

DISCOVER PROPHECY



The Real Star Wars

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Why God?

A few years ago, the world was awe-struck when news came out that Princess Diana had died in an unfortunate car accident. Princess Diana, the fairy tale princess come to reality, was known as a wonderful woman with a privileged opportunity to do good to others less fortunate.

Princess Diana had committed herself to having countries stop using land mines in warfare because of the disaster it brings to people for years to come. She traveled to Asia where she personally visited those injured by the land mines years after the war.

Everyone knew that she was the only one of England's royalty that used her position for the benefit of others. Having just come to grips with her divorce, she was just beginning to effect positive change in many spheres.

Then tragically, she was killed in an automobile accident that took her life and left her children without a mother. The world stopped to ask, "Why?" Why is it that something so bad can happen to someone so good.

We each ask this question at some time in our lives. Why do bad things happen to good people?

A mother loses her child when he is still born at six months and has to bury him in the grave. Why? Why does something bad have to happen to someone good?

God Is Love

Despite the bad things that do occur in our lives, the Bible is clear that God is a God of love. "The Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness" Exodus 34:7. "God is love" 1 John 4:8.

God does not delight in seeing people hurt. God is not a God who seeks to bring destruction on people at His earliest convenience. Some people have come to the conclusion that if something bad does happen, it is an act of God. Others feel that if something bad does happen to them, it's because they've done something wrong and God is returning punishment for their wrong.

This is not true. God is a God of love, who delights

in making people happy, but this does not change the reality that bad things do happen.

Jesus, when speaking to His disciples one day, told them a parable that gives us the answer to this important issue. He explained to them why bad things do happen.

The parable Jesus was telling was the parable of the Sower. A man went out to sow seed in his fields. However, after returning from the field, late that evening, someone else came in and planted a great deal of seed for weeds.

Now the original sower had no idea until the vegetation began to grow. As it was growing, the hired help noticed all of the weeds and asked the sower what had happened. "The slaves of the land owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!'" Matthew 13:27,28.

In the parable, God is the sower, the devil is the enemy. Why is it that bad things come up in our lives? It's because of the enemy of God. The Devil is the one that is causing all of the grief. It is he that is causing all of the hardship.

The Greatest of Angels

There has been so much talk in recent years about the subject of Angels. Songs, books, movies and television series appealing to the curiosity of angels. One of the most watched television programs was *Touched By An Angel*, a series about angels making a difference in the lives of people.

But what does the Bible say about angels? Surprisingly, the Devil, himself was an angel in Heaven with God. In fact, he was the greatest of angels before his fall. Notice Ezekiel's account of Satan, the Devil and how he fell from perfection in Heaven. "You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering.... On the day you were created, they were prepared. You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in

you. By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you” Ezekiel 28:12-17.

Satan (or Lucifer, the Devil) was the exalted angel of Heaven. There, before corrupted by power and beauty, he had great authority in heaven. Next to God, he was the greatest in the kingdom. However, he let all of the power and beauty go to his head and he became greedy. He was no longer satisfied with having second place in heaven. Instead, he would rather have first.

Pride Before Fall

Satan’s fall then came because of his pride. Isaiah describes his reasoning. Notice how he desired to ascend his power above God’s. “How you have fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High” Isaiah 14:12-14.

There are two important things to notice here. First, Satan wanted to be number one in the kingdom. He was no longer satisfied with second place. So he wanted to be the most exalted, above God. Secondly, Satan wanted to put his throne above God’s. In other words, not only did Satan want to be first, but he did so because he believed that he could run the universe as ruler better than God could.

The throne is key to this reasoning by Satan. Not only did he want to be higher than God, but he thought that God’s method of government was insufficient.

Within the earthly sanctuary, there was an ark. If you have ever seen Raiders of the Lost Ark, with Harrison Ford, that was the ark spoken of here. The ark was located in the most holy place of the sanctuary. (We’ll get deeper into the sanctuary and its meaning later). This ark was known to represent the throne of God in Heaven. It was also referred to as the Mercy Seat. The ark, being the throne in God’s kingdom contained three items within it: The staff of Aaron, some Manna and the two tables of stone with the inscription of the ten commandments (Hebrews 9:4). Do you know why these

were contained within the ark of the covenant? The reason these three things were in the ark is for what they symbolized. The ark, or throne, which represents the kingdom of God, has three principles at its foundation: The leadership of God, as seen in the staff; that God will take care of His children as symbolized in the manna and the standard of righteousness in His law.

