



bb-TBC-24

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	Preaching
☰ Working Title	Why doesn't God do something?
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bb-TBC-24 "Why doesn't God do something?"

Introduction:

A speculation, an hypothesis, a best fit solution... What's the problem?

Theodicy!

▼ If God is...

1. all-loving (God is love),
2. and all-knowing (omniscient)
3. and all-power (omnipotent)

...Why do bad things happen to good people? Or, perhaps, even more challenging, why do good things happen to bad people? One answer may be 'Intrusion Ethics'...

Theodicy:

▼ study or not to study?

I included this in my book, and some of my closest colleagues thought I should remove it. I think some of them wanted to protect my reputation... too late I think! They thought it too speculative, in the main. So why am I going against their counsel and including it "the Study Guide".

1. it's in the book The Better Covenant: Chapter 9
2. I make reference to it in some later chapters refer to it.
3. It is a familiar theme in Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes
4. It may encourage you to consider the question for your own blessing and understanding.

5. it may be a starting point even if it isn't the complete answer. I wavered but then my daily Bible readings took me to the book called Ecclesiastes, and The Teacher/Preacher spends much of his time concluding that everything is 'vane', without value, pointless, without an explanation. I took that as a green light.

if you really want to bend your brain you could take a look at the Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/theodicy-theology>.

▼ Here's your starter...

Theodicy, (from Greek theos, "god"; dikē, "justice"), explanation of why a perfectly good, almighty, and all-knowing God permits evil. The term literally means "justifying God."

▼ Ecclesiastes 8:11

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

in other words if God 'does not police his law, it will encourage others to break it'.

So why doesn't God act more promptly against the wicked man. Why does he allow Stalin to die in his bed and Idi Amin in luxury in Saudi Arabia? Why does he allow them... to get away with it.

▼ Psalm 73:3–14

For I was envious at the arrogant, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

For there are no pangs in their death; But their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; Neither are they plagued like other men.

Therefore pride is as a chain about their neck; Violence covereth them as a garment.

Their eyes stand out with fatness: They have more than heart could wish.

They scoff, and in wickedness utter oppression: They speak loftily. They have set their mouth in the heavens, And their tongue walketh through the earth.

Therefore his people return hither: And waters of a full cup are drained by them.

And they say, How doth God know? And is there knowledge in the

Most High?

Behold, these are the wicked; And, being alway at ease, they increase in riches.

Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart, And washed my hands in innocency;

For all the day long have I been plagued, And chastened every morning. (Psalm 73:3–14 ASV)

Ingersol??

The complaint of Ps 73 - 'what's the point?'

David wrestles with the same problem in Ps 37

▼ Habbakuk 'prays' it

¶ O Jehovah, **how long** shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear? I cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save.

Why dost thou show me iniquity, and look upon perverseness? for destruction and violence are before me; and there is strife, and contention riseth up.

Therefore the law is slacked, and justice doth never go forth; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore justice goeth forth perverted. (Habakkuk 1:2–4 ASV)

those two haunting questions

1. how long?
2. why?

▼ why doesn't God do something?

There is no 'slick', 'standard', 'one-size-fits-all' answer to this question, but we will 'boldly go...' where many have gone before and see if we can make a contribution.

Conflicts among the super-powers

God continued to 'rise up early and send his messengers' throughout the lifetimes of the House of Israel - the Northern Kingdom and the House of Judah - the Southern Kingdom. The prophecies of Isaiah are part of this pattern. His ministry continued for more than 50 years, through the reigns of four kings;

▼ Isaiah 1:1

¶ The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. (Isaiah 1:1 ASV)

There are dramatic 'mood swings' in the prophecies of Isaiah, from warnings of devastating judgments to promises of glorious recovery.

He was writing during a period of international upheaval. Superpowers were rising and falling the client states being dragged backwards and forwards like a lifeless doll on the turn of the tide. To most people living in those times, it must all have seen chaotic and shapeless but Isaiah is 'seer' and he will see things from a different perspective, from God's perspective!

