

Did God Create Evil?

Roger Kendall—January 14, 2012

Well, brethren, I know that many times we read the Scriptures and sometimes we come across a Scripture which kind of throws us for a loop! In other words, we would call it a difficult Scripture, which really within the context of the particular Scripture it's not clear, it really doesn't seem to fit within the context of other aspects of what we are reading in the Bible. Today we're going to look at Isaiah 45:7:

Better Understanding Isaiah 45:7:

That's the focus of Bible study—is it not? *To understand God's Word and to be able to explain and help others to understand God's Word!* We're being prepared now to teach. It's very important when we come across Scriptures like this to be able to understand it, have better insight into the meaning so that we can help others understand what this means.

Isaiah 45:6—this is Isaiah, speaking for God: “That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none besides Me. I *am* the LORD, and there is none else; form the light and create darkness; **I make peace and create evil.** I the LORD do all these *things*” (vs 6-7).

- God creating evil?
- God is the Author and is responsible for evil?
- Being wicked?
- Being unrighteous?

This does not fit into our understanding and contradicts in some respects God's Holy righteous character.

Well, as we look at this Scripture, and as many in the world look at this Scripture, you might say—as many have said—the God of the Old Testament was a mean, hard and evil. There are some in the world who would say that. But the God of the New Testament is Holy and righteous and good. They break it up and they use this Scripture and they kind of condemn God and say at first glance that God is mean, hard, unjust and evil.

Well, brethren, we know this is not true. We know that something is wrong, either with our understanding of what this English, translated from the original Hebrew, means. We're going to look at this today and hopefully get a better understanding of what this really means.

God's character and very nature is expressed all throughout the Scriptures. We can't just use one Scripture and condemn God. Let's really focus on the Old Testament and see what God says about

Himself.

Jeremiah 9:23—God is sort of defending Himself here and saying ‘No, I'm not a an evil God.’ He says: “Thus says the LORD, ‘Do not let the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor let the mighty man glory in his might; do not let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, **that he understands and knows Me...** [Isn't that what we need to do, to understand the very nature and Truth of God?] ...that I *am* the LORD, exercising **loving kindness, justice, and righteousness**, in the earth; for in these I delight,’ says the LORD.” (vs 23-24).

Here we see that the verse in Isa. 45 would imply that God is not righteous, Holy and good. Jesus Christ Who is the Creator—the God of the Old Testament—is the ‘same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). He doesn't change! So, the argument that we have the changing of character from the Old Testament to the New Testament. **That's nonsense!** God is the same, and He's a righteous Holy God, a loving God.

This is a Scripture that you should know and have memorized, 1-John 4:8: “The one who does not love does not know God because **God is love.**” God is spirit and He is love; He's not unjust. He is faithful, true and just in all that He does. He is full of mercy and justice and grace. He's the Giver of every good gift from above.

Looking at the very true nature of God, because from God comes, James 1:17: “Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning.” God is true! God is One Who is a loving, Holy, righteous God! Jesus Christ, as we've read and understand, is the Light of the world, our Savior and a High Priest Who intervenes very compassionately into our needs.

Let's turn to Hebrews 4. The Scripture in Isaiah does not mean that God is evil. Hebrews 4:14: “Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses... [Our High Priest is compassionate, loving High Priest, our Savior] ...but *one Who* was tempted in all things according to *the likeness of our own temptations*; yet *He was* without sin. Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (vs 14-16).

God be praised that we can do this, brethren. God is

- compassionate
- loving
- caring

So the question is, how could a perfect, loving, righteous God be the Author or the Creator of ‘evil,’ as what’s implied in Isa. 45:7.

We need to have a deeper understanding of the Scripture and that’s what we’re going to do today, and again, it’s an important thing that we do understand. When somebody comes along and tries to convict God, then we can be able to properly defend it, defend God from Scripture.

Let’s first look at the context. Anytime we come to a hard Scripture, the first thing we need to do is look at the context: look at Scriptures before and after and try to get more of an idea of how this particular Scripture fits in. This particular situation here, Isaiah 45, is that the Lord God is revealing through Isaiah that he is going to raise up Cyrus to free the children of Israel from Babylonian captivity.