Satan now comes along and says that he can run the universe in his own way. Instead of the law being the standard, there would be no law, instead of him taking care of people, he would let everyone fend for themselves, and instead of leading as a Sheppard, he would lead as a dictator.

Satan then takes his political agenda and begins conspiring among the other angels in Heaven. He attempts to persuade them to his side. “If I were God,” he said, “you could do whatever you wanted.” As he conspired, he managed to seduce many of the angels. Some saw through his words and chose not to follow, others took up his campaign. Whereas he started quietly and carefully, he now became outspoken and demanding. In time, the lines were drawn and conflict came in Heaven.

A Great Controversy

In time, this conflict was needing to be addressed and a cosmic conflict was the result. “And there was war in Heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And 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” Revelation 12:7-9. “And He said to them, ‘I was watching Satan fall down from Heaven like lightening’” Luke 10:18.

Satan, attempting to persuade as many as possible in Heaven to follow his agenda was kicked out of Heaven. However, the political push had only just begun. With now about a third of the angels on his side, he attempts to prove that his way of doing things is better.

So when Adam and Eve are created, Satan begins to take his agenda and frustration out on them.

Not Happily Ever After

God then, in creating mankind, intended to show to all that His way of government was the best. That His law of love, that His method of free choice was the best. Using our earth, He created Adam and Eve. And He

created them with freedom to choose. When Adam and Eve were created, they were created perfect and with a desire to follow and worship God. “And God created man, in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them....And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good” Genesis 1:27-31.

Being created in the image of God means the ability to choose. The ability for Adam and Eve to choose whether they wanted to serve and worship God or not. They could follow Him and His ways, or choose otherwise. This power of choice was to prove to all the universe that there was a people that would love and serve Him freely. That Satan’s accusations were untrue.

1 Corinthians 4:9 says, “For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.”

Angels and beings throughout the universe would see how this Great Controversy was played out in the lives of mankind. Whose government is better? Satan’s or Christ’s? Humans would show. God would let Satan have limited freedom in the lives of mankind, exclusive of taking their freedom to choose. He would let Satan’s kingdom and manner of government be revealed in its true identity, to a limited fashion, if we chose to try it rather than God’s plan.

Adam and Eve, the first to be given the choice, determined to give Satan’s plan a try.

A Simple Tree

Placed within the Garden of Eden was a special tree. This tree, God had instructed Adam and Eve not to eat from. There was nothing spectacular or miraculous about the tree. It was only a tool of choice. Adam and Eve had the ability to choose to follow and worship God or to follow and worship Satan. The tree was the ability to choose.

God did not want a people to follow and worship Him out of compulsion. Neither did He want robots who would serve Him without the power of choice.

Say, for instance, you as a parent come home from work one day and wish to be greeted by your children with a hug. An expression of their affection toward you would mean a lot. So, when entering the door, you see your children sitting on the couch watching TV. You tell them to get up and say hello. You instruct them to come to you and give you a hug. Reluctantly, they come and put their arms around you and with words of

no meaning they say, “I love you” and rush back to their TV glad that the awkward moment is over. How would you feel?

Let’s say you come home from work and when you open the door, your children come running to you and put their arms around you. However, your children are actually androids with a special computer chip programmed to express affection toward you. Out of programming you’ve installed, they say “I love you” on queue and return to whatever activity they’ve been designed to perform. Would that touch you in the heart? Would that mean a great deal to you?

Neither would probably mean much to you. Why? Because they didn’t respond to you out of love. They didn’t respond to you out of a personal desire and choice to love, but compulsion and programming. You wouldn’t like that and neither would God. That is exactly why He made us with the ability to choose.

Would you like it if when you came home from work and entered your home and were greeted by your children with an earnest and heart felt response of love with a hug? “I love you” they say when they don’t have to. That is what we’d want. And that is exactly what God wanted.

Which is why He made Adam and Eve with the ability to choose. The tree was only put there as an instrument of choice. They had the ability not to follow God.

