



Bad Things May Happen To Good People

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Since the tragedy of September 11, 2001, I'm quite sure that many questions have surfaced in everyone's mind. Questions such as, why did this tragedy of evil terrorism take place? Why did God allow a tragedy of such magnitude to happen? Why did God not prevent all the lives being taken of so many innocent people? Where was God during the tragedy? And what is our reaction to all of this? To tell you the honest truth, I don't have the answers to any of these questions. The Holy Bible is the only reference that can calm our anxieties, fears, and answer our many questions.

The Tragedy of Job:

If we search the Holy Bible we will find one Holy Book that is full of questions. The Holy Book of Job contains more than 330 questions within its 42 chapters. In comparison with other Holy Books in the Holy Bible, the Holy Book of Genesis has 160 questions, the Holy Gospel of Saint Matthew has approximately 180 questions, and even the Holy Book of Psalms, which is the largest book in the Holy Bible, has only 160 questions.

We may wonder why the Holy Book of Job has all these questions and the simple answer is because Job dealt with a terrible tragedy. Job was a righteous man and had a wonderful relationship with God. He prayed and offered sacrifices. Job lived before the time of Moses, which also means before the law. Job was following the natural law, which is a person's



conscience. In spite of his righteousness we find Job facing a terrible tragedy.

He lost everything: all his belongings, his children, and his health. With Job's example before us, we ask the question, why do bad things happen to good people?

By comparison, Job's tragedy somewhat resembles the tragedy of September 11, 2001 although they are about

4,000 years apart. In spite of all these years, life continues as we chant in the Divine Liturgy, "*As it was and shall be, it is from generation to generation. It is the same story over and over.*"

Wrong Assumption:

We learn from the story of Job and tragedy of September 11th that the assumption, which says good people shouldn't suffer, is a wrong assumption. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, suffered in this world and was crucified on the Holy Cross. In spite of the fact that both Herod and Pilate confessed that the Lord Jesus Christ was blameless He was crucified. So the assumption that good people shouldn't suffer is not a correct one. We should know that good people might suffer.

Who is to blame?

The second question that may arise is who to blame. If we read the Holy Book of Job, we will find this dialogue between Job and his three friends: Job said, "I'm a righteous and blameless person, why should I



suffer, where is the justice of God?" His three friends answer him saying, "Because you are suffering, you are a sinner."

Both Job and his friends believed in the same assumption that good people shouldn't suffer and as a result Job wondered and was troubled. His three friends tried to find the reason so they blamed Job. They told him that he was a bad person and should blame only himself for his suffering. The worst thing to do to someone who is suffering is to blame him or her.

Even the disciples when they saw the one born blind, they asked the Lord why he was born blind, and who committed a sin, he or his parents. Even the disciples believed the same assumption that good people shouldn't suffer.

Who is to blame? Many people during such a time start to blame God and that is extremely unacceptable and wrong. God is full of compassion, love, and justice. When evil takes place, do not believe it is from God. Do you think that all the American people that were killed at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon at the time of the attack died because God wanted them to? That was definitely not the case.

With the story of Job, we learn that it was Satan to blame for the misfortune that fell upon Job. The devil made Job lose all his children, his health, and his possessions. Satan is the source of all evil. Satan even started rebellions against God. A long time ago, before the creation of the world, Satan was an archangel and was tempted from within his heart to become like God. Satan desired to be even greater than God. Since then Satan has wanted to turn everyone in the world against and away from God; that is Satan's ultimate plan.

Why does God not prevent Satan from harming us?

So if Satan is responsible for all evil, why does God not prevent him from doing evil? God is All Mighty and it is in his capability to stop Satan from doing evil, so why did God allow such devastating terrorism to happen? Before we try to answer this question let's read these verses from the Holy Book of Revelations:

The Holy Book of Revelations 11:7 "When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make **war** against them, overcome them, and kill them."

The Holy Book of Revelations 12:7 "And **war** was broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

The Holy Book of Revelations 12:17 "And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make **war** with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The Holy Book of Revelations 13:7 "It was granted to him to make **war** with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation."

The Holy Book of Revelations 17:14 "These will make **war** with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen and faithful."

The Holy Book of Revelations 19:11 "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in

So who is to blame? It is Satan, definitely not God.



righteousness He judges and makes **war**.”

Looking at all these verses, we see that there is war between the Son of God, the angels, the church and its offspring, and the saints against Satan; and God will win this war at the end.