Isaiah 45:1: “Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have made strong in order to humble nations before him. And I will loosen the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved doors; and the gates shall not be shut.”

First of all, Cyrus wasn’t even born. This is several hundred years before Cyrus was even born. This shows the tremendous majesty and great power of God. In fact, He can do all things. He knows the future. He controls all things. It just magnifies the very glory of God here. Of course, this verse even points out how Cyrus was going to enter into Babylon. He entered in by draining the river and entering into the two gates in the river in Babylon. He was able to enter into the city and defeat the Babylonians. Of course, that began the Empire of the Medes and Persians.

Verse 2: “I [God] will go before you [Cyrus], and make hills level.... [Those that will stand in His way—other nations—as nothing.] ...I will break in pieces the bronze gates, and cut the iron bars in two.” Again, He’s going to give Cyrus the means and the power to be able to go forth and conquer.

Verse 3: “And I will give you the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I *am* the LORD, Who calls *you* by your name, the God of Israel” Again, He points out Israel, the very incredible power of God and majesty of God that He can predict and bring about future events.

Verse 4: “For Jacob My servant’s sake and

Israel My chosen, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.... [With that as an introduction, God says: ‘Who am I?’] ...I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else. *There is* no God besides Me... [to all of those out there that are worshipping false gods, there is no other God] ...I clothed you, though you have not known Me; that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none besides Me. I *am* the LORD, and there is none else; **I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil.** I the LORD do all these *things*” (vs 4-7).

Here we see He’s showing some of the very nature and the very way that God works with mankind, how He intervenes and what His working. So, the problem that we’ve had before us, brethren, is to understand what it means to “...create evil...”

In its common usage, when we hear the word ‘evil’ and we think of *wickedness, unrighteousness, bad conduct*. If we look into the dictionary and we can see that the word evil can imply very strongly a hurtful, sinful act. Evil is a word that describes Satan the devil, the source of evil. He is wicked and of the dark side.

What people find when they look up the word ‘evil’ there is a range of meanings. So, now we’re beginning to understand there’s a broader understanding of the word ‘evil’—that’s what we need to understand. It doesn’t fit with God’s character to say that He is sinful or bringing about unrighteousness.

Evil can be called *a morally, reprehensible act sinful or wicked*. That’s what we just discussed. *Those who can impute bad character and wrongdoing*. It also can mean to *cause harm or to bring about misfortune*. Also it can refer to *something that brings sorrow, distress or calamity*.

Has God ever brought calamity upon mankind? *Yes, He has!* Has God brought sorrow upon mankind? *He’s done that!* We can look at the Flood! We can look at the plagues of Egypt! We can look at the fact that He told King Saul to just completely eradicate the whole nation of the Amalekites—men, women and children!

Yes, we can look at this and say, ‘Wow!’ Is that not *evil* as far as the people are concerned who are at the brunt-end of this particular action? *Yes!* Based upon what we’re saying.

- Is God unrighteous?
- Is God wicked?
- *NO!*

Let’s go to *Strong’s Interlinear* so we can understand from Strong’s point of view what’s happening here. From Isa. 45:7: the word ‘create’:

from the Hebrew ‘bara’—*Strong’s* #1254—to bring about, bring into existence. God created the earth; He brought into existence.

Here it says that God *creates evil*—so He brings into the forefront ‘evil’—according to the English translation of the Hebrew word ‘ra’—from which the Hebrew word is translated—*Strong’s* #7451. If we turn there we can read that this word ‘ra’ or ‘rah’—translated *evil* in Isa. 45:7 means something that is *bad, adversity, affliction, calamity, to distress, to be exceedingly harmful, to hurt, to cause misery, sorrow, trouble*. It also means *wicked wretchedness, wickedness*.

In both the dictionary as well as with the context of what we’re reading here in *Strong’s* understanding of this word is that this word ‘ra’ can take on sort of a range of meaning. Part of that is the word ‘evil’—translated 442 times. Many times you go through evil this and evil that and you can see that it’s quite prolific. But it’s also translated in other places in the *King James* as ‘wickedness.’

