

populated area? Surely Satan wouldn't mind a *little* good so long as it creates a larger evil.

If something is so good that you can't imagine it's anything but the work of God, then ask yourself this: are you so wise that you could never be deceived, even by the most powerful of evil intelligences? Are you so knowledgeable, that you can see into the future and know that only good will come? And if you answer yes to either of these questions, isn't that a strong statement of pride, one of the seven deadly sins?

Or look at it this way, if Satan's plan was that at a certain time a horrible leader, or a crazy scientist, or even the antichrist himself was to be born, wouldn't it serve Satan's purpose to help that person's ancestors by saving them from accidents, helping them succeed at work, maybe even letting them win the lottery? So the next time you hear of a miraculous survival, don't think "God must have a special purpose for that person," think "Could that person be an ancestor of the antichrist?"

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WHEN DOES SATAN GET CREDIT?

A Question of Moral Atheism

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we tell whether the miracles are the work of God or of Satan? Does everything that seems to be good come from God? If you say yes, then you are implying that either God doesn't know all possible consequences of His actions, or that nothing that is good on its face can lead to evil. If God is omniscient, we can rule out the first possibility. And the second possibility is incorrect on its face: The miracle of birth may be creating a serial killer. Getting into your first-choice college might mean that you never meet the person who would be your perfect mate. Free ice cream might give you a headache. Does nothing that seems to be good come from Satan? If he's powerful, active in the world, and clever, why would Satan limit his actions to things so subtle that they are obviously his work? Perhaps Satan made the jumbo-jet crash so that the sole survivor would be inspired to become the charismatic leader of a false religion? Maybe the woman on her way to Nevada was inspired to stop and get a new tire so that she'd contract a disease from the mechanic and carry it to a more

IMAGINE THAT THERE is a horrible jumbo-jet crash. The huge craft plummets from the sky, smashing into a suburban neighborhood, destroying six houses, killing hundreds of people on the ground and in the aircraft. From the wreckage, one man emerges injured but alive. He thanks God for the miracle of his survival. Now imagine a woman driving to Nevada. On the edge of a long stretch of desert, she gets the urge to stop at a gas station and buy herself a soda. While she's stopped, she notices that one of her tires is worn to the point that it is about to fail. She thanks God for giving her the urge to stop, because without it she may have lost a tire in the middle of the desert. The typical atheist response to stories like this generally involves incredulity, eye rolling, and similar shows of dismissal. Why does God get credit for good things but not blame for bad ones? This question has been asked often enough that I'm not going to bother. Instead, I'm going to offer a different question: assuming that Christianity is true and that these incidents really are supernatural occurrences, how can

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QUESTIONS OF MORAL ATHEISM: INSTRUCTIONS

We appreciate your interest in helping us spread information about moral atheism! To make copies of this pamphlet for your own use or to share with friends, follow these simple steps:

1. Print pages one and two of this document, one on each side of the same piece of paper (if you don't have access to a duplex printer, print page one, put the page back in the paper tray upside down, and print page two — depending on the type of printer, you may have to experiment a bit).
2. Cut the printout in two, using the thin rules across the middle of the page as a guide.
3. Fold the two pieces of paper in half, making a pair of small pamphlets.
4. Keep one of the pamphlets to read, and give the other away to an interested friend or stranger.

That's it! If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, we invite you to share them by leaving a comment on blog.iamanatheist.org. Thanks!
