

John 9: 1-3

And passing by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither has this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God might be revealed in him. (MKJV)

What is the role of God in the man's blindness?

We don't like to think of God as being a cause of things we consider to be bad or evil, but where do we draw the line of what God is in charge of?

(Exodus 4:11) And the LORD said to him, Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? (MKJV)

What we're dealing with here is what these days is called a worldview, how we look at the world and try to make sense of it.

Any worldview has the answer some basic questions:

- 1) how did we get here?
- 2) who, if anybody is in charge?
who are we?
- 3) why are we here?
- 4) what should we be doing?
- 5) how do we deal with the problem of internal and external evil?

There are several possible positions to the case of God's role in the world that we can take but each of those positions must answer certain difficult questions. (Perhaps we have arrived at our particular position because it gave the easiest answer to some of these questions.)

Very well, any position that we take on the role of God in causing what we consider to be bad things or tragedies or evil things must be willing to address the following questions:

- 1) What is the role of God in the said event?
- 2) If He caused it or could have stopped it but didn't, then how do we explain it when those affected by it demand an explanation or defense from us?
- 3) If He didn't cause it or couldn't have stopped it, then how do we square that with Scriptural claims that He is all-knowing and all-good and all-powerful?
- 4) How do we reconcile the providence of God with the free will of mankind?

Here are some of the possible positions we can take:

- 1) God is in charge of everything and nothing happens without his causing it.
- 2) God set up the universe and the world to run on its own and now is sitting back watching to see what will happen.

- 3) God doesn't cause bad things to happen, but permits them to happen.
- 4) God doesn't cause bad things to happen and doesn't know in advance what will happen but manages to make everything work out right.
- 5. God is in charge of some things but not in charge of others.
- 6. God doesn't want bad things to happen but can't stop them from happening.
- 7. God does want bad things to happen.

Any position must also answer the following questions:

- 1) On what are we basing this position? Is this something we've thought through or it is something that seems right or an easy way of avoiding some of the difficult questions posed by the sufferers of the world?
- 2) Is there scriptural evidence to back up the position?
- 3) If God is in charge, then how can we explain away or justify when senseless tragedies strike?
- 4) IF God isn't in charge, then is there any point or purpose to what happens to us or it just as random as the bumper stickers say it is?
- 5) Do the terms we use such as "death," "bad," "senseless," "tragedy," "good," "happy" mean the same thing to us as they would to God?
- 6) If God is sorta in charge (we give him credit for good things) but not always in charge (we say it isn't his fault when something we don't like happens), where do we draw the line at His causality?
- 7) What is our role and responsibility in all this?

How did Jesus answer when people asked him about bad things happening?

Some Case studies

Pharaoh
 Job
 Joseph
 Jacob
 Jesus
 Peter
 Paul
 the nation of Israel
 Esther