

WHY DOES GOD
ALLOW WAR
AND
SUFFERING TO
CONTINUE

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

Published by:

*Crossroads Publications
10681 Princes Highway
Warrnambool
Victoria 3280
Australia*

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WHY DOES GOD ALLOW WAR AND SUFFERING TO CONTINUE

MAN'S LEASE

Genesis 1:28 tells us that when God created man, He gave man dominion over all the earth and its creatures. Once God had given this authority to man, it was meant to be an eternal privilege, expressed through an eternal Covenant. There was no condition required of man to maintain this position of authority other than refraining from eating of “*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*” (Genesis 2:17).

“ . . . There was no condition required of man to maintain this position of authority other than refraining from eating of “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” . . . ”

As we know, however, Adam rebelled. He ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and so violated this eternal Covenant. God could have dealt with Adam and Eve by banishing them from His presence forever, as He had done with the fallen angels. However because man in his fallen state had not eaten of the Tree of Life, Adam and Eve and all their descendants were able to obtain God's mercy (for they had not become irredeemable). Through this mercy, they gained God's grace in the form of a lease. The lease gave man the right to live on the earth and make use of its resources for a period of time.

The lease itself relates to:

1. **Usage** - man was given the right to make use of the earth and its resources.

2. Time - the lease is dispensational, i.e. it is limited in time. The Lord will thus return at some point to reclaim His property and take full control of it.

It is important to note that even though the Lord gave man a leasehold concerning the earth and its resources, God still owns the earth and everything on it:

PSALM 24:1 The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they who dwell therein.

PSALM 115:16 The heaven, even the (highest) heavens are the Lord's, but the earth has He given to the children of men (for a season, under leasehold).

The Old Testament in fact records God telling Moses that Israel is to be the tenant in possession of the land into which they were going:

LEVITICUS 25:23 The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.

As such, they could never sell the land. It could only be received or transferred by inheritance. The permanent possession of landed property could only come by inheritance, and be disposed of only to one's legal heirs. This was because of the principle of Divine ownership - the land was owned by God. It was not the tenant's to sell for he did not own it.

This should be a salient reminder to the rest of the world that by God's mercy we are, for a limited time, only tenants in our earthly home. Indeed we are strangers and sojourners on this earth that belongs to the Lord to do with as He sees fit (Psalm 50:12). If the people of Israel entered into poverty through, for example, financial mismanagement, they could only lease (or part-sell) their land that they were in possession of for the remaining time left of a 50 year period set forth by God. When the 50th year, the year of the Jubilee, arrived, the land had to be returned to its original possessor, for the Jubilee Year encompassed automatic release (Leviticus 27:24). The land then returned to its original tribal "owner" as set out by God. In

this way, the inheritance allotted by God to the 12 tribes remained the same, with each portion of land continuing on a permanent basis with the original tenants (Numbers 36:9).

“. . . Indeed we are strangers and sojourners on this earth that belongs to the Lord to do with as He sees fit. . .”

The people of Israel in fact were to be given the Promised Land as an eternal inheritance (Genesis 17:8), but this tenancy again was conditional on them obeying the Covenant that they had with the Lord God of Israel (Exodus 6:8; Numbers 14:8; Deuteronomy 31:20; Judges 2:1). When their sin and spiritual adultery became so great that there was no remedy (2 Chronicles 36:16), they were removed from the land, but given promise of a return (Jeremiah 30:3). Then followed the scattering of the Jews in 70 A.D. all over the known world, and their restoration to the land of Israel in 1948 (although with greatly reduced boundaries). With the Second Coming, the national repentance of the Jewish people will occur as they finally recognize the Messiah they rejected (Zechariah 12:10). Then the land of promise in its entirety will be fully restored to God’s ancient chosen people who will retain their national identity eternally (Isaiah 66:22).

Now there are so many things to learn from what could be called God’s economic plan for Israel, but for the purpose of this study, the primary lesson is that: *“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof . . .”* (Psalm 24:1), and that man is only the tenant by sovereign design and mercy.