When Isaiah began, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was under the reign of Jeroboam II (not the original Jeroboam who lived in 200 years earlier but another man of the same name). Jeroboam II was a powerful and successful ruler, as men judge things. According to the scripture, he was raised by God to give the house of Israel a respite from their enemies;

▼ 2Kings 13:4–5

And Jehoahaz (the king of Israel) besought Jehovah, and Jehovah hearkened unto him; for he saw the oppression of Israel, how that the king of Syria oppressed them.

(And Jehovah gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians; and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents as beforetime. (2Kings 13:4–5 ASV)

▼ 2Kings 14:16

And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead. (2Kings 14:16 ASV)

▼ 2Kings 14:27

¶ In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, wherewith he made Israel to sin. (2Kings 14:23–24 ASV)

And Jehovah said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under

heaven; but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.
(2Kings 14:27 ASV)

A valuable 'case-study' in the way God sometimes uses evil men.

▼ **digging deeper: Jeroboam II**

Jeroboam II., the son and successor of Jehoash, and the fourteenth king of Israel, over which he ruled for forty-one years, B.C. 825–784 (2 Kings 14:23). He followed the example of the first Jeroboam in keeping up the worship of the golden calves (2 Kings 14:24). His reign was contemporary with those of Amaziah (2 Kings 14:23) and Uzziah (15:1), kings of Judah. He was victorious over the Syrians (13:4; 14:26, 27), and extended Israel to its former limits, from “the entering of Hamath to the sea of the plain” (14:25; Amos 6:14). His reign of forty-one years was the most prosperous that Israel had ever known as yet. With all this outward prosperity, however, iniquity widely prevailed in the land (Amos 2:6-8; 4:1; 6:6; Hos. 4:12-14). The prophets Hosea (Hos. 1:1), Joel (Joel 3:16; Amos 1:1, 2), Amos (Amos 1:1), and Jonah (2 Kings 14:25) lived during his reign. He died, and was buried with his ancestors (14:29). He was succeeded by his son Zachariah (q.v.).

His name occurs in Scripture only in 2 Kings 13:13; 14:16, 23, 27, 28, 29; 15:1, 8; 1 Chr. 5:17; Hos. 1:1; Amos 1:1; 7:9, 10, 11.

Accordance Bible Software: Easton's Bible Dictionary

This was the last respite for the 'house of Israel'. The Northern Kingdom squandered its opportunity to 'get right with God'. When Jeroboam's 41 year reign ended his kingdom fell to pieces. In the next 20 year the 'house of Israel' had 6 kings, one of whom reigned for just one month. The God-given 'house of Israel' promised in conditional perpetuity to the original Jeroboam spiraled into chaos and oblivion in BC 722.

Intrusion Ethics

RB version!

The Judge of the whole earth

▼ ie. it is not conceivable that God will not judge the world.

▼ Genesis 18:25

That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked; that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? (Genesis 18:25 ASV)

▼ Matthew 12:36

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. (Matthew 12:36 NKJV)

▼ Acts 17:31

because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:31 NKJV)

▼ Romans 14:12

¶ So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. (Romans 14:12 NKJV)

▼ 1Peter 4:5

They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. (1Peter 4:5 NKJV)

▼ Hebrews 9:27

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, (Hebrews 9:27 NKJV)

▼ Romans 3:5–6

¶ But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? (Romans 3:5–6 NKJV)

creatures are answerable to their creator

Long before the time of Jeroboam II, God promised the land of Canaan to Abram's descendants in the mysterious event of Gen 15 and gave Abram an insight into an important truth;

▼ Rom 8:28 - Lit translation - (RB)

"And we have known that to those who are loving God all things he_is_working_together (synergizing) towards good to those who are

being called according to purpose"

- God is the ultimate 'multi-tasker'!

Every event is part of a process and God synergises all events... according to purpose.

▼ Genesis 15:13–16

And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

And in the fourth generation, they shall come hither again: **for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full.** (Genesis 15:13–16 ASV)

▼ Synergising and Synchronising

God was synchronizing his dealings with the descendants with his dealings with the Amorites. Abram had been 'in covenant' with three Amorite brothers.

