved; whoever refuses to believe is damned.

[Hebrews 3:7-11](#) (MSG) {PoG}

That’s why the Holy Spirit says,

Today, please listen; don’t turn a deaf ear {harden your heart} as in “the bitter uprising,” that time of wilderness testing!

Even though they watched me at work for forty years, your ancestors refused to let me do it my way; over and over they tried my patience.

And I was provoked, oh, so provoked! I said, “They’ll never keep their minds on God; they refuse to walk down my road.”

Exasperated, I vowed, “They’ll never get where they’re going, never be able to sit down and rest.”

Question: Is it a choice to believe in Him? Why were their hearts hardened?

Response:

- B. We are given instruction not to be led “astray”—a choice. Jesus warned people to watch out for the deception of the Pharisees who lead people away from the Lord—all the while the Lord wanting to have relationship with them. He can only instruct us, not force us: “Don’t let people do that to you” [i.e., our choice]. This shows how we have a choice to whom we follow and whom we believe. God can only lead us to Himself, not make people.

[Matthew 23:1-13](#) (MSG)

Now Jesus turned to address his disciples, along with the crowd that had gathered with them. “The religion scholars and Pharisees are competent teachers in God’s Law. You won’t go wrong in following their teachings on Moses. But be careful about following them. They talk a good line, but they don’t live it. They don’t take it into their hearts and live it out in their behaviour. It’s all spit-and-polish veneer.

4-7 “Instead of giving you God’s Law as food and drink by which you can banquet on God, they package it in bundles of rules, loading you down like pack animals. They seem to take pleasure in watching you stagger under these loads, and wouldn’t think of lifting a finger to help. Their lives are perpetual fashion shows, embroidered prayer shawls one day and flowery prayers the next. They love to sit at the head table at church dinners, basking in the most prominent positions, preening in the radiance of public flattery, receiving honorary degrees, and getting called ‘Doctor’ and ‘Reverend.’

8-10 “Don’t let people do that to you, put you on a pedestal like that. You all have a single Teacher, and you are all classmates. Don’t set people up as experts over your life, letting them tell you what to do. Save that authority for God; let him tell you what to do. No one else should carry the title of ‘Father’; you have only one Father, and he’s in heaven. And don’t let people manoeuvre you into taking charge of them. There is only one Life-Leader for you and them—Christ.

11-12 “Do you want to stand out? Then step down. Be a servant. If you puff yourself up, you’ll get the wind knocked out of you. But if you’re content to simply be yourself, your life will count for plenty.

13 “I’ve had it with you! You’re hopeless, you religion scholars, you Pharisees! Frauds! Your lives are roadblocks to God’s kingdom. You refuse to enter, and won’t let anyone else in either.

Question: Is God the one keeping you out of God’s Kingdom?

Response:

- C. The Lord is always doing His utmost to lead us to “greener pastures”, providing for us and keeping us safe from harm. However, He also makes it clear that, as Christians, we will face persecution. Paul faced much harm from Alexander the coppersmith ([2 Timothy 4:14-15](#)); whom I believe was Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” as a “messenger of Satan” ([2 Corinthians 12:7-9](#)). This is because God cannot violate a person’s own free will to be the one doing the persecuting. He, as God in the Flesh, couldn’t even keep Himself from persecution.

[Mark 10:29-31](#) (MSG)

Jesus said, “Mark my words, no one who sacrifices house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, land—whatever—because of me and the Message will lose out. They’ll get it all back, but multiplied many times in homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land—but also in troubles. And then the bonus of eternal life! This is once again the Great Reversal: Many who are first will end up last, and the last first.”

Question: Have you ever done something hurtful (intentionally or by mistake) to someone?

Response:

- D. What are other areas in life where the Lord instructs us to do—not Him being the one doing:

- *Refer also: Bible Study Lesson 031 – Our Responsibility (With the Lord)*

[Matthew 18:18](#) {PoG} – Don't Limit Heaven on Earth.

