

Punishment & Withdrawal of Protection

“There are about 35 different species of snakes in Palestine. Some are extremely poisonous. The poisonous serpents that infested the wilderness were called “fiery serpents,” on account of the terrible effects produced by their sting. As the protecting hand of God was removed from Israel, great numbers of the people were attacked by these venomous creatures. In other words, it wasn’t that God sent them upon the Israelites; rather, the Lord took His protection away from them, and they then suffered the consequences.” SSQ

This rings of those who don’t believe that God punishes. What do you think? I do realize that if God was not graceful towards me the devil would have me out of life so quick! I just see those snakes to be a judgment of God for sure. It was no random act, but very specific in my eyes. It also was very purposeful. If God opened the earth up to swallow Karah, sent an angel to start killing those in the camp on the outskirts who were murmuring, then He did this too. I really don’t like how it was set up saying 35 varieties...

God Bless,

Response:

God does withdraw His protection and that is when disasters occur--He withdraws it in various degrees. After the close of probation it will be COMPLETELY withdrawn from the wicked. Satan will have freedom to destroy and he will. BUT there will also be the PLAGUES sent directly from God which are punishment. God DOES punish, but mostly it is that He allows the natural and satanic results of our sin to hit us to various degrees. IF he did not hold back much of the natural cause and effect of sin—no flesh would live.

God puts a restraint on His own characteristics to allow life to continue here until the working out of the plan of salvation is completed.

This is one of the best ways to explain sin and God's Laws to children--realize that to move towards obedience is to move towards LIFE but to move away is to move towards DEATH. The life that we have now is only temporary and REAL life is found only in harmony with God.

However, we certainly see many incidences in the Bible that God took a direct hand and punished with a supernatural happening like those you mentioned.

Quotes:

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Eph. 4:18; Prov. 8:36. God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. {DA 764.1}

To sin, wherever found, "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them.--DA 107

The glory of His countenance, which to the righteous is life, will be to the wicked a consuming fire.--DA 600