As we have stated, man before the Fall was to have an eternal tenancy with dominion over all the earth. After the Fall, God could have dealt with His human creation and sent them into everlasting punishment (along with Satan and his rebellious angels) in the Lake of Fire. However in His mercy, He made a Blood Covenant with man. Ultimately it would take the Blood of an innocent man to be shed for that Covenant to properly come into effect. The Cross of Calvary and the Blood of the Lamb gave man victory and freedom at

an experiential level, plus another tenancy in another place that also belongs to God - that place being heaven, God's abode.

Now we will return to the subject of the lease given by God to man concerning the earth. Within the time-frame of this lease, man can generally do as he wills, and be punished or rewarded accordingly - for man is a free-willed agent and not a programmed robot. If mankind had chosen to stay within the boundaries of God's laws, he would have been blessed with success and prosperity. However the violation of God's principles brings a curse upon man, this curse being the natural result of continual sin. On a national or collective level, due to nations worshipping false gods and forsaking God's principles (Leviticus 18:25-30), the curse may become manifest in the form of wars, famines, drought, etc. God may allow this, for it is He Who has set spiritual laws in place by which people reap what they sow. However it is fallen man's master, Satan, who actively seeks to destroy humanity (John 10:10). And it is he who promotes wickedness and destruction, incites people to act on evil desires and gloats over his successes.

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On certain occasions since the dispensation of this lease, God's standards were violated to such an extent (with no sign of repentance) that God had to intervene and issue out severe judgement. It is rare for God to actually do this, for most of man's problems arise simply through his own sin issuing in the curse. However in the time of Noah, for example, God flooded the earth in order to remove the wickedness which then prevailed (Genesis 6:11-18). Also, in Abraham and Lot's generation, God rained down fire and brimstone on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20-

19:29). This judgement became necessary because of the degree of wickedness existing in these cities at that time.

Another reason God will intervene in man's affairs is if man is about to hinder or sidetrack His overall plan for the ages. Therefore God will, at times, cause the fall of empires and regimes, and help set others in place so that His plans may be brought to fruition - for the benefit of man's final outcome (Proverbs 21:1; Psalm 75:6-8; Isaiah 37:28-29).

Furthermore, because of the advancement in technology in this generation, we can see evil increasing at an enormous rate, reaching proportions never seen before in history (e.g. legalized abortion, pornography, anti-Christian views and practices such as homosexuality being promoted through the media, etc.). The Word of God teaches us that moral and spiritual depravity will be evident in the last days, shortly before Jesus' return (2 Timothy 3:1-7), and that we should take note of the signs of the times so that we will be aware of the season of His coming. Eventually man's lease will expire and God will again resume active control of the earth which He will regenerate to its original perfect state.

WHEN WILL THE LEASE EXPIRE ?

One view is that with the expulsion of Satan and his angels from heaven, an imbalance in heaven's occupancy (numbers) would have occurred. So the time-frame for the duration of the lease could be linked to the time it takes to restore heaven's balance with the number of souls needed to replace the third of the angels who fell. If this be the case, the leasehold of man will continue until heaven's balance is restored. In the meantime, Satan will be at work promoting his evil schemes to bring about sickness, war and poverty on God's property.

WHY DOES EVIL CONTINUE TODAY ?

In the world today we see many wars, famines and atrocities occurring and many people respond to these tragedies by asking, "Why does God allow such things to happen?"

In dealing with the question of why God allows evil to continue, the rationale behind one explanation of this perplexing issue lies in the assumption that God's power is somehow limited by His moral character. The reasoning behind this thinking comes from the following appraisal.

We have learned that when God created man, He gave man dominion or rulership over all the earth. This was meant to be an eternal or everlasting arrangement. However man broke the conditions of the Covenant when he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man was enticed to disobey God by Satan, for it was this evil spiritual being who used both deception and fear to cause the parents of the human race to rebel against their Creator. The consequences of their actions were enormous. Adam, through his sin, passed the dominion of the earth over to Satan who then became "*the god of this world*" (2 Corinthians 4:4). Adam died spiritually, thereby becoming separated from God and linked to Satan. Thus Adam entered into a state of spiritual death, causing all his descendants, which is every person who has ever lived (except Jesus), to be born into the same condition. The earth became cursed - the soil itself became barren (Genesis 3:17-18), and some of the animals which had eaten vegetation became carnivorous, and the fear of man entered into them.

Note: God could not have made another man from the dust of the earth in this case, for even the dust was cursed.

