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Why Didn't God Start Humanity Over Right Away by Destroying Adam and Eve?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about why God didn't start humanity over right away by destroying Adam and Eve instead of waiting for the flood, whether another fall will be possible in the new creation (and what that means for our free will), and why God didn't make us "fall-proof" from the beginning.

* Why didn't God start humanity over right away by destroying Adam and Eve if he knew he was going to have to destroy an evil generation with the flood later on?

* In the new heavens and earth, will another fall of humanity be possible, and could this create an infinite loop of creation and fall? If not, does this mean there will be a lack of free will in the new creation, and why wouldn't this "fall-proof" design have been God's original choice for creation?

Transcript

This is Stand to Reason, hashtag STR-esque podcast. Greg, you started laughing right away. I just know how you start with a burst of energy, and I know that that's not the way you're feeling right now, because you sort of want to get people are feeling a little out of the weather, and so you're giving it the old college try there.

Yes, let it fly. Well, let's get right into this, Greg. Here's a question from Ron.

Why did God not start humanity over right away with Destroying Adam and Eve after they sinned against him if he knew that he was going to have to destroy an evil generation with a flood later on? Well, okay, here we go again with the why did God? Why didn't God not? Ron, I don't mind even an insight. Here's the rule. The rule is that why God questions or why did he, why didn't he, are questions that frequently simply cannot be answered, because they have to do with the mind of God, which God has not generally revealed.

So what that means is that we are left with a speculation about what the options or what the reasons might have been. And that's hazardous, because they're speculative, and so therefore we want to make sure that we are not inappropriately dogmatic in the way we answer these, not just us, because we're not characteristically, I think, but many others will speculate on something and then pretend like their speculation is holy writ, okay? Now, I think this question falls into the category of theodicy, and what theodicy is, for those who are not familiar with the word, is a speculation on why it might have been that God allowed evil in the world. The problem of evil, at least the deductive problem, that is if God is good and he's powerful, there would be no evil in the world, but there is evil in the world, and therefore God is either not good or not powerful.

Oh, that's actually, I think, *modus tolerance* or *modus opponents* form of an argument. But the thing is it's not the way it's offered is not sound, because it could be that God had a morally sufficient reason to allow evil, and that's the way to get around that particular challenge. So the deductive challenge doesn't work, but it does raise the question, well then what is God's morally sufficient reason, and that's where theodicy comes in, and that's really at the heart of this question, why didn't God just do this? So it presumes that what God was after was a perfect world all the time, with no one ever sinning, and Adam and Eve messed it up.

So why don't you just crunch Adam and Eve, get them out of the way and start all over to see maybe you can do it better the second time? Well, this presumes of course that the second round is going to be any different than the first, that human beings aren't going to use their freedom, and at that point there was kind of an autonomous freedom of sorts, there's a much more robust sense of freedom for Adam and Eve, because they weren't influenced by a fallen nature, they had the power and ability, etc, etc, not to sin, *posse non-pacaria* is possible for them not to sin, that is not the case for us now because we're fallen. So, okay, they messed up, they get condemned, let's start over with another couple. So we're presuming that a do-over is going to be any different, that Adam and Eve's or the next Adam and Eve, 1.0 or whatever they call it, you know, in computer language, 1.1 will do any better, that's the first thing.

We don't know that, only God would know that. And secondly, it presumes that as God in his omniscience surveyed the entire enterprise in history, that what he was really trying to accomplish was to get a perfect humanity. So there would, in this sense, it seems like Ron's presumption is, well, God wouldn't want to judge anybody for sin if he could prevent it.

And now he's got two he could judge instead of putting all the humanity under the threat of judgment. So let's just judge the two and then start over again and then, you know, but see, that presumes something about God's sovereign purposes in the long run. Does he not want to be in a position where he has to judge massive numbers of people for the evil that they commit? Now, this is a presumption I don't think is defensible.

It comports with a lot of people's, I guess, maybe common sense notion about love, no loving father, no loving God would ever want to be in a position to judge other human beings. But I think that that is not a, for lack of a better word, a very robust understanding of God. And you have argued me, you may want to enter in with this, that part of that God is glorified, not just in people he loves and creates and then they go to heaven and spend eternity with him, but he's also glorified in his acts of justice against those who rebel and God is magnified in against those who rebuild that give substance meaning or at least a perspective on acts of mercy towards those who, for whom he forgave.

And so all of these things are in play here, which makes it, of course, really difficult to second guess God in this way. There's probably some for people to think that God is glorified in his judgments against sinners, and that this is somehow a good thing. But it just so happens that the Old Testament text is absolutely thick with these kinds of things, these kinds of characterizations of God.

So there you go. These are factors here. Again, I'm not saying why God would want to.

I'm giving some reasons that are factors in it, but I can't plumb the deaf so God on this. And what I have to believe is that God chose the right thing. It is not going to support, in many cases, with our fallen sensibilities about what God should have done.

