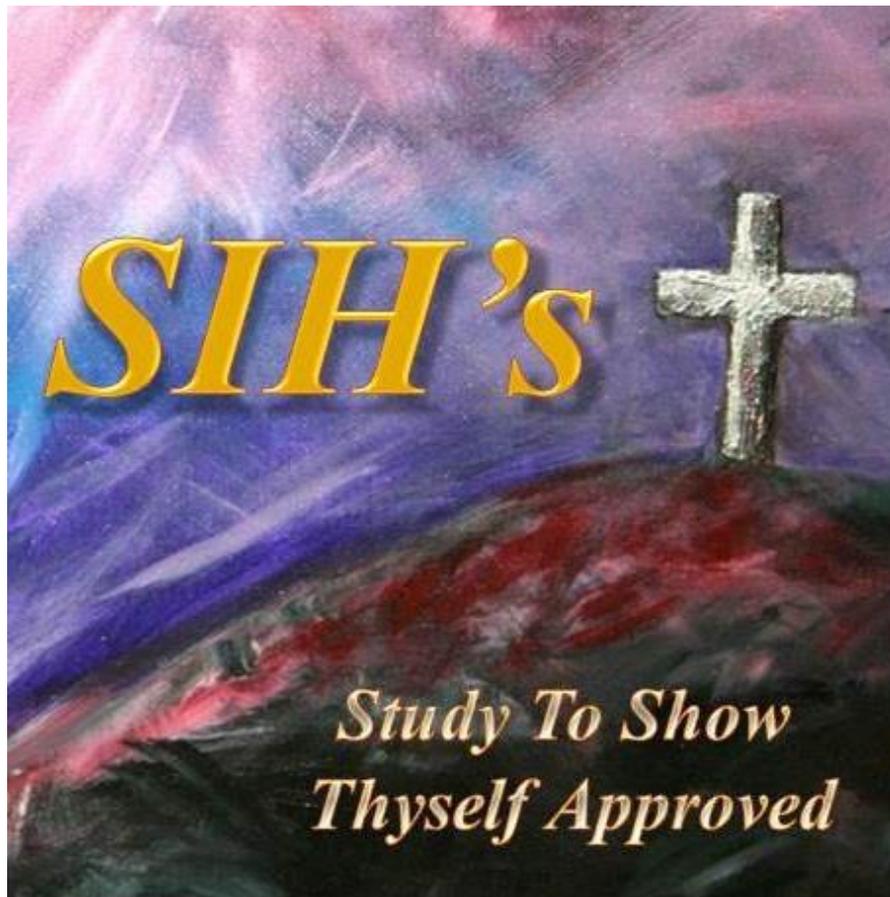


Settled In Heaven's

The Existence Of Evil

How It Came Into Existence And its Purpose



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Robert R Barkman**

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Table of Contents

“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #1)”	2
What Is The Biblical Meaning Of “Evil”?	2
“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #2)”	6
“He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and [among] the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand,”	6
“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #3)”	10
“Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, The Earth Is Filled With Thy Glory”	10
“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #4)”	15
“I Create Evil”	15
“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #5)”	19
“That they may know...[there is] none beside me. I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else”	19
“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #6)”	24
“That they may know...[there is] none beside me. I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else”	24
“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #7)”	31
“And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.”	31

“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #1)”

What Is The Biblical Meaning Of “Evil”?

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].” (Isaiah 45:7)

“[*Thou art*] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:...” (Habakkuk 1:13)

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:” (James 1:13)

In above set of Scriptures, we find one of the supposedly contradictory texts of the Scriptures. On one hand, from the lips of the Lord Himself, He clearly states that “**I create evil**”. Then later in the Scriptures we find Habakkuk as he speaks concerning the Lord says “**[*Thou art*] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:**” then, to add confusion to our subject, James states clearly that God “**cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:**”

In this series of lessons, we will be looking into two basic questions, first, “What Is God’s Role In The Existence of Evil ?” and, secondly, “What Is The Purpose Behind The Existence Of Evil ?”

THE SCRIPTURES:

(Romans 5:10-16)

*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only [so], but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. **Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:** (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also [is] the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, [which is] by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as [it was] by one that sinned, [so is] the gift: for the judgment [was] by one to condemnation, but the free gift [is] of many offences unto justification.*

(Romans 6:18-23)

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

*What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things [is] death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. **For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

(Romans 8:19-22)

*For the **earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.** For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected [the same] in hope, Because **the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption** into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that **the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain** together until now.*

THE STUDY:

The Characteristics of "Evil"

To begin our study, it is important for us to come to a Scriptural understanding of the term "evil".

The word "evil" in the Bible is translated by many different words. The following is a list of the most common root words translated by the word "evil" in the KJV Bible:

In the Old Testament the word "evil" is translated from the following Hebrew root words:

1. ra' a' – to spoil, to ruin, to be good for nothing, to break in pcs, marred
2. bliya `al – worthless, destructive,
3. `aven – nothingness, idol, trouble, vanity

In the New Testament the word "evil" is translated from the following Greek root words:

1. poneros – hurtful, calamitous, diseased, derelict, malice, vicious
2. kakos – worthless, depraved, causing injury, to harm
3. phaulos – inadequate, morally wicked, valueless
4. adikeo – to be unjust, to do wrong, to injure, suffering
5. blasphemos – irreverent, blaspheme, to speak ill of, to harm with speech

The most basic Biblical characteristics of "evil" can be obtained from the above lists. When used in the Holy Scriptures, the word "evil" is speaking of:

1. something that causes harm or injury
2. in many cases, the harm is so severe that it causes total worthlessness and ruin
3. it can be, but not necessarily, directly involved with moral wickedness

This is the basic characteristics for "evil" that we will be using throughout this study.

Based upon the above, we can also see that "evil" can be describing to different types of events....

The Two Types Of "Evil"

1. Evil can describe sin and its DIRECT results...

An act of "sin" can be described as an act of "evil" because "sin" is harmful to all mankind. When "sin" is equated with "evil", it presents to us two different truths about the same act:

1. "Sin" teaches us that it is an act that is done in opposition to the revealed will of the Lord.
2. That same act, when described as "evil", teaches us that it is an act that brings harm upon mankind.

One example of the harm that sin brings upon mankind is "death" (Roms 6:23). By "death" the Bible is teaching us that sin directly results in physical, spiritual and eternal death, all of which are harmful and ruinous to man. The existence of "death" can be traced back to the specific sin of Adam that was committed in Eden... (Roms 5:12)

Besides "death", there are many other direct results of sin upon man, all of which are evil. When sin is committed, mankind is directly harmed. Examples of this principle include:

1. murders which not only result in loss of life, but tremendous sorrow and hardship to those acquainted with the victim
2. lies which can result in individuals being slandered, unjustly punished, and their testimony ruined
3. adulteries which can result in broken families, and ruined testimonies
4. covetousness/theft which can result in loss of property, and financial ruin
5. drunkenness which can cause physical abuse, mental abuse, and broken families
5. hatred which can result in the abuse of those who are hated
6. sexual immorality which can result in STDs, broken homes, leading to abortions (the murder of the unborn)

The list of sins and their possible harmful results upon man are absolutely endless. This is why "sin" and "evil" are equated in the Bible.

