

Introduction:

1. One of the most difficult things for the human mind to comprehend has to do with the actions of other people. We see someone do something, and we ask “Why? Why did he do that?”
  - a. That is especially true when some horrible act is committed. We see something that seems senseless and we try to make some sense of it. (It is a mistake to even try.)
  - b. We saw something like that a few days ago when a young man recklessly fired weapons into a theater audience—killing and maiming large numbers. The whole world now asks, “Why?”
  - c. You don’t have to look at the news to see bad things happen. In our Bible reading in Judges we have seen the mass murder of 70 people in one family, Judges 9:4b-5. “Why?”
2. The “why” questions are almost endless. Some of those questions are answered in the Scriptures.

The Lesson:

**I. Why does God allow bad things?**

- A. Every time tragedy of any kind strikes men ask this question.
  1. It may be a natural disaster like Katrina, Rita or Ike.
    - a. The answer to that is that we live in a corrupted world where dangers abound. Powerful forces of planet earth can be terribly destructive. That is the nature of our world.
    - b. Could God prevent all such disasters? He could and He will. But you are either talking about the Garden of Eden or heaven—not this present world.
    - c. Our present world was changed when sin entered. Life became hard, Genesis 3:17-19. Paradise was lost by the actions of Adam and Eve. Paradise is no longer here.
  2. The bigger question is about acts of men, not nature: the 9/11/2001 terrorist attack; the 2009 Fort Hood shooting, the 32 killed at Virginia Tech in 2007; the carnage in Colorado.
- B. Why does God allow such tragedies to happen? Couldn’t He stop them?
  1. Of course He could stop men from doing evil. But think it through; what would that mean?
    - a. Have you ever done anything evil? Stolen? Lied? Harmed someone? “But that’s not the same as mass murder.” Of course not, but do you want God to draw a line and allow you to do evil only up to a point, and then stop you? How would He stop you? Would He just kill you and send you to hell before you could do the awful deed?
    - b. The problem is related to free will. Man either has free will or he doesn’t. If man has free will, then it is absolute. He can do wonderfully kind acts, or commit atrocities. Do you want God to turn off your free will and turn you into a robot? Do you want God to send *you* to hell before you commit an evil deed? We need to think it through!
  2. God allows people to do bad things because that comes with free will. We are like Adam, created with free choice to do good or evil, Genesis 2:15-17.
- C. Abimelech abused his free will to commit mass murder, Judges 9:5.

## II. Why do people do bad things?

- A. The question now is not about free will; this question is about motive.
1. Some people, instead of looking for motive, look for blame.
    - a. Some suggest that parents are to blame; that it can be traced to a bad childhood. Yet, millions of kids have bad childhoods and harm no one.
    - b. Others say, "America is to blame. We are a sick nation." But these things can happen anywhere. Mass murders are found in peaceful nations like Norway and Sweden.
    - c. Still others say, "Guns are at fault." But millions of gun owners kill no one! A European newscast asked, "Why do Americans even have guns." Because we are free people! When guns are not available, murderers still find other ways to kill and maim.
  2. But, back to motives: why do people do bad things? A number of things are suggested.
    - a. One attorney said, "It is insanity. Any jury would find the Colorado shooter not guilty."
    - b. Others suggest: desire for notoriety and fame; resentment of society.
- B. The Bible has a more basic answer that is not heard on the news: an unrestrained evil heart!
1. It isn't just that men might have evil hearts, but that they cultivate an evil heart. They plan and design evil things and act without restraint, [Genesis 6:5; 8:21](#); [Psalm 140:1-2a](#); [Proverbs 6:12-14, 18](#); [Ecclesiastes 8:11](#); [Matthew 12:35; 15:19](#).
  2. Every heart has the potential to do truly evil things. Yet we restrain ourselves! But when restraint is cast away, boundless evil can follow, [Exodus 32:25](#); [Psalm 119:101](#); [Proverbs 29:18](#); [Jeremiah 14:10](#); [Hosea 4:1-2](#).
  3. Abimelech was a man who broke all restraint.
    - a. He was Gideon's son by a concubine, [Judges 8:29-31](#). That meant no inheritance!
    - b. His name Abimelech means "my father a king." Was this at the insistence of his mother? His father Gideon had refused to be a king, [Judges 8:22-23](#).
    - c. What Gideon would not have, Abimelech would take by evil means, [Judges 9:1-6](#). This is an unrestrained evil heart, lusting for power. The less one restrains himself, the more inclined his heart is to do evil. The reverse is also true. Practice restraint!
- C. We may not always know what stirs men to do evil, but there is always an unrestrained heart.

## III. What does all this mean to us?

- A. Our lives could end in a moment—an unexpected moment. Always be ready, [Hebrews 9:27](#).
- B. We must restrain our hearts from evil. Don't even begin to walk that path, [Proverbs 4:14-15](#).
- C. Do what is right and know that there is a great day of justice coming, [Ecclesiastes 12:13-14](#).
- D. Trust God to deal with all evil doers. Nobody really gets away with anything, [Judges 9:53-56](#). There is yet the judgment to come for Abimelech and for all evil doers. [2 Corinthians 5:10](#).

### Conclusion:

1. We live in readiness for the Judgment Day! Just as death can come at any time, so the judgment.
2. For the righteous, that day will be one of great awesome glory!