Let’s turn an example and see that this word on one side pertains to evil—being wicked. Psalm 141:5: “Let the righteous strike me in kindness, and let him correct me; it is choice oil upon my head; let not my head refuse it, for still my prayer is also against their wickedness.”

The wickedness here is from the word ‘ra’ meaning evil or wicked. Here we see a more negative context of what evil really is. It’s a wicked thing. There are many examples, but I’m just going to pull a few out to give you this diversity of how this word ‘ra’ has been translated in the Scripture.

1-Samuel 10:19: “And you have this day rejected your God who Himself saved you out of all your **calamities**...” From the same Hebrew word ‘ra.’ In other words, we’re looking at another aspect of this word meaning that it’s not immoral or wicked, but it’s a *calamity*. Calamities are things that happen to people. You look at areas where a storm—a hurricane—will come in and will wipe out whole neighborhoods and kill many people. That’s a *calamity*! That’s destruction and that’s bad. It’s not necessarily connected to being evil in the sense of being wicked. It say, “...calamities and your tribulations...” That’s another example there.

2-Chronicles 20:9: “If **evil** comes upon us, **whether the sword, judgment, or plague, or famine**, and we stand before this house and in Your presence (for Your name *is* in this house) and cry to You in our affliction, then You will hear and help.” Here we see that we’re talking about the evil that God is bringing upon the people.

In the *King James* it’s translated as being *afflictions*. It’s another take on the word, not evil but an affliction. If you have a plague or famine it’s an

affliction. It’s another word, but it doesn’t connote the fact that it is wickedness or unrighteousness. There are many other examples. For instance

- Gen. 26:29 the word is translated as *hurt* (*KJV*).
- Gen. 44:29: translated as *sorrow*

What I’m pointing out is that there is a wide aspect of how this word ‘ra’ can be translated into English. Again, it’s based on context, upon the nature of what is being intended for the use of the word *evil*.

What we’re finding is that these translations from the Hebrew word indicates a bad thing—it’s bad, not good—in terms of suffering, pain, agony, affliction. That the word ‘ra’ can be employed to of either two aspects of *evil*.

In the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, I turned there and wondered what I would find. What it points out and really is fairly clear is that there are two basic aspects of *evil* that’s expressed especially in the Old Testament.

You find in the Bible that it is represented as *moral* and/or *physical*. In other words, we’re seeing two different aspects and they call it *moral evil* and *physical evil*.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, pg 1042:

We choose discuss the subject under these headings. Many of the evils that have come upon man have not been intended by those who suffer for them.

A disease, plague or major storm.

Disease, individual and natural calamity, drought, scarcity of food may not always be charged to the account of intentional wrong. Even when the suffering has been occasioned by sin or moral evil...

Moral evil they are saying that it is associated with wickedness and with unrighteousness or improper conduct.

...whether the conduct is active or passive, many perhaps the majority of those who are injured are not accountable in any way for the ills that come upon them.

In other words, they’re sort of in the wrong place at the wrong time. We see that a lot of times when we see *physical evil*—if you want to look at that. In other words, people die very sudden deaths. People go through massive fires. Look at the different disasters, trials and difficulties and it’s a form of *evil* according to the Hebrew definition. That’s what we need to understand.

Neither is God the Author of moral evil.

It says in James 1:13 that God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no man with evil. In other words, evil being in the way of being immoral or unjust.

By this term we refer to wrongs done to our fellowman, the actor or person doing it is responsible for the action.

In other words there is moral evil is that you have inappropriate action. It's more immoral rather than moral. Moral we think of being righteous, but we're talking about immoral activity. Again, the immorality points out that it may be present when the action is not even possible.

In the example that they give here is Matt. 24:48-49 and it points out 'that if that evil servant shall say in his heart' to do evil against his fellow works then that is an example of *moral evil* or an *unrighteous act*. That's one type of evil that they focus on—moral evil. The other kind is *physical evil*.

Usually in the Old Testament the Hebrew word 'ra' is employed to note that which is *bad*.

Everything that is bad is not necessarily evil in the sense of being wicked. We've discussed some of these already" the plagues upon Egypt, the Flood. These were some bad events.