2. Evil can describe sin and its INDIRECT results...

Normally, when we think of the results of sin, we think of the direct results of sin (see above). But there is also another set of sin's results that we must classify as "indirect" results of sin. What is an indirect result of sin? There are many results of sin that we cannot directly link to any specific act of sin.

For example a direct result of the sin of murder is the loss of life. The life that is lost can be directly linked back to the act of murder that was committed. If that specific act of murder had not taken place that specific life would not have been lost. This is a "DIRECT" result of sin.

But if we stop and think about things, there are many harmful acts that take place on the earth that cannot be linked back to a specific act of sin. Here are some examples: earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, many diseases (colds, flu etc), many accidents (falling, tripping down steps, etc.) Once again this list seems endless. But the principle still remains.... Think of ANYTHING that causes pain, suffering, harm, or death that cannot be directly linked to a specific act of sin... that is an INDIRECT result of sin.

By now, you might be thinking, "but why are you calling these the result of sin? There is no sin involved in any of these." We will answer this question with a question... "Would any of these things happen if sin had never entered the world?" The obvious answer is "No." If sin had never entered the world mankind would never suffer from sicknesses, tornados, falls, broken bones, etc. This is the principle revealed to us in Romans 8:19-22, where we are told that all of creation is "groaning and travailing" (ie suffering under the results of sin – earthquakes, tornados, viruses, imperfections etc) and waiting for deliverance from sins affects at the second coming.

It is because of sin that the world has entered a fallen state and, due to this fallen condition of the world, we have the existence of many evils that afflict mankind but are not the result of any specific sin. This is the principle behind saying that one type of "evil" is harm to man that is INDIRECTLY linked to the presence of sin.

So what is "evil" ? The easiest way that I can define the Biblical concept of evil is "the condition/ act of sin, OR the direct or indirect results of sin that are harmful, and potentially ruinous, to any part of God's creation."

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

What we have seen in this study....

We have attempted to come to a very basic understanding of the term "evil" as used in the Bible. We have come to see that:

1. "Evil" describes something that causes harm or injury
2. "Evil" can be referring to harm that is so severe, that it causes total destruction or uselessness
3. "Evil" can, but not necessarily, involves moral wickedness
4. "Evil" can describe sin or it can describe the results of sin
5. "Evil" can describe the direct results of sin
6. "Evil" can describe the indirect results of sin
7. "Evil" can describe an act that is morally wicked
8. "Evil" can describe, not the act, but the result of moral wickedness

So, in summary, "Evil" can describe an act or the results of that act and, in every case that it is used in the Bible, it is describing something that is harmful to man. In other words...

Evil is "the condition/act of sin, OR the direct or indirect results of sin, that are harmful, and potentially ruinous, to any part of God's creation."

In our next study, we will examine the source of evil in this world.

May the Lord bless you as you continue to seek His truth.

“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #2)”

“He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and [among] the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand,”

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].” (Isaiah 45:7)

“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:...” (Habakkuk 1:13)

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:” (James 1:13)

In above set of Scriptures, we find one of the supposedly contradictory texts of the Scriptures. On one hand, from the lips of the Lord Himself, He clearly states that **“I create evil”**. Then later in the Scriptures we find Habakkuk, as he speaks concerning the Lord, says **“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:”** then, to add confusion to our subject, James states clearly that God **“cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:”**

In this series of lessons, we will be looking into two basic questions, first, “What Is God’s Role In The Existence of Evil ?” and, secondly, “What Is The Purpose Behind The Existence Of Evil ?”

THE STUDY:

Before we begin this portion of our study, let’s pick up with the summary from our last study (Lesson #1)...

1. “Evil” describes something that causes harm or injury
2. “Evil” can be referring to harm that is so severe, that it causes total destruction or uselessness
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So, in summary, “Evil” can describe an act, or the results of that act, and, in every case that it is used in the Bible, it is describing something that is harmful to man. In other words... **Evil is “the condition/act of sin, OR the direct or indirect results of sin, that are harmful, and potentially ruinous, to any part of God’s creation.”**

We will now attempt to come to an understanding about the Sovereignty Of God....

Before we actually see the Bible teachings on the origin of evil, we need to lay a foundation of a few other basic truths about our Lord...

Our Lord Is In Control

One of the many attributes that is exclusive to our Lord, is the attribute of "absolute sovereignty". To put it simply, "absolutely sovereignty" means that our Lord is in total control of all things. The Bible is very clear on this subject. So clear, as a matter of fact, I think it is important to simply let the Bible speak for itself as we read these verses and are in awe at His greatness on display:

The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. (1 Samuel 2:6-7)

And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, And said, O LORD God of our fathers, [art] not thou God in heaven? and rulest [not] thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand [is there not] power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? (2 Chronicles 20:5-6)

For the kingdom [is] the LORD'S: and he [is] the governor among the nations. (Psalms 22:28)

A Psalm of David. The earth [is] the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. (Psalms 24:1-2)

But our God [is] in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. (Psalms 115:3)

A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

[There are] many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand. (Proverbs 19:21)

The king's heart [is] in the hand of the LORD, [as] the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will. (Proverbs 21:1)

The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, [so] shall it stand: (Isaiah 14:24)

This [is] the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this [is] the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul [it]? and his hand [is] stretched out, and who shall turn it back? (Isaiah 14:26-27)

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)

And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom [is] from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth [are] reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and [among] the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (Daniel 4:34-35)

But Jesus beheld [them], and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26)

*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to **the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:** (Ephesians 1:11)*

*Who being the brightness of [his] glory, and the express image of his person, and **upholding all things by the word of his power,** when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (Hebrews 1:3)*

From this sampling of verses we can see that the Biblical teaching of God's absolute sovereignty is not an issue of the misinterpretation of a few select Bible passages. The truth of His control over all things is a subject clearly declared in many passages and is found in both the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible.

Let's imagine a world where the Lord is not in control of all things. Let's imagine that Satan is not under the Lord's control and, therefore, could thwart His workings among men. If that was the case....

1. When we pray to the Lord, we would have absolutely no confidence He is able to answer us. He may have every intent to fulfill our request but, Satan could always intervene and stop the Lord's gracious workings on our behalf. The principle is this.... If God is not in control, there is no reason to believe He would, or could, answer any of our prayers.

