

**Study Guide Series**

# Does God Engage in **DESTRUCTIVE** Behavior?

A study guide for understanding and  
vindicating God's character

**Troy J. Edwards**

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character*

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *King James Version* (KJV) of the Bible.

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Published by **Vindicating God Ministries**

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Dedicated to the people at the wonderful  
church that I am privileged to pastor:

***Christ's Victory Bible Teaching Center***

## Introduction

*None of our faces are covered with a veil. All of us can see the Lord's glory and think deeply about it. So we are being changed to become more like him so that we have more and more glory. And this glory comes from the Lord, who is the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18; New International Reader's Version)*

You may have heard the old saying, "You are what you eat." There is some truth to that since healthy eating leads to a healthy life and bad eating leads to a life full of health problems. However, there is a truth that is equally important and that is that *you are what you worship* (Psalm 115:1-8; 135:15-18; Matt. 5:43-48; Luke 6:35-36; Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 5:1-2).

We can see this with Islamic terrorists. They worship a deity who seems to have no issue with lying, rape, murder, and killing. Because their deity has no problem with these things neither do its followers. Therefore they rape, murder, and lie without reservation since their deity not only encourages it, he even promises a sexual paradise for a job well done in these areas. Truly David spoke by the Holy Spirit when he wrote concerning false gods, "*They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them*" (Psalm 115:8).

Yet, while we rightly chastise the Islamic religion for glorifying violence, some aspects of Christianity is also guilty for its false misrepresentation of the Biblical Triune God. Certain segments of Christianity have presented us with a bipolar, schizophrenic deity. Quite often in these circles the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is portrayed as a vindictive all-controlling temperamental *destroyer* and at the same time a loving Father. In order to reconcile these two distinct tensions, proponents of these ideas attempt to convince us that God destroys people from a motive of love as well as for some unexplained, mysterious *glory*. Is it any wonder that those who held to these ideas about God (to include much of the Catholic Church and most of the 16<sup>th</sup> century reformers) were some of the greatest persecutors of those who disagreed with them? Even today many of those who believe these ideas about God continue to persecute

others, except they now do it through pen and paper rather than by sword and torture.

Many of these ideas come from a misunderstanding of what it means for God to have “glory.” God’s glory is not something mysterious and unexplainable. We could not see God’s glory and be changed if it is something mysterious and undiscoverable. It consists of His character and reputation (Ex. 33:18-19). When we know the Biblical truth about God then we understand His character and by deeply reflecting on His character we become more like Him. That is why it is important as to whether or not we see God as an angry vindictive destroyer or a loving, patient and kind Father. We cannot hold two opposite ideas about Him at the same time as some attempt to do. The foundational premise we start from is the grid from which we will interpret Scripture.

There are many Scriptures that speak about God’s generosity, kindness, mercy, love, compassion, holiness, integrity, etc. Yet, there are also many Scriptures that present Him as a destroyer. Some may not think that there is a tension between the former and the latter, that is, until we run into passages that also present God as a deceiver, tempter, an ordainer of sin, creator of evil, etc. There are those who would refer to these passages as “difficult.” This has led many “liberal Christians” to deny the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.

What if one can have a different understanding of these passages without ever having to compromise the fact that every single portion of the Bible is God’s inspired Word? In this study guide you will see that it is possible. We will show you that God is a loving and kind God, that He is not a destroyer, and that all Bible passages that state such, though they are divinely inspired by God, have been misunderstood. This study guide, using the Bible itself, will show you how one can read such passages and still see that God does not engage in destructive behavior.

What we believe about God will affect our lives. It will determine how we raise our children, treat our spouses, deal with strangers, interact with fellow employees, and how we conduct our ministry to the Lord and others. Therefore, this study is vitally important. We believe that after this study you will love God and your Bible even more and, while you will continue to *fear* (reverence/worship) God, you will no longer be *afraid* of Him because you will see Him as the loving God who is just like Jesus.

And you will long to become just like Him.

## Lesson One

### Proper Bible Interpretation Principles (Part 1)

*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1:20-21)*

Before we can answer the question as to whether or not God is a destroyer we must first lay out the proper method necessary to come to any conclusions on this matter.

The foundation of all our understanding about God must come from His written revelation to us, known to us as “the Bible”. Anything said about God that is not found in this book must be rejected. Nonetheless, there are many different churches claiming a number of contradictory things about God. While many churches, denominations, and theological persuasions have diverse and contrasting ideas about God, most, if not all of them, claim that the Bible is their source of information.

Certainly the conclusions we come to in these lessons will be in disagreement with the views held by many churches. Like many of them we believe that the Bible is our foundation for understanding about God’s character and nature. Therefore we will lay out the Bible interpretation principles that we use to draw our conclusions.

#### **1. Recognize that God is the source of only good**

It is important that we recognize that only good comes from God and evil cannot possibly come from Him. This is the foundation for any and all understanding about God.

*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit (Matt. 7:18)*

*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and **in him is no darkness at all** (1 John 1:5)*

*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (Matt. 7:11)*

*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, **neither tempteth he any man**.... **Every good gift** and every perfect gift is from above, and **cometh down from the Father of lights**, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (James 1:13, 17)*

**Note:** While some limit the word “tempted” in James to sin and immorality the word actually means to be tested to do evil through a number of means to include trials, tribulation, and persecution.

***Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. **This wisdom descendeth not from above**, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. **But the wisdom that is from above is first pure**, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace (James 3:11-18)***

God has been accused of being the source of all manner of evil in our world. Buzz words such as “sovereignty” and “omnipotence” have been attached to God and defined in a way that perceives God as the ultimate controller of all that happens in the universe. Scripture is approached, studied and interpreted from this perspective, causing men to cherry pick passages from Scripture to support this theology, ignore and reinterpret the plain meaning of

other passages that contradict it, and to even give distorted philosophical redefinitions of what it means for God to be good. It is best to set aside man-made definitions of God's attributes and how He manifests them and look to His Word to see exactly how He revealed Himself.

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## 2. All views of God must be seen through the “Jesus” Grid

Again, many churches, denominations and theological camps often see God through the grid of the creed or doctrinal perspective of the group they affiliate with. A “Calvinist” (one who believes that God controls and predestines all events be they good or evil) will see God through this grid. One who embraces a doctrine of “cessationism” (the doctrine that God no longer performs miracles in this present age) will not see God as one who heals sickness today (unless “it be His will”) or deliver from demonic oppression as Jesus did in the gospels.

When we begin to see that Jesus is God and that He reflects the very likeness and personality of the Father, then we will see God as He has truly chosen to reveal Himself:

*In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, **who is the image of God**, should shine unto them (2 Cor. 4:4)*

Other translations: “*Christ is the one who is **exactly like God***” (Easy to Read Version); “*They cannot see the light, which is the good news about our glorious Christ, **who shows what God is like***” (Contemporary English Version); “*They cannot see how bright and wonderful Christ is. **He is just like God himself***” (World English New Testament).

*In the past God spoke to our people through the prophets. He spoke to them many times and in many*

*different ways. And now in these last days, God has spoken to us again through his Son. He made the whole world through his Son. And he has chosen his Son to have all things. The Son shows the glory of God. **He is a perfect copy of God's nature**, and he holds everything together by his powerful command. The Son made people clean from their sins. Then he sat down at the right side[a] of God, the Great One in heaven (Heb. 1:1-3; Easy to Read Version)*

*Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake (John 14:8-11)*

Not once in the Scriptures do we find Jesus giving sickness, tempting anyone to sin, calling down famine, bringing about natural disasters to punish His enemies or condemning anyone in wrath and judgment. On the contrary, throughout the gospels we find Jesus healing the sick, feeding the hungry, delivering people from sin, averting natural disasters, and rebuking His disciples when they sought for violent methods in dealing with their opposition. Jesus exhibited total love—the kind that wants to help and not hurt. Jesus remains today our “harmless” High Priest (Heb. 7:26). The Father and Holy Spirit are exactly like Jesus.

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### 3. Learn to Understand the Language of the Bible

Learn that God used the language, culture, and idioms of the people who recorded His Word. There are no contradictions in the Bible. There is only a failure to thoroughly examine the language of the Bible. To understand the nature of God in relation to passages that implicate Him as a destroyer, we must understand Bible language, its use of certain phrases and idioms and how they differ from our culture, language, and expressions.<sup>1</sup> One scholar writes:

One peculiarity of the Hebrew tongue is that it abounds in figures of speech that must necessarily be understood, to gain its intended meaning. The simple mode of life in which the earliest Israelites lived, doubtless made them great observers of nature; any reference to which, from their familiarity with it, made them require no explanations. Our difficulty here is to reconcile this with our ideas and language; and the neglect of these idioms with our translators, where they have given a literal verbal translation, without the customary sense of the original, has led them into many errors.<sup>2</sup>

God used the language, expressions and idioms of His people to speak His Word. We failed to interpret these idioms in order to be understood in the Western mind, therefore, mischaracterizing God and charging Him as the direct cause of evil.

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### 4. Understand the ANE – Hebrew Permission Idiom

While there are a number of idioms in the Bible that have not been properly interpreted, the Ancient-Near Eastern – Hebrew

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<sup>1</sup> “For when the Deity has condescended to speak by the mouth of men, he has always left them to use the modes of expression current and intelligible in the age in which they lived.” Dathe, translation of the Historical Books, Hals, 1784, 8vo. As quoted in Twopeny, Richard **Dissertations on Some Parts of the Old and New Testaments which have been Supposed Unsuitable to the Divine Attributes** (London: C & J Riverton, 1824), p. 84

<sup>2</sup> Murray, John Hale **A Help for English Readers to Understand Mis-translated Passages in Our Bible** (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1881), p. 2

“permission idiom” is the focus of this particular study. An idiom is a form of speech that is unique to one’s tribe or culture.

In the neighborhood in which I grew up, which was predominantly African American, we might describe our admiration for a person by saying, “Yo man, that is a *bad* dude.” Unless one knows the culture from which the person is from and what he is attempting to communicate, we may look at the dictionary definition of “bad” and think that he is speaking negatively about that person. Yet, where I came from, the word “bad” actually meant something *positive*. Other expressions from the culture I am from like “that is da bomb” was not speaking of a *physical bomb* but was actually describing something *positive* about the thing we referred to as “da bomb.”