Many times the bad is physical. It may have been occasioned by the sins for which the people or the nation is responsible, or it may have come, not as retribution, but from the causes unknown. During many times, the evil is corrective...

Now we're getting into an aspect that is very helpful for us to understand. Sometimes the evil is corrective. We're going to look at that in just a moment.

...because the cause meant to forsake the wrong and accept the right. The Flood was sent upon the earth because all flesh had corrupted their ways (Gen. 6:12) and the evil was to serve as a warning to those who were to live after.

We see that the action that God did to destroy all life, except the eight people who were on the ark, was an evil in the sense that it was a physical evil to destroy all life, but it was corrective and based upon a good intent to cleanse the earth. One thing about God we have to understand is that God is

- Creator
- Sustainer
- Lawgiver
- Judge

If God has created the earth and He is Judge over the earth. If God is Judge and God is Lawgiver, does not He have the prerogative to correct, to bring punishment, correction and judgment? *Yes!*

Psalm 82:1: "God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods.... [God is Judge!] ...How long will you judge unjustly and respect the persons of the wicked? Selah." (vs 1-2). Here the Psalmist is saying, 'How long are You going to put up with the acts of the wicked?' Judge against the wicked?

Verse 3: "Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy; save them out of the hand of the wicked" (vs 3-4). God may move and do bad things to against wicked people to bring judgment, but also *to preserve the just!* That is the fatherless, the poor and to deliver them from the evil one.

Again, we can begin to understand a little bit more about this variation of understanding what evil is and really what the intent is. We have to look at the intent behind the action. What is the purpose? What is the intent behind the action that is taking place?

God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, again making them "an example of those who should live ungodly" (2-Pet. 2:6).

2-Peter 2:5: "And *if God* did not spare *the* ancient world, but saved Noah, *the* eighth, a preacher of righteousness, when He brought *the* Flood upon the world of *the* ungodly; and having reduced *the* cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, condemned *them* with a catastrophic *destruction*, **making them an example for those who would be ungodly in the future**" (vs 5-6).

Look at this! This really is very helpful for understanding how God's action can be defined as being *evil*, because that's what the word 'ra' can be translated as. But it's not for an unholy or unrighteous reason. It is because He's either cleansing and judging, and in this case He's setting an example that those who live that way will have a bad experience. In other words, God is Judge!

We see another example of this, of God doing *bad things* against the children of Israel, but for a right purpose; doing bad things—or evil—for a right purpose.

1-Corinthians 10:4—Paul writes: "And *they* [the children of Israel] all drank *of* the same spiritual drink; for they drank from *the* spiritual Rock that followed *them*. And that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not pleased, for their dead bodies were strewn in the wilderness. Now, these things became *examples for us*, so that we might not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (vs 4-6).

There is purpose behind the *evil* that God does, which is not unrighteous and unholy, but due to the fact that He is working to *cleanse, purge or judge*.

Verse 11: “Now all these things happened to them **as examples, and were written for our admonition**... [for our correction] ...on whom the ends of the ages are coming.” God hates sin and God will act against wicked evil individuals who have been previously warned or know of what the consequences of sin are.

God revealed to the children of Israel what the consequences of idolatry and of sexual perversion—sin. What did He say, ‘You’ll receive curses and you will be punished.’ God, as Judge, gave prior warning clearly in His Word what He would do if you choose to do evil—being wicked or sinful things.

I hope you’re getting the flow and gist of what I’m trying to teach here. This word *evil* takes on different connotations, and yet, all evil is bad, but all evil is not wicked. We’ll see one more example of where the evil that God brings is because of their disobedience. There’s a reason behind it. It’s not just because God is doing wicked acts against people, just because of His nature. He’s judging them for their unrighteousness and their disobedience.

Jeremiah 11:9: “And the LORD said to me, ‘A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the people of Jerusalem. They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, who refused to hear My words.... [This is the whole theme in the book of Jeremiah: *they refuse to hear My words*. The children of Israel and to the tribe of Judah, they refuse to hear!] ...And they went after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers.’ Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will bring [‘ra’] evil on them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry to Me, I will not hear them’” (vs 9-11).