2. When face with trials and temptations, there would be no reason to look to Him for help. Again, He may intend on helping us, but Satan could always intervene and stop the Lord's actions. This, in effect, would isolate us from the Lord's presence and aid, and therefore leave us to stand alone to face Satan.... If God is not in control, there is no reason to rely upon Him in our times of need.

3. In the area of our lost loved ones, there would be absolutely no need to pray for them or even share the gospel with them. After all, if there is one thing we would be certain of, it would be that Satan would stop the Lord's workings in the lost person's sins hardened heart. Out of everything the Lord would try to do, Satan would certainly put the priority upon stopping a lost person from coming to Christ... If God is not in control, there is no reason to look to Him to save our lost loved ones.

4. Think of all the future promises our Lord has given us. Do we realize if He is not in control of all things, He is not to be relied upon to keep His promises. Think about it. The wonderful promises of an eternity with Him, rewards for faithfulness, an eternity separated from sin, the future resurrection and glorification of our bodies etc etc etc . Even the assurance of salvation can no longer be relied upon as certain, if Satan is able to overcome the plans and intents of the Lord... If God is not in control, there is no reason to have any assurance of future with Him.

But praise the Lord, we know that no one, not even Satan, can do anything that the Lord does not allow. One example of that is...

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that [there is] none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his

hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. **And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath [is] in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.** So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD." (Job 1:6-12)

And we have the assurance the Lord will have the ultimate victory over Satan, we can know this based upon the truth of His sovereignty over all, and His ability to perform the future prophecies found in the Word....

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:" (Matthew 25:41)

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet [are], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Revelation 20:10)

Based upon the indisputable fact the Lord is sovereign, we must come to the conclusion that the evil that takes place in the world around us is under His sovereign control. No evil takes place in this world that He does not allow....

*the purpose of him who worketh **all things after the counsel of his own will:** (Ephesians 1:11)*

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

What we have seen in our study so far....

We have attempted to come to a very basic understanding of the term "evil" as used in the Bible. We have come to see that:

1. "Evil" describes something that causes harm or injury
2. "Evil" can be referring to harm that is so severe, that it causes total destruction or uselessness
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8. "Evil" can describe, not the act, but the result of moral wickedness
9. **Evil is "the condition/act of sin, OR the direct or indirect results of sin, that are harmful, and potentially ruinous, to any part of God's creation."**
10. Our Lord is in absolute control of all things, this principle is clearly presented throughout the Bible
11. It is because the Lord is in control of all things that we can place our unwavering faith in His enabling, His responses to our prayers, His ability to save, His prophecies of future events
12. The Lord is in control of Satan himself, who can do nothing apart from the Lord's allowance

In our next study, we will examine the holiness of the Lord and the source of evil in this world.

May the Lord bless you as you continue to seek His truth.

“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #3)”

“Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, The Earth Is Filled With Thy Glory”

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].” (Isaiah 45:7)

“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:...” (Habakkuk 1:13)

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:” (James 1:13)

In above set of Scriptures, we find one of the supposedly contradictory texts of the Scriptures. On one hand, from the lips of the Lord Himself, He clearly states that **“I create evil”**. Then later in the Scriptures we find Habakkuk, as he speaks concerning the Lord, says **“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:”** then, to add confusion to our subject, James states clearly that God **“cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:”**

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10. Our Lord is in absolute control of all things, this principle is clearly presented throughout the Bible
11. It is only because the Lord is in control of all things that we can place our unwavering faith in Him
12. The Sovereignty Of God affects: His ability to aid us, His answering our prayers, His ability to save, His prophecies to use
13. The Lord is in control of Satan himself, who can do nothing apart from the Lord’s allowance

We will now attempt to come to an understanding about the holiness of God and the origin of evil in this world....

Our Lord Is Perfectly Holy (Separated From Sin)

When we speak of the holiness of God, we are simply saying that God is completely separated from sin. He is absolutely pure in character, motives, thoughts and deeds. His holiness was made manifest to the prophet Isaiah in Isa 6:...

*In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy, [is] the LORD of hosts: the whole earth [is] full of his glory.** And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe [is] me! for I am undone; because I [am] a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." (Isaiah 6:1-5)*

Notice the effects of Isaiah's recognition of the holiness of God... "*Then said I, **Woe [is] me! for I am undone; because I [am] a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.**"*

The holiness of God is one of His attributes that clearly sets Him above all of creation. Sin has affected every area of creation, however when Isaiah saw this vision of God he was humbled. Why? It wasn't God's great power or His great majesty that brought Isaiah to his knees... it was the recognition of his absolute sinfulness in the face of the holiness of God.

The attributes of God that Isaiah recognized in his vision were also recognized by the Israelites when they were delivered from bondage in the land of Egypt...

*"Who [is] like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who [is] like thee, **glorious in holiness, fearful [in] praises, doing wonders?"** (Exodus 15:11)*

Again, we find the holiness of God being one of the main attributes that were recognized by the humbled nation of Israel. Please note His holiness is so extraordinary, He is described as being "glorious in holiness." In other words, His holiness makes Him deserving of our worship, honor, reverence and submission. It sets Him apart from all of the idolatrous gods of man and makes Him "shine" in comparison to them.

As a matter of fact, His holiness is so extraordinary that we find He cannot accept sin in His presence...

*"**[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:**" (Habakkuk 1:13)*

In the New Testament we have testimony of the Lord's holiness as well...

*"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and **in him is no darkness at all.**" (1 John 1:5)*

Note how John emphasized the complete, absolute holiness of God... "in him is **no darkness at all**". The illustration that John uses is an interesting one indeed. He uses the picture of light to describe the holiness of God, in comparison to darkness that represents sin (Acts 26:18). Just as darkness CANNOT dwell in the presence of light, so too, sin CANNOT dwell in the person of God (2 Cor 6:14).

The holiness of God is not limited to the Father but is also exhibited in the person of Christ....

*"For such an high priest became us, [who is] **holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;**" (Hebrews 7:26)*

What a blessing it is to know that the Lord that we serve is absolutely separated from sin. He cannot do wrong, He cannot make "mistakes", He cannot lie, nor can He treat anyone justly.

But also, getting back to our study, sin can in no way come from our God. He cannot create it, nor can He be held responsible for its existence among man...

***"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."** (James 1:13-17)*

James makes it crystal clear to us that, although the Lord is absolutely sovereign, He cannot be held accountable for the sinful actions of man. This is expressed in the first part of our above text...

*"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: **for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**"*

But James goes farther and teaches us that the Lord cannot be held accountable for the origination of sin when he says ...

