

Why does God allow bad things to happen?

In answering this question, we realize that there are many who have suffered a great deal of unexplainable troubles in this life and who, to this day, cannot figure out why they have suffered so. Our attempt to answer this question is in no way intended to minimize the trouble you have endured. Nor is it to accuse you of some great wrongdoing in order to hurt you even more.

Our answer is simply an accumulation of Bible verses that address this question and which can be checked out by reading the passages quoted. These passages will explain most of the trouble but probably not all. We also realize that the devil is real and that he is responsible for some of this stuff, too. However, we are not dealing with him in this answer.

God allows bad things to happen for numerous reasons. Here are some of the reasons.

1. To demonstrate his power — Rom 9:17. Pharaoh is a good example of this. He put the Jews through terrible affliction in Ex 1-14. God allowed him to do that and even raised him up so that God's power could be seen throughout the earth (i.e. Jos 2:9-11). Often we may have to endure something bad now in order for God to demonstrate his power LATER. The American revolution and the bad events leading up to it are a good example on a national scale.
2. To demonstrate his grace — 2 Cor 12:7-10. While Satan is the one who gave Paul the thorn in the flesh, God allowed it to happen in order to demonstrate the sufficiency of his grace. Paul got to the place where he rejoiced more in the infirmity than in the healing because of the strength of God's grace.
3. To demonstrate his works — Jn 9. Here a fellow was allowed to be born blind and live blind into adulthood merely for God's glory. God demonstrated his ability to heal this blind man; something only God could do (9:32-33). This man had to wait a long time for God to reveal what he was doing, but O was it ever worth the wait!
4. To demonstrate his chastening — Heb 12:5-11. God wants us to be partakers of his holiness and to yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. That's impossible without chastening and chastening is usually bad. We aren't perfect but God wants us to be (Matt 5:48, Col 1:28). When Job went through his ordeal, he came out repentant (Job 42:2-6). When our suffering is at the hand of God's chastening rod, we should come out the same way.
5. To demonstrate his wrath — Gen 6-8. Noah's flood is a prime example. The world had turned to such wickedness that God could no longer put up with it. So, he just wiped it out and started over with Noah's family and the animals in the ark.
6. For our obedience — Heb 5:8. Even God's own Son suffered so that he could learn obedience. If Jesus had to suffer to learn obedience, just imagine what we have to go through. Compared to what Jesus suffered, it appears that we have gotten off rather lightly.

7. For our ministry of consolation — 2 Cor 1:4-7. Oftentimes, we have to go through something in order to minister to others who have trouble after us. No one can comfort a widow like another widow. How many times have you heard someone in tears say, "I'm having it rough, but I know others who have it much worse than I do." And the mere thought of that truth is a major source of comfort to them. You may be suffering just to help someone else.
8. For our reward — 1 Pet 2:20-21; 4:12-16; Rom 8:17. This old world hated Jesus Christ and he promised that it would hate us too. As a result, many of us have suffered at the hands of the world enduring anything from reproach to martyrdom. It goes with being a Christian. Nevertheless, God promised a reward to those who suffer with him.
9. For our wickedness — Gal 6:7-8. There is a doctrine called "Sowing and Reaping." When you and I sin, there are consequences that result. And the consequences often cause us to suffer. We have no one else to blame but ourselves, though we may try to implicate God (Adam did in Gen 3:12, "The woman that THOU gavest..."). We reap what we sow. Lawyers may try to get you to accuse someone else for profit, but you are to blame.

We may reap individually or we may reap as a country. For instance, by allowing sexual promiscuity to advance out of control, the incidences of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases have sky rocketed. Many times these wind up affecting innocent babies. There are babies today that are born drug addicts or dying of disease. What did they do to deserve that? Nothing. They just suffer the consequences of irresponsible parents. Likewise, entire countries can reap for what their leaders have sown. Israel was nearly wiped out because of the unbelief of its religious leaders. America is heading for a terrible judgment from God.

When you suffer, it is a good idea to remember first and foremost that Rom 8:28 is still in the Bible. God has promised us that all things work TOGETHER for good to them that love God to them who are the called according to his purpose. Listen, the thing you are going through is probably not good by itself. But together with other things, God will make it good. It may take you years to see this or it may not even be evident until eternity. Nevertheless, God's promise is still true!!