

# Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

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In many of the world's churches today, ministers have preached a message that "God only wants good things in your life!" and "God wants to shower you with physical blessings!" These ministers say that if you are not receiving these good blessings in your life, then that means that you must not have enough faith, or that you must have done something wrong, or that you are not pleasing God.

This message is known as the "health and wealth" gospel, which has been popularized in today's narcissistic, shallow, and unrighteous society in which we all live. This "health and wealth" gospel basically not only equates physical blessings with pleasing God, but it actually adopts a direct correlation and link between the number of physical blessings you are receiving and the amount that you are pleasing God. So, if you are rich, healthy, successful, and happy, it is because you are pleasing God. Conversely, if you are poor, sick, unsuccessful, and unhappy, it is because you are not pleasing God. You are doing something wrong. You have sinned some secret sin, and God is punishing you. Something is amiss. Something is wrong with you.

Job was smitten with horrible boils all over his body. He experienced terrible pain and suffering.

**Job 1:1** *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. (KJV)*

**Job 2:7** *So went Satan [ hasatán – the adversary – not his name but who he is – a title ] forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*

*8) And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. (KJV)*

In Job's horrible sickness and agony, his three friends came to console him. But as they continued to talk, each of his friends came to the same conclusion: Job must have sinned a great sin, and he is being punished by God.

Job's three friends were wrong about the source of Job's sufferings. Eliphaz the Temanite told Job that the innocent is not punished.

**Job 4:7** *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?*

*8) Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*

9) *By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed. (KJV)*

Bildad the Shuhite told Job that God makes righteous people prosperous in what they do.

**Job 8:3** *Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?  
4) If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;  
5) If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. (KJV)*

Zophar the Naamathite told Job that he must have sinned to be punished like this and that he should stop whatever sin that he had committed.

**Job 11:13** *If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him;  
14) If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.  
15) For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear: (KJV)*

We will discuss later in the sermon why Job's three friends were completely wrong in their judgment of the source of Job's horrible predicament. But that belief of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (Job's three friends) constitutes a core belief in many Christians today:

*If you obey God and please Him, you will always prosper and be blessed physically, and if you do not obey God and do not please Him, you will never prosper and will never be wealthy and healthy.*

But this belief simply is not true.

Look at Psalm 73, where Asaph saw and was even envious of the prosperity of the wicked.

**Psalm 73:1** *Truly God is good to Israel, to those whose hearts are pure.  
2) But as for me, I almost lost my footing. My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone.  
3) For I envied the proud when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness. (NLT)*

So, the wicked and unrighteous can be very prosperous in this life. Can the opposite be true? Jesus, on the Sermon on the Mount, spoke about this seeming paradox to the multitude which had gathered.

**Matthew 5:44** *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

*45) That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (KJV)*

So, our Heavenly Father sends the same sun each day to shine on the righteous and on the unrighteous, and He sends the rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous alike. Both the righteous and the unrighteous benefit and are blessed with the love of our Heavenly Father.

In Ecclesiastes 8, we read a very important and crucial concept, principle, and truth.

***Ecclesiastes 8:14*** *Sometimes something useless happens on earth. Bad things happen to good people, and good things happen to bad people. I say that this is also useless.*

*15) So I decided it was more important to enjoy life. The best that people can do here on earth is to eat, drink, and enjoy life, because these joys will help them do the hard work God gives them here on earth. (NCB)*

My sermon this afternoon is entitled:

“Why Do Bad Things Happen to the Good People?”,

In it I would like to explore the subject of bad things which continue to happen to the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father even when they are being obedient to Him.

I would like to explore this subject in four points.

The first point concerning why bad things happen to good people is:

**1) We, as called-out ones, do not live charmed lives.**

It is a Biblical principle that *time and chance happen to all of us.*

***Ecclesiastes 9:10*** *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*

*11) I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.*

*12) For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them. (KJV)*

In Luke 13 we read about a tragedy that killed 18 people. This tragedy in the town of Siloam was a major news event that had a lasting effect on the people in the region. Jesus referred to this tragedy to make a point.