*"Do not err, my beloved brethren. **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.**"*

James helps us to understand that the ONLY type of gifts that proceed from God are "good" and "perfect" gifts. These descriptions totally eliminate for us the possibility of sin proceeding from God. To cover all the bases, James then reminds us that this holy God will continue to be absolutely holy throughout eternity.... Therefore, sin will never proceed from Him, nor will He ever be the author of it.

Folks, it is our great responsibility to recognize that, although the Lord included sin in His sovereign plan, and allows the occurrence of sin on a daily basis, He cannot be held accountable for that sin. The responsibility for the existence of sin must be placed at the doorstep of Satan...

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8)

"Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44)

Not only do we know that Satan is the originator of sin and a causative force for it in this world, we also find that the Bible teaches us that the responsibility for sin's entrance into this world must be shared with Adam....

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also [is] the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, [which is] by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as [it was] by one that sinned, [so is] the gift: for the judgment [was] by one to condemnation, but the free gift [is] of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one [judgment came] upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [the free gift came] upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Romans 5:12-19)

In our study so far, we have now seen that the Lord is in control of all things. Because we know He is sovereign we must come to an understanding that the sins He has included in His sovereign plan He allows to take place, all other sins He restrains.

We have also come to understand that, due to His absolute holiness, sin cannot proceed from God in any way. Therefore, He cannot be the author, nor the originator of sin. Although He has included sin in His plan for mankind, Satan and Adam are the ones responsible for the entrance of sin into God's creation.

In our next lesson we will be answering the question... "If God, due to His holiness, cannot be the author of sin then what did He mean when He said "I create evil"?"

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

What we have seen in our study so far....

We have attempted to come to a very basic understanding of the term "evil" as used in the Bible. We have come to see that:

1. "Evil" describes something that causes harm or injury
2. "Evil" can be referring to harm that is so severe, that it causes total destruction or uselessness
3. "Evil" can, but not necessarily, involve moral wickedness
4. "Evil" can describe sin or it can describe the results of sin
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7. "Evil" can describe an act that is morally wicked
8. "Evil" can describe, not the act, but the result of moral wickedness
9. Evil is "the condition/act of sin, OR the direct or indirect results of sin, that are harmful, and potentially ruinous, to any part of God's creation."
10. Our Lord is in absolute control of all things, this principle is clearly presented throughout the Bible
11. It is only because the Lord is in control of all things that we can place our unwavering faith in Him
12. The Sovereignty Of God affects: His ability to aid us, His answering our prayers, His ability to save, His prophecies to use
13. The Lord is in control of Satan himself, who can do nothing apart from the Lord's allowance
14. The Lord is perfectly holy and separate from sin.
15. Satan and Adam are the ones who are responsible for sin's existence and entrance into this world

May the Lord bless you as you continue to seek His truth.

“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #4)”

“I Create Evil”

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].” (Isaiah 45:7)

“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:...” (Habakkuk 1:13)

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:” (James 1:13)

In above set of Scriptures, we find one of the supposedly contradictory texts of the Scriptures. On one hand, from the lips of the Lord Himself, He clearly states that **“I create evil”**. Then later in the Scriptures we find Habakkuk, as he speaks concerning the Lord, says **“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:”** then, to add confusion to our subject, James states clearly that God **“cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:”**

In this series of lessons, we will be looking into two basic questions, first, “What Is God’s Role In The Existence of Evil ?” and, secondly, “What Is The Purpose Behind The Existence Of Evil ?”

THE STUDY:

Before we begin this portion of our study, let’s pick up with the summary from our studies so far ...

1. “Evil” describes something that causes harm or injury
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15. Satan and Adam are the ones who are responsible for sin’s existence and entrance into this world

If God, due to His holiness, cannot be the author of sin then what did He mean when He said "I create evil"?...

"I Create Evil"... Exactly What Did Our Lord Create?

"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things]." (Isaiah 45:7)

To understand what the Lord is speaking of we must remember the Biblical definition for "evil".

Evil is "the condition/act of sin, OR the direct or indirect results of sin, that are harmful, and potentially ruinous, to any part of God's creation."

In other words, the term "evil" can describe either:

1. the act of sin
2. OR the result of that sin.

We have already seen that, due to the absolute holiness of God, the creation of sin cannot be attributed to the Lord. Therefore when He says "I create evil", He cannot be speaking of the act of sin. However, there is no reason to deny that He was speaking of the results of sin in the world. As a matter of fact, the Bible makes it clear to us that this is exactly what He is saying.

Following the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, the LORD IMPOSED upon the serpent, mankind and all nature several "evils" in response to the commission of sin by Adam. These included: the curse upon the serpent, enmity between serpent and man, physical, spiritual and eternal death, the growth of weeds, and the mother's pain in childbearing and the dominance of man over the woman...

*"And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou [art] **cursed** above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And **I will put** enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, **I will** greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed** [is] the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat [of] it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou [art], and unto dust shalt thou return."*
(Genesis 3:14-19)

In these we can see the Lord's acceptance of the responsibility for these "evils" upon Satan, the woman, the man, and nature by the phrases "I will" and "cursed".

What about some of the results of sin upon nature? The evils of tornados and earthquakes, floods, and famines all of which only exist due to the entrance of sin into nature...

"Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:" (Psalms 148:8)

The Psalmist tells us that the elements of nature exist at the Lord's bidding and fulfill His will. But the Word goes much farther in Job 37:

*"For he saith to the snow, Be thou [on] the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength. He seaeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work. Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places. Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north. By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened. Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud: And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. **He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.**" (Job 37:6-13)*

Here, we are clearly told that the Lord is the One that "*causeth it to come*" and that He then uses these evils of nature "*whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.*"

Throughout the Word we see His origination, control and usage of the many "evils" of nature. A few well-known examples include:

1. Gen 6:-9: - the worldwide flood of Noah's day
 2. Exo 9:-13: - the many of the ten plagues of Egypt
 3. Deut 28: - drought as punishment for sin
 4. 1 Kings 16: - rain withheld
 5. Jonah 1: - storm to stop Jonah's flight
 6. Nahum 1: - whirlwind and drought used as examples of judgment from the Lord
- All of these were created by God, controlled by God and meted out in response to the presence of sin in the world.

What about the physical (medical) evils that comes upon mankind.... Is the Lord in control of these things? Below are just a few of many examples of the Lord causing, and then using, physical afflictions for His purpose..

1. Gen 19: - men of Sodom smitten with blindness
2. Exo 9: - boils upon animals and Egyptians
3. Deut 28: - boils, hemorrhoids, rashes
4. 2 Kings 6: - Dothan's army smitten with blindness
5. Acts 9: - Blindness upon Saul
6. Acts 12: - Herod smitten with worms

In the above six I chose, ALL of them clearly tell us that the Lord, or one of His angels, brought these afflictions upon these men. And all of these are related to the sinful condition of mankind.

