

(Know Your Enemy) 4. Why God Has Not Destroyed Satan

by Zac Poonen

God allows Satan to exist to test and purify believers, and to bring people to Himself, and He provides protection and guidance for those who trust in Him.

Scripture: Genesis 3:1

Topics: "The Purpose of Suffering", "Understanding Temptation"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of understanding the role of Satan in God's creation, explaining that while Satan is the source of evil, his existence serves a divine purpose. God allows Satan to tempt humanity to foster free will and to encourage people to turn to Him in times of trouble. Poonen illustrates that suffering and challenges can lead to spiritual growth and a deeper relationship with God, as seen in the story of Job. He reassures believers that God maintains control over Satan's actions, using them for the ultimate good of His children. The sermon encourages listeners to recognize the significance of their choices and the transformative power of obedience to God.

Transcript

What is it that reduces man to the level of an animal?

It is when he is interested only in his bodily needs and in his earthly existence. What is an animal interested in? Food, sleep and sexual satisfaction - that's about all. And when a man is interested only in these things, we can say that he has descended to the level of the animals.

But God didn't make man to be just like the animals. Education doesn't make a man superior to the animals either, for even well-educated men behave just like animals at times.

There is a part of us that is deeper even than our minds. It is called the spirit. Our spirit makes us aware of God.

When God created man He created him with a free will. He gave man the freedom to choose.

When Satan was created as an angel, he was created with the freedom of choice too. That is why he could say, "I will ascend above the throne of God."

There were many other things that God created that did not have a free will. The stars and the planets, for example. The planets in our solar system have never rebelled against God's laws for thousands of years. Why? Because they do not have freedom of choice. But then the planets cannot become children of God either. For someone to become a child of God, he must be created with a free will to choose entirely voluntarily what he wants.

But the danger of having freedom of choice is that you can use it to please yourself and to disobey God's commandments. But God was willing to take that risk because He wanted obedient children. And that is where Satan also fulfills a function in God's purpose.

All the chaos, confusion, diseases and evil in the world are the direct result of man disobeying God and listening to the Devil in the garden of Eden.

We could then ask this question: "If Satan is the root cause of all the problems in the world, why doesn't God destroy Satan?"

Well, I hope we can at least believe that God's wisdom is greater than ours. Our wisdom is like a little cup of water, whereas God's wisdom is like an ocean. We can be certain that if God has allowed Satan to exist and to be active on earth, there must be a very good reason for it.

In fact God accomplishes a number of things through Satan's workings. That is why He has allowed him to exist.

One reason why God allows Satan to cause so much evil and damage and suffering on earth, is so that people will thereby turn to God. Do you realise that if life on this earth had been very comfortable, with no sickness, suffering, poverty, or misery, hardly anyone would have thought about God at all?

Everything that God allows is for a purpose. We read in the Old Testament that when the people of Israel in the wilderness forgot about God, they were suddenly bitten by poisonous snakes. Immediately they turned to God. And God healed them. Wasn't it a good thing that those poisonous snakes were there to make those people turn to God?

I heard a story of a businessman who had once been close to God. He drifted away from God, as his business prospered. The elders in his church spoke to him repeatedly and tried to turn him back to the Lord. But he was too occupied with his business. One day a poisonous snake bit the youngest of his three sons, and the child became seriously sick. Even the doctors gave up all hope. Then the father was really worried, and sent for one of the elders of the church to pray for the child. The elder was a wise man. He came and prayed, "Lord, thank You for sending this snake to bite this child - because I could never get this family to think about You at all. But what I could not accomplish in six years, this snake has now done in a moment! Now that they have learnt their lesson, Lord, heal the child. And grant that they will never need any more snakes to remind them of You again."

There are people who do not think of God until one day they are suddenly taken to a hospital with cancer. Then, all of a sudden they begin to think of God and they turn to Christ and are born again. Incurable diseases, sicknesses, poverty and many other evils in this world have all been used by God to turn people away from their sins to have an eternal home in heaven. That is how God uses the very things that Satan does to save people from his clutches and save them for all eternity. Thus God makes a fool of Satan again and again.

God also uses Satan to purify us believers

Consider the example of fire? We know that millions of people have died through being burnt in fires in the history of the world. Yet no-one has yet stopped using fire. Because it is through fire that food is cooked and that automobiles and airplanes and machines run. Fire is also used to purify gold that can be purified in no other way. So fire can be put to very good uses. Or consider electricity. Millions have died through being electrocuted. Electricity is certainly very dangerous. Yet we all know that it can be made to serve very useful purposes.

Adam and Eve were innocent when they were created. They had to make a choice if they were to be holy. And in order to make a choice, they had to be tempted, so that they could refuse evil and choose God instead. And that was why God allowed Satan to come into the garden of Eden and tempt them.

Do you think it would have been difficult for God to prevent Satan from entering that garden? Not at all. But without temptation Adam could not have become holy. He would have remained innocent forever.