All of these are what we may refer to as the *idioms* of the culture from which I originate. The Hebrew people and the nations that surrounded them also had idioms; one of them was a “permissive” idiom. One minister explains:

In the language of Scripture, natural consequences are sometimes spoken of as though they were pre-ordained and irrevocable decrees. What happens solely through the permission of the Almighty, in the ordinary course of his Providence, is described as though it had taken place through some special and irresistible intervention of his hand. This is a mode of writing peculiar to the Hebrew idiom; an idiom which prevails every where throughout the New Testament, as well as the Old. Thus, when the sacred writers represent God as “blinding the eyes of men that they should not see, and hardening their hearts that they should not understand;” their meaning generally is, that he does not powerfully interfere to prevent those evils which are the natural fruits of our own folly, perverseness, and impenitence.<sup>3</sup>

Basically, in the ANE-Hebrew idiom ***God is said to do that which He merely allowed or permitted.*** This truth must be kept to the forefront of our minds as we delve into the topic of whether or not God engages in destructive acts. This truth is the primary key to interpreting many Scriptures that attribute destructive acts to God.

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<sup>3</sup> Foyster, John Goodge **Sermons** (London: Ibotson and Palmer, 1826), p. 90

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**Conclusion:** So far we have studied four of the seven principles of for the method of properly interpreting the Bible that will lead to understanding whether or not God engages in destructive behavior. We conclude with the Bible interpretation principle that ***God is said to do that which He merely allowed or permitted.*** The principle in the next lesson will expound further on this truth and help us see how we are able to derive this truth directly from the Scriptures themselves.

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## Lesson Two

### Proper Bible Interpretation Principles (Part 2)

*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1:20-21)*

In lesson one we concluded with the Bible interpretation principle that ***God is said to do that which He merely allowed or permitted.*** Understanding this principle is important when confronting Scriptures that portray God as a destroyer. In this lesson we will examine three more principles that explains how this truth can be derived from the Scriptures themselves.

#### 5. Translation of Permissive Verbs as Causative

Some words and phrases in Scripture can be translated through a biased theological grid. Certain words that should have been translated “permissively” were actually translated “causatively.” This is often based on the theological bias of the Bible translator.

In his *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, Stephen D. Renn, under the topic “Allow,” mentions three Old Testament Hebrew words: *yalak*, *nathan*, and *shalah*. Concerning the word “*nathan*,” Renn writes, “...., it expresses the meaning ‘to let, allow,’ in negative contexts of refusing to give permission.”<sup>4</sup> Concerning the word “*shalah*,” Renn says, “....the meaning ‘let (someone or something) go’ in the sense of ‘allowing’ them to go is indicated.”<sup>5</sup>

A good example of how a “permissive” word was improperly translated and made causative is found in 1 Kings 22 concerning a lying spirit placed in the mouth of Ahab’s prophets:

*Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the*

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<sup>4</sup> Renn, Stephen D. *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew And Greek Texts* (Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), p. 26

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

*LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee* (1 Kings 22:23)

The word “put” here is “Nathan” and would have been better translated as “allowed” or “permitted.” Out of the numerous translations I have sought, J. B. Rotherham’s *The Emphasized Bible* is the only translation that has made a correction to this passage:

*Now, therefore, lo! Yahweh hath **suffered** a spirit of falsehood to be put into the mouth of all these thy prophets. But, Yahweh himself, hath spoken concerning thee, calamity.*

Though Rotherham uses an old archaic word “suffered” (which in the English of this time simply meant “allow” or “permit”) it does help us to understand that God is not responsible for evil spirits entering into false prophets. He may *permit* this to happen, thus giving the liars what they wanted in the first place (Isaiah 30:9-10; 66:4; Rom. 1:18, 24-28; 2 Thess. 2:10-11), He is not the doer of it (Jer. 14:15; 23:32; 29:23).

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## **6. The Bible is its own Commentary and Dictionary**

While we are thankful for the well-educated scholars who have spent many years understanding the original languages and culture of the Bible, and we use their materials often to assist us, there is no better commentary on the Bible than the Bible itself. One portion of Scripture is sufficient for helping us to understand what we might believe to be a different but obscure portion of Scripture.

Keep this truth in mind: ***The Bible does not contradict itself. It explains itself.*** This is an important principle to understand. We often hear ignorant people say that the Bible contradicts itself. That is because they lack the spiritual discernment or the relationship with the author of the book and are attempting to read it with their natural, unrenewed mind. Furthermore, many of them approach the Bible

with the mindset of proving it wrong. For the Christian, we must understand that the Bible contains no contradictions or discrepancies. It contains clarifications and explanations.

For example there are some passages that appear to make God the author of sickness, which contradicts other passages that attribute sickness directly to Satan. A good example is found in Ex. 15:26 where we are told, “*I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians.*” Apart from interpreting the passage in the light of other Scripture we would get the impression that God is the author of sickness and disease. However, Finis Dake in his *Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible* helps us to apply this method of interpretation as we interpret Exodus 15:26:

b [I will put none of these diseases upon thee] God is responsible for disease only in the sense of making the law of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7-8); making penalties for sin (Ex. 15:26; 23:22-25; Lev. 26; Dt. 28); and permitting agencies with the power to execute the curse on man to have their way (Job 1:6-22; 2:1-13; 42:10; Ps. 91; Lk. 13:16; Jn. 10:10; Acts 10:38; Heb. 2:14-15; Rev. 9:1-12). If there had been no sin there would be no curse. When Christ reigns on earth there will be no sickness (Isa. 33:24; 35:5-6). When God’s will is done on earth as in heaven, there will be no curse (Rev. 21:1 -- Rev. 22:6).<sup>6</sup>

Note that Dake simply brings other Scripture to help us understand the language used in Ex. 15:26 to demonstrate that God is only said to do that which He allowed or permitted. A clear example of this principle is the comparison of two different passages that relate to David being moved to number Israel:

*And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah (2 Sam. 24:1)*

*And **Satan** stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel (1Chron. 21:1)*

We know that God never tempts anyone (1 Cor. 10:13; James 1:13). This is the work of Satan (Matt. 4:1-3; 1 Thess. 3:4, 5, 1 Cor. 7:5). In this sense God is said to have “moved” David by allowing

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<sup>6</sup> Dake, Finis Dake Annotated Reference Bible

Satan to do it. We will see in these lessons how this principle of interpretation helps us to understand how God is said to be involved in destructive acts.

Furthermore, the Bible, when read in its immediate and wide contexts helps us to define words that might either confuse us or provide a negative picture of God's actions. For example, the King James Version describes God as "smiting" the rebellious. Apart from a careful study of the Bible, the pictures that come into our mind usually see God physically bringing harm using His omnipotent power. However, reading the Bible carefully helps us understand that such is not the case:

*Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that **God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. And the children of Israel fled before Judah: and God delivered them into their hand** (2 Chron. 13:15-16)*

God does not "smite" directly but He does it by "delivering up" or allowing sinners to fall into the hands of the very evil forces they have chosen for themselves. This is the removal of His supernatural protection that holds back the evil forces waiting to bring about destruction. When we read statements about God "cursing" and making something "accursed" we might think of God exerting supernatural power to bring about the results of the curse. However, the Bible defines this for us. When Joshua sought God for why they were defeated at Ai God explained:

*Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, **because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you** (Joshua 7:12)*

To be "cursed" or "accursed" is to suffer the loss of God's presence, blessing, and protection. Bible commentaries and dictionaries are helpful tools but not everyone can afford them. No problem. The Holy Spirit gives us a divine commentary and dictionary within the Scriptures themselves. In these studies in

relation to God engaging in destructive behavior we will closely follow the method of “interpreting Scripture with Scripture.”

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## 7. Interpret the Old Testament in light of the New Testament

Finally, as we follow the method of “interpreting Scripture with Scripture” we must be sure that we understand all Old Testament Scripture in the light of how God has revealed Himself in the New Testament. It is sad that numerous Christians outright reject the Old Testament and see it as irrelevant for the church. Those who do so are rejecting a very significant, important, and vital portion of God’s written revelation to man. On the other hand, many have built doctrinal systems primarily on Old Testament proof-texts without bothering to see how those principles are taught in the light of the New Testament. We must reject both extremes.

The Old Testament is a progressive revelation. All was not revealed to God’s people during the writing of the Old Testament and only when we get to the New Testament are we given more insight on the Old. Apart from understanding this truth we will give God credit for many things that the New Testament clearly states are not true about Him. For example, God says in Ezekiel that He engages in the act of deception:

*And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, **I the Lord have deceived that prophet**, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel (Eze. 14:9)*

If a person rejects the Hebrew idiom in which ***God is said to do that which He merely allowed or permitted*** then they would have to believe that God is a deceiver. However, this is not a necessary conclusion if one is willing to read this passage in the light of the New Testament in which we are told that God has no ability to lie:

*That by two immutable things, in which it was **impossible for God to lie**, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us (Heb. 6:18)*

*In hope of eternal life, which God, **that cannot lie**, promised before the world began (Titus 1:2)*

As we can see, if Old Testament Scripture is not read in the light of the New Testament it is easy to cast aspersions on God's character. Now we can ask, "Why did God claim to be a deceiver if He is not?" God was simply taking responsibility for allowing the real deceiver, Satan, to deceive the prophet.

While Satan was by no means absent from the Old Testament, he was not fully revealed as an enemy of God and we did not fully see his hand in all of the evil that we find there. However, when we come to the New Testament, we begin to see who the culprit is behind all of the evil and deception in this world. Furthermore, the New Testament explains God's method of "deceiving:"

*And now **ye know what withholdeth** that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only **he who now letteth will let**, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, **whose coming is after the working of Satan** with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. **And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:** That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thess. 2:6-12)*

Note that God is withholding the man of sin from manifesting until a certain time when he finally "lets" him. God "sends" delusion by removing His protection and letting Satan have his way. However, the New Testament reveals that Satan is the agent behind all of the

deception in the world (John 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Rev. 12:9). Therefore, it is important that we read all Old Testament Scripture in the light of the New Testament so that we can fully understand the character of God.

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**Conclusion:** With these principles intact we are ready to embark on a journey in which we will see God in a new and wonderful light. We will not see Him as the angry destructive deity who pounces on those who reject Him. Instead we will see Him as the protective father who is willing to give us the freedom to reject Him even if it hurts both Him and us. We will also see the enemy for who he is. We will see him as a defeated foe whose greatest weapons are deception and accusation. As long as he can keep us believing wrong things about God—and he will use the Bible to do it—he can keep us from walking in the victory we have in Christ. But when we learn the truth about God and our enemy we are making strides towards a life of victory in Christ Jesus.