The Bible clearly tells us that the Lord creates and uses many direct and indirect evils (harmful events) in response to the sinfulness of mankind. It is, in this sense, that He says "I create evil"

Note: Please keep in mind, the evil results of sin do not always proceed upon men directly from the hand of the Lord. The example of Job helps us to understand that, at times, the Lord sovereignly allows Satan to

bring the results of sin upon man. In Job's case, it included both physical sickness, as well as, natural catastrophes as well as others (Job 1:-2:).

Be that as it may, it opposes the clear declaration of the Scriptures to believe that all of these evils come indirectly from the Lord. There are many times in Scripture where we are clearly told that these types of evils come directly from the hand of the Lord because of the sinful condition of mankind.

In our next lesson... Why does a loving God allow sin to take place and why does He bring to pass the evil results of sin upon mankind?

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

What we have seen in our study so far....

We have attempted to come to a very basic understanding of the term "evil" as used in the Bible. We have come to see that:

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13. The Lord is in control of Satan himself, who can do nothing apart from the Lord's allowance
14. The Lord is perfectly holy and separate from sin.
15. Satan and Adam are the ones who are responsible for sin's existence and entrance into this world
16. The Lord is the author and sovereign controller of the results of sin upon mankind

May the Lord bless you as you continue to seek His truth.

“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #5)”

“That they may know...[there is] none beside 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].” (Isaiah 45:7)

“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:...” (Habakkuk 1:13)

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:” (James 1:13)

In above set of Scriptures, we find one of the supposedly contradictory texts of the Scriptures. On one hand, from the lips of the Lord Himself, He clearly states that **“I create evil”**. Then later in the Scriptures we find Habakkuk, as he speaks concerning the Lord, says **“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:”** then, to add confusion to our subject, James states clearly that God **“cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:”**

In this series of lessons, we will be looking into two basic questions, first, “What Is God’s Role In The Existence of Evil ?” and, secondly, “What Is The Purpose Behind The Existence Of Evil ?”

THE STUDY:

Before we begin this portion of our study, let’s pick up with the summary from our studies so far ...

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4. The Lord is in control of Satan himself, who can do nothing apart from the Lord’s allowance
5. The Lord is perfectly holy and separate from sin. Because of this He is in no way the cause of sin, nor its entrance into the world.
6. Satan and Adam are the ones who are responsible for sin’s existence and entrance into this world
7. The Lord created the results of sin that we see taking place in the world.
8. The Lord either allows the results of sin to take place, or in many cases, He actively brings them to pass.

If this is so, our next questions are “Why did the Lord allow the evil of sin to enter His creation and all of mankind knowing that only harm would result from it?” “And why did He, through allowance or His direct intervention, bring to pass the evil results of our sin?”

To find the answer to the above questions, let's refer back to one of our foundational texts, Isaiah 45:7...

*"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and **create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].**"*

In the verses preceding this text, the Lord clearly explains to us all why He brings to pass the results of our sin, and by implication, why He allowed sin to enter His sinlessly perfect creation... Please note verses 5-7...

*"**I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else, [there is] no God beside me:** I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: **That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that [there is] none beside 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]."*

Why did our loving, kind, gracious Lord "form light and create darkness"... "make peace and create evil"? It was to reveal Himself to us. It was to clearly show us that He is the only true God. This is what our text unmistakably tells us.

So in what way does the entrance of sin and its results into the world reveal God to us? Let's take a look at three Biblical examples to help explain how He performed this...

1. The Ten Plagues of Egypt
2. The Life Of Job
3. The Miracles of Christ (in our next lesson)

Example #1 – The Ten Plagues Of Egypt

In this account of the sinfulness of the Pharaoh of Egypt and the resultant effects of his sin on the nation of Egypt, we find a clear declaration of their purpose....

To Show The Egyptians His Identity As True God and Sovereign Over All...

*"And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, [and] my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. **And the Egyptians shall know that I [am] the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.** And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they." (Exodus 7:1-6)*

To Show Pharaoh His Supremacy Among All Gods...

*"And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, [that] they may remain in the river only? And he said, To morrow. And he said, **[Be it] according to thy word: that thou mayest know that [there is] none like unto the LORD our God.** And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only." (Exodus 8:9-11)*

To Show The Israelites His Identity As True God and Sovereign Over All...

*"And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him: **And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I [am] the LORD.**" (Exodus 10:1-2)*

(One quick note about the term "hardening" Pharaoh's heart... Keep in mind, in our previous study, we saw that the Lord will never "tempt" any man, nor can He be the cause of sinful acts. The best way for us to understand the phrase "hardening" is to understand that the Lord ALLOWED Pharaoh's heart to become hardened due to Satanic intervention and the rebellious, fallen nature possessed by Pharaoh.)

How did the Lord reveal Himself through the plagues? Well of course, the greatness of His power is revealed clearly through the performance of the miracles but it goes far beyond that. Keep in mind that the Egyptians worshipped many, many false gods (probably in the 100s). In their belief system these gods were ordered in a hierarchy system with certain gods having authority and strength over others.

The plagues that were performed went directly against some of the most powerful and authoritative gods that the Egyptians worshipped. The following is a list of some possible combinations of plagues and the gods they went against:

1. water to blood – the god of the Nile river, Hapi
2. frogs – the god of fertility of fields and rivers (holds frog in her hand), Heka
3. lice – the god of the earth, Geb
4. flies – the god with a fly head, Kheper
5. murrain – the bull god – Apis
6. boils – the god of health – Imhotep
7. hail – the goddess of the sky – Nut
8. locusts – the god of the crops – Seth
9. darkness – the sun god – RA (the greatest god of them all)
10. death of firstborn – Pharaoh (believed to be a god) whose first born son would become a god as well

(Please keep in mind, I am certainly not a scholar concerning the Egyptian gods. I have tried to the best of my ability to match up the proper gods with the proper plague, but there could be variations of the above list. Regardless of which plague goes against which god, the basic principle can be easily seen by the above listing.)

The plagues were like a "faceoff" between the Lord and these different gods. Each one of these resulted in the Lord actually using their gods to be a plague and to bring evil (harm) to the Egyptians, and in some cases the Israelites.

The Lord, through the plagues that resulted from the rebellious sins of Pharaoh, clearly manifested to both Israelites and Egyptians, His phenomenal power and His absolute supremacy over all of the Egyptian gods. Truly, He revealed to all that "I am the LORD." This could only have happened through the existence of sin and its harmful results.

All of these truths are reaffirmed to us:

"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." (Romans 9:17)

Example #2 – The Life Of Job

In Job 42:1-7, we find Job describing what he had learned throughout his long period of evil (harmful things) that he had received from the hand of Satan, under the Lord's allowance...

