

## THE EVIL OF A RIGHTEOUS GOD!

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How untraceable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has been his counselor? Who has first given to him reimbursement? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Ro. 11:33-36).

### WHAT IS THE DIVINE LAW OF CIRCULARITY?

What is the full extent of the wisdom and knowledge of God? Who knows the mind of the Lord? The prophet Isaiah declared, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (Isa. 64:4, 1Co 2:9). How untraceable are God's judgments! Moreover, His paths beyond tracing out! Yet, God reveals these mysteries to us by his Spirit. **FOR THE SPIRIT SEARCHES ALL THINGS, EVEN THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD.** The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them. This is because they must spiritually discern the mysteries of God. A spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment. This is because he has the mind of Christ. (1Co. 2:10, 14-16).

The apostle Paul illustrates the depth of God's thinking in this statement, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things" (Ro. 11:36). The Amplified Bible goes on to say, "For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him." This divine law of circularity gives an answer to every question of Humanity. It solves every error produced through human theology. Furthermore, it gives a proper place for all the great truth of the Scripture. This spiritual principle shows how everything leaves its place of origin to make its circuit and return back to the place of its beginning. Creation itself teaches us the truth hidden in this divine law. The sun rises, and sets, hurrying to its place to rise again. Moreover, the wind goes toward the south, and returns back to the north. It whirls about continually, and returns according to its circuits. All the rivers run into the sea. Yet the sea is not full; because it returns to its place of origin. The seasons continue to revolve. Spring turns to Summer followed by Autumn and not far behind is the Winter season. The Winter soon has its fulfillment and Springtime again returns. (Ec. 1:4ff).

### WHO IS THE SOURCE OF ALL?

Let us take a closer look at the principle found in Romans 11:36. This marvelous perception says, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." The first part of this verse says, "FOR OF HIM . . ." The word "**OF**" comes from the Greek word "**EK**" which literally means "**OUT OF**." This undeniably establishes God as **THE SOURCE** of all things. The Apostle John echoed this by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. **ALL THINGS CAME INTO BEING BY HIM, AND APART FROM HIM NOTHING CAME INTO BEING THAT HAS COME INTO BEING**" (John 1:1-3). Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. He created all that is in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Moreover, every throne, power, ruler, and authority, was created by him and for him. He is before all, and in him it all holds together (Col. 1:15ff). If we are to receive all things from the hand of God the divine principle of circularity must become settled in our understanding. This is because after leaving God's hand in perfect condition a thing often becomes perverted and confused. By the time it reaches us, it often seems like "evil." This brings up the question, "Can an all wise and good God create "evil?"

The prophet Isaiah introduced Cyrus king of Persia to the nations of the earth. He also revealed his destiny long before his birth. The prophecy, found in Isaiah chapter 45, unquestionably reveals God's absolute sovereignty in the affairs of humankind. Cyrus was born outside the covenant Jehovah made with the nation of Israel. However, this heathen king would become the conquer of Babylon and set God's people free.

In this context the Lord spoke of being the Creator of "**DARKNESS**" and "**EVIL**." The Lord said "I

form light, and create darkness." "I make peace and create evil, **I DO ALL THIS**" (Isa. 45:7). This passage causes some to question, "How can a righteous God become the Author of evil?" "Does God create darkness and evil with forethought and purpose?" "Or are darkness and evil the unavoidable result of God's creation of light and peace?"

### WHAT ARE THE THREE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

However, if receive a thing as though it comes from God, no matter its present state, He will cause it to work into good. The final state produces the ultimate victory, bringing joy to man's heart and praise to God's name. One school of thought struggles with the slightest suggestion that God has anything to do with the creation of evil. These contend that God, who is all wise and good, could not deliberately create evil. Quoting from the Bible they say, "Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren." "Every **GOOD ENDOWMENT** and **EVERY PERFECT GIFT** is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." "With Him there is no variation, or shifting shadow" (James 1:17ff). Remember, "God is light, and **IN HIM IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL**" (1Jo 1:5). No one should ever say, "I am tempted of God." For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither does He tempt any one (James 1:13).

