

# Why Satan Was Not Destroyed

by Zac Poonen

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*God allowed Satan to exist to fulfill his purposes and to test his people, and Jesus' victory over Satan on the cross took away his armor and power.*

**Duration:** 25:25

**Scripture:** Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 2:15, James 4:7, Revelation 12:4

**Topics:** "Satan And Sin", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the origins of Satan's rebellion, his fall from God's presence, and the impact it had on the earth. It explores the concept of God allowing Satan to exist to fulfill His purposes, using examples from Scripture like Job, Paul, Joseph, and Esther to demonstrate how God turns the tables on Satan for His glory. The sermon emphasizes the victory believers have over Satan through Jesus' triumph on the cross, highlighting the authority and power Christians possess to resist the devil and live in victory.

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## Transcript

In our last study we were looking at how Satan became Satan and how he was cast down from God's presence because of rebellion, pride, discontentment. And it was when that happened that the earth became, like it's described in Genesis 1 verse 2, which was originally created perfect in Genesis 1 verse 1. Everything God creates is perfect. In the beginning God created the heaven and earth, it says in Genesis 1 verse 1. And the next words it says the earth was formless, without shape, empty, dark.

God never creates anything shapeless, empty, dark. So it's very clear that it became like that. And it became because of Satan's fall.

Because we know when Adam fell there were so many results of that on the perfect earth that there was in which he lived. Animals became wild, etc. So this is what happened when Satan fell.

So the earth and heaven were probably created long, could be even millions of years before Adam. We don't know. Though Adam himself is probably only 6,000 years ago.

But the earth itself, the heaven and earth, were created long before that. We don't know how many years were there between Genesis 1 verse 1 and verse 2. But when Satan fell, the earth became like that. Now we could ask ourselves a question as to why didn't God destroy Satan at that point so that he would cease to exist.

As far as we know, when Satan fell and was cast down, a number of the angels also apparently joined him in that rebellion against God. We don't know exact details about this. But we could get a little picture of this, perhaps, we can't be dogmatic about it, when we read in Revelation chapter 12 that the great red dragon, picturing the devil, swept away chapter 12 of Revelation verse 4, one third of all the stars of heaven.

In the book of Job, the angels are called stars. So in symbolic language, when the dragon sweeps away one third of the stars down from heaven, it's referring probably to the good angels who joined him in his rebellion and who are today the demons that are roaming around the earth and that sometimes possess human beings. Now it's very important to know that the devil was not cast down to hell.

He was cast down from heaven, from the immediate presence of God in 2 Corinthians chapter 12. We read of three heavens, Paul says he was caught up to the third heaven. In the Psalms, we read of the heavens being the work of God's fingers and that refers to the visible universe.

So that's the first heaven and God's throne is in the third heaven, there must be a second heaven in between and we presume that that is where the devil was cast down because we read in the book of Job that he could talk to God from there. He couldn't go back to the third heaven, never. But from the second heaven, he could speak to God.

And he's called also in Ephesians chapter 6, the principalities and powers in the heavenly places we read in Ephesians 6.12, the devil and his demons. He's called the prince of the power of the air in Ephesians. And his dwelling is said to be in the heavenlies, obviously not in the third heaven but must be in the second heaven.

And there we are in spiritual conflict with him. So when we seek to commune with God, it's through the second heaven there's a lot of resistance to prayer and praise especially. So, here we see that the devil's been cast out to the second heaven and in the book of Revelation we read of a time when he's thrown down from the second heaven to the earth in Revelation chapter 12 and then finally from the earth in chapter 20 to a bottomless pit for a thousand years and then pulled out of the bottomless pit and cast into the lake of fire in Revelation chapter 20.

So that's just, by the way, the history of the geographical location of Satan. So when people say that Satan is in hell, it's not true. He's never in hell.

