

The question of evil #2

In the last article I said that all rebellion (sin) to God is evil. And I stand by that statement. Every human being is in a state of rebellion and that is exactly why we needed a redeemer. However, I was overly brief on the subject of the source of evil. In this article I hope to address that a little better.

Let's start in the book of Job. Job 1-5 we see that Job had 7 sons and three daughters, lots of livestock, was very wealthy and was a righteous man loving God and all his ways.

In verse 6 the angels of heaven came before the court of heaven, most likely to give an account of their work. Then the adversary (Satan) shows up. Now God questions Satan for an account of his work and Satan is very vague with God. He basically says I have been all over the earth (up to no good, tempting men.) Verse seven God looks down to earth and his eyes settle on Job. God, knowing that Job was up to the task of repelling Satan's temptations through his faith, asks the tempter if he had considered him? Here I go again, making propositions that the Bible doesn't explicitly make. But I just can't resist. I ask myself the question, why? Why did God point at Job and provoke Satan against him in verse 7? I think that God decided to use a mere mortal man to put the father of lies in his place and humble him. I'm not saying that Job was perfect. He didn't come out of this ordeal without blemish. However his faith remained intact and because of that God's grace was applied. Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Here, the same applies to Job. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Verses 9-11 Satan took the bait. He goes 100 miles an hour, straight into rebellion. He questions God concerning Job, and starts making accusations against Job. He tries to murder Job's reputation. So we can see Satan's character and it reminds me of a Roman passage.

Rom 1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips, **Rom 1:30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, Rom 1:31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;**

Now the Apostle Paul is talking about earthly people. Do you think it is a coincidence that Satan has the same character as earthly people? Look back at the 7th verse in Job. Job 1:7 The LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." What do you think the evil one is doing? Let's go back to the garden for just a minute. Gen 2:16

The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; Gen 2:17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." not only did human beings start growing old and dying but a spiritual death began. Rom 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God restricted Satan from taking Jobs' physical life but there was much more at stake here. Our Lord Jesus said: **Mar 8:36**“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? **Mar 8:37**“For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? **Mar 8:38**“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” Satan was after Jobs' eternal life. In other words he was trying to murder Job spiritually, having much greater consequences. **Jhn 8:44**“You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

As usual the Lord explains things much better than I, and with fewer words. Is it any wonder that the people of his time were constantly amazed by his teaching?

There are a few other passages I wish to hit before I conclude this article. **Luk 22:31**“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has ^[tn]demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; **Luk 22:32** but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” In this passage we can see God's sovereignty. Satan can do nothing without God's permission. At this point we have to approach doctrine or none of this will make any sense. First: we have free will. We do have the ability to choose right from wrong. However God reserves the Right to direct the course of history. That's called providence. **Gen 50:20** “As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about ^[tn]this present result, to preserve many people alive. This passage has a lot of context that I'm going to forgo for the sake of time. Nobody wants to read 50 pages of anything I have to say. But evil things were done to Joseph but God had a bigger plan. God is saving his people from a famine. God could have just spoken a word and made Israel a land of abundance but that wouldn't have given the greater lessons. Lessons like trusting in Him, the providence of God, he is the God of life, the world is in a spiritual famine lacking the bread of life that is Jesus. So what would we have learned if God just snapped his fingers and “poof” everything is all well? How can we know that he can be trusted? If you don't understand that God is working everything to his good, then you walk around angry because the world is out to get you. At that point you sin

by being angry with your neighbor. How do you grow in faith if you are not tested? Ez street only produces self absorbed people. If God were to stop Satan right now he would have to judge him, and if he judged satan right now, he would have to judge us as well. If you are in Christ that's a good thing. But if the blood of Christ hasn't been applied to your sin stained soul, that would be the worst news you could possibly get!

But the second thing we see in our like passage is that Christ is for us. Rom 8:31

What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?

The answer to that question is ultimately satan. Eph 2:2

in which you formerly walked according to the ^[fn]course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Eph 2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, ^[fn]indulging the desires of the flesh and of the ^[fn]mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. Eph 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, Eph 2:5 even when we were dead ^[fn]in our transgressions, made us alive together ^[fn]with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

I had to throw those last few verse's in. because there is good news. God became a human being and lived a perfect life according to the law, because we could not. That made him the perfect sacrifice. No spots or blemishes. Perfect! So when he willingly lay down his life, God the father placed our sin upon him. He took the blame for our rebellion. He suffered. Why would we think we wouldn't? He died and lay in a grave for three days. But since he is the author of life, the grave could not keep his grip on him. So he rose again and spent 40 days on earth just so that we could know that he conquered death and promises to do the same for us. After those 40 days he ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the father where he intercedes with the father on behalf of those who have his blood applied to them. How does that happen? Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Walking in Christ is how we combat evil. Not with physical arms or politics. In Christ and Christ alone. If you don't like where society is going, the change starts with you.