**Luke 13:1** *There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.*

2) *And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?*

3) *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

4) *Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?*

5) *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (KJV)*

The falling of the tower in Siloam was apparently an accident. It was not planned. We do not know why it fell, but when it fell, it killed 18 people who were at the wrong place at the wrong time. Time and chance happened to them.

In Matthew 4 let's explore one of temptations of Jesus the Anointed One by our adversary, the devil.

**Matthew 4:5** *Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,*

6) *And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God [again the God of the Jews was Yehovah, so the devil was saying "If you be the Son of Yehovah"], cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. (KJV)*

The devil was quoting from Psalm 91.

**Psalm 91:1** *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

2) *I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*

3) *Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.*

4) *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*

5) *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;*

6) *Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*

7) *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.*

8) *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.*

9) *Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;*

10) *There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*

11) *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

12) *They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

13) *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.*

14) *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. (KJV)*

What was Jesus' response to the devil's temptation? Let's read it in Matthew 4:7.

**Matthew 4:7** *Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (KJV)*

Because the devil used this psalm in tempting Jesus, many believe that Psalm 91 was a prophecy about Jesus. But as we read Psalm 91, we can glean that the psalm concerns all those who trust in our Heavenly Father. In fact, the devil was not tempting Jesus to stub His toe; rather, he was tempting Jesus to fall from the pinnacle of the temple which would have killed Jesus prematurely and thwart the plan of salvation for mankind. In order to prevent Jesus' premature death, our Heavenly Father would have had to intervene and save Him from death through His angels. As Jesus rightly quoted in His counter to the devil, that would have been deliberately putting our Heavenly Father to the test in a frivolous and cavalier way, which is sinful.

Although Jesus knew that He would have divine protection, He did not use that knowledge to put Himself in dangerous situations or act carelessly and frivolously in ways that would endanger His life and health.

We, as called-out ones, should live the same way as Jesus did. We are living our lives in order to draw closer to our Heavenly Father. That in no way means that we will not experience pain, suffering, and hardship in our lives. We simply do not live charmed lives.

The second point concerning why bad things happen to good people is:

## **2) We, as called-out ones, are not promised health and wealth.**

Many people turn to Deuteronomy 28 as proof of the promise of the health and wealth gospel. This chapter is the well-known agreement of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience between Yehovah and the children of Israel before they entered the Promised Land.

**Deuteronomy 28:1** *And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:*

*2) And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.*

*3) Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.*

- 4) *Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.*
- 5) *Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.*
- 6) *Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.*
- 7) *The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.*
- 8) *The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*
- 9) *The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.*
- 10) *And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.*
- 11) *And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee.*
- 12) *The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.*
- 13) *And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: (KJV)*

A key aspect to realize here is that health and wealth were the blessings for obedience under the Covenant with Israel (commonly referred to as the Old Covenant). The Covenant with Israel was physical in nature, not spiritual. This covenant has physical blessings for obedience and physical curses for disobedience.

When Israel and Judah obeyed Yehovah, they had rain in due season, bountiful harvests, protection from their enemies, and peace in their land. Israel was rewarded and blessed for their obedience with prosperity and security. These blessings were a part of the Covenant with Israel. They are not a direct blessing and promise of our Heavenly Father in the Everlasting Covenant (commonly referred to as the New Covenant – the spiritual covenant with our Heavenly Father which brings spiritual salvation). The blessings in Deuteronomy 28 are not part of our covenant with our Heavenly Father as His called-out ones.

Nowhere in the New Testament are our Heavenly Father's called-out ones promised an easy life, a life filled with health, wealth, and prosperity.

This is a key point. We are not promised health and wealth in this life. Our reward is not of this earth.

Let's look at a small portion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew 5:11** *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*

*12) Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (KJV)*

Our reward is in heaven and not on this earth in this physical life. Jesus proclaimed that our reward will come at His return. This is a completely different reward than those listed in Deuteronomy 28.

**Matthew 16:24** *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

*25) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*

*26) For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

*27) For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. (KJV)*

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus discussed our future spiritual reward in contrast to any current physical reward.

