

Who Is To Blame?

'Adam said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me – she gave me the fruit and I ate." The Lord said, "What have you done?" Eve replied, "The snake deceived me and I ate'." (Genesis 3:12 & 13).

We find in this age of constant litigation, people almost always want to blame somebody else for every event that happens, but few people will take responsibility for their own actions. The 'blame game' began with Adam. Adam blamed God for giving him Eve, then he blamed Eve for giving him the fruit. Eve blamed the devil for deceiving her. Neither of them said, "Yes Lord. I disobeyed You." That attitude prevails to this day. When something unforeseen happens, we need to look at three possibilities for the cause of the event. It could be something the Lord is working out in our lives; it could be an attack of the enemy for us to overcome; or it could be caused by our own actions. The Lord is in complete control of the whole universe and holds everything together (Colossians 1:17), and He does not hesitate to take full responsibility for what happens when it is His doing. In the same way, if an event occurs because of our own doing, we must also take full responsibility. That is what repentance is all about. Repentance is our admission of wrongdoing, and God expects us to take responsibility for it.

If our hardship is caused by the enemy, we need to know that nothing happens without God's permission. Look at the following three examples. Believers often blame the devil for Job's suffering, but in the end, the Lord took full responsibility for it all. 'Job's family comforted him over all the calamities the Lord had brought upon him' (Job 42:11). Because of the sin in Sodom and Gomorrah that come to the attention of the Lord, He destroyed those cities in judgement and He did not hesitate to say beforehand what His intentions were, and He explained why. After the cities were destroyed, the Lord confirmed that He had destroyed Sodom, Gomorrah, the surrounding cities, every person and everything that grew on the ground (Genesis 18:16 to 19:29). What happened to Jesus on the cross was for the benefit of all mankind, and some people blame the Romans, some blame the Jews, others blame both, but it is the Lord Who takes responsibility for it. 'It pleased the Lord to bruise Him and crush Him; it was the will of the Lord to make Him sick' (Isaiah 53:10).

When the Lord does something calamitous, it is always for a divine purpose and He always takes full responsibility for His actions. When we do something that causes a calamity, we need to think twice before blaming God. We cannot blame God for the foolish actions of mankind and there is no reason why He should take responsibility for our stupidity. For example, if we lose our job because we abused our employer, that would be our own fault. Once we have repented of our foolishness, we can ask the Lord to help us find new employment, and hopefully we learnt a lesson. If we lose our job suddenly and we know we are not in the wrong, we can rightfully ask God what His plans are because we need to be employed. It may be that God wants us to work elsewhere, so we can trust Him to get us another, better job. What is definitely wrong, is to blame God when a situation is clearly our own fault. That would be berating the Lord for a situation that is a result of our own actions.

Some examples of people blaming others for their own foolishness are as follows. Not long ago a man sat in a public bar until he was hopelessly drunk. When the publican refused to serve him any more liquor, the man became aggressive, but the publican stood his ground and refused to serve the man. The man was already very drunk. He staggered out of the public bar into the street and was struck by a car. He was not badly injured, but he tried unsuccessfully to sue the publican for making him drunk. Another case was when a young man high on drugs, jumped headfirst into a shallow marina canal. He hit the bottom, broke his neck and was hospitalised. He knew the canal was shallow. The owners of a house situated next to the saltwater canal, had signs erected warning people not to jump into it. The young man should not have been at the house in the first place because the owners were away on holiday and he had broken in, but he then tried unsuccessfully to sue the owners of the house for the accident. Neither of these men were Christians. There are those who blame God for the deaths of some people when the cause of death is their own fault. People who blame God in those

circumstances, are trying to place the sins of the foolish on God's shoulders. That shows a complete lack of rational and logical thought. Blaming God or anyone else when a foolish person suffers the consequences of their own actions, is illogical. If a heavy drug user overdoses themselves, or a hoon drives at 100 kilometres an hour faster than the legal speed limit, or if a person drinks alcohol and drives, or a person smokes heavily for years, and then those people become ill, are injured or die as a result of their own doing, it is nonsensical to then feel angry at God. Logically speaking, if nobody ever smoked, no one would die from smoking-related diseases ... if nobody took illegal drugs, no one would die from an illegal drug overdose ... if all drivers would drive carefully according to the conditions, kept to the speed limit, never drank alcohol or took drugs before driving, our road toll would be almost nil. The people who do these things put themselves and others around them at risk, so to blame God for the deaths of people who behave in this manner, is illogical and is blasphemy. That is what Adam did – he blamed God then Eve for his own disobedience.