God could have legally and morally issued out judgement upon man and wiped him from the earth. In His mercy and grace, however, He decided against this, and set about His plan to redeem man rather than punish him. As we have seen, God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden so they would not take from the Tree of Life with sin in their hearts, and so become eternally separated from Him (Genesis 3:22-24). Also, as we have just learned, God allowed fallen man to continue to occupy the earth (which man had surrendered to Satan's jurisdiction) under the conditions of a time-limited lease.

This meant, however, that God could normally no longer directly intervene in man's affairs. In other words, God is limited by His own moral character and law because:

1. Man chose to give Satan most of the rights which God had originally given to man. By his own free will, man had opted to enter into Satan's Kingdom and to come under his rulership.

2. In setting out the lease, God once again became limited in His right to intervene, at least until the expiry date of the lease arrives. If God wanted to reclaim the earth before this time, legally speaking, He could be accused of trespassing. This being the case, **God's power to intervene is indeed limited by His moral law.**

Note: In issuing out the lease, God gave man legal possession of the earth - but only as a tenant. However, because Satan was then man's master, Satan also had tenancy rights in a sub-lease arrangement. God did not deal directly with the evil usurper (Satan) who had deceptively obtained sovereignty over man, for He could not violate man's free-will choice to submit to Satan's rulership. He could only do that which His character of mercy and grace constrained Him to do. God, in response to His love for man, devised a Plan of Redemption.

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COMING OUT FROM UNDER THE CURSE

The earth and man had thus become cursed at the Fall because of man's sin, and man now had a lease to occupy the earth and to dwell upon it. God was now, however, on the outside looking in, for Adam had come under Satan's jurisdiction. Man still possessed his free will under Satan's dominion, and was still able to turn again to God if he so chose. There was, however, the problem of spiritual blindness (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). This made man unable to perceive his true position, that he was and is in spiritual darkness without the power to please a loving God.

The only way God could assist man to come out from under the curse (to varying degrees), that curse being spiritual darkness and everything pertaining to it, was to draw up a Covenant or agreement with man. We see evidence of this in the Old Testament where God made a Covenant with His chosen people in order to cover their sins and keep eternal death at bay.

“ . . . The only way God could assist man to come out from under the curse (to varying degrees), that curse being spiritual darkness and everything pertaining to it, was to draw up a Covenant or agreement with man. . . ”

A major instrument in God’s Plan of Redemption for mankind was a man named Abraham. The scriptures tell us that God made a Covenant with Abraham, and promised that this Covenant would be “*an everlasting Covenant*” between Abraham and his “*seed*” (Genesis 17:1-7). The New Testament reveals that the “*seed*” to which God was referring was the Messiah - the Lord Jesus Christ.

GALATIANS 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham (justification by faith) might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

GALATIANS 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, “And to seeds,” as of many; but as of one, “And to your seed,” which is Christ (Abraham’s Seed was Christ).

Scripture tells us that those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour belong to Christ. They are then, by faith, Abraham’s spiritual descendants, and are heirs of the wonderful promises given to Abraham (Galatians 3:29).

So today, man has opportunity to escape from Satan’s dominion through faith in the greatest Blood Covenant of all time. Through this

Covenant, man can also claim back that which Satan fraudulently obtained from man. To terminate Satan's rights to any particular area of one's life one must:

1. Be regenerated.
2. Die to sin through repentance.
3. **Have** faith in God's Word in any particular area.
4. **Apply** that faith in Jesus' Name.
5. **Yield** to the Holy Spirit so as to be empowered to do God's will.

“ . . . So today, man has opportunity to escape from Satan's dominion through faith in the greatest Blood Covenant of all time. Through this Covenant, man can also claim back that which Satan fraudulently obtained from man. . . ”

For example, Satan and his forces can now be told to leave (your life, your home, your property etc.) for you have a Covenant with God that gives you the right to use the Name of Jesus against the devil and his schemes (Ephesians 6:12). As we yield to the Holy Spirit in the power of the Cross, we are positioned to use the Name of Jesus to cause any illegal squatters in our lives to be evicted by God's power. It is the Cross and its finished work which has made us able to be partakers of the Divine Nature, and with this empowerment the enemy will not succeed in stealing from God's children. Indeed it is through the energies of the Divine Nature that we become one with God, and begin to think as He thinks (1 Corinthians 2:16). Through the Divine Nature we receive enablement to believe and trust, and so by faith make proper demands on God's power. It is therefore when we yield to God's Light of Truth that all evil and darkness must depart. This is the

power of the Cross at work on our behalf and this is our rightful inheritance. Therefore we should not allow any devil to rob us of any part of it. Amen.