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## Lesson Three

### Did Jesus Destroy?

One Sabbath day while at the synagogue, Jesus saw a man with a withered hand. The religious leaders during that time were very legalistic and saw “healing” as a “work.” They did not want Jesus to heal on the Sabbath. In response, Jesus asked a question that is important to the topic of whether or not God is a destroyer:

*Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days **to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?** And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. (Luke 6:9-10)*

Note the following:

- Jesus compared “doing good” to “saving a life” and “evil” to “destruction”.
- Jesus compared “healing” to “doing good” and “sickness” to “destruction.”
- Jesus compared leaving someone in a bad condition as “doing evil” and “destroying.”

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#### 1. Jesus Did “Good”

Jesus chose not to do evil and destruction but to save and heal. When the Samaritans refused to let Jesus pass through their village His disciples wanted to bring “divine retribution.” Note our Lord’s response:

*And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias*

*did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For **the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.** And they went to another village (Luke 9:54-56)*

The above describes the primary mission of God.

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him **should not perish, but have everlasting life.** For **God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved** (John 3:16-17)*

The word “destroy” in Luke 9:56 and the word “perish” in John 3:16 comes from the same Greek word (*apollumi*). God the Father wants to keep the world from destruction just as much as Jesus does. That is why He sent Jesus in the first place. The VOICE translation enunciates this point well in its rendition of John 3:16-17:

*For God expressed His love for the world in this way: He gave His only Son so **that whoever believes in Him will not face everlasting destruction,** but will have everlasting life. Here's the point. God didn't send His Son into the world to judge it; instead, He is here to rescue a world headed toward certain destruction.*

The world is already headed towards destruction. God sent Jesus into the world to save it from its own self-destruction. If God were the One destroying the world then that would mean that He sent Jesus to save the world from Himself. Of course that makes no sense at all. Therefore, Bible passages that appear to implicate God as a destroyer must be understood in the light of the Christ character revelation.

The Bible said that Jesus went about “doing good” and not doing things that are destructive:

*How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who **went about doing good, and healing** all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him (Acts 10:38)*

Take note of the following:

- Jesus went about doing good.
- The good that Jesus did was “healing”.
- Sickness is not a blessing. It is “oppression.”
- Sickness has its origins in Satan.
- God was with Jesus. Therefore sickness is not the work of God. Otherwise Jesus would have been fighting against God by healing. However, God was with Jesus, affirming what He did.

Now connect this to another very important statement that Jesus made:

*Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise (John 5:19)*

Jesus only did what the Father wanted Him to do. Therefore, if Jesus is not a destroyer then neither is God the Father.

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## **2. Jesus and the Father are Exactly Alike**

Jesus represented the Father’s character in every respect:

*Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;***

*and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: **but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.** Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake (John 14:8-11)*

Here Jesus tells Phillip that everything He did, to include healing, deliverance, teaching, helping those in need, was the Father working through Him. Some erroneously think of the Father as harsh and cruel while picturing Jesus as loving and kind. Jesus does away with such thinking when He says, “*I and my Father are one*” (John 10:30). He and the Father are absolutely one in intent and purpose:

*And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, **that they may be one, as we are ....** And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, **even as we are one** (John 17:11, 22)*

Since the Father and Son are one in everything then all of the healings, deliverances and lovingkindnesses displayed by Jesus were the Father’s intent as well. Since Jesus never did any destructive acts towards men then neither did the Father. Jesus is God (John 1:1, 2, 14) and represents the heart of God with total accuracy.

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### **3. The Exception**

There is one time when Jesus did engage in destructive behavior. That was when He destroyed Satan and his works on our behalf:

*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Heb. 2:14-15)*

*He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8)*

The word “destroy” as used in these passages means “to make inoperative, bring to nothing.” Jesus, through His death, burial, and resurrection, has made Satan and his works inoperative against us. Satan is a defeated and powerless enemy.

Jesus will also destroy the anti-Christ who will appear on the scene in the end times:

*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and **shall destroy with the brightness of his coming**: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders (2 Thess. 2:8-9)*

The word “destroy” here simply means that God will bring him to an end. It is not talking about annihilating someone out of existence as some interpret this. Revelation says concerning the beast and the false prophet, “*These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone*” (Rev. 19:20). That means they will continue to exist. God’s “destruction” merely means that He will make them ineffective to do any more harm.

The Lord will also engage in the act of destroying when he finally destroys death itself:

*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under*

*his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death* (1 Cor. 15:24-26)

Again, “destroy” here does not mean to be blown out of existence. We are told, “*And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death*” (Rev. 20:14). Death will be “destroyed” in the sense that it will no longer be able to harm anyone.

Hence, there are some acts of destruction that Jesus has engaged in and will engage in in the end. However, these acts are on behalf of man and not against us.

That being said, since God destroyed the works of Satan which includes sickness, sin, deception, and death (in every form and manner) then these were never acts of God to begin with. Satan is not in partnership with God but is God’s adversary as much (if not more than) he is the adversary of men. God is not engaging in destructive acts through the works that the Bible credits as belonging to Satan. Furthermore, since God sees death as an enemy and intends to destroy it then God has never used it to destroy man. God is only the *literal* destroyer of that which attempts to destroy those creatures He dearly loves.

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**Conclusion:** It has been well said that if the Father had come to earth rather than the Son that there would have been no difference in the history or actions of the incarnate deity. Therefore, whatever we have learned about Jesus is equally true of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

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## Lesson Four

### Jesus' Teachings about God

In the last lesson we saw that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are exactly like one another. We saw that the Lord's mission was not to destroy but to save. Yet, in some of the Lord's teachings He appeared to teach a God who destroyed. This seems inconsistent with what we learned about the life of our Lord and the representation of His Father from the last lesson. In this lesson we will reconcile our Lord's teachings with the model of God that we have been sharing.

#### 1. Jesus' Parable of a Vineyard

In some of His parables Jesus described God as a destroyer. In the first one we will look at, Jesus gives the story of a man who planted a vineyard and then hired workers to take care of it. After sending several representatives and finally his son, who was killed, to reason with the workers to receive his fruit, the vineyard owner takes action:

*When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, **He will miserably destroy those wicked men**, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, **The stone which the builders rejected**, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matt. 21:40-43)*

The obvious truth from this parable is that God would destroy the Israelite leaders for murdering Jesus. Within this parable Jesus was using the common idiom that describes God as doing that which He merely allows or permits.

Jesus compares the destruction of the wicked men with the fact that the kingdom will be taken from the Jews who had been first

to be selected for it. This is what He means by adding the illustration concerning the stone that the builders rejected. Paul further explains:

*But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? **Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;** As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed (Rom. 9:31-32)*

Paul says that the stone, which He describes as a “stumbling stone” represents the fact that Israel refused to believe the gospel and killed their own Messiah, thus losing the kingdom that was rightfully theirs. Paul further explains, “*Well; because of unbelief **they were broken off**, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear*” (Rom. 11:20). Peter gives a similar explanation in his epistle (see 1 Pet. 2:6-8).

The fact that Israel, because of their unbelief, would not receive the kingdom, meant that they would be disconnected from God, or “broken off.” Isaiah connects this same illustration of a stumbling stone to God’s method of “destruction” or “smiting.”

*And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.... For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, **and smote him: I hid me**, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart (Isa. 57:14, 17)*

God punishes by HIDING HIS FACE!!! Hiding His face means the removal of His protective presence. It is by this method that God is said to “smite” or “destroy” (Deut. 31:17-18; Deut. 32:17-20; Jer. 33:5). Isaiah again says, “*That is because you have turned away [hidden your face] from us and have **let our sins destroy us** [given us over to our sins]*” (Isa. 64:7; The Expandable Bible). Scripture should always be allowed to interpret itself in order to get the best understanding of God's character. By following this

method we understand that Jesus meant God would “destroy” Israel by removing His protective presence and *allow* them to be destroyed.

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## 2. Jesus’ Parable of the Marriage

In another parable Jesus tells the story of a king who was holding a wedding for his son. The king sent representatives to invite people to attend and they were treated badly. Jesus concludes:

*But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and **destroyed those murderers**, and burned up their city (Matt. 22:7)*

The obvious meaning is that God the Father was preparing the wedding of God the Son with His bride, the Church (Eph. 5:25-26). The people He invites (the Jewish nation) harshly rejected His invitation so He destroyed them. However, *history* teaches us that God is only saying that ***He would do that which He merely allowed or permitted***. God is saying here that He would remove His protection and allow the Romans to destroy Jerusalem for their rejection of Christ:

*And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation (Luke 19:41-44)*

*And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke 21:24)*

Our Lord's words were fulfilled when the Roman emperor Vespasian sent his son Titus to deal with the Jewish revolt of 70 A. D. Titus successfully destroyed the Jewish nation during this period. Note God's words to His people in Psalm 81:

*I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. **Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries** (Psalm 81:10-14)*

The Jews were destroyed because they lost God's protection when they rejected Him by killing His Son. In Matthew's version of Jesus prediction of this event we read, "*Behold, your house is left unto you desolate*" (Matt. 23:38). The Amplified Bible renders this, "*Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate (abandoned and left destitute of God's help)*" and the Complete Jewish Bible reads, "*Look! God is abandoning your house to you, leaving it desolate.*" Destruction came upon Jerusalem because God's protective presence was removed, thus giving way to the enemy.

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### **3. What Jesus Said About Hell?**

What about those passages where Jesus teaches that God personally destroys sinners in hell. Let's look at one of them:

*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matt. 10:28)*

We must take the time to understand exactly how God is said to “destroy”. First, each person goes to hell through their own free-choice:

*“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and **broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction**, and many there be which go in thereat:” (Matt. 7:13)*

Furthermore, hell is actually a departure from God’s protective presence:

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: **depart from me, ye that work iniquity** (Matt. 7:21-23)*

*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, **Depart from me**, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41)*

God destroys people by removing them from His protective presence and “giving them up” and “delivering them” to the results of their choices:

*Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul **depart from thee**; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited (Jer. 6:8)*

The Contemporary English Version renders this, “I will abandon you, and your land will become an empty desert.”

Departure means to be abandoned to whatever forces are poised to destroy. God “destroys” by “departing” and giving up the sinner:

***How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, **I will not return to destroy Ephraim:** for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city*** (Hosea 11:8-9)

As we will continue to learn in these lessons, God’s method of destroying is to depart from the unrepentant sinner, thus removing His protective presence, and allowing the automatic choices of the sinner to take effect (Exodus 12:12, 13, 23; 2 Kings 13:23; 2 Chron. 12:7; Job 2:3-7; Psalm 5:10; 73:27-28; Isa. 34:2; Jer. 7:29-31; 18:7-10; Eze. 21:31; 22:30-31; 32:12-13; Hosea 4:5-6).