And this is the difficult place that we find ourselves in when we make these speculations. And just to add what you said there, Greg, judging the generation during the flood versus judging Adam and Eve, and you touched on this, would be two different things. In the first case, the flood wasn't wiping out all sin because obviously he still kept fallen people.

It was just an example of judgment. Now, if he had wiped out Adam and Eve and eliminated a lot of a lot more sin of all these people continuing to do evil to each other. Right.

If he had wiped out Adam and Eve, that would have indicated I want all sin wiped out. So there are two different things, possible solutions here. They're they're solving two different problems.

So he clearly didn't want to wipe out all sin with Adam and Eve, whether that's because, as you say, you know, it wouldn't have stopped it. The next one would have done the same thing. Presumably.

I actually think and I know I've said this before on the show, but when the Bible talks about the eternal purpose of God having Christ die on the cross, I do think his goal was to reveal his grace on the cross. That's something you would not see in any sort of a world that had no sin, no fallenness. And so I think God wanted to fully reveal who he was to the people who would enjoy him forever.

And that included revealing his grace, which is his highest glory, dying for sinners, loving sinners who hated him, dying them, saving them, dying for them and saving them. If that is his eternal purpose, then that would be why he didn't wipe out Adam and Eve. However, wiping out people at the flood accomplished a few different things.

One of them was it served as a demonstration of God's hatred of sin. So right at the beginning, you see God, God will judge sin. They had an example of God judging sin that they could look back to and point to and say, we should not be sending because God will judge us.

But it revealed his righteousness and his judgment. And it served as an instruction for later times. I mean, even in the New Testament, they refer back to God destroying people during the flood when they're revealing God's righteousness and the judgment that we will all face in the end.

Second Peter is a yeah, sample. So I think it was serving all those perfect because and just, you know, obviously some of the speculation isn't spelled out. But when you see it being used as an illustration to show people their impending judgment and God's hatred of sin throughout the Bible, you can see that that's how God was using that particular judgment.

But again, why he didn't wipe out Adam and Eve versus why he didn't, you know, why he wiped out the people in the flood, those are two different different issues there. Anything else to add before we go on to the next one, right? All right. Here's a question from Taylor.

In the new heavens and earth is another fall of humanity possible? If it is, could this create an infinite loop of creation in fall? If not, does this imply a lack of free will in the new creation? And why wouldn't this fall-proof design have been God's original choice from creation? See, this is where I think are so many discussions among, I should put it this way, discussions about free will among so many Christians are not thoughtful enough, okay? There is this way of thinking that we, if we can't sin, we have no free will. So my question simply is this, does God have freedom? Can God freely choose what he wants to do? And the answer is obviously yes, but God has no capability of sinning because he is morally perfect and there is nothing in his nature that drives him to that. He's not capable, everything, he can do whatever he wants and everything he wants to do is good.

So him being able to do whatever he wants in a non-mechanistic way seems to be a pretty good example of genuine freedom. Now, I think that in heaven, we will have the same thing. We can make all kinds of decisions, but our natures will be such that none of our decisions will ever be sinful.

We will share in, I think, which is a communicable attribute of God as God transforms us

in the able to sin. Now, there are different Christians to have different points of view. Clay Jones, for example, disagrees with me on this.

He said, we will be able to sin, but we will have seen how bad it is so we will never choose it. I don't see any real theological reason to hold that view. We know sin is bad now.

We still choose this. Yeah, yeah. And what I think that Clay is trying to do unnecessarily, I'm not faulting him.

I'm just thinking this is, he's trying to maintain a very robust notion of human freedom, which, and therefore he takes his side. Now, I mean, I could be wrong about his motivations, but it seems to me that's what's going on, even in this question. And as I get more and more questions, and I was at summit last week and in Colorado Springs and during the Q&A session there on the porch in the evening, which we characteristically have, there were so many questions about this and if, and freedom, and as if, if we are not allowed to do whatever it is we, we would ever option is possible.

I was going to say whatever we want, but if we have a renewed nature, all our wants will be holy like God's wants. But if we can't just do any including sin in heaven, then somehow we're machines. Well, this is a false dichotomy.

We are restrained by our natures in every set of circumstances. We are humans, and we are also fallen humans. So our natures being corrupted give us a range of choices, but the range of choices is limited.

The resurrection gives us also a range of choices, because we are still humans with the ability to make choices, but the range is going to be more limited than is we are not going to be able to make in moral choices. But that's not a bad thing. That's a good thing.

And some people will characterize freedom as not the ability to sin, but the ability to do what's right all the time. That's the kind of freedom that you want. And in a non-mechanistic way, determinism, lack of freedom is machine-like behavior, and I want people to think of it that way.

Okay, if God does not allow us in virtue of the way he has changed us in the resurrection, if we are no longer allowed to sin, or allowed isn't the right word, if we are no longer capable of sitting, this is not a meaningful restriction of our freedoms. We are not machines. We are not chatty-cathies.

