

CHAPTER 10

THE PROBLEM OF WRONG BEING DONE

Introduction

We live in a world where wrong is being done. Instead of doing what is right and what is fair, people often do what is wrong and what is unfair. Wrong is being done both near and far. Wrong is being done on our own street and in our own school and wrong is being done on the other side of the world. Sometimes wrong is done to us and sometimes wrong is done to others.

Sometimes it even seems like wickedness is winning over righteousness. Sometimes it seems like it pays to do wrong. Is this really true? Sometimes the person who does what is right seems to lose out. Is the person who does right a loser? Is the person who does wrong a winner? Jesus once said that the person who does right may even suffer or be persecuted (see Matthew 5:10). According to Matthew 5:11-12, is the person who does right a loser or a winner?

Examples of Wrong Being Done

Example #1

A candidate wins an election—not because he was the best man for the office but because he was rich and was able to use his money to buy votes. Is this fair? We should want the best man to be elected whether he is rich or not.

Example #2

Sam and Joe are both guilty of the same crime. They have both stolen money. What does the Judge do to these two men? Joe is given a minor fine and released. Sam is sent to prison for five years. How could this be? Why are these men punished differently for the same crime? The only difference is that Joe's father helped elect the Judge. Should a man have less of a punishment just because his father did the Judge a favor? Is this fair and right?

Example #3

A man is put into jail or even put to death for a crime that he never did! Has this ever happened? Have innocent men ever been punished and even put to death? Is this fair? The guilty should be punished and the innocent should be set free (Deuteronomy 25:1-2). But sometimes the innocent are punished and the guilty are set free!

A Bible Example: Consider Joseph (Genesis 39). Joseph was put into prison even though he was innocent. He was punished because a wicked woman lied (Genesis 39:14-20). Was this fair? Who is the one that should have been punished? _____

Another Bible Example: Consider Stephen (Acts chapter 7, especially verses 54-60). Stephen

was stoned to death even though he had done no crime. He had not killed anyone. He had not hurt anyone. He had not stolen anything. All he did was preach a message. Those who heard the message did not like what they heard so they killed the man who gave the message! Was this right? _____ Did God take care of Stephen? _____

Another Bible Example: Consider Barabbas. In Mark 15:7, Luke 23:19 and Acts 3:14 we learn that this man was a murderer. Was this man innocent or guilty? _____ Should this man have been be punished or set free? _____ What actually happened to Barabbas? Was he punished or released (see Matthew 27:21,26)?

_____ Who was crucified in His place (Matthew 27:26)? _____ Was this fair? _____ The only sinless Man who ever lived was put to death as if He were a wicked criminal and the wicked criminal was set free. Why did Christ do this (1 Peter 3:18)? that He might bring _____ He was treated as a wicked criminal so that God could treat us as though we were perfectly righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Example #4

A drunk driver crosses into the wrong lane and smashes into another car coming from the opposite direction. The three people in the other car are killed but the drunk driver is only injured. He loses his driver's license but he does not lose his life. Is this fair? Why should the man who caused the accident live and the others die?

Example #5

In Matthew chapter 2 we learn that Herod the Great wanted to kill the Christ child. To do this he had all the babies in Bethlehem killed (babies that were two years old or less)--see Matthew 2:16. The one Baby that he wanted to kill escaped (Matthew 2:13-14). The babies that were killed were innocent. Would God take care of King Herod or would God allow him to go unpunished for this evil deed? Do you think God took care of these babies that died?

Example #6

Bob's team was losing in baseball. The score was seven to five. There were two outs in the last of the ninth inning and it was Bob's turn to bat. One man was on first base. If Bob should make an out his team would lose. If Bob should hit a homerun his team would tie the game and have a chance to win. Bob hit the second pitch into the deep part of the outfield (past the outfielders). The man ahead of Bob scored and as Bob came around third base he thought that he would also try to score. He raced home and slid into home plate just before the catcher tagged him. However, the umpire made a bad mistake and called him out! Bob knew that he was safe but for some reason the umpire called it differently. Bob's team lost. Instead of being the hero, Bob was the goat! Sometimes umpires make wrong calls. Is this fair? What should a Christian ballplayer do when an umpire makes a bad call? Should he lose his temper and start a loud argument?

Example #7

Susie studies hard for the test in school but she only gets a 70. Betty did not study at all. Betty cheated by looking at a card which had all the answers on it and she got 100. Betty is praised by the teacher for being the only one in the class to get 100. No one knew that Betty cheated except Susie. Of course, God knew too!