The destruction one suffers in hell is through the “sowing and reaping” process:

*The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: **the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God*** (Psalm 9:15-17)

Therefore, God “destroys” by no longer stopping the reaping from taking place. The sad part about “reaping” is that the harvest is always bigger than the seed sown.

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## Lesson Five

### Satan is the Destroyer (Part 1)

Have you ever considered the fact that it takes much time, effort, and energy to create something but very little time, effort, and energy to destroy it. Take a car for example. You need a team of engineers who will design the car inside out on a drafting table (or computer) and then submit it to be built. Afterwards multiple tests are run to ensure the car's safety and drivability. After so much time, effort, and brain power you have a nicely designed attractive car.

Yet only one act of carelessness or even deliberate malice can destroy all that time and effort within minutes. A drunk driver smashing into it, falling asleep behind the wheel, a car bomb can easily blow it away, not stopping at a red light and getting smashed by a tractor trailer, etc. No real creativity is involved in destroying it.

#### 1. Contrast between God and Satan

The above describes the contrast between Satan and Jesus. Jesus is a *Creator* (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:16-17) and Satan is a *destroyer*. There was never anything destructive in God's universe until Satan fell:

*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, **and destroyed the cities thereof**; that opened not the house of his prisoners? (Isa. 14:12-17)*

The fall of Satan came with a propensity for murder, violence, and destruction. Therefore, it is important to know that since Satan is

the first to ever bring about destructive behavior. Satan is the original destroyer. This was not God's doing.

Satan continues his destructive ways among men. Sadly, many people, including Christians, continue to blame God for Satan's work. Yet, God is the one looking out for our well-being while Satan is seeking our destruction:

*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10)*

*Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:7-8)*

Satan wants to destroy us while Jesus wants to give us abundant life. Satan wants to devour us while God cares for us and is looking to bless us. Strangely, Satan's part is often ignored while God continues to be blamed for his work. However, the Scripture provides us with the truth needed to arm ourselves against the lies of this false accuser (Gen. 3:1-7; Rev. 12:9-11).

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## **2. The Millennial Reign of Christ**

There are many people who like to use the phrase, "God is in control." Many go as far as believing that God is controlling all of the events in this world, thus attributing life's hardships and tragedies to Him. Yet the Bible clearly says that Satan is controlling all of life's negative events in this world: "*We know that we belong to God, but the Evil One controls the whole world*" (1 John 5:19; Easy to Read Version). There is coming a day when God will show men the difference between His reign upon the earth and Satan's when He has locked Satan in a pit for one thousand years:

*And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season (Rev. 20:1-3)*

Scriptures says that those who take part in the first resurrection “....*they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years*” (Rev. 20:6b). Only then will Christ fully and completely reign on the earth and we will reign with Him.

The one thousand year reign of Christ will also mean the end of animal violence. There will be nothing that will hurt or *destroy* because the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God (knowledge of His true character):

*And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. **They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:** for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:8-9)*

*The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. **They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,** saith the Lord (Isa. 65:25)*

The only reason that there is anything on this earth that hurts and destroys right now is because men allowed Satan and his reign of death to take over this world (Rom. 5:12, 14; Heb. 2:14-15). God is not the one behind the miseries in this present world. He is not the One bringing destructive acts upon men. The millennial reign of Christ will demonstrate the difference between how God exercises His sovereignty and how Satan exercises his.

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### 3. Satan's Attempts to Destroy Jesus

When Adam and Eve sinned against God and plunged the whole world under death and destruction they basically transferred their God-given dominion to Satan (Gen. 1:26-28; Luke 4:5-8; Rom. 5:12). However, God promised that the seed of the woman would crush Satan's head (Gen. 3:14-15). This was the first prophecy of Jesus coming to defeat Satan. Much of the Bible is a record of the warfare between God and Satan for the salvation of men. Satan had done his utmost to stop the fulfilment of the prophecy in Genesis 3. We find him making the attempt to destroy Jesus after He came into our world as a man:

*And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt (Matt. 2:13-14)*

When that was unsuccessful then Satan attempted to rouse the leaders of Israel to destroy the Lord as an adult: "*Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him*" (Matt. 12:14).

None of these passages mention Satan by name but we know that he is the culprit. Jesus later reveals that these attempts to destroy Him were being influenced by Satan:

*But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself,*

*but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. **Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it*** (John 8:40-44)

Once again the Bible makes it absolutely clear that Satan is a destroyer. He is the “father” of those instruments that attempted to destroy Jesus. He is the father of destruction (murder). This is his “Modus operandi.”

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#### **4. Satan Works through Demons and Sickness**

The Bible describes sickness as “destruction.” *“He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions”* (Psalm 107:20). Paul told the church at Corinth how to discipline a church member who was sexually active with his step mother:

*In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one **unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh**, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus* (1 Cor. 5:4-5)

Satan is the author of sickness and disease (Job 2:7; Luke 13:16; Acts 10:38). The Bible describes sickness as a “destructive work.” It is a satanic work that God is seeking to protect us from:

*Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.... Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh*

*in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday* (Psalm 91:3, 5, 6)

The International Children's Bible renders verse 6, "*You will not be afraid of diseases that come in the dark or sickness that strikes at noon.*" Sickness is a destructive work from the fowler (Satan) from whom God protects us. When a person forfeits God's protection and the protection of the church then Satan is able to bring his destructive devices upon their body.

The Charles Thomson Translation renders the latter part of verse 6, "*the demon of noon day.*" Satan works through demons to spread destructive sickness. In Mark chapter 9 a demon caused a boy to be mentally and physically ill. It sought to "destroy" the boy:

*And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him (Mark 9:21-25)*

Scripture tells us that Satan is the prince of the demons (Matt. 12:24-29). Therefore the work of destruction of this boy should be credited directly to him. Satan is the agent of destruction and God is totally innocent.

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## Lesson Six

### Satan is the Destroyer (Part 2)

We will continue to examine the fact that Satan is the actual destroyer. In this lesson we will see how Satan is the actual agent behind those destructions often attributed to God.

#### 1. God Created the Destroyer to Destroy

In Isaiah God takes responsibility for creating the destroyer:

*Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and him that bringeth forth an instrument for his work, and **I have created the destroyer to destroy*** (Isa. 54:16; 1599 Geneva Bible)

While there is some disagreement about the identity of the “destroyer” in this passage, many believe that this is the devil. If nothing else, it is certainly a reference to Satan’s work, even if he is using human agency (ungodly soldiers – see Job 1:12-17). After all, Satan is the one who steals, kills, and destroys (John 10:10). Sadly, some use this passage to teach that God created Satan as the evil being that he presently is. One reason given is that Christians needed someone to fight in order to grow. If that is true, God’s project has been a dismal *failure* (Mark 4:14-17; 2 Tim. 2:26).

God did not create this being originally as “the destroyer” or Satan. The being currently known as Satan was an anointed cherub (angel) who was perfect until iniquity was found in him: “*Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was **found in thee***” (Eze. 28:16). Iniquity was *found* in Satan so God did not put it there. Everything that Satan does is of his own initiative (John 8:44). Satan’s desire to destroy is opposed to God’s desire to protect and give life (John 10:10).

God is not the source of evil or its results. It is evil that produces evil (Matt. 7:15-20 (Ps. 25:8; 34:4-10; 85:12; 86:5; 105; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 29; 135:3; 136:1). God is only said to have *created* the destroyer in the sense that He takes responsibility for its actions when He removes His protection and *allows* the destroyer to destroy (Ex. 12:12, 23; Job 1:8-12; 2:1-7; 42:10-11). Concerning this passage F. B. Meyer writes:

“I have created the waster to destroy.” This is the strong Hebrew way of saying that God permits and overrules and brings out good by means of the evil that had seemed destructive of all good.<sup>7</sup>

Men usually open the door for destruction by their own sins (Gen. 4:7; Eph. 4:26-27; 1 John 3:8-12; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; James 4:7). God merely permits the waster or destroyer to bring the inevitable consequences.

## 2. God Takes Responsibility

There are numerous passages of Scripture that credit God with directly bringing destruction upon people. The simple answer to this is to remember the Hebrew idiom in which God is said to do that which He merely permitted Satan to do. God often took responsibility for Satan’s work, especially in the Old Testament:

*But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord (Job 1:11-12)*

In the above passage Satan requests that God puts forth his hand to touch all that Job has. God complies with Satan’s request by telling him that all that Job possessed was in *his* hands. Satan then uses natural disasters and evil men to destroy Job’s family, servants, and livestock. God did none of it. He did not even suggest or remotely hint to Satan to do any of this. Yet, in the very next chapter of Job we find God taking responsibility for Job’s destruction:

*And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. (Job 2:3)*

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<sup>7</sup> Meyer, Frederick B. **Christ in Isaiah** (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade), p. 170

God took complete responsibility for all that Satan did to Job. Quite often God has done this in the Old Testament. God takes responsibility for acts committed by Satan, evil angels, and wicked men when He does not prevent them from committing destructive acts. Some passages are clear about this (see 2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chron. 21:1) but there are others that require more in depth research.

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### 3. Satan is the Destroyer of Egypt's Firstborn

Concerning the incident of the firstborn in Egypt who were going to die we read in Exodus 12:12a: *"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast."* God is said to be the One doing the smiting (bringing death and sickness upon man and beast). Now let us skip down to verse 23:

*"For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, **the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.**" (Ex. 12:23)*

Verses 12 and 23 would appear to contradict each other apart from understanding the permission idiom in which God is said to do that which He merely allowed or permitted. In The New Testament we read, *"Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them"* (Heb. 11:28). In 1 John 5:18 we read, *"....but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him"* (NKJV). By way of comparison it is the wicked one, Satan, who touches people in a way to harm them.