I am truly telling you: that whatever *you choose* to bind {forbid} on earth, it will be also be bound in Heaven {forbidden *from coming to earth*}; and whatever *you choose* to loose on {set free into this} earth, it will be loosed {set free} in Heaven {*to be able to come to earth*}.

[Mark 11:22-24](#) (MSG) – Speak to your Mountain.

Jesus was matter-of-fact: “Embrace this God-life. Really embrace it, and nothing will be too much for you. This mountain, for instance: Just say, ‘Go jump in the lake’—no shuffling or hemming and hawing—and it’s as good as done. That’s why I urge you to pray for absolutely everything, ranging from small to large. Include everything as you embrace this God-life, and you’ll get God’s everything.

[John 20:30-31](#) (MSG) – You Must Chose to Believe in Him.

Jesus provided far more God-revealing signs than are written down in this book. These are written down so you will believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and in the act of believing, have real and eternal life in the way he personally revealed it.

[Romans 12:1-2](#) (MSG) – You Need to Renew Your Mind.

So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

[James 4:7-10](#) (MSG) – We Have to Resist the Devil.

So let God work his will in you. Yell a loud no to the Devil and watch him make himself scarce. Say a quiet yes to God and he’ll be there in no time. Quit dabbling in sin. Purify your inner life. Quit playing the field. Hit bottom, and cry your eyes out. The fun and games are over. Get serious, really serious. Get down on your knees before the Master; it’s the only way you’ll get on your feet.

[1 John 4:1-3](#) (MSG) – We are Instructed to Test the Spirits.

My dear friends, don’t believe everything you hear. Carefully weigh and examine what people tell you. Not everyone who talks about God comes from God. There are a lot of lying preachers loose in the world.

2-3 Here’s how you test for the genuine Spirit of God. Everyone who confesses openly his faith in Jesus Christ—the Son of God, who came as an actual flesh-and-blood person—comes from God and belongs to God. And everyone who refuses to confess faith in Jesus has nothing in common with God. This is the spirit of antichrist that you heard was coming. Well, here it is, sooner than we thought!

Question: Do you find you would rather have God do for you, than do what He wants you to do?

Response:

IV. FURTHER THOUGHT:

- A. A sad reality to some Bible translations is that when done incorrectly, it can cause confusion and create unnecessary doctrines to try and resolve implied conflict in God's Word. In the following verses, most translations have contributed "hardness of heart" to something that God does to us (that He is the One hardening our heart); from which He then scolds us for having that hardened heart. But when we look at these verses in both the Greek and quoted Hebrew, it does not say that it is God doing the hardening. And the Message translation correctly shares this in John:

[John 12:35-40](#) (MSG)

35-36 Jesus said, "For a brief time still, the light is among you. Walk by the light you have so darkness doesn't destroy you. If you walk in darkness, you don't know where you're going. As you have the light, believe in the light. Then the light will be within you, and shining through your lives. You'll be children of light."

36-40 Jesus said all this, and then went into hiding. All these God-signs he had given them and they still didn't get it, still wouldn't trust him. This proved that the prophet Isaiah was right:

God, who believed what we preached?

Who recognized God's arm, outstretched and ready to act?

First, they wouldn't believe, then they couldn't—again, just as Isaiah said:

Their eyes are blinded, their hearts are hardened,

So that they wouldn't see with their eyes and perceive with their hearts,

And turn to me, God, so I could heal them.

This is how it would read in a corrected AKJV translation for both John and Isaiah:

[John 12:40](#) {PoG}

~~He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart;~~

Their eyes are blind, and their hearts are hardened.

And because of this, they are not able see, nor understand with their heart; to be converted.

So that I, the Lord, would indeed heal ([G2390](#)) them.

[Isaiah 6:10](#) {PoG}

~~Make the heart of this people fat,~~

~~and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes;~~

The hearts of these people are fat (waxed),

And their ears are heavy (dulled), and their eyes are shut (smeared shut / blinded);

Otherwise, they would see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,

and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed ([H7495](#)).