He was cast down from the third heaven to the second heaven. One day he'll be cast down from there to the earth and one day from the earth to a bottomless pit and then pulled out of the bottomless pit and then thrown into the lake of fire where hell will also be cast in one day. So, that's just a brief history of Satan.

Now the question, why did God not destroy Satan and the demons who rebelled right at the outset? Now we don't understand fully all the reasons why God does many things and we must be humble enough to acknowledge that our limited understanding, our mind is incapable of answering many, many questions about life on this earth. Why do little babies get AIDS? Why is there so much poverty? Why is there so much injustice? Why do poor innocent girls get raped all over the world? Why does God allow evil dictators to live so long? Why is God allowed so many false religions to lead people astray? Why is God allowed cults to come up, separate children from parents and make life miserable for so many? There are a hundred and one questions like this or thousands of questions to which we don't know the full answer. And the reason for that is that our mind has got a very limited capacity.

God's wisdom is like an ocean and you can't pour an ocean into a cup. A cup can contain a little bit of the water in the ocean and so our mind can contain only a little bit of God's wisdom. Everything that we need to know concerning life on earth and how to live a godly life, that God has clearly revealed.

But beyond that, there are so many questions concerning which we don't know the final answer. And this is one of those things. We don't know the complete answer why God didn't destroy the devil.

But one thing we know, that God allows everything to take place for the good of the maximum number of people, to fulfill his purposes. So there must have been some way in which God decided that now that the devil has rebelled, he's going to use this rebellious person to fulfill his purposes and there's a greater glory when God uses a rebel and an enemy to fulfill his purposes than when he uses a submissive son of his. You know there's a lovely verse which is quoted in Romans and chapter 9. It's actually a quotation from Exodus.

But in Romans and chapter 9 and verse 17, it says, the scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate my power in you, that my name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth. Now one would have thought that God would have said that to somebody like Moses. That I raised you up so that I might demonstrate my power through you and proclaim my name.

But here we read in verse 17 that these are words that the Lord told Pharaoh, it's a quotation from Exodus chapter 9 and verse 16, where the Lord told Pharaoh, you have rebelled against me Pharaoh, you are proud, you're exactly like the devil and I'm going to use you to manifest my power. That whatever Pharaoh did, God turned the tables on him, protected the Israelites who were slaves in Egypt. And so there's a glory that comes to God when his enemy accomplishes his purposes.

So that's the reason why God has allowed Satan to exist. And I'll give you one example of that from the New Testament, where we read of the Apostle Paul, who had such tremendous revelations, he was caught up to the third heaven, etc. And there was a great danger that he would become proud of his accomplishments.

He had done great work for God on the earth and he had all these revelations. And to protect him from pride, God allowed the devil to trouble Paul in some way by giving him a thorn in the flesh, which Paul himself calls a messenger of Satan. Now if the devil were not there, who would give Paul that thorn in the flesh? And did that thorn in the flesh accomplish something good? It certainly did.

It was a messenger of Satan meant to trouble Paul that would make Paul cling to God and would keep him humble and dependent on God. So you see there in 2 Corinthians 12, we see a way in which we could say God used Satan to keep his servant Paul humble, which is a very good thing. Because the Bible says God gives his grace only to the humble and he resists the proud.

If Paul had become proud, God would have had to resist him. But Paul remained humble because of the messenger of Satan. Because Satan troubled him with a thorn in the flesh, Paul remained humble.

So there is an example of how God used the devil to keep Paul humble. We have another example in the book of Job, where God allowed Satan to harass Job by destroying all his property, killing his children, nagging him through his wife, irritating him through three preachers. The devil used so many agents in that book.

It wasn't just the loss of property and children. Notice in chapter 2, the devil used Job's wife to harass him. And then throughout that book, the devil used at least three preachers to irritate Job and accuse him and charge him with so many things which are not true.

The devil is an accuser and he uses sometimes preachers to accuse others. But through it all, we can say it was like a fire in which Job was put. And he came out a purer man, he came out a humbler man, because Job also had the same problem that Paul was in danger of.