What should Susie do? Should she start cheating too? Does it pay to cheat? Is Betty really better off? Who really learned more—Betty or Susie? _____ Why? Did Betty really get away with cheating (see Numbers 32:23)? _____ *Class discussion:* Should Betty's dishonest act of cheating be reported to the teacher?

Example #8

Suppose that you were in a class where the teacher was not very quick to notice things like cheating. During quizzes and tests many of the students cheat and get their answers from the person sitting next to them. The teacher never seems to notice. One day you decide to try the same thing but the teacher catches you and sends you to the office and your parents find out about it.

Is this fair? The others were cheating and they all got away with it. You cheated and got caught! Why should you get caught and the other cheaters not get caught? Did you do wrong? _____ Did you deserve to get caught? _____ Is it all right for a person to cheat as long as he does not get caught? _____ Is it all right for a person to rob a bank as long as he doesn't get caught? Remember, God sees every crime and no one really gets away with anything.

Does it Pay to be Wicked?

Does it pay to do wrong? Is the person who does right a loser? Sometimes God lets wicked people prosper and He lets righteous people suffer (see Psalm 73:3; Jeremiah 12:1). Paul was a righteous man. Did he suffer (2 Corinthians 11:23-28)? _____ This seems very unfair! It seems as if the opposite should be true. The wicked should suffer and the righteous should prosper. Why is it that often things seem to go well for the unsaved and things seem to go wrong for saved people?

We need to remember that the Devil is the ruler of this world. He is called the P _____ (Ruler) of this world (John 16:11). He is also called "the god of this world" in 2 Corinthians 4:4. We must never forget that this world is not God's heaven but it is the Devil's system. Satan has been doing wrong and sinning from the B _____ (1 John 3:8). We are told in 1 John 5:19 that the whole world lieth in wickedness. This means that the whole world lies in the domain of the Wicked One who is Satan. This explains why there is so much wrong in the world. God has saved us out of this world (John 17:15-16). This means that true believers are not of the world even though we are still in the world (John 17:11). As we live in this world we should be thankful for anything good and right that is done. In the world ruled by Satan we should expect wrong to be done.

We also need to remember that this life is the best that the wicked will ever have. It is the only heaven they will ever have. This life is the worst that the righteous will ever have. It is the only "hell" that they will ever know. But in the next life God will straighten everything out. And the next life is forever and ever!

Consider Luke 16:19-31. Now answer the following questions: In this life who suffered?

_____ In this life who prospered?

_____ In the next life who suffered?

_____ In the next life who prospered? _____

In the next life everything was reversed! God is able to reverse everything and make everything right and fair. In this life the wicked may prosper and things may go well, but will they prosper

for long? _____ The righteous may suffer and their life might be filled with troubles, but will this last for long? _____ (see Romans 8:18 and 2 Cor. 4:17).

Why is This Happening to Me?

Sometimes a person might suffer and not even know the reason why! A good example of this is Job (read Job chapters 1 and 2). Did God know why Job was suffering? _____ Did Satan know why Job was suffering? Do we know why Job was suffering? Yes, because the first two chapters tell us why! But did Job know why he was suffering? _____ Did he understand what was going on between God and Satan? _____ Was Job still able to trust God (Job 1:20-21; 2:9-10; 13:15)? _____

There are many things in life that we do not understand and do not know the reason for. But God knows and understands, and God does only what is right. Does He ever make a mistake? _____ The Judge of all the earth shall so R _____ (see Genesis 18:25)!

When I Do Wrong

Sometimes I am the one who does wrong, and I must suffer the results of my sins. The Bible says that if we murder or steal or do evil, then we deserve to suffer (see 1 Peter 4:15). God often lets people suffer because of their sins, even in this life.

If a thief is caught and thrown into prison, he has no one to blame for his suffering except himself. Think about the two men who died on crosses next to Christ. Why did they suffer so much (Luke 23:33,39-41)?

_____ Why did Ananias and Sapphira drop dead (see Acts 5:1-11)?

_____ Even in this life, **crime does not pay!** Even if a person does not get caught, he still has guilt and terrible feelings because he knows deep within his heart that he has done wrong.