Thoughts: If it is the Lord's desire that they be converted and be healed, why is it that He would be the one hardening their hearts? Why would God's Will be keeping people away from Him when it is His Will that all would come to Him?

We must not accept this contradiction—either we must believe He doesn't want people to come to Him, or that He does want people to come to Him. Jesus showed that it is God's Will that everyone would choose to come to Him for Salvation. Yet, Jesus also let us know that not all would. The Lord's wants everyone saved:

[2 Timothy 2:4-7](#) (MSG)

He wants not only us but everyone saved, you know, everyone to get to know the truth we've learned: that there's one God and only one, and one Priest-Mediator between God and us—Jesus, who offered himself in exchange for everyone held captive by sin, to set them all free. Eventually the news is going to get out. This and this only has been my appointed work: getting this news to those who have never heard of God, and explaining how it works by simple faith and plain truth.

- B. Let's tackle [Romans 9](#) including where it says, "Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens". Does it really say God does violate our free will; and that it is Him who pre-chooses who gets Saved?

We won't read this chapter together, as it can be its own lesson. But want to bring some insight as to being able to read it from the perspective of God not controlling people.

We cannot discard all that we have now previously read through (and all the previous lessons) because of this one section of the Bible. We must instead evaluate what Paul is saying and the context from which he is saying it.

In general, the context of [Romans 9](#) is written from a Jewish perspective towards Gentiles. For the Jews, they believed that because they were the "chosen" people, only they themselves had access to God. Yet God's plan was to always bring the Gentiles into that access—to "graft them in" ([Romans 11](#)).

This upset the Jews, because they didn't feel like the Gentiles "deserved" God's mercy. Just as Jonah lamented that God showed Nineveh mercy ([Jonah 4](#)). Or that the Disciples James and John wanted to "call fire down from Heaven" to destroy the Samaritan village ([Luke 9:54](#)). Our human nature tends to want to inflict a punishing justice for "evils". Yet Jesus did not come to Judge, but to bring Mercy and Forgiveness.

God doesn't pick based on our works—like humans do (or as we create Santa Claus to be)—He picks outside of our works because He Loves us and wants to give each of us a chance to come to Him and see how much Grace and Mercy He has for us. Esau was the "natural" choice in human eyes, but God chose outside of our way of doing things. It wasn't that He had anything against Esau, He just wanted to demonstrate compassion to Jacob.

David was an illegitimate son of Jesse (born from another woman than his brothers). This is how David looked nothing like his striking brothers. God chose the "red-headed step-child", disregarding the sin Jesse had committed. Our religious judgements would not let a bastard child be made king. Yet God did.

Jesus's lineage is through sinners we wouldn't want associated with our own "good name"; yet it was those sinners Jesus frequently hung out with. Those sins are not in issue with God (as we learned before).

What about Pharaoh then? We need to look at it from the perspective of God not being able to violate our free will (not the other way around). When we make this the truth, we can see that Pharaoh's heart (like the Pharisees and Disciples) were hardened already to the Lord—and that the miracles (plagues) revealed this hardness.

Hardened hearts tend to react negatively to the Lord's Righteousness.

For Pharaoh, the Lord knew he had a hardened heart, and furthermore, that it would remain hard. Thus, the Lord used what was available to demonstrate His existence and superiority over the god's of Egypt.

To delve into [Romans 9](#) more, here are a couple of resources:

- <http://lhim.org/blog/2014/04/11/a-free-will-perspective-on-romans-9-and-predestination/>
- <https://graceandfaithministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Romans-9.pdf>

- C. To study out further the notion of the "Sovereignty" of God and how He cannot violate our free will, please read:

- <https://newcreations.org/sovereignty-of-god/>

Bible Study: Lesson 024



V. CONCLUDING REMARKS / NOTES:

[illegible]