▼ Genesis 14:13

¶ And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew: now he dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner. And these were confederate with Abram. (Genesis 14:13 ASV)

▼ The possession of the land of Canaan had at least three 'purposes' at work at the same time.

1. God's Judgment upon the Amorites
2. The land of Canaan was vomiting out its poison
3. God was fulfilling his promise to Abram

Intrusion Ethics

Paul gives us one answer to our question in his letter to the Romans

▼ Romans 9:21–23

Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

¶ What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, (Romans 9:21–23 NKJV)

At one level that settles it! God will do what God will do... and yet Paul is quoting from a passage where the whole point is that our choices have an effect on our destiny!

▼ Jeremiah 18:6–8

“O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?” says the LORD. “Look, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!

The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. (Jeremiah 18:6–8 NKJV)

▼ "Intrusion Ethics" is not arguing with Paul

▼ The iniquity of the Amorites is not full

Intrusion Ethics makes a distinction between the age in which we live in which God allows many blessings that are part of his 'Common Grace'

▼ Matthew 5:44–45

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may **be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.** (Matthew 5:44–45 NKJV)

Even though we deserve judgment and instant retribution for a sin we are still here because of God's and minuted love towards us, his grace. Why?

▼ 2Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2Peter 3:9 NKJV)

▼ Isaiah 28:21

For Jehovah will rise up as in mount Perazim, he will be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon; that he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act. (Isaiah 28:21 ASV)

▼ Romans 2:4

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4 NKJV)

▼ Then why do bad things happen to anyone?

▼ There will be a Consummation of the Age...

▼ Acts 17:30–31

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30–31 NKJV)

In the meantime... there will be times when it seems that God clearly intervenes in the events of mankind. Why? Is God inconsistent?

▼ Pre-consummation judgments (anticipatory judgments)

▼ Beware Hazard!!

A strong word of caution. We need to be very cautious in what we declare to be an act of God's anticipatory judgment. It is folly to try to map specific sins to specific events. although many Christians will attempt it and, sadly, some Christians seem predisposed to 'joining the dots'.

Notice how the Lord refuses to link a specific sin with a 'strange work' but insists that the final day of judgment will surely come. He confirms the fact of judgment following disobedience but refuses to 'join the dots'.

▼ Luke 13:1-5

There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?

I tell you, no; **but unless you repent** you will all likewise perish.

Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?

I tell you, no; **but unless you repent** you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:1-5 NKJV)

▼ Defining 'intrusion ethics'

If God is awaiting 'another' day why does he bring judgments, ahead of judgment day...

These judgments are 'intrusions of the ethics' of the coming Age of Consummation into our days of Common Grace or so the idea of intrusion ethics states. Some of God's judgments that intrude into this era of Common Grace are glimpses of a future day. They are anticipations of the era of the Final Consummation. One day this will be the norm and not be the exception. These judgments then are examples of 'another day' and a constant warning that the day of the Consummation and Final Judgement will arrive. They serve as rare examples of God's unchanging character in his attitude to sin and the sinner, an attitude that will be revealed in all its awesome fullness on the coming day they are Judgement Day in miniature... and very rare. This is why Isaiah describes those 'out of the ordinary' periods of judgment as the 'out of the ordinary' way that God sometimes works and calls them God's strange act. Of course, not all 'bad things' are commissioned by God, but those 'uncommissioned' are 'by permission'.

▼ Isaiah 28:21

For Jehovah will rise up as in mount Perazim, he will be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon; that he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act. (Isaiah 28:21 ASV)

▼ *digging deeper - Meredith Kline*

<https://www.meredithkline.com/files/articles/The-Intrusion-and-the-Decalogue-MGKline.pdf>

What shall we say?

What do you think about that? Confusing? Worrying?

▼ What shall we say then to all these things? Life is not random.

▼ Ecclesiastes 3:1

To everything there is a season, **A time for every purpose under heaven:** (Ecclesiastes 3:1 NKJV)

God wastes nothing, everything is grist for his mill, everything will serve his purpose

▼ Romans 8:28–39

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

¶ **What then shall we say to these things?** If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are

accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

¶ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 8:28–39 NKJV)