

WHY DOES  
GOD  
ALLOW  
WAR?

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

CROSSWAY BOOKS

A DIVISION OF  
GOOD NEWS PUBLISHERS  
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

*To My Wife*

*Why Does God Allow War?*

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Formerly published by Crossway Books as *Why Does God Allow Suffering?*

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Published by Crossway Books

a division of Good News Publishers

1300 Crescent Street

Wheaton, Illinois 60187

Original © D. M. Lloyd-Jones, 1939

First published (by Hodder and Stoughton) December 1939

Second edition (by the Evangelical Press of Wales) January 1986

This edition is published by special arrangement with the  
EVANGELICAL PRESS OF WALES, Wales, U.K..

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Cover design: Josh Dennis

Cover photo: Getty Images

All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

First printing, 2003

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 1-58134-469-4

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15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

*Foreword*

**BY JOHN MACARTHUR**

**I**F GOD IS BOTH GOOD and omnipotent, why does He allow bad things to happen? Why is there war? Why so much suffering? Why is the world so full of wickedness and human misery?

Those are questions everyone ponders at one time or another. And unless we seek *biblical* answers, it is all too easy to fall into unbelief and serious error. Some question the goodness of a God who would allow so much evil. Others assume that the prevalence of suffering in the world is proof that God isn't really in full control of His creation. One author a few years ago wrote a best-selling book grappling with the problem of evil. His conclusion was that God is ultimately just a helpless victim like the rest of us.

That is not the God of the Bible, who is both fully sovereign and completely good. Scripture teaches that God oversees and controls every aspect of His universe by a loving,

## WHY DOES GOD ALLOW WAR?

precise, and painstaking providence. He is not the author or the effectual cause of the evil that afflicts our world, but neither is He a “victim” of it. He allows evil for a purpose, and He promises that His purpose is *good*. It is the very essence of faith to trust Him for that—especially in the midst of our suffering. The Old Testament patriarch Job is the model of such faith. Devastated and overcome with almost inconceivable grief and pain, he nonetheless said, “‘The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.’ In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong” (Job 1:21-22).

Those of us who truly know the God of Scripture *can* ultimately trust Him, even when our sorrows seem overwhelming, when suffering afflicts us with unbearable pain, and when the worst kinds of evil seem to have the upper hand in this world.

One of the best and simplest biblical treatments of these issues ever published is this wonderful book by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Over the years it has been a bulwark of comfort and encouragement to thousands of readers. For more than six decades, it has strengthened the faith of God’s people whenever they have been called upon to endure various wars, tragedies, and sufferings of all kinds.

Lloyd-Jones was well-known as a preacher of God’s Word—surely the finest biblical expositor of the twentieth century. He pastored a large congregation in central London for several decades, and this book was the product of his teaching at the onset of World War II. As the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust were just beginning to grip Europe and the threat to England grew more palpable each day, Lloyd-Jones

*Foreword*

courageously faced the problems of war and human suffering from Scripture. *Why Does God Allow War?* was the result. It answered urgent questions, and it gave many people the biblical insight and spiritual strength they needed to endure the severe trials of that era.

Lloyd-Jones continued preaching to his congregation at Westminster Chapel, in the shadow of Buckingham Palace, throughout the years of the war. At one point in 1944, during the intense Nazi bombardment of London, Lloyd-Jones was preaching when a bomb exploded in the air just above the church. The concussion was deafening, and damage to the church building was severe. Miraculously, no one was seriously injured. But when the shock subsided, at least one woman in the flock—opening her eyes to find preacher, pulpit, congregation, and pews all covered with a fine white powder—concluded she was in heaven!

Lloyd-Jones faithfully shepherded his congregation through those years of the war by giving them biblical answers and a biblical worldview that enabled them to keep trusting God in the midst of the trial. And one of the great testimonies to the everlasting truth of the biblical answers he gave is the fact that this masterful study is as timely and as relevant today as it was when it was first written. It is not at all dated. It is as applicable as if it had been written in response to the terrorist attacks and the wars that plague *this* generation.

The simple, biblical profundity of this work speaks for itself. It is readable, rich, and rewarding. It reminds us that the problems of sin and suffering—as well as the timeless answers of the Bible—are the same for every generation. That is why

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW WAR?

it speaks to our time as powerfully as it spoke to its original audience. It provides the kind of solid, trustworthy, biblically satisfying answers that are all too hard to come by in this era of shallow sentimentality. In the decades since this book was first published, there has never been a time when it was more desperately needed. So I'm thrilled to see a new edition, and I'm thankful to Crossway for keeping it in print for the current generation and perhaps for generations to come. I trust it will continue to strengthen many in these troubled times.

—John MacArthur  
Pastor-teacher, Grace Community Church,  
Sun Valley, California  
March 20, 2003

*Publisher's Foreword*

**MATTHEW 24:6 (ESV)**

*“And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars.”*

**W**HY DOES GOD ALLOW WAR?” In the wake of 9/11 and the daily threat of terror, there is a disturbing urgency to this question, first on a national level but equally in the immediacy of our everyday lives. War was not part of what we had expected, not what we wanted for our children, not part of our plan for the future. Yet in a sense it is surprising that we are taken by surprise, for every generation from the beginning of time has known the scourge of war, and so it shall be until the end of the age. “And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars,” Jesus warned. “For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes . . .” (Matthew 24:6-7).

Confronted as we are today with the reality of war, this

## WHY DOES GOD ALLOW WAR?

classic volume turns to the foundational truths of God's Word—to answer the question of war but along with this the wider questions of human tragedy and suffering that every one of us will face at some point in life.

The purpose of this book, as the author Martyn Lloyd-Jones first wrote over sixty years ago, is “to help [people], and strengthen their faith”—concerning the question of war, but equally in facing personal suffering, crisis, and tragedy. As many will know, Dr. Lloyd-Jones is recognized as one of the greatest preachers and Bible teachers of the twentieth century. And in these pages we find “classic Lloyd-Jones”—with his penetrating insight into the urgency of our need, and his clear and compelling demonstration of God's prescription for meeting our need.

What is the answer that Lloyd-Jones offers? In one sense, it would be unwise to provide a brief summary—for the answer is not to be found in a simple formula, but in the reality of God Himself. And it is this reality that we come to understand in a deeper sense in the following pages—as we are driven to our knees in prayer; as we face the unexpected crises that shake our lives; as we come to learn something of the mystery of God's ways; and as we come to understand “the final answer to all our questions.”

Though first published over sixty years ago, *Why Does God Allow War?* is remarkably relevant for understanding the crises of our own times—whether the smoldering threat of terror, the prospect of global war, or personal suffering and tragedy. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones shows so clearly, the fundamental problems are unchanged, but so are the great Biblical principles



*Publisher's Foreword*

which lead us back to the One who alone can provide the answer.

When our lives seem shattered, is there any answer? Is there any place to which we can turn to find hope and peace and true happiness? The ringing affirmation of this little book is that there is indeed an answer—an answer that is rooted in the reality of God Himself, and *in what He has done and will do* for those who know and love Him.

—Lane T. Dennis, Ph.D.  
President, Crossway Books  
March 2003