

## **John 9: Who Sinned?** **05-16-16**

In John 9 Jesus and His disciples come across a blind man. The disciples ask Jesus whether this man or his parents had sinned to cause his blindness. It is not uncommon that we feel that suffering is always a direct punishment for sin. Here and later in John 11 it seems that even Jesus' disciples thought that bad things happen because God wants it to happen. In Job, Job's friends constantly accuse him of having sinned because of the difficulties he experienced.

However, we should always base our understanding on what we KNOW rather than what we FEEL. When it comes to suffering, we know:

1. God does not punish children for their fathers (Ezekiel 18)
2. The punishment of sin is eternal damnation, NOT events in this life (Romans 6:23)
3. Consequences of sin are not punishments (2 Samuel 12:13-14)
4. Not every bad thing is bad (Genesis 50:20)

Even knowing these things to be true, men still debate what is to many the most difficult question of all: how is it that God, who is good, permits evil to occur, or permits evil men to act? Many see God not acting against men who seek to create or act with evil a sign that either God is not good or not real. However, there is a very clear answer to this.

1. God permits evil men to act because of free will
  - God desires all men to be saved - 2 Peter 3:3-9
  - Evil is the result of mankind – James 1:13-15
  - God has only one recourse to evil – Genesis 6:5-8
  - Even the righteous sometimes commit evil; God does not desire to destroy us
2. God permits evil things to happen because the righteous need justification
  - Job was tested by evil – Job 1:8-12
  - Jesus was tested by evil – Matthew 4
  - All men must be tested – 1 Peter 1:6-9

We understand that in John 9 Jesus' disciples had a carnal worldview at that moment. They were expressing their view that bad things happen to bad people, and that God punishes men here and now. However, the Spiritual truth is that things happen for reasons we cannot fathom, and that by faith we perceive that better things come.