Others declare God created "darkness" and "evil" with absolute sovereignty and forethought. Suggesting everything is exactly as He decided it would be to fulfill His purpose. "In Christ **ALL** was created. **ALL IN THE HEAVENS** and **ALL UPON THE EARTH**, both the visible and the invisible. It makes no difference whether we speak of thrones, lordships, sovereignties, or authorities. Everything is created **THROUGH** Him and **FOR** Him. Christ existed before **ALL**, and **ALL** has its cohesion in Him" (Joh. 1:1ff, Col. 1:16f).

Still others say a principle in physics solves the issue without question. That is, "To everything there is an opposite and equal action or result." For example God created light and as an opposite or equal darkness resulted. Also He forms what is good and evil is the inevitable opposite.

### DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN SIN AND EVIL

Again the question is, "Can a holy and righteous God, Who never sins, create evil?" The first thing we need to consider is the distinction between "**SIN**" and "**EVIL**." In many religious minds the words "sin" and "evil" are synonymous. That is, they are interchangeable because they mean the same thing. However, in God's chosen language this simply is not so. Much misunderstanding has resulted from viewing these two words as identical in meaning. Learning to distinguish between words that differ is important. Understanding the difference that exists between "**SIN**" and "**EVIL**" is very important to the serious minded student. Recognizing this distinction causes the interplay of "**GOOD**" and "**EVIL**" to become evident.

"**GOD CREATED EVIL**" (Isa. 45:7). This statement is simply a quotation from the scripture. However, some conclude such a statement is nothing less than a "**DOCTRINE OF DEVILS**." Some have said, "**DECLARING GOD CREATES EVIL IS BLASPHEMOUS**." Many of these same people use misquotations in an attempt to prove their charges. Those who say "God created evil," become misrepresented as having said, "God is the Originator of sin." It is such twisting of words that causes us to consider this area of teaching. In doing so we found it essential to present an important, yet, neglected principle used to understand God's word. "**WHEN GOD INSPIRED THE WRITER TO USE TWO DISTINCT TERMS, HE HAD TWO DISTINCT MEANINGS IN MIND**." **NOTE:** The Scripture never says that God created sin. Moreover, we should not be presumptuous and must refrain from making such a statement.

### THE APOSTLE JOHN DEFINED SIN

The apostle clearly defined sin in his letter to the church. He said, "**SIN IS LAWLESSNESS**" (1Jo. 3:4). Since God is the lawgiver, He is not under any law, but is above His own enactments. Therefore, when God does what would be sin in man, it is no longer sin. Look at the example found in the book of Deuteronomy, where God says He "**KILLS**" (De. 32:39). When man kills it is a grievous sin. However when the institution of law kills it is no longer sin, but it is lawful. That is, when God kills it is far from being

sin. God is not a man and to judge Him by human standards is impossible. We have already stated, "Sin is lawlessness." The word rendered sin here is "**hamartia**." The Hebrew equivalent for this Greek word is "**chata**." Both words mean "**to miss the mark**." We find an explicit example of this word in the book of Judges. It tells us, "*Seven hundred left-handed men that could sling stones at a hair and not miss*" or "**SIN**" (Jg. 20:16). It makes no difference whether one uses the word "miss" or "sin" for they are the same word. Obviously our God never misses the mark. Therefore, He obviously never sins. Yet, all humans have "missed the mark and come short of the glory of God" (Ro. 3:23).

Let us consider for a moment the most outrageous missing of the mark ever committed by people - the killing of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Clearly it was the hands of lawless men that killed the Initiator of Life (Acts 3:15, 2:33). Yet we find the prophet Isaiah recorded that God bruised, afflicted and killed Jesus (Isa. 53:4ff). The fact being humans simply carried out what God ordained to take place beforehand (Acts 2:23, 4:28). Yes, the very act of God that puts away sin was humanities' most deplorable sin. The act was the same, but the participators were different in **RANK**, **MOTIVE**, and **OBJECTIVE**. What God does is correct, first because He is God. Then because God's **MOTIVES ARE PURE**. Moreover, God's **OBJECTIVE IS ALWAYS TO BLESS**. Now the slaying of Jesus without resurrection would have been the greatest calamity in the universe. However, unlike man, God is able, not only to kill, but to make alive again.

