

“What About Evil?”

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Scripture

2 Thessalonians 2:3-12

“Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

For this reason, God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness.”

Last Week

We looked at Daniel 9 and discussed the future of the world through the lens of Israel

David prayed about the future of Israel

Gabriel came to give Daniel an answer

Daniel 9:24-27 teaches us of the events coming near the end of the world

We learn that there's a peace treaty in our future with “the many” nations

That Israel will be deceived into thinking that they are safe

3½ years into that treaty, the Antichrist will break that peace treaty and begin to attack Israel

Jesus warned of that time and told His disciples to prepare to get out of Jerusalem

It is the GREAT Tribulation, the last 3½ years of the of the Antichrist's reign

This Week

Two Questions Came In:

- 1) What purpose exists why God would let Satan loose at the end of the Millennial kingdom?
- 2) Why are fallen angels (including Satan) still allowed access to Heaven?

The sermon title is: "What About Evil?"

I wrote a blog about evil last year-> some copies are available in the back as you leave

These are great questions -> **does God have a purpose with evil?**

We discussed this a while back in our Wednesday night bible study of Romans

Some people will not go to Heaven – that's pretty clear from Jesus's words **Matthew 7:23** and **Matthew 25:41**

Would we understand what good was if we didn't have evil?

An Earthly Example

Think about this, let's say you live at the north pole your entire life and the earth does not revolve the sun

The north pole is continually pointed to the sun

It is lighted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year -> there is always light

If someone comes from the south pole to visit you and speaks of complete darkness there

Can you even fathom what darkness is like?

Romans 9:22-24

"What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And **He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called**, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles."

Paul's point is that some individuals are chosen for wrath

So that we would understand the riches of His mercy

If everyone went to Heaven, then would being in Heaven be a big deal?

If it were not for evil, would we be able to receive Salvation?

Evil brought the Messiah to the cross

In short, we learn by contrast -> God is teaching us by comparison

So, God's purpose in allowing evil is for us to understand "good"

Let's answer the question: Why are fallen angels (including Satan) still allowed access to Heaven?

Satan and the fallen angels were created to serve God in Heaven

Satan and the fallen angels had access to earth:

Job 1:6-8

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. 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."**

The LORD said to Satan, **"Have you considered My servant Job?** For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."

The sons of God are angels -> Satan had access to Earth

God is making a point to Satan with Job -> **"If I have chosen someone, no matter what you do, he will remain faithful to Me!"**

Evil toward Job just refined Job's character and his faith

Job knew this ahead of time:

Job 23:8-14

“Behold, I go forward but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; When He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him. **But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.** My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. But He is unique and who can turn Him? And **what His soul desires, that He does.** For **He performs what is appointed for me, and many such decrees are with Him.**”

God knows our steps

God Uses Satan -> He used Satan's evil to refine Job just as a refiner would work with gold

God caused Job to hold fast to His ways and not turn aside

Job knew that God ordained his steps -> Job knows what God has appointed for him

Demons have access to Earth, right? -> Jesus cast them out of a demoniac into pigs

Matthew 8:28-29

“When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way. And they cried out, saying, **"What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"**

The demons know their eventual fate is destruction – “torment us before the time”

For what purpose did the demons exist in this case -> **for Jesus to show us His power over them** and that **He would be glorified**

Zechariah 3:1-4

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?” Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, **“Remove the filthy garments from him.”** Again, he said to him, “See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.””

We see Satan has the power to accuse us before God in Heaven.

Jesus is our Defender:

1 John 2:1

“I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And **if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous**”

What should that do in us? Build our devotion to the Lord for His love and protection!

Eventually, though, Satan and the fallen angels will be thrown down from Heaven:

Revelation 12:7-10

“**There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war**, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, **for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God, day and night.**”

This occurs at the 3½ point of the Tribulation – half-way through the peace treaty

So, the fallen angels’ access to Heaven is only temporary and for a purpose -> **to build our devotion to Jesus**

Paul taught the Thessalonians about the end times

The Thessalonians were concerned that the Day of the Lord had come already and that they somehow missed their trip to Heaven

Paul writes:

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

“Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and **the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”

The Day of the Lord is God's final judgment of the people of the Earth

It is prophesied to happen in the Old Testament

We see it materialize through the Apostle John's description in Revelation

The Day of the Lord will not come until after the apostasy

An apostasy is a purposeful falling away from the faith -> knowing the truth but living in opposition to it

Paul had a specific event in mind, when the Antichrist would come and set himself up as God in the temple

We spoke about this last Sunday night, at that 3½ middle of the Tribulation, the Antichrist breaks the treaty

He sets himself up in the temple to be worshipped

The Antichrist is the "man of lawlessness" or "man of sin" in the KJV

He is the beast from the Sea from Revelation 13

At present, however, sin is being restrained:

2 Thessalonians 2:5-6

"Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? **And you know what restrains him now**, so that in his time he will be revealed."

Who restrains sin now?

The Holy Spirit!

John 16:8-11

"He, when He comes, **will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment**; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."

But the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way:

2 Thessalonians 2:7-11

"**For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.** Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason, **God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false**, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness."

With the Holy Spirit removed, the Antichrist has total control of sin on the Earth

There is an Evil Trinity:

- Satan Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28; Revelation 12 (as the Dragon)
- The Antichrist Revelation 13 as the Beast from the Sea
- The False Prophet Revelation 13 as the Beast from the Earth

They have the ability to show “power and signs and false wonders”

With “all the deception of wickedness for those who perish”

God will send “a deluding influence” so that people on the earth will believe the Evil Trinity

They will believe that the Antichrist is the true Christ

The result of that delusion is they will be judged

It is the future of the majority of the people on the Earth

The question: What purpose exists why God would let Satan loose at the end of the Millennial kingdom?

For the purposes of a response to the question, we’ll suspend a deep review of Revelation 20 until later

The Millennial Kingdom

Revelation 20:1-3

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.”

John recorded the vision of an angel grabbing hold of Satan after his defeat at the end of the Tribulation

The angel binds Satan for 1,000 years in the abyss so he would no longer deceive the nations

He has been deceiving the nations for most of his existence, but he can no longer do it

Those who live through the Tribulation period as believers will remain

Those on Satan’s team have been killed with their spirits consigned to Hell:

Revelation 19:21

“And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

Going into the Millennial Kingdom, every person alive is a believer in Jesus

This is the time when believers will reign with Jesus over the Earth

You have an absolute righteous government

Everyone living at the beginning is a believer

What could go wrong?

There is about 30 years in a generation, so 1,000 years is ~30 generations

The first generation, a solid set of believers

The second generation, perhaps 95% believers

The third generation, another 5% slide to 90% believers

Within 20 generations at that rate, few believers

Satan would have a lot of people who will join his rebellion against God

The next event on God's prophetic plan, is the new Heaven and the new Earth

What's the point of the Millennial Kingdom?

In an absolutely perfect world with a righteous government, sin would still affect the world

Without God's pervasive influence, there would be no righteousness

Prayer

Benediction