

God, what were you thinking? (Series: Questions I would ask God)

Genesis 1:31=2:3, Isaiah 11:1-10, Revelation 21:1-6

Dear God, What were you thinking?

Usually when someone lays that question on us, we are standing in the middle of a mess of our own creation ... without much hope of straightening things out.

What were you thinking? Implies that we weren't.

For had we been thinking, we would have done things differently, smarter, better ... any other way than the way we did which has now caused such a big mess that it inspires the question: What were you thinking?

I've been there a few times. Have you?

What about God.

As we look around at this world, on the one hand we see it filled with so much beauty, so much good. We see happy healthy families, growing children, and grandparents enjoying their golden years.

But if we look a bit further we begin to see the unhappiness of so many families. We see broken lives, broken health, rampant disease, and tragic deaths for both young and old.

We see loneliness.

WE see hungry children in drought stricken lands, or the debris field left after the last tornado, the last tsunami, the last war.

So we might come to the conclusion that the world is a jumbled mess with good and evil locked in an endless struggle and no solution in sight.

And we want to ask: God, what were you thinking?

Look at the mess that you made(?)

Could you not have done things differently, smarter, better ...

Could you not have figured out a better way to shape our persons, our world, our history – so that we could live in a nicer place today; One that would make a good and powerful Creator God proud?

So let's ask God that question this morning.

God, when you made our world, what were you thinking?

And to find that answer, let's hop into a virtual time machine and go back to the beginning, when the world was made -- because while things seem so messed here up in the middle that doesn't mean that's how they started.

The book of Genesis, at the very beginning of our Bible, can be our time machine. It describes the beginning of our world this way: *In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters;* another translation phrases it: that the "***Spirit of God brooded over the chaos.***"

So God was thinking, carefully thinking, and then he begins to create: light, water, land, stars, plants, animals. And at the very end of His creating, God creates someone to continue the process, someone like himself to take these beginnings and further develop them into a growing living work of art. Male and female he created them, and God blesses them and God places them in a garden to care for it and tend it ... and **God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.**

it was very good.

At the very start of everything, what God was thinking and what God created was "very good." Everything! So what we are now seeing is not the way it all began.

What happened?

Apparently, something bad happened.

On a planetary scale something very bad happened to God's good creation.

The Bible explains this world changing bad event as the fall of Adam and Eve. God's creations that were most like Himself, God's designated planetary caretakers, being seduced into rebellion, caused the whole creation to become broken – to no longer work the way it had been designed to work.

After the fall, God told Adam:

*"Cursed is the ground because of you;
from now on and only by toil, will you get your food.*

By the sweat of your brow you will have to harvest the plants of the field and thorns and thistles will grow in your path until the day you return to the ground from which you were created.

Perhaps we need to ask Adam and Eve
What were you thinking?

So that is what we have now: something that had begun "very good" but now, because of human rebellion, it has gone sour.

That's not fare!! you say – blaming **all** this mess on us.

We may be responsible for the murders, and wars, broken marriages and bank failures. But you can't blame us for poison ivy, and ticks, and tuberculosis.

We didn't cause cancer!

Didn't we? Both then and now, are we not in many ways responsible for much of the disease ravaging our planet; By the way we live. By the way we extract and use the resources of this planet.

Notice, back there at the beginning, God told Adam that the ground was now cursed **because** of his rebellion. The thorns and thistles, and by extension the ticks, tuberculosis, and even cancer are a result both of our original and our continuing rebellion against the Creator.

Because if you take something that is very good, like a well-designed smoothly operating jet engine, something that was thoughtfully designed for doing what it is doing, and you fly a bird through the intake manifold – that jet engine will no longer be "very good" and perhaps even the plane that it was carrying will come crashing to the ground.

Or you can take a beautifully tuned V-8 engine running perfectly and simply crack the cam shaft and very quickly you will only have a overheated and frozen chunk of metal.

In a similar way, if you take God's "very good" creation and add rebellion and deceit – then nothing will ever again work in the way that it was intended.

So we were and continue to be the ones who corrupted that which once was very good.
What were we thinking?

So why has God fixed things?
The answer is that God has and is fixing things ...

but it will take time.

And the interesting part of this God's fixing process is that, in the mean time, it is also the brokenness of this creation that will eventually bring about ours and the entire planets full restoration.

Because it is the goodness of creation that first tells us of God ... and the brokenness of creation that hopefully will drives us back to God.

One of God's eternal promises has been "***work in all situations to bring about good for those who love him.***" And that includes both the original fall and our continuing broken world.

Because of this promise, God has also placed each one of us here at very personally specific times and places intentionally to cause us to seek a return back into relationship with Him – though he is not far from any of us.

Because you see, God has never stopped creating and in the process God also continues to stack the deck in our favor; even with all the thorns and thistles, ticks and tuberculosis, and even cancer that come into our lives

Though we were the ones who first hid from God, God still wants to be found by us and to one day again walk with us in the garden.

So perhaps the better question to be asking God is ...
What now?
What are you thinking now?

Can You help us get out of the mess in which we now find ourselves?
Can You help us get back to the garden?

The answer to these questions is a most loving "yes."

And to find out how God has been working to help us clear up this mess, let's now reenter our machine and head to the other end of time – to the very end of our world in order to see what will eventually become of it.

The last chapters of the last book in our Bible can provide us with that view: The aged apostle John writes:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.’ And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’

So the end of our world will once again be like the beginning with a new heavens and earth, everything remade and restored to its original condition: the curse undone, tears wiped away, and God once again walking with us, with all of His creation, in the cool of the evening.

And how does all this happen?

Who is it that can undo the curse and lead us back to the Garden?

Well from the beginning of time, perhaps even before the fall, God was thinking about that task as well.

The Bible records that in the beginning, with God, was the Word, and the Word was God. Everything was made by the Word and in the Word is the life that lights all people. And then the word entered our world – like a light shining in the darkness – and the world could not overcome it.

In the fullness of time, God sent forth this living Word, his son into our world, born under the law to redeem those who are under the law.

And God proves his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. While we were still in rebellion Christ was working to repair our relationship with the Creator and working to restore the planet as well.

All who put their trust in him become God’s children, part of his new creation (both immediately and in the time to come) Old things have passed away and for us everything has become new.

The Bible records that the planet joins us in longing for this full and final restoration.

for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Romans 8:19-20)

So even the planet ... if it could speak .. has been asking the same question of us.

What were you thinking.

So there you have it.
God thoughtfully and carefully created the world "very good."
And when our own rebellion tore that creation apart,
God then devised a rescue plan using his on being as that means of rescue.

And God promises to one-day restore the planet to its original condition.
And God invites you to join him in doing so.....
What? You haven't yet accepted that invitation?
What were you thinking?