When God raised Jesus from the dead, Satan was defeated. Jesus is now able to take away from Satan, in a potential sense, that which Satan stole by deception. Now all those in Christ have the potential, by faith and with God, to take ground from the enemy, legally and morally. So now, when a member of the Body of Christ (who is led by the Spirit) prays, **THEY PROVIDE THE LEGAL AND MORAL JUSTIFICATION FOR GOD TO RELEASE HIS POWER AGAINST MANKIND'S ENEMY.**

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST?

It seems to be a justified claim that without the Church's prayer, God will not move to repossess the territory which was invaded and overtaken by Satan. Every verse in the Bible dealing with prayer indicates that any resulting action which occurs is itself initiated on earth, quite often in response to the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit. Thus we must ask God to answer, according to His will. However we must first, in faith, boldly (in confidence and knowing God's will) enter the throneroom of grace in our and others' times of need (Hebrews 4:16) if we are to obtain the grace required.

In other words, while man's lease is still alive and lawful, God is limited in helping man. He has, however, given us the way to reach Him and obtain His help in every situation. By our faith in the finished work of the Cross, our obedience and our prayer, we give God permission to help us. **Indeed we give Him the legal ground to do so.**

“. . . Now all those in Christ have the potential, by faith and with God, to take ground from the enemy, legally and morally. . .”

With this in mind, let us remember that God rarely intervenes sovereignly in man's affairs, for He is limited in doing so by His own

moral character. We can take as an example of seemingly sovereign intervention, Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6). However Paul, even in persecuting the early church, had an attitude of wanting to serve God. This in itself could have constituted grounds for allowing God to take such action. Or faithful, Spirit-led servants may have been praying in tongues for such an event to take place. In any case, it appears that God will only intervene in such a dramatic way if the outcome is to be of paramount importance to His overall plan.

As Christians in rightstanding with God, however, we can pray so that God can help us. This is both our privilege and our responsibility - and this is why the Word of God tells us:

JAMES 5:16 . . . The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

JOHN 15:7 If you abide in Me (live in vital union with Me) and My Words abide in you (continue to live in your heart), you shall ask what you will (which will be what God wills), and it shall be done unto you.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:17 Pray without ceasing (pray about all things: Proverbs 3:5-6);

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 In every thing give thanks (not necessarily for everything): for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. (No matter what happens, or how negative things may seem to be, we are to never stop giving thanks to the Lord, which is the Will of God). (E.S.B.)

EPHESIANS 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit (an incessant pleading until the prayer is answered [Luke 18:1-8]), and watching thereunto (being sensitive to what the Holy Spirit desires) with all perseverance (don't stop) and supplication (petitions and requests) for all Saints (Saints praying for other Saints); (E.S.B.)

We can also rest in the knowledge that God is in ultimate control of His overall plan, and that in His foreknowledge, He has taken everything into consideration. Our God knows the beginning and the ending, and has planned and made allowances for all things, even the weaknesses and frailties of man. He has shown us in His Word the events which are to transpire at the end of the age, the result of which will be the issuing in of everlasting peace. This will be a perfect work, for we serve a mighty God Whose works and ways are perfect and just.

DEUTERONOMY 32:3 . . . I will publish the Name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God (Almighty, Creator of all that is).

DEUTERONOMY 32:4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgement (just): a God of truth (faithfulness) and without iniquity (injustice), just and right (upright) is He.

“. . .So now, when a member of the Body of Christ (who is led by the Spirit) prays, they provide the legal and moral justification for God to release His power against mankind’s enemy. . .”

Let us rejoice in this hope and assurance as we continue in our Christian walk, serving the Lord with willing, obedient and faithful hearts. And let us remember to intercede on behalf of others, so that the Lord can release His power to deliver and save.

May you have the victory in Christ. Amen!

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