

Why God Allows Trouble in the Church and How to Deal With It

- I. God is sovereign and is in control of all things (**Dan 4:35; Isa 46:10**).
 1. God knows all things (**Psa 147:5; Joh 21:17**), so therefore nothing happens without God permitting it to happen.
 2. If something happens, God allowed it.
 3. If trouble in the church happens, God allowed it.
 4. Though God permits it, He does not cause people to do the sinful things that cause trouble in church (**Jer 7:31**).

- II. God allows trouble to arise in true churches.
 1. Trouble in a church doesn't mean it's not a true church.
 - A. In fact, it's evidence that it is.
 - B. Satan is going to attack true churches.
 2. True churches with immature members sometimes develop strife in them (**1Co 3:1-3**).
 3. True churches sometimes have false doctrine in them, such as:
 - A. another gospel of works salvation (**Gal 1:6-7; Gal 5:1-4**).
 - B. the doctrine of Balaam (**Rev 2:14**).
 - C. the doctrine of the Nicolaitans which Jesus hates (**Rev 2:15**).
 4. True churches sometimes have heresies arise in them (**1Co 11:19**).
 - A. Hymenaeus and Alexander were delivered unto Satan for their blasphemous heresy that had shipwrecked their faith (**1Ti 1:19-20**).
 - B. Hymenaeus and Philetus were essentially preterists who taught that the resurrection was past already in the first century and had overcome the faith of some in the church (**2Ti 2:17-18**).
 - C. The church in Corinth had heretics in it that denied the bodily resurrection of the saints (**1Co 15:12**).
 - D. Heresies often arise *from within* the church (**Act 20:28-30**).
 5. God allows lying spirits to put lying words in the mouths of false prophets to deceive people who want to believe a lie or do something foolish.
 - A. The Lord did this to king Ahab when he wanted to go to war with Ramoth-gilead.
 - B. Ahab had already determined to go to war against Ramoth-gilead (**2Ch 18:3**).
 - C. In order to appease king Jehoshaphat, Ahab went to the prophets to get a rubberstamp on what he already decided to do (**2Ch 18:4-5, 11**).
 - D. Ahab didn't want to hear contrary advice (**2Ch 18:12-17**).
 - E. Micaiah revealed to Ahab why all the prophets prophesied that he should go up against Ramoth-gilead -- because God had *permitted* a spirit to be a lying spirit in the mouth of the false prophets to entice Ahab (**2Ch 18:18-22**).

- III. Why does trouble arise in a church? Some possible causes are:
 1. Pride (**Pro 13:10; Pro 28:25; 1Ti 6:3-5; 3Jo 1:9-10**)
 2. Envy (**Pro 27:4; Mar 15:10; Act 7:9; Act 13:45**)
 3. Bitterness and resentment (**Heb 12:14-15**)
 - A. Bitterness needs to be cut off at the root before it springs up.
 - B. If bitterness is allowed to fester, many will be defiled (**1Co 5:6**).

- C. Bitterness will cause the heart to turn away from God and to not believe His word which promises that punishment will come (**Deu 29:18-20**).
- 4. Backbiting, whispering, talebearing (**Psa 41:7; Pro 16:28; Pro 18:8; Pro 20:19; Pro 26:20 2Co 12:20**)
- 5. Desiring to be the pastor when one isn't called to be (**1Ti 1:6-7**).
- 6. Excess time on one's hands (**1Ti 5:13; 2Th 3:11**)
 - A. Idle hands are the devil's workshop.
 - B. Those with not enough to do often find themselves in trouble.