It is evident from Scripture that the destroyer is another person separate from God. The Psalmist would later tell us that it was

“evil angels” (the angels that rebelled with Satan) that caused the problems for Egypt:

***He let loose on them** his fierce anger, wrath, indignation, and distress, **a company of destroying angels.** He made a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death, **but gave their lives over to the plague.** He smote all the first-born in Egypt, the first issue of their strength in the tents of Ham (Psalm 78:49-51; Revised Standard Version)*

The phrase “let loose” in verse 49 is from the Hebrew word “*shalach*” which means “allow” or “permit”. This idea of “permission” rather than “causation” is seen in verse 50 where we read, “....**but gave their lives over to the plague.**” God “smote” the firstborn of Egypt by letting loose the demonic forces of Satan. God “smites” by hiding His presence: “*For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me*” (Isa. 57:17a) or as Complete English Bible renders it, “*I struck them; in rage I withdrew from them.*”

On the other hand, God personally stood guard over the obedient Israelites who covered their homes with the blood of the lamb. The Hebrew word for “passover” in Ex. 12:23 is the same word used in Isaiah 31:5: “*As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and **passing over he will preserve it.***” Therefore “Passover” is not God *skipping* the house that had blood but rather God *guarding, preserving and protecting that house from the destroyer.*

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#### **4. Satan is the Destroyer in the Wilderness**

Another Old Testament passage where we find this truth is in the Sinai desert that Israel suffered through for forty years due to unbelief and ingratitude. At one point Israel murmured, complained,

and issued death threats upon God's servants, Moses and Aaron. In response God is said to have sent fiery serpents to kill the ingrates:

*And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died (Num. 21:5-6)*

The Hebrew word for sent is *shalach*, which again means *allow* or *permit*. Due to constant murmuring, God was forced to remove the restraints He held on nature and *permit* the snakes (and the demonic forces who control animal violence) to kill. The Leeser Old Testament renders verse 6, “*And the Lord **let loose** against the people poisonous serpents, and they bit the people; and there died much people of Israel.*”

In the New Testament we are told that it was *the destroyer* who brought the serpents upon Israel when the hedge of protection was broken:

*Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and **were destroyed of the destroyer** (1 Cor. 10:8-10)*

Concerning this passage Albert Barnes writes, “....to presume on the grace of Christ to keep them in all circumstances, would be to tempt him, and provoke him to leave them.”<sup>8</sup> The Israelites provoked Christ to leave them. God withdrew His protective presence and allowed the forces of evil to have their way with the Israelites. The Good News Translation of verse 10 says, “*We must not complain, as some of them did—and they were destroyed by the **Angel of Death**.*” Satan held the power of death (Heb. 2:14) so we have no doubt that he is the destroyer in the wilderness.

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<sup>8</sup> Barnes, Albert Barnes **Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians** (London: Thomas Ward and Co., 1841), p. 131

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## **5. Satan is the Destroyer in the End Times**

One of the things that many Bible readers do not pick up on concerning the end times is that much of the destruction that will come upon men will not come directly from God's hand but from the evil forces that will be let loose upon the world due to the persistent rebellion of men who worship these dark forces:

*And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them (Rev. 9:2-6)*

Note the horrible description of these demons released from the bottomless pit. Note their ability to torment rebellious men painfully during this end times period. Men will not even be able to find relief through death (even though "death" is really no relief for any man who has rejected Christ). The Bible goes on to tell us that these are being reigned over, not by God, but by the one known as "the Destroyer."

*And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon (Rev. 9:10-11)*

Other translations explain the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek names in the English language:

*They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss (the bottomless pit); in Hebrew his name is Abaddon (destruction), and in Greek he is called Apollyon (destroyer-king). (The Amplified Bible)*

*The king of the locusts is the angel of the big hole that has no bottom. His name is Abaddon in the Jew's language and Apollyon in the Greek language. (This means, the one who destroys.) (Worldwide English New Testament)*

Here we see that these demons have a king whose name in both Hebrew and Greek is related to destruction. The Bible is clear that Satan is the prince of the demons so this is an obvious reference to him (Matt. 12:23-29; Luke 13:10-16).

While the world is already in pretty bad shape, it is nowhere the extent to which it will become when God finally removes His restraint and allows Satan full reign: *“The secret power of evil is already working in the world now. But there is one who is stopping that secret power of evil. And he will continue to stop it until he is taken out of the way”* (2 Thess. 2:7; Easy to Read Version). God’s mercy towards men and His limited restraint of Satan is the only reason this world has not plunged into a chaos of unlimited demon activity.

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## Lesson Seven

### Sin Contains its Own Seeds of Destruction

*O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help* (Hos. 13:9)

What does God mean by telling Israel that they had destroyed themselves? It is referring to the fact that sin has its own internal consequences. Within every sin is a seed of destruction (Prov. 8:35-36; Matt. 26:51-52; James 1:15; Rom. 6:21). Every sin contains within itself its own power to destroy (Psalm 7:15; 109:16-17; Hos. 14:1; Isa. 3:9-11; Jer. 2:17, 19; 4:18; Rom. 6:23). Even sadder is the fact that the harvest is always greater than the seed that was planted (Hosea 8:7).

#### 1. The Laws of Sowing and Reaping

God established the laws of sowing and reaping (Gen. 1:11-12). His intentions were only for good and for our benefit (Prov. 3:9-10; Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 9:6-12). It was Satan, demons and men who perverted God's good laws and used them in destructive ways (Gen. 2:15-17; Rom. 5:12; 1 John 3:8-10). Sadly, this law that was established primarily for our benefit can work to our detriment and destruction:

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting* (Gal. 6:7-8)

The VOICE Translation says, “*What you sow, you harvest. Those who sow seeds into their flesh **will only harvest destruction** from their sinful nature.*” God is no more responsible for the destruction we harvest as the result of our sins than He is responsible for a farmer chooses to plant a tomato seed or a carrot seed and receives the harvest of one or the other.

God established the laws of “sowing and reaping” and “seedtime and harvest” but He left it in the power and decision of each individual as to how they apply these laws both physically and

spiritually (Matt. 7:17-19). God is no more responsible for our sowing bad seed and its results than He is for the temptation that leads to it:

*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:13-15)*

Paul wrote, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin” (Rom. 5:12a). God did not bring death into the world any more than He brought *sin*. This was completely man’s doing. The same is true when each of us sin and bring forth the harvest of death and destruction into our lives. It is not God who tempts or brings death. It is the seed itself, once full grown and harvested that seed brings forth death and inevitable destruction.

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## **2. The Seed within Sin Destroys**

In the beginning God stated the principle when He spoke about the different fruit trees that He created. He said, “....*whose seed was in itself, after his kind*” (Gen. 1:11-12). Just like every piece of fruit, each sin contains within itself its own seed of destruction. Everything produces after its own kind. Let’s look at a sample of some passages that relate this truth:

*But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul (Prov. 6:32)*

*The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them*  
(Prov. 11:3)

*The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment* (Prov. 21:7)

S. D. Gordon said, “Sin has bound up in itself all the terrific consequences that ever come.”<sup>9</sup> When we sin we are planting seeds for our own destruction. As our opening passage stated, “*O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help*” (Hos. 13:9). Sin is spiritual and eventual physical suicide because it brings forth a harvest of destruction.

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### 3. How God “Destroys”

The prophet Isaiah lamented as he wrote, “*No one worships you or even asks you to help us. That is because you have turned away from us and have let our sins destroy us*” (Isa. 64:7; New Century Version). God destroys, not by directly doing anything to the sinner, but by removing His protective presence and allowing the seeds that the sinner has sown to harvest its fruit of destruction:

*Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee. But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield* (Psalm 5:10-12)

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<sup>9</sup> Gordon, Samuel D. **Quiet Talks on Personal Problems** (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1907), pp. 26, 27

How is God said to destroy here? He does it by allowing the sinner to *fall by their own counsels*. Concerning King Ahaziah Scripture says that he walked in the ways of his wicked father's household, "*....for they were his counsellors after the death of his father to his destruction*" (2 Chron. 22:4b). On the other hand God compasses with a shield those who are righteous.

In another psalm we are told that God will let destruction come upon a person by allowing them to fall into the very net (or "trap") that they had set for the psalmist:

*For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul. Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall (Psalm 35:7-8)*

The psalmist uses the word "let" twice in this passage in relation to destruction. It is an appropriate word since the idea is for the person to be caught in the very net (trap) that they set for someone else. The psalmist is asking God to let them reap what they had sown. There is nothing worse than falling into one's own trap. I heard the story about a man who, many centuries ago, introduced a device of horribly slow and painful torture. Sadly, the inventor of this device was the first person the king tried it on. Here was someone who fell into their own net.

However, it is not God's desire that any of us reap what we have sown. He makes numerous efforts to reach out to us and bring us to repentance. But after a certain point He must honor our rejection, remove His protection, and allow us to reap the results of our rebellion:

*Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and **your destruction cometh as a whirlwind**; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not*

*find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.* (Prov. 1:24-33)

While this is not God's desire, eventually God must let each individual "eat the fruit of their own way." This fruit is calamity and destruction. When a person persists in forsaking God then God must eventually remove His protection from that person, which is also a part of the sowing and reaping process (2 Chron. 15:2; 24:20; Jer. 2:17-19). Hence God's wrath and judgment of an individual, His method of "destroying," is to remove His protection and allow them to reap what they have sown (Psalm 9:15-16).

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#### **4. Sin Gives Satan a Foothold**

God does not have any desire in our destruction: "*Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?*" (Eze. 18:23). The problem with sin and one of the reasons it is destructive is due to the fact that it gives Satan an open door and a foothold into our lives (Gen. 4:7; 1 John 3:8-12; Eph. 4:26-27).

Concerning a fornicator the Corinthian church was commanded, "*To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh*" (1 Cor. 5:5a). However, God's desire is not to punish us for our sins but He is looking to rescue us from the destruction we bring upon ourselves:

*Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all*

*manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and **delivered them from their destructions** (Psalm 107:17-20)*

Note that it is not God who brought the destruction. It was sin that did this. Sin is the destroyer and God is the healer from that which sin does. God often attempts to interfere with the process of destruction in His attempts to save us. Again He tells Israel, “*O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; **but in me is thine help***” (Hos. 13:9). God wants to *help*, not *destroy*. The problem is that, “*No one worships you **or even asks you to help us***” (Isa. 64:7a; NCV).

Therefore at a certain point when repentance is not or ever will be forthcoming God finally allows the “sowing and reaping” process to take place: “*That is because you have turned away from us and **have let our sins destroy us***” (Isa. 64:7b; NCV). Yet, for the most part He offers us protection from Satan’s destructive devices of sickness:

*He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; **nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday** (Psalm 91:4-6)*

The Charles Thomson Translation renders verse 6, “....of the thing which walketh in darkness; nor of mischance and the demon of noon day.” The New Testament reveals that Satan uses demons to inflict sickness and disease (Matt. 4:24; 8:5-7; 12:25-28; Luke 7:21-22; 13:11-16; Acts 19:11-12). These are the things that God is attempting to protect us from. We open ourselves up to destructive demonic activity when we sin. However, if we return to God and receive His forgiving mercy, He gladly redeems our life from destruction:

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from*

*destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness  
and tender mercies (Psalm 103:2-4)*

God is the healer, not the sickness-bringer. He is the redeemer, not the destroyer. It is sin that destroys. It is sin that opens the door for Satan to destroy us. Let us walk in the freedom from sin that Jesus has given us through His redemptive work and stay free from satanic destructive traps.