Here we see the example of where *evil* is being used for the purpose of correction or disobedience. God is a just God; He’s the God of Justice. We do know that the word can imply wickedness or morally wrongdoing. However, we see here that the word can imply that God will bring evil as a means of *correction*, a means of *punishment* and of *judgment*. That’s something that we really need to be able to understand. God is just!

Jeremiah 23—an interesting section. There are four times that the word ‘ra’ is being used. Jeremiah 23:10: “For the land is full of adulterers. Because of swearing the land mourns; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is **evil**, and they *wield* power unjustly.” What

is the context of this word *evil*? *It is wicked! It is wickedness!*

Verse 11. ‘For both prophet and priest are ungodly; yea, in My house I have found their **evil**,’ says the LORD.” Again, translated *wickedness* (KJV). Actually, *wickedness* would be a better translation in this particular verse, because it shows the fact that this is immoral—*moral evil*.

Verse 12: “‘So their way shall be to them as slippery *ways* in the darkness; they shall be driven on, and fall in *their way*; for I will bring **evil** on them, even the year of their judgment,’ says the LORD.” This word does not mean wickedness. This word means a *bad event*; I’m going to bring *calamity, affliction, punishment* as part of ‘My judgment.’ Both situations the word is translated *evil*, but the context of what that word really means, as far as us in English today, is quite different.

Verse 13: “‘And I have seen repulsive things in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied by Baal and caused My people Israel to go astray. I have also seen in the prophets of Jerusalem a horrible thing; they commit adultery and walk in lies. They also strengthen the hands of **evildoers**, so that none returns from his **evil**... [translated as *wickedness* (KJV)] ...they are all of them like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah’” (vs 13-14).

Hopefully, with going through these verses we’re beginning to get a better idea of context and really what that word really is meaning in terms of the word *evil*.

This is the prayer of Daniel. This is a very moving prayer that I like to go back and apply as Daniel prayed for repentance because of the evil of the children of Israel. He called upon God to repent of the imprisonment or captivity.

Daniel 9:11: “Yea, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and have turned aside, so that they might not obey Your voice. Therefore, **the curse [captivity] has been poured out upon us**... [What is that curse? *Looking back on Deut. 28 dealing blessings and cursings!* Death by the sword and other means.] ...and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against Him. And He has confirmed His words which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us by bringing upon us a great **evil**... [‘ra’—Strong’s 7451] ...for under the whole heaven *it has not been done as it has been done upon Jerusalem*” As *it is* written in the law of Moses, **all this evil has come upon us**. Yet we did not make our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your Truth. Therefore, the LORD did not hesitate **concerning the evil that He brought upon us**, for the LORD

our God *is* righteous in all His works which He does, but we did not obey His voice” (vs 11-14).

This is pretty profound, because here we’re seeing that God is bringing evil—He calls it evil—but it is action by God because of *disobedience, because the people have forsaken the covenant*. As Judge and Lawgiver God has the absolute just and right position to bring punishment and judgment upon the people.

Those are some key verses that we need to look at and compare, to understand this word *evil*, especially in the Old Testament. These Scriptures point out, brethren, very clearly that God does cause evil in the sense of bringing calamity, trial and suffering upon people. But it’s because of their sins! It’s because of His judgment that God is now bringing against the people because of their worshipping false gods, serving other gods and because of their breaking of the Sabbath and all of the laws. They were not listening to God.

God bringing evil, we might say is a form of correction, a form of adversity upon the people to turn them from their sinful ways. We can look at this as being a good, righteous use of *evil*—being correction. When you first use the word it doesn’t sound right. Yet, it is a just cause that God does bring—a trial, a difficulty, an affliction—for a good purpose. To humble the people, to show them that their evil, sinful ways produce pain, suffering and anguish. *That’s what sin does!* So, by bringing it upon them, He’s able to teach and show the people that their ways are not good, and to help the people to learn the right way and to walk in the way of righteousness. This is a righteous use of *evil*, to do good. That tends to explain what God is saying in Isa. 45:7.