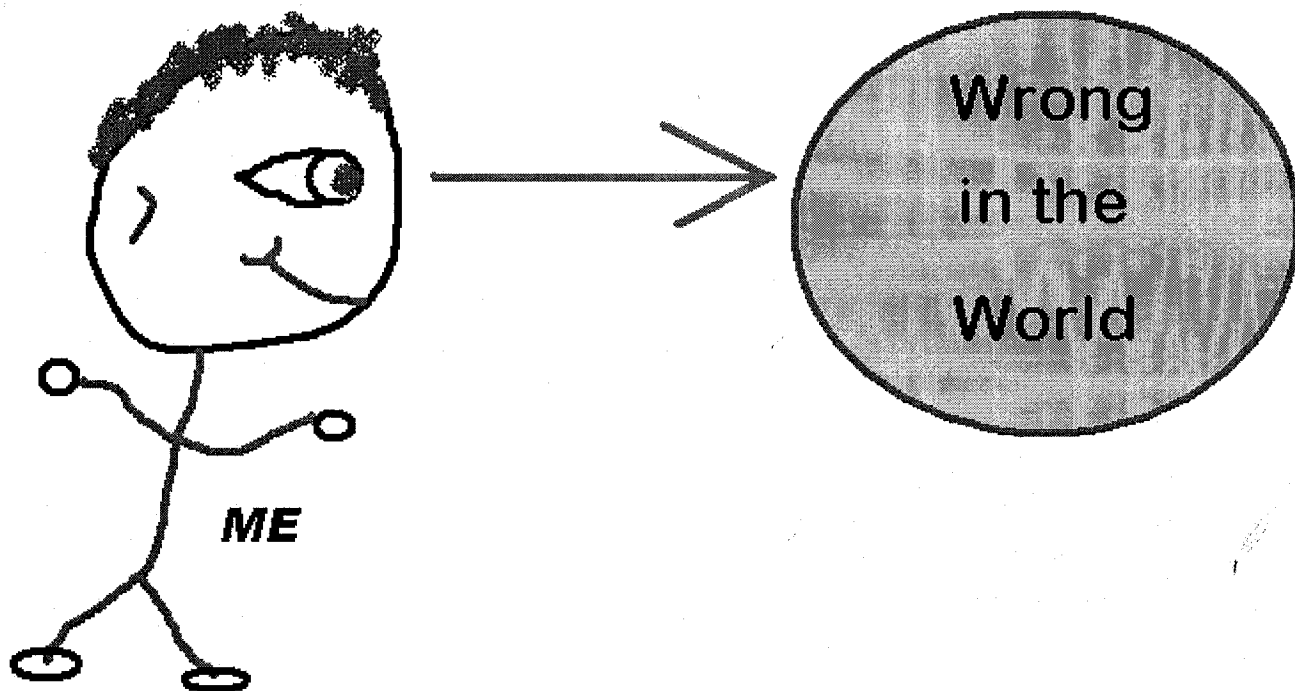
Tragic Accidents

Almost every day we can read about tragic accidents in the newspapers. In Luke 13:4 Jesus mentioned a tragic accident when a tower in Jerusalem fell. How many people died? _____ Does God know all about these kinds of things? _____ Does this mean that those 18 people were terrible sinners that God was judging (Luke 13:4-5)? _____ When a plane crashes and people lose their lives, does this mean that those people must have been more wicked than most people? _____

Jesus said that people who die in these kinds of accidents are not greater sinners than anyone else. We are all great sinners and we all deserve to perish (Luke 13:5). When such accidents take place we should be reminded that **life is short, death is sure, sin the cause, Christ the cure!** Someday we will all die physically just like those who died on the plane crash. Am I ready to die? Do I have eternal life? If I were to die today, would I be sure to go to heaven? Tragic accidents should make each one of us think about these kinds of questions. A drunk driver might run into a car that you are in some day. Are you ready to die?