Of course, that's an old reference that little people know, but we are not like mechanical dowels saying, I love you, I love you, I love you, but it's mechanistic. It's not coming from our hearts as it were. No, we will love God genuinely from our hearts, because our hearts are going to be good, and God is worthy of love.

It just troubles me that there are so many people that don't see this, and they think, well, I can't sin in heaven, well, then I'm just going to be a machine, and I'm not going to be able to love. Well, God's not a machine, and God can love, but he can't sin in heaven or anywhere else. So, it's just a mistaken way of thinking about freedom, all right.

Total loss of freedom, complete loss of freedom is determinism, strict determinism on every single thing, and strict determinism in that sense is machine-like behavior, okay. And this is what I want people to realize that even if our choices are somehow determined by God, and if God transforms us so that we are like Jesus and morally perfect in the resurrection, when we see him, we would be like him because we'll see him as he is as one reference, but there are others as well that indicate this. That doesn't mean we're automatons.

He's done something good for us. He's healed us morally, and therefore all of our choices will comport with goodness, and it will be the best of circumstances, because in that way we will be like God, not inherently, but because God transformed us like that so now our natures are immutably good. And that's my conviction about the nature of the resurrection.

And even if I'm mistaken about that, it's clear there will not be any sin in heaven. That's clear, I think, from the final chapters of the book of Revelation. But on my view, I don't see this, our transformation to immutable goodness does not in any fashion interfere in any meaningful way with human freedom.

Oh, so God's forcing us to do good. Well, if you want to use the force word, and this came up on our discussion, I say that God is guaranteeing that we're going to always do creatures. The word force is a word that's usually characterized when somebody does something to somebody else that they should not be doing.

That isn't the way God works. Well, I think this is such a great question. And this does come up a lot because as people start thinking through their views on libertarian free will, the question does come.

Well, if that's how can that be the case in heaven? Because how can God guarantee that we will not sin in heaven? Which he has guaranteed, as you said. And I think, Greg, I think that what you said about God is so helpful here, because God cannot sin, will not sin, and yet his freedom is not curtailed, like he is still free and he still loves. So obviously, that's possible.

Now, what Taylor asked here at the end is why didn't he do this from the beginning of creation? And that's kind of what I addressed in the previous question. So you can go back to that. But I just want to say a couple things.

One thing you said, Greg, you said that they are restrained by their natures, but I just

want to look at this a little bit different way. I don't think it makes sense to say we're restrained by our nature, because that makes it sound like our nature is something outside of us. Our nature is us.

So God isn't restrained by his nature. It's his nature to be good. His nature is who he is.

It's not something outside of him. And I think that sometimes people start thinking of our nature, quote, as being something outside of us that controls us when it's actually us. It's actually who we are.

That's just another way of saying who we are. So we act within our natures, because that's the nature of what it means to be a person. We act according to what our own desires and inclinations are.

So I just want to make sure people aren't thinking of nature as something outside of us. And the other thing is, God is different from us. So let's say I wanted you to do something.

The only way I can do that is by force. I'm not able, I'm not God. If I didn't choose to do it, if I didn't want to do it voluntarily.

Right. However, let me just give an illustration of how God does direct decisions that probably most people will agree with. And that is inspiration.

So nobody believes that inspiration is automatic writing where someone's hand is moved and they're an automaton. Hopefully not. That's just that's not the Christian view.

The Christian view is not that they heard a voice and they wrote it down or that their, their arm was moved by God or that they were puppets or they were automatons or anything. Well, by the way, that just so there's no confusion. There are times when things are dictated, like prophets, for example, but taken the concept of inspiration at large.

That's not the Bible wasn't dictated. Right. So the Bible is God breathed and Jesus talks about God speaking through the mouth of David, the Holy Spirit speaking through the mouth of David.

So it's God's words being spoken through others. Now, how does God do that? That the experience of the person who was writing was not that God was controlling them in any way. They were making choices.

We can see personalities and rise. We can see personalities and Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and Paul. We see the different writers.

We see that they're not, it's not all the same voice. And yet it's still God speaking through them and directing the words so that every word is the word that God wanted to

write. So if you apply that to other, other decisions we make, then we have an example that it can be the case that God can direct us without our feeling like puppets and without our, our personalities and wills being overridden in an illegitimate way.

So I just want to throw that out there so that people can maybe think about that. And then one last thing I want to say real fast, Greg, you said we'll be raised without the flesh. And I know you meant sinful, our sinfulness.

But I want to make sure people realize you're not talking about we're not going to have bodies. Right. Well, the word flesh sarks in the New Testament is sometimes describes our fallen nature, you know, the works of the flesh are evident, Galatians 5. And then sometimes it describes our just normal human nature.

Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you. But my father in heaven, Jesus says to Peter and then in 1 Corinthians 15, flesh and blood that clarification is important. Thank you.

All right. That's it, Greg. We're out of time.

Well, thank you so much, Taylor. And thank you, Ron. We appreciate hearing from you.

This is Amy Holland, Greg Coco for Stands to Reason.