*"Then Job answered the LORD, and said, **I know that thou canst do every [thing], and [that] no thought can be withholden from thee. Who [is] he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.** Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. **I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.** Wherefore I abhor [myself], and repent in dust and ashes. And it was [so], that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me [the thing that is] right, as my servant Job [hath]." (Job 42:1-7)*

Job, as he had gone through these many trials had come to recognize:

1. **"I know that thou canst do every [thing]"** - the unlimited power of the Lord
2. **"and [that] no thought can be withholden from thee."** – the unlimited knowledge of the Lord
3. **"Who [is] he that hideth counsel without knowledge?"** – our futility in understanding all of His workings
4. **"therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not."** – Coming to an understanding of the above three principles, worked within Job a spirit of humility and great reverence.
5. **"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee."** - Although, prior to His experience, Job had mental knowledge of all these things, it was only after experiencing God's greatness in his life that he came to understand these truths in his heart. He had previously "heard" of Him but, now, he has "seen" Him. This would result in his life being affected by these great truths as compared to simply possessing a head knowledge of them.

To summarize, just as with the Egyptian plagues, a sincere, heart-felt recognition of God's person and a genuine humility were gained through this experience of Job's.

That which could not be learned of the Lord through the teachings of His Word, were learned through this life experience by Job. This is a very important point that deserves to be emphasized in our study. We can possess a great mental understanding of the person of our Lord and yet never come to genuine experiential knowledge of them. We could be taught all we want about the Lord's supremacy and greatness, but it is through experiencing Him during the "evil" times of our lives that we can come to a much clearer, life-changing understanding of them.

If we were truthful, we would all have to say that if we are His child, we have learned much about Him through our daily walk with Him (which includes feeling the results of sin in our lives). This is all a part of why He has chosen to allow sin and the results of sin into this world. For us to come to a greater understanding of Who He is, What He does, and our need to submit to Him.

In our next study we will look at the miracles performed by Christ, Himself, as a source of understanding how the Lord is glorified by the harmful events that take place in this world...

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

Anything that clearly reveals the Lord to those who are lost is an act of love, grace and kindness. Although they may result in suffering on earth, they can reap the benefits of eternity with the Lord.

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14. The Lord is perfectly holy and separate from sin.
15. Satan and Adam are the ones who are responsible for sin's existence and entrance into this world
16. The Lord is the author and sovereign controller of the results of sin upon mankind
17. The Lord uses the evil (harmful) things of this world to reveal Himself to mankind
18. In the 10 Plagues of Egypt, the Lord revealed Himself by defeating 10 of the main gods of the Egyptians
19. In the life of Job, Job came to experience truths about the LORD, that he had previously known in his mind but was unable to grasp in his heart.

May the Lord bless you as you continue to seek His truth.

“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #6)”

“That they may know...[there is] none beside me. I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else”

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“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:...” (Habakkuk 1:13)

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:” (James 1:13)

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If this is so, our next questions are "Why did the Lord allow the evil of sin to enter His creation and all of mankind knowing that only harm would result from it?" "And why did He, through allowance or His direct intervention, bring to pass the evil results of our sin?"

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*"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and **create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].**"*

In the verses preceding this text, the Lord clearly explains to us all why He brings to pass the results of our sin, and by implication, why He allowed sin to enter His sinlessly perfect creation...

Please note verses 5-7...

*"**I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else, [there is] no God beside me:** I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: **That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that [there is] none beside 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]."*

Why did our loving, kind, gracious Lord "form light and create darkness"... "make peace and create evil"? It was to reveal Himself to us. It was to clearly show us that He is the only true God. This is what our text unmistakably tells us.

So in what way does the entrance of sin and its results into the world reveal God to us? Lets take a look at three Biblical examples to help explain how He performed this...

1. The Ten Plagues of Egypt (in our previous lesson)
2. The Life Of Job (in our previous lesson)
3. The Miracles of Christ

Let's now look at what we can learn from the miracles of Christ...

Example #3 – The Miracles Of Christ

We will use two examples of the many miracles that Christ performed, to help us understand that the evil results of sin in this world are used by God to bring honor and glory to Himself.

The Man Born Blind

*"And as [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man which was blind from [his] birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? **Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.** I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world...."*

*Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. **He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner [or no], I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.** Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear [it] again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: [as for] this [fellow], we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and [yet] he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God*

heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. **If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.** They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, **For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.** And [some] of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." (John 9:1-41)

In the very beginning of this account, we find Christ, Himself, explaining that the purpose of this man's blindness was "**that the works of God should be made manifest in him**". In other words, it was to "take the covering off" of God's power and grace, thereby exhibiting it plainly the world.

(Keep in mind, although his blindness was not the DIRECT result of any sin on the part of himself or his parents it was, obviously, the INDIRECT result of sin's existence in this world. If sin had never entered the world, the infirmity of blindness would never exist.)

Our text then goes further showing us that this healed man recognized that, through this miracle, Jesus was of God "**If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.**" which resulted in him coming to a saving faith in Christ... "**And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.**" Along with the salvation of this young man, who knows how many others who learned of this event were brought to a saving faith in Him as well?

As humans we all would have a tendency to think that it was very unjust for the Lord to cause this young man to be born blind. After all, through the declaration of Christ, Himself, this young man had committed no specific sin that caused his blindness. Please keep in mind that this young man, due to his fallen sinful nature deserved eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire. Any condition he experienced, short of eternal punishment is less suffering than any lost person would deserve. His blindness, although it was harmful to him, still brought less harm upon him than what he actually deserved due to his sinful condition. God was in no way unjust by allowing this young man to be born blind.

But, also, if we dig under the surface we find a very important principle we dare not overlook. It was this very blindness that the Lord used to reveal Himself to this young man and work an act of saving grace within him. Anyone of us would gladly be born blind if it meant that, through our blindness, we would come to a saving faith in Christ and be blessed with a glorified, infirmity free body throughout eternity.

Here, we see the basic principle that WHAT MAY APPEAR AS HARMFUL IN THE EYES OF MAN was actually based on the infinite knowledge of the Lord AN ACT OF GOD'S LOVE, MERCY AND GRACE which was performed for the benefit of the recipient.

Three verses come to our mind:

1. As one of the Lord's elect, everything that took place in his life was for his ultimate good...

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose." (Romans 8:28)

2. As fallen, mankind, none of us can begin to understand the workings of God and their ultimate results upon man...

"For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

3. Therefore, what may appear to be harmful to us, are in actuality, acts of love and kindness that works peace between God and man...

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Finally, Christ gives us a practical application for our lives that can be learned through this event. "**For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.**" This entire event reveals to us truth about our Lord. It is a living lesson on the role of Christ as He came to sinful man.... It was to heal those who were spiritually blind and to show the true spiritual condition to the lost whom did not see their need of salvation before this event.