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## Lesson Eight

### God Destroys in the “Permissive Sense” Only

*And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, **that I should not destroy it**: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: **their own way have I recompensed upon their heads**, saith the Lord GOD (Ezekiel 22:30-31)*

Sometimes because we recognize that God is all-powerful and sovereign we have the erroneous idea that He always gets His way or He is always able to find an agent to work through. Yet Ezekiel tells us that this is absolutely *not* the case. Due to the authority and freedom that God has granted to men, He is not always able to accomplish His will on the earth.

God needs a man to work through in order to get His will done on the earth (2 Chron. 16:9; Matt. 18:18-20). God does not want to bring judgment upon men but He needs our prayers in order to stop judgment. Yet, if God needs our prayers in order to *prevent* Him from bringing destructive judgment then is He able to bring judgment apart from our praying? The answer to that is “yes.”

However, if God needs us to pray in order for Him to do good then why doesn’t He need us to pray in order to bring destruction? It is because God’s destruction is in a “permissive sense.” God “destroys” by simply removing His protection and allowing the destructive forces of evil to have their way. Our prayers invite God in to protect us and prevent the destruction we invited through our sins. Our failure to pray prevents God from helping us and, frankly, is sending Him a message that He is not needed.

As Isaiah lamented, “*No one worships you or **even asks you to help us**. That is because you have turned away from us and **have let our sins destroy us***” (Isa. 64:7; New Century Version). God honors the freedom He has given man and will not force His help upon us, even if it means our destruction.

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## 1. God Destroys by “Recompensing”

In Ezekiel 22:31 God says that He “destroyed” or “consumed” the land by, “....*their own way have I **recompensed** upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.*” Paul, quoting David, explains exactly how God brings about “recompence” when he writes, “*And David saith, **Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence** unto them*” God’s method of “recompensing” is to allow the sinner to destroy himself:

*Vengeance and **recompence** are mine: **their foot shall slide in due time**: for the day of their destruction is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them, make haste* (Deut. 32:35; Good News Version)

The Contemporary English Version renders it this way, “*Soon our enemies will get what they deserve— suddenly they will slip, and total disaster will quickly follow.*” God does not put forth divine power to destroy. He destroys through the “sowing and reaping” process. Eventually persistent unrepentant sinners will get what they deserve through the seeds of death that they continue to sow.

In 2 Peter we learn that false teachers will suffer swift destruction but the Bible is clear that they bring it upon themselves through their sin:

*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and **bring upon themselves swift destruction.** And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of* (2 Pet. 2:1-2)

Hosea, as we saw in a previous lesson, also emphasizes this truth when he wrote, “*O Israel, **thou hast destroyed thyself**; but in me is thine help*” (Hos. 13:9). When we compare these two passages

of Scripture to Ezekiel 22:30-31 we find that God “destroys” by allowing men to “destroy themselves”.

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## 2. Recompensing is Permissive

The Hebrew word for “recompense” in Eze. 22:31 is “nathan.” It is the same word used in Exodus 12:23 translated as “allow” or “permit:” “....*the Lord will pass over the door and will not **allow the destroyer** to come into your houses to slay you*” (The Amplified Bible).

God “recompenses” by allowing the destroyer, Satan, to have his way and bring upon the rebellious the consequences of their rebellion (John 10:10; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; Eph. 4:26-27; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). Using the word Hebrew word “nathan” Hosea tells us that this has always been God’s “modus operandi” in destroying a person or nation:

***How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, **I will not return to destroy Ephraim:** for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city*** (Hosea 11:8-9)

In this passage “nathan” is translated as “give thee up”. In Ezekiel 22:31 God says, “*I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath*” and in Hosea 11:9 God says, “*I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger.*” Therefore, God “consumed them with the fire of His wrath” by “giving them up” or allowing their enemies to have their way with them. In Isaiah the Hebrew word “nathan” is used again in relation to how God sets about “destroying:”

*For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: **he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter** (Isa. 34:2)*

In this passage the word “nathan” is translated as “delivered.” Other translations use the phrase “gave them up” or “handed them over” to the slaughter. Either way we see that God’s method of destroying is by “permission” rather than “causation.” He hands unrepentant rebellious people over to their enemies:

*Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the Lord, **Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.** Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, The Lord is righteous. And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, **They have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance;** and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak (2 Chron. 12:5-7)*

The word “left” used in relation to God’s actions towards Israel in leaving them in the hands of Shishak is “*aw-zab*’.” Strong’s Hebrew dictionary defines it as, “A primitive root; to *loosen*, that is, *relinquish*, *permit*, etc.”

Here again we see that God’s method of bringing about destruction in the lives of people and nations is “permissive.” When people forsake God and refuse to repent after numerous attempts to reach them, He then simply “leaves them” in the hand of their enemy. The situation with Israel is parallel to the New Testament believer in which after unrepentant rebellion God turns a person over to Satan. When seen in this light, we understand more how God is left with no choice but to bring destruction on the nation because He could not find anyone to pray for it.

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### 3. God Destroys by Removing His Protection

In Deuteronomy we are given more insight into God's method of destruction. He allows the enemies of the persistent sinner to have their way when He forsakes the sinner, thus removing His protective presence:

*When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) **he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them** (Deut. 4:30-31)*

“Forsaking” and “destroying” are synonymous terms with God. When God has left the person alone He takes personal responsibility for what He allows to happen to the person. This method of destruction is again described in Israel's later history when God allowed Syria to oppress them due to their rebellion:

*But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and **would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet** (2 Kings 13:22-23)*

Note that God equates destroying Israel with casting them from His presence. It was the protective presence of God that kept Israel safe. It was their constant forsaking of God and pushing God away that nearly caused them to lose His presence. The Psalmist rightly said:

*For, lo, **they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.***

*But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works (Psalm 73:27-28)*

All destruction comes when people remove themselves from under the umbrella of God's protection. This is never something God wants. He sends prophets to plead and beg people not to continue in sin. However, He must eventually honor the will of the people. It is not God who intentionally removes His presence but it is the wayward sinners who tell God that they want no more of Him:

*Therefore they say unto God, **Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.** What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him? Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me. How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! **and how oft cometh their destruction upon them!** God distributeth sorrows in his anger (Job 21:14-17)*

These people told God to depart from them. They wanted no knowledge of His ways. They saw no profit in serving Him or praying unto Him. This opened the door for destruction to come upon them. When God departs then that is when destruction begins. Therefore God's method of destruction is by *permission* rather than by personally causing it.

This should motivate God's people to fast and pray for our nation and ask God to keep His presence over it. If God forsakes America, it is done. May God find many people in our day who are willing to stand in the gap so that He does not *permit* destruction to come upon our land.

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## Lesson Nine

### God and Destructive Curses

*Moreover all **these curses shall come upon thee**, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, **till thou be destroyed**; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee (Deut. 28:45)*

In the first fourteen verses of Deuteronomy 28 God gives a list of abundant blessings that His people would receive for their obedience to Him. These blessings can be summed up as follows: *fruitfulness, abundance, protection, direction, victory, success, holiness, honor, riches, and dominion.*

#### 1. Blessings in Disguise or Destroyers?

The list of curses for disobedience is much longer and takes up about triple the number of verses as the ones for the blessings. Among the curses we find *unfruitfulness, insufficiency, frustration, failure, defeat, bondage, poverty, fear, and all kinds of sickness and disease*. Strangely, there are ministers who claim that these things are “blessings in disguise.” These things are not blessings, they are designed to destroy:

***The Lord shall send upon thee cursing**, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, **until thou be destroyed**, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me (Deut. 28:20)*

*The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, **until thou be destroyed** (Deut. 28:24)*

*Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he*

*shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, **until he have destroyed thee*** (Deut. 28:48)

*And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, **until he have destroyed thee*** (Deut. 28:51)

*Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, **until thou be destroyed*** (Deut. 28:61)

*And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so **the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you**, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it* (Deut. 28:63)

None of the negative things listed in Deuteronomy 28 are meant to be a blessing. They are *destructive*.

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## **2. God Will “Rejoice” to Destroy**

Not only is God taking personal responsibility for inflicting the destructive curses upon His people for their disobedience but He even says, “....*the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you.*” This sounds very vindictive for someone who we understand is a loving God. Furthermore, it seems like a double-standard since God says elsewhere, “....*he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished*” (Prov. 17:5a; see also Prov. 24:17-18; Obad. 1:12).

The truth is God never rejoices when we are being destroyed by the curses that come with disobedience. On the contrary God is grieved and afflicted when we are suffering under a curse (Judges

10:16; Isa. 63:9). He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:23-32; 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9b).

So why does God say that He will rejoice over destroying His rebellious people? Remember that God is often said to do the thing that He actually *allows* or *permits* to be done by others when He has “given up” the person to the consequences of their sin. Isaiah says that God, “....**have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches**” (Isa 43:27-28). Another translation says:

*So I put the high officials of your temple to shame. I let Jacob's family be totally destroyed. And I let people make fun of Israel* (New International Reader's Version)

When God's people persist in rebellion, He *allows* them to come under the curse and will *allow* others to rejoice over their destruction (Judges 16:25; Eze. 22:1-5; Isa. 14:15-19). This is what is meant by God “rejoicing” to destroy the people.

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### 3. What is a “Curse”

If God does not rejoice over the people but is afflicted and grieved Himself when they fall under the curse then why does He inflict curses upon them? The same way we learned what it meant for God to “rejoice” over a person's destruction is the exact same method that we must use to understand how He curses.

This must begin with defining what a curse actually is. Thankfully, the Bible always explains itself and vindicates God. God tells us that a “curse” is something that occurs when He has removed His protective presence. When Joshua sought God for the reason that they were defeated by their enemies the Lord replies:

*Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen,*

*and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, **because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more**, except ye destroy the accursed from among you (Joshua 7:11-12)*

God equates being “accursed” with His “no longer being with” those who are suffering the curse. The curse is the loss of God’s protective presence. God alludes to this same truth in Malachi when He says the following:

*For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. **Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.** But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. **Ye are cursed with a curse:** for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation (Malachi 3:6-9)*

Here God tells His people to *return to Him*. He then follows this statement by telling them that they are “cursed with a curse.” The fact that His people must *return to Him* means that they are not presently under His protective presence. This is the meaning of being cursed with a curse. God’s people robbed Him of His tithes and offerings and, in effect, told Him that they don’t need His help. When we are not *under God’s protection* then we are *under a curse*.

God goes on to tell them that if they return to Him, “*And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and **he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground***” (Malachi 3:11a). Here we see that the destruction that comes from the curse is done by someone or something outside of God. Furthermore, since God will *rebuke* this devourer then it is not a force or an entity that is working for Him or working alongside of Him. God is not running a mafia type scam where you must pay “protection money” to keep Him from personally destroying your life. There really is another enemy God desires to protect us from.