Enters The Serpent

Once Satan was cast to the earth from Heaven, he took his campaign against God’s government to Adam and Eve. Using the tree and God’s power of choice to the couple, the Devil, in the form of a serpent, attempts to convince them that his way is better than God’s.

So the Devil asks, “Indeed has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” Genesis 3:1. And Eve, near the tree responds to the Devil’s misguided question, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die’” Genesis 3:2,3.

Beginning his seductive reasoning and appealing to the appetite for power that he has so strongly, he introduces the first lie. “You won’t die. For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, knowing good and evil” Genesis 3:4,5.

And the young couple ate from the tree in the middle of the garden. The two, using their ability to choose, have disobeyed the only command of God. The result?

As God instructed, they would die. Not right away, but eventually. God said that if they ate of the tree; if they disobeyed; if they sinned they would die. Romans says the same thing and this principle has been a practice since they ate of the tree, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” Romans 6:23.

As a result of their disobedience, we are all then subject to death, having the same propensity to sin. “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” Romans 5:12.

Christ Pays The Price

With that, mankind would be lost. Satan would have proven himself right. “God’s standard of obedience is too high. We can’t keep God’s commands” he would say. But to save us, Christ decides to pay the price of death for sin.

Coming to Adam and Eve, God instructs them of the future coming of one who would pay the price for mankind. “I will put enmity between you and the woman,” God said, “And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel” Genesis 3:15. God said that Jesus would come. As a result of His coming, he would be wounded, but he would crush the Devil’s head!

This Messiah would come through the seed of the woman, Eve. He would be born of a woman as a man. He would then face the Devil’s accusations head on and prove that God’s way is best.

And such Jesus came. In a little town called Bethlehem, Jesus took the form of mankind and was raised as a man.

Jesus met Satan’s temptations head on. Day by day, temptation after temptation, Jesus kept the commands of God. He was sinless. Having the powers of man, tapping into the resources God provides for us all, He was perfect. And as perfect, he could pay the price of death for us.

“For as through one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous” Romans 5:19.

As the perfect lamb of God, Jesus died upon Calvary’s cross for you and me. With nails pierced through His hands, a crown of thorns upon His head, He died and paid the price of sin for mankind, giving to them once again the ability to choose whom they would serve. Jesus, who gave His life for mankind, or the Devil, who seeks to force people to worship him?

Jesus’ arms are open wide, inviting all to come to Him because of His love.

Its Your Choice

Still today, you and I have the power to choose. The Devil is seeking to cause as many as possible to turn away from God and follow him, God is reaching out to reach us.

The Devil, however, because of the cross of Jesus, was defeated. The universe knows now his plan, and knows God’s way of doing things is better. Jesus demonstrated the heart of His government. The Devil has demonstrated his. But now, Satan is doing all that he can do to bring people down with him. He’s mad. He’s jealous. He doesn’t care a lick about us, only to hurt God. “Woe to the earth,” the Bible says, “and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time” Revelation 12:12. Knowing he has only a short time left, he is doing all he can to hurt people and God.

And this is exactly why bad things happen. You and I get a chance to see what’s at the heart of each government. God’s is love. The Devils’ is selfishness.

It is because of the devil that bad things happen to good people. God, letting the Devil’s way have some impact in our world, is allowing us to see the nature of his government. But as we see it, Satan is really at fault. “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him” John 8:44.

Satan is doing all that he can to kill and destroy. To hurt people. People like me and you. Why do we see bad things happening? Because of Satan. He is hurting people!

Despite his agenda, his workings will eventually come to an end. He will be held accountable for his actions. After judgment has been set. People will have chosen. God will be considered righteous and just, Satan will be destroyed. “I will destroy you, O covering cherub,” God says, “therefore will I bring forth a fire in the midst of you, it will devour you, and I will bring you to ashes upon the earth” Ezekiel 28:16,18.

If we then choose God, we may very well still experience bad things, but instead of being alone, we will have His strength to make it through the tough times. “For I am the Lord your God, who upholds your right hand, who says to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you’” Isaiah 41:13. Jesus is there to help us. We will never be alone. We can have His strength. We may fear the future, but He will give us the ability to make it.

