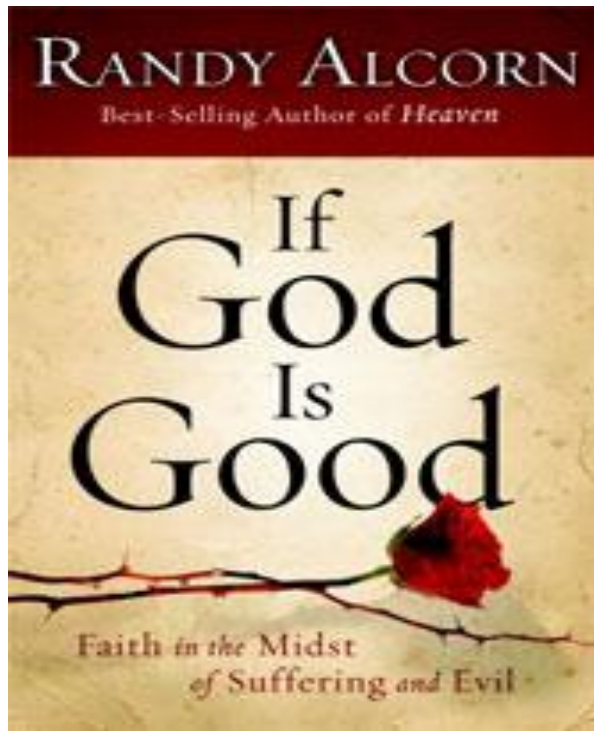




*Love God. Love People. Change the World.*



# ***If God is Good.***

## ***Lesson #9***

**Christian Life Assembly  
Winter 2010 ABF  
Jim Hoffman**

# *Natural Disasters and Suffering*

- **Gen 6:6** The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. **7** So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth — men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air — for I am grieved that I have made them." NIV
- **Num 16:31** As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart **32** and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, with their households and all Korah's men and all their possessions. **33** They went down alive into the grave, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community. NIV

# *Natural Disasters and Suffering*

- The plagues on Egypt.
- The fiery storm sent upon Sodom.
- The storm that got Jonah tossed out of the ship.
- The various droughts of the O.T.

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# *Question*

**What is the difference between God removing his blessing from a person or a nation and him sending judgment?**

# *Natural Disasters and Suffering*

- It is important to note that while scripture records a few disasters sent by God through nature, most of what we experience is the result of the general curse on the earth.
- How many times have we been embarrassed to hear some prominent TV preacher say “God sent this or that because of homosexuals, or abortions, or \_\_\_\_\_” with no evidence of his claim?
- I believe God is lifting his hand of blessing from America - I have no reason to believe San Francisco is going to fall into the Pacific because of the lifestyles it fosters. There is a difference.

# *Natural Disasters and Suffering*

- Scripture does not distance God from natural disasters and the secondary evils that come with them the way we try to do.
- Isa 45:7 I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things. NIV
- Amos 3:6 When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it? NIV
- Without equivocation, God causes some natural disasters.

# *Natural Disasters and Suffering*

- OT:7489 ra`a` (raw-ah'); a primitive root; properly, to spoil (literally, by breaking to pieces); figuratively, to make (or be) good for nothing, i.e. bad (physically, socially or morally):
- Ra – (Isa 45:7) – 21 different possible meanings.

# *Natural Disasters and Suffering*

- Some are caused by Satan – Job is the classic example wherein Satan incited the Sabaeans and Chaldeans to murder and plunder Job’s family.
- The distinction with Job is it proves that God rules over Satan and Satan cannot touch the believer without God’s permission.
- A new thought perhaps – Satan cannot touch us without God’s permission, but if Job was described by God as perfect and upright, what makes us think we are any safer than Job?



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# *Natural Disasters and Suffering*

- Was Job an exception to the rule just so we could learn all that we have from his life?
- I tend to think so – I believe we are more likely to have God’s protection than not, but if a ‘perfect’ man still needed to trust God for protection then so do we.
- The big lesson of Job about God is the same one C S Lewis noted in the Narnia tales – God is good, but he is not safe.
- Would a world without disasters would be too safe to ‘incite’ faith?

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# *Evil and Suffering Perspective*

- **Rev 13:8** All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast — all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. NIV
- **Point #1** – there is a ‘guest list’ of all who RSVP’d the invitation to Heaven.
- **Point #2** – no middle ground. All who will never repent will worship the beast.

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# *Evil and Suffering Perspective*

- The verse also speaks of the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the earth. In God's mind, since He is all-powerful, when he decreed a sacrificial lamb as payment for sin, He could count it in advance of it happening in time.
- This is also insightful to God's perspective on evil in the world – it is real, and it is ugly, but it is also 'dealt with'.
- The only thing left to play out is time.

# *Evil and Suffering Perspective*

- When we call on God to bring an end to evil consider what we are saying – God do again, what you did in Noah's day - Destroy everything!
- Gen 8:21 The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. NIV
- He promised to never again start over with sinful people – the next time sin will be put away forever.

# *Evil and Suffering Perspective*

- After the flood we had the Tower of Babel judgment where God did not destroy men, but disconnected them and started new nations and cultures.
- Two things are going on – the various nations and cultures serve to glorify God in a greater variety of ways.
- Secondly, the scattering of the people served to restrain and slow the progression of their evil.

# *Evil and Suffering Perspective*

- Perhaps to a great extent that is what God is doing today – restraining and limiting the evil of men so as to delay the necessity of final judgment as long as possible.
- 2 Thess 2:6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. 7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. NIV

# *Evil and Suffering Perspective*

- God never explained to Job why He allowed evil and suffering to come upon him – He wanted Job to trust Him.
- If Job, being blameless, did not get an explanation why he suffered so, should we expect one?
- The scriptures are filled with light to bring us to faith and trust, but they are short on reasons for suffering – perhaps because reason is often the enemy of faith.

# *Evil and Suffering Perspective*

- Mark Lowery, Christian comedian, says his favorite verse is “and it came to pass”.
- When we are “in the fire” it is discomfoting to know that God could bring the ordeal to an end in an instant, but has chosen not to – He is aware and cares.
- Ps 56:8 You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. NLT



# *Evil and Suffering Perspective*

- “While in the larger story this is not the best possible world, it just may be the best possible means of achieving the best possible world.” Randy Alcorn
- God makes no mistakes – if he wanted people to behave properly he could have programmed that into our DNA.
- Maybe he wants people who have seen what sin can do and then appreciate who He is and love him more.



# *Questions / Comments*