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#### 4. Satan is the Agent behind Curses

Scholars tell us that “the devourer” referred to in Malachi 3 is a hoard of insects that destroy the crops of the people. However, we have no doubt that the violence that we find in nature is controlled by Satan. Satan is the one seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8-9). Satan is the agency by which the curses are distributed since a curse is defined in Scripture as God not being among His people.

Let’s look at this by using the Biblical comparison method. In one of the curse passages that we quoted earlier we read again:

*Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, **them will the Lord bring upon thee**, until thou be destroyed (Deut. 28:61)*

Note that God said that He will personally bring every sickness and plague to destroy His rebellious people. Now, let’s look at a passage in the book of Job in which the Lord is said to have brought sickness upon Job:

*“Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and **comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him**: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.” (Job 42:11)*

In Deut. 28:61 God threatens to “bring” sickness on His people and in Job 42:11 God is said to have “brought” the sicknesses. Yet, we go back to the second chapter of Job we see that Satan is the one who brought the sickness on Job:

*But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. **So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown** (Job 2:5-7)*

Satan demanded that God “put forth His hand”. God “puts forth His hand” by *removing His protection and allowing Satan to inflict Job with sickness*. The only way that God can be said to inflict death is to remove His protective presence and allow Satan to inflict it. God does not inflict sickness using divine power.

Remember the sexually debased man who Paul commanded to be disciplined. The method of discipline was, “*To deliver such an one unto **Satan for the destruction of the flesh***” (1 Cor. 5:5). God only “inflicts” destructive curses by turning a person over to Satan and allowing him to destroy the disobedient one. This happens when God has forsaken the person, thus removing His protective presence and allowing the forces of evil to have their way.

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## **5. Moses Expounded on this Truth**

However, if anyone has doubts about what we have stated thus far, all one needs to do is read further into the book of Deuteronomy. Moses himself explained that the curses listed in chapter 28 are not things inflicted directly by God but is the result of His departure from His people:

*Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and **I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them;** so that they will say in that day, **Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they***

*shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods (Deut. 31:17-18)*

The New International Reader's Version translates verse 17, *"In that day I will become angry with them. I will desert them. I will turn my face away from them. **And they will be destroyed.**"* The destructions that come with the curse is the result of God forsaking, abandoning, and deserting His people. This is the meaning of God "hiding His face." God explains again to Moses that the "hiding of His face" is His method upon which the destructive curses will fall upon His disobedient people:

*And he said, **I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be:** for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.... They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and **with bitter destruction:** I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword without, and terror within, **shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs** (Deut. 32:20, 24-25)*

God says that He will see what their end will be. This means that God is not personally inflicting destructive curses. He simply removes His presence and sees what happens. Therefore, God is only said to "curse" by allowing or permitting the consequences of rebellion to take place that he at one time protected His people from. This should motivate us to be obedient and never push God away unless we place ourselves in the danger that inevitably comes upon us when we are no longer in His protective presence.

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## Lesson Ten

### Noah's Flood and Sodom and Gomorrah

Our study in which we are answering the question, “does God engage in destructive behavior?,” would not be complete without taking a brief look at the flood of Noah and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Therefore, in this final lesson we are going to examine these two very destructive events. We will only touch on them briefly here. For a more detailed explanation of these events see our book, “*Does God Send Natural Disasters.*”

#### 1. Did God Cause the Flood of Noah?

Sometimes when we teach the Biblical truth that God is not the active distributor of the violent and destructive things that He sometimes takes responsibility for, some understandably ask questions like, “What about the flood of Noah, Sodom and Gomorrah, the plagues of Egypt and other natural disasters attributed to God in Scripture?” Let’s start with God’s warning to Noah:

***The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth .... 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. 6:11-13, 17)***

When God created man He gave him dominion over the earth. The actions of man not only affect him but all that he was given dominion over (Gen. 1:26-28). The earth was filled with violence due to man’s wickedness and it had a very negative effect on the earth. The Bible plainly teaches that our sinful acts have a negative impact upon the earth (Gen. 3:17-18; 4:10-12; Lev. 18:24-28; 20:22; Isa. 24:4-5; Hosea 4:2-3; Zech. 12:12; Rom. 8:18-22). The earth was corrupt because *it was filled with violence.*

There is a moral order in the world that works like the law of gravity (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 6:5-7). When the moral order is violated, there are consequences. The Hebrews often credited God with the consequences though God was not actively bringing them about (for example, compare 1 Chron. 10:3-6 with 10:13-14 and 1 Sam. 15:23).

In Ancient Near Eastern literature, there are fictional accounts of the flood in which the gods become frustrated with the noise that humans are making and selfishly destroy them with a flood. This certainly does not represent the God of the Bible. As one scholar has noted in contrast to ANE flood stories, “Genesis, however, emphasizes the moral dimension and claims that human beings through their wickedness and violence are destroying the earth.”<sup>10</sup> Man’s wickedness and violence corrupted the earth and created conditions for the flood. *God in His love held it back* (see Rev. 7:1-3).

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## 2. How Did God bring the Flood of Noah?

How did God bring the flood? The short answer is that due to man’s wickedness He decided to give men a limited amount of time to repent before He withdrew His Spirit who was protecting men from the imminent danger that their sins were causing: “*Then Jehovah said, ‘My Spirit must not forever be disgraced in man, wholly evil as he is. I will give him 120 years to mend his ways.’*” (Gen. 6:3; The Living Bible).

This is a lot of time to repent. What a merciful God. However, after a constant rejection of God’s mercy, the Spirit would depart, taking His protective presence with Him and allow men to receive the destructive consequences of their rebellion. Sadly, they exacerbated the Spirit’s departure by telling God to leave them alone:

*Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? Which were cut down out of time, whose*

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<sup>10</sup> McKeown, James **Genesis: The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary** (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), P. 53, 54

*foundation was overflown with a flood: **Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?** Yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me. (Job 22:15-18)*

When God is asked to leave a situation, He is a gentleman. God leaves reluctantly but when He does, “....woe also to them when I depart from them!” (Hosea 9:12b). When God departed, His protection that withheld the flood waters went with Him:

*And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, **the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up**, and the windows of heaven were opened (Gen. 7:10-11)*

In Genesis 6 God says, “*And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh,*” Yet, God often says that He will do that which He merely allowed or permitted by the removal of His restraining protection.

Genesis 7 tells us that “*all the fountains of the great deep broken up.*” It was by God’s power that the waters were kept from overflowing and destroying (Genesis 1:6-10; Hebrews 1:3; 2 Pet. 3:5-7). Man would not repent so God “destroyed” by removing His protection. He abandoned them (except for Noah and his family) and allowed the *consequences* of their sin and corruption of the earth to bring the inevitable destruction:

*For a small moment **have I forsaken thee**; but with great mercies will I gather thee. **In a little wrath I hid my face from thee** for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. **For this is as the waters of Noah unto me**: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. (Isa. 54:7-9)*

The Living Bible paraphrases it, “*Just as in the time of Noah I swore that **I would never again permit the waters of a flood to cover the earth and destroy its life**, so now I swear that I will never again pour out my anger on you.*”

Notice that God did not actively bring about the consequences of Israel’s sin but He abandoned them, hid His face, and withdrew His protection. *Abandonment* and *hiding His face* is the normal way that God exercises His wrath (Deut. 31:16-18; 1 Kings 14:15-16; 2 Kings 17:17-20; 2 Chron. 29:6-8; Psalm 27:9; 89:46; Isa. 57:17; Jer. 33:5; Hos. 11:7-9; Matt. 18:34; Rom. 1:18, 24-28). The same is true concerning the people of Noah’s time who told God to *depart from them*. Therefore, His Spirit stopped striving with them, thus removing His protection, and allowing the consequences of their corruption of the earth to take place.

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### 3. Did God Personally Destroy Sodom and Gomorrah?

When Lot separated from Abraham the Bible says he, “....*beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before **the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah***” (Gen. 13:10a). Genesis later says that God rained down fire upon these cities:

*Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground* (Genesis 19:24-25)

The history of Sodom and Gomorrah is another example of the Bible portraying God as personally engaging in destructive behavior. While the Bible is the divine inspired Word of God, God spoke using the language and idioms of the people of those times in which the Bible was being written. When Scripture says that God engaged in destruction, it does not necessarily mean He used His

power to destroy. It means that He stopped protecting those who pushed Him away.

In the case of Sodom, the area around it called Siddim was full of dangerous slime pits: “*And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits*” (Gen. 14:10a). God makes note of this fact for a reason. The area surrounding Sodom was full of what many archaeologists have noted were petroleum gases, which is what these “slimepits” were. These pits were ready to explode at any moment. It was God’s protection that kept them from doing so (Rev. 7:1-3). When no repentance from Sodom was forthcoming, God had to release His protection. One minister explains the science of this:

Nothing is more certain than that science supports the Bible. Prof. G. F. Wright, of Oberlin College, a man who stands high in the ranks of scientists, shows clearly in his volume, “Scientific Aspects of Christian Evidences,” that the whole region about the Dead Sea has the appearance now of being an abandoned “oil district,” and that all the conditions for the catastrophe described in the Bible were present in the inflammable accumulations of oil and gas reservoirs. We have only to suppose that at the time of the destruction quantities of gas and petroleum existed below the plain; then their escape through a fissure would produce the results described.<sup>11</sup>

MacArthur concludes, “We see here how God can punish sinners with physical forces associated with their own sin.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, God rained down fire on Sodom and Gomorrah by removing His protection and allowing the natural consequences of their sin to take effect through those “slimepits.” God is not a destroyer in the literal sense. We bring about our own destruction when we push God away through our sin.

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Stuart MacArthur, **Bible Difficulties and their Alleviate Interpretation - Old Testament**, pp. 213, 214

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 216

#### 4. God Gave These Cities Over to Destruction

Scientists who have made it their goal to prove the Bible to be an accurate historical record, have noted that these slime pits were full of petroleum gases and that they were ready to explode.

It was something supernatural keeping this from happening. It was the continuous unrepentant sin of Sodom and Gomorrah that caused God to remove this supernatural protection and allow the destruction of these cities to take place. This is affirmed by Hosea:

*How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, **I will not return to destroy Ephraim**: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city (Hos 11:8-9)*

Admah and Zoboim were in the same region as Sodom and Gomorrah and were connected together in the same sins, which included homosexuality (Gen. 10:19; 14:2, 8; Deut. 29:23). Therefore, God removed His protection over that region and allowed the brewing slime pits (full of destructive gases) to have their way, thus destroying those cities. **God's method of destruction is to remove His hand of protection (which is to give the person or nation up) and deliver the person or nation to the consequences of their choices.**

God “destroyed” Sodom and Gomorrah by “giving them up” and “delivering them” to the consequences of their rebellion. Let us take heed to this. If God gives up a person or nation then it is in serious trouble. But when He does give us up, we cannot blame Him for the trouble that we experience. Let us repent of our sins and invite God back in to help us and protect us.