**Matthew 6:1** *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*

*2) Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

*3) But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:*

*4) That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

*5) And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

*6) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

Continuing in verse 16)

*16) Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

*17) But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;*

*18) That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. (KJV)*

Again and again, Jesus announced that our reward is a future reward in Heaven, and that our reward is not in this physical life. However, living our Heavenly Father's way of life and obeying His laws do bring blessings to our lives. But we live in an evil world ruled over by the evil one (the devil) and his demons. And consequently, we are not promised and we are not assured health, wealth, and prosperity in this physical life due solely to our obedience to our Heavenly Father and His laws.

The third point concerning why bad things happen to good people is:

**3) We, as called-out ones, are promised hardship and persecution.**

Our adversary, the devil, is after all of us. He wants us to be frustrated. He wants us to be disappointed, depressed, and weary with our lives. He wants us to give up. He wants to destroy us. He hates us with a passion. He wants more than anything else for us to fail.

Notice this warning from the Apostle Peter.

**1 Peter 5:8** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: (KJV)*

Our adversary, the devil, is constantly and continuously attempting to thwart our Heavenly Father's plan of salvation. He wants to devour us all, and he has attempted to do that throughout man's history on this earth.

Let's go back to Job 1, where we started in the sermon. Job was living a righteous life, and he feared God and hated wickedness.

**Job 1:1** *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

*Continuing in verse 6)*

*6) "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.*

*7) And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*

*8) And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? (KJV)*

In the story of Job, Our Heavenly Father allowed the adversary to take away all of Job's wealth, his sons and daughters, and all his possessions, and ultimately, the adversary was allowed to take away his health. He was smitten with painful boils from head to foot. This was a test for Job designed by our Heavenly Father to further refine him and to bring a deeper understanding and relationship with God Our Father. In the end, everything and more was restored back to Job. But for a period of time (which probably



felt like an eternity to him), Job suffered immensely even though God Our Father said that he was righteous.

In Luke 12, where after talking to the multitude, Jesus was talking to His disciples. He proclaimed to them that He was not sending peace on the earth for His followers—the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father.

**Luke 12:49** *I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?*

*50) But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!*

*51) Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:*

*52) For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.*

*53) The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother-in-law. (KJV)*

How many of us today are at odds with our own families and our own friends because of our devotion to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus?

Our predecessors in the faith had very different lives from what we have had in the faith. In Hebrews 11, we are told about the life of suffering that many saints had to endure in the past.

**Hebrews 11:35** *... and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:*

*36) And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:*

*37) They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;*

*38) (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

*39) And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

*40) God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. (KJV)*

These faithful predecessors in the faith did not enjoy health, wealth, and prosperity in their lives. On the contrary, they lived lives of hardship and destitution. The Apostle Paul endured numerous severe trials and afflictions in his life. In 2 Corinthians 11 we read about his trials and afflictions.

**2 Corinthians 11:23** *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

*24) Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*

*25) Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;*

*26) In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;*

*27) In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

*28) Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. (KJV)*

In spite of all these sufferings, deprivations and afflictions, the Apostle Paul was still content. However, Paul apparently had a severe trial of a “thorn in the flesh”. We do not know what it was. The Bible does not tell us. But Paul really desired to be alleviated of this affliction.

**2 Corinthians 12:7** *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

*8) For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

*9) And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (KJV)*

God Our Father did not take away the “thorn in the flesh” of Paul. Instead, Paul was told that he should be content and that the grace of his Heavenly Father was enough.

The Apostle Paul also wrote that we will all suffer.

**Romans 8:16** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

*17) And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

*18) For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (KJV)*

The Apostle Paul wrote that we, as called-out ones and heirs of our Heavenly Father and joint-heirs with Jesus, will suffer with Him so that we will be glorified together.

The Apostle Peter wrote about enduring fiery trials that we encounter in our lives and that we should not be surprised that we have these fiery trials.

**1 Peter 4:12** *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

*13) But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

*14) If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. (KJV)*

The Apostle Paul wrote that we will live troubled and perplexing lives but that our Heavenly Father will make us strong.