As children growing up, brethren, I’m sure we did not fully appreciate the correction, the punishment that was put upon us by our parents, because we might have been looked upon as being evil. Being taken to the woodshed, and perhaps maybe get some corporal punishment—spanking if you will—as being somewhat hurtful and cause us some pain. But it was for a good purpose. Our parents truly wanted us to understand that if you break the rules you pay the consequences.

Part of the consequences was: Didn’t we tell you not to go play in the street? Didn’t we tell you that if you did that you would get swats? This is just kind of a human example. Well, God is no different! We can see exactly the same parallel that just as our parents corrected us so that we could learn to do right, God does the same.

Hebrews 12:9: “Furthermore, we have had our fleshly fathers who chastened *us*, and we respected *them*; should we not all the more *willingly*

be subject to the Father of spirits, and live *forever*?” Wow! Subject to *God’s correction* so that we might have eternal life.

Verse 10: “For in the first case, they chastened *us* for a few days in whatever way seemed good to them; but in the second case, He *chastens us* for *our own* benefit that we may be partakers of His Holiness.” We can say that God does chasten us, and ‘You bring *righteous evil* upon us so that we might understand the right way to live.’

Verse 11: “Now truly, no chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yields *the* peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it.” Very profound!

I think if you put these Scriptures together with what we’re seeing in Isaiah it really comes together in a very, very nice package, that we can understand that God is righteous. God is not evil! He does certain things—acts which are bad—that are for a good purpose.

- He wants all mankind to come to salvation!
- He wants all people to understand the Truth of Jesus Christ and salvation!
- He’s doing all that He can to accomplish that!

One other point I want to cover that’s important to understanding about *creating evil* is this: *God does allow evil to occur*—meaning both sorrow and calamities—but also He allows sinful conduct to occur.

- Is He responsible because He allows sinful conduct?
- Is He culpable?
- Is He blamable for the sin in the world because He allows it to take place?

NO!

- Why?
- What did God do?

God is not responsible for the evil that’s in the world! Evil meaning wicked, immoral actions. Why?

When God created the earth, Genesis 1:31, we can see that He created it and everything was ‘very good.’ Beautiful! Everything was perfect! Nothing was wrong! Everything was provided for Adam and Eve and it was good. God taught Adam and Eve the way to live and how to have a full, joyful, happy and peaceful peace. He provided everything they would need in the Garden. There was nothing there that they were lacking.

He also gave them *free moral agency! The freedom of choice!* When you do give somebody choice, what does that mean? *You can go to the left or you can go to the right!* He gave mankind the

freedom of choice and they could then chose whether they would obey the Creator or not. That's the same with us today. It was the same with Israel. And it was the same for our parents Adam and Eve.

Of course, what happens is that Satan enters the picture and you know the rest of the story. Satan influenced Adam and Eve and they then decided for themselves to *choose* to decide what was right and good, and what was evil [wicked] and bad—to choose for themselves and then they would become 'as God' as Satan lied to them about. They chose to go the *evil way*.

God allowed it. God knew that was a possibility. But, again, it was *for a right purpose*. Why? God, even in the Garden of Eden—as He then banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden—said that in the future that He would raise up a Savior to solve this problem of sin. Within the context, we still have choice, freedom of choice even today, to continue to walk in the Truth and in the way of salvation, or to go the way of the world. God has given this tremendous freedom or liberty to choose, but we have to recognize that *choices have consequences!*

By giving free moral agency or choice, God is giving the potential for sin, Deuteronomy 30:15: "Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil." On the one hand you've got **life**: *choose right, do good*; if you choose the way of **evil**: *that is wickedness—'ra'—it brings death*.

Verse 16: "In that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply. And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it."

In the Old Testament, under the Old Covenant, it was physical blessings as the result of obedience. But for us, obedience to love God is eternal. It's quite a contrast there.

Verse 17: "But if your heart turn away so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, **choose life, so that both you and your seed may live**" (vs 17-19).

God has given us His Word. He's very clear! *You obey God, you walk in His way and you're blessed*. If you disobey God, you go against His commandments, and if you do wickedness you will

receive evil from God, you will receive curses and you shall be punished and judged.

