

Article Title— **“When Bad Things Happen”**Article Category— **Practical Christianity** www.Link1.info

So why do really bad things happen to really good people? Not a new question. Really good people and their friends and families have wrestled with it for centuries. David must certainly have asked it when a very jealous King Saul was chasing him with the intent to kill. Those three Hebrew boys – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego – must have entertained it during the minutes before they got thrown into that super-hot fiery furnace. Daniel must've pondered it, at least, as he was being tossed into the lions' den.

Those tormented ones who're experiencing grief and anguish, today, though, may have difficulty relating to those ancient Bible people—or even to the blood-curdling accounts of human torture in Medieval times. After all, we're in the 21st Century, here! So let's bring the question closer to our time. You're, of course, familiar with some of the horrible dictatorial atrocities that have been reported and are still happening during the first 17 years of this Century. Many others may be able to recall a long, long list of good people who suffered the personal pain and anguish of death during the 20th Century. Here's a quick refresher:

Adolf Hitler was responsible for the killing of roughly six million Jews and ten million Christians. The USSR's Joseph Stalin killed almost 20 million people. Prime Minister Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge killed a full third of Cambodia's people from 1975-1979. Francisco Solano López Carrillo, Paraguay's president from 1862 until he died in 1870, presided over the killing of more than 90% of that country's male population—and more than half of the total population, including members of his own family. Some people might add China's Mao Tse-Tung, Belgium's King Leopold II, the USSR's Vladimir Lenin, China and Taiwan's Chiang Kai-shek, Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un of North Korea, Iraq's Saddam Hussein, Italy's Benito Mussolini, Yugoslavia's President Tito and Uganda's Idi Amin. You may be able to expand that list, but there are two burning questions that demand credible answers. Both are about the victims of those evil tyrants. The second one comes later, but here's the first one:

Question #1—

- (a) Were they good people...most of them, at least?
- (b) What's the likelihood that they also asked, "Why does God allow such bad things to happen to good people?"

Most readers will agree that the majority of those 20th-Century victims were probably good people. Many Christians among them were possibly familiar with the words of 1 Corinthians 10:13 that say, "...God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]." They were likely to have believed that *before* they were tortured and/or killed...but did they believe it *during* their final hours on Earth? Given even a small measure of their anguish, would YOU have believed it?

During times of extreme difficulty, we are to take comfort in the knowledge that there WILL be a way of escape and that we WILL be able to bear it. To bear it or not to bear it, then, becomes a personal choice.

- > To choose to bear it may mean to adopt David's Psalm 27:5 mindset: "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me..."
- > And there's the familiar Psalm 23: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou [art] with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."

Admittedly, though, both time and timing are factors. When really bad things happen they test our resolve. It's easy, in those times, to slip into a "Why, God!? I can't handle this!" pity party. It can help to remember that "**There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.**" —Paul, at 1 Corinthians 10:13a.

At John 17:15 are these words: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Jesus was clearly aware that life in this world is TOUGH (His words about that at John 16:33 are quoted,



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Yes, I should've checked it out to make sure it was true.

So why didn't I do that? Well, maybe I didn't do that for the same reason that you haven't really checked out what your denomination teaches.

"In religion and politics, people's beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second hand, and without examination." —Samuel Clemens



for maximum comprehension

below). He didn't ask that we be shielded from all the hard knocks, but that we would choose our after-the-knock-down mindsets wisely; i.e.: avoid the evil "God lied about giving us stuff we can't handle" mindset.

Question #2—

- (a) Were some of those 20th-Century tyrants' victims convinced that nothing could ever be worse? Were the Christians among them thinking they were experiencing The Great Tribulation—and that the dictatorial tyrant *du jour* was the Anti-Christ they had heard and/or read about?
- (b) How do you think they might respond to the notion that there will be a truly *extra special* group of 21st-Century American super Christians who'll get raptured out'a here before anything bad like that starts happening to them? Could they have cited scriptural support for such a notion. Can you?

I'll leave those questions with you. Be aware, though, that I have submitted them to quite a large number of career professional Christians, none of whom have been able to cite credible scriptural support for the pre-tribulation escape fable.

Here are some words to examine and contemplate while you're waiting for that:

- > "...when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended." —Jesus, at Mark 4:16,17 (... a part of His explanation of the parable of the sower to his closest disciples.)
- > "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." —Paul, at 2 Timothy 2:3
- > "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions..." —Paul, at 2 Timothy 4:5
- > "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." —James 5:11
- > "For this [is] thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory [is it], if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer [for it], ye take it patiently, this [is] acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." —1 Peter 2:19–21
- > "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." —Jesus, at Matthew 24:13 (also at Mark 13:13)
- > "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." —Revelation 2:10
- > "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." —Jesus, at John 16:33
- > "In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on." —Robert Frost


Oh! I almost forgot to include these important refreshers: David escaped Saul's aggression, but he still had to endure it. Daniel escaped the lions' den, but he still had to endure it. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego escaped that fiery furnace, but they still had to endure it.

God's M.O. hasn't changed: Those who're to be saved will escape from The Great Tribulation...after having endured it to the end. Otherwise, God will have dealt unjustly with all those other good people that are the focus of this article.

—T. C. Newsome 

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