

If God initially created everything as “very good”, why did a group of angels, and Adam and Eve sin?

On day 6 of creation, after God made everything, the Bible says:

*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.
(Genesis 1:31)*

This verse tells us that God was pleased with his creation and there was nothing evil about it or wrong with it. So why then did a group of angels rebel against God, and why did Adam and Eve sin in the Garden of Eden? Why did they all disobey God if they were created “very good”? This is a good question!

FREEWILL

We believe that when God created angels and humans he gave them **freewill**. One characteristic of freewill is the ability to choose between right and wrong. We can see the evidence for God giving humans freewill in at least 2 ways:

1. People are made in God’s image (Genesis 1:26-27). This means that people are a reflection of God. We display some characteristics that God has because he made us in his image. One such characteristic is freewill.
2. God told Adam to eat from every tree in the Garden of Eden except from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:15-17). This shows that God gave people freewill, and he allowed them to exercise that freewill.

So we can see that God considers freewill to be a quality that is “very good”. There is nothing evil or wrong with freewill. It’s what humans and angels did with their freewill that’s the problem.

God’s idea of what’s “very good” is different to our idea of what’s “very good”. The Bible says:

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.
(Isaiah 55:8-9)*

We may think that giving angels and humans freewill with the potential for them to sin is not a quality that is “very good”, but that’s not the way God thinks. God’s thoughts and ways are infinitely superior to ours. God is omniscient (he knows everything) and full of wisdom (Psalm 139:1-18; 147:5; 1 John 3:20). We don’t know everything, and our idea of what’s “very good” is flawed.

ADAM & EVE

When God made Adam and Eve they had no sin in them (they were created “very good”). Adam and Eve did not have a sinful nature, but they had the **potential** to sin because God gave them freewill. The **testing** of their freewill by God came in the form of a command not to eat from “tree of the knowledge of good and evil”. In Genesis 3 we see Satan **tempting** Eve to sin. Satan tempts her to eat from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” - something which God told them not to do (Genesis 2:15-17). The result is that both Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating from this tree (Genesis 3:6-7). When they exercised their freewill to eat from it they sinned (Romans 5:12-19). From this point they received a sinful nature, which was passed on to all their descendants:

*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin,
and so death spread to all men because all sinned.
(Romans 5:12)*

Since everybody now has a sinful nature, our natural desire is to want to sin (Romans 3:9-18; 6:17-19). This is the reality of what we see now. People are naturally inclined to sin rather than obey God. But before Adam and Eve sinned they were naturally inclined to obey God rather than sin. Their single act of disobedience (through the exercise of freewill) changed their good nature into a sinful nature.

Now it may seem that God’s creation was not “very good” because it had the potential to sin, but that’s not the way God sees it. His understanding of what’s “very good” is different to ours. As far as God was concerned his creation was “very good” because it had no sin and he was happy to give his creation freewill.

REBELLIOUS ANGELS

It seems that God gave angels freewill too. Remember that God created everything as "very good" - this includes the angels. So all angels were originally without sin. But the Bible tells us Satan rebelled against God and many other angels rebelled with him (Ezekiel 28:11-19; Luke 10:18; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 Timothy 3:6; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:1-9). These fallen angels are now called demons or evil/unclean spirits (Matthew 8:16,28-29; 12:43-45; Luke 8:2; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 16:13-14). These rebellious angels sinned against God some time between the end of creation and the appearing of Satan in the Garden of Eden to tempt Eve (compare Revelation 12:7-9 with Genesis 1:31).

So just like Adam and Eve, it seems that God also gave freewill to the angels.

WHY DID GOD GIVE US FREEWILL?

Since God is omniscient (he knows everything), he would have known that giving angels and humans freewill would lead to them sinning. So why give us freewill in the first place? Many Christians believe God gave us freewill as an expression of his love for us and our love for him.

God's love for us: By giving us freewill God shows his love for us. Freewill gives us a level of freedom to make choices. Without freewill we are robots. But God loves us, he wants us to have some level of freedom to make choices so he gave us freewill.

Our love for God: By giving us freewill we can express our love for God. Freewill gives us the opportunity to freely decide whether or not we love God and to express that choice. Without freewill, we would only love God because he programmed us to (i.e. we'd be robots). Freewill allows us to express our love for him. Obviously not everybody does express love for God; most people use their freewill to reject him.

So freewill is an expression of love between God and mankind. This principle could also be applied to his relationship with the angels.

FREEWILL IN HEAVEN

Any person who repents and believes in Jesus Christ will have their sins forgiven and enter heaven in the after-life (Mark 1:14-15; John 3:16-18,36; 5:24 etc.). Anybody who dies without their sins forgiven will be found guilty of sin on judgement day and sent to hell for eternal punishment; Satan and his demons will also be punished there eternally (Matthew 25:41-46; John 3:16-18,36; 5:24-29; Revelation 20:11-15 etc.).

For those of us who will be in heaven, the Bible describes our time there as:

*...an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you...
(1 Peter 1:4)*

*But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.
(2 Peter 3:13)*

*They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;
the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.
For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.
(Revelation 7:15-17)*

*He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning,
nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.
(Revelation 21:4)*

*No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it,
and his servants will worship him.
(Revelation 22:3)*

These verses tell us that in heaven there will be **absolutely no sin or any effects of sin**. In heaven we will no longer have a sinful nature as we did on Earth. Our nature will be like that of Adam and Eve when God first created them.

Even though Adam and Eve were without sin when they were created, the freewill God gave them was put to the test by God and tempted by Satan. They decided to sin against God, causing them to receive a rebellious, sinful nature which was passed down to all people. However, since the verses above show that in heaven there'll be no sin this shows that no further testing or temptation will occur in heaven. Therefore in heaven there will be no

opportunity to sin. We will still have freewill but there will be no desire to rebel against God. The **tests** and **temptations** occur here on Earth.

One of the main reasons God created us was so that we would seek him and have a relationship with him. Acts 17:26-27 says:

*And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth,
having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,
that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him.
Yet he is actually not far from each one of us...*

These verses show that the **testing** of our freewill by God takes place here on Earth, not in the after-life.

One of the main reasons there'll be no **temptation** in heaven is because the great tempter (Satan) will be eternally punished in hell - he won't be around to tempt us as he did with Eve.

The other reason we won't sin in heaven (even though we'll still have freewill) is because there is no mention of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" in heaven. Eating from this tree is what allowed sin to enter the whole world, separating everybody from God and resulting in physical death (Genesis 3; Rom 5:12). Instead the "tree of life" will be in heaven, which is a symbol of eternal life, for all God's people to eat from and never die again (Genesis 3:22-24; Revelation 2:7; 22:1-2, 14, 19).

SUMMARY

- God created everything (including angels and Adam and Eve) as very good. This means they were without sin. Their main desire was to obey God.
- God also gave angels and humans freewill to make choices. God considers freewill to be part of his "very good" plan, even though he knew it would lead to sin. Freewill gives people the potential to sin when tested or tempted.
- Freewill is an expression of love between God and his creation.
- Some angels, including Satan, used their freewill to disobey God (i.e. sin).
- God tested Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve used their freewill to disobey God (i.e. sin).
- When Adam and Eve sinned they received a sinful nature. This sinful nature was passed down to all people. People's main desire now is to sin because of this rebellious, sinful nature.
- Anybody who repents from their sin and believes in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins will be forgiven now and enter heaven when they die.
- In heaven we will still have freewill, but there will be no opportunity to sin because there will be no testing or tempting of our freewill. There is no "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" or Satan in heaven. The "tree of life" will be in heaven. The tests and temptations are only here on Earth.



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