**2 Corinthians 4:7** *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God [ho theos – the God – God Our Father ], and not of us.*

*8) We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;*

*9) Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;*

*10) Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. (KJV)*

On the last night of His physical life, Jesus told His disciples that they would experience many trials and sorrows in their lives.

**John 16:32** *But the time is coming – indeed it's here now – when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.*

*33) I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world. (NLT)*

Many members of the early Church were imprisoned and suffered greatly.

**Hebrews 13:1** *Let brotherly love continue.*

*2) Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

*3) Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.*

*4) Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

*5) Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

*6) So that we may boldly say, The Lord [ Kurios without the definite article 'the' – Septuagint Greek for Yehovah – God Our Father ] is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (KJV)*

Although the called-out ones have always endured suffering and hardship, our Heavenly Father is our helper and calms our fears by our trust in Him.

Neither our Heavenly Father nor Jesus have promised us an easy life. Instead, Jesus and the apostles preached that we would live lives of suffering and deprivation. We as called-out ones are promised hardship and persecution.

The fourth point concerning why bad things happen to good people is:

**4) We, as called-out ones, are purified by fire.**

In Malachi 3, we read that our Heavenly Father is like a silversmith purifying His silver.

**Malachi 3:3** *And he [Yehovah] shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. (KJV)*

From an article by Patricia Holbrook entitled "Making Silver: A Reflection on the Heat of Our Trials" appearing in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, she writes:

*One of the earliest methods of refining silver is called "cupellation," and it involves heating crude silver at extremely high temperatures until it is liquefied and adding certain substances such as nitric acid to help absorb the impurities. Once the pollutants are consumed, and the temperature is just right, the liquefied silver should become as clear as a mirror. According to tradition, when the silversmith can see his/her reflection in the metal, it is ready to pour. Both the temperature and the moment to take the metal out of the fire must be precise, or it could destroy the silver. For that reason, the craftsman must sit and carefully manage the process, tempering the metal until it's ready, controlling the heat and timing.*

This process of refining and purifying silver by a silversmith required that the silversmith pay close attention and remained totally focused on the silver in the fire as it is heated up. Once the process is started, the silversmith does not leave the silver in the fire for any reason. He continues to sit by the fire, observing the silver as it is being purified by the high heat of the fire. The silversmith never leaves because, if the silver were unattended even for a little while, the silver could become too hot, resulting in irreparable damage to the silver itself. The silversmith knows that the purification process is complete when he can see his own face reflecting back to him in the silver. Just like a silversmith, our Heavenly Father never leaves us, even for a moment. He is always there as our silversmith, purifying us until He can see His own reflection in us reflecting back to Him.

In John 15, we read about God Our Father purging those whom He loves in order to make them more fruitful. Jesus talked to His disciples about that purging on the last night of His physical life.

**John 15:1** [Jesus said] *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.*

*2) Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. (KJV)*

The Greek verb for *purge* in verse 2 is *kathairo*, Strong's #2508. It means:

“to cleanse, to prune, or to purify and make clean by removing undesirable elements.”

We obtain our English words *cathartic* and *catharsis* from this Greek verb. This cleaning by removing undesirable elements is exactly what the silversmith does when he is purifying his silver. But why is God Our Father purifying us and pruning us? We read an answer in verse 8.

**John 15:8** *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (KJV)*

Our Heavenly Father purifies us so that we bear much fruit so that He Himself is glorified because we reflect Him in our lives. People will see that fruit and will glorify Him.

Our Heavenly Father allows severe trials in our lives even though we are obeying Him, because these trials build character within us, the character that our Heavenly Father wants in His children so that they can be in His Kingdom.

**1Peter 1:6** *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*

*7) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (KJV)*

Our Heavenly Father views our fiery trials and tests in our lives as being very precious to Him, because He knows that the heat from those fiery trials and tests will further refine us and draw us closer and closer to being like Him so that we will be part of the resurrection of the Firstfruits and will enter His spiritual Kingdom.

There seems to be no other way to be refined and to be shaped into our Heavenly Father's image without heat and without fire. The members in Laodicea were not wholeheartedly, humbly, and diligently following Jesus' example and our Heavenly Father's desire for us to be like Him.