Job was such an upright, righteous man, and he was a rich man, he had brought up all his ten children in a very good way, that he became proud. You know, whenever a man accomplishes something like that, and he's better than those people around him, he tends to be proud. And Job was proud, proud of his righteousness.

And God wanted Job to become more perfect, and one requirement that he had was humility. He needed humility. And the only way to bring Job to humility was by allowing Satan to trouble him and harass him, just like God allowed Satan to trouble and harass Paul to make him humble.

So Job was harassed by the devil in so many ways. The end result was, by the end of the book, you find Job is still a righteous man and still a perfect man. But in addition, he gets another quality in his character, which he didn't have when he started out, and that was humility.

He says in Genesis 40, verse 4, I am nothing, he says, I'm insignificant. And then he says in chapter 42, I repent, he says, I'll never open my mouth again, Lord. I put my hand on my mouth, because I'm a nobody.

Who accomplished that work in Job? The devil. So there we have examples of how God allows the devil to harass, trouble, irritate, and thereby makes his servants better. We find that even the temptations that the devil uses to bring to God's children, even when Jesus was tempted by Satan, and we are tempted by Satan, and through those temptations, God proves and tests us to see whether we qualify for his service.

The Bible says in the last days, there's going to be a flood of deceiving spirits that are going to come upon this earth. Now God could stop them, but he doesn't. Why doesn't he stop these deceiving spirits from coming into the midst of the church and into the midst of the world? Because it's through these deceiving spirits that God is going to test many people, including his own children, to see what they are really seeking for.

And think of the story in the Garden of Eden. God could have stopped Satan from coming into that garden very easily, but he didn't. Because Satan came in, Adam and Eve were tested.

It was Satan who came and invited Eve to take part of that forbidden tree. If he were not there, it's possible that Adam and Eve may have just gone past it. But because Satan came through the snake and put certain suggestions into Eve's mind and made her doubt God's love, that's what made her finally fall and eat of that tree.

Why didn't God stop Satan? Because he wanted Adam and Eve to be tested, because man cannot be holy without being tested and choosing God above everything else he's created. So here are a number of examples. We can only go by Scripture.

But here are some examples that show us that God uses Satan to accomplish his purposes. And he turns the tables on Satan. We see examples of that throughout Scripture.

For example, when Joseph was ill-treated by his own brothers, they wanted to sell him off to Egypt. They were inspired by the devil. Without a doubt.

Sell him to these Ishmaelite traders and send him off to Egypt so you'll never see him again. That was the work of the devil. The devil doesn't know the future, so he doesn't know what he's doing when he sends a Joseph to Egypt.

He doesn't realize that that is only accomplishing God's purpose. Because God wanted Joseph to be the ruler in Egypt, next to Pharaoh. But he uses the devil to use Joseph's brothers to send him to Egypt.

And then when he goes to Egypt, here's another interesting part of the story. He works in the house of a man called Potiphar and the devil uses Potiphar's wife to tempt Joseph and Joseph refuses to yield and thereby he manifests his integrity. He's tested and he overcomes and he becomes stronger.

Every time you pass a test you become stronger. Joseph became stronger and the devil tempted him every day through Potiphar's wife. He refused to yield and he became a stronger person.

And then the devil accused Joseph falsely through Potiphar's wife. She told a lie to her husband and the devil succeeds in putting Joseph in a jail. But it's there in the jail that he meets Pharaoh's butler and thus gets an opportunity to come before Pharaoh.

He wouldn't have met Pharaoh's butler if he hadn't gone to that jail. So who put him in the jail? The devil. What did it accomplish? God's purposes.

He finally got contact with Pharaoh's butler and threw that to Pharaoh and came before Pharaoh and became the second ruler in Egypt. So whatever the devil did to Joseph, whether it's through his brothers or through that evil woman Potiphar's wife, it only succeeded in fulfilling God's purpose. We can say in that example that God turned the tables on Satan.