Wrong in the World and Wrong in Me

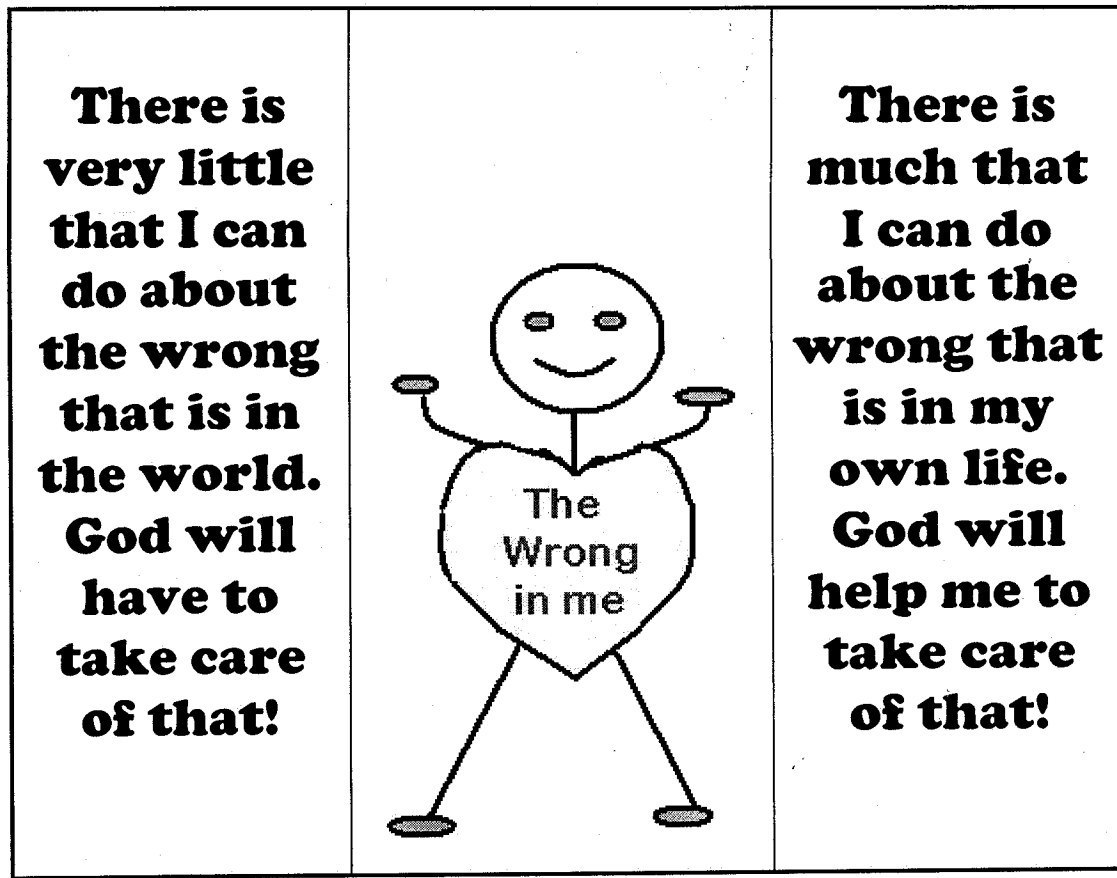
Yes, there is wrong in the world and plenty of it. The reason there is so much wrong is not only because of our evil foe Satan, but also because there is so much wrong in every person's heart. Men's hearts are filled with sin and self and pride (pushing others down so that I can go up!).



Don't get held up and hung up (think of yourself hanging on a hook) as you see the wrongs in the world. Don't get depressed and discouraged as you see things that are not right.

Remember, God will take care of the wrong that is in the world. Romans 12:19 tells us that God will take care of all the wrong that has been done. God will straighten out all that is crooked. God will correct everything that has been going the wrong way. God wants us to step aside and leave the matter in His hands. He will take care of the wrong in the right way at the right time. Is He the Judge or are you the Judge? _____ Are you the one who punishes sinners or is God? _____

Paul McMillan was a young boy who lived in Africa. His father was a missionary. One day Paul suffered a horrible loss. Certain Africans came and murdered his father. This was a terrible wrong that was done. How should Paul have felt about this? Should he have been angry and bitter and try to "get even" someday? Should he have hated these Africans the rest of his life? No, chose to please God in his reaction to this tragedy. Paul had received the Lord Jesus as his Saviour when he was young, and when he was older he had a strong desire to return to Africa to tell the good news to those men who murdered his father. Did Paul obey Romans 12:21?



Are you bothered by the wrong that is in your own heart and soul? Many people are concerned about the wrong that is in the world and the wrong that is in their neighbor next door, but they are not very concerned about the wrong that is **in them!** Often they want God to judge everyone else who is doing wrong, but what about them? Look what David said In Psalm 7:8: "The Lord will judge the people (God will take care of the wrong that people do); **Judge _____**, (O LORD) (take care of the wrong that is in me!)."

The world system is wrong and so there is much wrong in the world. God saves us out of the world but He usually leaves us in the world to bear witness to the rightness of the Lord Jesus Christ amid the wrongness of the world (John 16:8-11), that many might be saved (John 3:16).

“In the world ye shall have tribulation (trouble, pressure), but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).