

October 10, 2021

Viewpoint from the **Valley Grove Church Of Christ**

A Question About Good And Evil

By Hoyt Houchen

We read in Isaiah 45:7: *“I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things.”* This verse raises the question: did God actually create only good?

God’s original creation was very good (Gen. 1:31). Also, we are told that God “cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man” (Jas. 1:13). Since God is moral (sinless), moral evil is contrary to His very nature. God, then, does not create moral evil.

In what sense does God create evil? The NASB translates Isaiah 45:7: *“The one forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all this.”* The word rendered by the NASB, “calamity,” is the Hebrew word *rah*, which basically means “evil” (either moral or misfortune evil). God is addressing Cyrus (v. 1), the Medo-Persian king who was later to “subdue kingdoms.” Specifically, he would capture Babylon because of the wickedness that prevailed in that city. God was using Cyrus as His instrument to inflict this punishment. The prophecy was uttered more than a hundred years before Cyrus was born, but it was all literally fulfilled. So, in view of the meaning of the Hebrew word in the verse, and the context of the verse, the word “evil” which God creates refers to the calamities as punishment upon wicked nations. God, therefore, does not create moral evil, but calamities or misfortunes come upon man as a result of his sin (see Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 5:12; 6:23; Jas. 1:14,15).

There are instances in the Old Testament when God brought calamity upon people as a result of their moral evil or wickedness. Because of wickedness, God destroyed the earth with water, sparing only Noah and his family (Gen. 6:5-8). God afflicted the Egyptians with ten plagues because of the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 7-12). God smote the Philistines with a

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worship together and hope to see you again.***

great discomfiture and tumors while the Ark of the Covenant was among them (1 Sam. 5:9). Hell is created by God for those who are disobedient to His will (Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 21:8; etc.) These are examples of evil which God created — calamity, adversity, misfortune — all punishment as a result of moral evil. He did not create the moral evil. God created man a free moral agent. When man violates God's moral law, it is man, not God who is responsible for moral evil.

In 1 Samuel 16:14, we are told, "Now the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him." This verse has posed a problem for some in that they assume that this is a cause of moral evil coming directly from God. But actually, Saul's sin broke fellowship with God, and God allowed the evil spirit to trouble him. Again, this serves as an example of the evil consequences that come upon those guilty of sin or moral evil. The same truth is illustrated again in Saul's case (1 Sam. 18:10). God is the author of moral law and He is also the author of consequences which follow because of the violation of that law (1 Jn. 3:4).

Not all physical disasters today such as floods, tornadoes and earthquakes are due to sin (Lk. 13:1-5). Christians suffer in such calamities along with the wicked. Neither is it to be supposed that all suffering or affliction is the result of sin (see Jn. 9:2). In fact, Christians may suffer affliction as a means of chastisement (Heb. 12:7-9).

Persecution is an example (2 Tim. 3:12). Chastisement of Christians should motivate them to greater faith. We all suffer misfortunes in life — illness, disappointments, loss of loved ones and many more, but the Christian looks forward to heaven where none of these exist. Men do often blame God for consequences which result from their moral evil.

A simple solution is not always found for the problem of evil in the world, but we do know that God does not create moral evil and we can always be assured that whatever God does is right and in harmony with His moral character (Gen. 18:25).

Enoch — A Man Who Walked With God

By Harold Hancock

Only nine verses in the Bible mention Enoch, (Gen. 5:18-24; Lk. 3:37; Heb. 11:5; Jude 1:14) the seventh from Adam, but he is well remembered and well thought of by Bible students. Enoch was the son of Jared and the father of Methuselah. He lived three hundred and sixty — five years, but did not see death, for God took him, or translated him. Enoch "walked with God" and had this testimony — "he pleased God." What a great biography in few words. When we have finished life, if it may truly be said of us that we walked with God and pleased Him, we will have done well. The only thing that will matter in judgment is our relationship with the Lord.

“Are You Feeling Pressure?”

By Jarrod Jacobs

At times, when we talk with people about the Bible, there are folks who will say, “Don’t pressure me.” I have heard those teaching the Bible say to others, “This is not to pressure you, but. . .”. I have also had brethren speak up and say, “Don’t put pressure on (friend, neighbor, etc.) when you preach on. . .”. Let me begin by saying it is certainly not anyone’s intention to coerce a person into obeying the Lord. It does no spiritual good to “pressure” people into doing something that they do not wish to do. God does not coerce, or force people into obeying Him. He wants willing servants to obey Him. He does not want “forced labor” (Ex. 35:29; Isa. 1:18-19; 2 Cor. 8:12; 1 Tim. 6:17-18; 1 Pet. 5:2)!

At the same time, pressure can be a good thing. We know physically that pressure is a warning sent by the nerves to the brain that some part of the body is in stress or trauma. This is something given to us by God to protect us from further harm. (Ex: The boy felt great pressure in his hand, so he pulled it from the vise. Or, the girl experienced great pressure after her arm was broken.) In other words, pressure can be a good thing when applied correctly. One feeling pressure physically will take measures to prevent further harm to his body if this is possible.

Spiritually, we feel pressure at times. If someone wishes to speak to you about the Bible, and you feel “pressure,” perhaps it is because you’re in the wrong! Instead of fighting against this, why not take steps to get yourself out of spiritual jeopardy (i.e., repent), and prevent further spiritual damage by returning to the Lord now while you can (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7-8).

Sometimes pressure is felt spiritually when we know the truth, but refuse to speak it. We feel guilty afterward, saying, “I know what is right, but I said nothing.” The “antidote” for this is to speak the truth next time, and each time after that. Too, there may be some feeling pressure because they do not know the Bible as well as they should. The “antidote” for this is to spend time in God’s word and learn the truth so that we are no longer ignorant (Eph. 3:4, 5:17). In both cases, the “pressure” one feels results in something positive. This would not have been the case had that person not experienced spiritual pressure in the first place!

There is something to be said for pressure being applied in the right way. The apostle Paul did this with Philemon when he told him to accept Onesimus back (Phile. 8-22). Pressure was applied in the right way when Peter and the apostles told the Jews to *“repent and be baptized ... for the remission of sins”*

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and then “with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, save yourselves from this crooked generation” (Acts 2:38, 40).

How will we respond to God’s pressure? It is a serious matter, because the way we respond can determine where we spend eternity!

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The 23rd Channel

The TV is my shepherd; my spiritual growth shall want. It maketh me to sit down and do nothing for His name’s sake, because it requireth all my leisure time. It keepeth me from doing my duty as a Christian because it presenteth so many good shows that I must see. It restoreth my knowledge of the world, and keepeth me from the study of God’s word. It leadeth me in the paths of failing to attend services and doing nothing in the kingdom of God. Yea, though I live to be a 100, I shall keep viewing my TV as long as it will work, for it is my closest companion. Its sounds and pictures, they comfort me. It presenteth entertainment before me and keepeth me from what is important with my family. It fills my head with ideas which differ from those in the word of God. Surely, no good will come of my life because of so many wasted hours, and I shall dwell in my remorse and bitter memories forever. — *Anonymous*

October Birthdays:

The 20th Joan Blue; The 23rd Doug Threadgill; The 24th Diana Hinds



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Sunday
Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M.
Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday
Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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