You see another example in the book of Esther where Satan inspires a man called Haman and his wife to kill all the Jews and to turn against Mordecai who is one of the prominent Jews. But as you read that story, you find how God, and you know Haman made a huge gallows which is more than 70 feet high in order to hang Mordecai. You don't need a gallows, you need only a gallows 10 feet high to hang a man.

Why did he make one 70 feet high? What a nuisance it was to build such a huge, it's the height of a seven story building. Because he wanted the whole nation to see this guy hanging here to humiliate him. And at the end of the story, you find Haman himself is hanging on it.

A classic example of the devil turning, of God turning the tables on the devil. So God is glorified when his people see how all the efforts of Satan are frustrated. We find that again and again.

The Bible is full of stories from Genesis to Revelation of how God uses Satan to fulfill his purposes and how God turns the tables upon Satan and frustrates his purposes. And even more, after Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, where we now see Satan has been defeated completely. On the cross, his armor has been taken away and he has got no power over any of us.

So we see here that now our position is even more blessed than Joseph's or Job's or Mordecai's. That we come to the position that Jesus was in of one of total triumph. When Satan was defeated on the cross, we read in Colossians 2 and verse 15 that God took away from Satan all his armor when Christ died on the

cross.

One of the most important truths that we need to recognize is that Satan was defeated completely on the cross of Calvary when Jesus died. And just like many Christians know, all Christians know, that Christ died to take away all our sins on the cross. But even more, it's also true, equally true, that he took away Satan's armor on the cross so that Satan's got no weapons to fight against us now.

That's why today the Bible says, submit to God first, James 4, 7. Submit to God and resist the devil and he'll flee from you. There's no such verse in the Old Testament. No matter how much you submitted to God in the Old Testament, you couldn't resist the devil and make him flee.

No. And that's why God never gave such a command to people. People could resist the Philistines and make them flee or resist the Moabites or the Amorites or the Hittites and make them flee.

But they could not make the devil flee in the Old Testament. But now that Jesus Christ has defeated Satan on the cross, we are commanded to resist the devil in the name of Jesus Christ and he will flee. Now many Christians have a picture of they themselves running away from the devil and somehow escaping his grip.

This is not the picture that we see in the New Testament. In the New Testament, we see the devil running away from us. And that's the picture that we need to have in our mind always.

This is the position of the born-again believer, one of victory, one of authority. Satan has to obey a command given to him in the name of Jesus Christ. Every demon has to obey a command given in the name of Jesus Christ because they've all been defeated on the cross of Calvary, every one of them.

And that's why the Apostles or even any believer today can command a demon-possessed person in the name of Jesus to leave. And the person, the demon has to leave anybody who is possessed. It's not a question of how spiritual you are.

It's a question of whether you use the authority of the name of Jesus Christ or not. It's like you can have ten massive trucks coming down a road and one little policeman stands up and holds his hand and all those ten trucks stop. Why? Because that policeman represents the authority of the state.

He may be a small man. It doesn't make a difference. So that is how it is in the authority that God has given us through Jesus Christ over Satan and over all his power.

And it's important for us to exercise it. We need not live in fear of the devil anymore. The devil can try so many things through the years.

He's sought to harass Christians in so many ways, but he's a defeated foe. And everything that he does, whether a persecution or deception or anything, he's only going to further God's purposes for man. The Bible says the devil comes like a lion trying to harass and frighten and persecute Christians.

And most of the time he doesn't succeed because persecution leads to the church flourishing and numbers increasing, people becoming more spiritual as a result of persecution. But then he also comes as a serpent, deceiving. And there very often he succeeds.

But even that can be overcome because whether persecution or deception, the devil's power and authority have been taken away from him completely on the cross. And we must take our stand on that always. That Christ defeated Satan on the cross and he has no authority over us anymore.

God bless you.

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