Our second example drawn from the miracles of Christ is...

The Resurrection Of Lazarus

*Now a certain [man] was sick, [named] Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was [that] Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard [that], he said, **This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.** Now **Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was....** Then when Jesus came, he found that he had [lain] in the grave four days already... Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give [it] thee. Jesus saith unto her, **Thy brother shall rise***

again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world...**The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, **Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.** When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, **he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,** And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. **Jesus wept.** Then said the Jews, **Behold how he loved him!** And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore **again groaning in himself** cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been [dead] four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, **if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?** Then they took away the stone [from the place] where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up [his] eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said [it], that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. **Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.** But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. (John 11:1-46)

In this account, once again, Christ clearly explains the purpose of the sickness (and coming death) that had befallen Lazarus... **"his sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."**

Because Christ recognized the greater purpose that lay behind the death of Lazarus, AS AN ACT OF GRACE AND MERCY, He delayed beginning the trip to the home of Lazarus for two days. This, in essence gave time for Lazarus to pass away and be buried for four days before His arrival.

This led Martha to point out to Christ... **"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."** Mary, also pointed out the same truth when she said **"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."**

These are very true statements indeed. Stop and think about it, because of Christ's purposeful delay, we have Lazarus dying, Mary and Martha and his other acquaintances suffering and sorrowing greatly.... **"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her..."** All of this was due to Christ's chosen late arrival to the sick (and now dead) Lazarus.

Before we begin to accuse Christ of being unloving, mean and hateful, let's look at His reaction to what has taken place... **"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,"** **"And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!"** **"And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it."**

Obviously, from these texts, it is plain that our Lord had no pleasure in allowing Lazarus to die and to bring sorrow and pain upon those left behind. He sorrowed with them, not just motivated by the death of Lazarus, but also for the great sorrow they were feeling.

So then, we have the obvious question... Why would He allow Lazarus to become sick, and why would He delay His coming knowing that it would cause such horrible pain and grief? To answer this, we need to remember His initial explanation of why this event would take place, "**for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby**". From God's perfect point of view, the gain from this event far outweighed the pain that was felt.

When the Lord was revealed so mightily in the resurrection of Lazarus here are the results... "**Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.**" The salvation of many souls from eternal punishment in hell far outweighed the short-lived sorrow of those who were mourning. It was clearly an act of the Lord's love, grace and mercy, allowing all of these events to take place which worked eternal salvation for those who are lost.

This principle has been found throughout the ages in the lives of the Lord's servants.... Many have gladly suffered harm in this world and were willing to exchange their physical lives for the salvation of others. As a matter of fact, God's people count it a privilege to give our lives in bringing salvation to others. We have seen this historically in the lives of many martyrs throughout history (including many missionaries who have given their lives for His glory on the foreign field).

Is God unjust in all of this? Absolutely not. Is God uncaring, unloving, and hard-hearted to bring these things to pass? Absolutely not. In actuality, all of these things illustrate for us His love, grace, mercy and concern for those who are His people. Remember, EVERYONE affected, as a part of fallen and sinful mankind, deserves the eternal wrath of God. Anything short of that is only an act of grace.

Although their suffering at the death of Lazarus was great, it was nothing compared to the suffering that all of us deserved in the Lake of Fire. Our Lord was absolutely just allowing/causing a small bit of temporal pain upon his people, using it to bring eternal salvation to their souls. In the end, they would thank Him for this event knowing it led to their salvation.

Parents, on a far, far lesser degree make the same type of choice all the time. How often does a parent discipline their child causing them pain, for the greater good? Although the events in this text are not necessarily acts of discipline, they are still actions that cause pain for the sake of greater gain. Are parents unjust when they punish their child for wrongdoing? ABSOLUTELY NOT. This pain brought upon the child is an act of love and concern as they are motivated by the child's long term welfare. So it is with the harmful events that come from the hand of the Lord, they always come forth for the good of His people and to show Himself to mankind motivated by His love and concern for us.

In the case of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, although they were saved before this event, certainly it was a life changing experience that increased their knowledge and understanding of their Lord's greatness and how He works in the midst of man. By the time this event was over, they were far better off than before the event had taken place. In my way of thinking, probably, until their death, they would share this miraculous miracle with only words of amazement, honor and praise on their lips.

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

Anything that clearly reveals the Lord to those who are lost is an act of love, grace and kindness. Although they may result in suffering on earth, they can reap the benefits of eternity with the Lord.

We have attempted to come to a very basic understanding of the term "evil" as used in the Bible. We have come to see that:

1. "Evil" describes something that causes harm or injury
2. "Evil" can be referring to harm that is so severe, that it causes total destruction or uselessness
3. "Evil" can, but not necessarily, involves moral wickedness
4. "Evil" can describe sin or it can describe the results of sin
5. "Evil" can describe the direct results of sin
6. "Evil" can describe the indirect results of sin
7. "Evil" can describe an act that is morally wicked
8. "Evil" can describe, not the act, but the result of moral wickedness
9. Evil is "the condition/act of sin, OR the direct or indirect results of sin, that are harmful, and potentially ruinous, to any part of God's creation."
10. Our Lord is in absolute control of all things, this principle is clearly presented throughout the Bible
11. It is only because the Lord is in control of all things that we can place our unwavering faith in Him
12. The Sovereignty Of God affects: His ability to aid us, His answering our prayers, His ability to save, His prophecies to use
13. The Lord is in control of Satan himself, who can do nothing apart from the Lord's allowance
14. The Lord is perfectly holy and separate from sin.
15. Satan and Adam are the ones who are responsible for sin's existence and entrance into this world
16. The Lord is the author and sovereign controller of the results of sin upon mankind
17. The Lord uses the evil (harmful) things of this world to reveal Himself to mankind
18. In the 10 Plagues of Egypt, the Lord revealed Himself by defeating 10 of the main gods of the Egyptians
19. In the life of Job, Job came to experience truths about the LORD, that he had previously known in his mind but was unable to grasp in his heart.
20. When the Lord allows/brings harmful events upon mankind, it is done motivated out of love and concern for His people

May the Lord bless you as you continue to seek His truth.

“Why Does Evil Exist? (Part #7)”

“And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.”

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].” (Isaiah 45:7)

“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:...” (Habakkuk 1:13)

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:” (James 1:13)

In above set of Scriptures, we find one of the supposedly contradictory texts of the Scriptures. On one hand, from the lips of the Lord Himself, He clearly states that **“I create evil”**. Then later in the Scriptures we find Habakkuk, as he speaks concerning the Lord, says **“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:”** then, to add confusion to our subject, James states clearly that God **“cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:”**

In this series of lessons, we will be looking into two basic questions, first, “What Is God’s Role In The Existence of Evil ?” and, secondly, “What Is The Purpose Behind The Existence Of Evil ?”