You can go back and read Deut. 28 again—the blessings and cursings—and here we see very clearly that God will bring the curses, which is an example of using *evil* for a good purpose, to turn the people away from sin and to judge them because of their unrighteousness.

God also created the *law of sowing and reaping*. This goes along with the same idea of free moral agency. What this means very clearly is that God says however you live your life you are going to reap the fruit of that life for good or for evil.

Galatians 6:7: "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall reap corruption from the flesh.... [God is saying that sin has it's own reward, it's own benefits—short term! In the end it can lead to very miserable rotten and eventually death.] ...**But the one who sows to the Spirit shall reap eternal life from the Spirit**" (vs 7-8).

Here we see the total impact of choice. To *choose to obey*:

- walk in the Truth
- love God with all your heart, soul, mind
- serve God

you reap the *blessings of eternal life!* But if you serve the flesh, the way of evil and wickedness, you will pay the consequences of that.

Brethren, we can now be very, very thankful that God has revealed the fact that by choosing the right way, we have the blessing of eternal life.

Romans 6:20: "For when you were *the* servants of sin, you were free from righteousness.... [Yes, but when we were servants of sin we also reaped the consequences of a sinful life.] ...Therefore, what fruit did you have then in the *things* of which you are now ashamed? For the end result of those things *is* death. But now *that* you have been delivered from sin and have become servants of God, you have your fruit unto sanctification... [under Holiness, walking in the way of Truth and righteousness] ...and **the end result is eternal life**. For the wages of sin *is* death, **but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord**" (vs 20-23).

The consequences of the *law of reaping and sowing* is what you sow you shall reap. God is a Holy, righteous, just God. He is true in all things and He is not the Creator of what we would call *moral evil* or the *wickedness or sin*. God is responsible for bringing or causing *physical evil*, those acts which are bad events, but result in correction or judgment

and a punishment against those who have broken the laws of God. In other words God is the Judge of the world, therefore, He is justified to execute correction or punishment for the wickedness of evil men.

God created the potential for *moral evil*—sin—by given man free moral agency. We reviewed that that’s exactly what God has given to Adam and Eve and to Israel and to us. We are responsible to choose the right so that we can reap the blessings of God, rather than to reap the curses that come from disobedience.

Christ is Judge of the earth. He will bring destruction upon the evil of the world. The destruction of the evil is going to be a bad thing if you are on that side of the ledger. You’re going to be destroyed forever. You’re going to be eliminated. But God has purging the earth of sin as He prepares for His kingdom to come.

God will bring all righteousness upon the earth, but He’s going to purge the earth and prepare it for His kingdom. Looking back at this Scripture again, and let’s read it in slightly a different way, sort of in a modified or extended purpose:

Isaiah 45:7: “I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and I create evil which means the righteous use of a bad act to do good.” In other words, to do righteousness. I *evil* that I’m talking about is a calamity, an adversity, affliction— which is a result of God’s correction, punishment and judgment.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Isaiah 45:6-7
- 2) Jeremiah 9:23-24
- 3) 1 John 4:8
- 4) James 1:17
- 5) Hebrews 4:14-16
- 6) Isaiah 45:1-7
- 7) Psalm 141:5
- 8) 1 Samuel 10:19
- 9) 2 Chronicles 20:9
- 10) Psalm 82:1-4
- 11) 2 Peter 2:5-6
- 12) 1 Corinthians 10:4-6, 11
- 13) Jeremiah 11:9-11
- 14) Jeremiah 23:10-14
- 15) Daniel 9:11-14
- 16) Hebrews 12:9-11
- 17) Deuteronomy 30:15-19
- 18) Galatians 6:7-8
- 19) Romans 6:20-23
- 20) Isaiah 45:7

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 13:8
- Genesis 26:29

- Genesis 44:29
- James 1:13
- Matthew 24:48-49
- Genesis 6:12
- Deuteronomy 28
- Genesis 1:31

Also referenced: Books:

- *Strong’s Interlinear*
- *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*

RK:bo

Transcribed: 3-16-12

Copyright 2012—All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the copyright owner. This includes electronic and mechanical photocopying or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.