

God: Ultimate Blame-taker For the Universe

On Calvary, God took the consequences of our transgressions and opened a way for us back to Himself. But many are surprised to learn that that is not all the blame He takes. To use a random quotation, Jeremiah 51:56, NIV, states, with regard to the fall of Babylon: “I will make her officials and wise men drunk, her governors, officers and warriors as well.”

Anyone who has spent any time in the word knows that on the night of ancient Babylon’s fall the leaders of the nation engaged in a drunken orgy. But did God bring it? No. They chose to attend Belshazzar’s great feast and willfully drank the spirits offered them. Why, then, does this text say that *God* made them drunk?

Nor is this an isolated example. This format appears profusely in the word. In fact, we see it so often that we read right over it; it doesn’t attract our curiosity.

But why—what circumstances—would motivate our loving God to say He *did* what reason and a survey of the facts say He didn’t do?

Strange and Fascinating Texts

Scripture offers other quotations alleged to be God the Father’s activities. What do you make of these odd quotations?

- “*God sent* an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem” (Judges 9:23, NIV).
- “[T]he Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and an evil spirit *from the Lord* tormented him” (1 Samuel 16:14, NIV).
- “*God shall send* upon them strong delusion” (2 Thess. 2:10-13). “*I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put upon the Egyptians*” (Exodus 15:26).
- “*I put the plague of leprosy on a house*” (Lev. 14:34).

Did God really do these things? Scripture assures us that the Father is just like Jesus in character; therefore, putting our “tape measure” up to see if these quotations fit the beautiful and gracious life of Jesus, we ask, “Would Jesus do that?” Would He send evil spirits, not just delude humans but *strongly* delude them, bring disease and plagues upon them? Would He? Of course not. Then, really, neither would God the Father. But why would He express these events in the strange and sometimes violent language recorded in Scripture?

Speaking of strange and violent language, look at these Scriptures:

Who struck Jesus?

“*I [God] will strike the Shepherd.... We esteemed Him smitten of God*” (Zech. 13:7; Matt. 26:31; Isaiah 53:4).

“My God, My God, why hast thou *forsaken Me?*” (Matt. 27:46).

God didn’t strike Jesus on the cross. No. He forsook Him—didn’t intervene on His behalf. But why would He say He struck Him?

Who hardened Pharaoh’s heart?

“And the Lord said to Moses, ‘When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But *I will harden his heart*, so that he will not let the people go’” (Exodus 4:21).

“But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, *he hardened his heart. . . . Pharaoh hardened his heart*” (Exodus 8:15, 32)

So—who hardened Pharaoh’s heart? Was it God, as indicated in the first quotation or Pharaoh himself, as the second quotation indicates?

Who killed the firstborn of Egypt?

“For *I* will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land . . . *I am the Lord*” (Exodus 12:12).

“[T]he Lord will pass over the door and not allow *the destroyer* to come into your houses to strike you” (Exodus 12:23).

Who struck Egypt’s firstborn—God, as we have believed, or the destroyer? (See Rev. 9:11)

Whose idea was it to spy out the promised land?

“And *the Lord* spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Send men to spy out the land of Canaan... from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man’” (Numbers 13:2).

“And every one of *you* came near to me [Moses] and said ‘Let *us* send men before us, and let *them* search out the land for *us*’” (Deut. 1:22).

Was it God’s idea, as the first quotation indicates, or the idea of the people themselves, as indicated in the second quotation?

Who assaulted Job?

After Satan’s first assault against Job, God said to Satan, “You incited *Me* against him, to destroy him without cause.” After the testing, Job’s relatives “comforted him over all the evil that *the Lord* had brought upon him” (Job 2:3; 42:11).

“Behold, all that he has is in *your [Satan’s]* power; only do not lay a hand on his person” (Job 1:12).

Did God assault Job? Or was it Satan?

Who led King David to number Israel?

“The *anger of the Lord* was aroused against Israel and *He* moved David against them to say, ‘Go, number Israel and Judah’” (2 Sam. 24:1).

“Now *Satan* stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel” (1 Chron.21:1).

Was it the Lord who led King David to number Israel? Or was it Satan?

Who killed Saul?

“So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the Lord, because he did not keep the word of the Lord, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the Lord; therefore *He [God] killed him*, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse” (1 Chron. 10:13, 14).

