

***Question: Most people are appalled at the evil demonstrated by the school shootings and other violent acts both public and private. Why does God not do something about the evil like this in our world?***

In order to deal with evil in our world, God has established his kingdom; 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 like school shootings and other violent acts 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 close and personal relationship with the man and woman who had been 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, their relationship with God was severed; and Adam and Eve were driven from the paradise God had wanted to share with 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 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 had come, he also taught that the kingdom of God is still in the process of coming into the entire world. He told 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 people 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 those who have done acts of violence and evil have fallen under the power of Satan to do

Satan's deeds. By saying this, I am not making any excuses for these people because Satan can control only those who place themselves within the reach of his power.

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 death, the last enemy, has been destroyed, Satan will be cast into the pit and 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 apart from one's submission 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 the kingdom of God?"

[Send questions or comments to University Church of Christ, 801 N. 12<sup>th</sup>, Murray, KY 42071 or phone 270-753-1881. This article is reproduced on the web: [www.nchrist.org](http://www.nchrist.org) ]      2013/08/02