

# **“How Could A Good God Make Such A Bad World?” \* July 12, 2009 \* Job 24**



## *I. The Story of Allen Gardiner*

## *II. No Greater Stumbling Block To Faith*

“Is God willing to prevent evil but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then why is there evil?” ~ David Hume

## *III. The Christian Response To These Objections*

- A. God \_\_\_\_\_ our struggle to make sense of the world.
1. What does God allow Job to do at the beginning of chapter 24?
- B. God \_\_\_\_\_ with us that this world is very bad.
1. Why does Job come up with the list of injustices which he mentions in the chapter?
  2. What might God say to us if we accuse him of making an evil world?
  3. If he didn't make it this way, then why is it like this?

- C. God – because He is good – will put a \_\_\_\_\_ to suffering, and even \_\_\_\_\_ it.
1. What does Job call to mind in the end?

2. What four remarkable, unprecedented truths does Christianity teach about God?

- a. That he is \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. That he is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. That he is \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. That he became \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for me.

## *IV. Does the Bible say that “all things are good”? If not, what?*

*How did the story of Allen Gardiner end?*

*How will my story end?*

“You try to make sense of the world in which you live based on a very small and incomplete picture of reality. It is like looking at a parade through the tiny knothole of hurt, pain and self-centeredness.”

God, to Mac (and us) in “The Shack”

## ***“How Could A Good God Make Such A Bad World?” \* July 12, 2009 \* Job 24***



### *I. The Story of Allen Gardiner*

His name was Allen Gardiner. He was a British naval officer who fought with distinction against the Americans in the war of 1812. After his conversion to Christianity, he resolved to enter into missionary service and travel the world again, this time as a soldier for Christ. He worked in southern Africa for four years, but political unrest drove him out. He came next to South America, and labored for five years in Chile, but again encountered opposition from local rulers and was forced to leave. In 1842, he came to the southern tip of South America and set his sights on reaching a tribe of natives known as the Yaghans, whom Charles Darwin had come across in his voyages and described as “the lowest form of humanity” because of their petulant, thieving, and violent behavior.

It took several trips back and forth to England to raise interest, funds and personnel for a mission to this forlorn spot, but in early December 1850, Gardiner and six other companions were let off on a small island off-shore from the mainland to begin their mission, with two smaller 26-foot launches and six months of supplies. Things went badly from the start. They forgot to remove their gunpowder from the larger ship that brought them from England, which meant they would be unable to hunt for food or defend themselves, and it would be months before another supply ship would arrive. Immediately, they ran into conflict with the Yaghan’s who attacked them, stole a portion of their food, and forced them to flee to the mainland island of Tierra del Feugo. There the men waited in barren and desolate conditions, hoping and praying for that supply ship to come. As the brutal South American winter descended on them, one by one, the men began to die of sickness and starvation. Gardiner kept a journal throughout their months of suffering. One entry read, “*Lord at your feet I*

*humbly fall. And I give you all I have, all that your love requires. To lack is best, for all is Yours. Take care of me in this hour of testing. Do not let me have the thoughts of a complainer. Make me feel your power which gives life. And I will learn to praise you while carrying your cross.”* Gardiner was the last to die. Spring came, but it was too late, and Gardiner had not shared the gospel with one Yaghan Indian. The last lines written in his journal on September 6, 1851 were these: “*By God’s grace, this blessed group was able to sing praises to Christ for eternity. I am not hungry or thirsty in spite of five days of not eating. Wonderful grace and love to me a sinner...”*”

### *II. No Greater Stumbling Block To Faith*

“Is God willing to prevent evil but not able? The he is impotent. Is he able but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then why is there evil?” ~ David Hume

### *III. The Christian Response To These Objections*

A. God **understands** our struggle to make sense of the world.

1. What does God allow Job to do at the beginning of chapter 24?

**To vent.**

B. God **agrees** with us that this world is very bad.

1. Why does Job come up with the list of injustices which he mentions in the chapter?

**Job really didn’t suffer any of the injustices and indignities that he describes here. Where did he come up with this list then? I think that what’s going on here is that for the first time in his life, Job is seeing the world as it really is. Up till this point, Job didn’t think the world was all that bad, because his life wasn’t all that bad. And when things are going well for you in life, it’s pretty easy to say to yourself, “You know this is alright. Life is good.” And it’s very easy in times like this to get spiritually apathetic. And make God sit in the back seat. And forget about the hurts and needs of other people.**

