



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

"A Biblical answer to a blasphemous question"



In a newspaper report, published on Monday 12th August, on the events in Soham, Cambridgeshire, an account of a special service, conducted by Rev. Tim Alban Jones the previous day, was given. The service was organised in response to the abduction of the two little girls, Holly and Jessica, the previous weekend. The newspaper reported Rev. Alban Jones as saying, during the course of his sermon: "How could God allow something like this to happen?" There was no indication of the response, if

any, given to the question by the minister.

Such a question needs to be answered. The spirit of this question — that of accusing God of acquiescence in the crimes that have been committed against the two little girls — lies at the heart of the controversy between sinful man and holy God. Sinful man never misses an opportunity to deride and mock God and challenge His wisdom and love.

This question is similar to that posed, following the attack upon New York, back in September last year. It was asked then by God's detractors: "Where was God on September 11th?"

It is a favourite tactic of man to seek to blame God for the disasters that accompany man's defiance of God's law. Rebellious man seeks to make God the author of man's miseries. But such an assertion is very wrong.

In Louis Berkhof's Systematic Theology, the following statement is found: "In Scripture the moral evil that is in the world stands out clearly as sin, that is, as transgression of the law of God. Man ever appears in it as a transgressor by nature, and the question naturally arises. How did he acquire that nature? What does the Bible reveal on that point? God cannot be regarded as its author. God's eternal decree certainly rendered the entrance of sin into the world certain, but this may not be interpreted so as to make God the cause of sin in the sense of being its responsible author. This idea is clearly excluded by Scripture. 'Far be it from God, that He should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that He should commit iniquity,' Job 34:10. He is the holy God, Isaiah 6:3, and there's absolutely no unrighteousness in Him, Dent. 32:4; Ps. 92:15. He cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man, James. 1:13. When He created man, He created Him good and in His image. He positively hates sin, Deuteronomy 25:16; Ps. 5:4, 11:5; Zechariah 8:17; Luke 16:15, and made provision in Christ for man's deliverance from sin. In the light of all this it would be blasphemous to speak of God as the author of sin. And for that reason all those deterministic views which represent sin as a necessity inherent in the very nature of things should be rejected. They by implication make God the author of sin, and are contrary, not only to Scripture, but also to the voice of conscience, which testifies to the responsibility of man." "Man in the state of sin," Page 220.

It is true to say that questions similar to that posed by God's enemies have been asked on occasions by God's people. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? Psalm 42:9. Why hast thou then



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? Psalm 80:12. Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul lothed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? we looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble! Jeremiah 14:19. However, such questions are but a seeking for information and a lifting of the perplexity that has descended upon a troubled believer in the midst of life's trials. There is not in these questions the bold and brasen challenging and accusing of God that is embodied in the question that is the subject of our consideration. When believers ask such a question, they humbly and believingly submit to the answer God gives.

I wish to address the accusation implicit in the question before us. God is not to be considered guilty of complicity in the wickedness that has taken place in Soham and that for the following reasons.

I. THE LORD HAS FAITHFULLY WARNED MEN OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

Nothing demonstrates this better than the words of the prophet Jeremiah in chapter 11:6-8 of his prophecy. *Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them. For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice. Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not.* This sets forth God's unceasingly earnest witness to men of the folly of sin. These words, repeated in essence to the nations of men throughout the ages, show that man is the author of his own troubles.

1. The Word of God clearly tells us what sin is. *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law,* 1 John 3:4. Sin occurs when there is a contempt for God's law. That is the attitude which prevails in today's society toward God and His law. God's Word is considered an out-dated book of myths and fairy tales to be cast away. Man happily transgresses God's law and so sins against Him.

2. The Word of God tells us what the consequences are of rejecting God's law. *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,* Romans 6:23. Death in every form follows in the wake of sin. When God's blessing is taken away, spiritual death invades. At present there is great concern about a cloud of pollution over Asia. Scientists are blaming it for an interruption to growth and the deteriorating weather in that area. It appears the cloud is blocking out the sunshine with disastrous results. Scientists say the reduction in solar energy reaching the earth's surface means less oceanic evaporation of the moisture which controls summer rainfall in Asia. They estimate that the haze could be reducing India's winter rice harvest by up to 10%. And they fear 'several hundreds of thousands' of premature deaths from haze-related respiratory diseases. Sin comes between us and God and cuts us off from the sunshine of His blessing. *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear,* Isaiah 59:2.