### **EVIL DEFINED IN A HEBREW DICTIONARY**

Next, the word "evil" that is in question here, comes from the Hebrew word "**ra**" (Strong's #7451). The word appears 665 times in 622 verses of the Scripture and is **NEVER TRANSLATED SIN**. The following are some English words used to translate it: adversity, affliction, bad, calamity, displeasure, distress, evil, misery. Still other words used to translate it are grief, harm, hurt, noisome, sore, sorrow, trouble, vex, wickedness, wretchedness, and wrong. The word "ra" comes from a primary root "**ra'a**," which properly means "**TO SPOIL (literally by breaking to pieces)**". It figuratively means "**TO MAKE (OR BE) GOOD FOR NOTHING, i.e. bad**" (Strong's #7489). A Hebrew dictionary says this word means, "**TO SMASH, CRUSH, OR BREAK IN PIECES**" (TWOT).

Let us now learn a lesson from the sphere of matter. The Gnostics' asserted all matter was inherently evil. However, this just is not true. For instance, soot that is so polluting and defiling is but a diamond in another form. Displaced soot that is out of harmony with other matter, becomes evil. However, when soot is in its proper place and it is in harmony with other substances it is a thing of beauty and value.

We find this principle is also so in the moral sphere. "No act is wrong in itself, but only as its relation to other acts or to the actors is wrong." For example, to murder a man is to break the law. On the other hand, to execute a man is to fulfill the law, yet the act is one.

God never misses the mark. Yet who will deny He slew the Lamb and this before the disruption of the world? Furthermore, who would reject this sacrifice and deny it had to occur? (Re. 13:8, 1Pe. 1:19f, Acts 3:18, Lu. 24:26). One might say that Israel was innocent of the death of Jesus Christ. After all it was not the Israelites but the Roman soldiers who raised Jesus upon the cross. Yet behind it all we see the Omnipresence of the Omnipotent One who ordained Jesus as the Lamb of sacrifice. So let us thank Him who made His Son a sin offering for all Humanity, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2Co. 5:12). HALLELUJAH!

### **TRANSLATION OR INTERPRETATION**

When man does evil he normally sins, yet God, who creates, plans, and causes evil remains righteous in all His ways and holy in all His deeds (1Ki. 16:19, Ps. 145:17). Everything becomes energized according to the counsel of His will (Ps. 133:10f, Pr. 19:21, Eph. 1:11). Thus by now we can see clearly that the word evil, by itself, has absolutely no moral bias or slant like we usually associate with

it. It is true the use of the Hebrew word for evil often refers to the sinful actions of people. The Authorized Version has often translated the word to mean "wicked" or "wickedness." However this proves to be needless INTERPRETATION of Scripture and not at all a TRANSLATION.

The more popular theological view insists that evil sometimes means "*immoral*" yet upon other occasions it means "*calamity*." However, such an exegesis of God's inspired word is a fully inappropriate innovation into the domain of truth. For God's words are clean and purified. He refines all his words as silver in a furnace of fire. The words of the Lord are perfect (2Sa. 22:31, Ps. 12:6, 18:30, 19:8, 119:40, Pr. 30:5). The Hebrew vocabulary is so full and rich that the English often strains to provide suitable equivalents. If God had purposed to reveal something more than the simple thought of breaking or smashing in the passages where the word evil appears it would not have been difficult. Both the Hebrew tongue and the Divine Author could have done so. Yet He did not, so let us learn not to put our doctrine or opinionated thinking before writings within the inspired Scripture (1Co 4:6). "***Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar***" (Pr. 30:6).

### THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

Many have a real problem with the statement that God creates evil. However, we believe this difficulty is solvable with just a little consideration. The first time God becomes associated with evil is in Genesis account of creation. This is where we discover God caused "***THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL***" to grow in the midst of the garden of Eden (Ge. 2:9). It is within this very act we gain the insight that can solve the whole matter. The teaching of present day theologians cases many to consider this tree to be **EVIL** and not good. Yet it was first called "***the tree of the knowledge of good.***"

If Adam did not possess an automatic knowledge of good, and we know he did not, how was he to find and learn a knowledge of good? The one obvious way would be in the partaking of this tree. Yet, in doing so he would partake of the knowledge of good **AND** evil, because the two are inseparable. Good becomes known by means of evil. That is, no one makes an active choice of good without a refusal of evil. Similarly, we could not knowingly experience peace apart from an experiential awareness of discord and strife. This is the way it is with human affairs (Ge. 2:25, 3:5f, Ec. 1:18).