IV. Heresy in the church

1. Why God allows heresy in a church.
 - A. Heresies will reveal which Christians in the church are approved of God and which are not (**1Co 11:19**).
 - B. Those who have studied will show themselves *approved* when a heresy is being spread in the church (**2Ti 2:15**).
 - i. The heart of the righteous will study to be prepared to answer the heretic (**Pro 15:28**).
 - ii. Pastors and church members that have been meditating in the word of God will show themselves to be profitable to others when a doctrinal crisis arises (**1Ti 4:15**).
 - iii. They will not be carried away with every wind of doctrine like the rest (**Eph 4:14**).
 - iv. Those who have not studied sufficiently and are not sound in God's statutes will be ashamed when they get swept away in a heresy (**Psa 119:80**).
 - C. God's ministers show themselves *approved* when they endure a heretic with patience (**2Co 6:4**).
 - D. God may use a heretic to test young Christians who have grown up in the church and who have not yet had to experience the high cost of discipleship.
 - E. They will have to choose between the heretic and God's truth in the scriptures.
2. Heresy will not spread in the church if Christians obey God's commandments regarding it, which are:
 - A. If you come up with a novel doctrinal idea, get counsel from the pastor quickly before you fully convince yourself of it and end up destroying yourself and others (**Pro 18:17; Pro 12:15; Pro 11:14; Pro 24:6; Pro 14:12 Pro 21:2**).
 - B. Don't listen to heresy (**Pro 14:7; Pro 19:27; Pro 17:4; 2Jo 1:10**).
 - C. Don't repeat it to others.
 - D. Don't continue a dialog with him if he has rejected the truth (**Pro 23:9; Pro 29:9; Job 32:1**).
 - E. Rebuke and shun it (**2Ti 2:16-18; Psa 101:3**).
 - F. Shun v. - 1. *trans.* To abhor, detest, loathe. (last usage in 1250AD) 2. a. To seek safety by concealment or flight from (an enemy, his pursuit, etc.). *Obs.* 3. To avoid (in mod. prose use always to avoid persistently or habitually) from repugnance, fear, or caution; to keep away from (a person or his society, a place, etc.); to avoid encountering or exposing oneself to (dangers, conditions), using or having to do with (a thing); to eschew, abstain carefully from (an action, an indulgence, etc.). a. with obj. a person, his company, etc.

- G. Tell the heretic to talk to the pastor about it because the pastor is ultimately who the heretic has a problem with (**Pro 25:9**).
- H. Tell the pastor about it because he is the overseer who is tasked with watching over the church (**Heb 13:17**).
 - i. A good pastor will take heed unto the doctrine to save the church from heretics (**1Ti 4:16; Pro 4:13**).
 - ii. The pastor is responsible for convincing the gainsayers with sound doctrine (**Tit 1:9**).
 - a. Convince v. - 1. To overcome, conquer, vanquish; *fig.* to overpower.
 - b. The pastor's defense of the truth should be irresistible by the enemies of the truth (**Act 6:10**).
 - c. He should confound the heretics (**Act 9:22**).
 - d. He can only do so by God's help and grace (**Isa 54:17**).
 - iii. The pastor must shut their mouths to prevent them from subverting whole houses (**Tit 1:10-11**).
 - a. Jesus Christ put the enemies of truth to silence with the scriptures (**Mat 22:29-34; Mat 22:41-46**).
 - b. Jesus will give his ministers a mouth and wisdom that their adversaries will not be able to gainsay or resist (**Luk 21:15**).
 - iv. The pastor must admonish the heretic twice and then reject him (**Tit 3:10-11**) and call for his exclusion from the church (**Gal 5:19-21**).
- 3. Heresy must never be listened to or believed, even if it comes from one's own family.
 - A. Jesus Christ and His truth must be chosen above one's own parents, siblings, or children (**Mat 10:34-39**).
 - i. Those who will not do so are not worthy of Jesus Christ (**Mat 10:37**).
 - ii. Those that choose the truth of the gospel over family will be blessed in this life and in the next (**Mar 10:29-30**).
 - B. In the Old Testament, family members were to be the first to stone their family member who went after other gods (**Deu 13:6-11**).
 - C. The tribe of Levi chose God over father, mother, and brethren and killed them for their idolatry and were blessed for it (**Exo 32:26-28 c/w Deu 33:8-11**).
 - D. King Asa removed his own mother from being queen because of her idolatry (**1Ki 15:13**).
 - E. Gideon obeyed God and destroyed his own father's altar of Baal, cut down his grove, and offered his bullock on the altar that Gideon built (**Jdg 6:25-27**).
 - F. Eli was cursed for honoring his sons over God and God killed his sons for it (**1Sa 2:29-35**).
 - G. Moses chose to suffer affliction with God's people over staying with his own family (**Heb 11:24-26**).

V. Why does God allow the church to experience affliction and adversity?

- 1. God permits Satan to tempt and torment us, but He only allows Him to go so far.
 - A. God permitted Satan to take all of Job's possessions, but He restrained him from touching Job (**Job 1:9-12**).
 - B. God once again allowed Satan to torment Job, but this time only his body; He restrained him from killing him (**Job 2:4-6**).

- C. God allowed Job to be afflicted for his benefit and blessed him in the end (**Job 42:12**).
2. God allowed Israel to experience trials to prove them (**Deu 8:2-3**) and ultimately to do them good in the end (**Deu 8:16**).
 3. Tribulation worketh patience which worketh experience which worketh hope (**Rom 5:3-4**).
 4. When we suffer, we have fellowship with Jesus Christ because He suffered (**2Co 1:5; 1Pe 4:12-13; Rom 8:17; Php 3:10**).
 5. When a brother turns on you, you are walking in the steps of Jesus (**Joh 13:18**).
 6. When we endure the trial, God knows that we love and fear Him (**Gen 22:12**).