2. *What might God say to us if we accuse him of making an evil world?*

**“I didn’t make the world like this,” God would say in reply. If you know your Genesis, how did God make the world? What did he say of it when he was finished? “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” A good God made a very good world. Shadows and shades of that goodness still are all around us each and every day. We who marvel at a sunset flaming or an ocean roaring or a strawberry bursting are taking in some of that goodness. But the other? The ‘groans of the dying rising from the city and the souls of the wounded crying out for help’ – that’s not how he drew it up. That’s not how he wanted it to turn out.**

3. *If he didn’t make it this way, then why is it like this?*

**Job24:13. “There are those who rebel against the light, who do not know its ways or stay in its paths. When daylight is gone, the murderer rises up and kills the poor and needy; in the night he steals forth like a thief. They eye of the adulterer watches for dusk; he think, ‘No eye will see me,’ and he keeps his face concealed. In the dark, men break into houses, but by day they shut themselves in; they want nothing to do with the light. For all of them, deep darkness is their morning; they make friends with the terrors of darkness.”**

Why is the world the way it is? Because ‘there are those who rebel against the light’, and that would be you and me. Maybe you haven’t shown it in the exact ways described here. Maybe you’re not a murderer or an adulterer, but the same rebellion is in each of our hearts. There’s part of us that wants nothing to do with the light of God’s love and holiness. We want it our way. We want to call the shots. God made us a Cadillac with this world, he taught us how to drive, showed us the rules of the road, then handed us the keys and urged us to be responsible, and we thumbed our noses at him and drove the thing off a cliff. And all the badness that we find in the world, all the things that you and I would say are “not good” can be traced back to that moment. “Creation is groaning,” the Bible says because of human sin.

- C. *God – because He is good – will put a **stop** to suffering, and even **redeem** it.*

1. *What does Job call to mind in the end?*

**In verse 18, Job comes temporarily out of his funk and acknowledges that God is still in control, that God is still good. One way God will show this is by his judgment against wicked people. They won’t get away with it in the end.**

2. *What four remarkable, unprecedented truths does Christianity teach about God?*

- a. *That he is **the only God**.*
- b. *That he is **holy** and **good**.*
- c. *That he is **loving**.*
- d. *That he became **human** and **died** for me.*

- IV. *Does the Bible say that “all things are good”? If not, what?*

**The Bible tells us that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Rom.8:28). Not that “all things are good”. That’s not what it says. “In all things God works for the good...”. A God with all goodness, and all power and all eternity at his disposal can take something that is evil, and redeem it, can actually bring goodness out of it.**

- How did the story of Allen Gardiner end?*

**Gardiner as a time-bound, mortal creature failed. But as a redeemed, eternal creature, he succeeded. When their bodies were recovered, and news of their deaths reached England, it shook the whole nation. Unbelievers scoffed at the waste of it all. But Gardiner’s journal became a best-seller, and it stirred the hearts of a new generation who of believers, who took up his mantle and pressed forward. The South American Missionary Society was formed, inspired by Gardiner’s sacrifice. More missionaries came, including Gardiner’s own son. There were additional setbacks, yet another tragedy but within a few short years afterwards, the**

**Yaghan Indian tribe heard the story of the God who loved them enough to come to earth and die for them, and many of them accepted Jesus Christ. A short while later, an Italian ship sank off the Yaghan coastline. The converted natives rushed to their aid and rescued the sailors. The Yaghan's that Charles Darwin had met would have killed the men and pillaged their goods. But not these Christ-followers. When Darwin heard what had happened, he was so amazed that he supported the work of the South American Missionary Society the rest of his life.**

*How will my story end?*

*“You try to make sense of the world in which you live based on a very small and incomplete picture of reality. It is like looking at a parade through the tiny knothole of hurt, pain and self-centeredness.”*

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