“Then Saul said to his armorbearer, ‘draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and abuse me.’ But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid, therefore, *Saul took a sword and fell on it*” (1 Chron. 10:4).

Did God assault Saul or did he commit suicide?

Who commanded ancient Israel to sacrifice their children to idols?

“*I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters*” (Jer. 19:9, NIV). “I polluted them...all that they caused to pass through the fire, all that openeth the womb, that *I might make them desolate*” (Ezekiel 20:26).

“Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech” (Lev. 18:21, NIV). “...to burn their sons and daughters in the fire—something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind” (Jer. 7:31, NIV.)

Did God make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters, make them pass their children through fire, make them desolate? Or was He the one who warned them against it?

In each case God didn’t actually do it, but *He allowed* the prophets to assign Him the blame. When He *could have* prevented an incident from taking place, *but didn’t* prevent it, the incident does take place—then He allows the prophets to say *He did it*. He could have prevented Satan from harming Jesus or Job or Saul, but He didn’t intervene; therefore, Scripture says He harmed them.

Where the Bible says, for example, “And, behold, *I, even I*, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die” (Gen 6:17), is this possibly just another example of God’s saying that He didn’t intervene to prevent this disaster from taking place? And if so, what are the implications where other statements of His “wrath” are concerned? Is there a sense in which, because He didn’t prevent a certain event, that He is truly responsible for it?

Why?

Why would God allow Himself to be presented in this way? We can only begin to answer that question in this small pamphlet.

Despite what some believe, God did not dictate the Holy Scriptures. He merely presented the message in visions or dreams and relied largely on humans to write it down correctly. Human prophets, captives of their age, then wrote the vision or dream according to their best understanding and in the best words available to them at that time. But they had several cultural barriers to their full comprehension.

Although the ancient Hebrews were monotheistic, their neighbors were not. Polytheism flourished all around them and affected the way the Israelis saw things. They looked, as it were, through the polytheistic eyes of their neighbors, where violence prevailed as a suitable tool for settling disputes. Their gods were fickle, easily angered, violent, and needed appeasement by sacrifice, influencing the Israelis’ thinking to a degree. It was easy to imagine their God with similar qualities. Violence also figured prominently in their national history. As a body, they first observed it in Egypt where they came to equate national muscle to horses and chariots and weaponry and glittering garments of mail. They could not imagine a safe world without these things. It influenced everything—the way they thought, the things they did, the way

their prophets wrote.

But probably the main reason Scripture shows God speaking in such a strange way is that He wants us to know that He is in charge of His universe, and He makes all final decisions. He has the power. Satan does not. When He declines to intervene to protect us, it merely indicates a respect for human free will. We cannot imagine the sorrow and regret God feels when He must walk away.

But probably the greatest reason Scripture was phrased in this way was the ancient world's lack of understanding of the great conflict between Christ and Satan. To them, despite their polytheistic tendencies, they still believed at core in only one God. Their monotheism dictated that all events—both good and evil—came from Him. They could not conceive of a celestial dispute playing out in individual lives on this planet. They didn't get the importance of free will; they were unaware that humans get the master they choose to obey. Period. They were content with their knowledge, or lack of it. They thought they were right, when they were dangerously wrong.

Therefore when Scripture says, "I will make her officials and wise men drunk, her governors, officers and warriors as well," He means the wicked have crossed the Rubicon—the boundary line of their probation; now God *cannot* move on their behalf. They have squandered their free will serving Satan until they no longer hear the voice of God. Now God has *no choice* but to let them go. Thus they are helpless before the machinations of the enemy—the destroyer—and when they are blind drunk, the Bible says God made them so, because—He didn't prevent it.

While Satan accuses the brethren (Rev. 12:10), our sovereign God takes full responsibility for everything happening in His realm.

For More Information:

- www.4Adventists.com
Two Books Titled: *Light Through the Darkness: A Vindication of God*, 157 pages, and an *Adventist Supplement*, 72 pages.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBZfdggyXw&feature=youtu.be
(or) <http://youtu.be/hMaltpis72c>
A Video Titled: *A New Look At the Character of God*
- www.GodsCharacter.com
A Book Titled: *Servant God: The Cosmic Conflict Over God's Trustworthiness*, 418 pages
- www.TeachServices.com/as-he-is-4th-angel-publications-paperback-1si/
A Book Titled: *As He Is: Issues in the 'Character of God' Controversy*, 334 pages (Contact straub@direct.ca for alternate pricing.)