THE STUDY:

As we come to a conclusion of our studies, I would like us to look at an additional passage that can greatly benefit our understanding of this very difficult and controversial subject... “Why Does Evil Exist?”

In Romans 9:17-24, we find the Apostle Paul addressing the subject of our studies...

(In the context of this text, we find Paul discussing the sovereign control over the salvation of His people and the events that He uses to bring that salvation to them. For this discussion, he refers back to the Ten Plagues of Egypt as an example of God’s usage of the evil things of this world to reveal Himself to all mankind and the need of salvation to the lost)

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, **Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.**

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will [have mercy], and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed [it], Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? [What] if God, willing to shew [his] wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Romans 9:17-24)

(Please refer back to lesson #5, for an in-depth look at the Lord's allowance of Pharaoh's rebellion and His bringing of the ten plagues to display His glory and position as Only God over All)

The Lord chose to allow Pharaoh's heart to be hardened, due to Pharaoh's own sinful condition, which allowed His glory to be displayed through His workings of the ten plagues. Solomon understood this principle as well when he makes the statement.... **"The LORD hath made all [things] for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."** (Proverbs 16:4). The Lord, many times, allows wicked men to rise up, so that they can be used for His glory, when He metes out the harmful results of their actions upon them (on the day of evil).

Paul is pointing out that the Lord's choice to use the hardened Pharaoh as the cause for the performance of the plagues was an act that was fitting and proper based upon God's attributes of love, grace, and mercy; as well as His attributes of justice, wrath and holiness.

The usage of Pharaoh was an act of love, grace and mercy towards both the nations of Israel and Egypt as well as all the nations that would hear of this great event. For those who observed or heard of this event, the True God was being revealed to them as they were given the opportunity to exercise faith in Him, as He patiently waited for them. He would use this event to call out His elect from both Israel and the Gentile nations. One example of this is the Gentile prostitute Rahab which attributes her faith in God to hearing about the great display of His glory in the Jews deliverance from Egypt. (Josh 2:10)

In a very special way, the elect within these nations received maximum benefit from this loving, merciful, gracious event, as it brought many to salvation and for those already saved, it helped them to grow in grace and knowledge of Christ.

On the other hand, the Lord's usage of Pharaoh, whose hardening was based upon his own sinful acts of rebellion and the working of Satan in his heart, was an act of holiness, wrath and justice. Pharaoh, due to his lost condition and repeated sinful rebellion against the Lord, had made himself a public display of those who are habitually rebellious and hardhearted against God. The wrath that fell upon Pharaoh was deserved by him based upon his wicked condition and deeds. It was a display of a Holy, Just, God meting punishment

upon the guilty and deserving. Pharaoh, just like all mankind, deserved the wrath of God falling upon him. This should be a warning to all of us of the fruits that are born from rebellion against the Holy, Just God of the Universe.

Also, in Paul's text, he points out that God's usage of Pharaoh, and the performance of the plagues, dare not be questioned by mortal, fallen, sinful man. Based upon our studies, we have seen that what appears to be acts of cruelty and hatred on the part of the Lord, are in actuality acts of kindness, grace and mercy toward sinful mankind.

Because we cannot see "the end from the beginning" we can expect to come to a full understanding of God's workings among man. Although we cannot understand all things, it is imperative that the Christian, by faith, accept the teachings of His Word on this subject. For us to deny He was and is in control of the harmful results of sin, or to question His holiness or justice is totally out of the question for the Christian. It is like Paul says "***Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed [it], Why hast thou made me thus?***"

(This principle is much like the truths of the Word that teach to us that we will be receiving glorified bodies and spending eternity with Him. NONE of us totally understand what glorified bodies will be like, nor do we understand all of the facets of eternity with Him. But we still must believe what the Bible teaches us about these things and trust Him with the details. So too, with His allowance and usage of evil in this world.... we need to believe what the Scriptures clearly tell us and trust Him with the details that are yet unknown to us.)

To close our study, I would like us to stop for just a moment and think about the greatest lesson we can learn from the existence of sin in the world....

"Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; [even] in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."

"In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1:3-14)

Folks, if there was no such thing as sin in this world, we would not be able to begin to understand our Lord's love and grace to us. In the above verses, here are all the displays of God's great love for us that we would know nothing about if sin was not in this world....

1. *who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ:*
2. *he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world*
3. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself,*
4. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins,*
5. *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will,*
6. *he might gather together in one all things in Christ,*
7. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance,*
8. *being predestinated according to the purpose of him*
9. *after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:*
10. *ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*
11. *the redemption of the purchased possession,*

Every one of these marvelous acts performed by our Lord to reveal His glory to us, and are acts of love and grace that were performed EXCLUSIVELY in response to sin and its effects in our lives. Without sin in the world we would know nothing of these.

Without the existence of sin, we would know very little about His love for us... nothing of His forgiveness, nor of His grace... nothing of His patience nor His merciful kindness.

But most importantly, nothing of His sacrificial love for us....

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
(Romans 5:8-9)

Without sin, He would not have chosen us although we were His sinful creation that rebelled and rejected Him... Without sin, He would not have given His Son to come to the earth as man.... Without sin, Christ, God Himself, would not have gone to the cross, bore those same sins for us, allowing us to escape the punishment we deserved, and be accepted by His Holy Father.

And without sin, we could not begin to understand ...

"... we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39)

To God be the glory, great things He hath done.

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

In this study we have come to understand:

1. When the Bible speaks of "evil" it can speak of either of sin, its direct results, or its indirect results upon mankind.
2. Our God is in absolute control of evil either through allowance or performance.
3. Our God is perfectly holy and, although He allowed sin to enter the world, cannot be held responsible for it.
4. Our God either allows, or many times causes the effects of sin to take place in the world, this is done to reveal Himself to mankind, bringing glory and honor to Himself.
5. Our God either allows, or many times causes the effects of sin to take place in the world, as acts of love, mercy and grace as well as holiness, justice and deserved wrath.
6. As Christians, who are a part of fallen mankind, we must recognize that none of us can come to a complete, absolute understanding of the above great truths of God's Word. We must, by faith, trust that these things are true, understanding what we can and leaving all the rest in the hands of God.

Based upon the above, as Christians what are we to do during the "evil times" of our lives? We are to recognize He is in control and has allowed this into our life for two great purposes... our good and His glory.

1. Since it is for our good, we are to seek His face asking Him to bring to our understanding a heart-felt recognition of His person and workings.
2. Since it is for His glory, we are to be seeking opportunities to show Him to others, through our actions and words as these difficult times come upon us.

As the result of this study, may we all recognize His greatness, praise Him for it and come to the conclusion....

"He hath done all things well"