

*Question: Most people are appalled at the evil demonstrated by things like mass shootings in the U.S. and wars in the mid-east. Why does God not do something about the evil like this in our world?*

God is doing something. He has established his kingdom, his reign in our world; and that kingdom is moving toward the final defeat of all evil and toward the reign of God over all heaven and earth. The tragic events that we have witnessed in recent years are but another sign of the fierce resistance of the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God. Allow me to explain more fully.

In the beginning, God created a perfect world in which he shared a very close and personal relationship with those who were created in his own image. But Satan, the source of all evil, seduced the man and woman into disobeying God's clear instructions. As a result, the relationship with God was severed; and Adam and Eve were driven from the paradise first made for them. Since then, Satan, also known as the devil, has seduced human hearts into accomplishing his evil purposes while God has worked to return humanity to the original relationship with himself (Genesis 1-3).

To overcome the power of Satan's evil, God sent his son, Jesus Christ, into our world to live as one of us. Throughout his earthly life, Jesus demonstrated that God's power is greater than Satan's evil by casting out and destroying demons, Satan's invisible servants in this world. When accused of driving out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons, Jesus responded, "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Luke 11:20). While Jesus declared that God's kingdom has come, he also taught that the kingdom of God is still in the process of coming into the entire world. He taught his disciples to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Wherever God's reign has conquered hearts and lives, God's will is done on earth as it is in the presence of God in heaven.

At the same time, the devil continues to prowl around looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Because Satan is a liar, murderer and deceiver, he seeks to gain control of lives and to incite them to work his evil purposes against the will and purposes of God (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 Chronicles 21:1). Thus, I

would suggest that we should not be surprised that sick, confused and bitter individuals have continued to fall under the power of Satan to do his deeds. By saying this, I am not making any excuses for these individuals because Satan can control only those who place themselves within the reach of his power. Each one of us must choose for ourselves to follow Jesus or Satan.

When God's Son came into our world, he resisted Satan's temptations, tore down his stronghold, cast out Satan's demons and placed limitations on his work (Matthew 4:1ff; 12:28-29). Then, Jesus overcame Satan's power by dying and being raised to life again (Hebrews 2:14). After his resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven and sat upon his throne at the right side of God where he will reign until all his enemies have been put under his feet (Ephesians 1:20; Acts 2:32-35). When the last enemy, death, has been destroyed, Satan will be cast into the pit and the pit sealed over. Then, the kingdom will be delivered over to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-25; Revelation 20).

As long as evil remains in our world, the battle between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God will continue. But already the victory is assured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Even now Satan cannot overpower any person without that person submitting to him. All who live in submission to the reign of God are deeply saddened by the devastating evil of Satan's forces in our world; yet they march forward in confidence that God's kingdom is greater and will ultimately overcome and rule all creation. The most important question for each of us is, "Am I living under the banner of Satan's kingdom or of the kingdom of God?"

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