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It is widely believed that God makes bad things happen. This belief is so common in today's culture that even insurance companies classify natural disasters as "acts of God." Some people believe that our all-powerful God tries them and tests their faith so that they might stand approved before Him. This misunderstanding can cause fear and prevent people from enjoying a true and vital spiritual relationship with God.

When the Word of God is accurately understood, it becomes clear that God cannot be responsible for evil. We live on this earth that is made for us and sustained for us by the Giver of all that is good, our heavenly Father, God. Once we know the truth of the Word, we can enjoy a sweet relationship with God and see the source of evil for what it truly is.

When we are trying to get information about someone's traits and characteristics, it's best to go straight to the source—the one we want to know about. God gave us His Word so that we may know Him. He gave His Son, Jesus Christ, so that we could see His goodness in manifestation. What does God declare about Himself in the Word? Here are two clear sections of scripture that show us what we need to know.

*Psalms 145:8,9 [The Amplified Bible]:*

*The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in mercy and loving-kindness.*

*The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works [the entirety of things created].*

*I John 1:5:*

*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.*

God wants only good for ALL of mankind. He is Light! This truth is evident in His design for the earth (Genesis 1:31). This is also clear from the teaching of His Son recorded in Matthew 5.

*Matthew 5:45:*

*That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

God's continuing love and mercy is evident to all. Whether someone lives for God or not, they can still enjoy the sunshine and the rain. God wants all men to know His goodness.

If God is good always, then where does evil come from? It is important to understand that there is more than one god described in the Bible. Our heavenly Father is the one true God: all-powerful and always good. But there is also a false god, called the god of this world, the adversary, Satan, or the Devil. His motives are evil.

*John 10:10:*

*The thief [referring to the Devil] cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I [Jesus Christ] am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

Jesus Christ was sent to expose the works of the adversary, not so people would live with fear, but so they would recognize the adversary's ways and resist him (I John 3:8; James 4:7). The Word clearly identifies the source of evil works, such as stealing, killing, and destroying. They come from the adversary (I Peter 5:8).

Anyone who has read the Bible might ask, "Why does it seem as though God sometimes carried out evil in the Bible?" An example can be seen in Job 13:15, which reads, "Though he [God] slay me, yet will I trust in him..." It sounds as if Job believed that God might slay or kill him. But based on the clear verses we have seen in the Bible regarding God's goodness, this cannot literally be true. A little understanding of figures of speech in the Bible helps us understand this verse.

Job is utilizing an Eastern expression of thought, not giving a literal statement of fact. This apparent contradiction can be reconciled with the proper understanding of a figure of speech known as the idiom of permission. An idiom can be described as a usage of words particular to a language or a culture that has a meaning

different from the strict dictionary definition. The Hebrew language has an idiom of permission, which is a unique usage of words where active verbs are sometimes used to express not the *doing* of the action, but the *permission* of the action.

In Job 13:15, Job was using a figurative expression, attributing to God an action that He could not and would not do. Instead of saying that the Devil did something, the people in the Old Testament would say that the Lord *permitted* it to be done. This figure of speech allowed people to explain what was going on and still portray God as sovereign and in control of the situation. God would not slay Job; the power of death belongs to the Devil (Hebrews 2:14).

Though we can't always avoid the attacks of the adversary, we can choose to trust in God as Job did, knowing that He is good always and will help bring us to our deliverance.

*James 4:7:*

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

God is the Source of all that is good. The misunderstanding that God causes evil things to happen in life can cause fear and undercut our true and vital spiritual relationship with God. But by seeing what God has to say about Himself in His Word and by recognizing the real source of evil, we can be assured of God's goodness. As we recognize the good works of our God and the evil works of our adversary, we can live victoriously, enjoying a sweet relationship with our heavenly Father. God is good—ALWAYS!

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