### EXAMPLE OF GOD USE OF EVIL

It is essentially the association of God with evil that is the stumbling block for most, in this area of kingdom reality. Therefore, let us consider some places in the Scripture identifying God as having used evil. In the midst of his testing Job recognized he was suffering evil at the hand of the Lord (Job 1:20ff, 2:9f). In spite of the theology of all his friends, Job clearly confirmed this throughout his tribulations (Job 42:17). Again we find the Lord brought evil upon His people because their deeds were evil. Yet the apostle Paul tells us to overcome evil with good (Jer. 26:3, Da. 9:14, Ro. 12:19ff, Pr. 25:2f). We discover still further examples of God-inspired evil when we see that God puts His people to the sword (Jer. 42:17, 44:11; Ez. 14:21). However, the scripture states, "He that kills with the sword must be killed with the sword" (Re. 13:10). How horrified we become when we consider the inhumane and wicked brutes, who turned wild beasts upon the Christians in the Roman amphitheater. However, the Lord also made His people prey to wild beasts (Ez. 14:51f, 21). The arsonist is punishable by our laws, yet the Lord burns whole cities (Ge. 19:24, Jude 7, Jer. 21:10). If the quarantine officer allowed the introduction of a plague we would consider him liable, yet God sends the pestilence (Jer. 32:42, 42:17, Ez. 14:21). He brings starvation by famine upon entire nations, destroys entire cities, and desolates whole countries (2Ki 6:33, Jer. 19:9, 42:17, 44:11, Ez. 14:21, Jer. 26:18, Jonah 3:4, Neh. 13:18, Jer. 44:2). It was the Lord who sent an evil spirit upon Saul, and a lying spirit to cause all Ahab's prophets to lie to him (1Sa. 16:14ff, 19:9; 1Ki. 22:22). "***Who is he who speaks, and it comes to pass, when the Lord commands it not?***" "***Is it not out of the mouth of the Most High that evil and good proceed?***" (Lam. 3:37f, Isa. 55:10f). Solomon unveils some manifold wisdom of God by declaring, "***The Lord has made all things for His own end.***" "***HE EVEN MADE THE WICKED OR LAWLESS ONE FOR THE DAY OF EVIL***" (Pr. 16:4). The Lord clearly declares there are none that can deliver out of His hand: for He will work, who will hinder or reverse it

(Ec. 7:13, Isa. 43:13).

These passages should help to make it clear that God does use evil acts. Moreover, the very same acts may differ from the way they appear because of the one who is doing them. Now consider that evil enacted with proper authority loses its **"immoral"** quality. Examples of evil enacted with proper authority are found in paternal or political authority, these are a type or an allegory of true godly authority. All evil perpetrated through proper authority loses its **"immoral"** quality. That is, evil enacted by parents upon their children, masters upon their servants, the state on its subjects, or by God on His creatures loses its **"immoral"** quality. This is because it promotes some beneficial purpose and is corrective. Its moral quality lies, not in the evil but in the correction existing between the one who inflicts and the one who suffers. Consequently, even evil committed by morally criminal men loses its immoral quality when attributed to the Lord. That is, if evil accomplishes the Lord's purpose it is no longer immoral. The same act that is full of "moral evil" when viewed in humanity appears as "moral goodness" and glory when seen from the Divine Creator's vantage point. God Himself still calls it evil, but claims He is the real source of the power behind it (Isa. 10:5ff). No evil created by God can have the least taint of moral depravity. In so much as His designing of it is concerned. This is because He always directs it toward the reconciliation of His creation. May the Lord give us ears to hear and minds to fully understand this reality. **"For He afflicts, yet He has compassion according to the abundance of His kindness"** (Lam. 3:32). HALLELUJAH! What a mighty God we serve.

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