**Revelation 3:14** *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;*

*15) I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

*16) So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

*17) Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

*18) I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.*

*19) As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*  
KJV)

Just like fire and heat remove impurities from silver and gold and other metals, fire and heat through trials and sufferings remove spiritual impurities from our spiritual lives so that our Heavenly Father can see Himself when He sees us.

In today's message, we have explored in four points. Why bad events, bad circumstances, undesired and disappointing outcomes, sickness, financial hardship, and suffering are all part of the lives of the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father. Many of our unfortunate and difficult circumstances are the direct result of our own bad decisions and actions. But many times, suffering and hardship come seemingly out of nowhere when we are being obedient to His laws, when we are showing love to others, when we are trying our best to live His way of life. As we have explored today, there are reasons for that which are spiritual in nature.

### **1) We, as called-out ones, do not live charmed lives.**

There is a belief by many in the past that, since we are called by God Our Father, since we are so special to Him, and since He loves us so much, that we somehow live charmed lives and nothing bad will happen to us. This is just not true. Even Jesus Himself did not live a charmed life. At the end of His physical life, he was tortured, whipped beyond recognition, and brutally and painfully crucified on a cross. That is not living a charmed life. Why would we ever believe that we would live charmed lives?

### **2) We, as called-out ones, are not promised health and wealth.**

It is just not true that the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father are promised health and wealth in this life. Our reward is not in this life. Our reward is in the future. Our reward is being brought to us at our resurrection to spiritual life. In the perspective of trillions and trillions of years, an eternity in the future, our present physical lives of roughly 80 years or so are just a blip in the timeline of eternity. God Our Father and Jesus, our Brother, want us to be happy, vibrant, tireless, and joyous, but They want that for us for all eternity in the future.

### **3) We, as called-out ones, are promised hardship and persecution.**

Again, as called-out ones of our Heavenly Father, as followers of the spiritual covenant which gives spiritual salvation, we are promised hardship, suffering, deprivation, and persecution. God Our Father wants His called-out ones to be in His spiritual Kingdom as His children forever. He allows us to undergo hardship and persecution to mould and shape us more and more like Him and His Son.

#### 4) **We, as called-out ones, are purified by fire.**

Just like a master silversmith, Our Heavenly Father is refining us with fire and with high heat to remove the spiritual impurities within us so that when He sees us, He sees Himself reflecting back to Himself. In this refining process, we learn ever more deeply to love Him, to trust Him, to follow Him, to please Him, and to obey Him in all things.

Brethren, are you suffering? Are you in pain? Are you sick? Are you not prosperous in what you are doing? Are you tired and fatigued? Are you bewildered by trying your best to live righteously, but circumstances keep happening that keep you from succeeding with your goals and hopes and dreams?

Do we wonder at times “Why are all these bad things happening to me when I am trying to do good in my life?” Do we ever ask our Heavenly Father “What in the world is going on here? Why is all this happening to me?” Do we find ourselves like Tevye in *The Fiddler on the Roof* who, when he was talking with God, said, “I know we are the chosen people, but once in a while, can’t You choose someone else?”

Again, God Our Father does not promise us health and wealth in this life. There are blessings, many blessings, for following His laws and precepts, but there are evil forces in this world which also affect our lives. The lives of our predecessors in the faith were full of suffering, deprivation, and hardship, all while they were trying to live righteous lives and trying to please our Heavenly Father. Does it come as a surprise then that we, as their descendants in the faith, would also live lives full of suffering, deprivation, and hardship?

So, why do bad things happen to good people? Because our Heavenly Father, in His infinite wisdom and infinite love, uses these bad events and circumstances in our lives to refine us, to purify us, to humble us, and to mould us more and more in His image until that special day when we will be resurrected to spiritual life and will be presented by Jesus to our Heavenly Father where we will forever live with Him.

I end my message today with my favorite verse in the Bible, which summarizes this message. In Romans 8, we read a special promise to the called-out ones. In this verse, the word for “God” in Greek is ho theos – the God – God Our Father.

**Romans 8:28** *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God [ God Our Father ], to them who are the called according to his purpose. (KJV)*

And brethren, that includes you and me.