Satan is very powerful and is launching war against God Himself. But why does God not stop this war by just a single word from His Holy mouth?

The Holy Book of Jude, verse 9 states, “Yet Michael that archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” Saint Jude mentioned a story about the body of Moses. God hid the body of Moses from the Israelites lest they worship the body; as he was a great prophet, and they were surrounded by pagan nations that used to worship idols. Satan tried to bring the body of Moses to the people to worship the body. Archangel Michael descended from heaven and fought with Satan to prevent him from doing that.

Think about these words “dared not bring against him a reviling accusation”. What does that mean? We need to understand that God is the absolute in all His attributes. God can stop Satan from doing evil by just a word from His Holy mouth, but this will contradict with the absolute justice of God.

So, God allowed the devil to enter the war and gave him the opportunity to fight angels, Archangels, saints and even the Son of God Himself. The final result will be seen at the end of the world, in which the Son of God will throw the devil in Lake of Fire.

The war will continue to exist between God, His kingdom, and the devil, along with his kingdom. In order to save and rescue the fallen humanity; God

entered the war with the devil by Himself.

The devil came to the world hiding as a serpent, and God came to the world hiding as a human being, and there was war between God and the devil, until God defeated him on the Holy Cross.

The salvation, our salvation, was not just simply by a word from God, but God entered into a war by himself with the devil in order to save us. That happened because of the absolute justice of God.

We can read more about the Economy of Salvation in the book “Incarnation of the Word” by St. Athanasius in which he explained the necessity of crucifixion for our salvation. This is because of the absolute justice of God.

The war between God and Satan will continue till the end of time. Satan at a certain time will have authority over nation, tongue, and tribe. We should always be ready for this war and keep in mind that we are in constant war with the devil.

Based on this fact, we should live our lives understanding and not undermining the power of our enemy. We should be aware, watchful, ready, and prepared with the help of God.

Why did God create the Devil?

The last question I will try to answer is why God created the devil from the beginning? In his foreknowledge, God knew that an archangel would fall and would do terrible evil, so why did He create him?

God didn't create the devil but He created an archangel. It was not because of the foreknowledge of God that evil took place, but because of the free will of the archangel who fell. God therefore did not create evil.



Sometimes some inventions and discoveries cause harm to many, for example, the Internet. It is a great discovery but many people become addicted to it, and many will have their vision blurred. More dangerously, so many will be affected morally and spiritually. I'm sure the people who invented the Internet, knew all of that but this didn't stop them from designing it due to the many benefits which can be attributed to it as well. When they invented it, they also gave us means to protect ourselves and it is now our free will to decide which way to use it.

In the same manner, the existence of creation, is better than not. To be is better than not to be. To be created and live is better than not to exist and that is because of the absolute goodness of God, He created us. He also gave us the means of repentance. Now, the final choice is ours, to choose to live with God and overcome the devil or to live away from God and be with the devil. It is against the absolute goodness of God not to create us just because He foreknew what the devil would do.

Should we question God?

Even if we don't understand, we shouldn't question God. In the Holy Book of Job, God starts to ask Job questions in order to pass a message to him. The message is to show Job how much he knew and how much knowledge he has to dare to question God.

In the Holy Book of Job 38:1-6 "Then the Lord answered Job out of whirlwind and said, 'who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man, I will question you and you shall answer me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the Earth? Tell me if you have understanding. Who determined its measurement? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundation fastened? Or who laid its

cornerstone?'"

God is challenging Job to find answers to all these questions. In God's answer to Job we learn a few things. First, we shouldn't question God because we simply don't have the knowledge. There are so many mysteries around us in the world today that we don't understand so what will one additional mystery will do to us?

The power of the devil:

Second, the devil is very powerful (Job 41) and we should know he is making a war against us. So instead of questioning God, prepare yourself. All these questions will not help, but what helps is to be ready for the war.

In the Holy Gospel of St Luke 13:23, the Lord was asked, "Are there few who are saved?" God didn't answer by a yes or a no, but his answer was, "Strive to enter through the narrow door." The Lord answered this way because of the way the question was asked which might show the economy of God as an unjust. The Lord also wanted to teach us that we should concentrate on our salvation not on questioning God about His economy.

Conclusion:

The most important point is to stop questioning God and take a positive attitude. We know now there is a war and we know the devil's capabilities, so we should prepare ourselves with the armor of God in order to overcome the devil and his soldiers.

May the Lord help us to grow in our spiritual life and to support us in our war against the devil. Glory be to the Lord forever and ever. Amen.