The Bible says: 'The serpent was more subtle and cunning than any creature of the field which the Lord God had made. The serpent said to the woman, "Can it really be that God has said you shall not eat from every tree of the garden?" Eve said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees of the garden except the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden. God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die." But the serpent said to Eve, "You shall not surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing the difference between good and evil." Then when Eve saw that the tree was good for food and that it was delightful to look at, and a tree to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate and she gave some to Adam and he ate, then the eyes of both of them were opened' (Genesis 3:1 to 7). The serpent would have been an incarnation of the devil but that didn't bother Eve and she showed no fear. Fear is part of the curse and only came as a result of sin. Adam said, "I heard the sound of You (God) walking in the garden and I was afraid" (Genesis 3:10). The devil in the guise of a serpent had one objective; to make Adam and Eve doubt the truth of God's spoken word, which would result in disobedience, thus removing them from the blessing of God; replacing the blessing with a curse. Once he succeeded in doing that, all mankind was lost. Eve was deceived, but Adam disobeyed. 'It was not Adam who was deceived, but Eve who was deceived and they fell into disobedience' (1 Timothy 2:14).

After this came the 'blame game'. Adam blamed God for giving him Eve, then he blamed Eve for giving him the fruit. God asked, "Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Adam replied, "The woman whom You gave to be with me – she gave me the fruit and I ate." Then Eve blamed the serpent. "The serpent deceived me and I ate" (Genesis 3:11 to 13). Many Christians today blame the devil for their own sin. Adam and Eve did that too. Neither wanted to take responsibility for their actions. Would things have been different if Adam and Eve fell on their knees in humility before the Lord and immediately repented instead of blaming God and each other? God is a merciful God, and when people repent He will relent. We can see that in the Book of Jonah. When Nineveh repented, God relented. He is merciful, and if Adam and Eve had behaved differently and repented, the outcome would surely have been different. It is not recorded in the scriptures that Adam and Eve ever repented. How different this world would be if they had. When Jesus came, He took all the sins that Adam and Eve brought on mankind. Jesus willingly took all of the blame for what Adam and Eve did. All we need to do is accept His sacrifice.

We need to reverse the process of Eve's actions. Adam and Eve disobeyed God's commandment, they did not trust the Word of God and they did not believe in the promises of God – all the areas where Adam and Eve failed were reversed by Abraham who is our father in the faith and was a wonderful role model for us to look up to. Abraham's wife Sarah, on the other hand, acted like Eve. Sarah told Abraham to produce a child with Hagar. Once Hagar was pregnant with Ishmael, Sarah was annoyed and said to Abraham, "This wrong is all your fault. I gave my maid to you and now that she is pregnant she despises me!" (Genesis 16:5). Sarah blamed Abraham and Hagar. If we put ourselves in Hagar's situation for a moment, we can see the poor girl had no choice for she was a slave. She had to submit to having sex with Abraham and have his child, so it is no surprise she resented Sarah who came up with the idea. Again, we see that a woman (Sarah) beguiled a

man (Abraham), who fell for it then messed things up. Abraham tried to 'help' God bring about the promise of a son, by producing Ishmael.

If God gives us a warning and we do not listen to it, but proceed with our own agenda and we suffer the consequences, then we have no right to blame God. In His graciousness, He would forgive us and cover our sin, just like He graciously covered Adam and Eve's nakedness. If we listen and obey we will not fall, for He is able to keep us from falling (Jude 1:24). If we ignore the written warnings the Lord has carefully outlined in the Bible and we fall, then we must take full responsibility for our own actions, repent and change our direction. The consequences of our own actions may be dire, but we still cannot blame God. If God makes a promise as clearly as He did to Abraham, then God will keep that promise and we cannot 'help' God. The Lord will fulfil that promise when the time is right, in His own way. If we try to run ahead of God's time, we will mess things up and when that happens we cannot then blame God. He is not to blame for our foolishness. The Bible says, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding' (Proverbs 3:5).

Amen and God bless you.

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