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## Invitation and Prayer for Salvation

To become a TRUE Christian One must be born again -1. John 3:1-7

We must be born of the water and the Spirit. This water is not speaking of water baptism but of the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23; James 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15; Eph. 5:25-27).

There is only ONE avenue into heaven and that is to be born again. Water baptism, church membership, religious duties, giving to the poor, living a moral life, taking the Lord's supper, being a member of a denomination, or an INTELLECTUAL reception (vs. a heart reception) of Jesus Christ cannot save you. You must be born again.

Are you born again? If you are not you will not spend eternity in heaven with Jesus Christ but instead you will enter into eternal damnation. I urge you to consider accepting Jesus Christ as your savior.

To be born again is very simple. You need only accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. Why not give your heart to Him today. All you need to do is ask Him to come into your life. If you are not sure of how to do this here is a simple prayer to pray:

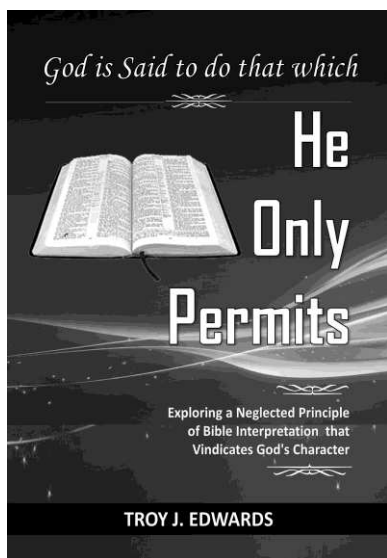
Lord Jesus

*I ask you to come into my heart right now. You said in your word that if I confess you with my mouth and believe in my heart that God raised you from the dead then I will be saved (Rom. 10:9). I recognize that I am a sinner and I need your forgiveness and a change in my nature. I repent of all my sin. I know that all that come to you, you will not reject (John 6:37). Thank you for your dying for me so that I can be born again. Thank you Father for Jesus. Thank you Holy Spirit for coming in to my life. AMEN.*

You are now born again. It's that simple. By the way, welcome to the family!

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### **God is Said to do that which He Only Permits**

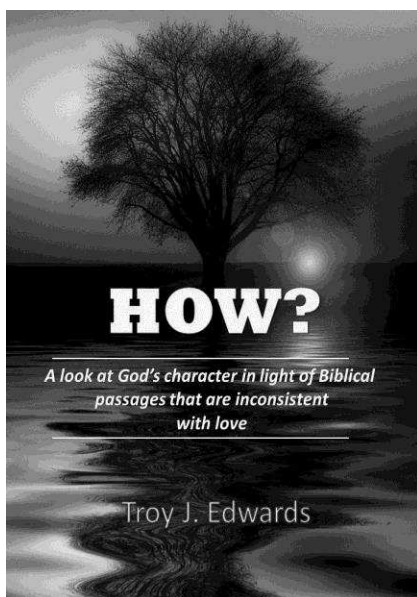
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In this book we study one of the most neglected truths which is “the permission idiom” in which God is said to be the cause of that which He merely allowed, permitted or did not prevent from happening. Neglect of this idiom has led to much misunderstanding about God and the Bible. This book will help you see God as light with no darkness in Him (1 John 1:5).

### **How?**

*A look at God's character in light of Biblical passages that are inconsistent with love*

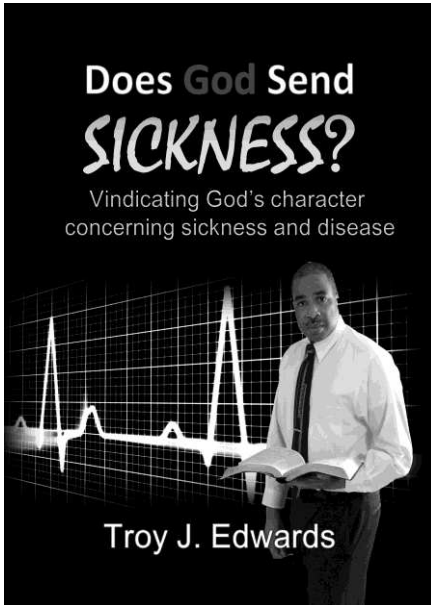
In this book we will look at a number of God's acts recorded in the Bible that upon a superficial reading paint Him as malicious, harsh, hypocritical, and in some cases, worse than the humans whose sin He punishes. When you see the explanations that the Bible offers you will see God in a new light. Most of all the reader will discover that God has always explained the punitive language of Scripture within the Bible itself.



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## **Vindicating God Ministries!**



### **Does God Send Sickness?**

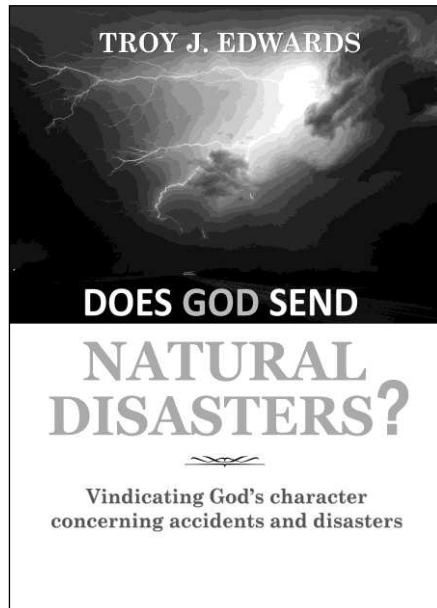
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God has been taking the blame for sickness and disease for centuries. This book will look at some difficult Bible passages in light of the *permissive idiom of the ancient Hebrew language*, in which God is often said to do the things that He merely allowed or permitted to happen. Those passages in both the Old and New Testaments that make God appear to be a cold and cruel dispenser of sickness and disease will be seen in a new light.

### **Does God Send Natural Disasters?**

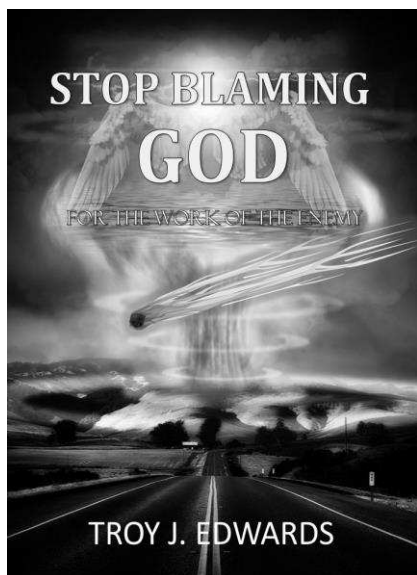
*Vindicating God's character concerning Accidents and Disasters*

Some have called natural disasters “acts of God”. They even have Scriptures to make a Biblical case for this assertion. However, does the Bible actually teach that God is the One sending them? Using the “permission idiom” we will examine several Bible disasters and learn that Scripture teaches us that God is actually trying to protect the world from disasters.



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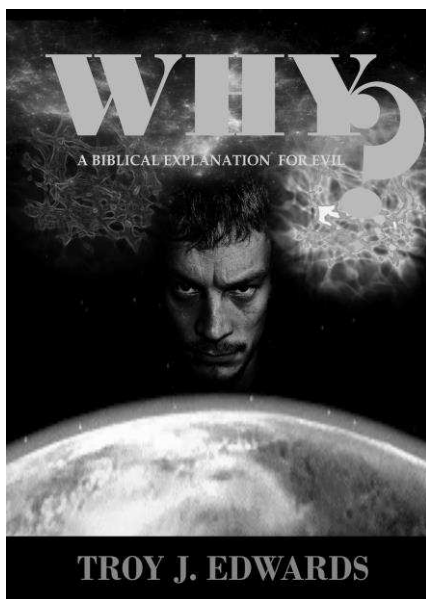
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*For the Work of the Enemy*

Sadly, blaming God is a popular pastime both within and outside of the church. In this book I address this problem and show from Scripture that God is not the source of any of our problems. I have also dealt with a number of areas in which God gets the blame. This book will help you to see that God is not at fault for the problems in life and that we can have the victory in every situation if we focus on exactly who our enemy is.

**WHY?**

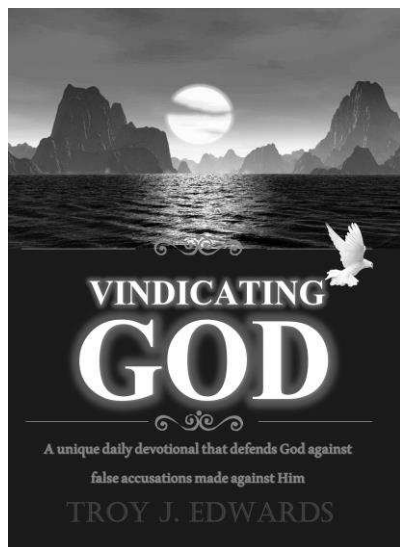
*A Biblical Explanation for Evil*

Why is there so much evil in our world? Why does the Bible seem to attribute so much evil to God? Why Doesn't God just destroy Satan? Why did God create this world if He knew that things would turn out this way? These and other questions are answered in this powerful book. This book will help you to see a picture of a loving God who never planned any of this evil and pain, is at war with evil, and is doing all that He can to rescue us from evil



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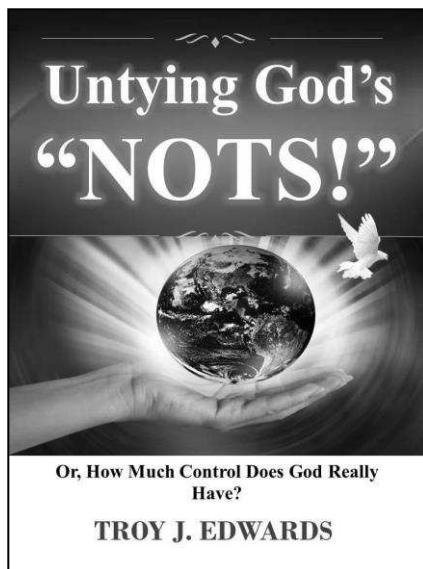
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