There is a lot of difference between innocence and holiness. Innocence is what you see in a baby. If you want to know what Adam was like when he was created, look at a baby - innocent and ignorant of good and evil. A little baby may be innocent but it is not holy, not perfect. In order to become perfect, that baby will have to grow up and make some choices, refusing the evil and choosing God.

It is when we refuse to yield to temptation in our minds that we develop character. You are what you are today because of the choices you have made so far in your life.

If other people around you are better than you, it is because they made better choices in their life than the ones you made. We are all making choices everyday - and those choices determine what we will become ultimately.

Eve made a choice in the garden. Through her choice, she was actually saying, "I would rather please my bodily desires and accept what Satan is offering me than be bound by the restrictions that God's commandments have imposed on me. I want to be free."

But did she become free? No. She became a slave of Satan. Only obedience to God's commandments can make us truly free.

Adam and Eve took a very important decision that day in Eden, that produced lifelong consequences for themselves and their children. All decisions produce consequences - sometimes consequences that unfortunately affect our children too. In Adam's case, he and his wife were sent out of God's presence for the rest of their lives.

So don't imagine that those little choices that you make are unimportant or that you will never reap in the future what you are sowing today. God will allow you to be tested and to be tempted. And for that purpose, He allows Satan to be free and to be active.

Let me show you an example from the Old Testament in the book of Job. In Job chapter 1, we read about a conversation that took place in heaven between God and Satan. And from the experience of Job, we can learn something about Satan's workings.

In Job 1:6, we read that one day the sons of God (angels) came to present themselves before the Lord. Satan also came among them. God asked him where he was coming from.

Listen to Satan's answer. He said he had been visiting different places on the earth. Did you know that Satan is active in this world right now?

Many people have the idea that Satan lives in hell. If that were true, then he could not possibly trouble us here on earth. But Satan does not live in hell.

The Bible teaches us that there are three heavens. The first heaven is what we call space. The third heaven is the immediate presence of God (2 Corinthians 12:2). When Satan was cast down from the immediate presence of God, he was cast down to the second heaven (Ephesians 6:12), and not to hell. And from the second heaven, he has the freedom to come to earth at any time. That is why he could come into the garden of Eden. And that is why he and his demons can come to earth even today.

The Bible says that Satan goes about like a roaring lion seeking for people whom he may devour. He is forever seeking to tempt young people to make wrong choices. He wants to enter into their lives thus, so that he can rob them of their purity, their honesty and their integrity, and thus destroy their character and finally take them with him to eternal damnation.

That is why Satan is roaming around the earth.

And you can be sure that Satan is observing everyone. He has been observing you from childhood and has sought at all times to tempt you to do evil and make the wrong choices, so that he can destroy you. He was the one who whispered to you to cheat in your examinations, to retain grudges against others, to tell lies to your parents and teachers, to steal other people's things, to read dirty books, etc.

God then told Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is no one on earth like him - a blameless and upright man". Of course Satan knew everything about Job. In fact Job was Number One on Satan's "hit-list". So Satan replied saying, "Does Job fear God for nothing? You have put a hedge around him and his house and his possessions and protected him and blessed him in every way. That is why he serves You" (Job 1:8-10).

There is a wonderful lesson for us to learn here: God puts a hedge around His children - a threefold hedge, around their bodies, their families and their possessions.

It is a blessed privilege that we have as children of God, to have this threefold hedge giving us Divine protection. Proverbs 18:10 tells us that the Name of the Lord is a strong tower, into which the righteous can run and be safe. There is great safety in the Name of Jesus. Satan does not fear any name other than the Name of Jesus Christ who defeated him on Calvary. When our life is surrendered to Christ, we can use the Name of Jesus Christ to resist Satan. The Bible says,

Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

We read further in the book of Job that God allowed Satan to go and afflict Job, his family and his property. In other words, God opened each hedge a little at a time, to allow Satan to go through and test Job. Why did God do that? So that Job could be "purified like gold" (Job 23:10). At the end of the testing, we read that Job became a humbler and a more godly man, with all self-righteousness cleansed out of him.

That is why God allows us to be tested too. So that out of those testings, we might come out purer, humbler, more godly, more loving and kind, more compassionate, less self-righteous, and more like Jesus Himself. So we see that Satan serves a very useful purpose in the sanctification of God's children.

All this Teaches Us Atleast Two Things

First of all, that Satan can never touch any child of God - their bodies, their families or their possessions without God's permission.

And secondly, that whenever Satan is allowed to touch us or hurt us in any way, it is always with the purpose that we might become more like Christ in our lives, more free from the temporary things of earth, and more heavenly-minded.

Isn't it a great comfort to know that our Heavenly Father is in total control of even what Satan tries to do to us?

I want to tell all of you young people that if you give your life completely to God you will have this threefold hedge around your bodies, your families and your property always. Satan will not be able to penetrate through any of those hedges without God's permission. And whenever God does permit Satan to come through, you can be certain that it will be for your good.

So we see that the Bible gives us clear teaching about Satan and his workings - not to frighten us but to enable us to see God's purpose in allowing him to exist.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/know-your-enemy-4-why-god-has-not-destroyed-satan/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net