

Voices: Why does a loving God permit evil?

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A question was put to me recently about Vladimir Putin and the evil he initiated in Ukraine: “If God is good, why didn’t he prevent an evil man like Putin from launching this terrible war?”

For that matter, why didn’t he stop Adolph Hitler during World War II? Or Benito Mussolini? Or Attila the Hun? Or any of the other countless evil tyrants down through history?

Why does a loving God allow evil despots to do horrible things? Why doesn’t he just intervene, especially when innocents are suffering? Shouldn’t a good God prevent such wickedness from bad men?

A response to the question of evil

Let’s start by considering this: If God were to intervene, even once, then he must consistently intervene all the time. Otherwise, he would be deemed imperfect or incompetent, or depending on the intervention God chose to take or not take, some would deem God to be evil.

God is not imperfect or incompetent, nor is he evil.

God created the laws of this world to apply equally to all of us human beings. Therefore, should God intervene in some way that did not apply equally to us all, say, by initiating an action to destroy a man like Putin, then God’s laws no longer would be equally applied.

Putin is, after all, the leader of Russia. There are many humans alive today who believe him to be a great man and a wonderful leader, despite the fact

he launched this terrible war on a smaller, neighboring country.

As for God removing Putin by, say, taking his life, shall the commandments be broken by the very God who created them? Thou shalt not kill is one of the Ten Commandments.

God's intervention

To ask, "Why doesn't God intervene in human affairs?" overlooks one important fact: God already has intervened in human affairs. God sent his one and only Son, Jesus, to live among us some 2,000 years ago.

Interestingly, when Jesus walked this earth, he did indeed intervene at times in the affairs of man. We call those interventions miracles. For example, he healed the sick. He made the blind to see and the deaf to hear. He fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes. Jesus even raised dead people back to life again.

The Son of God had every right to do these things, because although he was God, he was God in the flesh. Jesus was every bit a human being, just like you and me, and we human beings frequently intervene in one another's affairs with acts of kindness and generosity.

Never once did Jesus intervene using force or violence.

Consider this: Were God the Father to intervene willfully in the affairs of mankind, that would be the end of our human freedom; our freewill would cease to exist. God's intervening in the affairs of one man, even to remove an international criminal as evil as Vladimir Putin, would be the end of our human right to choose.

We have the God-given right to choose to sin or not to sin, to do evil or not to do evil. Every day, each and every one of us must choose.

Were God to deal with Vladimir Putin by removing him for his sin, then every man and every woman who sinned must be dealt with similarly, or else God would cease to be fair and just, which is contrary to God's nature.

Besides, God already has dealt with sin. God the Father sent his only Son, Jesus, to live among us and to die for us. He was nailed to a cross on a hill called Calvary to pay the penalty for our sin.

If ever God the Father were to intervene in the affairs of man, surely you'd think it would be to rescue his Son on that day, taking him off that cross and from such an agonizing death. He could have called 10,000 angels, but he did not.

God did not intervene that time, because the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf was all the intervention in human affairs we ever will need.

Pray for Ukraine

This is a brutal war we're observing in Ukraine—rockets flying, buildings crumbling, entire cities obliterated, millions forced to leave their homes.

I believe God is at work to bring an end to it. People are praying, and we know God hears our prayer. And if we know he hears us in whatever we ask, we know we have the requests we have asked from him (1 John 5:15).

When a man or a woman chooses to sin, God does not prevent it. He does not intervene in this way. To sin or not sin is our choice as human beings. God has given us permission to obey him or to disobey him. For that reason, God did not prevent Vladimir Putin from launching this war against Ukraine.

Please pray for the people of Ukraine. We must pray for an end to the war in Ukraine and for the safety of the millions made homeless by it.

Rich Mussler is a Christian author who teaches the Bible at First Baptist Church in Lewisville. The views expressed are those of the author.