3. The experiences of former generations testify to the truth of the Word of God. The history books written by men confirm the consequences of defying God's Word. The



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

account of the old world and its ruin is not only found in the Bible, Genesis 6, but also it is written in the world-wide fossil records of living creatures destroyed in that cataclysm. Sodom and Gommorah are two cities which also provide testimony of the destruction that sin brings, Gen 19. And what of Jerusalem? Today, there is little or nothing remaining of the city in which the Saviour preached. He warned that such destruction would be the consequences of man's rejection of Him. *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation,* Luke 19:41-44. Sin works man's ruin and God has faithfully warned us of this.

4. Mankind has yet to taste the full consequences of defying God. The full price of man's rebellion awaits the transgressor in eternity. *God . . . hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead,* Acts 17:31. *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God . . . In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel,* Romans 2:5; 16. The judgments of the flood in the days of Noah, the destruction of Sodom and later that of Jerusalem, along with many other such events were but tokens of the great judgment that awaits sinners in eternity. That judgment is recorded in the Book of the Revelation, 20:11-15. *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

II. IN MERCY GOD HAS PROVIDED SALVATION FOR SINNERS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST HIS SON.

Far from desiring the hurt of sinners, God has manifested love toward sinful man.

1. God delights not in the damnation of sinners. *Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye,* Ezekiel 18:31-32.

2. God has patiently borne with man's rebelliousness. *The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression,* Numbers 14:18. *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* Romans 2:4. God's patient bearing with the defiance of mankind testifies to His love and mercy toward sinners.



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

3. In love He provided salvation for sinners. *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, Romans 5:8.* God put His love on show at Calvary. The invitation to sinners in the gospel is a broad invitation to come and partake of salvation. *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, Acts 2:21.* Is there a word broader in intent in the English language than whosoever?

There has been the widest distribution of this broad invitation. *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned, Mark 16: 15-16.* Linked to this broad invitation, widely proclaimed, is linked the striving of the Holy Spirit with sinners. He is sent to labour alongside the messengers of the gospel to convict and convince sinners of their error and to produce faith and repentance.

III. MAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TRAGEDIES THAT RESULT FROM HIS SINS.

In the case of the abduction and murder of little Holly and Jessica the guilty parties are:

1. The wicked people who committed the crime. At present two people are being questioned about the abduction and murders. I am sure that shortly the matter will be resolved by the due process of the law and the guilty will be sentenced.

2. The governments that have removed the legislative restraints upon that forbidden by God are also guilty. Recent governments, none worse than our present government, have amended, revised or completely removed laws on the statute book which were designed to protect children from perverts. In recent years, there has been an alarming increase in the attacks upon children by paedophiles. This has been the result of the liberalising of the laws on public morality.

3. The society which desired such a removal of restraints. The people have gone along with the demands of a minority. They refused to support those who warned of the consequences of the lowering of the standards of public decency. Society must now suffer the outcome.

4. The churches which encouraged both society and governments on this road. The churches, above all, must bear the blame for the crime committed against these two little girls and the thousands of others who have suffered as a result of the harvest of preaching another gospel.

Many years ago, I heard the options facing the United Kingdom summed up in this fashion. We had a choice. It was "back to the Bible or back to the jungle." The ecumenical and liberal churches urged upon the nation a ceasing from the "old paths" of Puritan theology. Instead, we were urged to embrace the modern notions of union with Rome and the humanistic views of the so-called scholars. The time-honoured creeds and confessions of the churches of the Reformation were cast aside and the fluid fancies of the glib talking theological salesmen who masquerade as God's servants were adopted instead.

The trend was not really that new. Jeremiah encountered something akin to what our nation has undergone. A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

so: and what will ye do in the end thereof? Jeremiah 5: 30-31. Yes indeed. What indeed will be the end of the mad plunging downward by today's society under the leadership of deceitful politicians and deluded preachers? Paul answers that question. *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. . . . "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived,* 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13.

There are more Sohams to suffer the violation that has recently taken place. There are more little Hollys and Jessicas to suffer the consequences of man's depravity, for today's generation has refused to hearken to the warnings of God's Word and will suffer the bitter harvest in consequence.

May God melt hearts and bring every true believer low before Him in prayer for the nation at this time.

May the Lord draw near and bless and comfort the sorrowing families of the two little girls.